

A CASE STUDY: COSTA RICAN PERCEPTION OF NICARAGUAN
MIGRANTS

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MIGRANTS**

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ABSTRACT

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Costa Rica is proud of its pacifist and democratic tradition based on the idea of being a white nation. It is indeed one of the most developed countries in Latin America in terms of human development, human rights, access to health care services and technologies. It is also one of the few countries that do not possess a regular army since 1948. On the other hand, there is a great amount of migration flow especially from Nicaragua bordering the north of the country. There are many reasons for this flow of Nicaraguan migrants, who arrive in Costa Rica both in irregular and legal ways. However, with the amount of these “foreigners” increasing every year, the Costa Rican society has been asking whether they are about to lose their identity, whose self-perceived aspects are mentioned above. Some call this xenophobia, while there are many academicians and ordinary citizens who oppose this attitude against the Nicaraguans living in their country. What matters, in this thesis, is that the Nicaraguan population has been feeling ontologically threatened, or in other words ontologically vulnerable, a term which is employed in this thesis to explain the socially and culturally existential situation they are facing in the country to which they, for economic or political reasons, had to migrate. This thesis will discuss an already existing term, “ontological security” to explain the Costa Rican nationals’ attachment to their perceived democratic and peaceful identity, which eventually leads to the conflicts with their now-neighbors in their own country.

Keywords: ontological security, Costa Rica, migration, Nicaraguans, Central America.

ÖZ

BİR VAKA ÇALIŞMASI: KOSTA RİKA'DAKİ NİKARAGUALI GÖÇMEN ALGISI

Sağır, Kıvanç

Yüksek Lisans, Latin ve Kuzey Amerika Ana Bilim Dalı

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Kosta Rika, beyaz ulus olma fikrine dayanan ve aynı zamanda pasifist ve demokratik geleneğiyle gurur duyan bir ülkedir. Gerçekten de insani gelişme, insan hakları, sağlık hizmetlerine ve teknolojilere erişim açısından Latin Amerika'nın en gelişmiş ülkelerinden biridir. Bu ülke aynı zamanda 1948'den beri düzenli ordusu olmayan dünyadaki birkaç ülkeden biridir. Öte yandan özellikle ülkenin kuzeyini sınırlayan Nikaragua'dan yoğun bir göç akımı vardır. Kosta Rika'ya hem düzensiz hem de yasal yollarla gelen Nikaragualı göçmenlerin bu akışının birçok nedeni var. Ancak bu “yabancıların” sayısının her yıl artmasıyla birlikte Kosta Rika toplumu, yukarıda var olduğu sayılan özelliklere dayalı kimliklerini kaybetmek üzere olup olmadıklarını sorgulamaktadır. Kimileri buna yabancı düşmanlığı diyor, öte yandan ülkelerinde yaşayan Nikaragualılara karşı bu tutuma karşı çıkan sıradan vatandaşların yanı sıra çok sayıda akademisyen var. Bu tezde önemli olan, Nikaragua nüfusunun ontolojik olarak tehdit altında veya başka bir deyişle ontolojik olarak savunmasız hissediyor olmasıdır; bu terim, bu tezde, ekonomik ve siyasal sebeplerle göç etmek zorunda kaldıkları ülkede karşı karşıya oldukları sosyal ve kültürel olarak varoluşsal durumu açıklamak için kullanılmıştır. Bu tez, Kosta Rika vatandaşlarının günün sonunda kendi ülkelerinde şu anki komşularıyla çatışmalara yol açan ve sözü edildiği üzere

demokratik ve barışçıl kimliklerine olan yüksek bağılıklarını açıklamak için halihazırda var olan “ontolojik güvenlik” terimini tartışacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: ontolojik güvenlik, Kosta Rika, göç, Nikaragualılar, Orta Amerika

To the people of the world

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
ÖZ.....	vi
DEDICATION.....	viii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTES.....	ix
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	x
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xii
LIST OF TABLES.....	xiii
CHAPTERS	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	10
2.1 Migration: Basic Concepts and Migration Patterns in Latin America.....	10
2.2 Ontological Security: Definitions, Essentials and Criticisms.....	19
3. THE CASE OF COSTA RICA.....	29
3.1 A Brief History of Costa Rica and Key Political Events.....	29
3.2 Formation of National Identity in Costa Rica.....	41
3.3 Roots and Historical Background of Migration in Costa Rica.....	53
3.4 Costa Rican Perception of Nicaraguan Migrants and Ontological Security.....	71
4. CONCLUSION.....	96
REFERENCES.....	102
APPENDICES	
APPENDIX A. TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET.....	118

APPENDIX B. THESIS PERMISSION FORM/TEZ İZİN FORMU.....132

LIST OF FIGURES

1. BANANA WORKERS IN COSTA RICA.....	34
2. A PUBLIC CONFERENCE ON A SERIOUS DISEASE.....	36
3. ETHNIC PEOPLES OF COSTA RICA.....	44
4. A NEWSPAPER CUTTING RECRUITING JAMAICAN WORKERS...46	
5. MAP OF CENTRAL VALLEY.....	47
6. RAILROAD STATION IN LIMÓN.....	58
7. MAP OF THE GUANACASTE REGION.....	65
8. LA CARPIO NEIGHBORHOOD.....	90

LIST OF TABLES

1. STATISTICS ON CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES.....40
2. HISTORICAL POPULATION DATA.....43
3. FOREIGN POPULATION IN COSTA RICA HISTORICALLY.....60

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Nicaraguan migration to Costa Rica is a South-South migration event which is one of the greatest phenomena of Central America in the 20th and 21st centuries in addition to being a case where identity conflict is one of the most apparent in the region. Although the Nicaraguans have been migrating to Costa Rica for years, while they represented less than 2 percent of the country's population in the early 1980s their proportion rose to around 7 percent by 2018 (Blyde et al., 2020, p. 11). Their number represented more than 80% of the total regional immigrants in the country in this century (Martínez Pizarro, 2008, p. 111).

Particularly the beginning of the last wave of arrival, which was in 2018 due to the sociopolitical crisis that occurred in Nicaragua, led the Costa Ricans to further question the very dilemma of accepting the newcomers or reacting in a different way. So far, a significant number of statistical and historical studies have been made on the topic, yet its discussion in a theoretical conceptualization is still lacking. This thesis considers the concept of *ontological security*, as having the explanatory power to reveal the motives behind social groups' behaviors in such situations of conflict between the host nation and the migrants.

The concept of ontological security is a theory that has become popular among academics of international relations, especially in recent years. Although it was first employed in the field of psychology in the 1960s with the work of Laing (2010), it later attracted the attention of many students of other fields as well especially following its use in sociology by the British academic Anthony Giddens first in *the Constitution of Society* (1984), later in *Modernity and Self-Identity* (1991) and finally in *the Consequences of Modernity* (1991). The author, who touched upon the concept of ontological security in specific chapters, defined it as follows: “to be ontologically

secure is to possess, on the level of the unconscious and practical consciousness¹, ‘answers’ to fundamental existential questions which all human life in some way addresses” (1991, p. 47).

According to Giddens, there are four important ontological questions in the context of ontological security. Accordingly: “the prime existential question which the infant ‘answers’ in the course of early psychological development concerns existence itself”, in other words, “being against non-being”. Giddens continues, “a second type of existential question concerns not so much the nature of being as the relations between the external world and human life” (1991, p. 48). A third category of existential question concerns “the existence of other persons”. Accordingly, “trust in others [...] is at the origin of the experience of a stable external world and a coherent sense of self-identity” (1991, p. 51). On the other hand, “a fourth type of existential question concerns precisely: self-identity” (1991, p. 51). The point that will be emphasized in this thesis is especially related to this last question that Giddens refers to.

The identity of the self, according to Giddens (1991) assumes reflexive awareness. It is what the individual is conscious “of” in terms of “self-consciousness.” According to Giddens, this very self-identity is something that is routinely created instead of just being given (1991, p. 52). Anthony Giddens here emphasizes the routines of human life; thus, one has to keep his “biographical narrative” going. It is mostly at this point that the debates about the concept of ontological security emerge. After Giddens, many academics have made critical or supportive contributions to the theory, particularly based on “biographical narrative” and “routines”, through Giddens’s “continuity” discourse.

Although a lot of research has been carried out on the concept of ontological security, especially in the international relations community, adequate amount of its studies into the concept of migration has not been performed. Perhaps also importantly, this theory has not largely been applied to the developing countries such as Costa Rica, which receives serious immigration in its geography. In addition, while most of the

¹ By “practical consciousness”, which constitutes part of Giddens’s Structuration Theory, it is meant the level of knowledge that an agent contributes to the tasks that must be completed in everyday life, and it is so well integrated that it is barely noticeable. To give an example, when one person drives a car, she or he is not busy with how to push the accelerator pedal since this functions automatically. These are the daily or usual actions one individual does in practical manners without thinking over it.

migration studies are carried out in the context of “north-south”, those related to so-called “south-south” relations are limited. And finally, although several historical as well as critical studies on the migration phenomenon, which is one of the central points of discussion in Costa Rica, has been made, almost none of these studies have placed this trend into a theoretical framework. This thesis aims to fill this gap in the academy.

The point that concerns this thesis is the reactions of a society, which can be considered as a group actor, when unexpected or undesirable events challenge their routines and biographical continuities. In the Costa Rican case, there is a long-standing “democratic”, “pacifist” and “white race” rhetoric. This national rhetoric has been perpetuated historically to give the country a sense of difference and identity among its Central American neighbors’ majority mestizo, indigenous, and Afro-Creole or Afro-West Indian cultures by emphasizing the country’s supposed genetic and cultural proximity to European conquerors (Mosby, 2003, as cited in Martin de Ogunsola, 2012, para. 4). Accordingly, Costa Ricans have an autonomous, individualistic, and egalitarian society structure, which they also call rural democracy. National narratives would claim that this has been the case for years. However, they face with an unexpected element that supposedly contradicts with this narrative, which is the Nicaraguan immigrants, who came to the country in fluxes in unexpected moments and amounts. According to the myth, Nicaraguans, unlike Costa Ricans, are not peaceful but violent. They have come so far not according to democratic rules but in an atmosphere of conflict, which is quite challenging to the imagination of self-identity of the Costa Rican nation.

The historical characteristic of the Central America reminds an important self-perception of the Costa Rican nationals. Accordingly, compared to the rest of Central America, when the nation of Costa Rica was already aware of itself, it discovered that it could guarantee its internal and external security, in spite of so many failures in this region, in which Costa Rica was born. Thus, there are references, other than to homogeneity, to peace and moderation in the territory as distinguishing traits of the Costa Ricans. The same idea now also dictates that these positive traits predate even the creation of a Costa Rican nation, which on the other hand, for some, is more of a twentieth century invention (Pedroza, 2021, p. 6).

According to the predominant rhetoric in Costa Rica, their nation is exceptional since they have maintained a peaceful political life and economic stability for a long time. The success story of Costa Rican democracy is indeed significant since Latin America has had infamous and enormous difficulty creating, maintaining, and strengthening democratic institutions (Palmer, 2004 p. 139). Costa Rica throughout its history remained more racially and economically homogeneous than its neighbors while being somewhat isolated from the rest of Central America due to distance and rough terrain. This is not to say that there were no social inequalities or that Costa Rica was economically self-sufficient. Rather, unlike elsewhere in the isthmus, Costa Rica's socioeconomic disparities were never significant enough to allow one class or race to entirely rule others to the disadvantage of the majority. Despite its embrace of export agriculture, Costa Rica never fully evolved the dependency system that exists elsewhere on the isthmus, with its high human costs (Booth et al., 2010, p. 62).

In fact, many of the historical reasons that have been mentioned to explain democracy's failure in Central America were present in Costa Rica as well, even in large numbers. For instance, Costa Rica, like most Central American countries, was primarily agrarian, with a coffee and banana-based economy, and it experienced periods of instability, coups, and authoritarian leadership during the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. Yet on the other hand, during this difficult period, the country only had one brief violent military dictatorship, that of the Tinoco brothers (1917-1919), which was rapidly overturned by a coalition that soon restored civilian rule. Costa Rica is the only Central American country to have avoided dictatorship during the 1930s electoral politics (Palmer, 2004 p. 139).

Following the elections in 1948, the country was torn apart by a horrible civil war. The civil war is one of the iconic events in the memory of modern Costa Rican politics. It was the country's bloodiest incident, which in the end resulted in the reconstitution of the legal order as well as the abolishment of armed forces in the country. Since then, the country has seen regular elections every four years without rupture. Achieving this in such a region that is many times remembered with violence and wars is considered to be remarkable by scholars that have made studies on the region.

With this historical point of view, the Costa Ricans as a nation, in terms of national identity, have created a "biographical continuity" in Giddens' terms. On the

other hand, according to a significant segment of the Costa Rican society, Nicaraguan immigrants pose a threat to their biographical continuity. Now, the old democratic and peaceful routines have started to suffer, and the society has been corrupted. The reason for this supposed by a significant part of the Costa Rican society is the Nicaraguans who come to the country mainly as labor migrants and political asylum seekers. Accordingly, the Nicaraguan migrants have become a threat to their ontological security, in complete contrast to the routines and narratives the Costa Ricans as a nation have retained over the years.

With this background, the main research questions in this thesis are related to how the Costa Ricans perceive the Nicaraguan migrants that arrive in their country, to what extent this phenomenon makes the Costa Ricans feel ontologically insecure, and, on the other hand, to what extent this feeling and the consequent reactions place the Nicaraguans into an ontologically vulnerable situation. A critical view on the identity discussions within the Costa Rican society will be attempted to elaborate. A general discussion on the concepts of migration processes such as integration, exclusion, types of migration and migrants will be present in this study in addition to the specific elaboration of the phenomenon that will be discussed through the lens of ontological security.

Therefore, in this study, firstly, an explanation of the related migration terms as well as migratory processes in the region will be discussed as the first part of the literature review section. Terms related to integration of the migrants will be offered based on migratory processes and intercultural relations. Basic theories of migration explaining why and with which conditions migration occurs will also be briefly discussed in this section, in order to clarify why migrants, in this particular case, Nicaraguans move from their country to another.

Following the demonstration of these terms and discussions, there will be a conceptual explanation of the term ontological security in the second literature review section. The writing will touch upon the concept's various uses in social sciences, especially in the recent years (Kinnvall, 2004; Mitzen, 2006; Steele, 2005, 2014; Chernobrov, 2016; Ejodus, 2017; Rumelili, 2019). Several theoreticians studying this phenomenon agrees or disagrees on the "continuity" narrative of this theory as well as

its application to the states or societies as it was first applied to individual human-beings, who have feelings.

Subsequently, the third chapter will start by providing a background of the key social and political developments in the history of the country. To understand better Costa Rica's so-called self-perception of "democratic tradition" and "pacifism", it is crucial and useful to touch upon the political events beginning from the colonial times. Presentation of such a background will be helpful to take a grasp of the mindset of the nation before discussing the identity formation of this "imagined community," as Benedict Anderson (2016) would name it.

In the following section, various academic views on the formation of Costa Rican identity will be introduced. A critical observation will be made to reveal some background information on the worldview and dynamics of this historically multi-ethnic society. The section will be concerned with the predominant myths in the construction of nationhood in Costa Rica. Answers to questions such as which part of the political and social struggles were highlighted, and which ones have been forgotten or perhaps disregarded in the collective memory of the Costa Rican nation will be attempted to discover.

Then the text will analyze the history of migration in Costa Rica with subsequently specific focus on the Nicaraguan population. Starting with the black migration to the country, Costa Rica was part of the common migratory patterns of Central America during the colonial times. There were attempts to bring in European settlers as they were thought to be of similar culture and race, in addition to the fact that Costa Ricans, during the Liberal period that commenced in 1890s, had the desire to improve relations with the economic powers of Europe. Yet, on the other hand, the country in the end attracted a vast number of immigrants from their neighbor, namely Nicaragua, due to political, and socio-economic reasons as well as few natural disasters. The section will also include the general social profile of the Nicaraguans, such as schooling and their position in the labor force.

Finally, Costa Rican society's perception of the Nicaraguan migrants will be evaluated with the aid of academic articles as well as primary sources, which are mainly news from the media. Nicaraguans are by far the most predominant migrant group in Costa Rica, although they are not the only ones. The identity perceptions of

the Costa Ricans will be put on trial through the lens of ontologically security and theories based on integration and intercultural relations. “Anxieties” possessed by both sides will be elaborated. Are the members of Costa Rican nation feeling ontologically secure? If not, how do they react? What is the consequence of this behavior on the intercultural relations between the two societies? Quest for ontological security can lead to the vulnerability of certain social or ethnic groups, which also creates anxieties and ontological vulnerability in the migrant population in question.

The main objective of this thesis is to put the migration discussions in Costa Rica, which have been realized by various academics so far in historical studies, into a theoretical framework. An attempt to find out the perceptions as well as disagreements associated with identity and nationhood will be made. The challenging relationship between migration and belonging will be discussed with the aid of displaying experiences of the Nicaraguan population in the country. The story of this migration phenomenon is not a new topic. Yet, relevant discussions require, or are at least strengthened by, certain theoretical descriptions and labels from differing perspectives. Theories provide scholars and students of the academia with tools to have a more explanatory vision of cases of social sciences as they likewise do in other disciplines.

The methodology used in the development of this thesis comprises of both quantitative and qualitative studies. To clarify the difference between the two, quantitative research is centered on the element of quantity or extent in natural as well as social sciences. It is related to studying data results that can be counted or stated in terms of quantity. Such research entails a systematic experimental investigation of observable phenomena using numerical approaches such as statistics, percentages, and so on, whereas qualitative research is concerned with qualitative phenomena, such as those relating to quality or diversity. Characteristically, qualitative research is more difficult to assess than quantitative data since it involves a descriptive approach. In qualitative research, non-numerical data is examined in depth. Hence, it is relatively more anthropological or naturalistic, signifying that it is based on observation and experimentation, which are employed being considered as appropriate ways to reveal scientific knowledge (Mishra & Alok, 2017, p. 3).

Qualitative research has a number of advantages. To begin with, qualitative research generates a rather detailed description of participants' opinions, experiences and feelings as well as being useful to provide an analysis of the meaning of their actions (Denzin, 1989, as cited in Rahman, 2016, p. 104). Qualitative research is considered to offer a holistic understanding of the human experience in specific circumstances. "Cross-cultural influences" on behavior can be analyzed since it helps to investigate how meanings are shaped within and by cultures (Rahman, 2016, p. 104). Yet, on the other hand, issues of generalizability as well as difficulty of data interpretation can be counted as the flaws of qualitative research.

Thus, it is also necessary to support the ideas suggested in this thesis by utilizing quantitative techniques, which involve surveys and general statistics acquired from various resources. In order to be able to make a comparison with respect to the collective conditions of the agents in concern, it is convenient to collect numerical data, especially statistical ones, from such institutions as UN, ILO (International Labor Organization), and OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) to position these agents into a comparative context. Quantitative data is useful to gain generalized results. Surveys, on the other hand, on the social conditions of the principal agents of the thesis will be helpful to get representative results.

Quantitative approach also has some disadvantages such as its rather positivist research which simply attempts to make generalization by, in most cases, ignoring common meanings of certain social phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, as cited in Rahman, 2016, p. 106). It lacks the ability to determine deep and inherent meanings and explanations (Rahman, 2016, p. 106). A number of scholars of social sciences reject the positivism of these approaches. For instance, one of the principal founders of the theory of ontological security, Anthony Giddens rejects positivism since the author believes that human organization patterns are changeable by human agency and thus, they cannot exhibit invariant qualities (Turner, 1986, p. 969). Therefore, the elaboration of the arguments in this thesis will be in a larger extent based on qualitative research methods.

By utilizing secondary sources, which include academic articles, books, interviews by social scientists and news articles an insight on the phenomenon and the theory is intended to be provided to the reader. As studies on identity most of the time

require comprehending core motives and impulses behind an individual's or a society's behaviors, in this study, data collection will be carried out principally with these resources.

An important impediment against making sound research on a topic in regional studies is usually the native languages spoken in those specific regions. Most of the documents, both primary and secondary, analyzed in this dissertation were written originally in Spanish. By utilizing these resources, it is intended to give the first-hand information from the natives of both Costa Rican and Nicaraguan origin. The sources of related information were academics from Costa Rica, Nicaraguan migrants, Costa Rican citizens, journalists, and politicians, among others. Also, historical books, images, official documents, and video materials have been utilized in the preparation of this thesis.

One limitation in the preparation of this thesis, however, needs to be clarified. The arguments on the perceptions of the Costa Rican nationals presented in the thesis have been defended based on the predominant discourse of the subject in the press, political circles and academic environment. Hence, this thesis does not aim to give the impression to its reader that it assumes the existence of a unitary perception of the entire of Costa Ricans population against the Nicaraguan migrants in their country. The presence of the geographical distance factor and the restricted possibility of field work in this condition can be considered as major difficulties in the preparation of this thesis. Hence, the information gathered for the building of this thesis has been mainly based on academic studies and the media, which constitute the significant portion of the resources utilized for a description of the perceptions among the Costa Rican society. A relevant study can be carried out based on field work and surveys, measuring and revealing the extent and percentage with regards to the perceptions of the Costa Rican society on themselves and the Nicaraguans as migrants.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Migration: Basic Concepts and Migration Patterns in Latin America

Migration is a phenomenon which focuses on the global growth of humanity, and it has been more debated in recent years as a key feature of modern civilizations. Capital, goods, habits, and conventions all move around the world. Also exchanged are meanings, symbolic elaborations, and messages. Today, according to the estimations, there are approximately 120 million people living outside their home nations (Gonzalez, 2005, p. 7). On the one hand, the motivations to migrate remain strong at the root of differences in country living standards, poverty, the search for better economic and social conditions, political instability, religious persecution, wars, and natural disasters, all of which generate “from below” responses (Gonzalez, 2005, p. 7). Although there is not a specified definition of migrant in international law, the IOM (International Organization for Migration) defines a migrant as “a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently and for a variety of reasons” (*IOM -Who is a migrant?*, 2019). This definition of a migrant is regardless of their legal situation, the voluntary or involuntary nature of the displacement, the causes of displacement, or the duration of their stay.

Scholars of migration have frequently made a distinction between different types of migrants and migrations, although not all of these statements have been commonly adopted. One is the distinction between forced migration (caused by violence or political repression) and migration for economic or labor purposes. In Latin America, violence has been a major source of migration, particularly among professionals, academics, and intellectuals, who are typically among those that

actively oppose political and military violence; but labor migration has also been a fundamental category that exists in the region.

The duration of time spent outside the country is often employed to create a second classification. Migrations are considered irreversible or permanent when they imply new living arrangements and the intent to establish permanent residence. They are also categorized as temporary, seasonal or pendular movements of varying lengths (Domenach and Picouet, 1987 as cited in Martinez Pizarro 2000, p. 228). However, perhaps the most durable one comprises of Petersen's (1958) four main classes of migration: primitive, forced or impelled, free, and mass, which are caused respectively by ecological forces, migratory policies, migrants' ambitions and objectives, and collective behavior (as cited in Tichenor and Rosenblum, 2012, p. 39).

A common typology on the immigrants recalls the asylum seekers and refugees, other than those including but not limited to labor migrants or sojourners. An asylum seeker would be defined as an individual who arrives at a country's border and asks for protection under the Geneva Convention (Guild, 2009, p. 70). These persons are considered as asylum seekers because they seek protection while the state has to decide whether they fulfill the requirements for being a refugee or not. According to the international law (UN Convention Relating to the States of Refugees 1951 and Protocol 1967: the Geneva Convention), the condition for an individual to be recognized as a refugee is that they must be outside of their home country and fear persecution on the basis of race, religion, nationality, social group membership, or political opinion (*UN the Refugee Convention*, 1951; *UN Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1966).

On the other hand, in Latin America, the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees² (Cartagena Declaration) signifies an achievement in the development of a refugee protection regime in the region. It is many times referred to as the source of a comprehensive definition of who should be considered a refugee. The Cartagena

² The 1984 Cartagena Colloquium developed out of the ongoing need to establish and consolidate the "humanitarian practices and principles" to provide protection to a growing number of Central Americans compelled to leave their home countries. The Cartagena Declaration is the pronouncement resulting from that Colloquium. It is not a legally binding instrument or an officially sanctioned statement. Out of the 17 countries, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico and Nicaragua have directly imported the definition contained in the Cartagena Declaration into their national regimes. Costa Rica, Panama and Venezuela, have not incorporated the regional refugee definition into their national regime in any way.

Declaration goes beyond the definitions expressed in the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol defines a refugee as:

Persons who have fled their country because their lives, safety or freedom have been threatened by generalized violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violation of human rights or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order. (Reed-Hurtado, 2013, p.4)

The concept of “refugee” is related to the involuntary migration of the individuals. However, the terms on the migration and migrants are not only limited to this type. Furthermore, most of the theoretical research on the migration is instead focused on rather voluntary or semi-voluntary migration patterns. Scholars of migration would seek answers to the question of why individuals migrate from one place to another if they are not immediately forced to do so. There are basically four main theoretical perspectives explaining the migratory movements, which are neoclassical economics, world systems theory, the new economics of labor migration, and social capital theory (Tichenor and Rosenblum, 2012, p. 27).

The traditional view of migration is actually based on a neoclassical economic lens, according to which migration phenomena are the outcome of a mix of elements of attraction in the destination society and expulsion agents in the country of origin. Population increase, low living standards, a lack of economic opportunity, and political repression are among the push causes, whereas labor demand, land availability, good economic prospects, and political liberties are among the pull ones (Martinez Pizarro, 2008, p. 45). Economic growth is supposed to “pull” migrants to new places, whereas economic stagnation “pushes” them out of their home countries. These push-pull models, which were linked to neoclassical economics, dominated migration study in the mid-twentieth century, when internal migration movements were of particular interest (Tichenor and Rosenblum, 2012, p. 27). According to Lee’s (1966) theory of migration, for instance, the magnitude of a migration flow differs according to the strength of attraction of the receiving area, personal characteristics as well as the distance between the sending and receiving areas (p. 46).

Wage inequality is the predisposing condition for migration, whereas transportation and communication infrastructure, market integration, and social networks are enabling structures. In addition to the social structures that facilitate or

restrict migration between two locations, the factors that cause residents to migrate from one place to another also include the feedback effects that produce migration-related social structures, and how individual migrants exercise agency within these structures. Civil conflicts, foreign invasions, or other state-induced disturbances can also undermine traditional livelihoods, resulting in migration flows (Tichenor and Rosenblum, 2012, p. 29).

On the other hand, a new concept, named transnationalism was proposed by Schiller et al. (1995) suggesting a new framework on the migration processes. The article titled “From Immigrant to Transmigrant: Theorizing Transnational Migration” contends that “contemporary immigrants cannot be characterized as the ‘uprooted’” (Schiller et al., 1995, p. 48). Accordingly, many of them are transmigrants who become strongly entrenched in the country they moved to, still maintaining multiple ties with their country of origin. This term has a wide wingspan, which in effect combines different practices and modes of migration rather than replace them. These three anthropologists attempted to explain that a growing number of migrant groups and individuals, have been opting neither to go back to their home countries nor to break all their ties. This is particularly a distinctive social type, which deserves attention since it might put into question (and even ease) the traditional sense of belonging of international movers since they maintain “multiple relations-familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political that span borders” (Schiller et al., 1992, p. 1).

The authors also explain the reasons behind transnational migration in three elements: First, a global restructuring of global capital which leads to deteriorating social and economic conditions in both sending and receiving countries; second, racist attitudes in certain countries which led to economic and political insecurity of the newcomers; and finally, the nation-building projects of both sending and receiving countries which force the immigrants to maintain political loyalties and social ties in both sides (Schiller et al., 1995, p. 50). This explanation is also important as it provides clues to understand the integration processes of the migrants around different parts of the world as well as Latin America, since with the practice of transnationalism “transmigrants” are allowed, even encouraged, to participate in both countries of origin and destination (Tichenor and Rosenblum, 2012, p. 80). This concept proposes to

highlight the importance of the subject and its ability to respond to the conditions of exclusion and marginality (Martinez Pizarro, 2008, p. 47).

There are a number of social conditions that aid to or hinder immigrants' incorporation into social processes. Castles (1998) categorizes these situations in four differing terms: assimilation, integration, exclusion and multiculturalism (as cited in Pizarro, 2000, 252). Assimilation, as the author defines, is a "mode of incorporation encouraging immigrants to learn the national language and to fully adopt the social and cultural practices of the receiving community (Castles, 2002, p. 1155). Assimilation assumes existence of goodwill and the capacity of the migrants to put aside their distinguishing traits as well as the motivation of the nationals to accept new members (Pizarro, 2000, p. 252).

Integration refers to the process of mutual accommodation that requires the involvement of the immigrants and majority of the population. Integration treats adaptation as a two-way process in which majority and minority groups learn from each other; furthermore, it implies that immigrant groups would lose their cultural and behavioral distinctiveness over time (Hugo, 2003, p. 25). The distinction between assimilation and integration might seem to be blurry. The integration of the migrants implies that they failed to assimilate as individuals, yet these people were inclined to establish political, social, and cultural associations also maintaining mostly the habits or behaviors pertaining to their country of origin (Martinez Pizarro, 2000, p. 252).

Exclusion occurs when immigrants incorporate into the determined areas of society, such as the labor market; yet are not accepted to have access to others, such as political participation, citizenship, and social security systems (Castles, 1998, as cited in Pizarro, 2000, 253). Multiculturalism, on the other hand, can be explained as the development of immigrant communities within ethnic communities that are actually different from most of the population in terms of language or culture. It implies that migrant groups have to a certain extent equal rights in most sectors of the society and that they are not expected to leave aside their diversity. Multiculturalism, in Castles' words, "implies abandoning the myth of homogenous and monocultural nation-states and recognizing rights to cultural maintenance and community formation" (Castles, 2002, 1156).

