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# Spiritual Dimensions of Migrant Integration in Lisbon: A Case Study within the Common Home Agenda and Polyhedron of Intelligibility Framework

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*Article*

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**Abstract:** This article provides a comprehensive overview of the moral, political, and philosophical aspects of migrant integration, using Michel Foucault's concept of subjectivation and Pope Francis's Common Home Agenda as analytical frameworks. It dives deeper into the role of spirituality in the integration process, relating it to Foucault's idea of a polyhedron of intelligibility. Later, it describes Portugal's migration landscape and the research project, (title), which aims to shed light on the local migrants' subjective integration experiences. Based on the projects' interview statements, the article then describes the different spiritual aspects of migrants' integration into the Portuguese capital, Lisbon. Finally, it concludes with how spirituality includes many disciplines and ways of life choices and how the projects' migrants interpret the concept of spiritual integration in a multifaced polyhedron manner. Creating strong ties to their homes, traditions, cultures, spirituality, sports, and culinary practices, as well as practicing, sharing, and teaching these practices, protects them from total subjectivation.

**Keywords:** common home agenda; migration; integration; lisbon; spirituality; polyhedron; subjectivation; michel foucault

## 1. Introduction

Migration, as a worldwide phenomenon, involves more than just the physical movement of individuals across borders; it is a process that affects a person's identity, culture, and spirituality. The experience of migration brings about an interplay of adaptation, resistance, and transformation as migrants strive to find their place in new societies while maintaining connections to their cultural roots. In this context, the city of Lisbon, with its colonial legacy as a hub of migration and cultural exchange, offers a unique setting for exploring these dynamics.

This article delves into the spiritual dimensions of migrant integration, a relatively underexplored area within migration studies (Godziak and Shandy 2002). By focusing on the experiences of migrants in Lisbon, the research seeks to highlight how spirituality functions as both a means of preserving cultural identity and a mechanism for integration. The analysis is framed within the broader context of Pope Francis's Common Home Agenda (Francis 2015), which advocates for inclusivity and the protection of human dignity. Additionally, Michel Foucault's concept of 'polyhedron of intelligibility' (Foucault 1994) is applied to explore the multifaceted approach in which spirituality intersects with the processes of migrants' integration.

Through this interdisciplinary method, the article aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how spiritual practices serve as a form of resistance against the pressure of 'subjectivation' (Foucault, 2004) while also facilitating the integration of migrants into their new social and cultural environments. The study not only sheds light on the personal and communal aspects of spirituality in the lives of migrants but also explores its potential to foster a more inclusive society in the culturally diverse city of Lisbon.

## 2. Migrant Regulations under the Common Home Agenda: Moral, Political, and Philosophical Dimensions of Integration

*Laudato Si'* (Praise Be to You) is Pope Francis's second encyclical, subtitled *On Care for Our Common Home*. In it, the Pope critiques consumerism and irresponsible economic development, laments environmental degradation and global warming, and calls on all people of the world to take a consistent, swift, and unified global action. In this way, *Laudato Si'* also addresses the issue of refugees, highlighting how climate change will increase the number of migrants forced to leave their homes due to environmental degradation. The encyclical calls on people to welcome and support these environmental refugees (Francis 2015, Ls 25).

At the International Forum on Migration and Peace in 2017, Pope Francis elaborated on different forms of migration and our responsibility to assist migrants. He stated: "Migrations in their various forms are not a new phenomenon in human history. They have left their mark on every age, bringing about the encounter of different cultures and giving rise to new civilizations. Unfortunately, in many cases, people are forced to move by conflict, natural disasters, persecution, climate change, violence, extreme poverty, and inhumane living conditions. Our shared response can be expressed by four action verbs: to welcome, to protect, to promote, and to integrate" (Francis 2017).

Welcoming involves offering migrants decent and appropriate shelter. Protecting means defending the inalienable rights of migrant workers, asylum seekers, displaced persons, and victims of human trafficking. Promoting goes beyond protection, focusing on the integral human development of migrants and their families, ensuring they have the right to choose to emigrate and the right not to be forced to do so (Francis 2017).

Integrating concerns the opportunities for intercultural enrichment brought about by the presence of migrants and refugees. Pope Francis emphasized that integration is not about assimilation that erases cultural identity. Instead, it is about mutual openness and enrichment. This process can be accelerated by granting citizenship without financial or linguistic barriers and by legalizing long-term residents. He called for fostering a culture of encounter through intercultural exchange, best practices of integration, and preparing local communities for integration processes (Francis 2017).

Integration is the final step for a migrant to feel at home in their new country, and for that, it is important to investigate what contributes to the process of becoming an integrated citizen. Political theorists have explored how democratic values can be combined with cultural and religious diversity and socio-economic equality in the context of gaining citizenship  (Bauböck 1994; Hammar, 1990; Soysal 1994; Young 1990).

To understand current integration processes, we need to examine the integration policies of European countries. A typology based on citizenship distinguishes three aspects of citizenship. The first is the legal/political dimension, which examines whether immigrants are regarded as full members of the political community, their residence rights, and their ability to acquire national citizenship and participate politically. The second is the socio-economic dimension, which pertains to the social and economic rights of residents, including access to work, benefits, and social security provisions. The third dimension is cultural and religious rights, focusing on whether immigrants have the same rights as others to organize and participate in cultural, ethnic, or religious groups (Penninx 2005).

