

Immigrant: A Possibility Of Citizenship Impacted By The Foreigner Stereotype.

Simone Leão Lima Pieruccetti

Abstract:

Based on the ideas of Abdelmalek Sayad, the text explores the concept of immigrant, highlighting that it goes beyond the legal definition of a citizen temporarily in another country. Sayad sees immigration as a social system maintained by a relationship of domination between the country of origin and the country of destination. An immigrant is considered when he leaves his country in search of work, becoming an emigrant. Sayad emphasizes that the immigrant's position in the social hierarchy is crucial, being accepted only as a workforce. The text argues that the depoliticization of immigrants is necessary for their tolerance in the destination society, converting them into a mere work instrument. The duality of the immigrant, disconnected from both the society of origin and destination, reveals the threat to the national order and the clear separation between inside and outside. Thus, the text addresses the transformation of immigration into a technical and ethical issue, hiding its political nature, highlighting the complex relationship between citizenship, belonging and identity in today's society. The growing presence of immigrants in European societies questions the purity of national identity and challenges the parameters of belonging.

Keywords: Immigrant; Citizenship; Belonging; National Identity.

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I. Introduction:

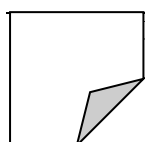
The issue of immigration has been widely debated and analyzed in different contexts and perspectives. However, the concept of immigrant goes beyond a mere legal definition of a citizen temporarily present in a foreign country. This article aims to adopt a more comprehensive approach, exploring the immigrant as a complex social system, as proposed by Abdelmalek Sayad ¹(1998, 2004). The aim of this investigative review is to uncover, from these texts and other contributions, the underlying layers of immigrant identity and examine how their presence challenges established notions of belonging, citizenship and politics.

Sayad offers a provocative perspective, considering immigration as a social system maintained by relations of domination between the country of origin and the country of destination. This vision transcends the dichotomy between immigrant and emigrant, focusing on the condition of the worker who leaves his or her country of origin in search of better job opportunities, thus becoming an immigrant.

Sayad argues that immigrants are often reduced to a deskilled workforce, accepted only for their instrumental utility. The depoliticization of immigrants is crucial for this acceptance, since their permanence is often conditioned on their economic contribution and not on their political participation.

¹Abdelmalek Sayad, a renowned Algerian-French sociologist, is known for his significant contributions to the study of immigration and immigrants. Two of his most notable works on the subject are:

1. "Immigration or the Paradoxes of Otherness" (1998): This is a seminal book in which Sayad explores the experience of Algerian immigrants in France. It analyzes the social, political and cultural complexities faced by immigrants and addresses different forms of belonging, identity and assimilation. The work also emphasizes the relations of domination between countries of origin and countries of destination, as well as the way immigrants are perceived and treated in the receiving society.
2. "The Double Absence: Notes on Migration" (2004): In this book, Sayad expands his ideas about the immigrant condition. It explores the notion of "double absence", which refers to the absence of both the country of origin and the country of destination. Sayad argues that immigrants live in an ambiguous space, not fully integrated into either political community. He also discusses the depoliticization of immigrants, highlighting how the destination society often perceives them only as labor, disregarding their political participation .



The immigrant presence also challenges traditional conceptions of belonging and identity. The immigrant resides in an ambiguous space, being part of two political communities, but at the same time not fully integrated into either of them. This duality sheds light on the complexities of citizenship and identity in an increasingly globalized world.

It is essential not only to explore the concept of immigrant from an expanded perspective, but also to examine how this perspective challenges and reconfigures conventional notions of belonging, citizenship and politics and thus, through the lens of Sayad's ideas, perceive the hidden layers of the immigrant experience, immigrant and its influence on contemporary political and social dynamics.

From Sayad's perspective, migration is no longer approached only in a macro or micro way. He proposed transcending these dimensions, seeking a comprehensive understanding of this social phenomenon. Sayad argued that understanding the underlying reasons and perpetuation of migration goes beyond the effects of the capitalist economy, which moves people from one field to another, from one country to another, from one continent to another.

The focus should not be limited to just these aspects. Instead, he argued that sociology needs to direct its attention to the lowest part of the social hierarchy, where the migrant and his paradoxical condition of existence reside.

This migratory movement is characterized by the figure of the emigrant, the one who temporarily left their society of origin, and the immigrant, the one who arrives in the destination society and is born into it. The paradox is that, in a way, these two roles are played by one and the same person.

The emigrant-immigrant being:

Each path taken by the immigrant represents a path of knowledge! This statement is closely linked to the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary nature that characterizes migration.

According to the words of Sayad (1998), the dialogue about immigrants and immigration does not arise spontaneously, and is often imposed, and this imposition extends to the very issues that involve the social science of immigration. One of the manifestations of this scenario is the tendency to perceive immigrants as a social problem, which involves constant definitions, thoughts and discourses about this condition.

