THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE IMMIGRANT

Social construction(s) of a welfare "deserving" immigrant: Case of South-Asian immigrants in Portugal

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List of Acronyms

EU: European Union

ESS: European Social Survey

SEF: Immigration and border enforcement agency, Portugal

SA: South Asian

Acknowledgements

Abstract

Portugal has often been referred to as an exception in the European Union (EU) regarding its open and welcoming attitude to immigrants even after the financial crisis and refugee crisis, two events that have led to a negative shift in immigration policy and public attitudes in Europe towards immigrants over the last decade. However, while Portugal has experienced a liberalisation of its immigration policy overall, and a positive shift in welfare deservingness perceptions towards immigrants, the reality is more complex and sometimes contradictory, specifically in relation to the political economy of immigration that although has led to increased tolerance of irregular immigration to serve the Portuguese economy — and in the course offered many the chance to secure a legal status — has also pushed thousands of irregular immigrants into low-wage jobs and precarious working conditions, rendering them "essential" yet invisible and forgotten in the mainstream public and policy discourse.

Using the case of South Asian immigrants in Portugal I elucidate this complexity and its role in engendering three distinct types of deservingness frames that have helped South Asian immigrants become more welfare "deserving" immigrants — either by proving their worth for "deserving" legal status and hence equal access to social rights and entitlements, or by managing and countering everyday bordering practices, a process mediated by their intersectional social positionalities, in the Portuguese society. The case also illustrates how broader structural factors, such as the economic and social context, along with the social location(s) of immigrants within the immigrant group and the host society, work together to produce deservingness frames that mediate the degree to which the immigrant penalty can be overcome and countered to narrow the deservingness gap between native and immigrant claimants of social welfare benefits.

Keywords

This research paper is dedicated to immigrants around the world for their courage to brave all odds and persevere.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Immigrants and the "deservingness gap" in Europe (2010-2019)

The events of the past two decades — the Eurodebt crisis of 2010-11 and the European refugee crisis of 2015 — along with the gradual yet intentional "shift from a Keynesian welfare state to a neoliberal welfare regime" [Oorschot 2005: 4], particularly in the aftermath of the Eurodebt crisis has magnified the "deservingness gap" between the native and immigrant claimants of welfare benefits in Europe [Reeskens and Meer 2018]. In fact, as first established by Oorschot's universal dimension of (welfare) support [Oorschot 2000], immigrants have not only been perceived as least deserving of state welfare when compared to other demographic groups such as the elderly, the sick, people with disabilities, the unemployed, etc. [Oorschot et al. 2017, Laenen 2020], but also as less deserving of welfare support than the citizens of their host country [Oorschot et al. 2017]. This widening of the deservingness gap has increased the burden on immigrants to "prove" their deservingness for claiming welfare benefits from the state [Attewell 2020], thereby resulting in a more stringent immigrant penalty that is borne by immigrants [Reeskens and Meer 2018] — linked to their identity, need, and contribution to the society, as perceived by the native population and the state [Reeskens and Meer 2018]. Countering and overcoming this immigrant penalty plays a pivotal role in helping immigrants narrow, if not entirely close, the deservingness gap [Reeskens and Meer 2018], and thus be able to claim equal access to social citizenship rights and entitlements as provisioned by the state to its citizens.

However, whether this immigrant penalty can actually be countered and overcome effectively using (positive) "deservingness frames" [Yoo 2008; Chauvin and Garces-Mascarenas 2014]— tools in the form language and imagery employed to construct/de-construct different relationship(s) of a particular welfare deserving group, in relation to the state and/or the society [Beechy 2015] — is a subject of current debate in the social policy literature [Reeskens and Meer 2018]. While one line of argument posits that (positive) deservingness framings of immigrants can help enable a "cultural resonance" [Yoo 2008] at the level of the individual and the institution, thereby signalling the immigrant community(s) as symbolising and embodying the collective values that the native population can relate and empathise with [Yoo 2008], the contending argument posits that deservingness frames limit and compromise the complexity and an intersectional understanding of the immigrant community(s) itself [Carmel and Sojka 2020], with scant attention paid to the broader structural factors that undergird the diverse immigrant experiences situated within a specific context [Cerda et al. 2015]. This might, therefore, end up reproducing, reinforcing, and silencing socio-economic inequities within and between immigrant communities by propagating generalised and binary labels and notions of a "more deserving" versus "less deserving" immigrant [Yukich 2014].

Moreover, while there is evidence, primarily from the United States, to show that deservingness frames employed to construct the "deserving" immigrant have been successful to counter the immigrant penalty to some extent, especially in the domain of right to access healthcare [Beechy 2015] and legal citizenship rights, as has been the case with the young undocumented minors, referred to as the DREAMERS generation [Sirriyeh 2020], in both the American and Northern European context, there are mixed results related to the impact of using positive deservingness frames to engender the welfare "deserving" immigrant. In fact, as outlined by Reeskens and Meer in

their multiple studies, situated in the Netherlands over the last decade, relying on positive deservingness frames has done little to help immigrants overcome the immigrant penalty [Reeskens and Meer 2018, Meer and Reeskens 2020] and perceptions about immigrants as less deserving of welfare benefits than citizens, both in public and policy discourse, have only further strengthened overtime [Reeskens and Meer 2018, Meer and Reeskens 2020]. Similar evidence has also emerged from studies undertaken in Sweden, Germany, and the UK [Berry et al. 2015 and Holzberg et al. 2018]. Surprisingly, however, limited literature exists on the impact of using positive deservingness frames to counter the immigrant penalty in the context of Southern Europe, even though immigration to Southern Europe at the beginning of this century, mainly from non-EU countries, has increased dramatically [Lafleur and Stanek 2018]. Moreover, both the Eurodebt crisis and the refugee crisis have played a pivotal role in dictating the economic, social, and demographic trends across countries in Southern Europe over the last decade, including influencing and shaping welfare deservingness perceptions with regard to immigrants [ESS 2019].

Immigrants and the deservingness gap: Portugal in Focus

Furthermore, while more attention has been given to this subject in countries like Greece, Spain, and Italy in Southern Europe [Amores et al. 2020], perhaps given the similar trends and trajectories on attitudes towards immigrants and the gradual advance towards welfare chauvinism in public and policy discourse as observed in in Northern Europe, the case of Portugal pertaining to this subject has largely been underrepresented in the broader social policy literature. This is particularly fascinating given the fact that Portugal has not only experienced a steep increase in immigration over the last two decades [Gois 2019], but also a notable shift in the profile of its immigrants following the Eurodebt crisis, which significantly impacted Portugal's economy, labor market, and its demographic makeup in the ensuing decade [Gois 2019]. Moreover, Portugal also stands as an exception to most other EU countries in relation to its trajectory on immigration rights and policies since the Eurodebt crisis [Cook 2018], with no significant prevalent discourse favouring welfare chauvinism [Cook 2018], and a relative narrowing of the deservingness gap observed between citizens and immigrants in the European Social Survey (ESS) data from 2016-17 compared to ESS data from 1999-2000 [Oorschot 2005] — when, surprisingly, Portugal had a more unfavourable attitude of immigrants' deservingness compared to its counterparts in Southern Europe [Oorschot 2005].

This makes Portugal an interesting context to examine whether deservingness frames applied to immigrants in the last decade have changed following the Eurodebt crisis. Furthermore, the research paper also seeks to understand two following related aspects:

1. Why did the immigrant deservingness frames change (or did not change) following the Eurodebt crisis?
2. Whether and how has the change (or lack thereof) helped immigrants counter the immigrant penalty and facilitated the narrowing of deservingness gap, as has been observed in the empirical data on deservingness perceptions for Portugal.

Deservingness gap in Portugal: The case of South Asian immigrants

Given the diversity of the immigrant demographic in Portugal, for the purpose of this research, I focus primarily on the South Asian immigrant community (both regular and irregular migrants)— with Bangladeshi, Indian and Nepalese immigrants in particular, subject to the comparatively easier

access and faster response from these South Asian communities during the data collection phase of the research. It would be worth noting that Portugal is also home to many Pakistani and Sri Lankan immigrants, and their experiences in relation to the research subject may be very different from those shared in this research paper. Hence, it would be sufficient to say that South Asian immigrant experiences documented for the purpose of this research are not representative of the entire South Asian immigrant community in Portugal, and therefore, making any broad generalisations pertaining to the findings should be avoided.

There are three main reasons for focusing on the South Asian community in Portugal. These are — 1) there has been a considerable increase in the number of South Asian immigrants in Portugal in the last decade following the Eurodebt crisis [Gois 2019], primarily economic migrants — working-age men and women from countries like Bangladesh, Nepal and India — who arrive in Portugal both as regular migrants (with a legal work permit) or as irregular migrants (without a legal work permit) [Pixoto and Sabino 2009], for several reasons, which I discuss in more detail in Chapter 3; 2) being from India myself and having spent most of my adult life as an immigrant, first in the U.S. and now in the EU, I was curious to learn more about and from fellow South Asian immigrants in relation to the process of becoming a "deserving" immigrant; and lastly 3) on a personal level, I will be immigrating to Portugal post my graduate studies in the Netherlands, and hence, in many ways, I will be following in the footsteps of many South Asian immigrants in Portugal, and undertaking a similar process to become an immigrant "deserving" of social rights and entitlements guaranteed to Portuguese citizens. Hence, my positionality as a female South Asian immigrant in the context of EU (and Portugal) plays an important role in not only gaining access to South Asian immigrants and others whom I have interviewed as part of this research, but also informs my analysis, understanding, and articulation of the deservingness frames that underpin and contribute to the identity of being a "South Asian immigrant" in the contemporary Portuguese society.

Therefore, using the case of South Asian immigrants in Portugal, I elucidate through my research that although the deservingness frames applied to South Asian immigrants in contemporary Portugal haven't radically changed since the Eurodebt crisis, they have certainly evolved and become more distinct due to the broader contextual factors that have played out in Portugal over the last decade, including the complex trajectory of the evolution of the Portuguese immigration policy in the last two decades, the various internal/everyday bordering processes that shape immigrants' interactions with the Portuguese state and society within the country, and the self-positioning of immigrants in the deservingness landscape, influenced by their 'situational intersectionality' along the primary categories of class, gender, and occupation.

In my analysis, I categorise these deservingness frames into three main types:
a) The invisible essential worker
b) The playing by the rules - model migrant
c) The self-integrating immigrant

Each of these deservingness frames are describe and discuss in more detail in Chapter 5, supported by the findings from the qualitative interviews conducted with Portuguese immigration researchers, local government officials, South Asian immigrant associations and NGOs, and South Asian immigrants (from Bangladesh, India and Nepal) in Portugal. The rationale for using qualitative research methodology and sampling process are the focus on Chapter 2 (Research Methods). The above three deservingness frames, however, should not be assumed to be fixed or strictly delineated categories — instead, as findings discussed later will elucidate, these frames often overlap,

intersect, and can work in conjunction — both at the level of the individual and the immigrant community. Moreover, these framings may not apply to all South Asian communities equally — some may resonate more with Indian immigrants, while another with Nepalese migrants, indicative of the fact that differences in country-level social-cultural histories and contexts may also play a role in differential application of deservingness frames applied to South Asian communities in Portugal.

With regard to whether these deservingness frames have helped South Asian immigrants overcome the immigrant penalty and narrow the deservingness gap, I contend that the answer is more complex than a simple yes or no. While in some cases these deservingness frames can enable South Asian immigrants, particularly irregular migrants, to access and secure legal paperwork — which becomes a mode of accessing welfare benefits and entitlements, along with paving the way for obtaining Portuguese citizenship — and thus have access to full set of political, social, and civil citizenship rights, in other cases, these deservingness frames can trap immigrant communities into reproducing and perpetuating beliefs, stereotypes, and inequities that, based on popular perceptions, make an immigrant (welfare) deserving, when in fact, they can harm and disempower immigrant communities from challenging oppressive power structures that deem them undeserving in the first place.

Moreover, as is discussed in more detail in later chapters, these deservingness frames can also serve as tools for migration control by the (Portuguese) state, both externally and internally, by reinforcing the hierarchy of deservingness among immigrants, thereby pitting immigrant communities against each other and undermining the ideals of solidarity, human dignity, and social justice. Drawing from the case of South Asian immigrants in Portugal, I posit that the application of (welfare) deservingness frames to immigrants in the Global North can be understood not only in parallel with the broader discourse of the deservingness frames that have been historically applied to construct the "deserving poor" [Borrelli and Bochsler 2020], but also more specifically in relation to the shared impact that neoliberal policies and reforms, undertaken in European welfare states in the aftermath of the global financial crisis, have had in shaping and guiding policy and public discourse towards both poor and migrant welfare recipients. The implications are discussed in more detail in the last chapter (Chapter 6: Conclusion).

