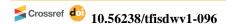
### Chapter 96

# International migration, poverty and care relations: the presence of immigrants in the city of Fortaleza, Ceará, Brazil



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#### **ABSTRACT**

In this article we analyze the presence of immigrants in poverty in the city of Fortaleza, Ceará, Brazil. Driven to study the issue of immigration, poverty, assistance, margins and the state, we seek to transform the "problems of immigration" into sociological problems. The condition of immigrant in poverty gains complexity by bringing to the discussion the relationship of assistance and the foundations of the idea of citizenship. We start from the understanding that the very condition of "displaced" experienced by

the immigrant, on the margins of the legal and illegal, implies interventions by the State. In this sense, we take with empirical field the relations of assistance experienced by immigrants in poverty who use the social assistance institutions of the capital of Ceará in search of social protection. Situated this proposal in the field of qualitative research, the research of bibliographic ethnographic, and documentary inspiration was used as methodological resources. In the research work, the analysis of journalistic articles was also used in order to verify the mechanisms of social classification of immigrants in poverty, their experiences and social representations. production of research data pointed to new demands of contemporary transactional actors, migratory dynamics and urgent and current demands, which require the State a series of interventions, reaching Fortaleza as an important region of entry of international immigrants.

**Keywords**: Immigration, Poverty, State. Margins, Assistance.

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

Migration is a distant phenomenon, present in the history of the human being. With the transformations generated by contemporary globalization, there is an intensification of population displacements and cultural exchanges, which take on different contours. Situated the international migratory movements from the process of productive restructuring and the current context of globalization, in its multiple dimensions and consequences, it can be said that the increase in the volume and significance of international migrations reflect the social, political, economic, demographic and cultural changes that encompass the transnationalization of national borders. Thus, driven by the two world wars, decolonization and cold war, the twentieth century is considered the "age of migration" (CASTLES, MILLER; 2009).

In seeking to understand the phenomenon of immigration in its entirety, Sayad (1998) discusses that the conditions that lead to migration and the forms of insertion of migrants in the receiving country are consequences, above all, ofthe precarious conditions of survival of immigrants in their country of origin. For this, migration is seen as a total process, because one must consider its historical, political perspective and the structures present in the functioning of society. This fact makes them make up the category of emigrants (from there) and immigrants (here), paradoxically constituting their existential condition. Immigrants in poverty when they arrive in the receiving countries are often used as a workforce and

perceived by the natives as a "problem", tied to the notion of social expenditure generators, threats to culture and established tradition.

Pierre Bourdieu, in a preface to The Immigration or the paradoxes of otherness (1998) authored by Abdelmalek Sayad, points out that the condition of "being an immigrant" has cultural and identity implications, because "the immigrant may be in a place where he is neither a citizen nor a foreigner". This condition of the immigrant tied to displacement, mobility and movement, succinct to the need to think about the fundamentals of citizenship and the State, since the immigrant demands from the State a series of legal, social, civil and economic conditions, which reverberate in public policies, in what is usually classified as immigration problems.

Therefore, the very nature of immigration can only be captured through the different problems that are associated with it (SAYAD, 1998), with emphasis on poverty. This condition of "displaced" of the immigrant imposes difficulties of analysis, even for the sciences, which perhaps incorporate the views or representations of the official bodies. In this respect, Bourdieu (1998) warns that research that would cover so-called immigration problems should turn to looking at the social experience of immigrants, in order to deepen more intimate issues of the condition of the foreigner, covering the causes and reasons that would have determined their departures from the countries of origin and the diversity of their conditions and trajectories.

Based on this assumption, we seek to transform immigration problems into sociological problems (LENOIR, 1993). Weowe with empirical field the immigrant presence and the relations of assistance experienced by immigrants in poverty who use the social assistance institutions of Fortaleza, Ceará, Brazil. In this intention, some questions become pertinent: How do immigrant subjects experience the condition of poverty in the city of Fortaleza? How do state institutions and civil society assist immigrants in search of social protection? How do social classifications homogenize or differentiate the condition of immigrants in poverty? Situated this proposal in the field of qualitative research, the research of ethnographic, bibliographic and documentary inspiration was used as methodological resources. In the research work, the analysis of journalistic articles was also used in order to verify the mechanisms of social classification of immigrants in poverty in the capital of Ceará, their experiences and social representations. The research data pointedto new demands from contemporary transactional actors, migratory dynamics and urgent and current demands, which require a series of interventions from the State, reaching Fortaleza as an important region of entry of international immigrants.