In the text "What is an immigrant?", also present in "Immigration or the paradoxes of alterity.", Sayad (1998) explores in greater depth the conception of the ideal model of migration and the type of immigrant that the receiving society desires. This model is generated through a process of dehumanization of these individuals, where immigrant workers originating from former colonies are stripped of their humanity and are treated as commodities: as they are reduced to their working capacity and accepted in a "temporary" way solely as a labor required. Sayad (1998) summarized this idea by stating: "Ultimately, what defines an immigrant? An immigrant is, essentially, a labor force, and a temporary, transitory labor force" (p. 54).

Contrary to the predominant and limited perspective on human mobility, the author emphasizes the importance of considering both immigration and emigration when approaching the sociology of migration. He highlights that these two aspects are interdependent and constitute different faces of the same reality, and cannot be understood in isolation (Sayad, 2004, p. 19). Furthermore, the author criticizes the simplistic approach to migration that focuses only on the dimension of the "work force" on the move. He emphasizes that any study of migratory phenomena that neglects the conditions of origin of emigrants is destined to offer a partial and ethnocentric vision of this phenomenon (Sayad, 2004, p. 56).

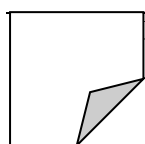
The migratory process of this being can be considered as an ontological process of *being-being-being*, each day of its journey, in a search for knowledge of the new and at the same time maintaining its being.

Thinking about the migratory phenomenon incites us to the need for a comprehensive ontological thinking about the strategies and consequences as well as to reflect on the importance of the role of territorial identity (*being-place*), of support with social networks (*being-with- the-others*), the need to get involved with the new place (*becoming*) and to settle in a new destiny (*being-destiny*). (Pieruccetti, Leão S., 2022. Dissertation Tesis MA Dispute Resolution. Independent College Dublin)

In this way, migrating involves bringing with you your historical trajectory (with immigration itself being an integral part of this trajectory), along with your cultural heritages, ways of life, emotions, actions and thoughts, your language and religious beliefs, as well as all other constructions social, political and mental aspects of your community; the former are, in essence, the incorporation of the latter - in short, carrying their culture with them (Sayad, 2004, p. 22).

As the phenomenon of migration falls within the lived experience, it is a phenomenological question to be understood and that also carries another original ontological question, which is precisely the condition of the migrant as being displaced from his place of origin. (Pieruccetti, Leão S., 2022. Dissertation Tesis MA Dispute Resolution. Independent College Dublin).

When this process takes place in an environment of different languages, we can consider it even more complex than what was brought up by the authors in the sense that the essence symbolically built in the



immigrant's bowels needs to be reestablished as if we were uprooting a tree from a place to transplant it. in another!

In this way, *becoming* : being-migrant highlights the essential, inseparable phenomenal question: being-place, since we are our places and our places are to us, as we inhabit, we exist inseparably from our inhabited spaces, contrary to thinking that we are in space. (Pieruccetti, Leão S., 2022. Dissertation Tesis MA Dispute Resolution. Independent College Dublin).

What comes out through speech, if it is felt primarily by the heart, in their emotions and so on, is as if the immigrant initially needed to connect with their native language, their language of symbols and signs in order to then be able to say something.” close” to what is desired in another language.

The being who emigrates, before being an immigrant, seeks, in addition, another place to be able to exist, and in this sense, his origins are of fundamental importance, his identity in the preservation of his mental health. Talking about origin is not just talking about a psychic issue but a reference for habitation in the world.

In order to replace the foundations of its spatial existence, and thus make this space an expression of itself, the subject invokes the being, bringing to the fore the being-itself, personalizing, appropriating and rooting itself in search of its ontological tranquility in the destination place. (Pieruccetti, Leão S., 2022. Dissertation Tesis MA Dispute Resolution. Independent College Dublin).

This subject is of great importance in understanding the subjectivity of this emigrant-immigrant, which is very little studied except when he or she is already in a context of mental illness.²

The departure of an individual from their country of origin, known as emigration, has relevance that goes beyond simple geographic change, also encompassing political aspects. This movement is motivated, mainly, by the search for better survival conditions that are not available in their home state.

True immigrant status is achieved when someone is stripped of citizenship status, including the ability for political participation, and becomes exclusively a labor force. This transformation is the basis of your displacement.

And it is exclusively in the capacity of labor that the community of the receiving nation consents to their stay, apparently on a temporary basis. However, it does not refer to any type of occupation. The emigrant-immigrant performs low-skilled labor functions ³, and his survival depends on submitting to the condition of subjugation within the scope of labor relations - regardless of his legal status in the country in question (Sayad, 2004: 162-176).

