

## Semi-uncontrolled traffic and the subordination of immigrants. Between Asia and Europe. The rise of the extreme right

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### ABSTRACT

Intense global flows have led to an increase in migrant populations in European countries and in Portugal in particular. The growing difficulty of citizens from countries like Bangladesh, India or Pakistan in legalizing themselves and the political processes of rejection of those migrants - The Brexit for example - led to the search for alternatives to these routes dating back to the colonial era and the forced labor of indigenous people. Meanwhile, centuries later, smuggling is a reality, and it is in this context that Portugal in the post-crisis 2008 has become a legislatively friendlier country for immigrants, particularly through measures taken by the socialist government elected in 2015. Many of these immigrants, who - in some cases for decades - have not seen their relatives, could in 2018 fulfill that wish and some of them settled in Portugal, bringing their wives and having children already with Portuguese nationality. We will try to clarify how this process started in 2015 was developed and revealing, a social condition of individuals as unwanted pariahs and subjects of an illegal, and therefore exploitable body. The role of the state in overcoming this condition turns out essential.

**Keywords:** Immigrant, Illegal, Smuggling, Human rights.

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## INTRODUCTION

It was estimated in 2006 that about 20 million people had embarked on migratory projects originating in India (TROVÃO and ROSALES, 2010, p. 7), although it was only from the nineteenth century and especially during the twentieth century that social networks of Indian origin could be identified operating in Europe, when Bangladesh and Pakistan did not yet exist.<sup>2</sup> Even today, the same religious motives, to which terrorism, poverty and climate change or political instability are added, promote violent geo-demographic adjustments in these societies, forcing their nationals to emigrate. This is the case of Bangladesh, India or Pakistan where tropical cyclones, hurricanes, tides, heavy rains and the consistent rise in sea level (in a state where the geography is mostly at sea level and not above – Bangladesh), cause population exoduses that, in the face of decrepit taxonomies, are confused with economic migrations. Moreover, in full line with what is reported to us by the report "Global Trends; Forced Displacement in 2017" by UNHCR, the UN refugee agency.

Globally, the forcibly displaced population increased in 2017 by 2.9 million. By the end of the year, 68.5 million individuals were forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, or generalized violence. As a result, the world's forcibly displaced population remained yet again at a record high. (Disponível em <https://www.unhcr.org/5b27be547>)

In 2019 and giving a glimpse of the intensity of the process and according to the report published by the same UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the number represents an increase of 2.3 million compared to 2017. In the same report "Global Trends" it is revealed that 70.8 million people are in a situation of forced displacement in the world. This has had consequences in the host countries with an increase in xenophobia and racism. These displaced or transitory bodies, without a place or space for citizenship, require another political paradigm and action from the authorities, starting with the deconstruction of a discourse that represents them as bodies and subjects without history. It is in this confrontational framework that we intend to address, from this article, the ways in which discourses of subordination of migrants are socially produced, resorting to racial arguments, which associate, for example, illegal/informal practices to certain nationalities/classes, thus triggering processes of infra-hierarchization between the *us* and the *other*, under several intersecting dimensions. Discourse appears in this context as a way of hierarchizing social actors and, simultaneously, as a mirror of this hierarchization, in a way that discourse and its object seem to be one. How does this happen? Nevertheless, it is up to us to deconstruct this apparent uniqueness. On

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<sup>2</sup> At first, we reveal, in a colonial context, the recruitment of labor of Indian origin and its transportation to the colonies where its work was needed. It was a somewhat forced and deceptive migration, however, after the colonial period, a migration that Trovão and Rosales call "free" emerged, but following the migratory paths taken by their Indian ancestors, however, mostly confined to the territories historically subject to colonization (TROVÃO and ROSALES, 2010, p. 7 - 8). In a second moment, and more relevant to the case at hand, namely between the 50s and 60s, we detected migratory flows directed primarily to the territory of the English colonial power.



the other hand, we will seek to draw attention to the consequences and impacts of these processes on migrants and their migratory survival strategies. To this end, we observed from January 2015 onwards, Indian, Bangladeshi and Pakistani citizens who sought to obtain a residence permit in Portugal, analysing for this purpose travel financing strategies, search/supply of employment contracts or the social networks established and designed with a view, for example, to obtaining support in socio-economic vectors such as reception, housing, exchange of information, or countless other aspects that underlie the status of *illegal immigrant*. To this end, we used participant observation, with long periods of coexistence with individuals belonging to these populations, and non-participant observation, using semi-directive interviews,<sup>3</sup> through which we intend to counteract the growing trend towards the objectification of illegal bodies.