There is also another term acculturation, which, according to Teske and Nelson (1974), is a process that can involve groups or individuals in direct cultural encounter circumstances. Changes in one or both cultural groups may occur, and changes in values may also be involved. Acculturation is a potentially bidirectional process that does not necessitate modifications in the acculturating group's values. It involves "the long-term conditioning process of newcomers in integrating the new values, norms, and symbols of their new culture." Assimilation, on the other hand, is a one-way process towards the dominant host culture that necessitates value shifts within the assimilation group (Gudykunst, 2005, p. 408). Acculturation also differs from enculturation, in the sense that the latter means the "primary socialization process of strangers in their original home (or natal) culture wherein they have internalized their primary cultural values" (Gudykunst, 2005, p. 221).

In terms of the relationship between the migrants and host nationals in a society, an important factor that influences the future of that very relationship is the legal status that the newcomers possess (Blyde et al., 2020, p. 19). According to Özden and Wagner (2018), if migrants can stay in the country legally, they may be more likely to become part of the "human capital investment" that allows them to adapt to a new culture and society (as cited in Blyde et al., 2020, p. 19). On the other hand, irregular migrants may live in isolated enclaves with few social, cultural, and economic ties to the host country where integration is difficult or practically prohibited. The designation of some immigrants as "illegal", thus, is the most extreme type of social exclusion, due to the constant dread of deportation, which increases the levels of stress (Berk & Schur, 2001 as cited in Flynn et al., 2014, p. 6).

State policies gain importance at this point. According to Bourhis et al.'s (1997) interaction acculturation model (IAM), the acculturation orientations of both the host majority and immigrant groups as influenced by state integration programs influence relational outcomes between host nationals and immigrant groups (as cited in Gudykunst, 2005, p. 22). However, other than the host state and the host society, the immigrant individual or group has a crucial role in the nature of the relationship as well. Berry's (1980) model on acculturation, which actually constitutes the fundamentals of Bourhis et al.'s (1997) approach, theorizes immigrants' attitudes and their outcomes in the following way:

Do they want to maintain their native cultural identities, and do they want to maintain good relations with members of the host culture? If the answer is “yes” on both issues, they use an “integration” orientation with respect to the host culture. If they answer “yes” to having relations with hosts and “no” to maintaining their cultural identities, immigrants have an “assimilation” orientation toward the host culture. If immigrants answer “yes” to maintaining their native cultural identities and “no” to having good relations with hosts, they have a “separation” orientation toward the host culture. (as cited in Gudykunst, 2005, p. 22)

Hence, the way that the newcomers to a country act or think may also affect the long-term relationship in terms of incorporation to the new culture and society. On the other end of the spectrum, when strangers enter a new culture, they are uncertain of the attitudes, feelings, beliefs, values, and behaviors of the locals. Herman and Schield mention that “the immediate psychological result of being in a new situation is lack of security” (as cited in Gudykunst, 2005, p. 285). Thus, the immigrants can experience anxiety when communicating with their hosts. Gudykunst’s theory of “anxiety/uncertainty management” takes places at this very point. Gudykunst (2005) defines anxiety as the affective (emotional) equivalent of uncertainty (p. 287). People feel the necessity to manage anxiety resulting from the existing uncertainty (Gudykunst, 2005, p. 23). This is because they need to be able to predict among the various possible behavior patterns that will be employed by hosts or immigrants. Otherwise, they will automatically fall back on their “ethnocentric nets” or “routines” and put on their “stereotypic lens” in an unfamiliar cultural setting to facilitate their adaptation more quickly.

Building on the ideas of Stephan & Stephan (1985), Gudykunst expresses that “cognitively, anxiety leads to biases in how we process information. The more anxious we are, the more likely we will focus on the behaviors we expect to see, such as those based on our negative stereotypes” (Gudykunst, 2005, pp. 289). Since anxiety and uncertainty are the common feelings of people while interacting with strangers, collaborative efforts gain importance. In the absence of collaborative effort, the hosts and new arrivals may end up with “great frustrations, miscommunications, and identity misalignments” (Gudykunst, 2005, p. 221). Further discussion on the feeling of anxiety and identity perceptions will be carried out in the following section on the ontological security.

The impact of migration is of particular interest for the scholars of migratory movements. As Blyde et al. (2020) also stress, however, most of the studies related to the impact of migration concentrate on developed countries. It is not common to investigate the impact of the migration phenomena between developing countries (it can be particularly referred to as South-South migration). This is despite the fact that usually the developing countries receive groups or individuals compelled to migrate from other developing countries (Blyde, et al., 2020, p. 7). In the case of Latin America, most of the investigation has focused on the Mexican and Central American migration to the United States and their impact on the receiving country. Hence, it is not irrelevant to claim that intraregional migration and its impact on these countries is a less studied area of migration.

In effect, this is perhaps a natural outcome of the migratory patterns that frequently occur. While some developed countries (or multinational firms) seek cheap labor in poorer nations, people from poorer countries seek better income and working conditions in the other direction. Interdependence and the interchange of products and services (including labor) between countries, on the other hand, have become a requirement for society's survival. This can also mean that national borders tend to fade away, allowing unrestricted movement of people (Gonzalez, 2005, p. 8) although actually human capital is still an element of the cycle of production that does not flow freely across borders.

When it comes to Latin America and migratory movements, Cabieses et al. (2013) places the major patterns of migration throughout the history in three specific phases, which are immigration that occurred from overseas (especially in the mid-19th and mid-20th centuries predominantly from Europe), intra-regional migration (especially between the 1970s and 1990s due to internal conflicts as well as socioeconomic developments of the region), and finally what is denominated as the South-North migration (especially in the last decades) (p.69). Cabieses et al. also mention that as a growing phenomenon, South-South migration has become a crucial pattern by the movement of people from relatively less developed countries of the region, such as from Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador and Nicaragua to Argentina, Brasil, Chile and Costa Rica.

Beaton et al's (2017) studies on the other hand indicate that outward movements of migration have also been an important trend with regards to the countries in Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC), particularly those in Central America and the Caribbean (p. 10). The authors' studies reveal that in these two sub-regions, emigrants account for about 10 percent or more of the population, compared with about 2 percent, on average, for emerging market and developing countries. Beaton et al.'s (2017) work is also important in the sense that it provides a detailed analysis of the migration scheme throughout the whole continent. The writers also point at Argentina (principally from Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay), besides Venezuela (from Colombia), as the significant destinations of migration in the previous decades.

However, according to the authors, beginning with the economic crisis that occurred in the 1980s, migration patterns gained a momentum from South America to outer regions, especially to the United States and Spain. The Nicaraguan migration to Costa Rica has also received the attention of these scholars as a crucial intra-regional migration pattern catching the eyes in the CAPDR (Central America, Panama and the Dominican Republic Region) (Beaton et al, 2017, p. 10). The same authors also inspected that while more immigrants arrived in higher-income countries in Latin America and they sent less emigrants, the latter relationship is found to be weaker for the Caribbean region, meaning that these countries have become more prone to sending educated and relatively high-income people abroad. Income differences across countries constitute one of the key factors that explain the patterns of cross-border migration (Beaton et al., 2017, p. 11).

Finally, Gonzalez (2005) has studied the migratory patterns with a focus on Central America. According to the author's account, the causes of recent regional displacements in Central America include a combination of structural (economic, political, and social) and situational elements (natural disasters). The author also confirms that instability and political disputes have especially been the catalysts for previous Central American mobilizations. From the 1970s through the early 1990s, internal conflicts in various Central American countries resulted in the forced, large, and spontaneous emigration of persons seeking asylum in Mexico, the United States, Belize, and Costa Rica. Many refugees have returned to their countries following the

signing of peace agreements in the region (Nicaragua, 1990; El Salvador, 1992; Guatemala, 1996); yet displacements continue because of these countries' lack of preparation to receive the return of so many of the population that had left in previous years. (Gonzalez, 2005, p. 10).

This section of literature review on migration has explained the basic concepts on migratory processes, making a distinction between various types of migration patterns as well as types of migrants. It also has mentioned the basic migration theories that aspire to explain the reasons behind migration. Additionally, it has briefly touched upon the relationship between the immigrants and host nationals by mentioning such cultural concepts as assimilation, integration, exclusion, and a number of theories explaining these relationships such as the anxiety/uncertainty management theory. The following literature review section will be focusing on ontological security with more in-depth look at such concepts as anxiety and identity security as well as different perspectives with regards to the theorization of the concept of ontological security.

2.2 Ontological Security: Definitions, Essentials, and Criticisms

Ontological security is a term that has been employed in a number of works in social sciences, from international relations to sociology and migration studies, in recent times. While definition of the term was first put forward by Ronald Laing (1960/2010) in his book titled *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness*, which was first published in 1960 and was a psychological investigation on the nature of human mental illness, later Anthony Giddens (1991), with only a few quotes from Laing in his writings, presented an updated definition of the term, which would be at the center of most of the discussions of the concept later on. Since Giddens' works, various authors from sociology to political science have studied the concept with differing perspectives. Hence, to begin the discussion of the concept it is appropriate to present these definitions at the first stage.

As stated, the concept of ontological security was first used by Ronald Laing in 1960 in psychology. Accordingly, ontological security was used to describe a "continuous person" who possesses a stable and a whole existence in reality as opposed to anxiety and loss of meaning, which could jeopardize everyday experiences

and self-integrity (2010, p. 39). According to the author, this is the impulse that social actors try to satisfy their sense of being and to maintain their own identity over time. Laing states, “each has his own autonomous sense of identity and his own definition of who and what he is... I am accustomed to expect that the person you take me to be, and the identity that I reckon myself to have, will coincide by and large.” Thus, “such a basically ontologically secure person will encounter all the hazards of life, social, ethical, spiritual, biological, from a centrally firm sense of his own and other people's reality and identity” (Laing, 2010, p. 39).

A more recent definition of the concept was provided in sociology by Anthony Giddens (1991), according to whom, ontological security indicates that social agents, for their identity to be stable, want a consistent self-narrative, in other words, a “biographical continuity” (p. 54). The implication of a continuous narrative, or “sense of self,” according to Giddens, can be found in one’s ability to “keep a particular narrative running” so that, the self’s existence is stable, and its social relationships are actually confident (Giddens, 1991, p. 54). Ontological security is the security of the social relationship, that is, a feeling of having full cognitive control of the situation (Morales, 2018). Thus, “to be ontologically secure is to have ‘solutions’ to fundamental existential concerns that every human life in some manner addresses on the level of unconscious and practical consciousness”³ (Giddens, 1991, p. 47). According to Giddens, the search for answers to questions about ontological security begins whenever an infant has a knowledge of an external reality outside of themselves.

Giddens (1991) suggests:

Practical consciousness, together with the day-to-day routines reproduced by it, help bracket such anxieties, not only, even primarily, because of the social stability that they imply, but because of their constitutive role in organizing an ‘as if’ environment in relation to existential issues.” (p, 37)

More importantly, “they provide modes of orientation which, on the level of practice, ‘answer’ the questions which could be raised about the frameworks of existence” (p, 37). In other words, a self that is ontologically secure is able to feel whole and can act by “bracketing out questions about ourselves.” There is a kind of predictability, in this

³ See footnote 1 for the meaning of “practical consciousness” according to Giddens’ conceptualization.

sense, within the environment of the self. Giddens argues that there is a need for “cocoon”, which protects against existential anxiety. Ontological security can be retained by the routinization of every-day life, which aids social actors create this very protective cocoon and “bracket out” fundamental anxieties. It can provide the self with stability in meaning as well as in behavior (Giddens, 1991, p. 44).

Kinnvall (2004), mentions a symbolic term “home”, in which the self lives. This has a similar meaning to Giddens’ concept of cocoon. Quoting from Dupuis and Thorns (1998), the author suggests the idea that “home” as a deliverer of security has the ability to join a material environment with a deeply emotional set of meanings relating to permanence (as cited in Kinnvall, 2004, 747). Kinnvall, in order to further clarify her point, claims that ontological security is maintained when “home is able to provide a site of constancy in the social and material environment” (2004, p. 747). Home, as she theorizes, “constitutes a spatial context in which daily routines of human existence are performed. It is a domain where people feel most in control of their lives” (Kinnvall, 2004, p. 747). In other words, humans need to maintain daily routines, to feel ontologically secure. This is because, as Mitzen (2006) also adds, human beings need certainties in their lives in order to avoid feeling insecure about their identity. “Individuals are encouraged to construct routines in order to promote cognitive and behavioral certainty” (p. 342). In that way, one can avoid unpredictability. Taking off from this starting point, it can thus be suggested that identities need continuous narratives which are not ruptured by unexpected happenings.

Anxiety is an important term that Giddens (1991) as well as later Bahar Rumelili (2016, 2019) employ to indicate the feeling that one agent has in times of ontologically insecurity. Anxiety can be described as an emotional response formed when an individual’s self-identity falls under a challenge (Giddens, 1984, p.61). The feeling of anxiety is rather distinguished from fear in the sense that the latter is more associated with a specific item or threat, while, on the other hand, anxiety is linked to a more diffuse or general sense of insecurity. Fear should be considered as a “response to a specific threat” and thus “has a definite object” (Giddens, 1991, p. 44) while anxiety does not. Rumelili also clarifies the distinction by stating, “fear is projected externally toward specific threats and concrete objects” while anxiety is felt in times of “increasing hard uncertainty, in the form of increased frequency of unanticipated

developments, as opposed to known threats and risks” (Rumelili, 2019, para. 3). Thus, again human beings as well as social groups would want to avoid uncertainties.

Rumelili (2019), who applied the theory into international relations, considers existentialist⁴ concepts of anxiety to be the most relevant for contemporary worries about rising international uncertainty as well as populist, nativist, and fundamentalist reactions at the state and group levels, among other conceptualizations (para. 2). Anxiety, in existentialist notions, is regarded as a natural human condition, rather than an atypical state of mind. To give an example, it is humans’ consciousness of mortality that distinguishes them from animals. Because we know that someday in the future we will die, but we just do not know when or how it will happen. Hence, it is strongly linked to future uncertainty and unpredictability, as well as the limitations on the human power to foresee the future (2019, para. 2).

Conflict Resolution and Ontological Security (2016) by Rumelili, on the other hand, demonstrates how the expectation of peace can trigger anxiety, which in turn activates social and political processes that revitalize conflicts. Although conflicts jeopardize the parties’ physical safety, they help resolve existential issues about life’s essential aspects, such as existence and identity, and hence serve as sources of ontological security across time. Rumelili also claims that coping with peace anxieties necessitates the development of alternative self-narratives at the individual, social, and state levels that shift the “self” in relation to the “other” and the world at large. The author explains her position by looking at how quest for ontological insecurity has obstructed the successful conclusion of peace processes in a variety of conflict situations, including Cyprus, Israel-Palestine, and Northern Ireland.

Jennifer Mitzen is another scholar of ontological security who applies the concept into international relations. Mitzen, starting from the individual, advocates the applicability of the ontological security theory into states. According to Mitzen (2006, 2017), states, as opposed to the realists, does not only seek physical security but also

⁴ Existentialism is a branch of philosophy whose goal is to comprehend the fundamentals of the human condition and its relationship to the world around them. Existentialism is a philosophical movement that proposes that each person define their own subjective values. Existentialism prioritizes individual subjectivity over objectivity. It places action, freedom, and decision as central to human existence and is also frequently associated with anxiety, dread as well as awareness of death. Jean-Paul Sartre, Friedrich Nietzsche, Soren Kierkegaard, Martin Heidegger, Albert Camus, and Paul Tillich are among well-known existentialists (*Existentialism*, 2007).

ontological security. And this very ontological security “is achieved by routinizing relationships with significant others, and actors therefore become attached to those relationships” (2006, p. 341). Realists suppose that although states may want to escape from security dilemmas, the state of uncertainty prevents them from doing so. The author, on the other hand, believes that states may not be able to escape from this security dilemma in the search for ontological security. The reason for this is that even dangerous routines can bring ontological security to the front and they adhere to the conflict situation arising from the security dilemma. In other words, the search for ontological security brings a new interpretation of an apparently irrational action. What Mitzen’s proposal actually means is that states may even sacrifice their physical security in search for ontological security.

Brent J. Steele (2014) is another author who has made significant contributions to the concept of ontological security in international relations. Steele, continuing with the identity discussion, claims that states engage in social behaviors to satisfy their self-identity requirements, even if it puts their physical survival in jeopardy. Steele suggests, “when we say that an individual is insecure, do we mean that their survival is at stake? Not necessarily [...] Rather, ‘insecurity’ in this sense means individuals are uncomfortable with their identity as social (inter)actors” (Steele, 2005, p. 525). Steele believes that the anxiety that effects all social agents compels them to secure their sense of self, as well as that of a nation-self” (Steele, 2014, p. 3). This is why agents (Steele names it as states) can “pursue social acts to suit self-identity demands, even if these actions endanger their physical survival in search of consistency and routine” (Steele, 2014,). When societies “label, construct, and experience reality”, ontological security can defeat rationality effecting states’ attachment to “identity-significant rituals” and “in commonplace perception” (Chernobrov, 2016, p. 584). In the end, one cannot talk about security without talking about people’s perceptions. So even if there is no apparent threat, people and states do not always necessarily feel safe.

It has previously been indicated that “ontological security” is the result of having a consistent sense of the “self”. This sense needs to be validated by others, which is in fact a result that requires common ontological structures for the actors in question (that is to say, for the agent seeking for ontological security for the “self” as well those who will approve that). At this point, Giddens mentions that agents can face

with “critical situations”. Critical situations are “circumstances of a radical disjuncture of an unpredictable kind which affect substantial matters of individuals, situations that threaten or destroy the certitudes of institutionalized routines”. These critical situations somehow produce anxiety and as already explained, anxiety is an emotional reaction produced when a person’s self-identity is challenged (Giddens, 1984, p. 61). It is important to note that when critical situations become frequent, agents feel insecure since their routine is unable to adjust to such circumstances. This explains why agents (at individual and group levels, i.e. persons, societies, and states) change behavior to go along with them (Steele, 2005, p. 526).

Then again, narratives and routines gain importance at this very point. According to Jelena Subotic (2016), if states have autobiographies that explain why they do what they do, it is then relevant to ask how these autobiographies have the potential to transform politics. Subotic describes in her work (2016), in which she cites examples of Serbia’s policy shifts on the contentious status of Kosovo, how political players employ state autobiographies to address state anxieties. Ontological security, as the author refers to Giddens’ ideas, is achieved through ensuring autobiographical continuity, or the continuation of routines in big crises or physical threat scenarios (Subotic, 2016, p. 610). Ejodus (2017), on the other hand, discusses that the unexpected incapacity of agents to “go on” by relying on unacknowledged expertise causes an expression of anxiety, which is followed by attempts to re-establish routines and recover cognitive control over the altered environment (p. 1). Alexandria Innes and Brent Steele (2013) also suggest that while insecurity can emerge in numerous ways during the search for ontological security, with “trauma” being a very extreme manifestation of this very insecurity, states ensure their existence by articulating their “perceived cohesiveness” through the discursive articulation of “collective memories” and “traumatic experiences” (p. 17). Their quest for the continuation of autobiography in that way can help to reduce inherent unpredictability of the surrounding environment for the agents, as well as their own vulnerability to the others (be it states or political actors) (Innes & Steele, 2013, pp. 16-18).

Dmitry Chernobrov (2016) critically suggests that most international relations studies of ontological security have centered on state acts that are backed up by identity demands. Yet, the author attempts to explain the concept of ontological security as

being about society rather than state per se and its need for a stable and continuous self-concept when faced with a crisis. Identity construction is thus connected to inner “anxieties” aroused by the crisis. In relation to this, self-identity becomes securitized socially as the public is motivated by inner identity needs to recognize (or misrecognize) ambiguous or unanticipated situations (2016, p. 582). Narratives would help societies define their identity borders and self. In narratives about unanticipated others, collective identities securitize their self-concepts. Showing “signals of belonging” that establish the boundary, hence, becomes increasingly significant. The construction of founding narratives, such as “usable pasts” (Anderson, 1983, as cited in Chernobrov, 2016) and “selected traumas or glories” (Volkan, 1988, as cited in Chernobrov, 2016), and the expulsion of nonperforming members are all required by such ontologies of the self.

On the other hand, understanding the narratives that social actors tell and employ can help us understand how they perceive the world, when and how they should behave, and why. Della Sala (2018), in his “Narrating Europe: the EU's Ontological Security Dilemma” discusses two European stories: “the EU's foundational narrative” and that of “unified in diversity”, with respect to narratives and ontological security in the EU. The EU, according to the author, is looking for ontological security that can be provided through narratives. Moreover, the EU's stories are not so much different than national ones. Della Sala (2017), in his previous work, “Homeland Security: Territorial Myths and Ontological Security in the European Union,” argues that political narratives regarding territoriality, particularly political myths, can help political communities acquire ontological security. In the refugee crisis, the European Union confronted a difficulty in matching its core values with a narrative of a territory with managed exterior boundaries. Territorial myths, according to the author, are about more than just setting borders; they are also about defining the community. More importantly, Della Sala contends that territorial myths will only help in a limited way to provide the ontological assurance needed to confront current concerns as long as this is not correctly and explicitly defined.

Zarakol (2016), on the other hand, argues that even if they have exclusive territorial control, institutions of political authority that do not provide the people with a solid ontological foundation may not be considered truly sovereign. Given these

constraints, any society can ask about the major source of ontological security for its members, and whether it is institutionalized; and if so, Zarakol asks if the primary source of ontological security political or religious (or both) (2016). This is relevant in the sense that societies seek a foundation to base their ontological security, and routines would help the social agents realize this aim (other than cope with anxieties). Ideologies can be considered as examples of routines in that context since they ensure a secure and continuing existence by explaining reality in reasonable ways (Chernobrov, 2016). Todorov states that “knowing that you are a Catholic, or a Communist, or a Scotsman, or a longshoreman allows your own existence to be recognized, it tells you that you are not in risk of being swallowed up by the emptiness” (2003, as cited in Chernobrov, 2016, p. 584). It thus then becomes possible to sustain consistency and routines in this manner.

Pratt (2017) divides the recent literature on ontological security in two essential directions, which comprise of research “focusing on the socially situated constitution of identity and selfhood” (Mitzen, 2006; Rumelili, 2016) and research “focusing on the affective dimensions of the human figures who steer state policy” (Steele, 2014 and Zarakol, 2010) (p. 4).⁵ However, the author adds to the literature with his concept named “relational view” on ontological security accentuating the idea that it is the “social arrangement” that is the referent of ontological security and not the “self”. This is to say that actors are more concerned with the coherence and stability of their broader social context than with their own self-coherence (Pratt, 2017, p. 9). He puts forward that, through the lens of relational sociology, the bounds of self-identity and self-experience exist not just “psychologically and emotionally”, as a result of anxieties and aversions to disruption, but also “conceptually and institutionally”. Accordingly, when the psychological components of ontological security are combined with a look at the social context, the analysis becomes more in-depth. As a result, attaining or maintaining ontological security requires actions that are

⁵ This is indeed true as Zarakol (2010) also expresses that according to Mitzen, state identities are linked to the intersubjective notions that constitute international society (p. 7). In order to be sustainable, they need to be recognized by others. Steele (2014), on the other hand, claims that Mitzen exaggerates the importance of the role of others in the ontological security process. Steele, unlike Mitzen, believes that rather than being “dependent” on the social world for identity, the state’s sense of “self” aids in the processing of the “relevant” components of the environment.

“situational structures rather than individual reflexes, psychological associations, or repetitive actions” (Pratt, 2017, p. 10).

Based on the theoretical conceptualization discussed so far, it is also essential to discuss the “othering” effect of quest for ontological security. Accordingly, while individuals, societies or states seek ontological security and a coherent sense of self-identity, it may end up in alienation or marginalization of other people or states, since the self needs to secure and protect its identity (Murer, 2010, as cited in Chernobrov, 2016). Self-imagining pursues to portray oneself as constant and existent over time, while transferring any flaws onto others. Assuming that the other’s differences are insuperable, unchangeable, and continual makes the agent feel secure. This occurs even though such behavior can lead to further hostility and isolation.

According to Rossdall (2015), attempts to achieve ontological security are usually violent or othering, aiming to securitize subjectivity through the drawing of lines of exclusion. While certain reactions are clearly more dangerous than others, none of them are completely risk-free. Moreover, the emphasis on “biographical continuity” (Giddens 1991, p. 53) and convincing and solid self-narratives (Kinnvall 2004, p. 746), according to Rossdall (2015), may obscure the ways in which these biographies and narratives are important sites of ethico-political reflection, which means that “whilst some moves to achieve or maintain ontological security are clearly more destructive than others, all enact certain limitations” (p. 373). This argument arises when ontological security is considered to be including comfort, which is associated with privilege and/or complicity, rather than as a subjective psychological condition. As a result of this fact, a self can, for instance, be appealed to such emotions or ideologies as increasing nationalism or religious radicalization in search of ontological security (Kinnvall, 2004).

Kinnvall (2004) identifies the loss of a sense of “home” as one of the consequences of increasing interdependence, as well as unemployment, economic insecurity, and forced migration. These, according to the author, are in fact some of the effects of globalization. Yet, these changes in human interactions make individuals and communities ontologically more insecure. At this point, belonging to an identity satisfies power and security demands (Millar, 2006, as cited in Chernobrov, 2016), while possibly causing alienation against the other agents. Kinnvall (2004, 2009) points

at reaffirming one's own identity by engaging any collective and eliminating uneasiness and existential discomfort.

An important point to mention here is that as Grzybowski (2021) puts forward, "state subjects are never complete or whole but retain a trace of what they have excluded. They are powerful projects of collective identity and exclusive security precisely because they are contestable and essentially unfinished" (p.14). This is to say that while "identity is an idea in search for a person," various subjects of a state such as varying number of ethnic (or even separatist) groups should also be part of the consideration in theoretical assumptions of ontological security. Lupovici (2011) focuses, on the other hand, on the instances in which states are threatened by many different identities they have, which are the situations that result in what the author would refer to as "ontological dissonance" (p. 809). Not only are various separate identities threatened in such instances, but the solutions to alleviate these challenges are ambiguous, forcing the state to choose between "different cherished values".

Skay (2010) looks, with respect to the discussion on the ethnicity and ontological security, at how in England, for instance, discussions about belonging continue to designate particular "ethnic" groups as more or less national because they share specific characteristics, customs, or norms. It is proposed that persons who claim and are treated as if belonging "without question" are provided with a crucial sense of material and ontological security, which is reinforced by routine activities, symbolic forms, and institutional structures. The author also investigates how challenges to this ontological order are contested and resisted, with a focus on the agency of "perceived" others. This, according to Kinnvall (2004), would provoke communities to construct "secure" identities and repel outsiders.

So far in this section, basic theoretical approaches to ontological security have been discussed. On the light of the term first coined by Ronald Laing in 1960, and later applied to sociology by Anthony Giddens, many scholars of academia, including Bahar Rumelili and Ayşe Zarakol from Turkey have studied the concept. Yet the literature is still at its principal steps with comparison to the literature on physical security, which has been intellectually debated since the end of the Second World War. The next section will be the beginning of the laying down the discussion on the Costa Rican case and their perception against the Nicaraguan migrants.

CHAPTER 3

THE CASE OF COSTA RICA

3.1 A Brief History of Costa Rica and Key Political Events

To understand better the identity formation and predominant perceptions of the Costa Rican society, which will be discussed in the following chapters, it is essential to give a background of the key political events that occurred in the nation's history. This brief chapter will evaluate these events to enable comprehending better the way Costa Rican society imagines its past and present. A chronological history of the country is presented here. The greater focus will be on the so-called "democracy tradition" and elements related to this, such as "egalitarianism" and "peacefulness," since these elements are at the heart of the identity formation of the modern Costa Rican nation.

The formation of the democracy culture of Costa Rica is based on its social and political past. When Christopher Columbus first arrived at the shores of this country in 1502, he said, "I saw more gold here in 2 days than I saw in 4 years in Hispaniola" and named this land as Costa Rica, which means "rich coast" (Esteban, 2011). Spanish colonization was delayed for fifty years when it became clear that the region was not actually that rich, and that the native populations would not be hospitable to them at all. However, with the arrival of these European conquerors, the indigenous population, which was 400,000, had decreased to 8,000 a hundred years later, due to the harsh working conditions and exposure to new diseases (Asi Funciona, 2013). The assimilation of the rest into the colonial society caused the people of Costa Rica to turn into a significantly homogeneous structure.

On the other hand, Costa Rica never based its economy on African slavery as a dominating form of production in the absence of known mineral wealth or extensive

plantation agriculture. Nonetheless, as in the rest of the Americas, Spaniards brought African slaves to Costa Rica from the beginning of the conquest. Slave ownership in Costa Rica was limited to a few controlling families, due to the province's economic underdevelopment (Lohse, 2014, p. 117). Historians believe that Costa Rican slavery was "non-economic" as they compare the human property of Costa Rican slave owners to the enormous numbers of individuals enslaved in other colonies. The small-scale Costa Rican economy's changing labor requirements undoubtedly developed a slaveholding system distinct from that of other New World colonies. Most Spaniards in Costa Rica actually lacked the financial means to purchase significant numbers of African slaves (Lohse, 2014, p. 117).

During the Spanish colonial rule, which lasted for nearly 300 years, Costa Rica was ruled as the southernmost province of the General Capitol of Guatemala (Capitania General de Guatemala) under a military governor. The distance of Costa Rica from the administrative center, the lack of resources such as gold and silver, and the fact that it was not allowed to trade with the outside world caused it to become a poor and sparsely populated region. Costa Rica was the poorest colony of the Spanish Empire. This caused Spain to leave Costa Rica to its fate. And yet, the people, who were deprived of the local labor force to work, had to deal with agriculture on their own small lands. This situation, which prevented landowners from establishing large farms, was the determining factor in Costa Rica's socioeconomic structure (Asi Funciona, 2013).