In this context, he exclusively exercises a utilitarian function within the host society, so that, if this function were to be extinguished, his stay in a non-native nation would become devoid of purpose. Due to clear evidence of non-belonging, the immigrant's stay is tolerated only as long as he contributes with his work for the benefit of the receiving society. In extreme circumstances, the highly specialized (alienated) worker represents the symbol of the "animal laborans" described by Hanna Arendt (2000: 31): an individual who, lacking socio-political participation, carries out his activities in total isolation from the rest of the environment. world, focusing exclusively on its specific productive function.

The author also draws attention to the fact that everything that comes into contact with human life or establishes a lasting connection with it instantly assumes the nature of a condition for human existence. It is for this reason that human beings, regardless of their actions, are always influenced by conditioning factors.

Everything that naturally enters the scope of human experience or is introduced into it through human efforts is integrated into the human condition. The impact of the reality of the world on human existence is perceived and accepted as a force that establishes conditions.

The objectivity of the world, its quality as a thing or object, and the human condition are intrinsically connected; Given existence as a conditioned state, human existence would not be viable without the elements of the world, and these elements would be a set of disconnected items, a kind of non-world, if they did not play a conditioning role in human existence.

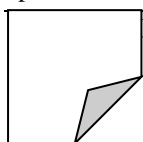
The rebellion of critical thinking

Understanding immigrants also means giving them a voice and the possibility of expressing themselves, something that is rarely permitted from an ethnocentric point of view.

²Hovey, J.D.; King, CA – “Acculturation stress, depression, and suicidal ideation among immigrant and second-generation Latino adolescents”. *Journal of American Academy Child Adolescence Psychiatry*; University of Michigan, USA, 35 (9): 1183-92,1992.;

Grisaru, N.; Budowic, D.; Witztum, E. – “Possessions By “Zar” among Ethiopian immigrants to Israel: psychopathology or culture-bound syndrome?”. *Psychopathology*. Israel, Ben-Gurion University of Negeu, 30(4): 223-33,1997.

³Sayad (2004: 162) uses the term OS, which in French means *ouvrier spécialisé* , or worker specialized, in the sense of a mechanical and alienating specialization.



The physical presence of emigrants/immigrants in receiving societies, as well as the stories they share and the sociocultural practices they bring with them, should not distract us from the hierarchies that persist in the migration process and that establish the supremacy of culture and the point of view of the receiving country (previously a colonial power), considered as the only legitimate ones.

Ethnocentrism, in essence, is an inherent characteristic of dominant groups and is rooted in the culture of these groups (a culture that aspires to be universal, absolute, the only true culture). This is because the dominant, being fully confident in themselves and their own culture, do not see the need to "reinvent" anything or to understand the practical realities of other groups. Even when there are exceptional occasions when they try to understand these culturally different "others" (the dominated), this understanding remains within the scope of theory and intellectual reflection. Even when they strive to avoid ethnocentrism, this broader understanding is still shaped by the values of their own culture (Sayad, 2004, p. 138).

Providing a voice to immigrants/emigrants and restoring their capacity for action implies recognizing that, in addition to their condition as subjugated, "subaltern", "hybrid" individuals and subject to contradictions, they are also critical and insurgent agents who they question, through their verbal and practical expressions, both the origins of migration and the persistence of hierarchical structures in the course of migration.

In contexts characterized by the close interconnection between the national order and the dynamics of emigration and immigration, defined by national states that attribute specific roles and characteristics to immigrants/emigrants, they challenge the demarcation between "national" and "non-national" categories and question the supposed illegitimacy of their presence, as well as the exclusion of rights, particularly in the political sphere.

This resistance can manifest itself through protests, political actions or refusal, for example, to obey deportation orders, it can also occur at academic levels in the development of research and academic works that explain the need for existential recognition.

The immigrant/emigrant becomes heretical to the order of immigration (and emigration) by rejecting conformity with a series of norms that define him, as well as defining the migratory (and emigration) phenomenon itself. This act of rejection involves resisting the imperative of transience, subordination in the work environment and political exclusion (or, as it is said, interference in matters that supposedly do not concern him) (Sayad, 2004, p. 112).

Questioning the partiality and limitations of predominant interpretations regarding migration, the same author, in the essay "O lar dos sem-família", Sayad (1980) also addresses the interdependence between work and housing for migrant workers, demonstrating how the characterization fundamental "temporary workforce" manifests itself objectively in the equally ephemeral conditions of housing.

This reflection reveals vulnerabilities that are accepted and legitimized, justified under the label of "precarious housing" for "poor residents". This is because the origins of these individuals are unquestionably "poor": immigrants are labeled as "savages" from "underdeveloped" nations, often former colonies.

The reduction of immigrants to a mere labor force also manifests itself in the way in which social policies aimed at them are planned and executed.