Organisation of the paper:

The paper is divided into six chapters (including the introduction chapter), whereby chapter 2 provides an overview of the research methodology and methods used to study the case of South Asian immigrants in Portugal. The chapter also outlines the ethical considerations and limitations of using the said research methodology. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the analytical and theoretical frameworks — welfare deservingness, deservingness frames, and situated intersectionality — employed to examine and discuss the specific case, followed by Chapter 4 that provides an overview of Portuguese immigration policy and welfare deservingness discourse in Portugal, along with an in-depth understanding of immigration trends and deservingness discourse pertaining to South Asian immigrants, supported by empirical trends and data. Chapter 5 provides a conceptualisation of the three deservingness frames applied to South Asian immigrants in Portugal, substantiated using findings from the qualitative interviews conducted with relevant stakeholders in Portugal. The last chapter, Chapter 6, discusses the broader implications of these findings for study of welfare deservingness discourse, along with outlining some future research prospects to study deservingness discourse related to South Asian immigrants in Portugal.

Chapter 2: Research Methods

Epistemic Approach to research: Feminist Standpoint Theory and Qualitative Research Methodology

Qualitative interviewing was the primary research method employed for this research paper, whereby individual and semi-structured interviews were conducted, either online or in-person, with multiple stakeholders relevant to the research topic. The decision to use qualitative interviewing was drawn primarily from the fact that much of the current literature on welfare deservingness in the European context is rooted in survey-based and quantitative research [Laenen et al. 2019], as evident from the decade long European Social Survey data that is used as the main repository for contemporary empirical research on welfare deservingness attitudes and opinions in the public discourse [Laenen 2020]. This has led to a considerable dearth in qualitative perspectives about why and how deservingness perceptions and views formulate, re(frame), and evolve overtime. Moreover, interestingly for Portugal, while there exists good quality and credible survey-based data on deservingness attitudes [Oorschot 2005 and ESS 2019], there is very little available in the current literature in terms of any form of qualitative data [Brito 2019, Laenen et al. 2019].

The decision to use a qualitative method of research also stems from my own epistemic approach and position that I chose to bring to the research process, guided by the feminist standpoint theory — the idea that the researcher and research participants are "socially situated" [Wigginton and Lafrance 2019], and hence all knowledge and truth constructed, during the research process, is socially situated as well, instead of an objective truth or reality that exists "out there" waiting to be discovered [Wigginton and Lafrance 2019]. Moreover, this episematic positionality also aligns with an intersectional approach, whereby throughout the research process it is acknowledged that the knowledge/truth constructed is not only influenced by my positionality as a researcher, a cis-straight woman, upper caste and class Indian and South Asian, and an immigrant, but also by the "plurality of the situated standpoints" [Wigginton and Lafrance 2019] brought forth by the research participants to the interviews owing to their respective social location(s) in the context of the Portuguese society.

This epistemic position also aligns well with the motivation to undertake more qualitative research to specifically study welfare deservingness, in a way that is not simply "top-down" and driven and interpreted entirely by experts [Laenen et al. 2019], who are from, and located primarily in the Global North, but also by people, who are both affected and/or effect the (de)construction of knowledge and truth about deservingness perceptions and attitudes in a particular context [Laenen et al. 2019]. A qualitative research methodology, when coupled with a feminist approach, therefore, enables a research process that isn't just more collaborative between the "researcher" and the "people", but also allows for knowledge(s) and realities from the "marginalities" to be voiced and shared that otherwise might be silenced and/or unheard [Wigginton and Lafrance 2019] — an aspect extremely relevant and important in relation to the focus of the said research topic that entails interviewing regular and irregular immigrants in Portugal.

This combined approach, therefore, has also shaped various aspects of the research process, as outlined by Wigginton and Lafrance in their feminist methodological framework [2019] — how the questions were formulated and the accessibility of language, how the research participants were approached (to ensure multiplicity and diversity of voices), how the interviews were conducted

(mode of communication, language used, interviewer-interviewee power dynamic, etc.), reflexivity (particularly around how my own positionality played out throughout the research process in terms of choosing the research topic, interviewing research participants, and interpreting and articulating the findings), representation and intersectionality (how the findings acknowledge as well as reconcile the different situated standpoints of the research participants), mobilising research for social change (planning for research findings dissemination with the research participants and the broader South Asian community in Portugal, along with how best to use the findings to "telling it as it may become" [Wigginton and Lafrance 2019] — to reimagine and transform the discourse of immigrant welfare deservingness in the long term), and ethics of care (ensuring informed consent is taken from the interviewees, respecting and acknowledging their knowledge, ensuring confidentiality and privacy, accurate representation, and sharing back the research findings in an accessible manner). While I discuss some of these steps in the following sections of this chapter, the latter steps pertaining to findings, representation, and mobilisation are shared in more detail in the relevant chapters later.

Primary data collection: Qualitative Interviews

Development of the questionnaire:
Two separate but connected questionnaires were developed keeping in mind the overall research questions, the fact that the interviews would be one-on-one and semi-structured, and hence primarily to guide the discussion rather than seek direct responses to the questions, and lastly, to account for the views and opinions of both the key informants (researchers, local government officials, associations/NGOs) as well as South Asian immigrants themselves. Moreover, while both questionnaires were developed in English, for interviews with the municipal government officials, the questions were translated verbally to Portuguese (and responses recorded in verbal Portuguese and translated to written English), and for interviews with some of the South Asian immigrants, the questions were translated verbally to Hinglish (mixture of English and Hindi) and responses recorded in written English.

Recruitment of research participants:
The sampling process followed for recruitment of the research participants entailed a mix of purposive and snowball sampling. Keeping in mind the research questions and objectives, the interviewees were approached based on their relevance to the research — their understanding of the welfare policy and immigration discourse in Portugal, be it from the perspective of an academic, journalist, government official, or social and legal services (for provision of welfare benefits and legalisation-related needs for immigrants specifically). Moreover, to corroborate and better understand these aspects in terms of lived experiences and realities of the South Asian immigrants in Portugal, I also decided to interview immigrant associations and NGOs that work directly with South Asian immigrants, along with also interviewing South Asian immigrants themselves. Moreover, while I was able to reach out to academics and journalists online via email (names drawn primarily from desk research and literature review undertaken online), for reaching out to immigrant associations, calling them on the phone and/or visiting in-person was most effective.

Here, it's also important to note, and as was also mentioned in the introduction section, my personal connection to Portugal, in terms of having a Portuguese partner, allowed me to have support in terms of reaching out to people I otherwise wouldn't be able to access easily. These primarily included municipal government officials and legal service officials, whom I was able to contact via my partner's networks. Moreover, due to my limitation with knowing Portuguese language, and for

the ease of communication for the interviewees, my partner was able to conduct the interviews in Portuguese with municipal government officials, and then translate them to English for me to analyse and interpret the data. In terms of the South Asian immigrants interviewed, while I was able to reach out to some through the NGOs I also interviewed, I was also able to approach some of them in a more spontaneous manner during my field work in Lisbon, where I often encountered South Asian immigrants working in restaurants, salons, and shops.

However, it is worth noting, that while I had many informal conversations with South Asian immigrants during my fieldwork in Lisbon, including with women, mostly working at beauty salons and restaurants, most declined to be interviewed on record due to privacy reasons, often related to their irregular immigration status in Portugal. Particularly with women from India and Nepal, while they were quite friendly and eager to chat with me, they didn't appear at ease with participating formally in the interviews in comparison to men who were more responsive and eager to share on record. I believe if time constraint wasn't an issue, it would have been possible to have more women participate in the research since it would have allowed for some more time to build trust and rapport with them.

Moreover, while I reached out to several people to schedule interviews, particularly with NGOs and government agencies, I either never heard back or the follow-up did not lead to anything concrete. Therefore, ironically, while due to the COVID pandemic, an opportunity opened up to access variety of stakeholders more easily by connecting online, in some ways, it also became challenging to follow-up and maintain momentum because of lack of in-person acquaintance imposed by the pandemic. Lastly, while the research participants were located throughout Portugal, and given that interviews could be conducted online or in-person, the location for most interviewees did not play an important role in whether or not they could participate in the research. With regard to the South Asian immigrants, however, four out of the 5 immigrants interviewed were located in Lisbon, while one was located in the city of Santarem, in the Alentejo region of Portugal (and was interviewed online via WhatsApp).

Conducting the interviews:
In total 15 individual and semi-structured interviews were conducted between June-August 2021, either online or in-person, lasting usually between 45 minutes to 1.5 hours. Most of the interviews conducted in-person were undertaken in Lisbon in August 2021. In some cases, questionnaires were shared before the interview (based on the participant's request). Informed consent was taken from all participants at the beginning of the interview, and the mode of interview was also chosen based on the convenience and preference expressed by the interviewees. Given the COVID pandemic, even though traveling to Portugal was eventually possible in the summer of 2021, when I conducted the in-person fieldwork in Lisbon (keeping in mind COVID measures and vaccination), some interviewees preferred to be interviewed online (even within Portugal) to ensure their safety, while some interviews were conducted online while I was in the Netherlands before being able to travel for fieldwork.

Interview cohort	Number of participants	City, Portugal	Mode of interview	Gender	Work profile
Academics/ researchers	2	Lisbon and Coimbra respectively	Online (via Google Meet) and in-person respectively	Both males	Both academics/ professors at universities

Interview cohort	Number of participants	City, Portugal	Mode of interview	Gender	Work profile
Municipal government official	3	All in Alcacer do Sal	In-person (conducted by my partner)	All males	Current Mayor, Former mayor an Municipal head of social care
Civil society	3	2 in Lisbon, 1 in Alcacer	2 conducted in-person and 1 online (via Skype)	Two females, 1 male	Journalist, lawyer, teacher/social worker
Associations/ NGOs working with South Asian immigrants	2	Both in Lisbon	In-person	Both males	NGOs helping immigrants from South Asia integrate into the Portuguese society culturally, as well as some aid provided with access to legalisation and social services in Portugal
South Asian immigrants	5 (3 from India, 1 from Bangladesh, 1 from Nepal)	4 in Lisbon, 1 in Santarem, Alentejo	4 in-person, 1 online (via WhatsApp)	4 males, 1 female	University professor, restaurant worker, filmmaker, head of an NGO, 1 interviewee requested anonymity regarding their work

Table 1: Summary of research participants interviewed as part of primary data collection

As mentioned earlier, interviews were conducted either in English, Portuguese, or Hinglish depending on the preference of the interviewee. Moreover, while in some cases interviews were recorded and notes taken, in others, depending on the interviewee, only written notes were taken given their refusal to record the interview. Reflecting on the dynamics of the interview itself, although it varied depending on the interviewee, it was interesting to note that nearly all research participants were eager to talk about this topic, and expressed an appreciation of the objectives of the research. Moreover, my positionality as a master's degree student also made accessing some of the interviewees easier given that it signalled credibility and genuine interest.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect to me was the interviewer-interviewee dynamic with South Asian immigrants and South Asian immigrant associations that I interviewed. Not only my positionality as a students/researcher became important, but also the fact that I studied in the Netherlands, and I am an Indian citizen with a Portuguese partner immediately came to play regarding how the conversations unfolded (from a more personal lived experience perspective rather than a more intellectual/academic perspective). The fact that I was open with them about my personal interest in this research topic enabled the interviewees to be more vulnerable with me as well, enabling them to be more honest and authentic, instead of sharing responses they assumed I expected from them. Not surprisingly, for male South Asian interviewees, my identity as an Indian woman, situated in a Netherlands-Portugal context, elicited both surprise and curiosity, and often led to questions about my personal and academic background. In some cases, I could see the interview space also became an outlet for them to vent on aspects related to their life in Portugal or

back in their home country — which instead of criticism, I took as a sign of trust and confidence they expressed in me. Lastly, during my interactions with most of the South Asian immigrants I interviewed, it became clear that I was viewed as someone in position of more power and authority than them, which perhaps could be attributed partly to my positionality as a researcher, but partly also to their assumption of me as a "good", "intelligent", and "hardworking" Indian/South Asian who appears to be "doing well" in Europe — an aspiration shared by all immigrants in the hope for a better life. It would also be important to note here that some of these interactions and experiences also led a few interviewees to welcome and offer me support for any future research endeavours related to working on issues pertinent for the South Asian immigrant community in Portugal.