The analytical perspective highlighted above involves apprehending the subjectivity of the immigrant, as an object/universe of study, through the analysis not only of their behaviors and strategies, but also of the conditions that are provided to them in the host land. Namely, SEF procedures<sup>4</sup>, immigration laws and their effectiveness, rights of applicants for residence permits, average waiting time until SEF issues a decision, daily difficulties that derive from the illegality imposed, in short, a panoply of constraints that are imposed on them, also at the identity level. This presupposes the deconstruction and consequent integration of concepts such as nation, emigration, globalization, host country and *homeland*, among others, so it is imperative to structure them not as abstractions, but rather as nomenclatures that reflect and impose multiple relationships and interdependencies, often embodied in feelings of belonging or disidentification with the other in multiple dimensions (Cf. WOLF, 1985, p. 3). Which cultures change, the arrival, the host or both?

## **FLOWS, GLOBALIZATION, MORAL/SOCIAL PANIC AND ITS DIMENSIONS**

The history of the world and societies reflects contacts, relationships, encounters or disagreements, as well as the connections established in certain contexts and circumstances (WOLF, 1985). Often, however, history is apprehended from the point of view of great personalities or from a focus on great events, which are the primary sources of the construction of national identities/cosmogonies. However, anthropology, with the help of history, must celebrate<sup>5</sup> those who are socially constrained to have no history by remission to the invisibility of non-citizenship. This perspective should stimulate an approach that encourages the rescue of this past – in the meantime,

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<sup>3</sup> In any of the cases involving travel to their homes and in the second case, numerous interactions maintained on Rua do Benfornoso, in their workplaces or businesses.

<sup>4</sup> Foreigners and Borders Services. Recently dismantled, giving way to the Agency for Integration, Migration and Asylum (AIMA). AIMA appears on October 29, 2023 with the extinction of the Foreigners and Borders Service (SEF) and restructuring of the border control system. Administrative functions related to migrants and asylum are now handled by AIMA.

<sup>5</sup> Halbwachs, 1990; Collective memory and the argument that what is not celebrated, is forgotten and if it is forgotten, it does not exist.



made invisible – underlining the role of this history/stories in the establishment of new connections, relationships and interdependencies. It is these different stories – multi-situated and multicultural – that, in interaction, bring to visibility the space of social relations, as an arena where authentic battles for survival and identity struggle are fought (ORTNER, 1984). It is our goal to underline and deconstruct the various subjectivities, in a process of encounter between cultures, which oscillates, dialectically, between the encounter and its reciprocal creation/transformation (SAYAD, 1999, 2014). This encounter/transformation does not always occur voluntarily, "often the bosses and the ruling classes would like to make use of the available immigrant labor, without paying a cultural price for it." (SAYAD, 2014). In other words, the transformation brought about by the migratory encounters we are talking about may not be desired. In the alternative, the intensification of flows of various kinds that we have been witnessing in recent decades has promoted the collapse of old organizational/representative logics in various dimensions; local, regional, continental and transcontinental.<sup>6</sup> The aspects valued from the established interdependencies and their intensification (HARVEY, 1989, SHELLEY, 2010:37), especially at the economic and financial level - which, while advised by economic cycles of expansion - allowed the complacent, but selective, acceptance of socially, legally and administratively produced/incorporated migratory phenomena as illegal. Illegality has, therefore, at its base a fiction, which first defines a center of normality/legality and, in opposition to this center, elects numerous factors of destabilization, commonly known as illegalities. The notions of legality and illegality correspond, therefore, to a structure/power that monitors them, thus preventing a hypothetical loss of their structural and structuring effectiveness (BOURDIEU, 2002) In this context, the constitution of effective or reserve work grants, made up of individuals from countries typically or contextually in difficulties of various kinds, were conceived as useful or at least, indifferent. In this way, this interested and, therefore, subjective framing was legitimized in a social construction of a concept of illegality, gradually incorporated and thus becoming concrete. The relative social and economic stability in Europe and the United States in the post-World War II period - which lasted until the end of the twentieth century - as well as the staggering of a list of enemy countries, equally stable and easily represented as such<sup>7</sup>, facilitated this ambiguous view of migrants, both illegal and paradoxically useful, and often – while, unskilled or skilled - associated with inherently cheap labor. This stability has fostered the production of a taxonomy on migration, based on asylum seekers, economic migration, etc. (Cf. MEZZADRA, 2015, p. 11).<sup>8</sup> In this context,

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<sup>6</sup> "Human trafficking has increased dramatically with globalization, the rise of illicit trade, and the end of the Cold War. Free markets, free trade, increased economic competition, and the decline of state intervention in the economy have underlined, as undeniable facts, the emergence of the globalization process. This process is also characterised by the intensification of the mobility of goods and people, as well as the acceleration of communications. Remote parts of the world are now integrated into the global economy. However, entry controls in certain countries create barriers for those seeking to migrate." (SHELLEY, 2010:37)

<sup>7</sup> Greater effectiveness of institutions such as NATO and the UN.

<sup>8</sup> Nowadays other concepts emerge, such as climate refugees, asylum seekers for gender discrimination, etc.



the borders, which were carved out - at the time - as geographical limitations, take on a dimension of mediators of social relations between individuals from different countries, existing and demarcating geographical limits and, therefore, symbolic, being characterized by a controlled porosity, however, surreptitiously consented and interested. It should also be noted that these taxonomies emerged at a time when the mobility of populations and individuals had nothing to do with the current one in size and intensity, so that currently, mobility and migration are concepts that intersect (Cf. LÉDRUT, 1979 and RÉMY and VOYÉ, 1994).