## 2 THE IMMIGRANT IN POVERTY LIVING IN THE "LAND OF THE OTHER": MIGRATION AND ASSISTANCE RELATIONS IN FORTALEZA

The dynamics of the population's spatial mobility process, in the scenario of globalization, changes in the 1980s and 1990s. Traditional immigration countries become locus of emigration. In the case of Brazil, there is a reversal of the international migration profile, with the departure of a significant number of

Brazilians towards North America, Japan and Europe. In the period of 1990 and 2000, migration flows to Brazil indicate the entry of new immigrants to Brazil, mainly from South America (40%), with predominance of Bolivians, Paraguayans, Peruvians and Venezuelans, followed by Europe (20%), Asia (12.5%) and North America (9.1%) (PATARRA, BAENINGER, 2005). The latest census data also point to the increase in immigrants from Africa (Congo, Angola), Asia (Bangladesh, China), Haiti (Caribbean) and Latin American countries, as mentioned above, with a predominance of Bolivians, Paraguayans, Peruvians and Venezuelans (IBGE, 2010). These population displacements are marked by a series of legal impediments and the expansion of people living in the underground, due to the lack of documentation, with limited access to public rights and services.

The consolidation of Brazil on the path of new international migrations reverberates in the permanence or transience of immigrants and in the construction of new migratory processes in the regions of the country. According to the "Thematic Atlas: International Migrationin the Northeast Region" (2019), between 2000 and 2017, Ceará consolidated itself as the second State of the Northeast of Brazil that received the most international migrants. During this period, the state received 26,400 foreigners. It is estimated that there is also an increasing number of asylum applications. According to data from the National Committee for Refugees (CONARE), linked to the Ministry of Justice, there were more than 1,000 asylum applications in the capital of Ceará alone, between 2011 and 2019. Venezuelans lead the orders, followed by Africans from Guinea-Bissau and Cubans. These data, however, do not cover persons who are illegal.

In recent years, this immigrant presence in the state of Ceará, especially in Fortaleza, has aroused recurring representations disseminated by the mass media that point, above all, to the living and working conditions of immigrants, actions in the context of public assistance and the solidarity of religious entities and civil society, according to the newspaper O Povo (2019) in an article entitled "About 90 Venezuelans are living in a subhuman situation in the Center". In "Immigrants seek alternatives to life in Ceará", The State (2016) warns of the difficulties encountered by immigrants in Fortaleza and the construction of subsistence alternatives. And articles with similar titles of the Diário do Nordeste "Imigrantes seek better living conditions in Ceará" (REDAÇÂO, 2015) and in "Immigrants seek a fresh start and face a new beginning and face a job market in the EC" (MESQUITA, 2019), and on the website of O Povo, "Ceará is the 2nd state of the Northeast that receives more international migrants" (MOURA, 2019) are portrayed foreigners who migrate attracted by tourism and the possibility of investment, and qualified professionals who enter the formal labor market or who are looking for opportunities to build a professional career.

These journalistic articles set in motion mechanisms for the construction of images about foreigners who associate them with poverty, the search for better living conditions and work. Thus, although representations were identified regarding the allocation of skilled labor and the initiative of investor tourists, there are many who portray immigrants as subjects with lower schooling and undervalued occupations, usually with low social status. Among these perceptions that characterized the situation of immigrants stand

out the images related to an ambivalent subject, which unites opposite dimensions of departure and arrival, belonging and non-belonging. Other images suggest representations linked to violence, deviation, breaking family ties, vulnerabilities, social disaggregation and intertwine with processes of marginalization, social disqualification and stigmatization of immigrants. As SAID (2003) these discourses are constructed according to the resignification that are made of the immigrant.

In the representations, brought by these articles of local newspapers, about the motivations that caused migration, attention is drawn to the causes related to war situations, political conflicts, poverty in native countries and search for work and survival of those who migrate and their families. The representation of poverty is dominant, with the causes and consequences of migration. When dealing with the effects of migration, the forms of insertion of migrants in the receiving country are pointed out, focusing on the poverty situation experienced by them. The image is recurrent that, when arriving in the receiving countries, immigrants face precarious conditions of survival, absence of specialized places of care, processes of prejudice and stigmatization, linguistic and cultural barriers that hinder the insertion in the formal labor market, difficulty with regard to the cost and regulation of civil documentation. The increase in the number of migrations to Ceará, in turn, is explained by the tourist specificities of the region and its hospitable nature. Ceará is paradoxically portrayed as a place of investment in transnational capital, which presents opportunities for work and study.