In a wider perspective, the term 'integration' is widely debated among scholars and policymakers. Within the EU, assessments of integration across member states generally focus on four key areas: employment, education, social inclusion, and active citizenship. These evaluations rely on data from sources such as the EU Labor Force Survey and PISA (European Union, OECD 2013). Additionally, some researchers adopt a spatial perspective, exploring 'belonging in place' by examining access to essential services like shops, health centers, and institutions (Åkerlund and Sandberg 2015). Furthermore, interpersonal connections and social networks—formed through interactions with both natives and fellow migrants—play a crucial role in fostering community and inclusion. These relationships are essential for developing a sense of belonging (Rauhut and Esteves 2023).

## 2.1. Subjection and Subjectivation as an Effect of Integration

After examining different aspects of integration, let us look at the concept of subjectivation, which adds both political and philosophical aspects to the analysis of the integration process.

Being a migrant involves leaving behind your past identity and adapting to a new culture and environment, often under challenging conditions. Migrants are frequently required to abandon their own ways of thinking, behaving, and being in order to adopt a new language and way of life. This forced integration can feel like an endless process of subjugation in their new country (cf. Arendt 2013, p. 5-16).

Even in less extreme cases, effective integration is often hindered by a lack of mutual respect and reciprocity between migrants and their new communities. Migrants may be pressured to adopt the values and norms of their host country as a prerequisite for acceptance rather than being welcomed on equal terms. As Benjamin Boudou points out, hospitality often falls short of true equality. The host's generosity can mask an underlying inequality where the migrant is expected to show deference and gratitude, reinforcing a power imbalance (Boudou 2017, p. 177-178).

Foucault associates 'subjection' ('assujettissement') with 'individualization', the practice of marking the individual "by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize, and which others have to recognize in him" (Foucault 1994b, p. 212). It is a form of power that makes the individual a subject, in the sense of subjugating him and making him 'subject to' in two senses: "subject to someone else by control and dependence" or "tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge". (Foucault 1994b, p. 212).; In the lesson of February 22, 1978, of the course, Sécurité, Territoire, Population, Foucault points out that individualization in Christian pastoral care is operated through subjection ('individualisation par assujettissement'). "Nor will it be brought about by the assertion of the self's mastery of self, but by a whole network of servitude that involves the general servitude of everyone with regard to everyone and, at the same time, the exclusion of the self, of the ego, and of egoism as the central, nuclear form of the individual" (Foucault, 2007, 239)

In his 1978 lesson, he raises a crucial question: "How can one be a subject without being subjected?" he explores the concept of subjectivation, which refers to how individuals come to understand themselves and their roles within societal structures. (Foucault 2004, p. 237). This question underpins his work in texts such as *The Subject and Power* and his lectures at the Collège de France from 1980 to 1984. Subjectivation involves challenging the fixed identities imposed by power structures and biopolitical regulation. It requires moving beyond established roles and norms to develop a new perspective on oneself and one's existence. This process means questioning and potentially transforming the way one relates to existing moral codes and social expectations. It is not about creating a completely new identity but about rethinking and negotiating one's place within societal norms and power dynamics. The practices of subjectivation that Foucault focuses on in the 1980s aim to find another way of constituting the subject in the face of the practices of individualization through subjection. It is a question of resisting of 'subjection to' by means of the 'relation of the self with itself', in other words, making use of a certain number of techniques that allow the individual to constitute themselves as a subject (Foucault 2024). In essence, subjectivation is about maintaining a dynamic relationship with oneself and the world rather than adhering to rigid, pre-determined identities. It involves engaging with collective and political identities formed through shared struggles while avoiding the risk of these identities becoming so fixed that they stifle individual expression. This approach can help resist the objectifying and exclusionary practices often found in current migration policies, which may force migrants into negative roles and identities. As Foucault argues in his 1982 course, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, effective resistance to political power requires a new relationship with oneself, suggesting that transforming our self-perception is essential for challenging and overcoming systems of oppression (Foucault 2001b).

There is no relationship of exteriority between 'subjection' and 'subjectivation', since they are irreducibly face-to-face. The first movement to stop being 'subject to' consists of the 'de-subjectivation' of the forms of individualization by subjection (Foucault 2024), and the second movement consists of the creation of new ways of being and living from which the individual becomes subject through their relationship with themselves. If we observe that the survival migrant is usually objectified in a relationship in which he is 'subject to', in the sense that his 'self' is uprooted from any belonging. (Cf. Djigo, 2019).

Both Foucault's thoughts on subjection and subjectivation align with Pope Francis's previously mentioned thought on how integration is not about assimilation that erases cultural identity. The 'polyhedron of intelligibility' is a useful framework for integration to reach this state of partly

assimilated identity, which is still able to protect itself from the full subjectivation that comes with moving to a new home. In this article, we aim to identify possibilities of resistance to these forms of subjection through new relationships of the self with itself.