## THE OTHER, STRANGE AND POTENTIALLY THREATENING – THE FAR RIGHT AND ITS RISE

The emergence of terrorist movements for which there was no such thing before, a framework - although terrorism is not a new fact in general - has demanded from the so-called developed economies an effort to adapt to a new type of war, unprogrammed, random, without military and military contingent, defined, which from the margins of the world structure emerges as a reinvented form of warmongering acting through violent operations called terrorists. that essentially affect the subjective feeling of insecurity, directing them to the centers of hegemonic power, namely reaching geographical areas of decision-making, of cultural, ideological, philosophical and civilizational expression *mainstream*. The identifiable enemy is followed by the opposer who may be the person with whom we have lived half-walled and known as a quiet neighbor for years. The paradigm of security is altered, as well as the imagery produced and associated with immigrants. They have become a threat to European political and social security and organization and even as probable culprits of the failure of the European welfare state, feeding the discursive enunciation of the extreme right on the rise all over the world. Flows perceived as entropic and potentiators of various disorders and, above all, as potentiators of the proliferation of terrorist acts. In Europe today, in addition to a xenophobic and racist reaction, there are moments of tension between Europeans themselves. Federalism, or the ideas that initially drove the EU, reveal cracks torn by nationalist ideals and negative prejudices towards the other. The recalcitrant agonism is not only directed at migrants or refugees<sup>9</sup> from other continents, it is also directed at the mobility of Europeans in transit through the Schengen area.<sup>10</sup> In this context, the countries close themselves off and claim for themselves autonomy that has been ceded for some time – by negotiation – while the tension between Europeans increases and the political discourse based on a *nationalist "we"* (BILIG, 1995), as opposed to a threatening *"they"*, enlists followers, in a process in which the production of the subjective sensation

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<sup>9</sup> In certain discourses, there is a dark intention to mitigate concepts and practices associated with the status of refugees, migrants and the possibility of some being terrorists.

<sup>10</sup> Therefore, it seems reasonable to us to say that mobility and migration can in certain cases be the same thing, and in these circumstances their differentiation is essentially political – some are citizens, others are not citizens.



of threat/insecurity results from more or less concerted actions that produce social panic (BOCAYUVA:49, MEZZADRA, 2015, p. 25-26, RUBIN in VANCE, 1984).

The increasing number of illegal immigrants and trafficked persons in a given area may result in an increase in discrimination and hostility towards the ethnic and racial minorities concerned. (SHELLEY, 2010, p. 61)

## BUSINESS CYCLES, RELIGION AND DISCOURSES ON IMMIGRATION

Other authors, however, argue in another direction; the conflict between immigrants and natives stems from the economic fragility, not only of migrants, but also of the economies of the host countries (DANCYGIER, 2012:1). In a confluent sense;

I delve into what this marginality and exclusion consists of and how they are elaborated and reconstructed in the web of everyday relations, often reflected by the procedures of institutions, for example the racialization of the economy and the law. (...) I want to underline the incongruity between an integrationist and multicultural rhetoric and the legal practices that seem to contribute a lot to its failure. I also want to deepen the concepts of citizenship. (CALAVITA, 2005:2)

Therefore, social panic is intensified by circumstances in which problems, also of economic origin, underlie this concertedly disseminated and produced alarmism that has essentially started to provide the extremist right-wing discourse since the economic and financial crisis. The economic aspect supported by Dancygier (2012:1), however, is not the only one to operate, currently, the religious issue takes on another dimension in the public sphere, re-entering and rekindling social panic, always latent and politically manipulated by ideological quarters. The prohibition of the wearing of the veil in France or the construction of mosques in Switzerland exemplifies cases in which religiously-based facts reassume a central role in public concerns (MAPRIL and BLANES, 2013:1), in a way that resembles homophobia or transphobia. These conflicts are reinforced by events in which social/moral panic generates violence against immigrants ([https://www.rtp.pt/noticias/pais/agressoes-no-porto-contrainmigrantes-terao-ligacoes-a-grupo-de-extrema-direita\\_a1569448](https://www.rtp.pt/noticias/pais/agressoes-no-porto-contrainmigrantes-terao-ligacoes-a-grupo-de-extrema-direita_a1569448)). Their motivation is varied and can range from Islamophobia, xenophobia or a mere aggressive reaction to immigration. Calavita tells us of a reactive phenomenon that occurred in Almería in the distant year 2000. Locals set fire to migrants' homes, shops and cars. As a result of these attacks, more than 70 immigrants engaged in agriculture were injured and hundreds lost their homes. A year later, in Salandra, Italy, nationalists attacked an orphanage housing 31 Albanian children, shouting, "Lynch the Albanians!" (CALAVITA, 2005:1, Cf. in the same sense BOCAYUVA:49, MAPRIL in LECHNER, 2015, Mezzadra, 2015). "(...) Unfortunately, this violence against migrants is very common (...)." <sup>11</sup> Calavita, points out that there is a certain socio-structural