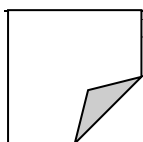
As these individuals are perceived – regrettably, from the point of view of receiving societies – as "complete" beings, their need is not just restricted to work, but also includes demands for housing, healthcare and even the possibility of retirement. In these cases, the asymmetry of power between nations of origin and destination facilitates management led by the receiving State, aiming at a specific "minimum cost" for these non-nationals. This occurs because, due to the lack of legal recognition, these migrants are deprived of their full human, social and labor rights, and are not granted rights equivalent to those granted to indigenous citizens, considered civilized, belonging to developed nations (Sayad, 1980).

Perceptions about immigrants' countries of origin are rooted in poverty and unemployment, which allows us to understand the concept of "trap" that Sayad attributes to the emigrant's condition. This trap lies in the illusory notion that the migrant is not being exploited for the benefit of the receiving society. Under the dynamics of power relations that favor the interests of the destination society, a complete reversal of positions occurs. According to Sayad's perspective, immigrants move from potential beneficiaries to a position of debtors, where they should originally be recognized as creditors (Sayad, 1998, p. 61).

The immigrant's identity is strongly influenced by both the nationality of origin and the stigmas resulting from hierarchies rooted in colonial culture. The divisions that emerged from the confrontation between "civilized" and "savage" during the colonial period are resurrected and updated in the relationship between "countries full of unemployed" and those that "create jobs".

The colonial legacy often obscures the reality that poverty and unemployment in countries of emigration are rooted in the consequences of colonialism, while simultaneously highlighting the wealth of a nation that offers an abundance of low-value jobs to an unemployed workforce and, therefore, available.

More than anyone else, immigrants carry with them the mark of the status and position attributed to their country in the international hierarchy of political, economic and cultural positions.



An immigrant is not just an isolated individual; he also represents, through his own existence and the way he was shaped as an immigrant, the very identity of his country of origin (Sayad, 1998, p. 241).

The immigrant from a country that was subjugated as a colony faces a duality of dominations, originating from his condition as a foreigner and emigrant from a subjugated nation.

This complexity in international relations is manifested in the distinction between foreigner and immigrant, since not every foreigner is automatically an immigrant, and conversely, not every immigrant is a foreigner. This categorization that differentiates "non-nationals" reveals the dynamics of domination that exist between the nations involved.

As highlighted by Sayad (1998), in the case of workers from other European nations, they can be considered foreigners according to the legal definition, but such categorization does not necessarily label them as immigrants.

It can be said, according to Sayad (1998), that the planet is divided into two distinct spheres: on the one hand, there is a world that holds political and economic dominance, producing mainly tourists; In this context, any foreigner from this influential world, even if he resides in another country for his entire life, is treated with the reverence corresponding to the status of "foreigner". On the other hand, there is a subjugated world that predominantly generates immigrants; Thus, any foreign individual from this world, even if they enter as a tourist and limit their stay to the period authorized for visitors, is considered a virtual immigrant or even a virtual "clandestine".

The foreigner threatens

When we refer to immigrants in this article, we are not referring to the executive who conducts international business, the scientist who temporarily moves to collaborate academically at a foreign university, nor the foreign wife or husband of an economically well-situated citizen. Although they may fit into the legal classification of immigrants, they lack the social status that truly characterizes this category.

They are considered foreigners, not immigrants. The immigrant is, so to speak, the "foreigner of foreigners", anyone who, even after obtaining citizenship, remains in a position of submission in the social structure, will continue to be labeled as an immigrant. social hierarchy, and not merely the lack of residence or naturalization documentation, which defines the immigrant.

The construction of this state is intrinsically linked to the process of depoliticization of immigrants, which implies their exclusion from the political sphere of the receiving society (Sayad, 1998: 63; 2004: 58).

In reality, the immigrant is reduced to a mere instrument, a body of work, whose usefulness is temporary; once his role in the immigration society is exhausted, he returns to his home nation. This transitory characteristic is a crucial element of the immigrant concept, as it reflects the feeling of not belonging.

The immigrant's permanence is always marked by the prospect of eventually returning to the country of origin or seeking naturalization, a process that implies obtaining the right to belong and the right to possess rights (Arendt, 1989) – although this citizenship does not always guarantee a true sense of belonging.

The immigrant exists, but is not fully present. His identity is often defined by contrast, as an indication of not being part of a specific political community: he is often seen as "illegal". Furthermore, even when he is recognized as belonging to the immigration society, his condition is precarious and temporary. The immigrant lives under the threat of being expelled, carrying with him the constant possibility of exclusion.

By maintaining the illusion of provisionality, the state's conception of politics remains unchanged. However, when the immigrant is examined outside of this functionality, he challenges this conception, as he exposes the threat to an order that, although naturalized, is, in fact, arbitrary. This order establishes that only national citizens have political rights and that only they are considered citizens.