### 3. The Role of Spirituality in Integration: Insights from the Polyhedron of Intelligibility

Common Home is an expression shared between the UN 2030 Agenda for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (Ls). This perspective of ecological conversion implies a re-education of the perspective of perceiving how things are all connected to each other. One of the important criticisms that have been made of the Global Agendas is the maintenance of an imaginary that does not allow the visibility of the interconnection of the problems to think of coordinated actions. In this way, *Laudato Si'* thinks development is "authentic human development" that has "a moral character": «It presumes full respect for the human person, but it must also be concerned for the world around us and "take into account the nature of each being and of its mutual connection in an ordered system" (Ls #5). It demands a "sustainable and integral development".

Given 'the complexity' of the common home issue and the plurality of contemporary culture, 'solutions cannot come in a single way to interpret and transform reality'. It demands a theological stance 'in dialogue with other sciences', in an 'interdisciplinary and inclusive' way, requiring 'a synthesis between empirical sciences and other knowledge such as philosophy', and an openness to create cultural conditions that foster a 'reconciled diversity' (Ls #63). For this reason, integral ecology is responsible for the full integration of the environment, human and social dimensions.

From this perspective, advocating for an ecological conversion is more than just raising ecological awareness; it involves adopting a mindset that understands the interconnectedness of all things. A key point where religion, environment, and spirituality intersect is in recognising spirituality as a source of resilience and renewal. This approach emphasises the need for a new way of life that cares for both oneself and the environment (Ls #202–203).

This new way of life is not confined to religious practices but is deeply connected to spirituality in a holistic way that includes personal, social, and environmental aspects (Deane-Drummond [2008] 2016). Spirituality, derived from the Latin word 'spiritus', meaning breath, relates to how individuals seek and find meaning and purpose in their lives. It involves experiencing connections with the present moment, oneself, others, nature, and what one considers sacred or transcendent.

Migrants face a complex integration process akin to a polyhedron, where each facet maintains its uniqueness while contributing to a unified whole. Pope Francis uses the polyhedron metaphor to describe how different elements, including spiritual, social, and environmental aspects, come together to form a cohesive and harmonious system: "it is the polyhedron, which reflects the convergence of all its parts, each of which preserves its distinctiveness. Pastoral and political activity alike seek to gather in this polyhedron the best of each" (Pope Francis 2013, p. 236).

Pope Francis advocates for a theological approach that moves beyond self-referential perspectives to engage with contemporary culture. This dialogue is central to the common good and human dignity, as envisioned by the Second Vatican Council and redefined by Francis as our shared home and universal fraternity. The polyhedron metaphor reflects how diverse elements can come together while preserving their distinctiveness, emphasizing the need for both pastoral and political actions to integrate these elements effectively (Pope Francis 2013, p. 236).

One of the tasks that demands this joint action of pastoral and political actions is the contemporary challenge of migrations, made more serious by environmental degradation and the increase of natural disasters (Ls #25), in such a way that "to guarantee the protection of the environment" it demands "regulate migration" (Ls #175). The 2030 Agenda integrates migration into the global development framework for the first time, emphasizing that migration is relevant to all populations, whether internal or cross-border, displaced or not. It highlights migrants as agents of development. Central to this is target point 10.7 of the agenda, which calls for facilitating "orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration" through well-managed policies. In this way, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes migration as a "powerful driver of sustainable development" (UN IOM 2022) for both migrants and local communities through significant benefits in the form of transfer skills, enhancing workforce capabilities, fostering investments, and enriching cultural diversity.

However, *Laudato Si'* also addresses the widespread indifference to the suffering of migrants (Ls #25). The polyhedral approach can help analyze the complexity of this issue, focusing on how both local communities and migrants construct a shared sense of belonging and a common home. This approach encourages a deeper understanding of the subjectivity involved in the migration process and the creation of a more inclusive and compassionate response.

Pope Francis uses the image of the polyhedron in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 236, especially in the context of promoting unity in diversity. He mentions the polyhedron as a metaphor for society and the ecclesial community. For Francis, the polyhedron represents a form of unity that respects and celebrates the diversity of its components. Unlike a sphere that homogenizes all the parts, the polyhedron maintains the integrity and uniqueness of each face, promoting a harmony that welcomes cultural, social, and individual differences. This initial perspective of his pontificate fits perfectly with his proposal for a Synod, understood as a process of listening and inclusive dialogue that involves the whole community in discerning problems and making decisions (cf. Synod 2021-2024).

Otherwise, before Pope Francis, in "*Dits et Écrits IV (1980-1988)*", Michel Foucault uses the term polyhedron in a context that suggests the complexity and multiplicity of discursive practices and regimes of truth. Foucault is often concerned with how different aspects of power, knowledge, and subjectivity are interrelated in ways that cannot be captured by a simplistic or one-dimensional view:

"As a way of lightening the weight of causality, 'eventalization' thus works by constructing around the singular event analyzed as process a 'polygon' or, rather, 'polyhedron of intelligibility', the number of whose faces is not given in advance and can never properly be taken as finite. One has to proceed by progressive, necessarily incomplete saturation. And one has to bear in mind that the further one breaks down the processes under analysis, the more one is enabled and indeed obliged to construct their external relations of intelligibility" (Foucault 2001 p. 227).