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<sup>11</sup> A decade and a half later, Salvini emerges.



affinity between racism and the dominant culture, even when the discourse that emanates from this source underlines values of tolerance and apparent kindness in the face of multiculturalism (CALAVITA, 2005:2) On the other hand, we must also consider that the motivations, aspirations and desires of our interlocutors often go beyond the mere search for economic improvements to be obtained from emigration. "encompassing consumption patterns and lifestyles, family and kinship logics, search for autonomy, access to "modernity" projects, among many other vectors of analysis and action (...). This paradigm joins others that in the publishing Portuguese have been drawing attention to the study of the experiential dimensions of contemporary migratory phenomena (DIAS, 2012; Cf. MAPRIL, 2013, 2016, p. 475, LECHNER, 2015, MEZZADRA, 2015)". These facts give a subjective and agency dimension to the perspective and study of these phenomena, both from the side of borders as symbolic elements that generate illegality, and from the social actors object of this process.

### **ILLEGALITY AS A DIMENSION OF INCLUSION AND THE FOUNDATION OF EXTREMIST DISCOURSE TOWARDS MIGRANTS**

Therefore, we see the existence of multiple social dynamics, both upstream and downstream of the migration problem (SHELLEY, 201, p. 8 Cf. CARRERA and ELSPEETH, 2016). Moreover, in this context, we consider that in contemporary times, Asian immigrants can easily be connoted with Islam<sup>12</sup>, illegality or threat (<https://observador.pt/2024/05/24/lider-da-comunidade-do-bangladesh-nega-existencia-de-grupos-radicais-e-pede-a-tanger-correia-provas-de-suposta-cimeira-de-partido-proibido/>) living in these conditions, sometimes for decades, in European countries where they incorporate a status of non-citizen or second-class citizen. More than a form of exclusion, illegality becomes a dimension of inclusion that sustains the xenophobic and racist discursive statement. Therefore, it was not only the old organizational logics of the world system that were in the process of collapsing, but also the epistemological efficacy of the classical scientific taxonomies on immigration.

(...) for this production of the "foreign body" of the "illegal migrant" who – it is important to emphasize – is not a mere figure of "exclusion". As an "internal other," the "illegal" migrant is first and foremost the product of what Nicholas De Genova, in an important work on migration from Mexico to the United States, defined as "an active process of inclusion through illegalization." (MEZZADRA, 2015, p. 14)

At the same time, this same paradigm of citizenship that serves as a reference and the associated welfare state is also beginning to be questioned by European elites in its practical effectiveness in relation to their own fellow citizens from an ideological perspective. On the other

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<sup>12</sup> Many of our interlocutors refer to this as essential to the difficulty they experience in obtaining legality in Europe, which is why we have attached importance to an introductory note on terrorism and its consequences in Western countries.



hand, we are witnessing the emergence of a trend in the various systems of European citizenship, which gives primacy to the dimension of the culturalization of citizenship, that is, "citizenship is attributed according to the proof of the incorporation of certain values and ideas, in a clear assimilationist logic." In these cases, citizenship would be less access to formal rights and more the incorporation of certain ideas and patterns of behavior.<sup>13</sup> Regarding the central issue, we do not deny the informalities/illegality mediated as strategic ways for a hypothetical "legalization" in the national territory, but, more than associating them with the abstract condition of being an immigrant with a certain nationality, we seek above all to point out the factors that contribute to this marginalization/marginality of behaviors and strategies. To this end, we must bear in mind the past contexts of these migrants (SAYAD, 1999) and the confrontation with the experiences of another type of subordination, that is, the castration of rights, which constrains them to act strategically in the social and political arena, with reduced "mainstream" autonomy.<sup>14</sup>

### INDIA, PAKISTAN AND BANGLADESH

The creation of stereotypes violently applied to migrants not only makes them prisoners of this prison of (<https://theconversation.com/como-a-islamofobia-e-o-racismo-antipalestino-sao-fabricados-por-meio-da-desinformacao-216336>) representations (Cf. MACHADO, 1999, 2003), but should also be the first aspects to be overcome by social scientists and activists, in order to approach migrations from a perspective that includes the various cultural dimensions of these individuals, not only as social actors and actresses received in "host countries", but also as coming from "countries of emission" of people, who had their own existence and cultures, at a stage prior to the migratory project. According to Abdelmalek Sayad, immigrant culture, when confronted with the culture that receives it, integrates metamorphoses that make it a culture of arrival or a culture in creation. (1999:19), so that the changes produced in the culture of immigrants when confronted with the society that receives them, will also produce effects on the culture of the *homeland* (SAYAD, 1999, p. 20-21).<sup>15</sup> In Portugal it is possible to speak of the emergence of what authors such as Sandro