There is also a process of differentiating the condition of being a migrant. The reports bring the opposition of those immigrants who seek "opportunities" of life and work in Fortaleza in distinction from those who are passengers attracted by the sights. Or those who are in temporary situation, who applied for a visa to work or study, and immigrants considered permanent, such as those people who constituted family with other Brazilians. In the speeches of official authorities, explained by these matters, the figure of the "poor" immigrant is highlighted, tied to the notion of people in situations of social vulnerability, dependent on public or private assistance, and susceptible to illegal practices and involvement with crime. The lack of regulation of civil documentation, in view of its costs, is repeatedly perceived as a factor in the insertion of these immigrants in precarious jobs, or in illegal practices. Language barriers and non-validity of university diplomas are also pointed out as difficulties for inclusion in the formal labor market.

Thus, the practices of legality and illegality, partly represented by the very condition of immigrant in a situation of poorpeople living in the "land of the other", which make them move between employment, unemployment and informality, exposing them to various survival strategies (TELLES, 2010). Reference is made to the article in the newspaper O Povo (2019) about the presence of Venezuelan immigrants and refugees who are in the Center of Fortaleza (commercial district) in extreme poverty, depending on donations to pay daily rent and minimum food for survival. These immigrants were on the streets and/or signs of the city center as "beggars" at the time of the intervention of the assistance institutions. As highlighted by the aforementioned article, in view of this situation, a reception network was organized to

assist families and "to direct basic human rights: housing, education, health", which encompassed the action of the church, civil society and public power.

The organization of this service network presupposes the establishment of interdependent and complex connections that would make up a care relationship, consisting of connected flows of human, material and symbolic resources. This relationship of assistance is what would define the condition of poorza for Paugam and Simmel. According to Paugam (1999), social disqualification arises due to the exclusion of the individual from the labor market and the need to resort to the social assistance system. Although with different trajectories, Simmel (2014) exposes that the poor resemble the foreigner, because the sociocultural condition of "being poor", can be determined by the assistance that someone receives publicly from the State or the community. This relationship becomes necessary, according to the author, because the foreigner when arriving at the other's land is in an external and marginal position in relation to the community of destination, which exposes him to the economic and social risk related to the precarious insertion to work and weakened affective bonds. For him, only the political category of citizenship would exceed the stigmatizing character of the assisted.

In the context of the care relationship, it is observed that in their wanderings the immigrant maintains contact with the institutional scenario, using the actions of governmental and non-governmental organizations that offer social assistance services. In contact with these subjects, a constant flow of back and forth to the social institutions involved in the provision of these resources was identified. In the city of Fortaleza, in addition to the network that acts primarily in the care of immigrants, with emphasis on the Immigrant Pastoral and the State Program for The Care of Migrants, Refugees and Combating Trafficking in Persons linked to the Secretariat of Social Protection, Justice, Citizenship, Women and Human Rights, the presence of immigrants in the equipment that make up the National Social Assistance Policy is identified, social assistance reference centres (CRAS).

With regard to the attendance in the equipment of the Social Assistance Policy and, specifically, the social assistance right of people in migratory situation, in Brazil, it is recognized that immigrants are subjects of rights, with rights guaranteed both in national and international legal systems, regardless of the regularity of their migratory situation, especially the Federal Constitution of 1988 and international human rights law. In this mainstay, it is worth noting Article 1, of Law No. 8,742/1993, the Organic Law of Social Assistance (LOAS), which establishes "social assistance, citizen's right and duty of the State, is a non-contributory Social Security Policy, which provides social minimums, carried out through an integrated set of public initiative and society actions, to ensure that basic needs are in place" (BRASIL, 1993). In a thesis, it can be inferred that, according to the legislation covering LOAS (1993; 2007; 2011), international immigrants, refugees and stateless persons, whether regular or not, even if documented provisionally, may be subject to users of public social assistance policy, as well as Brazilians and be entitled to social assistance goods and services.

Mapping the social institutions and the relationship of assistance that are instituted in the care of immigrants in search of social protection evidences, in this work, the dialogues with cras (public equipment within the scope of the municipal administration) and the Pastoral do Imigrante (religious entity). According to law no. 8,742/1993, CRAS is a basic social protection unit of the Brazilian Unified Social Assistance System (SUAS), which aims to prevent the occurrence of situations of vulnerabilities and social risks in the territories, through the articulation of social assistance services and the provision of services, programs and socio-assistance projects. The provision of services in cras should be planned according to the particularities of the territory of coverage and the families who live in it, their needs and potentialities, as well as the identification of existing situations of social vulnerability.