In this sense, polyhedral analysis can be seen as a metaphor for the entire Foucauldian system, which involves, on the one hand, analyzing the relationship between knowledge and power, respectively from the relationship between the archaeology of knowledge and the genealogy of power, as well as the genealogies of ethics, also seen as spiritualities that emerge as a form of resistance to forms of abuse of power, and thus a fertile ground for the production of new knowledge from new subjectivities.

Both Pope Francis and Michel Foucault use the polyhedron metaphor to address the themes of complexity and diversity, though their focuses differ. Pope Francis uses it to discuss how different elements in society and the Church can come together while preserving their uniqueness. Foucault uses it to explore how knowledge and power interact in multifaceted ways, creating new forms of subjectivity and resistance. Despite their different applications, both perspectives converge in their recognition of the need to address complexity and critique existing forms of power and knowledge. They both explore how spiritualities can emerge as forms of resistance and new ethical frameworks.

This paper proposes to use Foucault's polyhedral analysis as a tool to understand migration through the lens of Pope Francis's concept of a common home where everything is interconnected. By focusing on the spiritual aspects of migrant integration, the aim is to explore how spirituality can facilitate the integration process. This involves analyzing the experiences of migrants in Lisbon to understand what constitutes a spiritual space for integration.

The concept of 'polyhedron of intelligibility' can also help to identify the forms of alternative rationality that emerge in different practices during events that produce singularities. This analytical approach highlights the importance of both understanding the singularity of dominant processes of behaviour in contemporary society and the need to imagine forms of resistance through a political network grounded in spirituality. In this context, Foucault's notion of 'eventalization' can be observed in the rise of spirituality and migration as an ethical process of subjectivization, as forms of self-care that intersect with common engagement as a mode of political spirituality. This convergence becomes particularly relevant in the integration of religious traditions within the framework of Agenda 2030. Spirituality here goes beyond a purely religious aspect and emerges as a shared experience that encompasses ways of life choices and different forms of commitments in a cooperative way, influencing not only personal life but also cultural, social, political, economic, and linguistic spheres interculturally. In this path, spirituality can be connected with the multiple efforts to change the indifference against the migrants to a positive view of partnerships in the common call to everyone

in becoming agents of sustainable development. This perspective understands an enlarging sight of a safe place of integration, which addresses migrants and local communities. Giving visibility to the migrant perspective is a way to undermine the biopower process of exploitation since the integration of the heterotopy fosters a *commontopy*.

## 4. Portugal's Migration Landscape

In our modern world, millions are starting new lives due to economic challenges, opportunities for work or study, and the need to escape political conflicts or environmental issues. As of 2022, around 781,000 foreign nationals were living in Portugal, which is 7.4% of the total population (SEFSTAT, 2023).

Historically, Portugal has both sent and received migrants, a trend that has grown in recent years. One key factor driving migration to Portugal is its colonial legacy, leading to significant migration from former colonies such as Brazil, Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, and São Tomé and Príncipe. These historical connections continue to shape migration patterns today. Geopolitical factors such as political instability and conflicts in regions like North Africa and the Middle East have also spurred migration to Portugal. Another factor is the economy; Portugal has attracted migrants seeking better economic opportunities, particularly from Asia. There has been a surge in migrants from countries such as China, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan, driven by Portugal's attractive immigration policies. Additionally, East European migrants are also attracted to Portugal because of the better living conditions, such as from Romania and the war-torn Ukraine. Portugal's European Union membership has facilitated intra-EU migration, mostly from France and Italy, and the ex-EU member, the UK, allowing citizens from other EU countries to move to Portugal for employment, retirement, and way of life reasons. The country's pleasant climate, thriving tourism industry, and vibrant cultural scene enhance its appeal, such as the presence of many universities and educational institutions (Góis & Marques 2018).

### 4.1. Evolution of the Elements of the 'Apparatus' in the Portuguese Migration Context

Foucault's previously discussed polyhedral analysis is also associated with his concept of the 'apparatus', which is a heterogeneous network of elements in order to identify regimes of rationality, in other words, an ideological state apparatus (Foucault, 1980). The following brief analysis focuses on how elements of the apparatus—such as discourses, institutions, regulations, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical propositions, moral norms, philanthropic propositions, as well as architectural practices—(Foucault, 1980) have evolved in context of migration since Portugal's democratic transition.

During Salazar's dictatorial regime, the discourse was heavily nationalistic, emphasizing a homogeneous Portuguese identity tied to Catholicism, tradition, and the Portuguese empire (Rosas, 2012). Migrants, particularly from the colonies, were not viewed as equal members of society (Corkill & Eaton, 1998). Following Portugal's decolonization process, the discourse shifted towards inclusivity and multiculturalism, promoting values of diversity and human rights (Pereira, 2019). In line with this shift, institutions that were designed to reinforce a unified national identity during the dictatorship, such as the educational system, media, and church, have been replaced or reformed by democratic institutions focusing on integrating migrants.