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<sup>13</sup> To think about the relevance of this theme, it is enough to recall the way in which, for many political movements in contemporary Europe, "Islam is seen as a 'foreign' religion, of 'immigrants', in the face of other so-called 'native' or 'autochthonous' religions and which, at best, has to be disciplined." (MAPRIL, 2016 and LECHNER, 2015)

<sup>14</sup> How to get around these emasculating dynamics? How to survive in inequality of circumstances? How to deal with illegality? This is what we propose to accomplish, knowing in advance that the relations between individuals and institutions, or between individuals and groups, are generally unequal. This is accentuated in this context by the fact that some of these social actors only emerge as subjects as immigrants and illegals, stripped of their history and in some way of their identity/affections. (Cf. AGIER, 2002, KULIK, 2003, PELLUCIUS and MISKOLCI, 2007)

<sup>15</sup> This is all the more important because this right of enunciation is often denied to it by the dominant discourses on migratory phenomena, which, in their logic of conduct, that is, of the governmentality of migration, organize these populations on the basis of their national, linguistic and religious belonging, silencing the complexities, ambiguities and procedural dimensions of the daily life experienced by concrete people (,, ). The demotic versions (as Baumann, 1996 called them) analysed here contest precisely these homogeneous and dominant portrayals of immigration, introducing complexity and ambiguity. (MAPRIL, 2016:475, LECHNER, 2015)



Mezzadra and Brett Nielsen (2013) call border subjectivities <sup>16</sup>and in this context it is possible to observe the ties that are established between Pakistanis, Indians and Bangladeshis, as well as, in another segment, between Brazilians or between Brazilians and Portuguese, in terms of the exchange of information and the availability of resources (suspended in social relations, in which the share capital raised plays a relevant role). These social networks are based on relations of nationality, common regional origin, gender, neighbourhood, sharing of language or knowledge and, in some cases, kinship (BOURDIEU, 2002, COLLEMAN, 1999, VERTOVEC, 2009). In specific cases, religion can also be a dimension of primary relevance. To understand them, we need to delve into the historical roots that underpin the relationship between, for example, Bangladeshis, Indians and Pakistanis. These networks reflect subjectivities that sustain the bridge between cultures of origin and cultures in creation (SAYAD, 1999), which can be rooted in the difficult living conditions in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, marked by episodes of terrorism and poverty.

#### BRIEF SOCIO-CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF THE GREATER MAINLAND INDIA:

In order to understand the subjectivities mentioned above, we must make a brief review of the historical facts that have long sustained the relations between Indians, Bangladeshis and Pakistanis. Even in the twentieth century, both Pakistan and Bangladesh were part of greater India. In 1947 India was divided into India and Pakistan, with Pakistan being mostly Muslim and India Hindu. As a consequence of this division, the province of Bengal was partitioned into East Bengal (Pakistan) and West Bengal (India). These events culminated in 1971<sup>17</sup> with a conflict over East Bengal's successful independence from Pakistan. This rebellion, which was based on a previous movement for the autonomy of the Bengali language (1952), resulted in the independence of Bangladesh. Earlier, the partition between West and East Bengal had had its social consequences. Muslims in Kolkata/Calcutta, India – West Bengal – are still a minority today in three respects: they belong to a community that is highly discriminated against on a daily basis, they belong to a group of Urdu speakers among a majority of Bengali speakers, and lastly;

(...) the third aspect to bear in mind regarding the minority status of Muslims in Calcutta is that they are essentially urban, while in East Bengal they live mainly in rural areas. The fact that they retain the language and customs of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh is the most eloquent comment on their sense of separation, not fully integrated into the life either of the city or of the state of West Bengal. (SEABROOK and SIDDIQUI, 2011, p. 5)

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<sup>16</sup> (...) by border political subjectivities, subjectivities that question the hegemonic models of construction of migratory regimes based on national belonging. This is especially true in the case Portuguese, where the idea of citizenship centered on interculturality conveys a model of organization of immigrant populations based on the idea of national communities, represented by their associations. (MAPRIL, 2016, Cf LECHNER, 2015)

<sup>17</sup> The arrival of these immigrants in Portugal must be framed in the history of immigration from the territories that today belong to Bangladesh and in its relationship with some events that occurred in the world economy and in national policies. Migratory movements from present-day Bangladesh began long before the founding of the state, which took place in 1971, and assumed, until the mid-1970s, the pattern of immigration linked to the colonial experience. (MAPRIL, 2005)



Do you wonder why they did not transition to Eastern Bangladesh? According to Seabrook and Siddiqui, the explanation is simple; the Urdu-speaking Muslims residing in Kolkata hail from Bihar. There is a curious parallel between the isolation of these Muslims in India and those 1.25 million Muslims from the state of Bihar who decided to migrate to Pakistan in 1960.