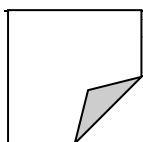
When observed beyond their practical function, the immigrant becomes a threat to the national order, revealing their non-intrinsic role of representation. Depoliticization, in this sense, emerges as a requirement for tolerance in relation to immigration, since it conceals the arbitrariness of the nationality criterion linked to citizenship. It is interesting to note that this arbitrariness becomes evident due to the presence of the immigrant.

According to Ramos (2013) cited in the master's thesis of the author of this article:

The Other may be seen as someone to be tolerated, as a full subject of a social group, as a positive social and cultural source, as a citizen with the right to affirm difference and participation, or as a threat and source of evil and, consequently, , a subject to exclude, discriminate against or eliminate. (Ramos, 2013, p. 347 in Pieruccetti, Leão S., 2022. Dissertation Thesis MA Dispute Resolution. Independent College Dublin).

Sayad (1998: 48-50; 2004: 76-81) investigates how the "immigration problem" has been discussed since the post-Second World War, through instrumental approaches that calculate costs and benefits, using criteria that are supposedly neutral to provide a seemingly objective answer to a question that is far from neutral or objective.

Even discourses that support the presence of immigrants are often based on functional arguments, such as the need for labor from outside due to demographic decline and the aging of the EU population. The



securitization of immigration, which uses technical and functional language – which seeks to be apolitical, but which carries political nuances – reinforces this (false) depoliticization of the immigrant.

In addition to functional representation, the depoliticization of immigration transforms it into an ethical and moral issue (Sayad, 1998: 60; 2004: 224). Instead of recognizing the immigrant's rights, the immigration society adopts a generous stance towards him, believing that it is being benevolent by "offering" him a job. In this context, citizenship ceases to be a right and becomes a gesture of generosity on the part of society, a gesture for which the immigrant, in turn, does not show gratitude. This establishes a dynamic of exchange where citizenship is considered a gift to be reciprocated by the immigrant through the abstention of their own agency.

If the immigrant assumes himself as a political agent, sharing his own narrative about his condition, he is seen as ungrateful, for confronting the sovereign who delegated part of his sovereignty to someone who, supposedly, had no right to it. This establishes an apparent relationship of reciprocity that, however, intrinsically carries a relationship of power and social hierarchies, essential to maintaining the immigrant's identity (Sayad, 1998, 2004). In this way, the discourse on the moral act conceals its true political nature.

As emphasized by Sayad (2004: 224), the "best way to depoliticize a social problem is to make it technical or to absorb it completely into the ethical field."

Through the use of technique and ethics, the political element is veiled, even if paradoxically the immigrant is highly representative of this aspect – precisely because of this representation.

The utilitarian and functional perspective of immigration (seen as "good" or "bad") conceals political values that are fundamentally rooted in the sovereign State.

The presence of the immigrant exposes the exclusionary nature of the distinction between national and non-national citizens, a distinction sustained by sovereignty. This presence challenges the modern political conception centered on the nation-state, putting at risk the order that the State seeks to guarantee by saying "I am your protector", revealing its inability to carry out such a guarantee completely (Sayad, 1998: 269; 2004 : 279-282). Therefore, the immigrant personifies the deficiency of the national order. Their only alternative is to maintain loyalty to this order through their work, reciprocating with submission and obedience the supposed generosity granted by the immigration society.

When leaving their country of origin, the emigrant abandons his participation in the political context of his country of origin, but does not fully integrate into the new political body of the immigration society. As a result, the immigrant is not merely someone who does not have national citizenship. Due to his perpetual identification as an emigrant, he embodies a double absence in relation to the national political order: both in the society of immigration and in the society of emigration. This duality creates an ambiguity that challenges the fundamental structure of the modern State, calling into question the clear political distinction between the interior and the exterior – something considered a significant crime by the immigrant, thus constituting an aggravating factor in criminal terms.

For this reason, simply excluding it from territorial borders is not enough; It is also necessary to eliminate this ambiguity within the State itself.

[the] immigrant (and with him the emigrant) is someone who cannot have, in one case *de jure* and in the other *de facto*, a civil identity. Thus dissociated from the entire national order, both that of immigration and emigration (...), and because this double dissociation made him a kind of abstract man – an "integral" man, one would say, as he escapes all determinations concrete, empirical, historical and

territorially, socially, politically and culturally (ie, nationally) specified, as it is free from all ties (social, national, etc.) that would identify it; the "ideal" man, in short, the one paradoxically postulated in the expression "Rights of Man" – the immigrant could end up, as for example the deportee ends up, being nothing more: nothing more than a singular and corporeal individuality, a biological and technical (a "body-work"). (Sayad, 1998 pg. 272-273),

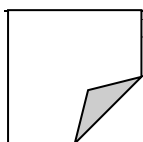
In a symbolic way, the immigrant personifies the archetype of the cosmopolitan man, someone without ties, to whom the human rights system should apply.