Costa Rica joined the federated republic that was established after Central American countries declared their independence from Spain in 1821. The first elected governor Braulio Carrillo Colina established a credible judicial system, founded the country's first newspaper, and promoted free education to the population. Yet perhaps more importantly, he wanted to export coffee by promoting its production, which until then was only at subsistence levels. For this purpose, he transferred free municipal lands to every villager who wanted to grow coffee (Baker, 2014, p. 91). Such a socio-economic policy boosted the already considerable population of small farmers (Booth et al. 2010, p. 62). These developments in Costa Rica paved the way for the country to gain an autonomous, individualistic, and egalitarian society. Another name for it was

“rural democracy.” The small farmers of that time would form the basis of the larger middle class that would later emerge in the country.

Hence, it can be stated that the seeds of eventual Costa Rican democracy were laid in the nineteenth century, although actual democratic governance did not emerge until the mid-twentieth century. Between 1824 and 1899, one out of every five Costa Rican governments was overthrown by coup d'état, and the military dominated the country 44% of the time (Booth et al. 2010, p. 62). During the majority of that time period, the country was ruled by wealthy rural families. Elections that did take place were indirect, limited to a small, literate elite, and frequently corrupted. However, economic developments and political changes prevented a landed elite from completely dominating Costa Rican national politics.

Costa Rica declared its independence from the federation in 1848. Yet the nascent landed class ruled the country until the military, which had substantially grown during the 1857 Central American war, overthrew them. General Tomás Guardia (1870-1882) was the military's leader, who after seizing the control with a coup d'état, launched a campaign against the affluent, and confiscated part of their assets in addition to exiling a number of their leaders. Although an authoritarian in essence, General Guardia carried out important reforms in the name of democracy and freedoms during his 12-year presidency. He undertook reforms that were not typical of the period, such as freedom of religion,⁶ abolition of the death penalty,⁷ prevention of the use of the military for political purposes,⁸ and making primary education compulsory and free for both genders. The constitution, also known as the Liberal Constitution,⁹

⁶ Article 51 of the 1871 Constitution would establish that “The Catholic, Roman Apostolic Religion is that of the State, which contributes to its maintenance, without impeding the free exercise in the Republic, of any other cult that is not opposed to universal morality or good customs” (Constitucion Politica, retrieved February 06, 2022).

⁷ Death penalty was not actually abolished completely. Article 45 of the 1871 Constitution would establish that “The death penalty will only be imposed in the Republic in the following cases: 1st. In the crime of premeditated and certain homicide. 2nd. In crimes of high treason; and 3rd. In the piracy” (Constitucion Politica, retrieved February 06, 2022).

⁸ Article 22 of the 1871 Constitution established that “The military force is subordinated to the Civil Power, it is essentially passive and should never deliberate” (Constitucion Politica, retrieved February 06, 2022).

⁹ This constitution would set the separation of powers as a rule in the country. Article 64 stated, “the Government of the Republic is popular, representative, alternative and responsible, and is exercised by

approved by Guardia in 1871, is considered to be the cornerstone of liberalism in Costa Rica (Baker, 2014, p. 147).

In order to understand better the 19th century Costa Rica, it is convenient to make a distinction between the worldviews of the Conservatives and Liberals especially in the second half of the century. In this period, traditional large-scale landowners who had benefited from crown licensing and export monopolies tended to be conservatives. Liberals, on the other hand, were more likely to be wealthy, yet angry and dissatisfied landowners who lacked crown export licenses or urban elites concerned with trade (Booth et al., 2010, p. 52). A significant distinction was that, although Conservatives tended to stick to more conventional economic methods, Liberals, who had come to rule much of Central America by the late 19th century, promoted “modernization” within an externally oriented, laissez-faire economic framework (Booth et al., 2010, p. 52). Liberals, in order to boost exports, also implemented legislation that deprived most indigenous groups of lands originally allotted for them by the Spanish crown. When the Liberals were in control, they ruled in an authoritarian way. In most nations of Central America, like in Costa Rica, liberalism’s modernization served to strengthen the concentration of wealth and income in the hands of the wealthy, as well as the reliance of local economies on the international economic system (Booth et al., 2010, p. 52).

As coffee manufacturing grew in the late 19th century, a labor scarcity kept rural wages high. By that time, market forces in the fast-expanding coffee business had begun to concentrate land ownership, displacing many smallholders. Large coffee producers, on the other hand, had to pay acceptable wages and the government had to implement reforming public policies in order to secure the labor crucial to the nation's wealth. Costa Rican peasants and laborers were thus subjected to less exploitation and persecution than those in other Central American countries (Booth et al. 2010, p. 63).

Tomas Guardia's reforms also revealed another important fact. The expansion of education to all made it difficult for the elites to exclude the public from political processes. In that period, reading ability was a criterion for voting eligibility, thus rising literacy simultaneously increased suffrage (Booth et al. 2010, p. 63). The

three different powers that will be called Legislative, Executive and Judicial”. The separation of powers was quite ahead of its time especially when compared to the other countries in the region.

number of people engaged in political processes also increased as business, governance, transportation, immigration, and urban centers grew. In addition, it was understood that while liberal and stable regimes benefited business aristocrats, unstable administrations with a military understanding would indeed harm them (Baker, 2014, p. 151). Perhaps it was due to this stability that in the 1870s the Costa Rican government hired an American firm owned by a railroad entrepreneur Henry Meiggs¹⁰, to build a railroad from the inland coffee grounds to the Atlantic coast. The aim was to increase exports to Europe. The Costa Rican government, which was experiencing financial difficulties at that time, offered to give this company lands on both sides of the railway in return for the work they would do. Accepting the proposal, the Americans began to plant bananas to feed the workers cheaply in these lands. However, after a while, they would export the surplus production and make a huge profit with the income they obtained. The United Fruit Company that was established, on the other hand, would change the economic landscape of Costa Rica. Meanwhile, African immigrants brought from Jamaica for the construction of the railway would later gain an important place in the ethnic composition of the country (Asi Funciona, 2013).¹¹

¹⁰ Henry Meiggs (1811-1877) was an American railroad builder who carried out constructions in Chile and Peru. He entered into the business of provision of transportation for gold miners, which led him to make a fortune. He brought Chinese immigrants for the construction of the Peruvian railroads. During this project, the Costa Rican President Tomas Guardia approached him for the construction of a railroad between the Caribbean port of Limón and San Jose, the country's capital. Although Meiggs was initially contracted for the building of this railroad, it was later carried out by one of his nephews, Minor Cooper Keith. The project could be completed only 14 years after Meiggs' death ("Henry Meiggs," n.d.).

¹¹ A more detailed discussion on the migration of the Caribbean black population is discussed in section 3.3.

Figure 1

Banana workers in Costa Rica



Note. Source: Palmer, 2004, p. 89.

In 1889, the transition to democracy took place in Costa Rica (Baker, 2014). For the first time in the country's history, "free and fair" elections were held. The story of these elections is noteworthy. Bernardo Soto, a liberalist landowner, military leader, and the head of state at that time, called the country for elections in 1889. However, his rival Joaquin Rodriguez won the elections against the candidate that Soto supported. When the Soto government did not want to recognize the new president, Costa Ricans took to the streets with their guns, and this reaction of the people made Soto take a step back.¹² Although a number of authors disagree with the idea that it was the birth of the Costa Rican democracy, this election is considered to be significant in the sense that it compelled the military to acknowledge an opposition victory, as a result of the mobilization of the ordinary people in Costa Rica to defend the election (Booth et al., 2010, p. 63).

In the 1890s, a bipartisan democratic system and compulsory free education were largely in place, although women and blacks were not yet able to vote. The emergence of newspapers¹³ with certain news standards in the late nineteenth and early

¹² November 7, when Soto left office, is celebrated as Democracy Day in Costa Rica.

¹³ One of the newspapers founded in that period (1889), *La Prensa Libre* (Free Press), is still published today.

twentieth centuries enabled this media instrument to take an important place in public debates. High literacy rates had a great impact on this. So much so that in 1927, when newspapers could reach the whole country, the literacy rate was 65% across the country and around 90% in the capital San Jose (Baker, 2014, p. 165). Education was also a critical tool for disseminating a vision of national identity developed by circles of politicians and intellectuals in Costa Rica. This notion of national identity was initially primarily masculine, military, and racial. However, it gradually evolved to include values such as civil, peace, and social justice as certain movements led to the reformulation of study curricula and teacher education. As a result, although education could not initially become a tool for class mobility in economic terms, it did make a significant contribution to the expansion of a collective sensitivity associated with civil, rather than military; conflict resolution, rather than repression, and with the pursuit of institutional solutions to social needs rather than their delay (Molina Jimenez, 2007, p. 248).

Costa Rica drew the attention of foreign visitors at that time who experienced the cultural and political traits of the nation. For instance, Dana Gardner was a student from the United States who visited and spent some time in Costa Rica in 1914. He observed the democratic life of the country as follows:

The inhabitants of Costa Rica now enjoy more stable and more nearly democratic political institutions than any of their Central American neighbors. Constitutional government works in practice, and the letter of the law is generally respected, even though its spirit is often ingeniously circumvented. The president walks through the streets much like a private citizen, without fear of assassination or of being captured by his enemies, and the leaders of the opposition carry on their propaganda in San Jose without hindrance or persecution, and at times are even called in to consult with the president on matters of great importance. The press criticizes the administration fearlessly [...] The elections are participated in by about as large a proportion of the entire population as in the United States. If one candidate receives a majority of the votes cast, he becomes president, and if no absolute choice is made by the people the question goes to the Congress. (Palmer, 2004, p. 149)

Figure 2

A Public Conference on a Serious Disease



Note. San Jose. Year of the photography, 1915. Source: Rockefeller Archive Center, as cited in Palmer, 2004, p. 110.

The first significant event to disrupt democracy in Costa Rica took place in 1917. On this date, the country's Minister of War Federico Tinoco Granados overthrew the government in a coup. These were the difficult times due to the World War I. He won the elections held in the same year with the aim of legitimizing the regime. However, the Tinoco regime became Costa Rica's last military government, as he was overthrown in 1919 by popular outcry and an invasion by exiled elites (Booth et al., 2010, p. 63). He had to resign in the face of pressure after a two-year dictatorship full of political and civil rights violations (Baker, 2014, p. 170). After this event, there was a return to democracy again. Civilian and constitutional rule continued subsequently. Moreover, between the two world wars, Costa Rica was one of only 10 countries with open assemblies and certain functioning democratic institutions (Abolicion del Ejercito, 2017).

The second major blow to democracy came in 1948¹⁴. Costa Ricans witnessed a civil war that lasted 44 days on this date, in which 2,000 people, mostly civilians,

¹⁴ The Costa Rican Civil War was a civil war that took place between 12 March - 24 April 1948. On February 8, 1948 there was the presidential election. There was a stand-off after the elections between the incumbent National Republican Party (NRP) and the opposition (a coalition of diverse groups),

lost their lives. After the elections that year, the destruction of some of the ballot papers in an unknown fire triggered the events. The social conflicts brought about by the 1929 depression and the Second World War were also of a nature to ignite a spark at any moment. A farmer and philosopher named Jose Figueres Ferrer started an armed rebellion. In the events that later turned into a civil war, the villagers and the army came face to face. This event, known as the War of the 48, would become the bloodiest memory in Costa Rican recent history (Dahl, 2003).

Yet this war was also an important turning point in the history of the country. Jose Figueres, who would become the head of state under the administration of the Second Republic Junta, which was established after the war, took a revolutionary step by abolishing the army in his country on December 1, 1948. Claiming that “this institution was incompatible with the future of humanity,” Figueres took this decision “within the framework of the principles of democracy and freedom, which are the legacy of his ancestors,” and would later be mentioned as a success that other countries did not dare (Abolicion del Ejercito, 2017, para. 12). After the decision, with the new constitution enacted by the Second Republic administration, universal suffrage was introduced, and democracy was once again made to have a say. Subsequently, Otilio Ulate, the elected president, was handed the task, and then Jose Figueres, who was declared a national hero in the country, won the elections held in accordance with the new constitution in 1953 (Baker, 2014, p. 171). Costa Rica, on the other hand, has seen 16 democratic elections since the civil war, the most recent in February 2022, during the preparation of this thesis. Hence, with the aid of this stable and institutionalized system of elections, Costa Rica, in the democracy index, has ranked high (18th in 2020) in the world and in Latin America (in 2020, second only after Uruguay) (Economist, 2020).

whose candidate was Otilio Ulate. Ulate won the elections, however the Congress, which was dominated by the ruling party, annulled the results after they were considered to be fraudulent. This led to the Costa Rican Civil War. A businessman, Jose Figueres Ferrer led the uprising against the NRP. The candidate of NRP was Rafael Angel Calderon, who had previously formed an alliance with the Catholic Church and the Communist Party. The war took 44 days, this was a short period of time, but saw the bloodiest war in the history of Costa Rica, and importantly, after the war was won by the armed groups led by Jose Figueres Ferrer, who then became the president of the government of junta, in the 1949 Constitution communism was outlawed and the Costa Rican army was abolished (Olander, 1996, p. 467-468). Costa Rica still remains as one of the very few countries without a regular military force.

Costa Rica differed from its neighbors in significant and apparent ways for the majority of the nineteenth and twentieth century. Despite this fact, Costa Rica has always been subjected to the same international commodity price fluctuations (of coffee, banana, and petroleum) and dependent development as its neighbors in terms of its economy. Costa Rica, on the other hand, has simply managed its economic challenges better since the 1950s, reducing the impact on inhabitants and disguising underlying parallels with its neighbors (Booth et al., 2010, p. 61).

The period from 1950 to 1980 is considered to be the most dynamic in Costa Rican history in terms of promoting a relatively egalitarian society. The evolution of poverty indicators reveals a profound social transition in which the country finally approaches the egalitarian imaginary created by nineteenth-century liberals. Social differences did not vanish during this period, yet the middle of the social pyramid widened as poverty and inequality decreased. By 1950, the bulk of the population, more than 50% of it, was poor. In the first decade, little improvement was accomplished, but between 1960 and 1980, poverty dropped 30 percent, which corresponds to roughly a fifth of the population (Sojo, 2010, p. 63).

On the other hand, as the twentieth century drew to a close, Costa Rica's politics and economy began to resemble those of its neighbors. Costa Rica became less politically distinctive as formal electoral democracy and enhanced human rights expanded throughout the area, and other isthmian regimes adopted systems similar to Costa Rica's. Costa Rica, on the other hand, advanced toward the economic model that was in commonplace in Central and Latin America. Costa Rica restructured its linkages to the world economy and adjusted its domestic welfare policies as it was forced, like its neighbors, to follow a neoliberal economic development model in the 1980s (Booth et al., 2010, p. 61). During the years of 1970s and 1980s, economic developments in Costa Rica resulted in considerable internal turmoil similar to its neighbors. Nonetheless, the country managed to contain the violent turmoil that affected much of the isthmus without resorting to regime change (Booth et al., 2010, p. 65).

Costa Rica's relative stability was not achieved by chance; it was the consequence of elite decisions made in the 1970s and 1980s to mitigate some of the degradation of basic living conditions while avoiding violent political repression. Late-

nineteenth-century rulers and landlords had similarly accommodated peasants to secure a labor supply, which influenced these decisions. Political parties in government in Costa Rica, since the 1940s, employed political and economic reforms such as minimum wage and social security retirement program, which was the first in the Central America (Holzhauer, 2004, p. 1). These policies aimed at appeasing and stabilizing the mobile working and middle classes in the mid-twentieth century (Booth et al., 2010, p. 65). Hence, even in times of recession, majority of the citizens remained loyal to the political regime, as opposed to the challenges against sovereignty of the governments in other countries of the region such as Nicaragua, Guatemala, and El Salvador (Booth et al., 2010, p. 68).

On the other hand, Costa Rica is a country that has likewise made a name for itself in international platforms regarding peace. In Central America, which spent the 1970s and 1980s with protracted wars, Costa Rica preferred an active neutrality policy and did not encounter extensive domestic violence. In fact, Oscar Arias Sanchez, who was president from 1986 to 1990, won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1987 for his role as a peacemaker in the conflicts in Central America. Arias' opposition to the hegemonic support of the US in the civil war in Nicaragua played an important role in winning this award (Anglade, 2013, p. 357). *La Prensa Libre* newspaper wrote in August of that year that upon the signing of the peace plan for Central America, "Costa Rica began exporting its most important products, peace and democracy" (Asi Funciona , 2013). So much so that although there was a peace plan prepared by the US for the wars in Central America, the presidents of Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador preferred to sign the plan presented by Costa Rica.

Table 1
Statistics on Central American Countries

	Costa Rica	El Salvador	Guatemala	Honduras	Nicaragua	Region ^a
Population (in millions)						
1960	1.2	2.6	4.0	1.9	1.5	11.2 ^b
1980	2.3	4.5	6.9	3.7	2.8	20.2 ^b
2003	4.2	6.6	12.3	7.0	5.3	35.4 ^b
Population-density estimate (persons per square km)						
1998	72.3	293.8	106.3	55.2	39.4	80.5
Mean annual population growth						
1961–70	3.4	3.4	2.8	3.1	3.2	3.3
1970–80	2.8	2.3	2.8	3.4	3.0	3.0
1980–90	2.8	1.6	2.9	3.4	3.4	2.8
1990–96	2.4	2.2	2.9	3.0	2.5	2.7
2004	1.5	1.8	2.6	2.2	2.0	2.0
Percent indigenous population						
1978	1	2	60	2	2	14
2004	1	1	43	7	5	11
Percent urban population						
1960	33.2	36.4	34.0	22.5	41.7	33.6
1996	49.3	48.4	41.8	48.6	74.1	50.2
Percent literate						
1960	86	42	40	30	32	42
c. 2000	96	80	70	76	67	78
Primary school enrollment ratio						
1980	107	75	73	98	94	89
1990	101	81	78	108	94	92
c. 2002	108	112	103	106	105	107
University enrollment						
c. 2001 ^c	20	17	8	14	12	14
Life expectancy at birth						
1980–85	73	57	59	60	60	60
c. 2003	78	70	66	66	69	70
Infant mortality/1,000 live births						
c. 1993	14	40	62	49	56	55
c. 2003	9	33	36	32	32	28
Religious identification (percent) c. 1985						
Catholic	97	93	79	94	88	90
Protestant	3	4	6	3	8	5

Note. Comparison of Central American countries in terms of population and other social data. Source: Booth et al., 2010, p. 270. Costa Rica ranks relatively higher with respect to the percentages of such indicators as literacy, life expectancy at birth, and infant mortality.

In this section, a brief political and social history of Costa Rica was presented beginning from the colonial times, an introductory description of the major events have been discussed. These events were crucial for the self-imagining of the Costa Rican in the modern decades. The next section will be dealing with the identity formation of the Costa Rican nation, which is crucial to take a grasp of the Costa Rican population's perceptions towards the Nicaraguan migrants in their country as well as their quest for ontological security against this unexpected and new phenomenon.

3.2 Formation of National Identity in Costa Rica

This section will be dealing with the identity formation processes of the Costa Rican nation beginning from the post-colonial times. It is aimed to identify the motives behind the particular perceptions of the predominant classes of the Costa Rican society towards their own nation.

In the 1990s, according to Montero-Rodriguez (2013), questions such as “who are we?” began to become common among the Costa Rican society (p. 14). They were asking this question both against themselves and before the international community. What was constant in all these debates was the traditional narrative of identity, the alleged stability, the concept of the quiet country, and the so-called simple and honest peasant population. In this way, identity discussions based on self-image were turned into a dialogue. However, this is obviously not the beginning of the issue.

When Costa Rica gained independence, it became necessary to invent an identity that would respond to the interests of a social class and a specific context. It was critical that the Costa Ricans situate themselves in history. During the last three decades of the 19th century, political and economic power in Costa Rica was concentrated precisely in the social class that was linked to the cultivation and export of coffee. From there arose the invention of that identity or of those elements that were going to identify the society as Costa Ricans (Arce Wong, 2020).

Palmer (1995) claims that Costa Rican nationalism began to emerge in the third quarter of the 19th century (para. 3). The aim was to shape national subjects according to the requirements of oligarchic liberalism.¹⁵ Therefore, the emergence of this nationalism was the product of intellectuals who cooperated closely with the government and made propaganda from the top to down in a consistent and uniform way (Palmer, 1995, para. 3). In front of the intellectuals of the Costa Rican Liberal

¹⁵ Palmer (1995) locates the liberal period between 1870 and 1920, beginning with General Tomas Guardia’s rise to power and especially with the legislation of the 1871 Constitution of Costa Rica. Palmer states that “ideas of political community before 1870, both official and popular, though sometimes proto-national in various ways, never crystallized into a coherent nationalism. That was the product of intellectuals who worked closely with the state and spread from top to bottom in a consistent and uniform way to mold national subjects according to the needs of oligarchic liberalism” (1995, para. 3).

State, there were several important issues to be resolved in the formation of national identity. First, they decided that the current population was one race, which is white, and homogeneous, but also one nation in origin. Second, they referred to this race as an essential element and even as a basis for progress in terms of wealth and modernity. Finally, they argued that an interventionist policy was needed from the state to ensure the continuation of this pure national formation. In this way, some form of social protection and cleansing had to be accomplished (Palmer, 1995, para. 2). The subjects of the nation were seen as “brothers” of the same origin, who mark the national ideology under the slogan of kinship ties (Montero-Rodriguez, 2013, p. 14).

However, according to Steven Palmer's account, there was an existence of racial assimilation policies in the 19th century. According to the author's findings, between 10% and 20% of the population of the Costa Rican highlands were African American descendants of mulatto, pardo,¹⁶ and black slaves in the first half of the century.¹⁷ In the middle of the 19th century, populations of mestizo and Hispanic origin were officially considered “white”. For example, in an article published in 1851 to promote Costa Rica abroad, it was stated that there were 90,000 whites and 10,000 indigenous peoples in the country (Palmer, 1995, para. 11). Also, in another survey at the beginning of the 20th century, about 15% of the total population was classified as “indigenous” (Palmer, 1995, para. 10).

¹⁶ Mulatto, according to the definition of *Oxford Dictionary*, is a person of mixed white and black ancestry, especially a person with one white and one black parent. Meanwhile, pardo, (Spanish: “brown”) is a person of mixed African, European, and Indian ancestry (*Encyclopædia Britannica*). Mulattos and pardos were maintained in servitude during the colonial period, with no possibility of obtaining wealth or political influence.

¹⁷ A deeper historical investigation would indicate that in the 17th century, the freshly arrived Africans were surrounded by a larger community of creole slaves (mulattos and blacks), as well as free blacks and mulattos, ladino Indians, Spaniards, and mestizos, all of whom possessed a common culture. Africans, regardless of their ethnic origins, quickly adapted to the majority culture because of necessity. Slave children were brought up with the “principles and ideals” of the dominant culture, since there is no evidence that African parents passed on components of their original cultures to their offspring. These conditions are supposed to have aided the rapid and complete assimilation of Africans and their descendants into the developing Costa Rican creole culture in the 17th century (Lohse, 2014, p. 53).

Table 2
Historical Population Data

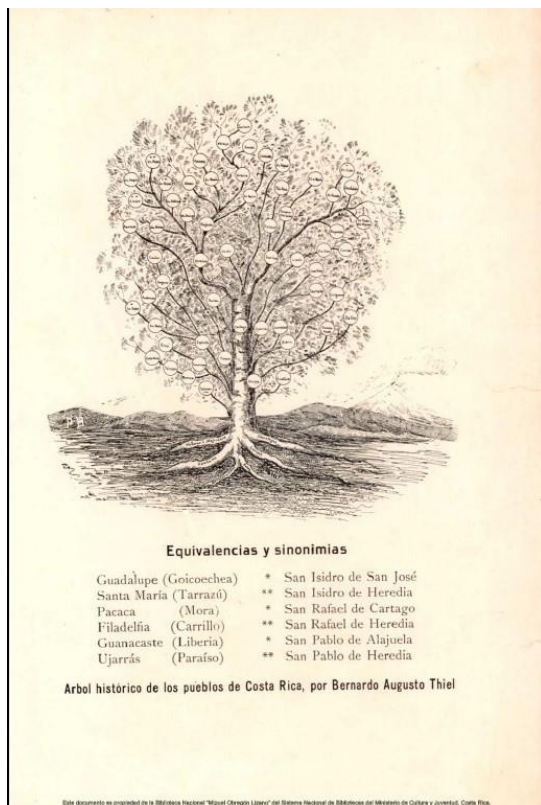
Year	Indians	Spaniards	Free blacks and mulattos	Mestizos	Total
1492	400,000	0	0	0	400,000
1569	69,875	-	-	-	-
1611	8,248	-	-	-	-
1681	1,077	520	129	16	1,742
1741	804	1,707	2,142	5,300	9,953
1751	2,811	-	-	-	-

Note. Estimated populations of Costa Rica between 1492-1751. Sources: Denevan, Quiros Vargas, AGI, ANCR, Fernandez, AGCA, as cited in Lohse, 2014, p. 11.

On the other hand, beginning with the 1880s, Costa Rican liberals vigorously opposed the existence of such racial heterogeneity in the national population and proudly referred to a “homogeneous race.” In the next two decades, according to Steven Palmer’s account, liberal ideologists made it their primary duty to insist on this homogeneity (Palmer, 1995, para. 13). Palmer, in contrast to the ideas of a homogeneous nation in Costa Rica, cites the historical family trees of the peoples of Costa Rica in the journal *Revista de Costa Rica en el Siglo XIX* (Magazine of Costa Rica in the XIX Century) written by Archbishop Bernardo Thiel,¹⁸ which was actually sponsored by the state to show the progress and achievements of the country. Each of the tree’s roots is labeled with the name of an indigenous group from Costa Rica’s side of the isthmus: Nahuas, Caribes, Güetares, Bugabas, Chorotegas, etc. In Palmer’s interpretation, by the end of the Spanish conquest and colonization in the 19th century, the indigenous peoples of Costa Rica were transformed into the “homogeneous race” (Palmer, 1995, para. 19).

¹⁸ Bernardo Augusto Thiel was a clergyman who in fact opposed the Liberals for both their anticlericalism and their lack of social consciousness against such issues as workers’ rights in Costa Rica (Prabook, 2021). He has a profile of a person possessing awareness towards social matters of the time.

Figure 3
Ethnic Peoples of Costa Rica



Note. This is an image of the peoples of Costa Rica prepared by Bernardo Augusto Thiel and published in 1902. In each of the roots of the tree, six of the names of the indigenous groups of Costa Rica are written, while the names of the Costa Rican villages (including today's capital, San Jose) can be seen on the branches. Source: *Tipografía Nacional*, 1902, p. 11.

Costa Rican historian and foreign service officer Ricardo Fernandez Guardia published a work in 1909 named *la Cartilla Histórica de Costa Rica*. According to Steven Palmer, this work by Guardia is Costa Rica's most important and most successful schoolbook. This book claims that while the discoveries were initially disastrous for indigenous people, "in return they took the Christian religion and civilization, the animals, plants and arts of the Old World, the Castilian¹⁹ language, and other goods that we now enjoy." The important hint in this sentence is that at the beginning of the sentence, indigenous peoples were mentioned as "they," while at the

¹⁹ Spanish language is sometimes referred to as Castilian, derived from the Castile province of Spain, as it is believed that the language originated in this region.

end of the sentence it was described as “we,” merging this population into the “homogeneity” of the society (Palmer, 1995, para. 21).

Steven Palmer questions why Costa Rican liberals wanted to base nationalism on a so-called homogeneous white race, by looking for elements that prompted them to act in this way. According to Palmer, new racist ideologies were emerging in Europe in the 1860s. This was due to both the adoption of Darwin’s theories and the positivist approaches that were popular at the time. In this period, the things that were regarded to be “pure” came to the fore and this was the case for societies as well. In this context, according to the liberals, it was necessary for the society not to be “polluted” and to remain “pure”. Palmer explains that the Costa Rican liberals of the time saw this as an opportunity to show that the country was historically a homogeneous and white society (Palmer, 1995, para. 24-27). The creation of Costa Rican identity was linked to peace and working as a simple peasant, as well as another important aspect of whiteness, also because they were interested not only in consolidating Costa Rica as a nation-state, but also in strengthening economic relations with Europe, and they saw selling the idea that they were white as important (Arce Wong, 2020).

However, according to Palmer’s account, there were groups in the country that did not want to be part of the homogeneous race. These were the indigenous groups, a significant population of which was living in the Guanacaste region (see Figure 5), and Anglican blacks of the Limón province.²⁰ In fact, West Indian blacks were the largest immigrant group in Costa Rica according to the 1892 census²¹ (Palmer, 1995, para. 30). These peoples lived in the periphery of the Republic geographically, demographically, politically, and economically (Palmer, 1995, p. 28).

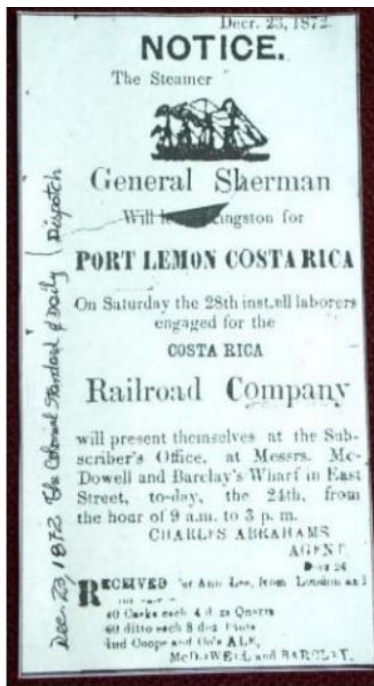
A very important event in the history of Costa Rica, which also affected the future of the country in terms of ethnic identities, took place at the end of the 19th

²⁰ A large number of Afro-Caribbean immigrants from the Anglo-Spanish and French Caribbeans went to the mainland of Costa Rica to work on the construction of a railroad in 1872. Later, the province and port of Limón became home to a significant portion of these immigrants as they were forced to move here. The settlement resulted in the existence today's Afro-Costa Rican community. This group of people preserves characteristics of Caribbean immigrant culture, particularly Jamaican culture (Miller, 2012, p. 1). So, a distinct “racial” and cultural population persists in this region.