Under Salazar, regulations were strict, aiming to maintain control over the population and limit immigration from non-European countries, with the exception of the colonies where Portuguese sovereignty was asserted (Jerónimo, 2017). After joining the EU, Portugal's regulations evolved to align with EU standards, including policies on immigration, asylum, and anti-discrimination. The legal framework during Salazar's regime was repressive, with laws designed to control and assimilate colonial subjects (Rosas, 2012). Post-1974, Portugal adopted a new constitution that guarantees fundamental rights and freedoms, including for migrants, with legal reforms encompassing citizenship laws and anti-discrimination legislation (Ferreira, 2022).

Scientific statements and philosophical propositions during Salazar's era often reflected racialized, hierarchical, and conservative views of humanity, aligned with colonialist and nationalist ideologies (Jerónimo & Pinto, 2015). In contrast, contemporary academic discourse has shifted towards critical studies of race, migration, and multiculturalism, with a focus on liberal, socialist, and humanist ideas (Castelo, 2019). Similarly, philanthropic actions during the Salazar era were aimed at

"civilizing" or assisting migrants, reinforcing the colonial mindset (Corkill & Eaton, 1998). In contrast, modern philanthropic efforts emphasize empowerment and integration, with NGOs and civil society organizations actively advocating for migrant rights and providing support services (Ferreira, 2022).

However, some of the most problematic practices, particularly administrative measures and moral norms, have not evolved as much as other elements. SEF (Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras) and AIMA (Agência para a Imigração e Mobilidade Académica), responsible for immigration, border control and integration, have faced significant criticism for their inefficiency in processing residency permits, visas, and other necessary documentation for migrants. Many migrants report waiting months or even years for their paperwork to be processed, during which time they may lack access to essential services, legal employment, or social benefits, and in some cases, this social limbo can even lead to deportation (Malheiros et al. 2023). This mirrors the restrictive and controlling nature of the Salazar-era bureaucracy, where administrative delays were used as a tool to exert power and control over marginalized groups.

The evolution of moral norms in Portugal, particularly concerning attitudes towards migrants, reflects both significant changes since the Salazar era and troubling signs of regression in recent years with the rise of nationalist ideologies. While the period following Salazar's dictatorship saw a shift towards more inclusive and egalitarian values, recent developments, including the rise of a right-nationalist movement, indicate an attempt to reactivate the exclusionary and xenophobic attitudes that were prominent during Salazar's rule (Madeira et al. 2021).

Architectural practices are also problematic elements of the 'apparatus' in the context of migration. The flow of migration in Lisbon was also shaped by the economic and housing policies adopted by Salazar's government. The first large-scale social housing projects were constructed at the time, while there was a general lack of control over the 'informal' housing market (Malheiros 2000). Lands without building permits were sold at very low prices, and an illegal real estate market emerged, parallel to the legal one (Salgueiro 1972, 37). The informal housing was transferred from rural migrants to new arrivals from Africa, who spread to the northern outskirts of Lisbon. The state itself boosted informal construction by organizing small plots of land where poor families could build 'shacks', paying low monthly rent. In meanwhile, the state favoured real estate companies and large contractors to build housing units in the most valuable urban areas (Santos, 2014). The current housing crisis in Lisbon, which is commonly connected to tourism and the growing number of foreign residents (Lorga et al. 2022), also originates from the previously mentioned inequal real estate market setting.

The 'polyhedron of intelligibility' and the 'apparatus' share a heterogeneous character. The apparatus is a formation that unites discourses and practices; it is a set of abstract and concrete things that serve the current power system and exercise dominant strategic functions. Some elements of the 'apparatus' in the contemporary Portuguese context, such as administrative measures, moral norms, and architectural forms, serve to constitute a national political identity that excludes migrants.

*4.2. Research Project: (Title)*

This article works with the post-doctoral research project: (title). The project focuses on how 40 migrants from 36 different countries and backgrounds integrate into Lisbon, Portugal. The interviews are from the UK, US, Italy, Germany, Slovenia, Armenia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Algeria, Palestine, India, Ukraine, Gambia, Capo Verde, Nepal, Pakistan, Kenya, Madagascar, Poland, Brazil, Cuba, Columbia, Chile, China, Bangladesh, Scotland, Singapore, Capo Verde and Turkey.

The research project asks migrants the same 17 questions about the socio-cultural and spiritual aspects of their integration experience in Lisbon. The responses reveal recurring patterns in how the interviewees integrate into their new country through social and cultural practices. Participants were selected through a sample of convenience found in various cultural, social, and ethnic associations (such as Nepalese, Bangladeshi, and Cape Verdean groups), art groups (photo club, film club, drawing club), refugee centers (Jesuit Refugee Centre), student associations (Catholic University of Portugal), and sports clubs (volleyball).

The questions of the project, (title), are designed to encourage the participants to elaborate on their lives' socio-cultural and spiritual aspects. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyze how a person's integration process in Portugal is not only determined by their economic condition but by

several other factors as well. This research is based on subjective narratives described by the migrants about their integration experience and does not work with quantifiable data about the migrants' backgrounds. They are from a versatile group, between 25 and 55 years of age, 15 men and 25 women. Most of them are remote workers or work at local companies; some of them created their own businesses; some are PhD students, educators, or refugees.