Analysis of the interview data:
The interview transcripts were analysed using Atlas.ti software to help identify the common themes that emerged across different interviews. Keeping the research questions in mind, following 5 codes were developed:

1. Markers of a "deserving" South Asian immigrant (from the perspective of the Portuguese state and society)
2. Markers of a "deserving" South Asian immigrant (from the perspective of the immigrants)
3. Contemporary manifestations of the immigrant penalty
4. Deservingness and intersectionality
5. External and within-country factors that influence deservginess frames in Portugal

Based on these 5 themes, the conceptual categories pertaining to contemporary deservingness frames applied to South Asian immigrants in Portugal were developed, which are discussed in more detail in the chapter on research findings.

Secondary data: Review of demographic and statistical data

In order to corroborate and substantiate findings from the interviews, relevant secondary data[1] sources were also reviewed. These included the following:
1. European Social Survey data on deservingness perceptions in Portugal (ESS 2019)
2. Immigration trends pertaining to South Asian immigrants in Portugal (Pordata, the Francisco Manuel dos Santos Foundation's statistical database)
3. Access to legal immigration status by immigrant groups (SEF, Portugal)
4. Immigrants' employment trends by nationality before and after the Eurodebt crisis (National Institute of Statistics, Portugal)
5. Access to welfare benefits by immigrants by nationality and year (Observatório das Migrações)

Ethics of care

Given the fact that the data collection for this research was undertaken in the summer of 2021, during the COVID pandemic, it was extremely important to prioritise the safety and health of

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[1] For the purpose of this research, only data available until 2019 has been reviewed given the exception of year 2020 due to the COVID pandemic, when Portuguese government enabled immigrants, regardless of their immigration status, to access variety of social services, including healthcare

research participants, while also keeping in mind that they had other obligations and priorities related to their employment, care work, etc. Hence, as a researcher it became important for me to keep the research process as flexible as possible for myself, as well as for the research participants, and also have in place contingency plans if interviews couldn't materialise. This entailed also respecting the choice of research participants to be interviewed online or in-person (at a place of their convenience), being open to re-scheduling, and ensuring that I had COVID safety measures in place for in-person interviews. Moreover, getting informed consent and ensuring participants' confidentiality and privacy was key throughout the process, and as a result the names of some interviewees (individuals and organisations) have been anonymised to ensure their privacy.

Limitations of qualitative research methodology:

Given the small sample size of the interviews conducted, findings from the interviews cannot be generalised to be representative of deservingness frames applied to the broader South Asian immigrant community in Portugal. Moreover, even though the limited sample offers a diversity of voices and perspectives, the representation, particularly within the South Asian immigrants interviewed, is biased towards the male and middle/upper-middle class perspective, thereby providing a limited understanding of how "deservingness" is experienced along the marginalised identities based on gender, class, caste, religion, and country of origin. While a few cases offer some insights on these aspects, these are often third-person accounts and hence cannot be assumed as entirely representative of the "truth".

In addition, as mentioned earlier, the limitations of undertaking field work during the pandemic made it challenging to explore other forms of qualitative methodologies possible, especially focus group discussions (FGDs), that could have helped not only to corroborate the individual interview findings, but also help gather more data concerning specific attributes such as gender, class, and religion. However, undertaking such FGDs requires considerable time and planning, and given the uncertainty due to COVID and time constraints related to data collection phase, this form of primary data collection could not be undertaken.

Lastly, while the interviews entailed questions on media narratives about South Asian immigrants and welfare recipients in Portugal, a discourse analysis of media reports before and after the Eurodebt crisis could have added more value and nuance to the research findings. However, given my limitation with the Portuguese language (I am in the process of learning elementary Portuguese), and the time constraints, this form of data analysis wasn't feasible. However, it should be noted that I did review some relevant English language reportage on South Asian immigrants in Portugal, especially in light of the COVID pandemic, which although was mainly cursory, did help me in corroborating some outputs resulting from the interviews.

Chapter 3: Theoretical and Analytical Frameworks

Welfare deservingness: An Overview

In the realm of social welfare policy and development, deservingness is a foundational concept used to determine who should receive what form of social protection and welfare support from the state, and under what conditions [Watkins-Hayes and Kovalsky 2016]. This is predicated on the idea that resources are often finite and limited, and hence, categorising people into "deserving" and "non-deserving" of the benefits leads to a more judicious allocation of resources [Osipovic 2015]. The first use of "deservingness" as a framework to distinguish between deserving and non-deserving recipients of welfare can be traced back to the English Poor Laws Amendment Act of 1834 or the New Poor Laws [Xu 2020], whereby the poor were categorised either as deserving (non able-bodied) [Kootstra 2017] or undeserving ("moral failings" related to work and family/primarily able-bodied) [Watkins-Hayes and Kovalsky 2016] of receiving poor relief. Consequently, this distinction, from then till now, continues to be employed for the social and political construction(s) of "acceptable" and "unacceptable" ways of being poor, — diverting attention from the broader structural factors that cause and sustain poverty [Katz 2013] to framing certain forms of "the poor" as the problem, referred to as the "perversity thesis" [Somers and Block 2005] — where the poor are held responsible for being poor owing to their lack of moral discipline and willingness to contribute to the society [Watkins-Hayes and Kovalsky 2016]

Application of "deservingness" in welfare policy, therefore, has not only enabled the adoption and sustenance of the perversity thesis, but also embed the deservingness discourse and rhetoric in broader social and structural inequities related to gender, race, caste, class, and other axis of marginalities [Watkins-Hayes and Kovalsky 2016]. This has also led to broadening of the deservingness concept in the modern welfare states towards "hierarchies of deservingness" [Oorschot 2000], that not only relate to being the worthy/unworthy poor, but also other intersectional categories rooted in differential social location(s) such as the deserving/undeserving unemployed, the deserving/undeserving single mother, the deserving/undeserving immigrant, and so on. In fact, as outlined by Oorschot, in the context of Europe, there exists a "universal dimension of support" [Oorschot 2000], where, regardless of the context, public opinion perceives the elderly, the sick, those with disabilities, and families with children as the most deserving of welfare support, while the unemployed, those on social assistance, and immigrants are perceived as the least deserving [Oorschot et al. 2017].

Public attitudes and perceptions related to deservingness of welfare benefits by particular population groups are predominantly measured using the CARIN deservingness criteria [Oorschot et al. 2017] — namely, Control (whether the need for welfare is a result of circumstances beyond one's control), Attitude (whether the recipient feels grateful for the welfare versus looking it at as a social right) Reciprocity (whether the recipient has contributed to the society), Identity (whether one belongs to the same in-group), and Need (how genuine is the need signalled by lack of any support or resources) —which are underpinned by the three key aspects of redistributive justice (equality, equity, and need) [Muleman et al. 2020]. Both across and for each target group, each of these criteria are usually measured, either through surveys, case studies, or qualitative methods, to identity and track changes in deservingness perceptions over time, either regionally or at the country level.

The "Deserving" and "Undeserving" Immigrant

As outlined above, within the context of modern European welfare states, immigrants are perceived as the least deserving of welfare support compared to other population groups (Oorschot et al. 2017]. However, immigrants are also perceived as less deserving of state welfare compared to citizens of the host country [Oorschot 2005], primarily because of their low scoring on deservingness criteria related to identity and reciprocity [Oorschot 2015]. Furthermore, within the category of immigrant, there are perceived binaries of the "deserving" and "undeserving" immigrant, mediated by criteria of need and control, as is embodied in the case of refugees and asylum seekers deemed as welfare deserving versus irregular economic migrants perceived as undeserving of welfare support [Reeskens and Meer 2018].

Interestingly, while immigrants as a conceptual category was added only later to the "universal dimension of support" [Muleman et al. 2020], place of residence [coded now as citizenship status in relation to immigrants], as an indicator of deservingness has long existed in the welfare deservingness discourse pertaining to the poor [Xu 2020]. In fact, based on the English Poor Laws, poor relief was tied to one's residence status within a parish, and a poor person belonging to a different parish was deemed undeserving of social welfare unless they could furnish a proof of settlement [Xu 2020]. Signalling citizenship or residence status as a marker of "deservingness", therefore, not only has historical antecedents, but has also shaped how both poor and immigrants are perceived, portrayed, and governed in intersecting and overlapping ways in the deservingness discourse in modern welfare states [Borrelli and Bochsler 2020].

This entails not only their social exclusion [Borrelli and Bochsler 2020], but also sub-compartmentalisation"deserving" and "undeserving" categories [Borrelli and Bochsler 2020]. While the undeserving poor comprise of those perceived to be "lazy" or "unproductive" [Watkins-Hayes and Kovalsky 2016], the underserving immigrants are usually those who are perceived to be "taking away jobs", "unwelcomed" or "not contributing back or being grateful to the host country" [Borrelli and Bochsler 2020]. Both groups are also subjected to social control and regulation [Borrelli and Bochsler 2020] in the form of state surveillance and public scrutiny [Watkins-Hayes and Kovalsky 2016], particularly for those deemed as the "undeserving" poor and immigrants, either in the form of increased conditionality and scrutiny associated with provision of welfare benefits [Borrelli and Bochsler 2020] or compromise of personal information and privacy in order to access and avail welfare support in the first place [Borrelli and Bochsler 2020].

Everyday bordering, migration control and (welfare) deservingness of immigrants

Furthermore, in relation to immigrants specifically, this has evolved into social policy mediated migration control, where internal bordering practices [Ratzmann and Sahraoui 2021] that construct and reinforce categories of "us" and "them" in everyday life [Anderson 2013], within the host country, influences welfare deservingness perceptions of immigrants, as well as shapes immigrants' experiences of accessing welfare support and benefits [Ratzmann and Sahraoui 2021]. These everyday bordering processes and practices, as posited by Yuval-Davis et al., entail "the everyday construction of borders through ideology, cultural mediation, discourses, political institutions, attitudes and everyday forms of transnationalism" [Yuval-Davis et al. 2018: 229], which are constantly negotiated and contested "between individuals, groupings and states as well as in the constructions of individual subjectivities" [Yuval-Davis et al. 2018: 230].

These everyday bordering practices can span implicit or explicit conditionality to learn the host country's language, stricter documentation to prove legal status, acting "respectfully" with social

services administrators and officials who assess and control provision of welfare benefits at the local level, and so on [Ratzmann and Sahraoui 2021] — encompassing the various modalities of how both "belongingness" and "deservingness" are negotiated and shaped by immigrants in "everyday life" [Yuval Davis et al. 2018]. In many ways, while for immigrants, the constant and gradual process of "belonging" to the state means overcoming the "everyday" bordering, for the host state and society, the same processes become a tool of migration control, which when situated at the site of welfare provision, reinforce the role of deservingness perceptions related to immigrants' access to welfare [Ratzmann and Sahraoui 2021]. A related aspect of how these everyday bordering practices also influence deservingness attitudes towards immigrants is their role in widening the deservingness gap between immigrants and native claimants of benefits [Reeskens and Meer 2018] and thus strengthening the "immigrant penalty" [Reeskens and Meer 2018], imposed on them owing to their perception as an outsider and the "migrant other" [Watkins-Hayes and Kovalsky 2016]. This deservingness gap, in the European context, has grown in the last decade, attributable to the Eurodebt crisis of 2010-11 and the European refugee crisis of 2015 [Reeskens and Meer 2018], along with increasing surveillance and regulation of immigrants, both through external and internal bordering processes [Ratzmann and Sahraoui 2021], thereby making the immigrant penalty both "inevitable" and "unsurmountable" [Reeskens and Meer 2018] for immigrants to overcome in modern European welfare states.