²¹ The presence of blacks is thought to be a result of the railway building and banana investments of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, according to traditional historiography. However, until recently, the established heritage of blackness dating back to the conquest period was overlooked (Sojo, 2010, p.27).

century. The failure of the national railway,²² which resulted in the loss of de facto authority over the province of Limón, became a critical problem in terms of the racial composition of the region. This black population had a privileged position in the construction sector whose importance was increasing in the country's economy. According to Palmer, these considerations should have led to the erasure of African origins from national racial myths. Thus, the people of Limón have disappeared from the national conversation. Moreover, these hesitations contributed to the explicit rejection of the idea that people of color were naturalized members of the Costa Rican community (Palmer, 1995, para. 30).

Figure 4
A Newspaper Cutting Recruiting Jamaicans



Note. This newspaper cutting from 1872 was an advertisement circulated in Jamaica. It was published to recruit Caribbean laborers into Costa Rica's railways project
 Source: Miller, 2012, p. 6.

²² Without having completed the railway line by the end of 1872, the country's foreign debt rose to 3,400,000 pounds, of which only 1,300,000 were available to the government. The first locomotive could travel the entire length of the track only 19 years after the contract for the construction of the railway to the Atlantic was signed. In 1890, the railway did not belong to Costa Rica anymore, as it was sold to an English corporation for 99 years (Casey Gaspar, 1976, p. 293). This also led to the introduction of a new factor in the economy of Costa Rica, that is, the banana production, which owed its existence to the railroad.

On the other hand, labelled as a “tropical place” of excellence and stability, Central Valley has always been considered as an aseptic and immune area of the country. The sense of national identity was shaped through this geography. This place has also been described as a place where peace and equality prevail, described as being like the lost paradise and the Garden of Eden. It is also claimed to be the base of the familial origin of the Costa Rican people (Montero-Rodríguez, 2013, p. 16). The society in Central Valley (see Figure 5) had also formed the roots of Costa Rica's national experience and institutional identity when the country gained independence in 1821. In other words, a particular regional development²³ with an agrarian structure became the foundation for so-called “exceptionalism” (Palmer, 2004, p. 11).

Figure 5
Map of Central Valley



Note. Location of Central Valley and other geographical regions in Costa Rica. Source: Project Llano Bonito, 2021, retrieved on 27.01.2022.

²³ An important note to mention is that in terms of ratio of the total population of the country, this was a very substantial region. Costa Rica, for instance, had sixty thousand residents in 1824, with four out of every five living in the Central Valley (Palmer, 2004, p. 11).

It is not a coincidence that this area is a particular place. The Spaniards who had arrived in Costa Rica were unable to build a civilization that was like that of other colonies, i.e., one based on the exploitation of indigenous and slave labor. This resulted in the emergence of a peasant economy in the Central Valley. Small and medium agriculturalist families formed peasantry who were also successful in trading, and they had become the Central Valley's dominant socioeconomic group during the 18th century (Palmer, 2004, p. 11). There was a "utopia of being an ethnically white society made up of poor peasants, isolated, without disputes, without social classes." In this environment, the people preferred democracy as a result of their poverty and the equality of their material and social status (Ziga, 2003, p. 27, as cited in Montero-Rodríguez, 2013, p. 16).

Central Valley is understood as a social and symbolic construct that ascribes moral superiority and a civilizing mission to itself, rather than merely a geographical entity. To illustrate this point, Costa Rican writer Carlos Monge Alfaro (1943) in his book titled *Social and Human Topography of Costa Rica*, analyzes Costa Rican geography utilizing the valley-plain contrast:

The plain produces men endowed with immense vital energy, but it does not create culture. Civilization does not start from the plain. It *comes* to there. And it comes from the valley. One of the reasons that explains the previous affirmation is that in the plains men live isolated, without forming intense relationships; The opposite thing happens in the valleys, where people are concentrated. The valley or plateau generally has a better climate, the landscape is more collected, with greater variation. The distances are short. The men are grouped in families, they work the land intensively. They join her more. They want her more. They consider it their true birthplace. The property is distributed among all and is the economic base of the household. (Monge, 1943, as cited in Gutiérrez Arguedas & Granados Chaverri, 2020, p.9)

On the other hand, following the civil war of 1948²⁴, Costa Rica embarked on a new nationalist project and modernization period, with a "Second Republic" replacing the outdated Liberal Republic, according to its ideologues, and following the parameters of the new order outlined after World War II and the start of the "Cold War." This means that the international conjuncture also played a role in the recent discourse and formation of identity. Inside Costa Rica, the period in question was

²⁴ See footnote 13 for the main events that occurred during the Costa Rican Civil War of 1948.

dominated by the National Liberation Party's social democratic doctrine. During this period, a new version of Costa Rican history was developed. According to this novel version, the dominance of small peasant owners created a sediment of equality and democracy that was threatened by the rise of the coffee oligarchy, liberalism, and the free market, which resulted in inequality, latifundia,²⁵ or the control of powerful companies and countries over the national economy, throughout national history (Quesada Soto, 1969, p. 18).

This period also corresponds to a resurgence of homogenizing discourses, in which a single national identity emerges, monochrome in socioeconomic and ethnic dimensions, after the rupture of the 1940s. According to Alexander Jiménez (2005) between 1948 and 1980, Costa Rica's institutional alignment with the Central Valley shifted, and peripheral spaces were nationalized (as cited in Sojo, 2010, p. 65). This was, additionally, the period when the state sponsored the development of a culture and an official Costa Rican intelligentsia, which is frequently called "metaphysical ethnic nationalism"²⁶ (Sojo, 2010, p. 65). They are in charge of creating a scenario in which pacifism, whiteness, rural democracy, and exceptional character collide, using metaphors, images, and imaginaries that have existed since Independence. There is an ideal setting -the Central Valley-, a golden age -the colony-, and a symbolic character -the individualistic peasant- in this novel.

It has been expressed earlier that Costa Rica's image as an "exceptional" country is founded on a peculiar interpretation of its history, particularly its colonial past. In general, this interpretation is based on two historical assessments: first, that Costa Rica was a peripheral zone in the pre-Columbian era, and that it was likewise a peripheral region during the Spanish Empire. Second, that this marginality had a significant impact on the development of the human type and civilization that would give birth to so-called democratic nation. On the other hand, unlike liberals, social

²⁵ Latifundium (or latifundia in plural) is defined as "a large landed estate or ranch in ancient Rome or more recently in Spain or Latin America, typically worked by peasants or slaves" (*Oxford Dictionary of English*, 2010).

²⁶ This is a term coined by Alexander Jimenez in 2002 based on the analysis of a discourse in the author's work titled "The Impossible Country of Philosophers" (Original: "El Imposible País de los Filósofos"). In this essay, the phrase "metaphysical ethnic nationalism" is defined as a "supposedly social democratic political project whose main function is to differentiate Costa Rica from other Central American republics and celebrate their uniqueness based on certain vague and imprecise features" (Jimenez Matarrita, 2002, p. 32).

democratic ideologues saw this marginal character favorably, seeing it as a key to explaining the Costa Rican people's uniqueness, particularly their democratic nature (Gutiérrez Arguedas & Granados Chaverri, 2020, p. 4).

If isolation was the foundation for the distribution of opportunities and resources in the original Costa Rica, an extroverted pattern of economic development and property distribution would be the referents of postcolonial social organization, where identity would simultaneously begin to move away from poverty and toward entrepreneurship and progress (Sojo, 2010, p. 32). In relation to this fact, Drozda (2012) stresses that the Costa Rican history shows that the country was unable to construct its own cultural domain before establishing a national economy. According to this view, in Costa Rica, what was required to do was devote oneself to the law firm of order and progress. This, according to the argument, was the case even in 1889, when Costa Rica had already achieved adequate economic stability. As a result, the author claims, United Fruit Company, and its home country wielded equal, if not greater, influence over the development of Costa Rican culture compared to the Costa Rican government. Instead of creating its own identity based on the experiences of its people, Costa Rica presented itself to suit the foreigners who controlled the country's economy (Drozda, 2012, p. 38).

The author believes that in the history of Costa Rica, the expansion of the coffee business represented the shift from European imperial power to American imperial power, which still continues to exert significant influence in Costa Rica. Because today, for instance, tourism is so important to Costa Rica's economy and the country's reliance on US visitors, the business is structured to convey the picture that these visitors desire to see rather than the one that genuinely reflects Costa Rican society. The clear US influence on "national identity representation -a peaceful and democratic nation of white, educated, and happy people- and cultural transformation -consumerism, the strong presence of English in the Costa Rican dialect, and the proliferation of US companies" suggest that Costa Rica does not have "full independence" because foreign influence has shaped many aspects of the official national identity (Drozda, 2012, p. 38). Furthermore, behind the appearance of democratic modernity, growth, and progress, new kinds of dominance and alienation were emerging. The state's expansion under the new nationalist and modernizing

initiative, according to Quesada Soto (1969), resulted in debt and reliance on foreign governments, organizations, and multinational corporations, which financed or controlled the process. This could be a serious criticism against the so-called exceptionalism of Costa Rica.

In the cultural sphere, modernization was seen as causing societal breakdown, alienation, and a loss of values and identity, despite the fact that it created new social, cultural, and educational alternatives. The expansion of educational and social opportunities aided the emergence of a middle class and a more democratic, less stratified society with more opportunities for promotion and social mobility. Yet on the other hand, the old equilibrium between rural and urban cultures was definitively destroyed with the migrations produced by the depletion of the agricultural frontier and the new modernizing initiative. Beginning in the 1950s, the capital city of San José and the metropolitan area have experienced an unorganized expansion as a result of uncontrollable immigration and ambiguous “modernization” (Quesada Soto, 1969, pp. 19-21).

According to Carlos Sandoval (2004), throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, the representations of the nation emphasized Costa Rica’s “unique” identity defined by political concepts such as “democracy”, “peace” and “social equality”. According to Alvarenga, the “essential” characteristics of the country of Costa Rica played a crucial role in the formation of the “imagined national community.”²⁷ The author states that the concept of “otherness” as a unifying factor in the formation of a national identity has an important effect. This could be accomplished by revealing and even emphasizing the differences in the past and in the present.

On the other hand, although multiculturalism seems to have become widespread in the cultural image of Costa Rican society, this “essentialist” discourse prevents the interaction between cultures from growing as a transformative element.

²⁷ “Imagined communities” is a concept coined by Benedict Anderson. The term has been cited in almost any text written about nationhood. Published in 1983, Anderson, in his book titled *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, defines the nation as an “imagined political community.” Anderson suggests, “it is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.” Benedict Anderson also clarifies why it is imagined as a community asserting that “regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately, it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings” (Anderson, 2016, p. 9).

At this point, Costa Rican society has its fears. The fear of losing ancestral heritage in the face of multiculturalism is affecting society. On the other hand, this situation can only be resolved by understanding that the national community is historically constructed, and, like all identities, it is in an endless process of mutation (Alvarenga, 1998, p. 8).

Carlos Sandoval has undertaken detailed studies on Costa Rica's self-imagination. Sandoval aims to show that there is a connection between the historical formation of Costa Rican nationalism, the concept of "Costa Rican exceptionalism" and the historical construction of the Nicaraguan other. Costa Ricans are still taught in schools, the media, and popular culture that their country stands distinct from the rest of Central America's dictatorships, political violence, and underdevelopment (Booth et al., 2010, p. 61). It was also claimed that Costa Ricans had the "whitest" population in Central America and also the best-spoken Spanish in the region. Also in this period, Nicaraguans were increasingly defined as "other" in Costa Rica's mentality and imagination (Sandoval, 2003, p. 109, as cited in Quiros, 2005, p. 6).

Molina (2020) stresses that collective identities are always constructed in relation to others, i.e., they describe themselves in terms of others who are more or less similar to them, establishing comparisons that attempt to identify the uniqueness that distinguishes them. The "others" in Costa Rica's instance are, first and foremost, the Central Americans, with whom it shared colonial administration, union and integration programs throughout its republican history due to their proximity in geography, culture, and history (p.61). As a result, that region has a strong influence on its national identity. In the internal order of Costa Rica, on the other hand, everything that wasn't Valle Central, the hegemonic Costa Rican identity, was considered alterity. The official historiography, which ascertained it in this way, is the constructor of this vision (Cuevas Molina, 2020 page 63).

Molina mentions that the colonial identity is substantially affirmed "inward" in Central America, that is, toward the subaltern and class-dominated inhabitants of their own nation-states. Guatemala is the finest illustration of this, with, according to Molina, a racist society based on "Indian" discrimination (2020, p.63). In the case of Costa Rica, the differentiation established by the dominant identity is directed not only inwards, but also outwards, towards Central America as a whole, which is seen as a

region of “indians,” with “indian” as a synonym for backwardness. Camacho (1996) states, “from the postulated model of society, a kind of ethnocentrism is derived, according to which relations with the other Central American countries are defined in a context almost of a civilizing company” (as cited in Cuevas Molina, p. 63).

One of the most impacting writers who dealt with the relationship between Costa Rica and identity is perhaps Carlos Sandoval Garcia. Sandoval (2004) conducted research on the relationship between Nicaraguan migration and Costa Rican national identity. In Sandoval's work, it is explained that symbolic borders are created because Nicaraguans are undesirable members, and this can be associated with the formation of Costa Rican national identity. Accordingly, Nicaraguans exist with greater poverty, higher crime rates, and a lower level of education than Costa Ricans. Nicaraguans are also held responsible for influencing the availability and quality of social services in the country (Gamboa, 2008, p. 63). This relationship between the Costa Ricans and the Nicaraguan population will be dealt with in the following sections. The next section will be dealing with the background of migration in Costa Rica.

3.3 Roots and Historical Background of Migration in Costa Rica

This section aims to discuss the historical background of migration in Central America with specific focus on Costa Rica and the Nicaraguan migrants. This region has one of the highest levels of migratory movement in the world. When discussing major tendencies of migration in Central America, it can be mentioned that the formation of regionality in Central America is characterized by the continuous transformation of national territories in the recent and old past, the integration of the region into world markets, sociopolitical circumstances that emerge in the aftermath of wars and internal conflicts (especially in the 1980s and 1990s), and the dislocation of thousands of people from their original societies, who were motivated by a lack of response to their most basic needs. In Latin America, asymmetries across countries and subnational regions are much more pronounced. Up to now, there are no community resources that have been provided to reduce them. What is called as the

“volitional dimension”²⁸ of migration characterizes migrants’ motivations with the desire to enhance one’s life at one end and the avoidance of events or processes that threaten livelihoods and lives at the other. (Tichenor & Rosenblum, 2012, p. 16)

In Central America, there has been a strong tendency for unskilled laborers to migrate due to the economic and political factors, in addition to their relative easiness to be assimilated both culturally and linguistically in the countries of destination (Martínez Pizarro, 2000, p. 151). In a setting of regional integrations, the ease with which Latin American citizens can cross borders also significantly contributes to a rise in transboundary displacements (Pellegrino, 1995, as cited in Martínez Pizarro, 2000, p. 124). Intra-regional flows have recently gained much importance, with cross-border moves between adjacent countries such as Guatemala-Belize, Guatemala-Mexico, Haiti-Dominican Republic, and as in the case of this thesis Nicaragua-Costa Rica, taking center stage (Gonzalez, 2005, p. 9).

As a historical starting point, it is crucial to debate the labor immigration of colonial times in Latin America, which was predominantly black throughout this era. During colonial times, the opening up and development of new territories for agriculture in Costa Rica and other Central American countries necessitated the use of foreign labor. During the harvests in plantation areas, seasonal workers migrated to supplement the regular wage laborers (Hamilton & Chinchilla, 1991 as cited in Bitkeviciute, 2016, p. 10). During the colonial era, labor migration to Latin America was predominantly African in origin, with workers arriving from Caribbean possessions.

It was possible to overcome the problem of labor shortages by forcibly displacing millions of Africans, especially in places with a tiny indigenous population. Slavery was abolished in Spanish America in the third decade of the 19th century, as a result of the participation of the black and mulatto populations in the independence processes. In the Caribbean, as also discussed earlier in the case of Costa Rica, there was a very dynamic Anglophile black migration. These employees would solve, to a significant extent, the labor shortages (especially a workforce suitable for the tropical climate) required by the construction of railways, the expansion of huge banana firms,

²⁸ Volitional dimension of migration refers to the way which migrants, especially at the individual level, respond to the forces that push or pull them to migrate. The term, in other words, refers to the decision-making process of a migrant (Tichenor & Rosenblum, 2012).

and one of the continent's greatest works: the interoceanic canal, in Central American countries (Alvarenga, 2002, para. 2).

An important point to mention here is Latin America's so-called “ideal race” and its relationship with migratory processes. The rulers of Latin America, particularly those who lived in sparsely populated nations, sponsored huge immigration from Europe in the second half of the 19th century. There were many attempts by governments such as Argentina and Brazil until the colonization initiatives could finally be successful. These countries succeeded only in attracting masses required to occupy rich agricultural regions suitable for supplying the rapidly increasing European market and this could only happen when conditions were made relatively acceptable to immigrants (Alvarenga, 2002, para. 3).

The dominant segments of Latin America, on the other hand, are no longer supportive of immigration of different ethnic groups. When it becomes required for the development of particular economic activity, they are hardly accepted even as the “necessary evil”. The states of the region that support immigration do not truly want to welcome any ethnic group. For instance, when thousands of Chinese people wanted to migrate to Latin America, they found it difficult to settle these countries. This was the case although they would accept to tolerate working conditions that the white immigrants would refuse. Indeed, the goal has been to primarily attract white people from Western Europe. The growing influence of eugenic scientific theories²⁹ in national discourses explains this selective policy of immigrant groups, which is seen throughout Latin America. (Alvarenga, 2002, para. 3)

Ethnic groups that do not originate in Europe were labeled “inferior races” by social Darwinism³⁰. Racism is not a new phenomenon in Latin America and the Caribbean. Slavery and subjection of indigenous peoples were justified by the premise that these peoples’ nature make them inferior. Several nation projects with major

²⁹ Eugenics is a scientifically and morally incorrect belief that humans may be improved through selective breeding of population. Beginning in the late 1800s, a number of political leaders and intellectuals promoted eugenic concepts and practices based on widespread racism and xenophobia (Eugenics and Scientific Racism, retrieved in 2022).

³⁰ “Social Darwinism” refers to any attempt to apply notions from Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection to social theory, political systems, economics, and other aspects of human social life. It is mostly recognized for its notorious relationship with early twentieth-century political ideas aimed at “improving the human race” (Mogilski, 2016, p. 1).

indigenous populations have proposed miscegenation as the only way to better the racial conditions of the country's residents. In the so-called "white" Costa Rican nation, the country's diverse ethnic population was, at least in the ideology, already absorbed into the national project by the end of the 19th century. The Central Valley, as also mentioned earlier in the previous chapter, was regarded "racially" homogeneous and mostly white (Alvarenga, 2002, para. 4). On the other hand, since the middle of the 19th century, Costa Rican authorities have decided to favor colonization corporations so long as they provide the desired European population. The Protective Board of the Colonies was established by the Costa Rican government in 1850 to encourage the immigration of European settlers, and the Law of Bases and Colonization was passed in 1862, prohibiting the colonization of other races (specifically African and Chinese races).

Costa Rica, however, in the second half of the 19th century attracted immigrants from outside Americas. However, there was an Immigration Act that was proclaimed in 1897. Accordingly, the country administration envisaged the right to ban the Chinese, Arab, Syrian and Armenian populations from the country if they were found to be destructive to the wellbeing of the Republic and the process in the country. This is because "they would cause physiological degeneration in the country and will be favorable factors for the development of idleness and immorality" (Palmer, 1995, para. 31). According to Palmer, although these discriminatory immigration restrictions did not entirely prevent people of these races from entering the country, there was a symbolic closure of the doors. However, with a racially homogeneous population but a labor shortage, the Liberal State was left with only one option, which is "nationalism" (Palmer, 1995, para. 31). The historical formation of Costa Rican national identity, thus, has led to the closure of areas of integration for newcomers (Gamboo, 2008, p. 66).

However, despite their satisfaction with the ethnic composition of the community, the dominating part of the country believed that their small population was an impediment to advancement. As a result, national authorities were concerned about the minimal pace of population growth. A report prepared by the Costa Rican government between 1905-1906 for instance notes that the number of births in 1905, which totaled 3389, was "disappointing." Cleto González Viquez (1906-1910), one of

the former presidents of Costa Rica, opposed the immigration of people from those races that were considered as inferior and formed a concept called “self-migration”, according to which it increased national production and reproduction, reduced infant mortality, and moral and biological. He proposed a policy that he called “maximizing through the implementation of sanitary measures” (Alvarenga, 1998, p. 4).

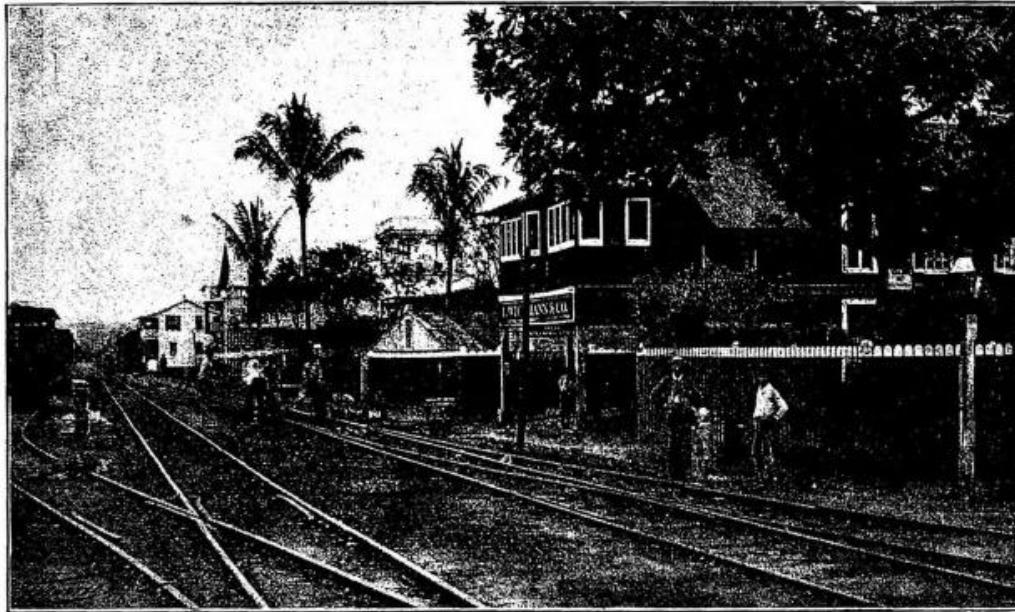
On the other hand, two significant events in the Costa Rican Caribbean encouraged the immigration of Chinese and, particularly, Jamaicans: the construction of the railroad, and later the large-scale banana production, which was in the hands of the transnational UFCO (United Fruit Company).³¹ In fact, it had been the state of Costa Rica that actually had wanted to construct a vast banana-farming area with a labor force consisting completely of European immigrants. Yet, against all these wishes, the Costa Rican government had to accept the immigration of these other populations because it did not have sufficient authority to impose itself on international firms. Moreover, this was the only labor force willing to immigrate in large numbers to the Costa Rican Caribbean.

A significant point to note is that there was no reason for the black immigrants of this period to become a Costa Rican citizen, study Spanish, convert to Catholicism, or send their children to Spanish-speaking schools because they regarded themselves as temporary laborers who would return to Jamaica once their work was completed. Furthermore, blacks were confined to the Limón region, where foreigners made up the majority of the population (Araya Incera, 1982, p .84). Yet, the position of black people in Costa Rica was ambiguous; on the one hand, they were prohibited from emigrating to the interior of the country, effectively excluding them from Costa Rican national culture; on the other hand, given their affinity for Anglo-American culture and command of the English language, the black immigrants played an important role in the banana plantation system (Araya Incera, p .84).

³¹ The UFCO was founded in 1899 and specialized in the production and marketing of tropical fruits (primarily bananas). By 1930, the UFCo had grown to be one of the greatest international enterprises in the Western Hemisphere, with 3 million acres throughout Latin America and 80 percent of global banana output under its control (Mendez-Chacon & Van Patten, D., 2021, p. 2).

Figure 6

Railroad Station in Limón



UNA CALLE EN LIMÓN

Note. This is a picture displaying the most important station of the Atlantic Railroad, which ends in the town of Limón on the Caribbean Coast (Barrantes, 1892, p. 260). The foreign population of the town, most of which was constituted of blacks that immigrated from Jamaica, in the next decade more than doubled that of the local residents of Costa Rica. Source: Alvarenga, 2002, para. 35.

In the meantime, the mestizo communities of the rest of Central America were not included in the Costa Rican state's colonization programs. This immigration, which occurred much later particularly from Nicaragua, was not much tolerated in areas outside of the Central Valley, other than not being considered as an answer to the problem of population scarcity. The idea was this: positive immigration must originate from populations with cultural and physical attributes similar to Costa Ricans. Central America was obviously not the source of this ideal immigration. It should have been from Europe. The government thus continued to try to raise the country's population by bringing in European immigrants. Contracts were negotiated between the central government and private companies aiming at the introduction of immigrants. In order to countervail black immigration, white immigrants should have been brought into the country.

Consequently, in 1881, President Tomás Guardia signed a contract with a Spanish merchant named Esteban Perera, an attempt which was somewhat impractical in terms of its application. Accordingly, Mr. Perera would transport white immigrants to inhabit lands where, thanks to the railway, incorporation to the mercantile economy was supposed to be possible. The Atlantic Railroad could be an opportunity to open new and attractive possibilities for colonization. These white immigrants would be of both sexes and appropriate for agricultural employment in the region (Alvarenga, 2002, para. 7). Immigrants would be granted a tax exemption while maintaining their nationality. They would also get a free second-class trip on the Atlantic Railroad.

However, according to the contract, the immigrants would negotiate the conditions directly with Perera himself, rather than with the government. As a result of this, while the immigrants would possess no lands, the Spanish merchant would own a large area of them.³² According to Alvarenga (2002, para. 11), this contract demonstrates that the national authorities lacked experience with immigration-related projects. The state authorities failed in thinking that employing a merchant to transport thousands of European immigrants to the Caribbean coasts on their behalf was a successful idea. In fact, the countries that sought out to attract significant numbers of white immigrants could only be successful when they provided them acceptable transfer, i.e., if the government refunded the expense of travel and provided conditions for settlement and installation. They would be given a salary or a subsidy when they arrived and put in farms in productive areas. However, in the Costa Rican case, the government authorities did not think that they should take seriously their responsibilities toward the new colonizers.

The immigration of Europeans did not have the same numerical significance as that of black Jamaicans; nevertheless, qualitatively, it was very important to Costa Rica's modernizing process after 1870, which corresponds to the liberal period (Araya Incera, 1982, p. 80). In the country's center, European immigrants were involved in a variety of activities. For instance, in education, they helped to develop the government's program that began in the second half of the 19th century; in trade, on the other hand, by 1890 about 57 percent of the country's largest merchants were of

³² This is a labor exploitation system called *colonato*, in which the "colonos" (laborers who provided services to the landowner) would use a piece of land without claiming over a certain parcel (Smith, 1977, p. 231).

European origin; and significantly, in the coffee industry, foreign entrepreneurs shared the control over coffee processing and marketing with nationals (Hernández 1975, as cited in Araya Incera, 1982, p .80).

Table 3
Foreign Population in Costa Rica Historically

Year	1864	1883	1892	1927
Total Population	120,499 +	182,073	243,205	471,524
Foreigners	2,653	4,556	6,289	44,340
Europe	-	1,190	2,339	6,222
Spanish	-	460	831	2,415
German	164	240	342	685
French	64	198	189	327
British	54	175	246	379
Italian	-	58	622	1,342
Latin America	1,872	2,446	2,848	32,023
Nicaraguan	1,196	1,014	1,302	10,658
Colombian	676	530	812	1,243
Jamaican	-	902	734	17,245
United States	48	130	204	672

Note. Source: Jones, 1935, as cited Araya Incera, 1982, p .79).

An important fact in terms of migration was that the growth of the banana industry attracted many laborers from the Central Valley as well (Alvarenga, 2002, para. 11). Thus, small towns took the attention of young peasants. During these times, and even until the mid-twentieth century, the Central Plateau of Costa Rica was a place of departure for many immigrants as they moved to colonizing zones. This consequently led to a considerable scarcity of coffee workers in the Central Valley. As a result of this, the coffee plantations would have to be the new source of attraction for European settlers (Alvarenga, 2002, para. 15). With this aim, in the assembly, it was suggested to import coffee farm laborers for landowners. This time, the government would pay the ticket upon their arrival.

The central government, on the other hand, was concerned that the proposed law would not take into consideration “the prejudices that may arise in the country as a result of the mixing of races.” Anyhow, the order was accepted in 1896. Accordingly, immigrants “may be modest *braceros*³³ or farmers’ families”. The law would empower the administration to “refuse or prohibit the immigration of races that, in his judgement, are damaging to the country.” The impulse behind this was “doing away with the black and yellow (race) rule, or at the very least indicating certain sections of our country where they can only live” (Alvarenga, 2002, para. 15). However, large countries with much higher growth rates developed immigration strategies that allowed them to monopolize the massive “desired immigration” (Alvarenga, 2002, para. 15).

Francisco Montero Barrantes is the author of the book titled *Geography of Costa Rica* (Original name in Spanish: *Geografía de Costa Rica*), published in 1892 and according to Alvarenga’s (2002, para. 31) account it was used as a school textbook. Barrantes (1892) states:

The total population of Costa Rica on December 31, 1891 was 262,661 inhabitants. With very little, almost insignificant difference, all the inhabitants of Costa Rica belong to the white race. This is the Central American country where there is less mixture of races, for which the population is homogeneous, and forms a compact whole, united by equal ties of all kinds. (p. 149)

Parallel to this claim on the ethnic composition of the country, the new immigration plans would fortify this homogeneity because it would be easier to integrate the residents from Europe into the national culture since they had many genetic and cultural similarities with the country's people (Alvarenga, 2002, para. 31).

