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## MIGRANTS AND IDENTITY BUILDING

### Cosmopolitan identity

#### Essay

According to 2013 UN migration statistics, 232 million people are living abroad worldwide. It almost equals 3 percent of the world's population (similar to the population of Brazil). This fact makes international migration a key characteristic of globalization and one of the most important problems on the international agenda. If all the migrants were inside the borders of one state, this state would be the fifth most populous in the world. One country can be a country of destination, origin or transit, it can combine two roles or even three. Almost every country in the world is influenced by migration in this or that way, so in our globalizing world it is very important to take migration processes into consideration.

It is part of human history to move, relocate looking for a better life and greater opportunities. In fact, there are many complex factors that drive and determine migration. It is believed that most migrants leave their homes to have a better living, probably in a healthier environment, or to reunite with their families, friends or their loved ones with whom they were once separated by thousands of kilometers and bureaucratic barriers. However, lots of people do not move in search of a better life, but run from something: wars, armed conflicts, environmental and other disasters; some people were previously involved in trafficking, tortured or submitted to other forms of degrading treatment. Those people are devastated and scared for their lives. Finally, those who choose to migrate are mostly driven by the Scott F. Fitzgerald's green light at the end of the dock, the dream, the ultimate future, a desire for greater happiness and prosperity.

Massive levels of immigration have brought great levels of diversity into local communities, as well as the major change into the notion of national identity. The fast demographic transformation recently coincided with the economic downfall. Politicians are having trouble solving new complex political issues and responding to emerging challenges, such as hybrid identity, social inequality or instability in economics and politics caused by increasing

migration flows in the era of globalization. It all has transformed into a harsh critique of "multiculturalism", claiming that some policies do not bring people together, but emphasize differences, divide societies and break up communities. People get scared for the future of their communities: their identity, culture, languages, ideals and values. Nowadays, many countries respond to it by narrowing the right to residence and citizenship in order to protect communities and isolate their cultures, in some way punishing "the aliens", those who come from somewhere else.

It is believed that people are strongly attached to their compatriots, people who share their national identity. It is true, but the thing is that there are ways to peacefully coexist within larger, more diverse groups of people. And I am not talking about putting aside national loyalties. I would like to talk about cosmopolitanism as one of the ways to peaceful coexistence. Martha Nussbaum (Nussbaum & Cohen, 1996) says cosmopolitans are those people "whose primary allegiance is to the worldwide community of human beings" (p.4). Cosmopolitanism is an ancient normative ideal, which argues that all citizens of the world (kosmopolites) are part of one single community which is controlled by universal law (Werner, 2010). According to the cosmopolitan reasoning, all human beings are morally equal in terms that they should be the subjects of equal moral concern. All people should be morally equal, regardless of their membership in any particular political community, ethnic group, religion, race, or another mode of affiliation. According to the moral equality principle, people should be able to decide for themselves where they can achieve their life goals and live a flourishing life, i.e. according to the cosmopolitan ideal, migration is to be considered as a human right. In a globalized economy in which national borders are of decreasing importance for the movement of goods and capital, services and information, the right to migrate is necessary for labors to compete on fair terms in the global market. A cosmopolitan does not need to forget his/her national belonging; on the contrary, cosmopolitan education can lead to a different result, it can help one to understand his/her own culture and to better understand people living in other places of the world.

Cosmopolitanism is very much connected to globalization and identity studies, and it is relevant for the democratization process. Cosmopolitan norms are part of democratic practice; they should be widely used not only in international relations, but also on the local level, within local communities. Cosmopolitanism does not stand for the abolition of the

nation-states concept, but it promotes that everyone should have the right to migrate/relocate, and that the legal rights of citizenship should be more universal, a person should not be constrained to national borders.

Contemporary trends are more willing to step back from strongly localized traditional studies. Let's think, for instance, about contemporary migrants: in many ways they are connected with their home, some of them are oriented towards return, maintaining a strong identification with their sending context. There are those migrants who have developed to be at the same time part of the both contexts. They have this intermediate status. In the era of globalization relationships and the most important links can be maintained even at a long distance. Those people preserve their national identity, but time passes and their identities, ideals and values get influenced by the identities of the receiving communities. It is quite hard to stop these processes in the era of globalization. People adopt to changes, they assimilate, their children are products of two (or more) cultures, two (or more) identities. Strict borders do not exist any more. A cosmopolitan is "someone who thinks that the world is, so to speak, our shared hometown" (Appiah, 2005). This is how most of our century's immigrants perceive the reality around them, since they can easily travel back and forth between their home country and the receiving country. The thing is that this kind of perception poses danger to the receiving states, such as the unwillingness to fully integrate in the life of a receiving community. This modern cosmopolitan identity of immigrants is very much different from the Kantian one. It is more complex and will have yet unknown impact on the national identities and societies all over the world. And this fact makes new cosmopolitan identity yet more exiting to study.

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