Moreover, while more recent literature has examined how migration control and welfare deservingness interact and overlap in diverse contexts, these are mostly drawn from case studies in countries in the Global North, particularly in the U.K. [Yuval-Davis et al. 2018] and countries in the northern Europe - Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, etc. [Ratzmann and Sahraoui 2021, Reeskens and Meer 2018], not much is known about how everyday bordering practices contribute to the deservingness gap and shaping immigrant penalty in the context of Southern Europe, where not only have immigration trends changed since the financial and the refugee crisis [Gois 2019], but also the shift towards neoliberal and pro-market reforms in the aftermath of the financial crisis has lead to significant retrenchment of welfare programs and spending [Brito 2019], thus also influencing and challenging welfare deservingness of different population groups, including those situated at the margins

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Political economy of (welfare) deservingness of immigrants

An understanding of the evolution of deservingness discourse in the last decades cannot be complete without examining the role and influence of neoliberalism on shaping the public and policy discourses on welfare deservingness. Neoliberalism, through "market governance" [Reid 2013], not only deters and limits government spending on social policies and programs and encourages market solutions to fill in the void, but also governs citizens as persons who are "free" to make their own choices and hence are responsible for their own success and failings [Reid 2013]. This both aligns with and reproduces the "perversity thesis" [Somers and Block 2005] prevalent in the deservingness discourse, thus reinforcing the notion that those who seek help from the government are simply not taking personal responsibility and lack "credible" reasons for deserving welfare support and hence are "undeserving" compared to the "deserving" other [Watkins-Hayes and Kovalsky 2016]. Neoliberal policies, therefore, not only use the deservingness discourse as a vehicle to deter social solidarity and limit the welfare state, but also bolster and amplify it to mould public perceptions and policies that encourage stricter and more rigid delineation and distinction between the (welfare) "deserving" and "undeserving".

The implementation of structural adjustment reforms, particularly in Southern Europe, in the aftermath of the financial crisis, led to austerity measures that significantly limited government spending on welfare programs geared towards vulnerable population groups [Brito 2019]. This engendered renewed debates about who is more or less deserving of state's help during the crisis, relegating those already marginalised further to the margins — young people, unemployed, and immigrants [Oorschot et al. 2017]. In fact, as reflected in data on deservingness attitudes, this led to increased negative deservingness perceptions towards the young and unemployed, and the immigrants across Europe [Attewell 2020], particularly galvanising the right-leaning political parties to mobilise their base and mainstream welfare chauvinistic attitudes across the continent [Oorschot et al. 2017, Attewell 2020]. It is also worth noting that neoliberal policies, in the aftermath of the crisis, have also impacted and reshaped labor market structures and wages in Europe [Lafleur and Stanek], thereby also influencing the broader immigration patterns to and across the continent [Gois 2019]. This is especially true for Portugal, where construction(s) of the "deserving" and "undeserving" migrant in relation to South Asia immigrants are shaped by broader changes and shifts in the economy and the labor market [Gois 2019], as is discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Lastly, neoliberalism has not only influenced deservingness perceptions towards immigrants, but also increased the regulation and control of those perceived as "undeserving" [Watkins-Hayes and Kovalsky 2016]. This has meant that in the effort to limit government spending on welfare, and to provide welfare only to those who are "truly" deserving of it, there has to be stricter monitoring and regulation of the undeserving, which in the context of immigrants signals to irregular migrants, who stay and work in host countries without legal paperwork. While in the U.S. this has led to increased use of private and corporate media to construct the archetype of the "undeserving" immigrant in the popular imagination and discourse [Watkins-Hayes and Kovalsky 2016], in Europe, there has been an implementation of increased electronic surveillance apparatus and fingerprint databases [Broeders 2007] with names of irregular immigrants and asylum seekers [Watkins-Hayes and Kovalsky 2016], to bolster the distinction between the deserving and undeserving immigrant in context of accessing welfare and other social services provided by the state. These distinctions, as shared earlier, are drawn along gender, racial, class, caste and other intersectionalities, thereby also widening other forms of socio-economic inequalities within and between immigrant communities, creating further sub-hierarchies of the deserving and undeserving immigrant. Thus, when situated in a neoliberal context, migration control and its intersection with welfare provision and social policy broadly, not only heightens the deservingness discourse targeted towards immigrants, but also actively encourages the construction of the "undeserving" immigrant in the public, political, and policy discourses.

Deservingness frames: Constructing deservingness

In light of the evolving discourses on welfare deservingness over the last decade, the role of using specific frames or constructs to deem a target group either deserving or undeserving has become increasingly common and helpful tool in popular media, social movements, and policy discussions alike [Yoo 2008]. Referred to as deservingness frames, they can help ascribe either a positive or negative contextually situated "meaning" to characterise the welfare deservingness of a particular population group [Chauvin and Garces-Mascarenas 2014], thus employing a "cultural resonance" to the archetype or the framing applied to the target group [Yoo 2008]. Majority of the contemporary literature on deservingness frames has emerged in the United States, where public and political debates on welfare deservingness have not only sharpened since the 1990s, but are also spaces

where framing of certain groups as deserving or undeserving of welfare support are most actively being used by both on the right and the left of the political divide [Yoo 2008, Cerda et al. 2015]. Such framings have predominantly been in relation to either advancing or undermining deservingness of immigrants in contemporary American society, whether it is with respect to welfare benefits, healthcare, or legal documentation and visa status [Yoo 2008, Cerda at al 2015, Sirriyeah 2020]. In the European context, deservingness frames in relation to immigrants, primarily refugees, have been applied more commonly since the European Refugee crisis of 2015, when immigration became a politically polarised issue in public and policy discourse [Amores et al. 2020, Meer and Reeskens 2020]. Unsurprisingly, for Europe, the literature reflects case studies mostly from northern European perspectives, while for Southern Europe, the focus generally tends to be on Greece, Italy and Spain.

When viewed from the perspective of the "undeserving" immigrant, the most common deservingness frames applied are related to irregular immigrants constructed as a "burden on the state" and "not playing by the rules" as opposed to immigrants there with legal visa status [Yoo 2008]. In the American context more specifically, the underserving immigrant is also framed as someone who takes away jobs from native population (regardless of their legal or irregular status) [Yoo 2008], thereby reproducing the notion of the "deservingness gap" between citizens and immigrants, even if those jobs aren't preferred and filled by citizens to begin with. These negative deservingness frames also seek to put to question the "belongingness" of immigrants to the host country, thereby conceptualising deservingness in relation to the everyday processes and practices of bordering and de-bordering that immigrants are expected to overcome and undertake in everyday life [Yuval-Davis et al. 2018, Ratzmann and Sahraoui 2021].

In terms of the deservingness frames applied to construct the "deserving" immigrant identity, the most commonly used frames focus on the deservingness criteria of "control" and "need" [Oorschot et al. 2017]. For example, in the United States, positive deservingness frames have been used to reframe the public discourse around the DREAMERS generation [Sirriyeah 2020]] — the young undocumented immigrants brought to the U.S. as minors by their parents and hence had no active choice in undertaking that decision. Another example of positive deservingness frame often applied to the Asian-American immigrant community is the frame of a "model minority" [Yukich 2014], emphasising their qualities of self-reliance, hard work, and upward social mobility to denote their welfare deservingness through the archetype of "contributing" to the economy and society, and hence "deserving" of welfare in case of future need [Yukich 2014]. In the context of Europe, positive deservingness frames have been applied to refugees, mainly in terms of control and reciprocity — posited as someone fleeing war and crisis [Berry et al. 2015], hence in circumstance beyond their control, or as someone bringing economic or cultural contribution to the society, thereby deserving of state support [Berry et al. 2015]. It is, however, important to note that over the past decade, there has been a considerable increase in negative deservingness frames that are applied to immigrants [Berry et al. 2015], thus also substantiating the significant tilt towards welfare chauvinism across the continent [Attewell 2020]. A similar trend is also observed specifically in Southern Europe (with the exception of Portugal, as discussed in the next chapter), and particularly in Greece [Amores et al. 2020] where negative deservingness frames pertaining to immigrants and asylum-seekers have increased substantively in the mainstream media.

Lastly, it is also worth outlining the limitations of deservingness frames in social constructions of the "deserving" and "undeserving" immigrant. While the use of these frames can be useful to mould and guide public perceptions and policy discussions, there is also the associated danger of

reinforcing social inequities within and between immigrant communities by drawing distinction between acceptable and unacceptable ways of being an immigrant [Cerda et al. 2015]. Although it is true that immigrant communities aren't homogenous entities, the drawback of applying deservingness frames signals creating hierarchies of differences, rather than advancing solidarity and humanity of all immigrants [Cerda et al. 2015]. The categories of deserving and undeserving also collapse the rich tapestry of intersectionality which engenders a more nuanced and complex understanding of lived realities and experiences [Carmel and Sojka 2020], thereby limiting out understanding related to diverse notions of belonging and claims-making to access social rights and entitlements [Carmel and Sojka 2020]. The emerging literature on the critiques of using deservingness frames in relation to immigrants is discussed in more detail in the last chapter.

Situated intersectionality and construction of deservingness

First defined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 [Hvenegård-Lassen and Staeneaus 2020], the concept of intersectionality advances the understanding that social identities along the axis of race, class, caste, gender, sexuality, ability, etc. are interconnected and work in conjunction to "produce experiences of both privilege and marginalisation" [Smooth, 2013]. While intersectionality has been applied to several domains of sociological and feminist research in the last two decades, primarily in the U.S., in the context of welfare deservingness discourse, it has mainly been employed to critique the role of deservingness framework in reproducing patriarchal stereotypes in relation to construction of the deserving and undeserving welfare recipient [Watkins-Hayes and Kovalsky 2016].

This has played out in public and policy debates in the U.S. on positioning, for instance, single Black mothers and able-bodied men as "undeserving" of social assistance [Watkins-Hayes and Kovalsky 2016] in comparison to a heterosexual couple with children, who may rank higher on the "hierarchy of deservingness". Ironically then, while deservingness categories collapse nuance and complexities in relation to a particular target group, at the same time they also amplify gender, class, caste, racial, ability-related biases and prejudices to create and sustain hierarchies of deservingness, pitting deserving and undeserving categories against one another in public and policy discussions [Watkins-Hayes and Kovalsky 2016].

In the realm of immigrant welfare deservingness, Yuval-Davis and others use the concept of "situated intersectionality" [Yuval-Davis 2015]— a lens that prevents viewing immigrants as a monolithic entity, but also avoids perceiving them solely along one axis of social identity [Yuval-Davis et al. 2018]. Instead, a situated intersectionality lens takes into account persons' "situated positionalities" [Yuval-Davis et al. 2018] with the assumption that they are embedded in complex contexts of varying and multiple hierarchies of power [Yuval-Davis et al. 2018] whereby binaries of the 'deserving/undeserving' are not always distinct and static. The lens of situated intersectionality, therefore, is "highly sensitive to the geographical, social and temporal locations of the particular individual or collective social actors examined by it, contested, shifting and multiple as they usually are" [Yuval-Davis 2015 91]. As a consequence, it can help inform our understanding of deservingness frames applied to immigrants by signalling social identities that are privileged and those that are silenced to construct the "deserving" and the "undeserving" immigrant in a particular context and time, thereby offering a more nuanced perspective of how these categories are constructed to advance or limit immigrants' access to social welfare and entitlements.

I use the situated intersectionality lens to examine and understand which social identities are privileged or silenced in prevailing deservingness frames applied to create the "deserving" or "undeserving" South Asian immigrant in Portugal.

Chapter 4: The (welfare) deserving immigrant - Portugal as a case study

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Immigration trends in Portugal (2000-2019): An overview

Portugal offers an interesting case study on immigration in the EU, and particularly in Southern Europe, given its shift from being a country of emigration to immigration at the beginning of the 21st century [Mourao 2015, Carvahlo 2017, Gois 2019], and then a shift back to emigration in the aftermath of the Eurodebt crisis [Fonesca and McGarrigle 2014, Gois 2019]. Before the financial crisis of 2010-11, Portugal was increasingly becoming a destination for international labor migrants [Fonesca and McGarrigle 2014], driven by the spur in economic growth in the 1990s and accompanying structural changes in the labor market [Fonesca and McGarrigle 2014] related to increasing skills levels of the native Portuguese population, booming seasonal work sectors such as tourism and construction, and increase in the size of the informal economy [Fonesca and McGarrigle 2014]. Moreover, there was also a perception (and one that is still prevalent) about Portugal being an easy country to access and stay [Fonesca and McGarrigle 2014] because of a more liberal immigration policy in comparison to other countries in the EU [Gois 2014].