Within the framework of non-governmental organizations, the Pastoral do Migrante is part of the Episcopal Commission for the Service of Charity, Justice and Peace and the Pastoral care of Human Mobility of the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil (CNBB). Founded in 1995 in the capital of Ceará, the Pastoral do Migrante is coordinated by Immigrants and Christian religious scalabrinas, and its social practice is based on representations of a religious nature, which proposes acceptance, protection, promotion and integration to immigrants. According to pastoral, its social actions start from the premise of welcoming the immigrant in need of assistance. As people in need of welcome, immigrants "find themselves in search of a better life, far from poverty, hunger, exploitation and the unfair distribution of the planet's resources (Pope Francis)."

In contact with these institutions, one can closely monitor the care directed to immigrants in poverty who come to Fortaleza in search of better living and working conditions. These subjects, through spontaneous demand, sought social assistance equipment in search of basic food basket benefits; inclusion in the Single Register for social policies; access to the Bolsa Família Program, today replaced by Brazil Aid; access to housing or temporary housing; legal guidance; issuance of documents; training courses and professional referral; guidance and referrals to the network of social assistance services and other public policies, such as health and education. At this time, they shared situations of prejudice, life experiences, material deprivations, legal-bureaucratic difficulties and symbolic barriers they experienced in their place of destiny. Most were accompanied by other people in their daily sociability network, in part by family members, people who lived near their homes with whom they had some kind of relationship or assistance, other immigrants.

In the practices of this care network, immigrants are faced with actions that run into targeted social protection policies, improvement of the identification of users and the compatibilization of programs to existing resources, reducing government action to minimum or compensatory functions. In turn, the official discourses that permeate the relations of assistance oscillate between resilience, resignification and critical understanding of immigrant status. The double contradiction, manifested in the provisional state of being an immigrant that reflects the enduring problems faced in their daily life, can be observed in his reports on the forms of adaptation in the "land of the other", which covers the negotiation of the original traditions

and the question of language. The learning of the native language, the knowledge of the legal-bureaucratic formalities, the acquisition of the means necessary for survival and the insertion in the labor market are recognized by immigrants as a system of practices or patterns of behavior that encompass the processes of integration resulting from it.

Finally, it is understood that the condition of being a migrant in poverty covers a status established through social classifications, which mark relations of otherness and processes of identity resignification, and also implies intervention by the State in the field of public policies. According to Augé (2010), the tension that the presence of the immigrant provokes in the land of the other reverberates in the challenges that the immigrant faces to overcome the cultural and material differences found in the host country. In the migration process, borders, which can be natural, linguistic, cultural and political, are configured as ways of reaffirming identities and reveal those who are "inside" and "outside". Thus, the identity of people in mobility is felt from their condition of ambivalence, consisting of the lived experience of daily life and as an aspect of social differentiation. As CASTELLS (2002) points out, actors who find themselves in devalued and/or stigmatized positions, in turn, develop an identity of resistance. These individual and collective identities of the immigrant enable the formation of social immigration networks, including these care networks focused on the "problems" arising from immigration, which enable the organization of survival strategies, permeated by processes of contradictions and conflicts.

#### **3 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The discussions about migratory movements evidence the immigrant's identities in a relational and situational bias, consisting of the lived experience of daily life. Upon arriving in the land of the other, the immigrant is oshes physical and symbolic boundaries between "us" and "them" that hinder access to different material resources, making them move between employment, unemployment, informality and exposing them to various survival strategies. The borders of the legal and the illegal are further permeated by the increasingly rigid demands placed by the receiving countries to prevent the entry of *outsiders*. In the context where immigrants are seen as cultural, social and economic threats, one of the most problematic current aspects of immigration and globalization is poverty and social exclusion. The establishment of a network of assistance is justified, in turn, by the very condition of "displaced" experienced by the immigrant, on the margins of the illegalisms.

Differences, inequalities and discrimination are intertwined in the experience of migrants in poverty. The difficulty in accessing the structure of social and economic opportunities result in an increase in situations of social unprotection and insecurity, which highlights the problems of exclusion and marginality. Thus, it is observed that in the absence of a public measure of equivalence (of rights) referenced in the values of social justice, equality and equity, they may imply guilt and accountability of individuals for changes of a supposed "their destiny", above all, when based on a naturalized conception of poverty or inadequacy of capacities. In the opposite conception, the reflections, raised here, on the living conditions

of migrants in poverty consider the importance of expanding public policies and actions in the face of this situation, based on the perspective of the rights of immigrants and their families. Poverty is understood in its multidimensionality, reaffirming the centrality of the state that guaranteed social protection.

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