In the final decades of 19th century, some laws were created to restrict immigration in order to offer the State a legal instrument that would allow them to select immigrants. These laws specifically aimed to prevent the entry of certain ethnic groups. For example, in 1897 new immigrations of Chinese were prohibited and in 1904 of Arabs, Armenians, Turks and Gypsies. In 1904 the entry of Arabs, Turks, Armenians and Gypsies had been prohibited, but in 1910 the entry of these groups was

³³ Bracero is a Spanish term meaning “one who works with his arms” (Brazo means arm in Spanish) (Bracero - Teaching, retrieved in 2022).

allowed again as long as they presented a sum of not less than 1,000 colones (Costa Rican currency) when entering (Alvarenga, 2002, para. 35).

Following the law on migration in 1896, another law was approved in 1907 with a similar logic of selective migration. However, they both failed.³⁴ After another attempt in 1908 to attract immigrants from Europe, President Cleto González Viquez (in office between 1906-1910) considered that, rather than bringing in “sometimes useful” immigrants, it was more convenient to give medical services and decent health conditions to the country's residents in order for the population to increase rapidly. He named the concept as “self-migration,” which would supposedly increase national production and reproduction and reduce infant mortality. President González also offered a policy that he called “maximizing moral and biological benefits through the implementation of sanitary measures” (Alvarenga, 1998, p. 4). It is true that at that time, there would be a significant policy change with respect to encouraging colonization and population increase. The governments of the following decades would emphasize improving the sanitary and health conditions of the national population, as well as backing up internal immigration plans. (Alvarenga, 2002, para. 31).

However, the country's economic progress was troubled by this stiff selection of the origin of immigrants. Selective immigration strategy accompanied with the internal movement from the Central Valley to the Caribbean aggravated the labor crisis on coffee farms. Later in the 1920s the lack of labor for coffee farms would become a persistent problem. In the face of this reality, the government became obliged to accelerate its immigration program by allowing “unwanted” people enter the country (Alvarenga, 2002, para. 44). Due to difficulties in bringing in laborers from overseas, farmers in the Atlantic zone turned to the country's interior labor force, appealed to the promise of high earnings.

³⁴ In the 1892 census, for example, Europeans accounted for 2,339 of the 6,289 foreigners who were registered. There were 1,302 Nicaraguans, 634 Jamaicans, and 676 Colombians. On the other hand, in 1927 there were 6,614 Europeans, their number in 1973 was just 3,611. Although the number of European settlers increased from 1892 to 1927 (it almost tripled), the expectation was a higher quantity of this ethnic group. According to the same census performed in 1927, the Jamaican population, on the other hand, experienced an impacting rise, with 17,248 people. This is an increase of more than 27 times in population (Alvarenga, 2002, para. 36).

In the meanwhile, the majority of the few immigrants from “accepted” ethnic groups who stayed in the country chose to live in cities. They tended to concentrate in San José (capital city) and devote themselves to jobs associated with the urban life, particularly crafts and trade. For instance, there were no Italians (the second largest group from Europe) in the censuses who were classified as “day laborers”, and only 5 of the 427 Italian citizens in San José who were listed in the census of that year were classified as “farmers” (Alvarenga, 2002, para. 35).

Later on, the government largely gave up European colonization plans and favored encouraging self-immigration. An agricultural community with the name of Guápiles was established by the government in 1930. This is a small town in the province of Limon near the Atlantic Coast. This colony was established by legislation. In that way that the State aimed to offer national settlers even better terms than those previously offered to immigrants from the Western Europe under various colonization contracts, as had been done earlier (Alvarenga, 2002, para. 46). Being a Costa Rican head of family was the primary prerequisite for obtaining land in the new colony. The government also promised to supply the settlers with transportation, a decent plot of land in the area where they lived, a house, and farming tools, as well as the basic necessities for the first six months. It was intended to populate, as much as possible, the country’s unoccupied areas with a healthy population that would ensure a healthy progeny and, so, could reproduce quickly.

On the other hand, the banana firm was in a very difficult situation starting in the mid-1920s, which resulted in a major reduction in employment possibilities. This fueled a prejudiced discourse among white workers. White workers wanted to eliminate black workforce as much as possible by prohibiting all immigration and carrying out mass deportations. This could be implemented without breaking the law because a major portion of the black people had not earned Costa Rican citizenship. White employees even complained to the United Fruit Company because it assisted blacks in obtaining nationalization. In this way, the government reserved the authority to carry out mass deportations if it considered it necessary (Alvarenga, 2002, para. 48). There was a violent racism by white workers against blacks which started in the 1920s.

Alvarenga claims that this did not only result from a lack of job opportunities. According to the author’s account the state had been systematically developing

discriminatory ideologies against “lower races” since the previous century. As the nation grew, it would create fundamental hierarchical disparities between the Central Valley population, whose European heritage was predominant, and the rest of the Central American and Caribbean communities. Discrimination towards the black population was not specific to this country, it was common in other Central American countries as well. As a result, Alvarenga believes that racism and xenophobia did not simply arise as a result of greater labor market competition between ethnic groups (Alvarenga, 2002, para. 49). The policy of ethnic hierarchy built by the government was internalized by a significant portion of the society.

The 1929 economic crisis had a significant impact on employment and wages in both banana and coffee farms, especially towards the beginning of the 1930s. This decade in Costa Rica is marked by the rise of labor unions and political organization. In 1932, a law was passed that established minimum wages for coffee, cane, and tobacco (25 cents per hour) as well as bananas and cocoa (50 cents an hour). A Wage Commission was established in 1932. It can be understood that, during the crisis, the Costa Rican government adopted a number of steps to protect the working sectors, which were confronted with an unprecedented situation: a surplus of labor. In 1936, for the first time, it was proposed by the government to intervene by controlling intra-country labor movement. It was indicated that there was a poor geographic distribution of the workforce, and that workers should be shifted from places where there was a surplus of labor to those where there was a shortage (Alvarenga, 2002, para. 51). So, the plan was accepted, and a significant number of personnel moved to different regions of the country. This resulted in large harvests of coffee, rice, and banana.

This restructuring of the workforce, yet, had some shortcomings. The existing labor force came from the Central Valley's most densely inhabited districts, particularly the capital city of San José, and the unemployed workers' adaptation to these new places and activities was difficult. The government wanted to assist the new laborers. Several farms were, for instance, investigated, and the owners of those where the workers lived in straw huts in deplorable sanitary conditions were notified of their need to provide them with adequate housing. Consequently, significant changes in immigration regulations occurred during the 1930s. At this time, the government completely abandoned projects to promote European immigration. The local

employees' working conditions were improved also thanks to the trade union fights of the 1930s (Alvarenga, 2002, para. 57). On the other hand, as the political positions of the workers improved, xenophobia among these became more visible.

Later, the Nicaraguans were the ones who undertook the toughest work on the plantation. Nicaraguan labor played a significant role in the banana expansion (Alvarenga, 2002, para. 65). The UFCO delegated the work of cleaning up the new territory to Nicaraguan contractors who brought their own labor from their nation since the beginning of the 20th century. During the 1940s, when Nicaragua was experiencing a severe economic crisis, there was a great number of illegal immigration of Nicaraguans asking for work who came on foot alone without any support. At this time, there were tens of thousands of Nicaraguans looking for work in the province of Guanacaste alone (see, figure 7). In 1948, the planting of rice, corn, and beans was done mostly by Nicaraguan or of this origin workers in Guanacaste as well as other regions in the Pacific (Alvarenga, 2002, para.65).

Figure 7
Map of the Guanacaste Region



Note. A map showing the location of the Guanacaste Region in Costa Rica. It borders the neighboring country of Nicaragua, which led to an influx of Nicaraguan immigrants various times during the 20th century. Source: Cañada, 2018, p. 52.

In 1950 the goal of bringing European immigrants to the fields was revived again. But this was the last time. The initiative came at a time when the economy was expanding and there was a labor shortage. Because the braceros were migrating to the

banana region on the Pacific coast, a substantial portion of the coffee had the risk of not being harvested in the Central area there was an expectation and an offer from the Italian government of a massive Italian immigration that would facilitate the spread of coffee farming to other regions of the country. This was again a result of the selective migration policy. It was once again attempted to attract only “desirable foreigners” who could assimilate and were farmers. Then again, European foreigners were the most attractive ones who could assimilate into the country (Alvarenga, 2002, para. 73). The Costa Rican government signed an agreement with a colonizing business to handle the immigration of 300 Italian families who would be given land in the country’s south. As a result, the colony of San Vito de Java developed in the South Pacific Region.

However, this was also not very successful in the end. Less than half of those few Italians who immigrated into this colony remained in the first years of the 1960s. The Italian families had either returned to Italy or gone to other parts of Costa Rica, particularly San José. The ambition of populating the Costa Rican countryside with white peasants introduced directly from Europe faded away with this experiment. In the following decade, there would be a rapid growth of population in Costa Rica which would also allow the settlement of the unoccupied areas. Yet, there would be again a shortage of labor in coffee-growing areas and large farms, which would constitute a great risk for the farmers in terms of loss of a significant portion of their harvests in the coming decades (Alvarenga, 2002, para. 76).

In Central America, the events of the 1970s and early 1980s marked a shift in conditions with respect to the previous tradition of migration and asylum (Reed-Hurtado, 2013, p. 8). These occurrences also affected Costa Rica profoundly. During this period, due to the political events and conflicts in the region, the number of people seeking political asylum elevated several times higher than at any other time in the region’s history. Second, and more importantly, the composition of those seeking political asylum has shifted from individual political figures to large groups of people who were afraid of persecution due to the generalized violence and their participation in politically vulnerable segments of society. Unlike previous exiles, who tended to be people with money and a certain amount of education, current asylum seekers were mainly people with scarce money, as well as a lack of education and employment skills. Particularly for ideological and political reasons, several nations in the region

were unwilling to accept refugees, believing that they would pose a threat to national security (Reed-Hurtado, 2013, p. 9).

Costa Rica, compared to the other countries in the region, has a larger population of immigrants, the bulk of whom are Nicaraguans. The phenomenon that began as a migration of agricultural laborers to the banana plantations in the end of the 19th century, later moved to metropolitan areas and, most notably, the province of San José. Throughout the 1950 and 1984 censuses, the foreign population registered in the censuses remained rather stable, varying between 2.5 and 4.2 percent of the overall population (Martinez Pizarro, 2011, p. 368). Immigrants from Nicaragua and the rest of the Central American isthmus accounted for 8% of the Costa Rican population in 2000, one of the largest percentages in the area. Nicaraguans, towards the end of the decade, accounted for more than 80 percent of the country's regional immigration (Martínez Pizarro, 2008, p. 111).

With regards to the Nicaraguan migration trends in Costa Rica during that period, they reflect political and economic developments as well as natural calamities in the origin country (OECD, 2018, p. 43). An earthquake in Managua triggered the first wave of immigration in December 1972. The end of the civil war against the Somoza government in 1977 and the Sandinistas' triumph in 1979, on the other hand, resulted in a more constant surge in immigration. The conflict between the Sandinista administration and the contras, which lasted from 1981 to 1989, is linked in particular to an increase in immigration, which doubled between 1982 and 1983 (OECD, 2018, p. 44). Due to the political unrest in Nicaragua, as well as high rates of inflation and economic instability, the influx of migrants from Nicaragua to Costa Rica remained in existence throughout the decade. Despite the establishment of a democratic regime in Nicaragua following the end of the civil war in 1990, migratory flows from Nicaragua to Costa Rica remained high due to unfavorable economic conditions in the aftermath of the conflict (Membreo Idiáquez, 2001, as cited in OECD, 2018, p. 43).

Following the Hurricane Mitch in October 1998, there was a boom in immigration. Due to the high rate of irregular immigration, which was intensified by Hurricane Mitch, the Costa Rican government implemented a migratory exemption known as "amnesty," which lasted from February to July 1999. The law permitted irregular immigrants from Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, and El

Salvador who arrived before November 9, 1998, to get a one-year renewable residency permit. In February 2000, 153,316 people requested for a migratory exemption, with Nicaraguans accounting for 97.4% of the total (OECD, 2018, p. 45). In total, 140,000 Nicaraguans living in Costa Rica were able to get their affairs in order (IOM, 2001, as cited in OECD, 2018, p. 45).

Nicaraguan migration entered its latest cycle in April 2018 and has been going strong since then. During this time, new arrivals are primarily fleeing Nicaragua's political crisis, and their presence continues to impact Costa Rica's migration landscape (Chaves-González & Mora, 2021, p. 9). In this most recent cycle of Nicaraguan migration, there have been a variety of sorts of migration. On the one hand, it has taken on the characteristics of earlier cycles, such as circular, semi-permanent, and permanent migration as well as the desire for humanitarian refuge. To be more illustrative, during the harvest season, in general, between 80,000 and 120,000 Nicaraguan workers migrate. A portion of this population is also able to engage in construction activities, which can result in longer periods of permanency. Nicaraguan immigrants are found in a variety of occupations, including private security, construction, and, in the case of women, domestic service (Chaves-González & Mora, 2021, p. 9).

A distinguishing feature of this last wave of immigrants was the fact that a considerable number of professionals and university students were among the 80,700 Nicaraguans requesting asylum in the country. To give an idea, according to research published in 2019, over 53% of these persons had a higher education. As a result of this latest phenomenon, there were 368,000 Nicaraguan regular immigrants and refugees in 2020, according to estimates (Chaves-González & Mora, 2021, p. 9). In Costa Rica, through the refugee mechanism, 106,906 individuals sought for regular status from 2018 to August 2021, while only approximately 5,000 of them received refugee status from 2018 to May 2021 (Chaves-González & Mora, 2021, p. 15).

Hence, Nicaraguan migration to Costa Rica has been a phenomenon for years. The percentage of the migrants increased from less than 2% of the Costa Rican population in the early 1980s to over 7% in 2018 (Blyde et al, 2020, p. 11). However, Nicaraguans in Costa Rica are mostly low-skilled: in 2018, 78.6% of working-age Nicaraguans had just an incomplete secondary education, and only 2% had finished

university education. Costa Ricans accounted for 58.3 percent of the population and 9% of the population, respectively. Nicaraguans are more likely than Costa Ricans to work in low-skilled employment due to their lower educational levels. (Blyde et al, 2020, p. 11).

Nicaraguan migrants are drawn to Costa Rica because of its proximity, for Nicaragua's impoverished population, the appeal of opportunities closer to home, as well as the promise of a journey that is shorter, cheaper, and possibly less dangerous than the long journey to, for instance, the United States, making Costa Rica a very appealing place to move to (Rocha Gomez, 2006, as cited in Bitkeviciute, 2016, p. 12). Furthermore, because of the two nations' long history of labor migration, many Nicaraguans have developed migratory networks in Costa Rica. Many who are seeking to find job in Nicaragua's unstable and unpromising economy are drawn to the success stories that are televised back home (Bitkeviciute, 2016).

Costa Rica also appears to provide a further appealing factor that other places, such as the United States, do not: a cultural and linguistic legacy that is familiar to the Nicaraguans (Bitkeviciute, 2016, p. 12). Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans speak the same language and possess similar way of life due to their shared Central American indigenous history and later experience as Spanish colonies. Nicaraguans should be able to seamlessly integrate into Costa Rican society, based on their shared heritage. However, long-standing historical tensions between the two countries in the form of territorial disputes and domestic and international policy conflicts reveal themselves to be a significant barrier between these two peoples. Costa Ricans frequently blame Nicaraguan politics for their perceived faults, fearing that as they cross the border, they would bring corruption, poverty, and violence with them (Sandoval Garcia, 2004 as cited in Bitkeviciute, 2016, p. 13).

The formation of strong social networks among Nicaraguan migrants in Costa Rica, on the other hand, has been aided by social exclusion. These social networks help with migration in the first place, as well as adaption and fundamental requirements like housing once in Costa Rica (Marquette, 2006, p. 12). Furthermore, migration, especially irregular one, from Nicaragua is fueled as a result of the existing strong migration networks, low wage labor demands in the receiving country, and the existence of positions for lower-skilled labor in the receiving country due to the

movement of domestic labor into more skilled occupations. With regards to Nicaragua, Costa Rica satisfies all of these requirements. In addition to Nicaragua’s proximity to Costa Rica, the traditional openness of the borders between the two countries, has likely intensified general and irregular migration. Moreover, the historically high degree of seasonal agricultural movement also clearly exacerbates overall and irregular migration levels (Marquette, 2006, p. 22).

The exiles, on the other hand, according to research carried out by Arias Foundation for Peace and Human Progress, which is located in Costa Rica, expect to return to Nicaragua to find a country with a number of political conditions related to the reasons for their exile. These conditions, as indicated in the research, include living in democracy (29.9%), living in justice and freedom (28%); continuing with their lives, studies, and work (19%); living free of paramilitaries and repression (14.1%); enjoy freedom of expression (5.4%); abolition of the army (1.9%); and people’s unity (1.4%) (Cuadra Lira & Samcam Ruiz, 2019, p. 19). However, if return cannot be an option, integration into a new location in the host country becomes frequently the next best choice. Yet, many host countries regard migrants, including the forced ones, as burdens (Pellegrino, 2003). Migrant inflows are not just seen as bulk of workers or risks to border security by domestic constituents, but also as potential citizens who compete with natives to determine the country’s cultural character.

Table 4
Expectations of the Nicaraguans when returning to their home country

Living in democracy	29.9 %
Living in justice and freedom	28.0 %
Continuing with his life, studies, and work	19.0 %
Living free of paramilitaries and repression	14.1 %
Enjoy freedom of expression	5.4 %
Abolition of the army	1.9 %
People’s unity	1.4 %
Respect for law	0.3 %

Note. Source: Cuadra Lira & Samcam Ruiz, 2019, p. 19.

In this section the history of migration in Costa Rica with specific focus on the Nicaraguan population has been analyzed. Starting with the black migration to the

country, Costa Rica was part of the common migratory patterns of Central America during the colonial times. There were attempts to bring in European settlers as they were thought to be of similar culture and race, in addition to the fact that Costa Ricans, during the Liberal period that commenced in 1890s, had the desire to improve relations with the economic powers of Europe. Yet, on the other hand, the country in the end attracted a vast number of immigrants from their neighbor, namely Nicaragua, due to political, and socio-economic reasons. The next section will be dealing with the predominant perceptions of the Costa Rican society against the Nicaraguan migrants in their country. Identity perceptions of the host society, their perceived threats will be attempted to discuss in a theoretical perspective as well.

3.4 Costa Rican Perception of Nicaraguan Migrants and Ontological Security

The previous sections of this thesis dealt with identity formation of the Costa Ricans and the arrival of the Nicaraguan migrants into the country's national territories. This section will be discussing the manners and effects of Costa Rican society's perceptions against the Nicaraguan immigrants in Costa Rica. A theoretical emphasis will be on the ontological security approach and its implications on the subject. Discourse and narratives will be focused as they are important part of this argument. Thus, the "anxiety" disseminated with this phenomenon and its results will be debated.

Nicaraguan immigration has been notably one of the most important social issues in Costa Rica over the last two or three decades. At the very least, this is how the general public perceives it. Many of the country's most important happenings, especially those negative ones tend to be related to this phenomenon. The Nicaraguans are associated with a greater poverty, with higher crime rates and with a lower educational level. In Costa Rica, if the children poverty or mental illness does not improve, the blame falls on the immigrants. Likewise, if crime, domestic violence, or unemployment rise. They are also held responsible for influencing the country's availability and quality of social services (Gamboa, 2008, p. 63). The collective

imagination thus tends to exaggerate the significance of immigration (Rosero, 2004, p. 149).

This actually has to do with the identity formation of the Costa Rican society, which has been discussed earlier in the previous sections. Yet, on the other hand, for a relevant discussion of the Costa Ricans' perception of Nicaraguan migrants, this thesis suggests making a theoretical foundation principally based on Giddens's ideas. A good starting point would be the term employed by Giddens as well as many other ontological security authors in considerably analogous social situations: "anxiety". Basically, the definition of term given by Giddens itself is quite explanatory. Giddens suggests that "anxiety is essentially fear which has lost its object through unconsciously formed emotive tensions that express 'internal dangers' rather than externalized threats". In other words, according to author's view, "we should understand anxiety essentially as an unconsciously organized state of fear" (Giddens, 1991, p. 44).

Giddens further suggests a clarification of the unpreparedness of this behavior by stating that:

A circumstance of 'anxious readiness' is different from anxiety as such, because it is a physiological, and functional, condition of preparedness of the organism to face a source of threat. Preparation for action, as it were, is what expedites an appropriate response to danger; anxiety itself is inexpedient." (Giddens, 1991, p. 40)

The word "inexpedient" by definition means injudicious or unwise. Again, the author is stressing behaviors not based on cognitive actions but rather emotions or feelings that lead social agents to act on the events against which they are unprepared. Therefore, actors need to develop a cognitive "cocoon" that "brackets on the level of practice possible events which could threaten the bodily or psychological integrity of the agent" (Giddens, 1991, p. 40).

Giddens, when he defines the term ontological security itself, mentions that it is "to possess, on the level of unconscious and practical consciousness, answers to fundamental existential questions" (1991, p. 44). The concept of ontological security, according to the author, is linked to the implicit nature of practical consciousness or to "the bracketings" assumed by "natural attitudes" in daily life (Giddens, 1991, p. 36). What is significant in this point of stance is that behaviors which are mostly based on

emotions should be considered as natural since, accordingly, anxiety, which is itself “inexpedient,” “tends to paralyze relevant actions rather than generate them” due to the perceived “internal dangers” rather than actual “external threats” (Giddens, 1991, p. 41).

It is important to note that various studies have been made by such scholars as Sandoval (2004, 2008, 2014), Alvarenga (1998, 2002, 2005), Gamboa (2008), Quiros (2019), Putnam (1999), Rosero (2004) and Bitkeviciute (2016) among others on the relationship between Nicaraguan immigration and the creation of national identities in Costa Rica. These studies mostly examine the creation of Costa Rican identity and its relationship to Nicaraguan social representation with the purpose of placing symbolic borders, arguing that these people are unwelcome members of Costa Rican society. This thesis attempts to go one step further to explain the psychological and sociological motives behind such behavior, intending also to explain the relationship between the two social groups.

With respect to the inter-communal relations in Costa Rica, Carolina Mora (2017) mentions that there has been a xenophobic fight in Costa Rica especially beginning in the 1980s. The author emphasizes the anti-Nicaraguan and anti-Central American antagonism that arose during those years. Nicaraguans, and sometimes Central Americans in general, are blamed of the country’s poor status, hygiene and health issues, national and citizen security issues; and stereotypes such as “warlike,” “undemocratic,” and “ignorant and illiterate” are utilized in this rhetoric (mora, 2017, as cited in Quiros, 2019, p. 4). Nicaraguans are put in a field of unfavorable social images and prejudices, which began in the 1980s and continued in the 1990s. When it comes to the labor issue they say: “Nicaraguans come to take our jobs”; in security: “Nicaraguans are violent”; in economy: “Nicaraguans generate extra expenses for the state”; and finally when it is a discussion about the culture: “Nicaraguans are changing our identity” (Quiros, 2019, p. 7-8). The national press also played an essential part in this adoration of nationalism.

The predominant discourse within the Costa Rican population since the past has had the assumption that all Nicaraguans are criminals and harmful. Nicaraguans are also many times labeled as “barbarous” and “exceedingly violent” by even laborers from subordinate ethnic minorities living in the Atlantic coast, such as blacks. On the

other hand, it is truly hard to say when the first adverse responses against Nicaraguan migration were displayed in Costa Rica. However, related research demonstrates that in the 1940s, the preconceptions about this ethnic group that later prevailed in the 1990s were already well-established. Nicaraguans took part in the revolution in 1948³⁵. They were present on both sides, but following the victory of the soldiers of Figueres, they were labeled “communists” and were brutally repressed by the authorities.

The participation or involvement of Nicaraguan workers in the movements that opposed the main Costa Rican political factions in the years leading up to and during the violent period of the military confrontation of 1948 influenced the perceptions of Nicaraguan immigrants later in the 1940s and 1950s. Nicaraguans on both sides backed each other to varying degrees. They were subjected to control, repression, and expulsion at the end of the armed conflict, and their lawful admission into Costa Rica was impeded or prohibited (Quiros, 2019, p. 10). At the start of the next decade, there was a definite trend toward penalizing foreigners who entered without the appropriate documentation. According to Alvarenga (2002), this initiative against the immigrants was connected to the increasing migration of Nicaraguans and the xenophobia directed at this ethnic group, especially since the late 1940s (para. 53).

Alvarenga (1998) and Sandoval (2004) attempted to explain the rise of xenophobia in Costa Rica via the lens of national identity creation. According to the authors, the historical creation of that identity has aided in the closure of integrating spaces for newcomers. Similarly, they examined how the Costa Rican community's internalized construction of the national being presents itself in so-called xenophobic explosions. Alvarenga criticizes some popular discourses denying otherness in her works, offering an opposition to the historical progression in the official nationalist discourse. Other academics, while examining the situation of Nicaraguan migrants in Costa Rica, came up with conclusions by looking into the image and perception these migrants faced when integrating into Costa Rican society and visiting public institutions such as education, health, and social security (Gamboa, 2008, p. 66).

Alvarenga (1998) claims that half of the Costa Rican population harbors xenophobic feelings toward Nicaraguans, who are seen as a threat to the Costa Rican nation's identity, social, cultural, and ethnic order. Alvarenga further believes that in

³⁵ See footnote 13 for details of the Costa Rican Civil War of 1948.

Costa Rica, the social construction of the “violent Nicaraguan” has become quite widespread, with even the most integrated Nicaraguans in the country internalizing the image of the violent Nicaraguan as opposed to the peaceful Costa Rican. Furthermore, according to the author, Nicaraguans are seen as having darker skin (*morenos*) and more indigenous or negroid traits than citizens from the Costa Rican Central Valley. In fact, Nicaraguans, more than any other immigrant group, play a critical role in shaping Costa Rican self-image and identity, because they contain all features that the “Ticos”³⁶ cannot accept about themselves. Costa Ricans see a Nicaraguan as a dangerous person, a lawbreaker, manipulator, poor, possessor of bad luck and also tragic (Quiros, 2019, p. 6).

According to Sandoval (2004), on the other hand, the Nicaraguan community in Costa Rica is frequently racialized and criminalized, and it is frequently claimed that Nicaraguan immigration is weakening Costa Rican national identity. However, in fact, according to the author, Nicaraguan immigration to Costa Rica has corresponded with a deterioration of Costa Rica's feeling of nationhood, as proved by a decline in public services such as education and health care, which have been the remarkable qualities of the country's modern past. Meanwhile, Costa Rica's reputation as a “middle-class nation” is in disarray, as a large portion of the population believes that they lack access to middle-class living standards. This material deterioration, as well as its related subjective implications, has created a sense of confusion or disruption in Costa Rica, both in material terms as well as feelings of nationhood. Because Costa Rica has always meant to be an exemplary nation in what is viewed as socially exclusive Central America, such disorientation causes fear and uncertainty (Sandoval, 2004, p. 435).

Tichenor & Rosenblum (2012) claim that there has been xenophobia which is fueled by the country's employment status. Similarly, national support for immigration is sometimes positively correlated with income, GDP per capita, and GDP per capita increase over time. This income effect, on the other hand, appears to be stronger in economically unequal countries than in countries with more equal domestic income distribution (O'Connell 2005, as cited in Tichenor & Rosenblum, 2012, p. 308). Economic inequality, in turn, exacerbates anti-immigration prejudice. Agüero Garcia

³⁶ Tico is the nickname that the Costa Ricans call themselves.

(2019) supports this argument. The author suggests that the migration phenomena of the Nicaraguans are framed within a structural transformation that began in the 1980s, when the state model was transformed into a less social-democratic version oriented toward exports and the promotion of a thriving economy based on services. In social affairs, on the other hand, wealth disparities grew, and Costa Rica became known as one of the most unequal countries in Latin America.

Carlos Sandoval points out that nationalism has turned Costa Rica's border with Nicaragua, a neighboring Central American country, into a racialized divide, with "the nicas" living "on the other side" of the border. Sandoval believes that "nica" is a term that seems to summarize images in which racism based on biological reasons and cultural differences appear to be interrelated (2002, as cited in Cuevas Molina, 2020, p. 64). Racialization, according to Sandoval, entails assigning to Nicaraguans the national complaints resulting, in large part, from the issues that have arisen in the country as a result of the welfare state's decline from the mid-1980s to the present. They would be responsible for the decline of the social security system, an increase in violence and instability, a significant portion of unemployment, and so on.

In terms of racial perceptions, the main portion of the Costa Ricans believe that they are significantly whiter than Nicaraguans although a study carried out by scientists from the University of Costa Rica in 2016 demonstrates that Costa Ricans are of a mixed race, which comprises of 45.6% European, 33.5% indigenous, 11.7% African and 9.2% Asian (Cuevas Molina, 2020, p. 64) genetic traits. This observation of the Costa Ricans, according to Wallace (2017), is due to the fact that the bulk of Nicaraguan migrants come from specific geographic locations or socioeconomic strata and are not necessarily indicative of the overall Nicaraguan community (as cited in Cuevas Molina, 2020, p. 65).

Nicaraguans are hence placed in a realm of "otherness" as a result of this bias dynamic. It comes down to the belief that the large nature of foreign migration threatens the strong framework based on which the universe of homogeneity in Costa Rica is founded, which is about peace and democracy. One of the main worries about current Nicaraguan migration is the perception that racial and cultural plurality is a significant attack on the country's diverse, positive, and beneficial characteristics (Alvarenga, 1998, p. 6). Within this discourse, hence, social identity is regarded as the

most valuable asset of the national society, and yet if exposed to the outside world, it will eventually erode and even will be lost. That is to say, multiculturalism is perceived as a degenerative feature rather than a positive and dynamic component of social identities (Alvarenga, 1998, p. 7).

