

**BETWEEN THE IMMIGRANT AND THE HOMELESSNESS CONDITION: CHALLENGES OF
A PHENOMENON IN THE PORTUGUESE SOCIAL REALITY**

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This presentation is based on an exploratory study conducted in Portugal between March and November 2010, aiming to understand the social phenomenon of people who are, simultaneously, immigrant and homeless in Portuguese society.

The study results presented in this paper derive in part from the implementation of a national survey (680 valid questionnaires), that allowed to design a profile, as well to understand the main patterns of an emergent social phenomenon in Portuguese society: people who are, simultaneously, immigrant and homeless. The overwhelming majority of the answered questionnaires refers to individuals who live in the district of Lisbon (75.6%, representing 514 individuals), which can be explained by the coexistence, in this geographical territory, of situations such as strong urbanization, attraction of migrant labor force, and poverty increase.

In turn, an interview was conducted with twenty homeless immigrants who were accompanied by two private social institutions in the city of Lisbon. These interviews allowed, in a comprehensive logical, outline the ideal-type way of life of homeless immigrants, since their migration project until the condition of homelessness.

Two distinct categories were identified: the «homeless immigrants» and the «immigrants homeless». In the first situation, we found a homeless person, who is also an immigrant, i.e., his condition is not directly dependent to his immigration status: there are many similarities between his life path until the current condition and the journey of a Portuguese citizen who is in the same circumstances. His situation of homelessness always occurs after the immigrant condition, resulting from a life journey marked by social exclusion processes following a successful phase of the migratory process. In the second group, we found cases in which immigration status depends on the situation of homelessness, matching with the arrival at the Portuguese territory.

The study results allow us to define some challenges to public policies and social intervention developed in Portugal, in order to prevent and minimize the vulnerability and extreme destitution that affects people who are simultaneously in the condition of immigrant and homelessness.