

## **Portuguese emigration in nineteenth century: an estimation of legal mass departure to Brazil.**

*Cristiana Viegas de Andrade*<sup>\*</sup>

It is widely noted that international migration had an important impact on Portuguese demographic dynamics at least until the 1970s. Millions of people went abroad in search of opportunities for a better life. Since the conquest of the Americas till the beginning of the twentieth century, Brazil was the principal destination of Portuguese people. This giant, placed on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, was absorbing a Portuguese population that was escaping from the economical crises having place in their own country. Indeed, this movement was so ever-present in Lusitanian daily life that some historians consider migration as a key part, a defining element of Portuguese culture.

However, Portuguese historical demography studies have assumed a somewhat “isolated character” from the mainstream of debate. In other words, many studies of past population have been made in a very isolated way, where each researcher has used different methodologies to calculate rates and indices, which make the results incomparable (although comparison of broad tendencies is possible). Furthermore, Portuguese demographic history badly interconnects both, local and regional findings. So, this history runs the risk of only creating case studies (very particular and very individual), or on the other hand, providing general views (universal history), that barely engage in the truthful portrayal of complex populations. Therefore, there is a gap in the Portuguese historiography in what concerns the study of the migratory event to Brazil. Many are the studies about specific populations, from specific parishes, but they were not aggregated and confronted yet.

In an attempt to contribute to Portuguese migration studies, this paper aims to show a quantitative estimation of the legal migration from Portugal to Brazil. In this direction it will be firstly presented a literature review, which not only shows the historiography but also links and compare the results already achieved. It is an effort to

---

<sup>\*</sup> PhD Student from Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure.

link the knowledge already produced in direction to a better understand of the history of Portuguese emigration to Brazil. Given that it does not exist yet, it is an enormous contribution for future researches. Moreover, this paper will also introduce the analysis of Lisbon passport registers' information, conceded during the period between 1839 and 1897. This set of documents consists in a list of people to whom the passports were given, and the destination to where they intended to go. Thus, the analysis of passports will result in the estimation of the number of people who went to Brazil, besides their sex and destination. It permits a quantitative estimation of legal emigration. In addition, it will be present the analysis of another set of documents, the passport requests. These documents present since the place of birth until the reasons for asking the passport, and consist in a very rich source of information. Two sets will be shown, 1886 and 1889, and they are used as a sample in an attempt to characterise the emigrant population from the second half of 1880 decade.

This paper is, therefore, a contribution to migration studies of populations from the past. It aims not only to present a quantitative estimation of Portuguese emigration but also to propose a better interaction between researchers and knowledge in order to the enlargement of the results.