As a result, in the 1990s the Portuguese immigrant communities were primarily made up of economic migrants from Brazil and Eastern European countries (Ukraine, Russia, Maldova and Romania) [Fonesca and McGarrigle 2014], while in the first decade of the 21st century, the work-induced immigrants inflows to Portugal were mainly from China, Brazil, Moldova and Romania [Fonesca and McGarrigle 2014]. It is important to note that many of the economic migrants even during these decades were irregular migrants, many of whom were eventually regularised between 2001-2004 [Fonesca and McGarrigle 2014]. In addition, while the immigrant demographic was dominated by economic migrants, Portugal also experienced other forms of immigration related to family reunification especially from former Portuguese colonies — the Portuguese-speaking African countries (PALOP) and Brazil, high-skilled migrants working in universities, hospitals, etc., and retirees, primarily from northern European countries [Fonesca and McGarrigle 2014, Gois 2019].

These immigration trends, however, changed significantly after the financial crisis, with a significant decline experienced in the number of labor migrants migrating to Portugal between 2008 and 2015 [Gois 2019], along with increased emigration of Portuguese citizens to other countries in Europe [Fonesca and McGarrigle 2014], and return of immigrants either to their home countries or re-emigrating to countries particularly in Northern Europe [Fonesca and McGarrigle 2014]. However, Portugal also experienced during the crisis an uptick in immigrants migrating to Portugal for reasons related to family and higher education [Gois 2019]. Moreover, as reported by Gois, after 2009 there was also an increase in the number of expats (mainly from other EU countries) living as temporary migrants in Portugal [Gois 2019]. Thus, not only was there a change in the number of immigrants coming to Portugal, but also in the overall immigrant profile since the financial crisis [Gois 2019], resulting in an immigration dynamic over the last decade that is made up of both "labor migration and migration of inactive people (retirees and students)" [Gois 2019: 20]. It is also worth noting that while the immigrant demographic (those with legal residential status), is still largely from other European countries and Portuguese-speaking African countries [Gois 2019], the growth rates of immigration have been highest for immigration from Asia and Central and South American countries [Mourao 2015].

Another event that has shaped the contemporary dynamics of immigration in Portugal in the last decade was the European Refugee Crisis of 2015. While historically Portugal received the least number of asylum application within the EU before the 2015 crisis [Gois 2019], in the aftermath of the crisis, Portugal received 1,397 applications for asylum in 2016 and 1,750 in 2017 [Gois 2019], mainly from Syria, Eritrea and Ukraine [Gois 2019]. Moreover, between 2015-2018, Portugal not only welcomed 1.674 refugees as part of the EU relocation program [Gois 2019], but also offered to received nearly 10,000 refugees as part of the European Commission's refugee quotas program [Costa and Sousa 2017]. However, this has neither been coupled with the strengthening of the state infrastructure required to manage and integrate refugees post their arrival in the country [Gois 2019], nor with the scaling up of administrative support required to keep up with the increase in requests to receive more refugees and asylum seekers [Gois 2019].

South Asian immigrants in Portugal: A brief history

Portugal began experiencing a significant increase in the presence of immigrants from South Asia in the early part of the second decade of the 21st century [SEF 2019], driven by changes in immigration policy [Gois 2019], as well as the consequences of the financial crisis that led to increased segmentation of the labor market and expansion of the informal sector [Pereira et al. 2021], thereby opening up of low-skilled and low-wage jobs, primarily in the seasonal agricultural and tourism sectors [Pereira et al. 2021]. This also led to inflows of more irregular migrants to Portugal from South Asia [Gois 2019, Pereira et al. 2021], characterised as part of the broader "Southern European model of migration" [Pereira et al. 2021], whereby "existence of a large informal labor market facilitates the hiring of irregular migrants" [Pereira et al. 2021: 1], a phenomenon that was first observed in other Southern European countries, and took root in Portugal only in the latter part of the first decade of 21st century as a result of neoliberal reforms, leading to the opening up of intensive agriculture in Portugal to international markets [Pereira et al. 2021]. Therefore, Portugal experienced not only an increase in the number of seasonal agriculture jobs, but also experienced increase in the hiring of irregular migrants, specifically from non-EU countries [Gois 2019], given that the nature and precariousness of this work was not appealing to the native Portuguese workforce.
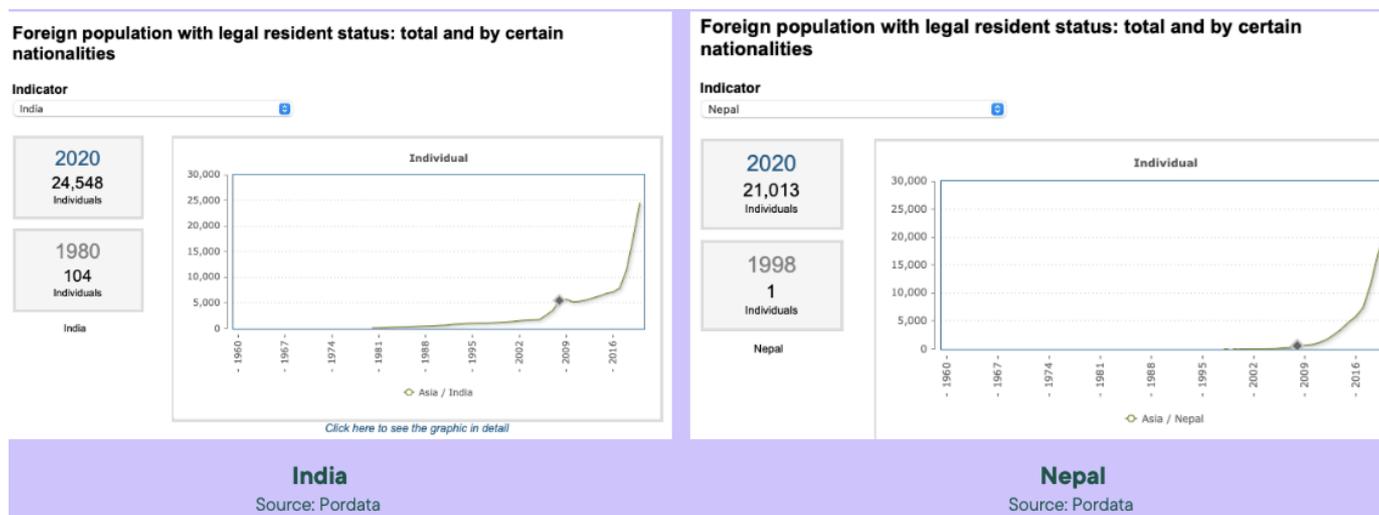

Figure 1: Observed increase in population of Indian and Nepalese immigrants in Portugal (1980-2020)

An increase in irregular immigrants from South Asia after 2015 is also driven by another factor — the continued perception of Portugal primarily as a "transit country", whereby Portugal is perceived as a country with comparatively liberal immigration policy in the EU, thus ensuring easier access to obtaining legal paperwork and EU citizenship. Moreover, for many South Asian immigrants, Portugal is viewed as a pitstop in their journey to other countries in the EU [McGarrigle and Ascensao 2018], especially in Northern Europe, which are perceived to offer higher wages and standard of living than Portugal. It is important to note, however, that this trend stands in contrast with the immigration trend for South Asian immigrants that was in place before the financial crisis, whereby immigrants of South Asian origin moved to Portugal from former Portuguese colonies in Africa or Goa to settle as merchants and entrepreneurs [Cachado 2017] or from South Asian countries, primarily India, to work as high-skilled migrants [thus having legal visa status [Pereira et al. 2021].

In terms of the latest data pertaining to South Asian immigrants in Portugal, India and Nepal contribute about 5 percent and 4 percent respectively of the current immigrant population in Portugal [SEF 2019]. Moreover, within each of these immigrant groups, while the majority are economic migrants (regular and irregular) [SEF 2019], a considerable percentage are also in Portugal as students and for family reunification purposes [SEF 2019]. Furthermore, both immigrant groups, as outlined above, have a sizeable number of irregular immigrants, with nearly 14 percent of Indians [SEF 2019] and 12 precent of Nepalese [SEF 2019] identified as "undocumented" among those subjected to migration control checks by SEF, the Portuguese immigration agency in 2019. Similar government data are unavailable for other countries in South Asia and hence have not been incorporated in this research paper. In terms of the demographics, while most of the immigrants from South Asia are young working age men [Pereira et al. 2021], there has been a recent increase in number of Nepalese women who are migrating to Portugal for work [Pereira et al. 2021]. For immigrants from Pakistan and Bangladesh, the immigrant demographic is made up of primarily nuclear heterosexual families, a trend that is also observed for highly-skilled migrants from India who move to Portugal [McGarrigle and Ascensao 2018, Pereira et al. 2021]. Moreover, there is some evidence in the literature, especially pertaining to Nepalese immigrants, that most immigrants, regardless of their legal status, have medium to high-level education [Pereira et al. 2021], and while there is no class, caste, religion-disaggregated data available from the Portuguese government, there is some evidence in the literature that these social identities also influence how different groups within the South Asian community assimilate and connect with each other, and with the Portuguese society in relation to managing and countering the everyday bordering processes experienced as an immigrant [Gois 2019, Pereira et al. 2021].

Lastly, there is emerging literature and news reportage in Portugal about the precarious and dangerous working conditions experienced by irregular South Asian immigrants, particularly in the seasonal agriculture sector. According to one recent study by Pereira et al. with Nepalese immigrants employed in the soft fruit agricultural sector, almost all Nepalese immigrants interviewed reported being shocked by the "exploitative working conditions, the precarious employment and the appalling housing conditions" offered to them as part of the work [Pereira et al. 2021: 7]. This has also been reported by other South Asian immigrants involved in agricultural labor in the Alentejo region of Portugal, where most of farming sector jobs are located [de Sousa 2020], who often fear "coming out" of the shadows to report these harmful violations given their irregular status and fear of losing employment [de Sousa 2020], along with feeling shame for

working in the farming sector jobs that, back in their home countries, are often looked upon as jobs done mainly by the poor and the uneducated [Pereira et al. 2021]. As a result, most of the stories get around through tight-knit and informal networks within the immigrant communities [Gois 2019], often serving as warning signs, particularly for newly arrived (irregular) immigrants, about employers and jobs that should be avoided. However, while jobs in seasonal farming and agricultural sectors still dominate the employment landscape for irregular South Asian immigrants, in the last few years, many South Asian immigrants (although not on irregular status) have moved away from Alentejo region to Lisbon and the south of Portugal for woking in hotels, Indian restaurants, supermarkets, mobile shops, salons, etc. [Pereira et al. 2021], thereby also resulting in a considerable increase in their visible presence in and around Lisbon.

The evolution of Immigration policy in Portugal (2000-2019)

The above described immigration trends, overall and for South Asian immigrants, cannot be understood fully without situating them in the backdrop of the evolving immigration policy discourse in Portugal. Historically, Portugal has been perceived as an open and welcoming country for immigrants in comparison to its other European counterparts, although with its approach to immigration control policies often labeled as being reactive than proactive [Cook 2018]. This has, however, changed in the last two decades, with a shift towards a proactive approach to immigration at the national level [Cook 2018] that is more aligned with the immigration policies of the most liberal countries in Northern Europe [Cook 2018, Gois 2019] than with its counterparts in Southern Europe that have shifted more towards stricter and highly regulated immigration policies and regimes [Cook 2018]. This progressive shift has entailed reforms such as the amendment to the Nationality Law in 2006 that extended the right to citizenship to a wider group of immigrants from multiple countries instead of only to immigrants from former Portuguese colonies in Africa and Brazil [Cook 2018, Gois 2019]. Easier naturalisation processes were also introduced [Cook 2018], with Portugal having one of the highest naturalisation rates for non-EU citizens in Southern Europe [Cook 2018]. The immigration law of 2007 also simplified processes for regularisation and visas, including some of the most progressive family reunification policies in the world [Cook 2018]. Moreover, the asylum law of 2008 also made right to asylum contingent on a much broader scope when compared to the law in other countries and even in the International law [Cook 2018]. In fact, as recently as 2020, during the COVID pandemic, Portugal was one of the few countries that provided provisional legalisation to more than 350,000 irregular immigrants with ongoing regularisation processes with the Portuguese immigration authorities [Esteves 2021], thereby enabling them with rights to access healthcare and social welfare benefits similar to citizens and immigrants with legal status.