This argument is related to the collective perception of and major discourse in the Costa Rican society. The supposedly exceptional country of the Central America is now facing a “critical situation”, which disrupts the historically founded narratives of the Costa Rican society based on positive traits such as peace and democracy. This is a critical situation that the Costa Ricans have to deal with. Furthermore, as Giddens (1984) suggests, it produces anxiety. Multiculturalism produces a new framework, which, in practice, goes against the traditional discourse based on the homogenous society. This is for the reason that the new framework also creates uncertainty. Demerath (1993) claims that uncertainty and people’s anxiety are interrelated as uncertainty leads to lack of predictability (as cited in Gudykunst, 2005, p. 295).

As discussed earlier, Costa Rican liberal thinkers had anticipated in the 19th century a homogeneous national community whose qualities spring from its lack of contamination by multiculturalism. Thus, it seems that the various segments that make up civil society have internalized this national narrative to a large extent. In Alvarenga’s (1998) terms, the supposed “essential” features of the Costa Rican nation have played a crucial part in the “imagined community’s” formation. Truly, the building of difference in relation to neighboring otherness seems to have worked as a unifying factor in the formation of a common identity in Costa Rica.

Alvarenga believes that as multiculturalism becomes every day even more entrenched in Costa Rican society, the essentialist discourse impedes interaction between cultures from growing as an element of transformation. There is the worry of losing that ancestral legacy in the face of multiculturalism, and according to Alvarenga, it can only be resolved if it is understood that the national community is built historically and, as a result, is unavoidably procedural. In other words, it is in an endless process of mutation, just like all identities (Alvarenga, 1998, p. 8).

However, Giddens (1991) states that the ability to develop a coherent narrative that explains who we are and where we are heading in our life determines the persistence of identities, not their own actions or the reactions of others. Mitzen (2006)

likewise believes that the argument that ontological security is a basic need is based on the idea that actors consider and fear deep uncertainty as a threat to their identity. Such uncertainty makes it harder to act, which frustrates the action-identity relationship and makes maintaining a self-concept difficult (p. 345). Hence it becomes challenging to adapt to the new environment, which has changed unexpectedly. Habits and routines are the safeguard of the Costa Ricans against tensionful phenomena (Giddens, 1991, p. 39).

A Costa Rican woman, Blanca, interviewed by Alvarenga, uses the phrase “jumble” to represent her fear of cultural contamination, claiming that Nicaraguan migration has “created a jumble” (Alvarenga, 1998, p. 7). The term “invasion” has been used in Costa Rican discourse to describe the vast extent of recent migration. In consequence, this idea communicates a terror of otherness that jeopardizes not only space but also the “legitimate” inhabitants’ fundamental identities. Such expressions as “clogged with Nicaraguans”, “Nicaraguans are invading Costa Rica a lot”, or “There isn't a spot here in Costa Rica where a lot of *them* doesn't appear” are not uncommon in the conversations or discourse of the nation (Alvarenga, 1998, p. 6).

On August 18, 2018, for instance, a gathering of Costa Ricans, estimated to be up to 500 individuals, protested the entry of Nicaraguans in the country with chants of “Nicas out!” and flags and clothes depicting national symbols and distinctive aspects of Costa Rica. The event was held in the La Merced Park, in the center of San José, also a popular gathering spot for Nicaraguans. There one of the demonstrators, expressed:

We are protesting because the Immigration Police are allowing far too many Nicaraguan foreigners to enter Costa Rica, and we can no longer bear it because this is an invasion. The legislation protects Nicaraguans far too much. We don't want any more Nicaraguans. (Efe, 2018)

This demonstration ended in rioting, insults, crimes, and attacks against Nicaraguans, with dozens of people detained. According to Quiros Nazi sympathizers, anarchists, and members of violent soccer groups were among those imprisoned (2019, p. 2).

It is even frustrating to some Costa Ricans that Nicaraguan migrants come to their country to recreate their cultural norms and claim the same privileges as the country's real residents. Alvarenga gives the example of a Costa Rican citizen named

Doña Mónica, a resident in a slum, who feels irritated by typical Nicaraguan cultural manifestations. She says, “these migrants want to come to Costa Rica to want to be *them* and not *us*”. On the other hand, that for the Nicaraguans it is hard to abandon their culture’s ideals is perceived as a kind of attack by the Costa Rican woman. Doña Mónica explains, the residents of the neighborhood do not want to share their free time with the Nicaraguan migrants because it is irritating to them that they constantly talk about things from there in Nicaragua, rather than seeing the fact that they are in the world of Costa Ricans and acting accordingly (Alvarenga, 1998, p. 6).

However, this type of behavior by the Nicaraguan individuals can, on the other hand, be considered as a result of their feeling of vulnerability. This is for the reason that as Ting-Toomey (1993) argues:

The more vulnerable individuals feel, the more anxiety they experience in these interactions. The more individuals need inclusion, the more they value ingroup and relational boundaries. The more individuals need differentiation, the more distance they place between the self and others. (as cited in Gudykunst, 2005, p. 18).

Vulnerability can be referred to the degree of anxiousness or ambivalence in regard to group-based and person-based identity issues (2005, p. 220). In addition to that, Gudykunst (2005) believes that “individuals in all cultures or ethnic groups have the basic motivation needs for identity security, inclusion, and connection” (p. 218). Gudykunst continues to stress that the more identity challenges or dissatisfactions that individual faces (e.g., identity exclusion, detachment, and long-term identity instability), the more likely that person is to stick to old, familiar identity practices. In order to provide themselves with “consistency,” the migrant individual or group can inevitably adhere to the own cultural habits.

Doña Monica’s husband further expresses: “Their way of being, in my opinion, is not one of us. What pertains to us is completely being tico. You think of yourself as being very different from others.” In Alvarenga’s words, Don Ricardo is declaring that Costa Ricans are unable to share foreign cultural norms due to a national essence. This essence, according to the author’s argument, inevitably leads to ethnic segregation. Prejudice against other cultures is demonstrated in the rejection of their way of speech. Alvarenga quotes from Fernando Mayorga, a journalist, who reveals “The Tico’s disrespect for his nationality has reached the height of correcting him even his method

of speaking so that the “pues” doesn't sound like “pueh”³⁷ or so that any other word that comes to mind sound as we desire,” says journalist Fernando Mayorga (Alvarenga, 1998, p. 6). Accent is truly a strong way of recognizing Nicaraguans in Costa Rica. It draws much attention to the Costa Ricans, perhaps even more than the skin color. The majority of discrimination begins from the accent as well as specific words and phrases that Costa Ricans consider to be offensive. The Costa Ricans claim that Nicaraguan migrants do not have a good command of the Spanish language. Even there are several TV series mocking Nicaraguan accents (Bitkeviciute, 2016, p. 50).

In an editorial comment in the newspaper *La Nación* de Costa Rica on May 20, 1981, as recovered by Philippe Bourgois in his work on ethnicity in the setting of banana farms, the author noted:

We Costa Ricans have a penchant for deceiving ourselves. It's a way out of the “mea culpa.” As a result, whenever a big crime happens, the question of “How did they talk?” comes instantly. “They spoke like Colombians, Nicas, gringos, Cubans, or Salvadorans,” says the answer, and it seems like it came straight from heaven. “Oh! It's a good thing they're not Ticos.” It's the exclamation that comes after a relief sigh. (Bourgois, 1981, as cited in Quiros, 2019, p. 4)

Intellectual populism³⁸, according to Sandoval (2004), has been a form of exercising xenophobia in Costa Rica. Immigration has usually been portrayed as a crime story, with immigrants depicted as trespassers into national territory and violators of law-and-order rules. More lately, well-known Costa Rican intellectuals have used newspapers' comment pages and other public forums to bring the matter of immigration into a broader discussion. In the case of Costa Rica, what is novel is that academics create a narrative in which society is entirely defined in terms of nationhood. This means that the framing in which problems are discussed has shifted from the society to the nation.

Such ideologies as nationalism can be considered as examples of “routines,” as in Giddens' terms, in that they ensure a secure and continuing existence “by explaining

³⁷ “Pues” is a common word in Spanish meaning “well” as a conjunction word. In some of the Spanish accents the letter “s” at the end of a syllable is pronounced more like an “h” letter (similar to the German composer's name, Bach), as do most of the Nicaraguan population.

³⁸ What is meant by “intellectual populism” is the populism perpetuated by intellectual people such as writers, journalists, academics, or even politicians. Its importance is in that it can stir the masses since it is usually performed by persons who can influence the populace.

reality in reasonable ways” (Chernobrov, 2016, p. 586). Todorov (2003) claims that “knowing that you are a Catholic, or a Communist, or a Scotsman, or a longshoreman allows your own existence to be recognized, it tells you that you are not in risk of being swallowed up by the emptiness” (as cited in Chernobrov, 2016, p. 586). In this way an individual belonging to a nation or a certain social identity can sustain consistency and routines in their interactions. This is a protective “cocoon” against ontological issues of identity. Nationalist reactions to migration can lead the social agent in question which is subject to a perceived critical situation to feel protected from external threats.

Again, as Giddens (1991) would express, since anxiety faced in such “critical situations” is related to being inexpedient, “day-to-day routines help bracket such anxieties, not only because of the social stability that they imply, but because of their constitutive role in organizing an ‘as if’ environment” (p. 37-38). Hence in certain cases, as in the Costa Rican natives-Nicaraguan migrants relationship, for the host community, and even for the migrant community, society can be considered as almost interchangeable with nationhood in order to create an “as if” environment, a protective “cocoon” and “bracket out” anxieties. By this way the paralyzing effect of the anxieties in social actions is attempted to be impeded for the social agent’s self.

Intellectual populism, Sandoval (2004) believes, has the capacity to display self-contained discourses, closed to any voices other than the thinker’s own, that claim to be the truth, and, in the end, it can demonstrate what is called monological thinking. Accordingly, the intellectuals’ opinions are published and framed by newspaper opinion pages. The concept of a “hegemonic ideology” penetrating into varying social levels, consequently, ignores the interaction between public discourses and ordinary life. While intellectual populism relies on rhetorical abilities to make its case, fictional discourses feature a variety of voices (Sandoval, 2004, p. 438). In this environment, such simple everyday life events as immigrants’ efforts to find work leave their place to disputes over the preservation of traditions, which is, according to Sandoval, a common issue in xenophobic rhetoric. Many hegemonic immigration discourses have the potential to influence a wide audience, even if they are also opposed by counter-narratives that seek to discredit representations of immigrants as threats to others (Sandoval, 2004, p. 440).

Rodolfo Cerdas, a political scientist, and former communist member of the Costa Rican Parliament, expressed that “recently it has been fashionable to criticize Costa Rica as if there is nothing valuable here and as if we just had problems” (Sandoval, 2004, p. 435). According to Cerdas, first of all, all Costa Ricans are denigrated, with many of them and their social achievements being devalued. Second, the true consequences of immigration are disregarded. That is to say, immigrants are granted an abundance of virtues and benefits while ignoring their shortcomings in areas such as education, health, and social integration. For Cerdas, a misleading perspective like this, which places the Costa Ricans into self-punishment and self-blame, does not help nor immigrants nor the Costa Ricans understand their concerns, and makes it impossible to educate the public (Sandoval, 2004, p. 435-436). According to Sandoval, refusing the idea that reactions against immigration, particularly of Nicaraguans, is a “denial”, was shown as convenient and necessary. Rodolfo Cerdas’ argument, on the other hand, can be considered as being related to the quest for a “reasonably stable sense of self-identity” that has a feeling of “biographical continuity” which that social agent is able to grip instinctively and automatically, which is necessary for that very individual to a greater or lesser degree communicate to other people (Giddens, 1991, p. 54).

Juan Jose Sobrado, a lawyer, university professor, and newspaper columnist, made a speech at a symposium hosted by the Center for Culture of Spain in San Jose. According to Sobrado, Nicaraguan immigrants constitute a threat to Costa Rican identity. Sobrado claimed that continuing to accept immigrants would convert the capital San Jose into a “Calcutta.”³⁹ According to his perception, “waves” of economic refugees were causing cities to grow in an unruly manner, resulting in a serious environmental and social disaster. Sandoval believes that the majority of his remarks related identity to space, which means that “immigrants crossed national borders and weakened national identity” (Sandoval, 2004, p. 436). In the speech of Sobrado, thus, since space is linked to nationhood, its violation is supposed to be a serious threat.

³⁹ Calcutta (now also called Kolkata) is a city in eastern India. The capital of British territories in India during the colonial times, today Calcutta is the chief harbor of the country. In his speech, Sobrado associates this also demographically diverse city with chaos or anarchy.

Threat perception with respect to the identity of a society, on the other hand, is a crucial aspect of ontological security worries. “Unconsciously formed emotive tensions that express ‘internal dangers’ rather than externalized threats” has led many intellectuals within the Costa Rican society to bear emotional outpourings from time to time. Considering Sobrado’s reaction as a threat perception, although there are not tangible or concrete threats against the well-being of the society or the security of the environment, perceived threat of danger can be explanatory in the behavior of the lawyer. Hence, ontological security concerns several times lead the social agent to shift the focus of the real existing matters to the perceived matters in the surroundings.

On the other hand, studies related to Costa Rica address to a culture in which the story of exceptionality in comparison to other countries in the region, along with the formal supremacy of “nationality” over “political citizenship,” allows for a disparity in terms of nationals’ and immigrants’ political and individual rights (Pedroza, 2021, p. 1). The key feature of the 2006⁴⁰ law, which was criticized for lacking a human rights viewpoint as it aimed to handle migration as a national security concern, was the strengthening of police control measures for undocumented or unauthorized immigration, as well as the implementation of criminal penalties for unauthorized immigrants (Gamboa, 2008, p. 53). It can also be claimed from a theoretical perspective that “basic thrust is a screening-off device in relation to risks and dangers in the surrounding settings of action an interaction is the main emotional support of a defensive carapace” (Giddens, 1991, p. 40). Yet against this framework explaining the behavior of the host society, the conditions for the migrant community can be expressed in theoretical terms as individuals in all cultures have shared basic human requirements for identity security, inclusion, predictability, and connection in their communication with others (Turner 1987; 1988, as cited in Gudykunst, 2005, p. 219). Identity vulnerability, unpredictability, autonomy, and change are the opposite pairs of the corresponding demands that the migrants can experience in the face of the host nation’s attitude against them.

As a continuation of this argument, it is significant to state that belonging could be considered as a personal, intimate sensation of being “at home” in a place (place-

⁴⁰ The 2006 migration law, as also explained earlier, had a highly restrictive tone with its emphasis on national security and immigration control.

belongingness) as well as a discursive resource that develops, claims, defends, or rejects forms of socio-spatial inclusion and exclusion (politics of belonging). Despite the fact that Nicaraguans speak Spanish (as do Costa Ricans) and share the same spiritual, cultural, and sporting interests as the native Costa Rican population, the coexistence of these two countries has obstacles. The cultural and linguistic connections that natives have with the most prevalent immigrant group, according to Bitkeviciute, do not set the feeling of belonging to a culture at all (2016, p. 44).

When addressing the Costa Rican immigration phenomenon, it's vital to remember that an immigrant's long-term goal is usually to feel at home or to develop a sense of belonging. Integration as a method for achieving social cohesiveness is a vivid theme not only in Costa Rica or Central America, but also in other regions of the world. This is significant since belonging is regarded as a fundamental human need (Bitkeviciute, 2016, p. 6). It might be true that immigrants' feelings of belonging to their "new" country may in usual cases be hindered by their inability to fit in culturally or meet cultural criteria (for example, language, traditions, customs, religion etc.) However, this, at the same time, indicates that the proximity of a migrant's language, culture, religion, or traditions does not necessarily impact how strongly a migrant feels a part of the society as in the example of in Costa Rica. This is because, when it comes to cultural distinctions between the two countries, the majority of people agree that Costa Rica and Nicaragua are more alike than they are different⁴¹ (Bitkeviciute, 2016, p. 59). It appears to be more dependent on the type of migrant and the host society's attitudes toward that category of migrants (Bitkeviciute, 2016, p. 6).

Yet, according to Bitkeviciute's studies, a substantial segment of the Costa Ricans thinks that there is no expectation for Nicaraguans to integrate since the integration is unnecessary because their presence in the country is mostly for economic reasons. Accordingly, in the end, the majority goes to Costa Rica for work and are not so much interested in the rest. They socialize among themselves, and not very much with the Costa Ricans. Nicaraguans in Costa Rica, for instance, do not participate in national holidays nor in many activities that Costa Ricans get involved. A Nicaraguan student who was also interviewed on his compatriots expressed that "since they came

⁴¹ Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans have a same language and similar way of life due to their shared Central American indigenous history and later experience as Spanish colonies (Bitkeviciute, 2016, p. 13). In terms of religion, they also both comprise of predominantly Roman Catholic populations.

to the country to work, they just need to go to work, live at home, and maybe go to a pub at most. And sometimes they go to church. They are not interested in traditional celebrations; they just don't grasp it" (Bitkeviciute, 2016, p. 63).

Ana, a university-educated official from the Ministry of Labor, explains the logic of this national debate when she states that, as a result of the massive Nicaraguan migration, "the Tico is no longer the authentic Tico; we are already a mixture of a lot of things that we don't know in the end... As a result, the legitimate population loses the ability to control its present and future pluriculturalism" (Alvarenga, 1998, p. 7). In accordance with this worldview, it is recommended by this segment of the society that the government do everything possible to facilitate their return to their homeland, or "accelerate the processes and incentives to achieve their fullest integration into the culture and national life, with special attention to the youngest and most penetrable populations for early socialization and eventual assimilation" if there is no self-desire for assimilation (Alvarenga, 1998, p. 8).

Giddens (1991) believes that, since society is a "shared cognitive ordering of the environment", it solves its members' ontological security problem for them (Giddens, 1991). In other words, the author stresses, "the individual's fall is cushioned by the social order, which reproduces a general ontological security until she can pick herself up again when trauma occurs" (as cited in Mitzen, 2006, p. 348). According to this argument, society has the ability to solve its members' ontological security challenge for them, since society is a "shared cognitive ordering of the environment" (Giddens, 1991, as cited in Mitzen, 2006, p. 348). In the words of the student above, Ana, the agent seeks the help of the social order in order to defeat the anxiety produced by pluriculturalism. Pluriculturalism, which is, again, against the narratives of the Costa Rican society and nation based on the perceived "homogeneity", is considered as a source of uncertainty. Social agents, on the other hand, do fear uncertainty as an identity threat (Mitzen, 2006, p. 352). In order to overcome that fear, the individual imposes cognitive order on the environment (Mitzen, 2006, p. 346), which is in this case asking for a policy based on the rapid integration or assimilation of the Nicaraguan migrant society into the community of "Ticos" by the government.

On the other hand, with respect to the Costa Ricans' desire for the incorporation or integration of the migrants, in a poll carried out in 2009 investigating the tendencies

of the Costa Rican society against the immigrants, the people polled were more supportive of pluralism and assimilation over separation in general, however this depended on the immigrant group. In the case of immigrants from Colombia, for instance, the cultural pluralism tended to be more supported while with regard to immigrants from Nicaragua, the population would demand a greater assimilation (Castro, Chacon & Peña, 2009, p. 530), supporting the speech expressed above by Ana.

In fact, the Costa Ricans generally are aware that immigrants do not pose, for instance, a financial threat to them or their children (Castro, Chacon & Peña, 2009, p. 529). Gindling (2008) in his research encounters no evidence to support the hypothesis that Nicaraguan migration to Costa Rica was a significant influence in Costa Rica's such social issues as declining salaries, rising inequality, or stagnant poverty (p. 116). Hence the matter was more about symbolic threats, such as threats to personal and social well-being (Castro, Chacon & Peña, 2009, p. 529).

Bustamante (2002), plunges into the discussion from the perspective of the vulnerability of the immigrants. The author, as some other scholars indicated above, observes that there is a widespread belief that foreigners or specifically immigrants do not have or should not have the same rights as citizens. This fact is expressed as a vulnerability on the side of the immigrants. Being vulnerable in this setting involves being exposed to the violence of others, which leads to significant self-closure and security measures to protect oneself from possible attacks (Boublil, 2018, para. 3). The author claims that this is a social construct that may be demolished. The author's observations presume a distinction between foreigners and immigrants, on the one hand, and citizens on the other, which constitutes a relationship that the state legitimizes. Hence, in the end this division becomes a source of power for the state as well as the society or nation in question, while the counterpart is placed into a position of imposed powerlessness (Bustamante, 2010, 565).

In daily life, this corresponds to almost a hierarchical social interaction between the person who defines another as "deviant", as can be seen in the national discourse against the Nicaraguan newcomers stated above, and the person(s) who are labeled as such. The act of assigning someone such considerations imply some form of power game. It could be a "legitimate" power backed by the state's norms and

ideals, or it could be a real misuse of that power (Bustamante, 2002). At this point, migrants' vulnerability corresponds to the risk of being powerless enough in another country to be regarded as deviant by locals who do not view the immigrants to be compatible for the already existing system of norms and values based on appearances, behavior, or even simply socio-linguistical accent (as in the case of the use of "pueh").

Migrants are intrinsically vulnerable "beings" as human rights subjects from the instant they leave home to begin their migration. However, the extent of this and levels of acceptance in the societies they roam in varies greatly. This brings the discussion to "feeling at home" again. When a person is at home, that person is less vulnerable than when leaving home to become a migrant (Bustamante, 2010, p. 565). Especially in those societies who predominantly believe that extending human rights to immigrants, particularly to irregular ones, is damaging to the locals' rights or to legality principles, the hosting nation usually possesses the tendency to support the idea of a power difference that leads to liberty of, or at least impunity against, violations of immigrants' human rights (Bustamante, 2002).

In the case of the relationship between Costa Rican society and the Nicaraguan migrants, the quest for ontological security, or preserving one's identity while dealing with unanticipated shifts in the environment, has led to overreact to the phenomenon. From a theoretical perspective, considering as a point of view explaining the attitude of the host nationals, Gudykunst (2005) expresses that "an increase in the power we perceive that we have over strangers will produce a decrease in our anxiety," making the host nationals ontologically secure (p. 301). Furthermore, the author states that "the less powerful we feel in a situation, the more anxious we are". Strangers, which are migrants, usually feel like they do not have much power in host cultures and, therefore, they most of the times experience high levels of anxiety (Gudykunst, 2005, p. 423). This inevitably becomes the essence of their vulnerability in the social relations between the two communities. Rossdall (2015) believes that while some efforts to establish or maintain ontological security are evidently more harmful than others, they all impose certain constraints. When ontological security is viewed as a conformance to larger political and social frameworks, where comfort is generally connected with "privilege" and "complicity", rather than a subjective psychological condition, this argument arises (p. 370).

A labeling situation, in some cases, may emerge when a person meets another who is not in conformance with the shared beliefs and concepts. This occurs due to this person's unusuality. "Nica", or in plural "Nicas,"⁴² is the label or short name given to the Nicaraguan immigrants in Costa Rica. The party that possesses greater authority tends to make the other's labeling stick (Bustamante, 2002). On the other hand, in some cases, in a society, labeling is viewed as a social activity; a habit that is usual and not abnormal. This involves a historical, which might be more recent or older depending on the perceptions, background in which a power structure and the combination of values and norms emphasize the nature of the relationship (Bustamante, 2002). Whether a phenomenon of such scale will have social implication, and if yes, its extent, depends on how the society perceives and even how it desires to interact with the foreign newcomers, a fact that is influenced, to a great extent, by the historical events and relationships.

With the purpose of exemplifying this point of view, it is convenient to mention a study made in the Bocas del Toro banana division in the 1980s, which explained how Nicaraguans moved to the banana plantations on Costa Rica's Caribbean coast and the Bocas del Toro division in the early twentieth century to carry out the most difficult tasks of deforestation as "Nicaraguan loggers" and how they remained an important part of the labor world of the region. In this example, however, labor leaders, the administration, and the workers themselves regarded Nicaraguans' combativeness as an innate "racial" trait and believed that their "quarrelsome character" has a historical, institutional base. This reasoning is based on Nicaragua's history, which is one of the most violent in Central America, with civil wars and years of severe military dictatorship. Moreover, the recurrent invasions of the United States, adding to the previous long civil conflicts, have destroyed the country since colonial times, which subsequently and supposedly resulted in inter-personal communications of the Nicaraguans that are characterized by masculine violence (Quiros, 2019, p. 8).

On the other hand, perhaps paradoxically, there is a serious belief within the rhetoric of the Costa Rican society that, in terms of the services provided by the

⁴² A common manifestation of ethnicization process is the opposition between "nica" and "Nicaragüense." Thus, not all the Nicaraguans are nicas. A laborer or a domestic worker are one-of-a-kind, while on the other hand, a writer from that country is a Nicaraguan. The "nicas have dark skin and are poor. On the other hand, successful Nicaraguan businesspeople do not have a nationality, they are simply entrepreneurs (Sandoval, 2014, p. 8).

government, Nicaraguan immigrants make excessive use of services such as health care and housing. Yet the Caja del Seguro Social's (Social Security Fund) records demonstrate that the contributions that foreigners make to the health-care system are greater (Sandoval 2004, p. 408). On the other hand, according to a poll made in 2006, more than 75% of those polled agreed that Nicaraguans increase delinquency, and more than 60% believe that the government's support to them makes things worse for nationals. Frequently, the Costa Rican population appears in the role of defenseless and unprotected victim, caught in the crossfire of Nicaraguan aggressions (Zamora & Jimenez, 2009, p. 559).

From a theoretical perspective, on the other hand, self-imagining is the process of portraying oneself as consistent and existent over time while projecting any defects onto others. The agent feels safe assuming that the other's differences are "insuperable, unchangeable, and continual" (Murer, 2010, as cited in Chernobrov, 2016, p. 586). This occurs despite the fact that such behavior might cause hostility against the individuals or groups that the agent in question interacts, as in the case of the migrants.

Here, an important standpoint is the association that Costa Ricans, usually influenced by the media, make between Nicaraguans and the country's rising crime rate (Alvarenga, 1998, p. 3). This is due to the fact that, in the news, many times the protagonists are divided into two groups: those who belong to the group of "Nicaraguan offenders" and those who belong to the group on the other end of the spectrum, which is tasked with restoring social order and "neutralizing" the chaos and damage caused by the first. This second group is made up primarily of institutional entities such as police departments that act solely as though they are of Costa Rican nationality (Zamora & Jimenez, 2009, p. 558). In Costa Rica, immigration has always been portrayed in the media as a problematic issue, as a threat to Costa Rican citizenship. However, associating immigration with social conflict has not only been a practice of the media, as they shared, according to Zamora & Jimenez (2009), responsibility with other institutions such as the government, the police, and educational systems (p. 552).

An important site for the publication and broadcasting of this kind of news is the La Carpio neighborhood in San Jose. La Carpio is a very well-known slum located between two heavily polluted rivers and the city's landfill. Thousands of Nicaraguan

civil war refugees moved there especially after the 1980s and 1990s. They are predominantly undocumented immigrants who have been mostly ignored by the San José and Costa Rican governments (Miller, 2015). According to the National Statistics and Census Institute, the majority of La Carpio’s families have a monthly income of between 60,000 and 75,000 colons (US\$130-165), which is insufficient to meet the cost of basic goods and services for a family. Residents of the neighborhood have to deal with police raids and become accustomed to their town constantly being shown in crime sections of the country’s media, which anyway tend to emphasize crimes done by immigrants, in addition to trying to cope with their poor economic situations (Fonseca, 2005, para. 3).

Figure 8
La Carpio Neighborhood



Note. La Carpio neighborhood in Costa Rica’s capital, San Jose. Source: Pérez González, 2019.

One of the most common concerns among La Carpio residents is that the media only shows “the bad side”. Karina Fonseca, a Costa Rican journalist who writes for the Nicaraguan online news source *Envío* has made interviews and research in the neighborhood. One interviewee states, “the media have ignored us without even being aware that many working people reside here, including Ticos, Nicas, and people of many different nationalities, who leave their houses at daybreak to go to work.” The resident continues, “this is what they should focus on so that we don’t feel judged

when we go to the clinics or just out on the street and find it difficult to tell people we are from La Carpio” (Fonseca, 2005, para. 22). Police officers and media are thus claimed to be contributing to the bad public perception of La Carpio.

Fonseca (2005) found that, between 1999 and October 2004, the country’s most prominent newspaper, *La Nación*, published an average of one negative item per week on La Carpio on its digital edition (para. 4). However, according to Fonseca, investigations on the matter have ruled out the claim that Nicaraguans have been more violent than the Costa Ricans. Nicaraguans, for example, were responsible for only 10.3 percent of reported instances of domestic violence in Costa Rica in the 1990s, the decade in which most of these immigrants were originating from a Nicaragua that had just got out of a civil war. Moreover, these percentages are nearly proportionate to the percentage of Nicaraguans in the country's total population, discrediting the idea that Nicaraguans are far more violent than the host population (Fonseca, 2005, para. 7).

On the other hand, as Stephan & Stephan (1985) explains, anxiety causes cognitive distortions in how social agents interpret information. The more anxious one social agent feels, the more likely that individual is to focus on other nationals’ behaviors that is expected to witness. These include those based on the agents’ negative stereotypes. Furthermore, anxiety also leads to the inclination to confirm these personal expectations against others and not to recognize their behaviors that are inconsistent with these expectations (Stephan & Stephan, 1985, as cited in Gudykunst, p. 429). Accordingly, the stereotypes that occur against the migrants can be considered to be the results of these processes, where the expectations against them are not equivalent to the behaviors of others.

On the legal side of the issue, the security discourse, characterized by fear of the other and the need to defend sovereignty against potential threats posed by irregular migration, has aided not only such larger countries as United States and Mexico, but also countries of smaller sizes such as Costa Rica, in adopting repressive policies against undocumented migrants (Rodriguez, 2020, para. 54). The 2006 migration law’s restrictive tone as mentioned above, for instance, with its emphasis on national security and immigration control, could mark a significant policy transformation for Costa Rica, where a heritage of hospitality and refuge for displaced Latin American communities had previously dominated political rhetoric and national identity

(Fouratt, 2014). This fact reveals not only present tendencies in migration securitization and criminalization, but also how such discourses are implemented into law (Fouratt, 2014).