Besides, building social and cultural connections, spiritual connections can be critical to successful integration, as it can help individuals feel more connected to their new home and provide a support network. The project contained a question about the religious and spiritual aspects of integration, and its answers and findings are concluded in the following part of the article.

Based on the response of the project, social gatherings, and cultural associations are the most effective in supporting integration. Many participants mention that friends and cultural communities are key factors in helping them feel at home in their new country. In contrast, bureaucratic processes, tax systems, and health institutions pose the biggest challenges for the interviewees, primarily due to language barriers and long waiting times. Also, many of the research project participants mention the difficulty of finding affordable housing and many of them, young professionals, have to live in a room of a shared house. This finding is important according to the previously mentioned multifaceted (legal and political, social and economic, cultural, ethnic and religious) dimensions of becoming a citizen as a migrant (Penninx 2005). According to the answers different parts of these dimensions are satisfied in a very different scale, which hints to a possibility of partial integration. This finding is also aligned with the previous examination of how different elements of the 'apparatus' evolved differently in the context of Portuguese migration.

## 5. The Religious and Spiritual Aspects of Migrants' Integration Experience

The interviewee from Florida highlights that finding her religious community was an important milestone in her integration process:

It was very challenging to find a church home. I actually spent an entire year searching…I ended up attending a Portuguese-speaking church, which has actually been the best thing for me. The community is very warm. We have dinners.' (citation).

The Gambian participant described how different religions can exist peacefully together in a cosmopolitan space:

"Since I live here, about the religions, what I know, I know that I don't, my friend is a Christian, I'm a Muslim, and I pray in home; it does not offend her it does not disturb her, but sometimes she prays with me, he fasts Ramadan with me, so I don't have a problem with that." (citation).

Several participants, including the Armenian, Polish, Colombian, Russian, Chinese, Singaporean, and American ones, have indicated that they do not actively practice a particular religion, yet, the Capo Verde participant stated:

I believe in many different aspects for many different religions, like I feel like we can get a little bit of everything from every religion, it is whatever suits us, right, but I don't really believe in organized religion in the sense like, yes, this is what you have to do, this is you now, because this is what we tell you that you have to do in order to like reach God or like go to heaven, I don't believe that, but I respect it, and I'm always curious to communicate and learn from people that are from certain religions. (citation).

Both the Ukrainian and the Kenyan participants feel that catholicism is a less strict practice in Portugal. According to the Ukrainian participant:

Because our religion in Ukraine is so categorized, so you can't go in the church without several costumes, like you should put the scarf, you should have a long skirt, so all your body should be closed. And a lot of these strong rules. But here (in Lisbon) I saw people can sit in the church, because we don't have branches in the church. Always you should stay during the mass. And here you have branches, and even the way of how it's going on during the holidays, it's more pleasant, more, like, open for you, and you enjoy the process. It's not like your punishment with something is just like if you want to be in the church, you be with the pleasure not because you should be'. (citation).

The Kenyan participant says:

When I was back in Kenya, it's a Christian-filled country and this whole culture of you have to go to church, you have to pray every day in the morning, at night, before you go to sleep, which was very much forced onto me and my siblings. That stopped because now I feel I have more space to choose what to do with my religiousness or with my spirituality rather than it being imposed on me and I am able to manage that better here than back home, unfortunately.' (citation).

Both the Slovenian and Armenian participants have explored other religious groups in Lisbon. The Armenian interviewee visited the Dominican friars and a Korean cult; the Slovenian participant was introduced to Hinduism through her flatmate.

### 4.1. Celebrating Local Religious Traditions

Celebrating local and home traditions and holidays is also important in the integration process of migrants. The Slovenian participant celebrated Christmas with her local neighbors, who invited her over and shared their family traditions. The Chilean pointed to local festivals, such as the *Santos Populares*, a prominent street celebration dedicated to local Catholic saints.

One of the Brazilian participants described how the carnival in Lisbon connects him to his new home and the local Brazilian community:

Some things I miss about Brazil, but like Carnival, for example, is the main cultural event that we can mention. But recently there has been Carnival, there was Carnival like last week, and it's not even, it wasn't even, it was September, no, August, and we had carnival so like there's a huge Brazilian community here that makes us not miss this type of thing so much. (citation).

Some participants highlighted the significance of practicing their own culture in their new home country. It is important not just to keep their own traditions alive and pass them on to the next migrant generation but also to teach them to the locals, therefore creating a cultural exchange that is an open dialogue, a form of integration. The Bangladeshi interviewee described that Muslim, Bangladeshi, and Portuguese festivals are all important to him. He said:

I am from Bangladesh, and I am a Muslim, and I am living nearby in the Mouraria neighbourhood, last seven and half years. So luckily, we have three-four mosques where we can practice our daily religious life, and also, we are free. I mean the local authority approved the gathering twice a year, that is the biggest festival of the Muslim community, Eid-ul-Adha and Eid-ul-Fitr. So we gathered almost 7,000 to 10,000 people, gathered in Martim Moniz. It's a huge gathering. So this is something really, how to say, it's really something wonderful because we are almost 10,000 miles away from our home and here we can practice what we believe with our friends, family and other people. So in the gathering it's not people from Bangladesh or from South Asia, so you can find people from the Middle East, from Africa and from all over the world. (citation).

