

**Title** Space narratives, geographical imaginaries and destination cosmologies: from 17th century Portuguese Jesuits in Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet to 21st century Nepali migrants in Europe

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**Abstract**  
(250 words) To address space as a narrative process (Lotman, 2005), we need to inquire on the multiple ways how the meaning of spaces evolves through time, experience and across cultures. What cognitive structures, references and memories shape our construction of meaning about places? In this study, I depart from a description of Iberian colonial legacies and 17th century European spatial narratives regarding Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet and India (Gettelman, 1982), to compare them with postcolonial spatial narratives by 21st century Nepali migrants in Europe (Samaddar, 2020; Neubauer, 2023). I articulate these recent migratory flows with postcolonial heritages and the “coloniality of power” (Quijano, 2000) in our modern, capitalist world-system, to examine the particular space representations of European destination countries by the migrants themselves. This is a qualitative and interpretative research, combining data from 30 semi-structured interviews with Nepali female migrants in Portugal and 30 other semi-structured interviews with Nepali male and female migrants in Spain and Portugal – together with participant observation, the field diary and the ethnographic method. In order to compare and draw parallelisms between different spatial narratives through time, space and across cultures and religions, I will analyze and give examples of the concepts of “geographical imaginaries” (Driver, 2014; Thompson, 2017; Zanker and Hennessey, 2021), “destination cosmologies” (Belloni, 2020), and “spatial imaginary spillover” (Neubauer, 2023). I will conclude with the implications of such findings and questions about the spatial narratives that we want for the future.

**Key words** Space narratives; Geographical imaginaries; Destination cosmologies; Spatial imaginary spillover

**Biographical Note**  
(100 words) Alexandra Pereira is a post-doctoral researcher in sociology of migration (IHD Program – UCP). Her project focused on the forms of discrimination and inequalities faced by 1st and 2nd generation Nepali female migrants in Portugal. She has a PhD in Sociology (LisbonU), with previous training in

Clinical Psychology (CoimbraU). She has been publishing about South Asian and Nepali migrants in Portugal since 2016. She has previously collaborated with migrant associations in Finland, the United Kingdom and Portugal. She was a research assistant for ISCTE-IUL, Lisbon. She is a member of IMISCOE's Migration Research Hub.

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