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# Spiritual Integration of Migrants: A Lisbon Case Study Within the Common Home Agenda and Polyhedron of Intelligibility Framework

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**Abstract:** Migration is a multidimensional process that reshapes identities and communities. This article adopts a polyhedral framework inspired by Pope Francis's *Laudato si'* and Michel Foucault's concepts of "subjectivation" and the "polyhedron of intelligibility". Both emphasize spirituality as a transformative force in individuals' lives and a concept that connects philosophy and theology to support resilience among migrant populations. Using Portugal as a case study, the research examines migration's historical and contextual landscape and its discursive framework. Through a Lisbon-based research project of interviews with migrants, the study explores the concept of spiritual integration by presenting how spirituality functions to preserve cultural identity while facilitating integration without full assimilation into the host community. Spirituality includes many rules and choices regarding ways of life; therefore, the interview projects' migrants interpret the concept of spiritual integration in a subjective and 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 subjection, while learning the host society's customs and rituals helps them to fit in. The findings show that spirituality serves as an integrational tool, a coping mechanism, and a form of resistance, providing a space for migrants to address and overcome challenges. The article emphasizes the importance of integration policies to create a "safe place" of inclusivity within host communities.

**Keywords:** common home agenda; migration; integration; Lisbon; spirituality; polyhedron; subjectivation; Michel Foucault



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## 1. Introduction

This article aims to answer whether spirituality is a helpful tool for understanding migration-related issues, such as integration into a new home country. Do migrants experience spirituality as an important resource for building resilience? How can spirituality be analyzed as a practice of subjectivation and resistance in the face of governmental regulations in migrant lives?

The article explores these questions in the context of Portugal, examining migrants' spiritual practices through the lens of Pope Francis's "common home" agenda and his

approach to the polyhedron perspective, particularly the spirituality of fraternity, for which migration is an important issue. This paper also uses Michel Foucault's concept of spirituality as self-care, which is linked to the notion of the polyhedron of intelligibility. The authors argue that spirituality, beyond its religious connotations, functions as a tool for ethical self-formation and as a form of resistance to subjectivation by state policies.

Using qualitative interviews with migrants in Lisbon as examples, the article investigates how spiritual practices create alternative spaces for migrants to maintain their identity while helping with their integration. The authors propose a framework in which spirituality operates both as a personal resource and as a political strategy of integration, aligning with Pope Francis's vision of reconciled diversity and Foucault's genealogy of ethics.

Migration, as a worldwide phenomenon, involves more than just the physical movement of individuals across borders; it is a multidimensional process that affects not only the individual's identity but also the culture and social environment in which the migrant lives. In this way, successful integration is a two-way street that requires the immigrant to make an active effort to adapt, contribute, and build ties with the host country's culture and community, which in turn also needs to adapt so that the inevitable cultural clashes do not escalate into mutual hostility, but rather find strategies for intercultural coexistence. On the one hand, there is a transformation of society and culture as a result of a large flow of migrants. On the other hand, there is a transformation of the individual as they adapt to the host environment. This mutual transformation process must be seen as a safe environment for both sides.

Portugal has been facing significant demographic challenges, such as an aging population and low birth rates, which directly impact economic growth and the sustainability of social systems. Currently, there are 188.1 elderly people for every 100 young people, with almost a quarter of the population over 65, making Portugal one of the oldest countries in the world (Instituto Nacional de Estatística [INE] 2024). Immigration has a crucial role to play in helping these challenges. Studies suggest that Portugal will need around 138,000 new immigrants per year to achieve economic growth of 3 percent and be among the richest countries in the European Union by 2033 (Diário de Notícias [DN] 2024). In addition, sectors such as construction are facing a labor shortage estimated at 80,000 workers, endangering infrastructure and development projects (Eco News 2024). Immigration not only contributes to demographic balance but also supports the economy by filling gaps in the labor market. Academic studies show that Portugal has faced historical challenges in formulating effective integration policies, especially in reconciling immigrants' economic and social needs. The data provided demonstrate that immigration significantly impacts depopulated areas' social and economic regeneration, particularly in rural regions. The arrival of new residents helps sustain local services and promotes regional development. For instance, the increased presence of immigrants in Portugal's labor market, especially in sectors such as agriculture, construction, and accommodation, has been vital for addressing labor shortages in more rural areas (Observatório das Migrações 2020, pp. 169–73, 177–80). Immigrants also contribute to entrepreneurship and the revitalization of local communities, with rising self-employment rates and strengthening local economies (Observatório das Migrações 2020, pp. 169–94). Furthermore, their integration supports reversing depopulation and aging trends in rural regions (Observatório das Migrações 2020, pp. 167–69, 190–94). However, immigrants do not only fill economic and demographic gaps; they also enrich society with their diversity and contribute to a more sustainable future on both a personal and a collective level. Therefore, migration should be seen as a strategic opportunity, not as a problem.