Political economy of the Portuguese Immigration Policy

It is important to note, however, that despite these progressive policies on paper, not only do challenges ensue in relation to their implementation on the ground, but they also gloss over the impact and influence of neoliberal reforms and policies on the architecture of the immigration apparatus in Portugal in the last two decades. For instance, while in the 1990s, in response to pressure from the EU, Portugal restricted access for labor immigration [Carvalho 2017], it also authorised regularisation of thousands of irregular migrants to address the labor bottlenecks and shortages during the booming economic growth of the 1990s [Cook 2018]. This contradiction led to the passage of the 2001 immigration law that provided irregular immigrants a legal status as long as they had a work permit and entered the country within a certain time frame [Carvalho 2017].

This approach continues to this day, and has been categorised as a "'*laissez-faire*' approach towards irregular inflows" [Carvalho 2017: 11], which responds to the economic and financial needs of the economy, including as a measure to address the labor shortages and support the national welfare system [Carvalho 2017: 13], particularly in the aftermath of the financial crisis of 2010-11. A perspective of the contemporary immigration policy, therefore, posits the high tolerance for irregular immigration as a "covert" [Carvalho 2017: 11] way to achieve domestic economic goals, particularly in the years after the implementation of structural adjustment reforms following the financial crisis, along with the subsequent austerity measures and its impact on the Portuguese labor market and economy.

This coupling of tolerance of irregular immigration [Carvalho 2017] and increased ethnicisation of certain work sectors, such as overrepresentation of South Asian workforce in agricultural and restaurant industry [Gois 2019], proved to be a dangerous mix for irregular immigrants during the financial crisis, when the unemployment rates between foreign-born and native Portuguese population not only skyrocketed [Gois 2019], but also prevented irregular immigrants from accessing social welfare benefits and support from the state [Gois 2019] even though they paid into the system through their taxes [Carvalho 2017]. Moreover, after the economic rebound in the Portuguese economy in the latter part of the last decade, not only did irregular immigration increase again, but it also pushed irregular immigrants into more precarious and dangerous working conditions, putting them at a higher risk of physical, psychological, and emotional harm, along with increased risk of social exclusion and poverty [Gois 2019]. Furthermore, given the lack of convergence between and limited human resources at different immigration and integration agencies on the ground [Gois 2019], there is limited government oversight of the work environments for irregular immigrants, thereby often making them dependent either on the informal networks of support within the immigrant community [Pereira et al. 2021], or on the poorly funded and overstretched NGOs and migrant associations that provide social and legal aid to immigrant communities in Portugal [Gois 2019].

Social policy mediated migration control in Portugal

Portugal, as opposed to its other Southern European counterparts, through its 2007 immigration law ensured equality between legal residents and citizens, by making legal status the conduit to access all social rights and entitlements has provisioned to Portuguese citizens [La Spina 2017]. Those with a legal residence permit are entitled to access all social welfare benefits (contributory and non-contributory), including minimum income assistance and unemployment benefit, as the Portuguese citizens [Fonesca and McGarrigle 2014, Gois 2019]. Moreover, during the financial crisis, Portugal ensured access to social welfare benefits for immigrants through more than 90 directives [La Spina 2017], attempting to the close the deservingness gap between immigrants and citizens that tends to increased particularly during a crisis. This, however, left out thousands of irregular immigrants without a residence permit, who although paid into the welfare system [Carvalho 2017], but could not benefit from it.

Interestingly, however, Portugal, as a consequence of the austerity measures also cut significant funding to social welfare programs and healthcare benefits [La Spina 2017, Brito 2019], thereby limiting the number of immigrants who could, in fact, be served and aided through the immigrants' specific directives outlined above. As evident from the data from 2011, while the number of immigrants who applied for unemployment benefits increased, those who actually received

unemployment benefits was nearly 13 percent less than those who received unemployment benefits in 2010 [Fonesca and McGarrigle 2014], indicative of the dissonance in the policies implemented in the aftermath of the financial crisis. Moreover, everyday bordering experienced by immigrants, whether in their interaction with healthcare, social services, or law enforcement agencies has resulted in a "complex system of social classification and control" [Formenti et al. 2019], experienced as recently as during the pandemic particularly by racialised and ethnic communities in the form of over-policing and negative media narratives on those deemed as "unclean" and " a source" of COVID [de Sousa 2020]. Lastly, while the broader rhetoric of Portugal being welcoming country to immigrants is true to an extent, especially in comparison to other EU countries, this rhetoric is not matched with action on the ground as reflected in the precarious working conditions of irregular immigrants or lack of funding and resources to support integration processes for irregular immigrants and refugees [Formenti et al. 2019], thereby reinforcing the binary of a"deserving" and "undeserving" immigrant.

Deservingness perceptions of immigrants in Portugal

Public opinion and attitudes towards immigrants in Portugal have remained relatively liberal [Cook 2018] in comparison to other member countries of the EU that have experienced an increase in anti-immigrant attitudes and welfare chauvinism[Attewell 2021]. According to the latest data from the migrant integration policy index (MIPEX) 2020, Portugal's outlook towards immigration was scored as "favourable" — among the highest in the world [MIPEX 2020], along with the European Social Survey data from 2019 being indicative of significant positive change in welfare deservingness attitudes towards immigrants [ESS 2019]. Nearly 20 percent of the Portuguese
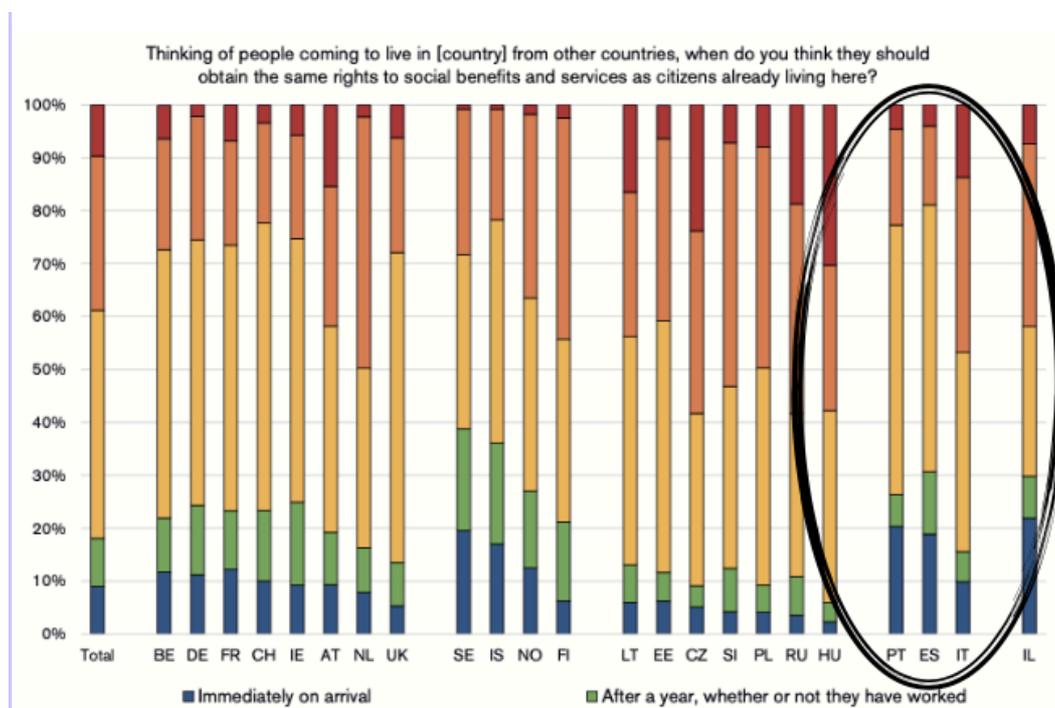

Figure 2: Deservingness attitudes towards immigrants in Portugal (round 8 of European Social Survey data (ESS 2019)

population in 2016-17 (round 8 of ESS) agreed that immigrants, regardless of their legal status, should receive access to social rights upon arrival, compared to only 10 percent of the population that agreed with the statement in the previous round of the survey conducted in 2013-14 [ESS 2019].

In contrast to this data, however, it is also important to note that the broader hierarchy of deservingness still holds in Portugal [Oorschot 2005]. This means that despite more positive deservingness perceptions towards immigrants, broadly, the elderly, the sick, those with disabilities and those with children are considered most deserving of help from the welfare state, while the unemployed, the immigrants and Roma people are considered least deserving of welfare support [Oorschot et al. 2017]. In fact, the stereotype of immigrants being more dependent on the welfare system than citizens is also prevalent in Portugal [Gois 2019], despite the government data being indicative of the fact that immigrants not only pay more into the system than receive from it [Gois 2019], but also that immigrants' contribution to the welfare apparatus has increased significantly between 2015-2019, after an initial slump in the immediate aftermath of the financial crisis [Oliviera 2020]. Therefore, there exists a deservingness gap [Reeskens and Meer 2018] between citizens and immigrants claimants of benefits, resulting in an immigrant penalty that has to be overcome by immigrants in order to become "deserving" of welfare from the state [Reeskens and Meer 2018]. However, based on the deservingness data, one can hypothesis that the immigrant penalty for immigrants in Portugal may be easier to overcome in comparison to other countries in the EU given the more positive and favourable deservingness perceptions towards immigrants over the last few years.

However, as shared before, access to social welfare benefits is linked to the immigrants legal status in Portugal, thereby not directed towards many irregular immigrants who work and stay in Portugal. This not only impacts disproportionately those working in the informal sectors such as agriculture and domestic work, and are more likely to be irregular migrants [Gois 2019], but also primarily immigrant women, who are more likely to work in informal sector jobs as well as less likely to pay into the welfare and social security system [Gois 2019]. In Portugal, therefore, a welfare "deserving" immigrant is conceptualised in relation to their legal status, and hence a route and access to a residence permit, i.e. regularisation, becomes a first important step towards welfare deservingness. However, as posited by Reeskens and Meer, deservingness gap can still hold regardless of the legal status [Meer and Reeskens 2020], and everyday bordering practices [Yuval-Davis et al 2018] that immigrants experience in the host country can still inhibit access to social welfare, and hence, the process of becoming a welfare deserving immigrant can also impact immigrants with legal visa status.

The "Deserving" South Asian immigrant in Portugal

Drawing from the discussion above, it becomes apparent that within the South Asian immigrant community, in the context of Portugal, an easier and clear distinction between a welfare "deserving" and "undeserving" immigrant is based on one's access to legal status or having a residence permit. In the eyes of the state, if not the society necessarily, this becomes an important aspect of deciding who deserves what from the state. Although data for all South Asian countries is not available, for legalised Indian immigrants in Portugal, there has not only been an increase in contributions towards social security system from 2018 to 2019 [Oliviera 2020], but also an increase in Indian immigrants (in absolute numbers) who were accessing sickness welfare benefits from the Portuguese state in the same time period [Oliviera 2020].

Gráfico 8.7. Evolução do número contribuintes estrangeiros, e percentagem de estrangeiros no total de contribuintes, entre 2005 e 2019
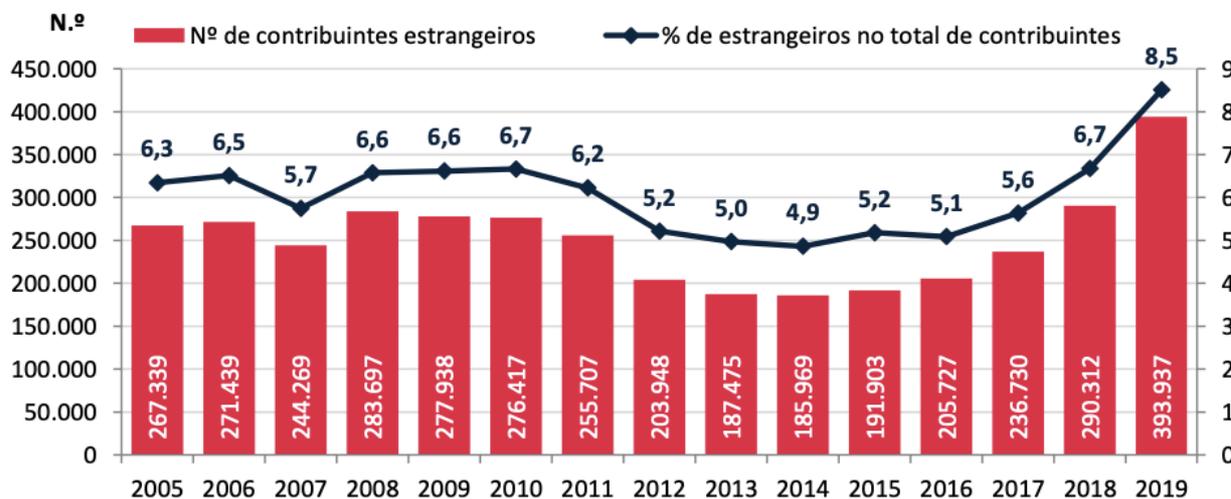
Fonte: MTSSS- Ministério do Trabalho, Solidariedade e Segurança Social (sistematização e cálculos da autora).