### 5.2. Alternative Interpretations of Spiritual Activities

Others have offered insights into the spiritual dimensions of their lives. For the Chilean participant, spirituality is intertwined with a sense of energy and self-affirmation. The Colombian participant has incorporated spiritual practices into her daily life, such as meditation, breathing exercises and sound healing. Additionally, she expresses curiosity about exploring sound healing and ecstatic dance to enhance her productivity and focus. For the Pakistani participant, spirituality is closely linked with familial and cultural ties, which evoke a sense of unity with the universe. The Ukrainian interviewee believes in the spiritual power of hugs, as a simple embrace can be very empowering in the hard times of integrating into a new country. And the Kazakh interviewee highlighted that she is not religious but she likes to go to churches to admire their architecture.

The male participant from the US referred to going to the gym as his own spiritual practice, such as the Madagascarian woman who said: "Not really not my belonging to a religious community, but totally belonging to a sports team and to the queer community" (citation).

The Italian participant, who was once a dedicated churchgoer, has transitioned to seeking a sense of community beyond the confines of a church through community engagement. Now, she is

volunteering in an association focusing on social matters called Sirigaita. The woman with a multicultural background described a similar kind of community-mindedness outside of the church:

I am very, very community-minded. I'm not religious, but I'm very spiritual and I'm very focused on bringing people together in prayer. Just us praying in different ways, it doesn't really matter who you pray to, it's the fact that we come together and we break bread together and we share and we speak out and we say in the presence of each other what we are grateful for. I always have friends in Australia where I would organize these types of dinners and prayer circles and women's circles (citation).

The Indian interviewee connected his culinary practice to God and to the act of sharing food with others as a crucial act for integration:

I want to share a very important aspect because this is a value system that helped me integrate here a lot more with my mom. I learned two very important things with my parents, I would say, to be honest, I'm gonna say this in Hindi and then convert this into English and hopefully try to explain: the One is Atithi Devo Bhava, that means a guest is God. And second one is Niyat Mein Barkat Hai; in my way, the way I would say, your intentions define your efficiency. So when I say a guest is God, no matter who is home, I am happy if you, even if you have a friend along, I am happy to welcome them. I really believe in sharing. I think the moments that I hate, or I do not like the most are the moments where I cook food and I cannot share it with someone. It gives me goosebumps, I could cry right now for that because that's just not me. So one of the first rules I always have whenever I'm interviewing a new flatmate is, you don't have to cook. Of course, cook, because I can't cook for you all the time. But when I cook, I make a lot for everyone. So that's like my rule….When it comes to food, the one thing I've learned is that the more you give, the more you get it when you need it….When you have a thought process wherein you're very happy to share the food, that is your pot of gold, which is never-ending. And this is something my mom always says. And this is again, I think I carry this cultural integration from my home, not from India, but from my home to here (citation).

The Chinese participant connected religious activities to her home's food culture:

…And I think the most cultural, religious thing that I still keep relations with my home culture is food. That's a religion and every other food is pagan. I must say that. I would try to, even if I'm cooking, it's harder to get all the ingredients you want for these Chinese dishes. I'll just put in whatever I can to make it look less pagan. It comforts me, so I don't feel like a traitor, not to the country, but only to the food. Do you feel that your religious or spiritual practices help your integration in any way? Not really. You know the funny thing, for example, when I hang out with my very few Chinese friends here, we go to Chinese restaurants, many times it feels like you are walking past the border, like a national border, a cultural border, border and the more authentic the restaurant is, the fewer white people or people of other nationalities or ethnicities there are. So you walk in that, people are speaking Chinese, people are behaving in a pretty Chinese way like they don't they never say what they want directly or something like that and although still it feels like because it's a very broad term like I go to some Sichuan restaurants with very spicy food that kind of thing but that's not my home food my region is very southern and originally it didn't take much spicy food in their repertoire, but that's kind of changing, it's just whatever is popular it kind of resembles my past experience and just simplifies the term it's like, um, it's like Mandarin is the lingua franca of China and Sichuan food or Chinese food here is the food franca for all Asian-looking people, or whatever you call it. (citation).

*5.3 The Concept of 'Polyhedron of Intelligibility' and the Multifaceted Nature of Spiritual Integration*

Foucault's idea of a polyhedron—a structure with multiple, interconnected facets—mirrors the multifaceted nature of spiritual integration among migrants. Foucault's 'polyhedron of intelligibility' emphasizes the complexity and multiplicity of individual identities shaped by various social, cultural, and political forces. In the context of migrant integration, this concept can be directly related to the spiritual identities of migrants, which are not monolithic but consist of multiple dimensions—religious practices, cultural rituals, moral values, and personal beliefs. The article discusses how migrants in Lisbon engage in a range of spiritual practices that include traditional religious ceremonies, personal devotional activities, and participation in community-based spiritual events.