On the one hand, for the process to be safe, the host culture needs to adopt an open, empathetic, and inclusive approach, recognizing the migrant not just as a "stranger"

but also as an integral part of society. This involves not only government policy but also behavior changes of the wider community to create a welcoming environment for integration. Ensuring equal rights by simplifying bureaucratic procedures and guaranteeing fair access to employment, health, education, and housing is essential. Protection against discrimination and providing legal and psychological support for newcomers should be a governmental goal. Finally, the host culture must make room for migrants' cultural and spiritual expressions.

On the other hand, the integration process requires the immigrant to play an active role in adapting to the context of the host country by learning the language, respecting local norms, and building social ties that foster a sense of belonging. Integration does not mean the loss of cultural identity; on the contrary, preserving traditions and values of origin enriches diversity and promotes intercultural dialogue.

When migrants do not learn the local language or avoid engaging with the host culture, they can face social isolation. This can also limit their access to the labor market and limit their access to basic services such as health and education. In the long run, the formation of closed migrant communities can reinforce segregation and fuel negative perceptions by the locals, leading to social tensions.

Similarly, when members of the host community do not adapt to welcome migrants, negative consequences affect both sides. Social exclusion and difficulty for immigrants to access basic services can create a hostile environment. In addition, economic sectors that depend on migrant labor can suffer from a labor shortage. Resistance to diversity also prevents the host community from benefiting culturally from the contributions of migrants.

In the best case, the host community and the migrant population are both committed to active integration. In the worst case, where integration is hindered on both sides, disrupted social cohesion can lead to violent events. Episodes of violence can lead to disintegration, as in the case of the emergence of jihadist hotbeds in Western Europe. The Islamic community in Europe represents around 6% of the continent's total population, with projections showing an increase to around 8% by 2030 due to immigration and higher birth rates (Pew Research Center 2015). Within this group, the proportion of individuals involved in jihadist activity is extremely low, estimated at less than 0.1% of the total Muslim population (Roy 2017). This figure reflects the marginalization of jihadism about the vast majority of Muslims, who not only refrain from terrorist activities but also often condemn such acts. Studies conducted in European countries show significant levels of disapproval of extremist organizations such as the Islamic State, highlighting universal disapproval in Muslim-majority countries such as Lebanon (Pew Research Center 2015). Stigmatizing the entire Muslim community based on the actions of an extremist minority not only is unfounded but also undermines efforts of integration (Cesari 2013).

However, the integration or non-integration process occurs both at a macro level, involving structural issues, and at a micro level, affecting the concrete relationships of local communities. This complex phenomenon requires, on the one hand, a polyhedral approach to have the tools to understand the elements of the integration process and to address its obstacles. On the other hand, it is necessary to look closely at the people who lack basic conditions or experience delays in processing their residency or in accessing basic social services. Migrants need to develop resilience to integrate without giving up their cultural roots.

*Laudato Si'* (*Ls*), building on the shared concept of the common home with the 2030 Agenda, points to the need to overcome the previous UN agenda's problem of a lack of integration, namely the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). *Laudato Si'* highlights the need to think about how everything is connected and to foster a broad integrative perspective using the notion of the polyhedral. In both agendas, the *Laudato Si'* Goals (LsG)

and the Sustainable Development Goals (SGD), migration is an important issue because both agendas not only are "green agendas" but also discuss political, social, cultural, and ethical problems. The agendas demand efforts for integrated solutions involving the people directly affected by promoting them as active parts of the solution. It is not a matter of welfarism but rather of collective discernment in managing new solutions and gathering a set of different actors.

In this challenge of "changing the mindset", *Ls* evokes the role of spirituality in migration issues, addressing a spirituality of fraternity by *Fratelli Tutti* (Francis 2020). The encyclicals address different aspects of the common home, but both establish theoretical principles that can be translated into a practical toolbox for solutions.

In Portugal's case, religious communities have historically engaged with the High Commissioner for Migrations through the Inter-religious Dialogue Commission (Alto Comissariado para as Migrações 2024; Agência Ecclesia 2024). However, it is an institutional representation that does not cover the increasing variation in religious diversity, especially the phenomenon of *believing without belonging*. In addition, radical groups are activating an ideological discourse targeting migrants from "other civilizational matrixes". These movements trigger xenophobia as their political strategy (Amado 2024).