This was partly a consequence of the partition of India and the result of unrest in the state of Bihar. The exodus took place in the conviction that opportunities for Muslims would be greater in Pakistan than in India. Nevertheless, these unfortunates were trampled by the Bangladeshi war of independence in 1971. Thus, they were ostracized by the Bengalis, connoted as collaborators and forced to take refuge in refugee camps, protected by the UN. (SEABROOK and SIDDIQUI, 2011, p.45-46)<sup>18</sup>

Within this framework, it will be easy to understand that in this, as in many other cases, emigration has economic motivations, many of them, however, spurred on by political factors, exogenous to individuals considered in isolation. Even today, in a migratory context, these divergences are perceptible, between individuals who were once part of a single country, India. Thus, religion, language and roots in the territories subject to change of sovereignty have led and continue to lead to processes of discrimination, even so, susceptible to transformation in migratory contexts, which can be explained by the concept of transnational positionality.<sup>19</sup> This concept implies some duality in the directed analytical approach, involving the contexts of origin and destination. In Portugal, it is visible and observable in the relations between Indians, Bangladeshis and Pakistanis.<sup>20</sup>

## TAXONOMIES AND THEIR EPISTEMOLOGICAL EFFICACY

### ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL DIMENSIONS OF SUBORDINATION

These migratory flows to Europe, trapped by a tangle of various and multi-situated interdependencies that condition each other, are confronted with the prospect of an ever-increasing need for legal and administrative integration, which in turn is becoming more and more difficult to achieve through legalisation and the acquisition of differentially positive forms of citizenship. Therefore, alternative/informal strategies are activated as a form of reaction to increasingly hostile

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<sup>18</sup> Some of these camps in Bangladesh have become cities particularly similar to Calcutta (Kolkata). These Urdu-speaking Muslims were similarly stigmatized by the Communist Party, which converted poor people into small landowners, however, as long as they were Bengali speakers. Thus, the groups coming from Bihar were discriminated against and relegated to poverty, both in India (Calcutta) and in Bangladesh - refugee camps in Dhaka. (SEABROOK and SIDDIQUI, 2011:45-46)

<sup>19</sup> Translocational positionality is, according to Anthias, "one structured by the interplay of different locations, related to gender, ethnicity, race and class (amongst others), and their at times contradictory effects. (ANTHIAS, 2002, p.276 e 2000 in BASTOS e GOIS, 2010, p.138).

<sup>20</sup> "Bangladesh, one of the poorest countries in the world, is the source of many and varied forms of trafficking, including forced marriage, domestic servitude, slave labor in factories, or sexual exploitation of women and children. Slave labor takes place in factories relocated from other countries of the world where labor costs were higher, thus exploiting the Bengalis. Ironically, this exploitation takes place in a country where wages are already among the lowest in the world. This exploitation of Bengalis also takes place in bordering countries such as India and Pakistan, as well as in some Gulf countries." (SHELLEY, 2010, p.169) Translocational *positionality* can, for example, mean that someone who in India held a lower status, can reverse that position in Portugal by virtue of being able to provide an employment or accommodation contract.



and politically worked reception contexts for this outcome. These strategies can easily be integrated by discourses of illegality, which reinforce the connotation with a status of subordination, operating through stereotypes linked to certain nationalities or religions. These processes, accentuated by emerging nationalisms, connote ethnicity/nationality with crime, and, within these, with certain types of crimes, which, in turn, underline orientalized/essentialized characteristics (MACHADO, 1999), which tend to be incorporated by the host societies as corresponding to and integrating these immigrants. In this way, the process of subordination already underway is reinforced.<sup>21</sup> This state, which through its agents and institutions treats some as subordinates, creates anguish and frustration in the migrants who turn to it. The difficulty in legalizing or obtaining a legal employment contract encourages alternative avenues.<sup>22</sup> In this generic framework, the figure of the illegal immigrant, contrary to what one might suppose, is not only a consequence of a process of exclusion, it is, in Mezzadra's view, a concept that assumes a dimension of inclusion, through hierarchies of citizenship (2015, Cf CALAVITA, 2005, p.2). In a global context in which neoliberalism reigns and the extreme right is on the rise, these undocumented workers nevertheless constitute a reserve of labor (Cf. SAYAD, 1999), for jobs unwanted by the natives and in conditions of total or near-slavery.<sup>23</sup> Still, public statements around ideals such as the integration of migrants are common. "(...) integration has become a mantra on the lips of governments officials, opposition party members, and immigrant advocates alike<sup>24</sup>." (CALAVITA, 2005, p. 2). This may be happening today in Portugal, with citizens of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan (Cf. SHELLEY, 2010, p.149 and 151).

Many of the countries in this region (India, Bangladesh and Pakistan) are among the most densely populated in the world. Only India – among these – is experiencing any economic growth and a tendency towards the consolidation of the middle class. However, much of the Indian population, as well as Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan, remain in a state of deep poverty.