Before that law, the Costa Rican government had in certain times advocated policies to aid immigrants' absorption into Costa Rican society, such as President Miguel Angel Rodriguez's (in office between 1998-2002) Immigration Amnesty Decree,⁴³ which was widely attacked by anti-immigration activists. The objective of the decree, in the President's words "was to help them to legally enter the workforce, receive legal wages and contribute taxes to the health and education services provided by the Costa Rican state" (*El Nuevo Herald*, 1998). However, despite the government initiative, the perception of invasion and the burden represented by immigration later became an argument to defend the application of restrictive policies and advocate greater control, particularly police control, of the migratory flow, on the grounds that it posed a security and economic burden (Gamboa, 2008, p. 52).

According to Gamboa, there is a conflict between a need for labor in a market that offers more positions than the labor force available for particular jobs, and a tendency to exclude immigrant workers from the lower strata of the labor market. Foreign labor emerged as a valuable resource in the labor market at a time when the economy as a whole, and a number of productive sectors in particular, were feeling the impacts of the shift from the traditional agro-export model to a more diversified service-based model. Immigrants, on the other hand, were viewed as a risk in the local collective imagination, which was highlighted by the negative repercussions of this transition on the welfare state. This reality, according to Gamboa, led to the imposition of control measures that have, in the end, led to repressive police campaigns against immigrants, employers, and immigrants' service providers in order to reduce immigration (Gamboa, 2008, p. 67).

Giddens emphasized that "trust in others is at the origin of the experience of a stable external world and a coherent sense of self-identity" (1991, p. 51). In the

⁴³ Immigration Amnesty Decree was an initiative by President Miguel Angel Rodriguez which would establish that for six months, starting on February 1, 1999, all Nicaraguans residing illegally in Costa Rica since before November 9 would be able to regularize their immigration status (*El Nuevo Herald*, 1998). The law was so unpopular that, in a speech to the legislature on May 1st, no mention of the issue of migrant amnesty was made (Mora Izaguirre, 2004, p. 90). The decree also coincided with a remarkable time as Costa Rica was passing through a socio-economic crisis (Sandoval, 2004, p. 436).

intercultural and/or inter-agental relations, as Turner (1988), suggests, social agents “need to ‘trust’ others in the sense that, for the purposes of a given interaction, others are ‘reliable and their responses ‘predictable’” (as cited in Gudykunst, 2005, p. 295). On the other hand, when the individuals categorize strangers, their stereotypes are stimulated. Social agents’ stereotypes of strangers’ groups can offer predictions with regards to the strangers’ behavior. If strangers conform to the individual’s stereotypes, that agent can perceive their behavior as predictable. However, if strangers do not conform to the stereotypes of the social agent when that very agent employs only group-based information to predict their behavior, then the agent considers the behavior of them as unpredictable (Gudykunst, 2005, p. 295). Hence the relationship between the Costa Rican natives and the Nicaraguan migrants requires trust in order that that relationship can possess predictability, which in the end has the power to reduce anxiety.

Such exclamations in the Costa Rican society as “Oh god! We don’t have peace anymore, we don’t have democracy, we don’t have anything!” exemplify the preceding arguments by demonstrating a high level of alarmism in the face of the loss of some of the most important imaginable identities promoted by official speeches (Zamora & Jimenez, 2009, p. 572). The everyday creation of the “Central Valley whiteness”, built on popular practice in opposition to the mestizo (Guanacastecan and Nicaraguan), the chinese, the indio, and the black, was symbolic of this process (Putnam, 1999, p. 145). These differences that are frequently expressed in the Costa Rican society mean that, the Costa Ricans’ perception on the Nicaraguan migrants is highly based on the differences, which also lead to anxiety, another description for the existence of ontological insecurity. Dijker (1987) suggests that the larger the “perceived differences” between social agents’ own groups, which are the Costa Ricans in this case, and strangers’ groups, namely the Nicaraguans, the more negative those agents’ feelings particularly in terms of the anxiety that is felt, about dealing with them become (Gudykunst, 2005, p. 299). Hence, such perceptions of difference by the Costa Rican natives against the Nicaraguan migrants lead them to feel also ontologically insecure.

Shapiro (1989) brings a differing interpretation to the concept of human being. According to the author, “human being is its habitat. He or she can adopt a stance

toward a particular environment through reflection and, as a result, symbolically modify it to construct a world with it” (Shapiro, 1989, p. 190). Social constructions are what separates humans from other non-human beings, which are also one of the fundamental elements of identities. Relatedly, it is important to recognize that “national identity” is more than just a type of social organization; it is also a “narrative”, “a vision of the world that is shaped by the presence of real or idealized elements” (Montero Rodríguez, 2013, p. 14).

Sandoval (2004), on the other hand, expresses that many infants or adolescents residing in Costa Rica but of Nicaraguan origin know almost nothing about the nationality of which they are member. That is to say, as Sandoval puts, Nicaraguan children face a difficult time figuring out who they are. They experience living in a third space of identity since “they don’t feel particularly Costa Rican, nor do they have a strong connection to Nicaragua, and hence do not fit into any single identity” (p. 441). One of the testimonies given by a primary school student reads:

When I was six years old, I started kindergarten at this nice school with a good and friendly teacher. My initial years at school were not tarnished by the fact that I was Nicaraguan. I had no idea I was from Nicaragua. I asked my mother about the province [of Costa Rica] where I was born after hearing so many comments about Nicaraguans at school. [When she told me I was Nicaraguan], I burst into tears because I couldn’t accept it. Like other Nicaraguans, I was frightened of being insulted or laughed at school. But, as time has passed, I’ve come to accept my nationality more, despite the fact that I’ve never been to Nicaragua and know nothing about the country. So far, I’ve been pleased with how nicely I’ve been treated in school and at home. (Sandoval, 2004, p. 441)

Social actors, as in the case of this story the people at the school, categorize the strangers based on their group membership, which is their ethnicity, although in this specific case, the student did not previously know that she was of Nicaraguan origin. The social agents assume that the social identity based on that category is affecting their behaviors. On the other hand, strangers may not be aware of their such identifications or even if so, they might be basing their behavior on distinct social identities such as social class, gender and so on. That is the reason why, in order to be able to predict accurately, the social agent has to comprehend which social identity is the representative or guide of that stranger in question (Gudykunst, 2005, p. 299). Failure to do so can lead to interpersonal or intersocietal crashes or disappointments, which is further a cause for vulnerability of the stranger in question. This is due to the

significant fact that in terms of self-identity, people of all cultures and ethnic groups have the same underlying motivator demands for identity security, inclusion, and connection in order to be ontologically secure, instead of being vulnerable.

Parallel to the discussion presented earlier as well as the example given above, Fiske (1996) claims that “lack of power leads to anxiety and attempts to cope with the anxiety” (as cited in Gudykunst, 2005, p. 301). On the other hand, strangers tend to have less power than ingroup members. This is another factor that leads the immigrants to feel vulnerable, as they are susceptible to anxiety and ontological insecurity within the host society which they are based in. Hence, the nature of the stranger-ingroup relationship influences strangers’ and ingroups’ power and the potential for conflict between them (Gudykunst, 2005, p. 301).

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

Over the last decades, Nicaraguan immigration has been one of the most significant social issues in Costa Rica. Many of the country's most significant events, particularly the negative ones, are linked to this phenomenon. When there are social problems in Costa Rica, the blame is placed straight on the immigrants. This has to do with the formation of Costa Rican society's identity. For an appropriate and relevant discussion of Costa Ricans' perceptions of Nicaraguan migrants, this thesis proposed establishing a theoretical foundation based primarily on Giddens' ideas of ontological security. The primary goal of this thesis has been to place the migration debates in Costa Rica into a theoretical framework.

Giddens defined ontological security as "the possession, on the level of unconscious and practical consciousness, of answers to fundamental existential questions" (1991, p. 44). Anxiety has been central to discussions of ontological security. Giddens would define anxiety as "the fear that has lost its object through unconsciously formed emotive tensions that express 'internal dangers' rather than externalized threats." According to the author, the concept of ontological security is linked to the implicit nature of practical consciousness or "the bracketings" assumed by "natural attitudes" in daily life (Giddens, 1991, p. 36). The identity of the self and "self-consciousness" were the principal ideas of the theory.

A significant argument in this point of view was that emotions-based behaviors should be considered natural because anxiety, which is "inexpedient," "tends to paralyze relevant actions rather than generate them" (Giddens, 1991, p. 41). Following Giddens, on the other hand, many academics (Kinnvall, 2004; Steele, 2005, 2014; Mitzen, 2006, 2017; Rumelili, 2016, 2019; Subotic, 2016, Zarakol, 2016; Pratt, 2017) have made critical or supportive contributions to the theory, particularly through

Giddens' "continuity" discourse, which is based on "biographical narrative" and "routines."

Costa Ricans consider themselves to be exceptional as they have long maintained a peaceful political life and relative economic stability. In the case of Costa Rica, there has long been "democratic," "pacifist," and "white race" rhetoric. Costa Ricans, according to this rhetoric, have created a "biographical continuity" in terms of national identity with this historical perspective. However, they have been confronted with an unexpected element that would allegedly contradict this narrative, which are the Nicaraguan immigrants, who arrived in the country in waves at unexpected times and in unexpected amounts. Nicaraguan immigrants, on the other hand, have been seen as a threat to the biographical continuity of the Costa Rican nation. According to this perception, the old democratic and peaceful routines were now under threat, and society had become corrupted.

A significant portion of Costa Rican society believed that this was due to Nicaraguans who came to the country primarily as labor migrants and political asylum seekers. Nicaraguans have thus become a threat to their ontological security, in stark contrast to the routines and narratives that Costa Ricans have maintained over time since, supposedly, Nicaraguans, unlike Costa Ricans, were violent rather than peaceful. They did not possess a cultural life based on democratic rules, but one in an atmosphere of conflict, which has been challenging to the Costa Rican nation's imagination of self-identity.

With this context in mind, the main research questions in this thesis concerned how Costa Ricans perceive Nicaraguan migrants who arrive in their country and to what extent this phenomenon causes Costa Ricans to feel ontologically insecure. Another argument discussed in this thesis has been the question of to what extent this feeling and the resulting reactions place Nicaraguans in an ontologically vulnerable situation.

In order to present a clear background of the identity formation, the thesis examined the political history of Costa Rica as well as history of migration in the country, with a particular emphasis on the Nicaraguan population. The thesis discussed general social profiles of Nicaraguans, such as education and labor force participation. In the final section of this thesis, the perceptions towards Nicaraguan migrants in Costa

Rican society was assessed by utilizing academic articles as well as primary sources, which are primarily the news from the media. Costa Ricans' identity perceptions was examined through the lens of ontological security and theories based on integration and intercultural relations.

While the anxiety that the huge flux of migration of a different ethnic group from their neighboring country, which can be considered as a “critical situation,” created a sense of ontological insecurity for the Costa Ricans, their pursuit of ontological security exposed the migrants to ontological vulnerability, by creating anxieties in the migrant population. The problematic relationship between migration and belonging has been discussed utilizing examples from the daily life experiences of the Nicaraguan population in Costa Rica.

Through the lens of national identity creation, Patricia Alvarenga (1998) and Carlos Sandoval (2004) attempted to explain the rise of xenophobia in Costa Rica. Sandoval (2004) claimed that the Nicaraguan community in Costa Rica has been frequently racialized and criminalized, and that Nicaraguan immigration has been weakening Costa Rican national identity. On the other hand, according to the author, Nicaraguan immigration to Costa Rica has coincided with a deterioration of the country's sense of nationhood, as evidenced by a decline in public services such as education and health care, which have been the country's remarkable qualities in the modern past. This material deterioration, as well as the subjective implications it entails, has created a sense of confusion or disruption in Costa Rica, particularly in terms of feelings of nationhood. Since Costa Rica has always aimed to be a model nation in what is perceived as socially exclusive Central America, such disorientation has caused fear and uncertainty (Sandoval, 2004, p. 435). Tichenor and Rosenblum (2012), suggested, furthermore that the economic inequality that has been created in the last few decades have intensified anti-immigrant sentiment.

Costa Ricans, on the other hand, believed that they were significantly whiter than Nicaraguans in terms of racial perceptions. This perspective created the belief that the large scale of foreign migration has been a threatening factor to the strong framework upon which Costa Rica's universe of homogeneity, peace and democracy has been built. A main concern about the current Nicaraguan migration has been the perception that racial and cultural diversity has constituted a significant assault on the

country's diverse, positive, and beneficial characteristics (Alvarenga, 1998, p. 6). The presumably exceptional Central American country has been facing a "critical situation," disrupting Costa Rican society's historically established narratives. Multiculturalism has created a new framework that, in practice, has been contradictory to the traditional discourse based on homogeneous society.

These differences, which have been frequently expressed in Costa Rican society, would imply that Costa Ricans' perception of Nicaraguan migrants has been heavily based on differences, which is a factor leading to anxiety, another description for the existence of ontological insecurity. These would also include negative stereotypes based on the social agents', which are the Costa Ricans, experiences. As a result, stereotypes against migrants has been viewed in this thesis as the result of these processes, in which the expectations placed on the migrants have not been equivalent to the behaviors of others. According to Dijker (1987), the greater the "perceived differences" between social agents' own groups, in this case the Costa Ricans, and strangers' groups, namely the Nicaraguans, the more negative those agents' feelings about dealing with them become (Gudykunst, 2005, p. 299). As a result, such perceptions of difference among Costa Ricans and Nicaraguan migrants make the members of the host nation feel ontologically insecure.

Demerath (1993), on the other hand linked uncertainty and people's anxiety since uncertainty is a factor leading to a lack of predictability (as cited in Gudykunst, 2005, p. 295). In the case of the relationship between Costa Rican society and Nicaraguan migrants, the quest for ontological security, or preserving one's identity while dealing with unanticipated environmental shifts, has led to an overreaction to the phenomenon. As Rossdall (2015) claimed, while some efforts to establish or maintain ontological security could be clearly more harmful than others, they would all impose some constraints. This argument would arise when ontological security is viewed as a conformance to larger political and social frameworks, where comfort is generally associated with "privilege" and "complicity," rather than a subjective psychological condition (p. 370).

The definition of vulnerability from an identity perspective has been presented as the level of anxiety or ambivalence about group-based and person-based identity issues (2005, p. 220). Accordingly, strangers, or migrants, frequently would feel

powerless in host cultures, and as a result, they would frequently experience high levels of anxiety (Gudykunst, 2005, p. 423). Strangers, on the other hand, would have less power than ingroup members. Another factor that would make immigrants feel vulnerable was their susceptibility to anxiety and ontological insecurity within the host society in which they lived. The Nicaraguan migrants' such attitudes and behaviors as living in enclaved communities, as in the case of La Carpio neighborhood, and in a separated position without being able to integrate to the Costa Rican natives, has been attributed to a sense of ontological vulnerability. To provide "consistency," the migrants individually and as a group inevitably adhered to their own cultural habits. Anxiety, on the other hand, caused cognitive distortions in how the migrants interpreted information on the behaviors of the Costa Rican nationals, as Stephan and Stephan (1985) would explain.

An important argument of the thesis has been that the power relations between the two groups, namely the Costa Ricans and the Nicaraguans significantly affected the nature of attitudes of both parts. Lack of perceived power would lead more anxiety, hence the Costa Ricans attempted to keep control of the migration process and asked for the assimilation of the Nicaraguans to their society. This perception of the necessity of acquiring more power on the migrant community and these migrants sense of having less power, which actually constituted the nature of the stranger-ingroup relationship in this migration case led to the potential for conflict between them (Gudykunst, 2005, p. 301).

In this thesis, both quantitative and qualitative techniques were used for data collection. Since "cross-cultural influences" on behavior was considered to be better analyzed in qualitative research as it would help to investigate how meanings are shaped within and by cultures (Rahman, 2016, p. 104), this type of research constituted the basis of the thesis. However, as there are issues of generalizability as well as difficulty of data interpretation in this technique, quantitative methods have also been applied into the construction of the arguments. To be able to compare the collective conditions of the agents in question, numerical data, particularly statistical data have been collected from institutions such as the UN, ILO (International Labor Organization), and OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development).

A further discussion on the topic can lead a student of ontological security to study the nature of power relations between the conflicting parties which lead them to feel ontologically secure or insecure. Such questions as how the power is perceived by individuals or societies with respect to other identity groups and what these social agents do to create more power on themselves can be contributive subjects to the academy. On the other hand, it is obvious that rather than simply attempting to explain the causes and effects of the migratory processes on the host and origin countries, an in-depth discussion of identity problems in a social context can also be discussed. This requires to ask that the anxiety that the group members of both host and migrant communities feel are to what extent socially constructed in the environment they live in and to what extent they are feeling this as a “self” experience distinct from the collective perceptions of the community.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Kosta Rika'ya Nikaragua göçü, 20. ve 21. yüzyıllarda Orta Amerika'nın en büyük sosyal biri olan ve kimlik çatışmasının bölgede en belirgin haliyle görüldüğü güney-güney göç olayıdır. Nikaragualılar esasında yıllardır Kosta Rika'ya göç etmektedirler. Ancak bu göçmenler 1980'lerin başında ülke nüfusunun yüzde 2'sinden daha azını temsil ederken, bu oran 2018'de yaklaşık yüzde 7'ye yükselmiştir. Bu ciddi ve dramatik bir yükselişi temsil etmektedir. Zira öte yandan Nikaragualı göçmenlerin sayısı, bu yüzyılda ülkedeki toplam bölgesel göçmenlerin %80'inden fazlasını temsil etmektedir.

Özellikle Nikaragua'da meydana gelen sosyopolitik kriz nedeniyle 2018'de gerçekleşen son geliş dalgasının başlangıcı, Kosta Rikalıları bu yeni gelenleri kabul etme veya farklı bir şekilde reaksiyon gösterme ikilemini daha da derinlemesine tartışmaya yöneltti. Şimdiye kadar konuyla ilgili önemli sayıda istatistiksel ve tarihsel çalışma yapılmıştır, ancak konunun teorik bir kavramsallaştırmada tartışılması hala eksiktir. Bu tez, ontolojik güvenlik kavramını, ev sahibi ülke ile göçmenler arasındaki bu tür sosyal çatışma durumlarında sosyal grupların davranışlarının ardındaki nedenleri ortaya çıkaracak açıklayıcı güce sahip olduğunu savunmakta ve konuyu teorik açıdan ele almaktadır.

Ontolojik güvenlik kavramı, özellikle son yıllarda uluslararası ilişkiler akademisyenleri arasında popüler hale gelen bir teoridir. İlk olarak 1960'lı yıllarda Laing'in (2010) çalışmasıyla psikoloji alanında kullanılmaya başlanmış olsa da, daha sonra özellikle İngiliz akademisyen Anthony Giddens tarafından *Society of Society* (1984), *Modernity and Self-Identity* (1991) ve son olarak *Consequences of Modernity* (1991) isimli yayınlarıyla sosyolojide kullanılmasının ardından diğer alanlardaki birçok akademisyen ve öğrencinin de ilgisini çekmiştir. Giddens ontolojik güvenlik

kavramını şu şekilde tanımlamıştır: “Ontolojik olarak güvenli olmak, bilinçdışı ve pratik bilinç düzeyinde, tüm insan yaşamının temel varoluşsal soruları karşısında 'cevaplara' sahip olmaktır.”

Giddens'in Yapılanma Kuramı'nın bir parçasını oluşturan “pratik bilinç” ile kastedilen, bir eylemi gerçekleştiren günlük yaşamda tamamlanması gereken görevlere katkıda bulunduğu ve öylesine iyi bütünleştiği için neredeyse fark edilmez olan bilgi düzeyidir. Örnek vermek gerekirse, bir kişi araba kullanırken gaz pedalına nasıl basılacağı ile meşgul değildir, çünkü bu aslında bir şekilde otomatik olarak yapılır. Bunlar, bir bireyin pratik bir şekilde, üzerinde düşünmeden yaptığı günlük veya olağan eylemlerdir. Anthony Giddens aynı zamanda insan yaşamının rutinlerini vurgular; bu nedenle, kişinin “biyografik anlatısını” devam ettirmesi gerekir. Giddens'in “süreklilik” söylemi aracılığıyla, özellikle “biyografik anlatı” ve “rutinler”e dayalı olarak teoriye eleştirel veya destekleyici katkılarda bulunmuştur.

Bu tezi temel noktası, bir grup aktörü olarak ele alınan “toplum”un, beklenmedik veya istenmeyen olayların rutinlerini ve biyografik sürekliliklerini zorlamasına karşı gösterdiği tepkilerdir. Kosta Rika örneğinde uzun süredir devam eden bir “demokratik”, “pasifist” ve “beyaz ırk” retoriği var. Bu ulusal retorik, ülkenin Orta Amerika'daki komşularının çoğunluktaki mestizo, yerli ve Afro-Kreol veya Afro-Batı Hint kültürleri arasında, ülkenin Avrupalı atalarına sözde genetik ve kültürel yakınlığını vurgulayarak, ülkeye bir farklılık ve kimlik duygusu vermek için tarihsel olarak sürdürülmüştür. Ülke basını, siyasi çevre ve halk arasındaki baskın retoriğe göre Kosta Rikalılar Orta Amerika'da istisna bir millettir. Buna göre Kosta Rikalılar, “kırsal demokrasi” dedikleri özerk, bireyci ve eşitlikçi bir toplum yapısına sahiptir. Ulusal anlatılar bunun yıllardır böyle olduğunu iddia etmektedir. Bu tarihsel bakış açısıyla Kosta Rikalılar ulusal kimlik açısından Giddens'in tabiriyle “biyografik bir süreklilik” oluşturmuşlardır.

Ancak Kosta Rika ulusu, bu biyografik süreklilikle çeliştiği varsayılan beklenmedik bir unsurla, yani ülkeye beklenmedik anlarda ve miktarlarda gelen Nikaragualı göçmenlerle karşılaşmışlardır. Anlatılan retoriğe göre Nikaragualılar, Kosta Rikalıların aksine barışçıl değil, onlara kıyasla şiddet eğilimlidir. Şimdiye kadar sosyal ve siyasal yaşamlarını demokratik kurallara göre değil, Kosta Rika ulusunun öz-kimlik tasavvuruna oldukça meydan okuyan bir çatışma atmosferinde gelmişlerdir.

Teorik açıdan bakıldığında, Nikaragualı göçmenler, Kosta Rika ulusunun yıllardır sürdürdüğü rutinlerin ve anlatıların tam tersine, ontolojik güvenlikleri için bir tehdit haline gelmiştir.

Bu arka planla, bu tezdeki temel araştırma soruları, Kosta Rikalıların ülkelerine gelen Nikaragualı göçmenleri nasıl algıladıkları, bu olgunun Kosta Rikalıları ontolojik olarak ne kadar güvensiz hissettirdiği ve diğer yandan, bu algının sonucunda ortaya çıkan tepkilerin Nikaragualıları ontolojik olarak nasıl savunmasız bir duruma sokmuş olduğudur. Kosta Rika toplumu içindeki kimlik tartışmalarına eleştirel bir bakış açısı geliştirilmeye çalışılmaktadır. Bu çalışmada, ontolojik güvenlik merceğinden tartışılacak olan olgunun özel olarak işlenmesine ek olarak, entegrasyon, dışlama, göç türleri ve göçmenler gibi göç süreçleri kavramlarına ilişkin genel bir tartışma da yapılmaktadır.

Bu çalışmada, literatür taraması bölümü öncelikle ilgili göç terimlerinin yanı sıra bölgedeki göç süreçlerinin bir açıklamasını ele almaktadır. Uluslararası hukukta göçmenin belirli bir tanımı bulunmamakla birlikte, IOM (Uluslararası Göç Örgütü) göçmeni “ister bir ülke içinde isterse uluslararası bir sınırın ötesine geçerek geçici veya kalıcı biçimde ve çeşitli nedenlerle olağan ikamet yerinden uzaklaşan kimse” olarak tanımlamaktadır. Göçmenliğin bu tanımı, yasal durumlarına, yerinden edilmenin gönüllü veya gönülsüz doğasına, yerinden edilme nedenlerine veya kalış sürelerine bakılmaksızın yapılmaktadır. Öte yandan göç üzerine araştırmalar yapan akademisyenler farklı göçmen türleri arasında kendi çalışmalarında ayrımlar yapmışlardır. Örneğin bunlardan biri, zorunlu göç (şiddet veya siyasi baskının neden olduğu) ile ekonomik veya çalışma amaçlı göç arasındaki ayrımdır. Latin Amerika’da şiddet, özellikle profesyoneller, akademisyenler ve genel olarak da siyasi ve askeri şiddete aktif olarak karşı çıkanlar arasında yer alan entelektüeller arasında önemli bir göç sebebi olmuştur; ancak işgücü göçü de bölgede var olan temel bir kategoriyi oluşturmaktadır.

Göç literatürü alt başlığının altında göçmenlerin entegrasyonuna ilişkin terimler ve göç süreçleri de kültürlerarası ilişkiler temelinde sunulmuştur. Göçün neden ve hangi koşullarda gerçekleştiğini açıklayan temel göç teorileri de bu bölümde anlatılmakta olup, bu tez kapsamında Nikaragualı göçmenlerin neden kendi ülkelerinden başka bir ülkeye taşındığını açıklığa kavuşturmak için bir tartışma girişi

yapılmaktadır. Öte yandan, Schiller (1995) tarafından “ulusötesilik” (transnasyonalizm) adı verilen yeni bir kavram önerilmiştir. Göç süreçleri üzerine yeni bir çerçeve öneren bu kavrama göre, ulusötesi göçün arkasındaki nedenleri üç unsurda açıklanır: Birincisi, hem gönderen hem de alan ülkelerde kötüleşen sosyal ve ekonomik koşullara yol açan, küresel sermayenin yeniden yapılandırılması; ikincisi, bazı ülkelerde dışarıdan göçmen olarak gelenlerin ekonomik ve siyasi güvensizliğine yol açan ırkçı tutumlar; ve son olarak, göçmenleri her iki tarafta da siyasi bağlılıkları ve sosyal bağları sürdürmeye zorlayan hem gönderen hem de alan ülkelerin ulus inşa projeleri. Öte yandan, göçmenlerin sosyal süreçlere dahil olmasına yardımcı olan veya engelleyen bir dizi sosyal koşul vardır. Castles (1998) bu durumları dört farklı terimle sınıflandırır: asimilasyon, entegrasyon, dışlama ve çok kültürlülük (aktaran Pizarro, 2000, 252).

Göç terimlerinin ve bu konuda teorik tartışmaların gösterilmesinin ardından, ikinci literatür taraması bölümünde ontolojik güvenlik teriminin kavramsal bir açıklaması yapılmaktadır. Ontolojik güvenlik kavramı ilk olarak 1960 yılında psikolojide Ronald Laing tarafından kullanılmıştır. Buna göre ontolojik güvenlik, gündelik yaşantıları ve kendi bütünlüğünü tehlikeye atabilecek endişe (*anxiety*) ve anlam kaybının aksine, gerçeklikte istikrarlı ve bütünsel bir varoluşa sahip “sürekli bir kişiyi” tanımlamak için kullanılmıştır. Kavramın daha yeni bir tanımı sosyolojide Anthony Giddens (1991) tarafından yapılmıştır; yazara göre ontolojik güvenlik, sosyal aktörlerin, kimliklerini istikrarlı bir şekilde sürdürebilmeleri için tutarlı bir öz-anlatı, başka bir deyişle, “biyografik devamlılık” isteği içerisindedir. Ontolojik güvenlik, sosyal ilişkinin güvenliği, yani durumun tam bilişsel kontrolüne sahip olma hissidir.

Bu tez yazısında, ontolojik güvenlik kavramının özellikle son yıllarda sosyal bilimlerde Kinnvall (2004), Mitzen (2006), Steele (2014), Chernobrov (2016), Ejodus (2017), Rumelili (2019) gibi akademisyenler tarafından çeşitli kullanımlarına değinilmiştir. Bu fenomeni inceleyen birçok teorisyen, bu teorinin “süreklilik” anlatısının yanı sıra, bu teorinin ilk kez duyguları olan bireysel insanlara uygulandığı gibi devletlere veya toplumlara uygulanabilirliği konusunda da tartışma içerisine girmişlerdir. Bu tartışmalarda is en önemli terim, daha önce yukarıda da bahsedildiği gibi “kaygı, tehdit ve endişe” olarak Türkçe’de ifade edebileceğimiz *anxiety* olmuştur. Endişe, Giddens (1991) ve daha sonra özellikle Bahar Rumelili (2016, 2019),

tarafından bir sosyal eylem gerçekleştiren aktörün ontolojik olarak güvensizlik zamanlarında sahip olduğu duyguyu belirtmek için kullanır. Endişe, bireyin kendi kimliğini bir kritik durumun (*critical situation*) altına düştüğünde oluşan duygusal bir tepki olarak da tanımlanabilir. Rumeli'nin ifadesine göre endişe, bilinen tehdit ve risklerin aksine, beklenmedik gelişmelerin artan sıklığı şeklinde oluşan belirsizliğin sonucu da ortaya çıkar. Steele (2005, 2014), tüm sosyal aktörleri etkileyen endişenin, onları kendi benlik duygularının yanı sıra ulus-benlik duygusunu da güvenceye almaya zorladığını belirtmektedir. Bu nedenle sosyal aktörler “tutarlılık ve rutin” arayışı doğrultusunda öz-kimlik taleplerine uygun sosyal eylemleri benimseyebilirler. Steele, sosyal aktörlerin algılarına da vurgu yapar, zira insanların algılarından bahsetmeden güvenlikten bahsedilemez.