He points to the paradox of the ideal individual in the context of cosmopolitanism, someone who is invested with rights based on their humanity, not their political and social connections. However, the question arises: is it possible to conceive of humanity without political and social connections? Without such links, how could a human being be understood beyond being a "technical-biological organism"?

The figure of the abstract human being has no substance, and the immigrant, like all human beings, has an inherent political aspect. Therefore, the need arises to contemplate how he is allowed to exercise his political potential in a world in which the politician is strongly linked to state notions of belonging.

Nationality and citizenship of the immigrant/foreigner

The relationship between nationality and citizenship, a principle that has been increasingly questioned in recent decades due to increased mobility and the transgression of national borders, becomes evident. However, the alleged universal citizenship – which is based on the concept of man whose central identity is his abstract



humanity – is still anchored in national criteria of belonging, despite the constant challenge that the presence of the immigrant represents to these criteria.

As we explore, the growth of multiculturalism and the emergence of new generations of immigrants in European societies also transform the immigrant into a citizen who, even though he formally maintains his citizenship, is treated as an irregular presence. This irregularly attributed treatment highlights the failure of the myth of the purity of national identity constructed in the modern era.

The distinction between civic and cultural identities is an artificial construct, and all nations can be considered imagined communities (Anderson, 1991).

These nations are based on myths, representations and narratives of unity, whether through the idea of a shared cultural origin or a republican commitment. In this way, the European Union (EU) does not so much reveal the development of a post-national citizenship that goes beyond national identities, but rather the emergence of a transnational identity, in which several imagined communities are intertwined.

This intertwining undoes the exclusive divisions of the modern era, putting at risk both nation-states and the cohesion of the EU itself as a set of political institutions in formation, which seek to build a shared notion of community to obtain political legitimacy. However, EU institutions have not yet managed to overcome the historical connection between individual rights and duties, i.e. citizenship, and nationality. This bond persists as the main criterion of belonging, even in a world characterized by transnationality.

According to the reflections of Benedict Anderson (1991: 5-7), the concept of nation is characterized as an imaginary political construction, since the connection between its members is established in a kind of fiction, in which the majority of them never will have direct contact with each other, but they share an imaginary horizontal relationship.

In this context, identification occurs even in the absence of personal ties. Anderson's (1991) analysis explores the roots and development of this community imaginary, pointing out, initially in Western Europe, the decline of political legitimacy provided by religion and dynasties in the 17th century, which created the historical conditions for the emergence of nationalism.

Implicitly, the author alludes to the consolidation of the modern State as a facilitating factor in the formation of this national imaginary, as state sovereignty replaced the influence of the Church and, subsequently, broke with social hierarchies, allowing the emergence of a horizontal link based on the imagination of belonging to the same political community.

Previously, in dynastic political systems, poorly defined borders allowed a monarch to control vast and distant populations, characterized by diverse languages and customs (Anderson, 1991: 19). However, from the end of the 18th century, a new form of legitimacy began to emerge, in which national consciousness began to claim sovereignty over a supposedly homogeneous community, allowing the regulation of individuals through state institutions.

The formation of national consciousness occurred unconsciously, as vernacular languages developed and became official, a process that intensified with the large-scale dissemination of impressions made possible by 19th century capitalism.

This evolution allowed for a concrete removal of language from the sphere of authority and sacredness, making it accessible to a wider audience beyond circles of power.

Through technologies resulting from the capitalist production system, such as books and newspapers, an imaginary of common identity was established between individuals who had never met in person. This connection, although comprehensive – extending across thousands or millions of people – was limited by territorial borders.

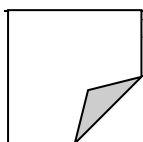
The emergence of national consciousness, therefore, gave rise to the peculiar universality of the nation-state. Although it began with the bourgeoisie and literate elite, the dissemination of knowledge facilitated by printing and the educational system not only entrenched the common language, but also reproduced a model of the nation-state that could be emulated by other nations (Anderson, 1991 : 81-82).

This expansion process reached its peak during the First World War and the final phase of the colonial period.

The nation, although just one of several possible ways of conceiving a political community, has acquired stability throughout history, appearing more like a natural reality of connection between individuals than a social construction. This sense of solidity was achieved in part due to the birth of the nation-state, which brought with it a perception of eternity, continually reinforced by discourses that affirm national identity and uphold the imagined nature of political community (Balibar, 2015).

This question raises the question: would people be willing to sacrifice their lives for a nation if it were just a mere status?

The emergence of national consciousness established a relationship of submission to the sovereignty of the State, something that was solidified by the establishment of citizenship through legal principles such as *jus solis* (right to soil, that is, birth in the territory) and *jus sanguinis* (right to blood, i.e., descent). In exchange for



this recognition, individuals gained a formalized feeling of belonging to the State, thus obtaining citizenship, which implied subjection to state authority accompanied by rights and obligations.