Figure 3: Increase in contributions to social welfare system by immigrants in Portugal 2005-2009 (Oliveira 2020)

A similar increase is also observed for number of Indian immigrants who were receiving parental benefits between 2018-19 [Oliviera 2020], and family allowance during 2018-19 (this trend was also observed in the case of Pakistani immigrants during this time period) [Oliviera 2020].

726 beneficiários em 2018 passaram a 589 em 2019), a romena (-14,3%, de 3.121 beneficiários em 2018 para 2.675 em 2019), e a cabo-verdiana (-11,3%, de 6.895 beneficiários em 2018 para 6.118 em 2019).

Quadro 8.14. Titulares estrangeiros com lançamento de abono de família e respetivos montantes processados (em milhares de euros), segundo os principais países de nacionalidade, em 2018 e 2019

Nacionalidade	2018		2019		(A) Rácio de montantes processados por beneficiários em 2019 (em euros)	Taxa de discrepância de estrangeiros (A) face ao total de beneficiários em 2019 (%)
	Beneficiário	Montantes (milhares de euros)	Beneficiário	Montantes (milhares de euros)		
África	13.852	6.595	14.002	7.112	508	-17,9
PALOP	13.335	6.286	13.133	6.593	502	-18,8
Angola	1.724	821	2.317	1.190	514	-16,9
Cabo Verde	6.895	3.112	6.118	3.104	507	-17,9
Guiné-Bissau	2.147	1.098	2.383	1.188	499	-19,3
Moçambique	245	107	255	127	499	-19,3
S. Tomé e Príncipe	2.054	999	2.060	983	477	-22,8
América	9.984	4.525	14.409	6.926	481	-22,3
Brasil	9.502	4.300	13.845	6.629	479	-22,6
Ásia	5.361	3.077	6.227	3.741	601	-2,9
China	1.781	965	1.803	1.038	575	-6,9
India	692	391	995	644	647	4,6
Paquistão	428	246	492	306	622	0,5

Figure 4: Increase in family allowance recipients by immigrants in Portugal India and Pakistan (Oliviera 2020)

Similarly, there was a slight increase observed in the number of Indian immigrants receiving minimum income support from the government [Oliviera 2020]. There is no gender or age-disaggregated data available for these figures, therefore, they provide only a limited insight about the direction of deservingness trends in relation to Indian immigrants specifically, and South Asian immigrants broadly. The findings from the qualitative interviews, discussed in the next chapter, however, provide a more nuanced and intersectional understanding of these positive shifts in the deservingness trends in relation to South Asian immigrants, of both regular and irregular status, by using the concepts of deservingness frames and situated intersectionality. The findings not only substantiate and corroborate this positive shift in the deservingness perceptions of South Asian immigrants in Portugal, but also situate them in the backdrop of the broader economic, immigration, and social policy discourse in Portugal as has been discussed in this chapter.

Quadro 8.15. Agregados familiares com titular estrangeiro com Rendimento Social de Inserção e respetivos montantes processados, segundo os principais países de nacionalidade, em 2018 e 2019

Nacionalidade	2018		2019		(A) Rácio de montantes processados por beneficiários em 2019 (em euros)	Taxa de discrepância de estrangeiros (A) face ao total de beneficiários em 2019 (%)	Diferença do Rácio (A) de 2019 face ao Rácio (A) de 2014 (em euros)
	Beneficiários	Montantes (milhares de euros)	Beneficiários	Montantes (milhares de euros)			
África	2.177	4.149	2.068	3.892	1.882	-24,1	+335,9
PALOP	2.032	3.834	1.863	3.486	1.871	-24,6	+321,8
Angola	543	1.125	528	1.069	2.025	-18,4	+334,5
Cabo Verde	632	1.152	580	1.075	1.853	-25,3	+342,3
Guiné-Bissau	460	812	435	781	1.794	-27,7	+308,4
Moçambique	64	120	52	87	1.681	-32,2	-133,2
S. Tomé e Príncipe	289	542	268	475	1.772	-28,6	+322,1
América	763	1.394	709	1.343	1.894	-23,7	+453,3
Brasil	702	1.269	632	1.192	1.885	-24,0	+468,1
Ásia	198	431	235	557	2.372	-4,4	+858,6
China	8	10	10	16	1.560	-37,1	n.d.
Índia	19	28	25	45	1.795	-27,6	+363,4
Paquistão	38	85	32	91	2.847	14,8	+1.137,4

Figure 5: Increase in minimum income recipients by immigrants in Portugal — India and Pakistan (Oliveira 2020)

Chapter 5: Deservingness Frames in post-austerity Portugal - The case of South Asian Immigrants

Based on the qualitative interviews undertaken with a diverse group of relevant stakeholders in Portugal, I posit that in the context of a positive shift in the deservingness perceptions towards South Asian immigrants in the decade following the financial crisis, the deservingness frames employed to construct the "deserving" South Asian immigrant, although, haven't changed radically, however, have evolved and become more distinct compared to before the crisis. This evolution has been guided by the broader shifts in the Portuguese economic and labor market needs before and after the financial crisis, in conjunction with the evolving immigration policy discourse in Portugal as a response to these needs. Moreover, from the perspective of the South Asian immigrants, their integration experiences, rooted in particular context and time, and moulded by multiples social identities, have also influenced the deservingness frames they articulate and embody in "becoming" a deserving immigrant in contemporary Portugal.

I conceptualise these deservingness frames into the following three categories:
a) The invisible essential worker
b) The playing by the rules - model migrant
c) The self-integrating immigrant

A. The invisible essential worker

Owing to the high tolerance of irregular immigration as an important element of Portuguese immigration policy, both before and after the economic crisis, along with the segmented labor market needs of the Portuguese economy, which seeks labor primarily for informal sector low-wage jobs, this deservingness frame has applied to irregular immigrants more broadly in the last two decades, whereby, from the state's perspective, those willing to work "in the shadows", largely absent from the mainstream Portuguese society, are eventually recognised by the state through regularisation — thus deeming them "deserving" of social rights and entitlements similar to legal migrants and citizens.

While before the financial crisis this group compromised mainly of Brazilians and Eastern European immigrants [Fonesca and McGarrigle 2014, Gois 2019], after the financial crisis, the number of irregular immigrants from South Asia, primarily from India and Nepal, has increased significantly, with many now dominating informal and seasonal sector jobs in agriculture, tourism, and hospitality industries [Pereira et al. 2021], thereby having taken on the mantle of the new invisible and silent workforce of the Portuguese economy in the last decade. This also reflected in the interviews discussions pertaining to ability of irregular immigrants' access to legalisation and social rights in Portugal.

"60-70% of South Asian immigrants today in Portugal are irregular immigrants. They live on less than minimum wage, working in precarious conditions with little opportunity to integrate. But this is the only way for them to begin the legalisation process here to gain a residence permit."
— Joao Miguel de Carvalho, Center for Research and Studies in Sociology, CIES-ISCTE

"It is difficult for Portuguese employers to import legal workers and so they hire irregular immigrants from Nepal or India. The government and the media turn a blind eye to other conditions because we [Portugal] need workers! We need them, but we don't need to show an interest in them…but it [working in informal, low paying jobs] is also a way for them to get legal papers."
— Jochen Faget, journalist, DW media organisation (originally from Germany)

As evident, for many gaining employment in informal jobs becomes the only path to regularisation (and hence social benefits and entitlements), whereby proving their "economic worth" to the state grants them an opportunity to overcome the immigrant penalty, to an extent, and help close the deservingness gap. This deservingness frame, therefore, can be mapped on two deservingness criteria — identity (as a needed worker) and reciprocity (contributing to the state and the society) [Oorschot 2000]. However, while this deservingness frame works in favour of the state, given that that irregular immigrants keep the economy running in the background, undertaking jobs not preferred by the Portuguese citizens, paying their taxes and supporting the welfare state, it comes at a personal cost to the immigrants. This has been discussed in the earlier chapters, and was also corroborated in the interviews, as shared below.

"Portugal has a neoliberal immigration policy, focused on getting workers, not focused on people. Even the right-wing Chega party isn't against immigrants, because we need them as workers. But this is a patronising attitude and Portuguese see them [South Asian immigrants working in these jobs] as second class citizens."
— Joao Miguel de Carvalho, Center for Research and Studies in Sociology, CIES-ISCTE

"I consider them [South Asian irregular immigrants] the new slaves, because of their working conditions and the way they are exploited. And we should end this with urgency."
— Rogério de Brito, former Mayor, Alcácer do Sal

Furthermore, interviews also shed light on the absence of voices and representations of South Asian immigrants from the mainstream media in Portugal, responsible also for fostering a one-dimensional view, specifically of irregular immigrants only as workers, not as people with multifaceted lives and aspirations just like the citizens — a form of everyday bordering (discussed in the next type of deservingness frame) that reinforces the idea of "us versus them". Interestingly, while the COVID pandemic has led to an increase in reportage in the international media on the exploitative working conditions of South Asian immigrants in Portugal, in the national and local media, the reportage about South Asian immigrants has primarily been linked to spread of COVID infections, rather than engendering a discussion on the structural conditions that put these communities at higher risk of contracting and spreading COVID [deSousa 2020].

"A public discourse on immigration policies and how they impact immigrants is absent in Portugal. There is also complete ignorance on part of social workers about the conditions that these [South Asian] irregular immigrants live in."
— Jochen Faget, journalist, DW media organisation (originally from Germany)

"In the last year [2020], the media is talking more about South Asians but the coverage is about COVID only. More positive representation of the [South Asian] community is lacking."
— K, Male, Head of NGO helping South Asian immigrants

B. The playing by the rules - model migrant

This deservingness frame is drawn from the trope of the model migrant — often used by host countries to construct an immigrant worthy of deserving help from the state. In the context of South Asian immigrants in Portugal, while the model migrant archetype is partly linked to the their identity and reciprocity as a worker, and hence relates to the first type of deservingness frame, it is also linked to notions of self-reliance, self-sustenance, and fairness in terms of following the rules — proving that they can take "personal responsibility" to address their work and family circumstances instead of creating welfare dependency, which in turn can then become a credible basis for the state to help when there is a "real" need (such as a pandemic which is beyond individual control). This deservingness frame, therefore, can be mapped on to the deservingness criteria of control (over one's circumstances) and need, and applies to all South Asian immigrants, regardless of their legal status.

"There are more than 300,000 people [in Portugal today] waiting for their residence permit for more than a year. But this is the system everyone has to follow if they want to live here. In the meanwhile, they work and pay taxes, which also improves their chances of getting a residence permit."
— K, Male, Head of NGO helping South Asian immigrants

"Portugal welcomes everyone who wants to work and build a better life. South Asians have started their own businesses here and there is no discrimination between them and Portuguese citizens."
— Male, Head of an South Asian religious association, Lisbon

Interestingly, this deservingness frame has also been internalised by South Asian immigrants themselves, as was apparent in reflections from the immigrants interviewed:

"My policy is the survival policy. We should have our own way instead of waiting for the government. That is why I started my own business — it was not easy without legal papers but it helped me to apply for a residence permit."
— A, male, Indian immigrant

"I work 6 days a week, sometimes 7 days…because of the restaurant business in summer. I am waiting for my residence permit, but they say it will take time. Till then, I will work and save money. I can try for another job once I get my residence permit, or go to another country in Europe."
— P, female, Nepalese immigrant, restaurant worker

These reflections emphasise the initiative and efforts that immigrants are expected to take in order to signal self-reliance and following of the rules put in place for them to become "deserving" of social rights and entitlements. While this sample represents immigrants with irregular and legal status, it is very limited in terms of gender, class and caste representation —important social identities that can impede or facilitate the achievement of self-reliance because of the broader socio-economic inequities embedded and driven by them, thereby influencing the lived realities and experiences of South Asian immigrants and communities in Portugal.