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<sup>21</sup> *Translocational positionality* can not only operate between Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis abroad, revolutionizing old statuses and recreating new ones, but generally operates a downward social mobility in the face of the relationship built between them and the natives. Criminal imagery, for example, can also be seen through a scientific discourse that can reinforce it: Transnational crime was synonymous with drug trafficking in the past, however, in contemporary times human trafficking is practiced on such a large scale that many transnational criminal groups engage in this type of activity. mainly. Like drug trafficking, human trafficking exists because of the demand of the developed world. Some transnational crime groups such as the Chinese Triads, Thai, Indian, Pakistani, Nigerian, Mexican, Russian-speaking, Albanian, and Balkan specialize in trading humans. (SHELLEY, 2010, p. 5)

<sup>22</sup> Forgery of airline tickets for example, one of our interlocutors paid €200 for one, in order to prove his entry into Portugal. Those who falsified the airline tickets were Portuguese.

<sup>23</sup> "This broad definition of trafficking includes sex trafficking as well as trafficking into exploitative work situations such as domestic help, agricultural workers, and workers in dangerous industries as well as those trafficked as child soldiers." (SHELLEY, 2010, p.11)

<sup>24</sup> We found that in Portugal the Bengalis, Indians and Pakistanis almost all use the same ones, since the passage of information is through word of mouth, at the same time, almost all these lawyers know each other. Their relationship with their customers is distant and in their waiting rooms, we see the daily presence of dozens of these individuals.



## CITIZENS AND OTHERS

Neoliberal capitalism and the recent extreme right that has acquired greater visibility with the election of Donald Trump in the United States, based on a marked arbitrariness of the circulation of commodities, capital and images, conceives in these alterities to citizenship, the spoils of this same global neoliberalism - *losers*. From this perspective, southern Europe, and more specifically Portugal, constitute an interface of entry into the continent – either from a physical perspective of crossing a border, or in a conceptual dimension of conditional acceptance into citizenship, through the residence permit – where cultural, religious, economic and political borders are in constant negotiation and the traditional conceptualization of border as a geographical delimitation. It begins to absorb and evidence hints of struggle and tension between subjectivities (Cf. MAPRIL and BLANES, 2013, p.7, Cf. ORTNER, 1987). This is confirmed by Sayad's argument that thinking about immigration implies thinking about i/emigration and its consequences in the countries of origin (1999, p.15). To this end, we also use Mezzadra's concept of border, in which the nomenclature goes beyond its mere geopolitical dimension. The fact that they cross the border, which has no legal and institutional legitimacy, leaves them with difficulties which they will have to overcome, and this cannot be achieved by the standards of European citizenship. This form of inclusion by illegality ends up following Foucault's reasoning. In other words, in contexts of extreme surveillance, the conditioned deviation can be the reinforcement of the norm, which through a fiction is socially incorporated as nature (1978).<sup>25</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Authors argue that the way in which religious, cultural and political expression takes place in the public space reveals the social place attributed to the social actors who are the subjects of these manifestations (Cf MAPRIL and BLANES, 2013, p.10). This hierarchization ends up producing and, simultaneously, absorbing a discursive statement about migrants, so the study of the flows of people must be part of this discourse. Discourse is thus part of the object, in a dialectical relationship that integrates them mutually (SAYAD, 1999:16, Cf. FOUCAULT 1978, 2003). In this context, we draw attention to Calavita's argument, which points out the following, that "despite this political rhetoric aimed at integration, immigrants remain pariahs, vulnerable to the type of attacks described here, as well as to experiences of exclusion" (2005:2). In this context, we find that there are several factors to be taken into consideration regarding the existence of opposing forces that operate socially,

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<sup>25</sup> With the incorporation of exclusion, the object is constituted as a special candidate for the status of threat and simultaneously of invisible, subjectivities that define its condition. Politically understood in this way, illegal immigrants are the contrast with the purity of the status of citizen, thus constituting themselves as the authority, the enunciation, the visibility and the political intelligibility of human subjectivity. On the contrary, the object suffers from a form of (impure) purity that demands silence as victims, invisibility, and apolitical beings. (COUTIN in GENOVA, 2010, p. 419)



generating tension, namely the economic recession experienced in Portugal since 2009. The fact that the country has assumed international relevance as a gateway to Europe and the Schengen area, religious aspects intertwined with the moral/social panic produced about global terrorism, refugees and immigrants, neoliberalism and its human wreckage, the resurgence of the far right in the Americas, Europe and also in Portugal, its contextual need for cheap and available labor exchanges, The strengthening of border policing, the increase in tension in social relations mediated by borders, the change in the paradigm of the concept of "work" and the competition for jobs and the contemporary global panorama, tends to conceive of immigrants as naturally illegal, thus incorporating them into societies, as a metaphor for non-citizenship.<sup>26</sup>

In this framework of approaches to the daily life of exclusion by the inclusion of the illegal, we realize that the cohabitation between all these individuals, more than just a reference of nationality, essentially obeys religious indicators. We have seen Pakistanis living with Bengali Muslims because they share the same religion, just as we have seen Bengali Hindus living with Indians. We remind you that Muslims don't eat pork and Hindus don't eat beef. The coexistence in a kitchen of different symbolizations of pure and impure is an obstacle to this cohabitation, as can religious rituals. Another aspect that brings these individuals together is the knowledge of the language, for example. As we can see, although we are analysing social actors with very different cultures and identities, as well as with geographically different origins, we find that some of the strategies used in the migratory context reveal some similarities, not least because their networks intersect. In these cases, there are too many living in just one house, thus lowering rental costs. The sharing of dwellings with other people and the exchange of dwellings are assumed as a means of meeting contextual needs according to the mobilities necessary for the implementation of their strategies, which do not only take place on a zonal scale, but also between countries or continents. It is also one of the items to be observed in xenophobic discourse.