Several conceptual approaches fill the contemporary literature on citizenship, generating panoramas that vary between inclusion, weakening, expansion or even abandonment of citizenship throughout the 20th century (Kivisto & Faist, 2007). This leads to an application of the term "citizenship" with completely different meanings.

Faced with this diversity of interpretations, Christian Joppke (2007: 38) proposes a segmentation into three dimensions of citizenship, each of which leads to distinct approaches to the topic: status, related to legal affiliation to a given state sovereignty; the rights, corresponding to the abilities granted by such status; and identity, encompassing the feeling of belonging to a political community, embracing shared bonds with other citizens. This last dimension, as previously mentioned, is historically intertwined with nationality.

While nationality emerged as a criterion for citizenship, it is not entirely confused with it, since equality between citizens never implied equality between individuals⁴. Throughout history, several nationals of the same State, such as women, slaves and black people, held unequal rights and, often, more onerous duties than other compatriots.

Due to this internal disparity within nations, numerous investigations into citizenship have focused on its inclusive nature in the last century. This involves the recognition of previously marginalized groups, for example, women and black people, who, despite already having a nationality status, achieved rights to political participation and equal treatment in various Western societies throughout the 20th century.

At the same time, other scholars turn their attention to the erosion of "social citizenship", a concept coined by TH Marshall, who stated that economic inequalities imposed by capitalism should be limited through social rights provided by the State (Kivisto & Faist, 2007: 53 -56).

Citizenship remained linked to nationality without there being an in-depth consideration of the social construction of this link. Even the Universal Declaration of Human Rights⁵, which symbolizes the recognition of the individual's uniqueness beyond their national affiliation, grants legal validity to individual rights, but maintains state sovereignty as a fundamental principle and nationality as a universal right.

Intriguingly, foreign individuals cannot claim rights based on their "humanity" if they are not represented by a sovereign state (Balibar, 2004: 59). It is in this context that the immigrant begins to have an obligation towards the State that gives him a portion of its sovereignty in the form of protection.

In recent years, some of the literature that addresses the topic of citizenship has begun to question the association between citizenship and the nation-state as the basis for citizens' duties and rights.

Since 1948, when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted, many transformations have occurred. The era of globalization has intensified and expanded international mobility, leading many theorists to suggest that, although citizenship remains linked to the State, its identity dimension - as discussed by Joppke - in relation to nationality is being eroded. The advance in the universalization of human rights, the existence of multiculturally diverse societies and the diversity of legal pathways for obtaining dual or multiple citizenship have been interpreted as indicative of a new, more flexible type of citizenship.

Habermas (2001) argues that a post-national political community is viable, where the sense of belonging does not arise from ethnic, cultural or national values, but rather from collective adherence to the public processes of democracy. From this perspective, political identity would be built through the practice of public discussion and dialogue, where everyone could participate to achieve a joint understanding of political issues.

Habermas's thought suggests that a consensus can be reached through rational argumentation. The notion of post-national identity is based on a pluralistic culture of debate and democratic compromise, suitable for a multicultural Europe.

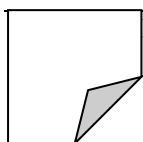
As noted earlier, Habermas uses the term "nation" in a pre-political sense, emphasizing the possibility of a political connection that transcends cultural ties. He normatively opposes national identity to European political identity, defending the distancing of the notion of nation. He states that "The flattening of the national identities of member states and their mixing into a 'European nation' is neither possible nor desirable" (Habermas, 2001: 126).

However, paradoxically, on another occasion, he also finds in the word "nation" a meaning that distances itself from shared cultural roots and, from the 19th century onwards, approaches a conception of civic union. This conception, he argues, supports the idea that just as the nation was built through "civil solidarity between strangers", this construction could continue on a European scale (Habermas, 2001: 129).

Therefore, contradictorily, Habermas argues that a "European nation" is feasible and desirable. He states that this path is based on Europe's own historical trajectory, which, despite conflicts, has been, since the Middle Ages, a history of pioneering learning in the coexistence of diversities (2001: 130-131).

⁴Sayad (2007, p.229.), in his book *The Suffering of the Immigrant*, calls "gentle violence" to explore the issues involved in naturalization and its symbolic interests when it comes to a "residential nationality" for the immigrant.

⁵ United Nations, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 10 Dec. 1948 .



Habermas further argues that the concept of "constitutional patriotism" as an element of political identity carries with it what Joppke (2007, 2008) calls the "paradox of universalism": if the uniqueness of a society derives from liberal-democratic principles, how does it achieve stand out from the rest? How is it viable to establish a feeling of belonging to a specific society and not to others? In this process, procedural liberalism was transmuted into norms with substantial content.

thickened form procedural framework for tolerance into substantive way of life, which the majority considers 'their' way of life and which is expected to be shared by immigrants and ethnic minorities, too" (...). "The excluding and thus identity-forging dimension of particular universalism can be formulated as the notion that the liberal state is only for liberal people. This is, of course, a profoundly illiberal idea" (Joppke, 2008: 541).

