

Criminalization waves in Portugal: from traditional crime to drug related crime

From traditional crime to cosmopolitan criminalization

State-of-spirit and class analyses

To understand criminalization in Portugal we do not have many data or knowledge scientifically available. Portuguese education and scientific research systems are underdeveloped by European standards, even they have improve a lot these last decades. It means that Portugal is trying to overcome a much neglected educational and scientific situation heritage of a 50 years long dictatorship, when (till today) any assessment exercise or knowledge production is taken as political statement. Portuguese people as well as most part of Portuguese elite support a psico-cultural trend that does not give credit to knowledge as a social value (only 10% of people has a licence of superior studies and many of them are unemployed since the State begin to retain expenses for budgetary reasons). In the late 90's a literacy study has to create a special classification to record about 10% of people with performance under the worse literacy performance known in other developed countries – the mashed with the official number of people who has never been at school.

The results of Portuguese justice system are, along with educational system, the best known break to Portuguese social and economic development. We need to present a brief history of the Portuguese justice system to understand the trends of its development and the way it can use penal system to relate with other institutional powers and with the people.

We will present briefly too to immigrant situation in Portugal, and the numbers we have about the social qualities of inmate in Portugal, referring to the variables stressed by the research project.

A second part of our paper we will present the focus and some results of the sociological research we conduct. In short, we interview people from the main classified immigrant communities in Lisboa, Luso-africans, Brazilians and East Europeans. We ask them what they feel about justice in general and about the way they lived in person judiciary procedures. They were working people, we found on the streets or through immigrant helping associations and they show fear of us, because they under what kind of propose served our inquiry, even they understand and accept we are not police people. Studying these fear mashing it with their free discourses about justice and with professional help of several immigrant experts working on the ground to understand the recent immigrant live experiences that explains the fear, we realized that to decide to migrate is a fearful decision, specially when there is no legal support for it and, so being, it is mandatory to pass through the twilight zone of clandestine entry in Europe, full of abusers and profiteers many of them without scrupulous.

These immigrants face all kind of risks; including imprisonment eventually do to intentional (non) official protection of abusers and profiteers of immigrant non documented situation in Europe. They do it because they know and believe that

Portuguese justice, in court and in the working market, is better than in their own original countries. They know, too, Portuguese justice need and must be improved. And they are looking forward that it happens as soon as possible. They think and they know they will benefit from it, in the future. They believe in progress.

I call it submission spirit of this immigrant part of working class. It means they support the western self imposed mission of developing better the justice system, using the western world wide known liberal legal doctrines.