Ontolojik güvenlik arayışının “ötekileştirici” etkisini de tartışmak gerekmektedir. Buna göre, bireyler, toplumlar veya devletlerin ontolojik güvenlik ve tutarlı bir öz kimlik duygusu arayışı, benliğin kimliğini güvenceye alması ve koruması gerektiğinden, diğer insanların veya toplulukların yabancılaşması veya marjinalleşmesi ile sonuçlanabilir. Burada sosyal bir aktörün kendisine dair imaj ve algısı, bir başka deyişle düşüncesinde tasavvur ettiği benlik, herhangi bir kusuru başkalarına aktarmaktadır. Diğerinin farklılıklarının aşılmaz, değiştirilemez ve sürekli olduğunu varsaymak, sosyal aktörün kendisini güvende hissetmesini sağlar. Bu gerçeklik, bu tür davranışlar daha fazla düşmanlığa ve izolasyona yol açabilir olsa bile gerçekleşir.

Ontolojik güvenlik kavramının teorik olarak tartışılmasının ardından, yazının bir sonraki bölümünde ülkedeki anahtar sosyal ve siyasi gelişmeler ele alınmıştır. Kosta Rika toplumunun, kendi anlatısına göre “demokratik gelenek” ve “pasifizm” algısını daha iyi anlamak için ülkenin sömürge döneminden başlayarak geçirdiği siyasi olaylara değinilmekte ve Kosta Rika'nın ulusal kimlik oluşumunu hangi siyasal ve sosyoekonomik koşullarda gerçekleştiğini anlamak adına arka plan verilmektedir. Burada önemli bir bilgiyi vermekte fayda vardır. Tezde savunulan bu argümanlar önemli ölçüde basında, siyasi çevrelerde ve akademik ortamda konunun ele alındığı en baskın retorikler üzerine savunulmuştur. Yani bir başka deyişle her ne kadar örneğin “Kosta Rikalıların algısı” gibi yek bir ortak algının varlığı düşünülse de bu tez çalışmasının zorluklarından birisi olan bir bölge çalışmasında coğrafi uzaklık

faktörünün mevcudiyeti ve saha çalışması yapılabilmesinin kısıtlanmış olması dolayısıyla, ikincil kaynaklardan elde edilen bilgi ve akademik görüşler doğrultusunda bu argümanlar okuyucu ve tez jürisine sunulmuştur. Benzer bir çalışma daha gerçekleştirilip, saha veyahut anket çalışması yardımıyla bu tezde savunulan Kosta Rika halkının kendisine ve Nikaragua halkına ilişkin algısına dair argümanların bu toplumun ne kadarlık kısmının görüşlerini yansıttığı daha belirgin biçimde ortaya konulabilir. Ancak yine de belirtildiği gibi hâkim olduğu tespit edilen retorikler bu tezde belirtilen görüşler doğrultusundadır.

Bununla birlikte, belirtildiği gibi toplumsal ve siyasal tarihin kısa panoramasının verildiği bölümde görülmektedir ki Kosta Rika demokrasisinin tohumları on dokuzuncu yüzyılda atılmıştır. 1824 ve 1899 yılları arasındaki sürenin büyük bir bölümünde, ülke varlıklı kırsal aileler tarafından yönetilmiştir. Ancak öte yandan, ekonomik gelişmeler ve siyasi değişiklikler, toprak sahibi seçkinlerin Kosta Rika ulusal siyasetine tamamen hakim olmasını engelledi. Bu dönem için bir ayırım yapmak gerekirse, muhafazakârlar daha geleneksel ekonomik yöntemlere bağlı kalma eğiliminde iken, 19. Yüzyılın sonlarında sonlarında Orta Amerika'nın çoğunu yönetmeye başlayan Liberaller ise dışa dönük, *laissez-faire* ekonomik çerçeve içinde “modernleşmeyi” teşvik etmişlerdir.

Öte yandan Palmer (1995) gibi yazarlar tarafından Kosta Rika ulusalcılığının 19. yüzyılın üçüncü çeyreğindeki bu Liberal döneme rastladığı belirtilmektedir. Bu görüşe göre, milliyetçilik, hükümetle yakın işbirliği içinde olan ve yukarıdan aşağıya sürekli ve tekil biçimde bir propaganda yapan aydınların ürünüydü. Kosta Rika Liberal devleti aydınlarının önünde ulusal kimliğin oluşumunda etkili bir biçimde değinilmesi gereken birkaç önemli konu vardı. İlk olarak, mevcut nüfusun “beyaz” ve “homojen” olan tek bir ırk, aynı zamanda köken olarak tek bir ulus olduğuna karar vermiştiler. İkinci olarak, bu ırka zenginlik ve modernite açısından temel bir unsur ve hatta ilerlemenin temeli olarak atıfta bulundular. Son olarak, bu saf ulusal oluşumun devamını sağlamak için devletten müdahaleci bir politikaya ihtiyaç olduğunu savundular. Bu doğrultuda 19. yüzyıl süresince ırksal asimilasyon politikaları uygulanmaya çalışılmıştı.

Takip eden bölümde, Kosta Rika kimliğinin oluşumuna ilişkin çeşitli akademik görüşler tanıtılmaktadır. Tarihsel olarak çok etnik gruptan oluşan bu

toplumun dünya görüşü ve dinamikleri hakkında bazı arka plan bilgilerini ortaya çıkarmak için eleştirel bir gözlem yapılmaktadır. Bu bölüm, Kosta Rika'da ulus inşasındaki baskın mitleri de konu olarak ele almaktadır. Kosta Rika ulusunun kolektif hafızasında siyasi ve toplumsal mücadelelerin hangi bölümlerinin öne çıktığı, hangilerinin unutulduğu ya da belki göz ardı edildiği gibi soruların yanıtları keşfedilmeye çalışılmıştır.

Molina (2020), kolektif kimliklerin her zaman başkalarıyla ilişkili olarak inşa edildiğini, yani kendilerini az çok benzer olan başkaları açısından tanımladıklarını ve onları ayıran benzersizliği belirlemeye çalışan karşılaştırmalar yaptıklarını vurgular. Kosta Rika örneğindeki “ötekiler”, her şeyden önce, coğrafi yakınlıkları, ortak veyahut benzer kültür ve tarihleri doğrultusunda beraber koloni dönemini yaşadıkları ve bir önceki cumhuriyet tarihi boyunca da sömürge yönetimine karşılık birlik ve ortak entegrasyon programlarını deneyimlediği Orta Amerikalılardır. Sonuç olarak, bu bölge ulusal kimliği üzerinde güçlü bir etkiye sahip olmuştur. Kosta Rika sınırları dahilinde ise, egemen Kosta Rika kimliği olan Valle Central’in (ülkenin coğrafi olarak ortasında bulunan ve çoğu idari birimlerinin de bulunduğu vadi) dışında kalan her şey başkalık olarak kabul edilmiştir. Ülke kimliğini bu şekilde tespit eden resmi tarihçilik, bu vizyonun kurucusu da olmuştur.

Tez metni, bu tartışmaların ardından, Kosta Rika'daki göç tarihini, Nikaragua nüfusuna odak yaparak analiz etmektedir. İlk olarak siyahilerin göçüyle başlayan bu olgu, sömürge dönemi boyunca Orta Amerika'nın ortak göç modellerinin de bir parçasıydı. Özellikle 1890'larda başlayan Liberal dönemde, Kosta Rika siyasal çevrelerinin Avrupa'nın ekonomik güçleriyle ilişkilerini iyileştirme arzusuna sahip olmalarına ek olarak, benzer kültür ve ırktan oldukları düşünülen Avrupalı yerleşimcileri getirme girişimleri oldu. 19. yüzyılın ortalarından itibaren Kosta Rika'nın politik yetkilileri, istenen Avrupa nüfusunu sağladıkları sürece sömürge şirketlerini dahi tercih etmeye karar verdiler. Ayrıca örneğin, 1850 yılında Kosta Rika hükümeti tarafından Avrupalı yerleşimcilerin göçünü teşvik etmek adına “Koloni Toplulukları Koruma Kurulu” kurulmuştu ve 1862'de diğer ırkların (özellikle Afrika ve Çin ırkları) kitlesel göçünü yasaklayan Kolonizasyon Yasası kabul edildi.

Ancak Orta Amerika'nın geri kalanının *mestizo* yani melez toplulukları, Kosta Rika devletinin kolonizasyon programlarına dahil edilmedi. Özellikle Nikaragua'dan

çok daha sonra meydana gelen bu göç, *Valle Central* dışında kalan bölgelerdeki nüfus kıtlığı sorununa bir cevap olarak görülmemesinin yanı sıra pek hoş da görülmedi. Fakat, ülke nihayetinde siyasi ve sosyo-ekonomik nedenlerle ve belirli dönemlerde gerçekleşen doğal afetler sebebiyle komşusu Nikaragua'dan çok sayıda göçmen çekti. 1940'larda, Nikaragua şiddetli bir ekonomik kriz yaşarken, hiçbir destek almadan tek başına yaya olarak gelen iş arayan çok sayıda Nikaragualı yasadışı göç oldu. Nikaragualı işçi gücü, öte yandan Kosta Rika'daki muz üretiminin genişlemesinde önemli bir rol oynadı. Aralık 1972'de Nikaragua'nın başkenti Managua'da yaşanan deprem ilk göç dalgasını tetikledi. Öte yandan, 1977'de Nikaragua'daki Somoza hükümetine karşı iç savaşın sona ermesi ve 1979'da Sandinistaların zaferi, göçte daha sürekli bir artışa neden oldu. Sandinista yönetimi ile kontralar arasında 1981'den 1989'a kadar süren çatışma, özellikle 1982 ile 1983 arasında ikiye katlanan göç artışına yol açtı. 1990 yılında iç savaşın sona ermesinin ardından Nikaragua'da demokratik bir rejimin kurulmasına rağmen, çatışma sonrasında olumsuz ekonomik koşullar nedeniyle Nikaragua'dan Kosta Rika'ya göç akımları yüksek kaldı. Bu nedenle, Nikaragualıların Kosta Rika'ya göçü yıllardır bir fenomen olmuştur.

1980'lerin başında Kosta Rika nüfusunun %2'sinden az olan göçmenlerin yüzdesi 2018'de %7'nin üzerine çıkmıştır. Ülkedeki göç tarihinin temel hatlarıyla anlatıldığı bu bölüm aynı zamanda Nikaragualıların eğitim ve işgücündeki konumları gibi genel sosyal profilini de içermektedir. Bununla birlikte, Kosta Rika'daki Nikaragualılar çoğunlukla düşük vasıflıdır: 2018'de, çalışma yaşındaki Nikaragualıların %78,6'sı orta öğretimi tamamlamamıştır ve yalnızca %2'si üniversite eğitimi tamamlamıştır. Kıyas yapmak adına, Kosta Rikalılar orta öğretim ve üniversite eğitimi söz konusu olduğunda sırasıyla nüfusun yüzde 58,3'ünü ve nüfusun yüzde 9'unu oluşturmaktadırlar. Dolayısıyla, Nikaragualılar, düşük vasıflı istihdamda çalışmak için Kosta Rikalılardan daha olası bir konuma sahiptirler.

Öte yandan, burada belirtilmesi gereken önemli bir nokta, Orta Amerika'da, ekonomik ve politik faktörler nedeniyle vasıfsız emekçilerin göç etme yönünde güçlü bir eğilimin yanı sıra, varış ülkelerinde hem kültürel hem de dilsel olarak asimile edilmelerinin görece kolay olmasıdır. Bölgesel entegrasyonların olduğu bir ortamda, Latin Amerika vatandaşlarının sınırları kolaylıkla geçebilmeleri de sınır aşan yerinden edilmelerin artmasına önemli ölçüde katkıda bulunmaktadır. Guatemala-Belize,

Guatemala-Meksika, Haiti-Dominik Cumhuriyeti gibi komşu ülkeler arasındaki sınır ötesi hareketler ve bu tez örneğinde olduğu gibi Nikaragua-Kosta Rika en belirginleri olmak üzere, bölge içi akışlar son zamanlarda çok önem kazanmıştır. Nikaragualı göçmenler, Nikaragua'nın kıyasla yoksullaşmış olması, coğrafi olarak ABD gibi ülkelere kıyasla yaşadıkları yere daha yakın olmasının yarattığı fırsatların cazibesi ve ayrıca uzun yolculuktan daha kısa, daha ucuz ve muhtemelen daha az tehlikeli bir yolculuk vaadi nedeniyle Kosta Rika'ya gelmeyi tercih ederler. Ayrıca, iki ulusun uzun işçi göçü tarihi nedeniyle, birçok Nikaragualı Kosta Rika'da göç ağları geliştirmiştir. Bu sebeplerden dolayı, Nikaragualılar, Kosta Rika'daki yegâne olmasa da en baskın göçmen grubunu oluşturmaktadır.

Son olarak bu tez metninde, Kosta Rika toplumunun Nikaragualı göçmenlere yönelik algısı, akademik makalelerin yanı sıra, ağırlıklı olarak yerel medyadan edinilen haberler şeklinde elde edilen birincil kaynaklar yardımıyla değerlendirilmektedir. Bu bölümde Kosta Rikalıların kimlik algıları, ontolojik güvenlik, entegrasyon ve kültürlerarası ilişkilere dayalı teoriler merceğinden yargılanmaktadır. Her iki tarafın da sahip olduğu “kaygı, tehdit ve endişe” olarak Türkçe’de ifade edebileceğimiz *anxiety* durumları teorik olarak detaylandırılmaktadır. Kosta Rika ulusunun üyeleri ontolojik olarak kendilerini güvende hissetmekte midir? Eğer aksi durumda ise, nasıl tepki vermektedirler? Bu davranışın iki toplum arasındaki kültürlerarası ilişkilere etkisi nedir? Ontolojik güvenlik arayışı, belirli sosyal veya etnik grupların kırılabilirliğine yol açmakta ve bu da söz konusu göçmen nüfusta endişe ve ontolojik savunmasızlık yaratmaktadır. Söylem ve anlatılar, bu argümanın önemli bir parçası oldukları için tezin bu bölümünde odaklanılmaktadır.

Nicaragua göçü, özellikle son yirmi ya da otuz yılda Kosta Rika'daki en önemli sosyal sorunlardan biri olmuştur. En azından, kamuoyu bunu böyle algılamakta. Ülkenin en önemli olaylarının çoğu, özellikle olumsuz olanlar bu fenomenle ilgili olma eğilimindedir. Nikaragualılar daha büyük bir yoksulluk, daha yüksek suç oranları ve daha düşük bir eğitim düzeyi ile ilişkilendirilmektedir. Kolektif düşünme şekli veyahut hayal gücü bu nedenle göçün önemini abartma eğilimindedir. Bu durum aslında daha önceki bölümlerde tartışılan Kosta Rika toplumunun kimlik oluşumu ile ilgilidir. Kosta Rikalıların Nikaragualı göçmenlere ilişkin algısıyla ilgili bir tartışma yapabilmek için, bu tez, temelde Giddens'in fikirlerine dayanan teorik bir temel

oluşturmayı önermektedir. Giddens ve diğer birçok ontolojik güvenlik yazarı tarafından oldukça benzer sosyal durumlarda kullanılan “endişe” terimi iyi bir başlangıç noktası olabilir.

Temel olarak, Giddens tarafından verilen terim tanımı oldukça açıklayıcıdır. Giddens'a göre endişe, “dışsallaştırılmış tehditlerden ziyade 'iç tehlikeleri' ifade eden bilinçsizce oluşturulmuş duygusal gerilimler yoluyla nesnesini kaybetmiş korkudur.” Başka bir deyişle, yazarın görüşüne göre, endişeyi esasen bilinçsizce örgütlenmiş bir korku durumu olarak anlamalıyız. Ülkedeki göç ve göçmenler fenomenine dair araştırmalar yapan pek çok akademisyen sosyal, kültürel ve etnik düzeni için bir tehdit olarak görülen Nikaragualılara karşı yabancı düşmanlığı duygusunu beslediğini iddia ediyor. Ancak bunun bir adım daha ötesine gidebilmek mümkün.

Öncelikle Kosta Rika’da Nikaragualılara toplu olarak oluşan algının geçmişini şu şekilde tanımlamak mümkündür: Nikaragualı işçilerin 1948’de Kosta Rika’da yaşanan iç savaşın şiddetli döneminde ve öncesindeki yıllarda ana Kosta Rika siyasi hiziplerine karşı çıkan hareketlere katılımı veya dahil olması, 1940’ların ve 1950’lerin sonlarında Nikaragualı göçmenlerin algılarını etkilemişti. Her iki taraftaki Nikaragualılar, farklı derecelerde birbirlerini desteklediler. Silahlı çatışmanın sonunda kontrol, baskı ve sınır dışı edilmeye maruz kaldılar ve Kosta Rika’ya yasal olarak kabul edilmeleri engellendi veya yasaklandı. Takip eden yıllarda, gerekli belgeleri olmadan giriş yapan yabancıların cezalandırılmasına yönelik net bir eğilim vardı. Örneğin Alvarenga’ya (2002) göre göçmenlere yönelik bu girişim, özellikle 1940’ların sonlarından itibaren Nikaragualıların artan göçü ve bu etnik gruba yönelik yabancı düşmanlığıyla bağlantılıydı. Diğer yandan, Sandoval’a (2004) göre Kosta Rika’daki Nikaragua topluluğu sıklıkla ırksallaştırılmakta ve kriminalize edilmekte ve Nikaragua göçünün Kosta Rika ulusal kimliğini zayıflattığı sıklıkla iddia edilmektedir. Kosta Rika, kendini sosyal olarak ayrıcalıklı olarak gördükleri Orta Amerika’da her zaman örnek bir ulus olmayı amaçladığından, bu göç dalgaları korku ve belirsizliğe neden oldu.

Sandoval’a göre, Kosta Rika’ya Nikaragua göçü, Kosta Rika’nın ülkenin modern geçmişinde uzun süreler boyunca dikkat çekici niteliklerde olan eğitim ve sağlık hizmetleri gibi kamu hizmetlerinde bir düşüşün yanı sıra, Kosta Rika’nın aynı zamanda ulus duygusunun da bozulmasına tekabül etmektedir. Bu arada, Kosta

Rika'nın “orta sınıf ulus” olarak ünü de, nüfusun büyük bir kısmı artık orta sınıf yaşam standartlarına erişimden yoksun olduğuna inandığından, bozulma içine girmiştir. Bu maddi bozulma ve bununla ilgili toplumdaki öznel çıkarımlar, Kosta Rika'da hem maddi anlamda hem de ulus olma duyguları açısından bir karışıklık veya bozulma duygusu yaratmıştır.

Öte yandan Nikaragualılar, bahsi geçen önyargı dinamiğinin bir sonucu olarak bir “ötekilik” alanına yerleştirilmişlerdir. Yabancı göçün büyük çapta olması, Kosta Rika'daki homojenlik retoriğinin kurulduğu, barış ve demokrasi ile ilgili güçlü zihinsel çerçeveyi tehdit ettiği inancına yönelmekte bu yüzden. Mevcut Nikaragua göçüne ilişkin temel endişelerden biri, ırksal ve kültürel çoğulculuğun ülkenin diğerlerinden ayrı olan, olumlu ve faydalı özelliklerine yönelik önemli bir saldırı olduğu algısıdır. Çok kültürlülük, sosyal kimliklerin pozitif ve dinamik bir bileşeninden ziyade dejeneratif bir özellik olarak algılanmaktadır. Zira bu anlayışa göre, toplumsal kimlik, ulusal toplumun en değerli varlığı olarak kabul edilir, ancak dış dünyaya maruz kalırsa sonunda aşınır ve hatta kaybolur.

Sonuç olarak, gelinen noktada, Orta Amerika'nın retorikteki istisnai olan ülkesi olan Kosta Rika şimdi, toplumunun barış ve demokrasi gibi olumlu özelliklere dayalı tarihsel olarak temellendirilmiş anlatılarını bozan “kritik bir durumla” karşı karşıya. Giddens'in ontolojik güvenlik teorisinde ifade edildiği üzere endişe üretmektedir. Çok kültürlülük, sosyal yaşamda homojen toplum temelli geleneksel söyleme aykırı yeni bir toplumsal çerçeve üretir. Bu yeni durum aynı zamanda bir “belirsizlik” (*uncertainty*) de yaratır. Demerath (1993), öngörülebilirlik eksikliğine yol açması nedeniyle “belirsizliğin” ve sosyal aktörlerin “endişesinin” birbiriyle ilişkili olduğunu iddia eder.

Bir toplumun kimliğine yönelik tehdit algısı ise ontolojik güvenlik endişelerinin önemli bir boyutudur. “Dışsallaştırılmış tehditlerden ziyade 'iç tehlikeleri' ifade eden bilinçsizce oluşturulmuş duygusal gerilimler” Kosta Rika toplumu içindeki birçok entelektüelin, siyasetçinin ve sıradan vatandaşların zaman zaman duygusal taşkınlıklara uğramasına neden olmuştur. Örneğin avukat, üniversite profesörü ve gazete köşe yazarı Juan Jose Sobrado, Kosta Rika'nın başkenti San Jose'de düzenlenen bir sempozyumda yaptığı konuşmada Nikaragualı göçmenlerin Kosta Rika kimliğine bir tehdit oluşturduğunu ifade etmiştir. Sobrado, göçmenleri

kabul etmeye devam etmenin başkent San Jose'yi, ismi kaosla özdeşleşmiş bir şehir olan Kalküta'ya dönüştüreceğini iddia etmiştir. Bu algıya göre, ekonomik mültecilerin dalgalar halinde gelmeleri şehirlerin asi bir şekilde büyümesine neden oluyor ve ciddi bir çevresel ve sosyal felakete yol açıyordu. Sobrado'nun tepkisi ele alındığında, toplumun refahına veya çevrenin güvenliğine yönelik ölçülebilen somut tehditler olmasa da, algılanan tehlike tehdidi avukatın davranışında açıklayıcı olabilir. Bu nedenle, ontolojik güvenlik kaygıları, sosyal aktörlerin birçok kez var olan gerçek meselelerin odağını çevrede algılanan meselelere kaydırmasına neden olmaktadır

Bu noktada, yine Giddens'in (1991) ifade edeceği gibi, bu tür “kritik durumlarda” karşılaşılan endişe bilişsel olmadığı için, “günlük rutinler, yalnızca yerine getirdikleri sosyal istikrar nedeniyle değil, aynı zamanda bir 'sanki' ortamı oluşturmadaki kurucu rolleri” nedeniyle de, açığa çıkan endişeyi “parantez içine alarak” etkisini azalır hale getirir. Bu nedenle, Kosta Rika yerel halkı ve Nikaragualı göçmenler ilişkisinde olduğu gibi, ev sahibi grup ve aynı zamanda göçmen grup için içinde buldukları sosyal topluluk, bir “sanki” ortamı sağlayarak koruyucu bir çevre yaratmakla kalmayarak aynı zamanda bahsi geçen sosyal toplulukla “ulusun” neredeyse birbirinin yerine geçebilir hale gelecek konuma gelmesine sebep olabilir. Bir başka deyişle her iki grup da ortaya çıkan endişe, ait oldukları topluluğu yani ulusu bir “koza” olarak düşünerek buna sıkı sıkıya tutunmasına olanak verir. Bu şekilde sosyal aktörün kendisi için endişelerin sosyal eylemlerdeki felç edici etkisi engellenmeye çalışılır. Öte yandan, Nikaragualıların (Kosta Rikalılar gibi) İspanyolca konuşmasına ve yerel Kosta Rika halkıyla benzer manevi, kültürel ve hatta sportif ilgileri paylaşmasına rağmen, bu iki ülkenin bir arada yaşamasının önünde engeller var olabilmektedir. Bitkeviciute'ye (2016) göre Kosta Rika yerel halkının ülkedeki en büyük nüfuslu göçmen grubuyla sahip oldukları kültürel ve dilsel bağlantılar, karşılıklı olarak bir kültüre ait olma duygusu için yeterli olmamaktadır ve bu durumda da olmamıştır.

Öte yandan, Nikaragualılar Kosta Rikalılar tarafından kendi içlerine kapalı hayat sürmekle eleştirilmektedirler. Örneğin Kosta Rika'daki Nikaragualılar ulusal bayramlara veya Kosta Rikalıların katıldığı pek çok etkinliğe katılmamaktadırlar. Ancak göçmen grubun bu davranışlarını, kendilerini savunmasız hissetmelerinin bir sonucu olarak da değerlendirmek mümkündür. Yukarıda ifade edilen ve bir “koza” arayışı içerilmesiyle alakalı argümanlara ek olarak, Ting-Toomey'nin (1993) öne

sürdüğü gibi, “bireyler ne kadar savunmasız hissederlerse, bu etkileşimlerde o kadar çok ‘endişe’ yaşarlar. Bireyler ne kadar dahil edilmeye ihtiyaç duyarsa, grup içi ve ilişkisel sınırlara o kadar değer verirler.” Bununla beraber, “birey ne kadar farklılaşmaya ihtiyaç duyarsa, kendisi ile diğerleri arasına o kadar fazla mesafe koyar”. Bu noktada savunmasızlık (*vulnerability*), grup temelli ve kişi temelli kimlik sorunlarına ilişkin endişe veya kararsızlık derecesi olarak ifade edilebilir (2005, s. 220).

Bunlara ek olarak, Gudykunst (2005) “tüm kültürlerdeki veya etnik gruplardaki bireylerin kimlik güvenliği, dahil edilme ve bağlantı kurma için temel motivasyon gereksinimlerine sahip olduğuna” inanmaktadır. Gudykunst, bireyin karşılaştığı daha kimlik sorunları veya memnuniyetsizlikleri (örneğin, kimlik dışlama, ayrılma ve uzun vadeli kimlik istikrarsızlığı) arttıkça, kişinin eski, tanıdık kimlik uygulamalarına bağlı kalma olasılığının daha yüksek olduğunu vurgulamaktadır. Göçmen birey veya grup, kendilerine “tutarlılık” sağlamak için kaçınılmaz olarak kendi kültürel alışkanlıklarına bağlı kalabilirler. Zira diğer yandan, Giddens (1991), toplum “çevresel ortamın ortak bilişsel düzeni” olduğundan, üyelerinin ontolojik güvenlik sorununu onlar adına çözdüğüne inanmaktadır. Başka bir deyişle, “bireyin düşüşü, travma meydana geldiğinde kendini tekrar toparlayabilene kadar genel bir ontolojik güvenliği yeniden üreten sosyal düzen tarafından yastıklanmaktadır.” Her ne kadar Kosta Rika nüfusunun önemli bir kesimi tarafından, Nikaragua göçmen toplumunun yerel topluma hızlı entegrasyonuna veya asimilasyonuna dayalı bir politika talep edilmekteyse de aynı Kosta Rikalılarda olduğu gibi, Nikaragualıların belirsizlikten ve endişeden kaçınma, dolayısıyla da ontolojik güvenlik arayışı buna engel teşkil etmektedir.

Tezin önemli bir argümanı da iki grup, yani Kosta Rikalılar ve Nikaragualılar arasındaki güç ilişkilerinin, her iki tarafın tutumlarının doğasını önemli ölçüde etkilediğidir. Teorik açıdan bakıldığında, sosyal grupların kendisinde algılayacağı güç eksikliği, daha fazla endişeye yol açmaktadır, bu nedenle Kosta Rikalılar göç sürecinin kontrolünü elinde tutmaya çalışmışlardır. Bunun bir yansıması olarak Nikaragualıların toplumlarına asimilasyonunu öncelikli olarak istemişlerdir. Göçmen topluluk üzerinde daha fazla güç elde etme gerekliliği algısı ve bu göçmenlerin daha az güce sahip olma hissi, aslında bu göç vakasında yabancı-iç grup ilişkisinin doğasını oluşturarak, aralarında çatışma potansiyeline yol açmıştır.

Konuyla ilgili daha fazla tartışma gerçekleştirmek adına bu tez, ontolojik güvenlik alanında çalışmalar yapmak isteyen öğrenci için, çatışan taraflar arasında kendilerini ontolojik olarak güvende veya güvensiz hissetmelerine yol açan güç ilişkilerinin doğasını incelemesini önermektedir. Gücün bireyler veya toplumlar tarafından diğer kimlik gruplarına göre nasıl algılandığı ve bu sosyal aktörlerin kendileri üzerinde daha fazla güç yaratmak adına ne tür tollara başvurdıkları gibi sorular akademiye katkı sağlayan konular olabilir. Öte yandan, salt olarak göç süreçlerinin ev sahibi ve menşe ülkeler üzerindeki nedenlerini ve etkilerini açıklamaya çalışmanın ötesinde, kimlik sorunlarının sosyal bir bağlamda derinlemesine tartışılmasının da gerekliliği bu noktada ifade edilebilir. Bu hem ev sahibi hem de göçmen toplulukların grup üyelerinin hissettikleri kaygının, yaşadıkları çevrede ne ölçüde sosyal olarak inşa edildiğini ve bunu ne ölçüde kolektif algılardan farklı bir “kendi” deneyimi olarak hissettiklerini sormayı gerektirir.

APPENDIX B. THESIS PERMISSION FORM / TEZ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ / INSTITUTE

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Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Social Sciences

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Applied Mathematics

Enformatik Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Informatics

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Marine Sciences

YAZARIN / AUTHOR

Soyadı / Surname : Sağır

Adı / Name : Kıvanç

Bölümü / Department : Latin ve Kuzey Amerika Çalışmaları

TEZİN ADI / TITLE OF THE THESIS (İngilizce / English):

Bir Vaka Çalışması: Kosta Rika'daki Nikaragualı Göçmen Algısı / A Case Study: Costa Rican Perception Of Nicaraguan Migrants

TEZİN TÜRÜ / DEGREE:

Yüksek Lisans / Master Doktora / PhD

1. **Tezin tamamı dünya çapında erişime açılacaktır.** / Release the entire work immediately for access worldwide.
2. **Tez iki yıl süreyle erişime kapalı olacaktır.** / Secure the entire work for patent and/or proprietary purposes for a period of **two years.** *
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