We also see that there is a hierarchy between legal and illegal. Some migrants are now on the lists of far-right parties as a counterweight to their official discourse. The legal ones take advantage of this situation in the face of their illegal countrymen. Access to resources - restricted or expanded by the network of contacts of social actors - is, by the nature of the situation, necessarily different from that which is triggered by an individual with the capacity to experience citizenship, in the sense of being a citizen with rights and not just duties (not in the sense of being a national of the host country). Therefore, it will be incongruous to produce discourses of subordination of the illegal Bengali, Indian, Pakistani or even Brazilian associated with illegality. Different circumstances imply different strategies, as well as different moral valuations of those strategies. Contacts between

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<sup>26</sup> will allow me to problematize more broadly the nature of citizenship, belonging, and community in this global era. (CALAVITA,2005, p. 2)



compatriots and family members promote the entry of new individuals in Portugal, reflecting a growing importance of social networks and their weight through the internet. Nowadays, we see the presence of Asian immigrants in the large Portuguese cities and also in the rural areas of southern Portugal where they are mainly dedicated to agriculture. The gains made in Europe are capitalized on the *homeland*. We also conclude that the majority attempts regularization through article 88, which requires fewer requirements for granting residence permits, and which, because it is more generalist, also allows greater arbitrariness and discretion in granting or refusing permits – depending a lot on political orientations – a situation that, for the reasons already mentioned, changes in 2018 to the advantage of migrants.<sup>27</sup> It was, however, common for immigrants to spend years paying social security, without enjoying the rights corresponding to an individual with a residence permit.<sup>28</sup> The imbrication between globalized societies is clearly evident in the interpretation given to article 88 of Law 29/2012, amended in 2017 and 2018, which provided that at the end of 2014, beginning of 2015, a few thousand Bengalis, Pakistanis and Indian citizens moved to Portugal – Brazilians since the 80s and by phase professionally identifiable – from other European countries from which they began to be expelled – mainly from the United Kingdom – with the in order to legalize themselves. This last aspect underlines the preponderance of being an immigrant in the identity of the social actor, since nationality and other identity criteria prior to emigration are voluntarily made invisible. At the same time, the identity of the individual becomes that of "illegal", "undocumented", "refugee", etc. These labels acquire their own life and dynamics, which translate into the loss of rights. We also highlight the fact that these processes of subordination are associated with social dynamics of dehumanization of the other, accentuating the asymmetry in power relations between cultural centers and their peripheries, whether gender, nationality or economic. Nevertheless, the policies adopted in Portugal from 2018 onwards demonstrate how the State, in the sense of a structure that legislates and shapes behaviours/representations, has a role to play in the deconstruction of harmful categories, attributing to them more positive meanings. It depends a lot on the State, whatever it may be, to respect and ensure respect for human rights and the promotion of better living conditions for those who, at some point, as illegal immigrants, feel in their bodies the weight of having no place and are therefore subordinate. An immigrant, like a woman, is not born a woman, nor is he born an illegal

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<sup>27</sup> Decree 9/2018, which regulated the Legal Regime for the entry, stay, exit and removal of foreign citizens from the national territory contained in Law 102/2017 – fifth amendment to Law 29/2007

<sup>28</sup> "There are still waits for appointments of almost two years: as in the case of Amardeep Singh. It will belong to a pool of about three thousand processes that were admitted without requiring the requirement of regular entry into Portugal and that were suspended after an order signed in March 2016 by the director of SEF, Luísa Maia Gonçalves, determining that it is an "unavoidable condition" for the immigrant who applies under article 88 to have entered national territory regularly or to be within the Schengen visa period (90 days). (available at <https://www.publico.pt/2017/03/07/sociedade/noticia/a-vida-em-suspenso-do-imigrante-a-espera-da-regularizacao-1764221>)" As we said in 2018, this obstacle was legally resolved, however, there are news of mafias operating in the captivation of vacancies for appointments with the SEF and their subsequent sale on the black market, simply because they are no longer available through government channels. In August 2019 this also seems to have been resolved and the vacancies have returned to their original locus.



immigrant. It is the result of a certain structuring of power relations at different scales, scopes and intersectionalities. In 2023, SEF is extinguished and the Agency for Integration, Migration and Asylum (AIMA) is established. The objective is to humanize the relationship with the immigrant, however, what we are witnessing at the moment is an even greater delay in the legalization processes in a European political context in which the restriction and tighter control of the flows of people is being discussed. Humanization and swift regularization are the best antidotes to the racialized and xenophobic discourse of the far right.



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