These practices represent the different "faces" of their spiritual identity, each contributing to their overall sense of self and belonging in a new environment. The 'polyhedron of intelligibility' can also be applied to understand how spiritual practices create and sustain social networks among migrants. Each facet of the polyhedron can be seen as a different aspect of these networks—family, community, religious institutions, and social groups—that are interconnected through shared spiritual activities.

The polyhedron also represents the idea of resistance against being reduced to a singular, homogenized identity. Migrants often use their spiritual practices as a form of resistance against the pressures of assimilation that could lead to the loss of their cultural and spiritual identities. The article shows that spiritual practices help migrants maintain their distinct cultural identities while also integrating into the broader social fabric of Lisbon. By engaging in these practices, migrants assert their uniqueness and resist the potential erasure of their cultural heritage, a process that Foucault would describe as resisting the power dynamics that seek to subject them to a singular identity.

Foucault's concept can be extended to the physical and metaphorical spaces where spiritual practices occur. These spaces—whether they are churches, mosques, temples, or community centres—serve as sites where different facets of migrants' identities and experiences intersect. The article discusses how these spiritual spaces in Lisbon not only provide a place for worship but also act as communal hubs where migrants can connect with others who share their cultural and spiritual backgrounds. These spaces become polyhedral in nature, as they support multiple layers of meaning and function, from religious observance to social support, contributing to the overall integration process.

Finally, the 'polyhedron of intelligibility' aligns with the evolving nature of migrant subjectivities, where spiritual integration is not a static process but one that involves continuous negotiation and redefinition of identity. The article illustrates how migrants in Lisbon adapt their spiritual practices in response to their new environment, blending their traditional customs with new influences encountered in the host society. This ongoing adaptation reflects the dynamic nature of the polyhedron, where each new experience adds another facet to the migrants' identity, enriching their integration journey

## 6. Conclusion

Through this exploration, it becomes evident that the integration of migrants into new societies is a multifaceted process, one that cannot be fully understood through aspects such as employment, education, and social inclusion alone. The spiritual dimension, often overlooked in mainstream integration discourses, emerges as a significant factor in how migrants navigate in their new environments.

Despite the differences in integrating into a specific community or into the  Common Home as a whole, both perspectives explore how spiritualities can emerge as forms of resistance. Resistance is not an action of moving against integration but a multifaceted 'polyhedron of intelligibility' that assimilates some elements while keeping others untouched. For a 'subjectivaiton' where the identity can still remain solid, integration is not a singular process. The spiritual aspects reported by the research project participants shed light on how different actions of acceptance, non-acceptance, learning, sharing, and even teaching are part of one's integration experience.

Spirituality includes many disciplines and life choices, and the migrants interpret the concept of spiritual integration in a multifaced polyhedron manner. The migrant population's organic way of creating strong ties to their homes, traditions, cultures, sports and culinary practices allows them to resist the cultural pressures to fully assimilate. By preserving their spiritual traditions, they assert their identities and resist the forces of subjection that seek to impose a new, singular identity upon them while they build a spatial sense of belonging, not just to a new physical space but to new spaces of shared practices. At the same time, by engaging in spiritual practices, they undergo 'subjectivation,' where they reconcile their cultural heritage with their new social reality, creating a hybrid identity that reflects both continuity and change.

From the different elements of the 'apparatus,' administrative challenges are the most significant obstacles faced by the interview project participants. Securing legal residency documents and accessing social services proved to be particularly difficult. However, cultural and spiritual aspects of integration were praised for their positive impact. As the article discusses, spirituality serves as a

form of peaceful resistance. Through shared spiritual practices, spirituality also acts as a means to resist the resurgence of pre-democratic practices of oppression.

Moreover, the research project underscores the importance of viewing integration as a dynamic process in which both migrants and host societies undergo transformation. In Lisbon, the interaction between migrants and the local population, facilitated by shared spiritual practices, contributes to the creation of a multicultural network. This not only benefits the migrants but also enhances the cultural vibrancy and cohesion of the local community.

In conclusion, the insights gained from this study of spiritual integration in Lisbon have broader implications for other urban settings around the world. As cities continue to become more culturally diverse, the role of spirituality in the integration process should be recognized and supported. By embracing the spiritual dimensions of migration, policymakers and communities can foster more inclusive environments in our increasingly globalized world. Of course, it is important to note that each country has a different history, culture, and religious and spiritual practices. Portugal has been predominantly Christian since 1139. Other religions are also present in small percentages, like Islam, Hinduism, and Shikism, and there are migrant Muslim, Nepalese, and Indian communities. In 2023, the country scored 4 out of 4 for religious freedom; this means that people are free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief publicly and privately (Freedom House, 2023). This religious freedom is also highlighted in the interview answers, frequently stating that religious practices are less strict here and that there is openness to discovering new practices. In Portugal, many existing communities originate from historical migrant flows or the ex-colonial legacy, and governmental policies allow religious gatherings and traditional celebrations of different people. This example of a cosmopolitan European capital with a long migration history can be interesting to compare with other cosmopolitan contemporary places and cities based on how spirituality - in its free interpretation - plays a role in the migrants' integration experience.

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