In apparent contrast to the communitarian approach, which uses cultural identity as a means of exclusion - and where the only route to integration for immigrants is naturalization or assimilation - the Habermasian perspective, often categorized as cosmopolitan, adheres to the same principle of exclusion by converting liberalism into a way of living. It is in this context that the concept of the universal metamorphoses into a particular characteristic, thus exposing its paradoxical nature.

II. Final Considerations:

In the contemporary world, migration has become an undeniable and constant reality, shaping social, political and economic dynamics on a global scale. As individuals seek new opportunities and refuge in foreign lands, it is imperative that we recognize and embrace the importance of establishing dignified treatment for immigrants.

One of the fundamental principles that must guide our policies and actions is respect for the humanity of each immigrant. Each person who crosses borders in search of a better life brings with them their own cultural, historical and personal identity. These identities are precious and must be respected and valued. The integration of immigrants as legal citizens is a crucial piece of this puzzle. It is a process that goes beyond legality; it is about recognizing the humanity and individuality of each person.

Furthermore, the integration of immigrants should not be limited to the political and economic sphere alone. It is essential to consider the psychological and cultural dimensions of your life. Each immigrant carries with them a unique baggage of experiences and stories, which contribute to their cultural identity. Preserving and respecting this identity is vital to the health and well-being of immigrants.

Neglecting these dimensions can lead to significant public and mental health problems. Immigrants who face discrimination, social exclusion or marginalization are at greater risk of developing mental health problems. Therefore, effective integration not only benefits immigrants, but also contributes to the prevention of public/mental health issues that can be costly and have undesirable consequences for host countries.

Recognizing the complexity of immigrants as human beings is a responsibility shared by all nations. By establishing dignified and respectful treatments, integrating them as full citizens and valuing their cultural identities, we can create more inclusive, diverse and healthy societies. This approach not only promotes the well-being of immigrants, but also strengthens public health and contributes to a more harmonious and equal world.

May we establish a constant reminder of the importance of embracing diversity and protecting the fundamental rights of all human beings, regardless of their origin or destiny.

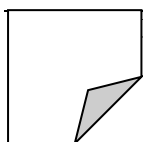
This article aimed to explore a series of complex themes related to identity, citizenship and belonging in the context of mobility and growing cultural diversity that characterize the contemporary world. Through the topics covered here, we examine how immigrant presence challenges entrenched concepts of nationality and citizenship while revealing the complexities of human identity and political communities.

One of the main points of discussion throughout this article was the imaginary nature of nations and how national identity is a political construct.

Nations are imagined communities, based on myths, representations and narratives of unity that often disregard the diversity intrinsic to modern societies. The emergence of nationalism and the nation-state brought with it a perception of eternity that was continually reinforced by discourses that affirmed national identity and upheld the imagined nature of political community.

However, as the world has become more globalized and multicultural, these imaginary boundaries of nations are being challenged. The immigrant, often labeled as a simple foreigner or threat, personifies the breakdown of territorial and cultural boundaries that have historically defined nations. Its presence calls into question the political conception centered on the nation-state and highlights the need to rethink the relationship between citizenship and nationality.

Another important point we proposed was to rethink the relationship between citizenship and identity. Citizenship, although historically linked to nationality, is undergoing a transformation as universal human rights and cultural diversity challenge the idea that citizenship is a right conditional on national affiliation. The emergence of a more flexible citizenship and the possibility of a post-national political community, as discussed



by Habermas, suggest that political identity can be constructed on the basis of democratic dialogue and participation, regardless of cultural ties.

However, this search for post-national citizenship is not without challenges and paradoxes. The "paradox of universalism" highlights how the pursuit of uniqueness in a liberal democratic society can paradoxically exclude those who do not fit this mold. Furthermore, transforming liberalism into a way of living can reinforce identity and political barriers.

In this context, critical thinking plays a fundamental role. The rebellion of critical thinking allows us to question dominant narratives about nationality, citizenship and identity. It challenges us to consider the complexities of the immigrant experience, often reduced to an "alien" or "threat", and to recognize the intrinsic political nature of the immigrant.

Ultimately, we invite readers of this article to also rethink our conceptions of identity, citizenship and belonging in an increasingly interconnected world. We must embrace the complexity of the human experience and recognize that identity cannot be reduced to a single national affiliation! Citizenship must evolve to reflect the universal values of human rights and the cultural diversity that characterizes our global society because in doing so, we can build a more inclusive and just world, where immigrants are no longer seen as mere objects of temporary work. not even as a threat, but as a valuable and equal part of the global community.

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