For instance, while some of the immigrants interviewed noted that they arrived in Portugal with savings from their home country, and had informal networks support that allowed them to kickstart a life in Portugal and buy them time to find a good job, the same privilege may not be afforded to those, especially working-class and male South Asian irregular immigrants, who arrive in Portugal through work agencies and on loans, and are pushed into debt before they even have the opportunity to find work [Pereira et al. 2021]. In such a case, self-reliance becomes a compulsion rather than a liberating choice to gain independence. In contrast, for South Asian women who tend to migrate with male members (often with their spouse), and are dependent on them for their survival owing either to their dependent visa status and/or patriarchal gender norms that prevent them from working, self-reliance does not even feature as a choice, and their "deservingness" is mediated primarily through their identity in relation to their spouse or a male family member.

These examples elucidate the fact that while the deservingness frame of a model migrant benefits the state and the society in terms of determining who can be deemed as a "deserving" immigrant, and in some cases, is also articulated by immigrants themselves as a favourable mode of becoming a deserving immigrant, perhaps because it serves as a driver of motivation and ambition, this framing of deservingness not only silences the multiple social identities embodied by South Asian immigrants in their native contexts, which are carried along spatially and temporally to the host country, but also undermines how these intersectional identities interact with immigrants' social positionalities within the host country context — thus, not only homogenising and minimising the diversity of immigrants' experiences, but also creating the false binary of a "deserving" South Asian immigrant, who is a model migrant, versus another version of a South Asian immigrants who is less deserving of legal status and citizenship.

C. The self-integrating immigrant

This deservingness frame is drawn primarily from the perspectives of immigrants and immigrants' associations interviewed and their understanding of what construes a "deserving" South Asian immigrant in Portugal. This framing entails overcoming the everyday bordering, along social and cultural lines [Yuval-Davis et al. 2018] that is experienced by immigrants — in the form of language barrier, legal status checks and local policing of immigrant neighbourhoods, interactions with social services personnel, lack of awareness about social and cultural practices of the host country, and a lack of or misrepresentations of immigrant groups in the media — to become "deserving" of legal status and support from the state.

From my interviews with South Asian immigrants, particularly those with legal status, it became apparent that for them, the onus was on immigrants to try and overcome these forms of everyday bordering and hence prove that they are committed and invested in being part of the Portuguese society. This means investing in learning the language, participating in Portuguese culture and social activities, being "respectful" for interactions with the government officials, and encouraging positive representation and portrayal of the community in media both by highlight how South Asian immigrants are contributing positively the society and also offering more awareness and opportunities for the Portuguese society to learn about social and cultural practices of the community. This type of deservingness frame, based on immigrants' experiences, helps immigrants being perceived as more deserving of legal status, citizenship and ultimately support from the state in the form of welfare benefits (when the need arises).

"Portugal doesn't have racism, but has cultural otherisation. But I also feel South Asian community here is not open to new things. We should also try and integrate and mingle with the Portuguese. That is what I am trying to also do through my films."
— S, male, Bangladeshi immigrant, filmmaker

"When I arrived in Portugal, I started meeting Portuguese people, learned the language, made my children learn the language and learn about the culture. It is important to also do our bit to become part of the society. We cannot only rely on the government to do that."
— M, male, Indian immigrant, university professor

"Learning Portuguese helped me get a job in the restaurant [run by a Portuguese person], and I have also met local Portuguese people through this job. But I had to pay for the [language] classes. Ultimately, many people do that because that's how you can get a job in Lisbon. I think it's helpful for the future."
— P, female, Nepalese immigrant, restaurant worker

This specific articulation of the deservingness frame, however, not only elides the responsibility of the state to help immigrants integrate into the host society, but also obfuscates the privilege that immigrants with legal status have in countering everyday bordering versus irregular immigrants who fear prosecution and deportation, if apprehended by law enforcement agencies. Moreover, using a situated intersectionality lens, it could be contended that the social location(s) of the interviewees — particularly, their gender, class, and type of work, they occupy in the Portuguese society — plays an important role both in shaping their views on self-integration as a process to become more "deserving" in the eyes of the state and society, and their notion of who gets to claim they "belong" to the Portuguese society. This was also reflected in the different articulations of the two make interviewees versus that of the female restaurant worker — while the men, owing to their gender, class and work status in Portugal, articulated learning the language as a way to adopt and express their belonging to the host society, the female restaurant worker articulated learning the language as a means to an end (getting a better job). Given the limitation of the sample, it would be futile to draw more generalised conclusions, however, these articulations do open an avenue for further research on interplay of situated intersectionalities and belongingness in the context of everyday bordering processes that impact South Asian immigrants in Portugal.

Lastly, it is important to note that in contrast to the immigrants, those, working as part of NGOs and the local government felt that the Portuguese society and state has to do more to make the environment more welcoming for immigrants than simply relying on immigrants to take measures to integrate into the Portuguese society and culture.

"At our association, we help immigrants from Nepal and other South Asian countries learn Portuguese by giving language classes. The government organised Portuguese classes are only held once a week, and take 6-7 months to complete, but people working don't have so much time. It also impacts their ability and time to get a residence permit. So, we as a community help them integrate into the society more quickly."
— K, Male, Head of NGO helping South Asian immigrants

"We see that the government and the laws we have in place are not design to welcome immigrants the way they should, and that makes even less sense when the Portuguese people are immigrants themselves, we had many waves of migration to several countries in the world, and

just for that shared experience we should do more to welcome better. We should design better laws, enable better and responsive dialogue, and support institutions that can help immigrants to prosper in our country, that includes our region [Alcacer do Sal]. Right now what we do is small and often comes in extreme urgency or need, and we acknowledge that now we could to better and it is part of the vision and strategy for the future of this region, to attract a new wave of migrants… that can be foreigners or not, we want to keep generations of a young working class and young entrepreneurs."
— Vitor Proença, Mayor, Alcacer do Sal municipality

Drawing from these articulations of becoming a "deserving" South Asian immigrant in Portugal, I posit that these deservingness frames have helped South Asian immigrants (some more than others based on the data) over the last decade to counter the immigrant penalty to an extent — at least in terms of securing or being able to access the process of securing a residence permit — the conduit to equal social citizenship rights as citizens from the perspective of the Portuguese state. However, the ability to use a particular deservingness frame in facilitating access to social rights is fraught with gender, class, and occupation dynamics owing to the social location(s) and contextual hierarchies of power within which immigrants are located in the Portuguese society. Moreover, the interviews also illustrate that immigrant penalty is not overcome simply by gaining legal status as an immigrant — instead, the process of integrating and belonging continues even as a legal resident, again mediated by intersecting social identities and contexts that determine whether practices of everyday bordering can be overcome at individual or group-level to claim more deservingness in comparison to another immigrant individual and/or group.

Chapter 6: Learnings from the Portuguese case: Implications for the broader deservingness discourse

Deservingness frames: A contextual and intersectional approach

Portugal has often been referred to as an exception, in Southern Europe specifically, and in the EU more broadly, regarding its open and welcoming attitude to immigrants even after the financial crisis and refugee crisis, two events that have led to a negative shift in immigration policy and public opinion in Europe over the last decade. And indeed, while Portugal has seen liberalisation of its immigration policy overall, and a positive shift in welfare deservingness perceptions towards immigrants, the reality, as discussed in this paper, is more complex and sometimes contradictory, specifically in relation to the political economy of immigration that although has led to increased tolerance of irregular immigration to serve the Portuguese economy, and in the course offered many the chance to secure a legal status, but has also pushed thousands of irregular immigrants into low-wage jobs and precarious working conditions, rendering them "essential" yet invisible and forgotten in the mainstream public and policy discourse.

Using the case of South Asian immigrants in Portugal I elucidate this complexity and its role in engendering three distinct types of deservingness frames that have helped South Asian immigrants become more welfare "deserving" immigrants — by either proving their worth for "deserving" legal status and hence equal access to social rights and entitlements (the invisible essential work and model migrant deservingness frames) or by managing and countering everyday bordering practices, regardless of their immigration status, but contingent on their intersectional social positionalities, to integrate (and belong) to the Portuguese society, thereby situating themselves higher up on the hierarchy of deservingness in comparison to other immigrants. While it is difficult to say whether these deservingness frames definitively help South Asian immigrants in overcoming the immigrant penalty, what is quite clear is that broader structural factors, such as economic and social context, along with the social location(s) of immigrants within the immigrant group and the host society, work together to produce deservingness frames that mediate the degree to which the immigrant penalty can be overcome and countered to narrow the deservingness gap. Consequently, these deservingness frames can re(produce) and reinforce inequities that already exist within the immigrant group, manifested and amplified in the framing of deservingness applied to the immigrant individual/group — even when it's a positive framing that facilitates a positive shift in welfare deservingness perceptions towards immigrants.

Using deservingness frames: A cautionary tale

When situated within the broader discourse of welfare deservingness, one of the key takeaways offered by the case of South Asian immigrants in Portugal is the salient and complex role that broader development processes — related to changes in the labor market, immigration processes, and social-policy mediated migration control — play in producing and bolstering different deservingness frames over time for immigrants. This is also the first of its kind research undertaken to examine deservingness attitudes and frames using qualitative methods approach in Portugal, which provides a more nuanced understanding that is not possible simply from survey-based data on deservingness perceptions that also fail to capture experiences and realities of the affected

population group (immigrants in this case). Moreover, conceptualisation of deservingness frames also allows for a more in-depth understanding related to hierarchies of deservingness that are created not just across groups, but also within a group, as is evident from how different deservingness frames impact the same group of immigrants, when stratified along the axis of class, gender, occupation, etc. This has resonance with the categories of the deserving and undeserving poor that were fist conceptualised in the New Poor Law in the 19th century, and hence, also reflects how the discourse has expanded to other vulnerable categories.

This also highlights the dangers of using deservingness frames, which although provide more nuance, may also end up reproducing inequities that divide a population group rather than unite it, and can serve the state or political parties to use even the positive deservingness frames to serve their own interests and agendas, undermining the ability for the vulnerable population groups to collective and practice, practice solidarity, and challenge the oppressive structural factors that impede their access to social rights. This is evident in the case of Portugal where the framing of the invisible essential worker, even if construed as a way of proving deservingness, has held many irregular immigrants in precarious and dangerous working conditions. Therefore, the case also mandates questioning the usefulness of deservingness frames itself, and whether they do more harm than good in the long term. Although deservingness perceptions play a pivotal role in shaping welfare preferences and policy, and these are mediated by the social constructions of deservingness frames, perhaps, the Portuguese case of South Asian immigrants also provides a cautionary tale of the limitations of using deservingness frames in claims-making from the perspective of a "deserving" and "undeserving" welfare recipient.

Future research prospects: Expanding on the South Asian immigrants case study

Given the limited sample size analysed for the purpose of this research, many questions remains unexamined in relation to deservingness of South Asian immigrants in Portugal, and can serve as avenues for future research. To begin with, how generalisable and representative are these deservingness frames in relation to larger South Asian immigrant community in Portugal, which itself is heterogenous and segmented along boundaries of ethnicity, religion and class. Therefore, it is very likely that the current analysis has failed to capture the nuances of differential deservingness frames, particularly in relation to Pakistani and Bangladeshi immigrants, that are not represented well in this case study. Moreover, an ethnographic approach to study the countering of everyday bordering in daily life in Portugal by different groups within the South Asian immigrant community can provide a more enriching analysis of the role of situated intersectionality in producing diverse notions of "belonging" and "deservingness". Moreover, a focused research with more of Portuguese local government and social service officials can also shed more light in their perceptions related to welfare deservingness of immigrants, as has been undertaken in contexts like the UK, the Netherlands, and Sweden. Furthermore, the elements of class and gender (and caste) —being sensitive issues within the South Asian immigrant community — require more trust-building with the immigrant communities in order to be explored further.

Current research, even if it provides limited insights, makes it apparent that proxy indicators for these social dimensions play an important role in determining the usefulness of different deservingness frames in overcoming the immigrant penalty, but to learn more about the processes that underpin the interplay of these and other social identities in producing and sustaining deservingness frames warrants further research. It could also be interesting to explore how deservingness frames differ between different immigrant communities separated by geography. This

can provide important insights for not only understanding how different lived realities and experiences may produce different deservingness frames, even in the backdrop of the same structural factors, but may also serve as important entry points to create immigrant solidarity across race, class, gender, occupation, etc. and collectivise to challenge the status-quo and bring about structural changes that ensure rights of all immigrants in Portugal and beyond.

Chapter 7: References

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