



# Immigration and Xenophobia: Portuguese Immigrants in Early 19th Century Rio de Janeiro

*Rosana Barbosa*

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In *Immigration and Xenophobia*, Rosana Barbosa discusses Portuguese migration to Rio de Janeiro from 1822 to 1850 as a significant aspect of the city's history. During the first half of the nineteenth century, many Portuguese fled the difficult economic and social conditions in Portugal for better economic opportunities in post-independence Brazil, which was experiencing a boom that was fuelled by such commodities as coffee.

Its retail commercial sector attracted many immigrants from France, England, Spain, Italy, Germany, and most especially from Portugal. The arrival of Portuguese migrants was facilitated by the fact that they were mostly well received by the Brazilian government and elite, who wanted to create a "white" nation, while still continuing to import thousands of Africans every year.

Although they were well received by the government, the Portuguese sometimes faced hostility and aggression from the population at large for reasons arising from nationalism and competition for jobs. Despite the presence of this hostility, most Portuguese immigrants in Rio de Janeiro adapted well to their new environment. They married or developed relationships with local people, bought properties in Brazil, and most did not return to Portugal.



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