The case study was not specifically designed only to understand the spirituality or religious dimensions of migrant integration. The research project's interview questions cover many aspects of integration, such as culture, bureaucracy, housing, and governmentality, and only two questions focus on spiritual integration. However, the answer showed that many participants highlighted the importance of spirituality in their integration experience. This led the authors to focus on this aspect in this article to strengthen the theoretical framework with numerous real-life examples. The spiritual integration of migrants not only demands traditional theoretical tools of religious analysis but also intersects with how religious and political issues are being handled to target migration issues.

This article aims to expand the polyhedral perspective of Pope Francis in dialogue with the political discursive analysis of Michel Foucault about the polyhedral of intelligibility. The French philosopher's conceptual analysis has been used in both migration and religious studies separately. The paper uniquely intersects these studies through the phenomenon of migration in the Portuguese context. On the one hand, the polyhedral of intelligibility in Foucault demands an understanding of the connection between the discursive context and the genealogies of power. On the other hand, the polyhedral of intelligibility refers to the emergence of ways of resistance, which Foucault named a genealogy of ethics or spirituality. In this way, the polyhedral perspectives of Pope Francis and Foucault converge with their aim of promoting reconciled diversity, seeing spirituality as a common ground in building a peaceful common home with inhabitants of different backgrounds.

*Methodological Framework*

The authors analyze the migrant integration in Lisbon through a polyhedral lens. This approach combines the principles of *Laudato si'* and *Fratelli Tutti* by Pope Francis with Michel Foucault's concepts of *polyhedron of intelligibility* and *subjectivation*. The aim is to develop the notion of *spiritual integration*, demonstrating the relevance of spirituality as a process of personal, cultural, and social transformation. In this perspective, spirituality is understood as a means to foster resilience, enabling migrants to navigate the challenges of the integration process in Lisbon.

The *polyhedron* metaphor, inspired by Foucault and Pope Francis, captures the complex, multifaceted nature of migratory experiences and the diverse regimes of power that influence them. Spirituality functions not only as an internal coping mechanism but also as an ethical and political practice that helps migrants stay resilient while integrating.

The methodological design works in two parts. First is a genealogical analysis of migration policies in Portugal, examining how different regimes of governmentality, ranging from the Salazar regime to contemporary EU policies, have historically shaped the integration of migrants. This part aims to understand the relationship between forms of governmentality and the concept of subjectivity in the context of migration. Second, the qualitative interview project with migrants living in Lisbon focuses on self-care practices as a way of resistance to the subjectivation process.

The interviews are part of a postdoctoral research project, (Re)searching needs and hope through visual storytelling (Koncz 2023–2024) carried out within the Integral Human Development program, associated with the research project Common Home and New Ways of Living Interculturally: Public Theology and Ecology of Culture in Pandemic Times (CITER (Research Centre for Theology and Religious Studies) (2020–2025)), based at Universidade Católica Portuguesa in Lisbon.

## 2. A Polyhedron Approach to Common Home Agenda and the Role of "Spiritual Integration" in the Migration Process

*Laudato Si'* (Praise Be to You), *On Care for Our Common Home*, is Pope Francis's second encyclical. In it, he critiques consumerist society's irresponsible economic growth, which leads to environmental downfall and global warming. *Laudato Si* also addresses the issue of refugees, highlighting how climate change will increase the number of migrants forced to leave their homes because of environmental degradation—the encyclical calls on people to help these environmental refugees (Francis 2015, n. 25).

Following on from *Laudato si'*, and in connection with it, the encyclical *Fratelli* (2020) is also a crucial contribution to understanding the challenges of migration within a wide context. In *Laudato si'*, Pope Francis emphasizes that issues such as the ecological crisis and its multiple causes cannot be addressed from a single perspective. He highlights the need for an interdisciplinary dialogue, including popular knowledge, spiritualities, and cultural heritage of peoples (Francis 2015, n. 63; 110). This approach is further developed in *Fratelli Tutti*, where the Pope recognizes that migration presents "complex challenges" (Francis 2020, n. 129) that require effective public policies and an ethical commitment involving fraternity and solidarity. He argues that even "the most rigorous science" must be integrated into a dialogue that welcomes different perspectives and promotes an integral vision (Francis 2020, n. 165). In both encyclicals, spirituality is a proposed "tool" for integration for a "reconciled diversity" (Francis 2020, n. 230).

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 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).

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 sped

up by granting citizenship without financial or linguistic barriers and legalizing long-term residents (Francis 2017).

Integration is the final step for a migrant to feel at home in their new country. 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 socioeconomic equality in 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 residents' social and economic rights, 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 debated among scholars and policymakers. Within the EU, integration assessments generally focus on four key areas: employment, education, social inclusion, and citizenship. These evaluations rely on data from the EU Labor Force Survey and PISA (OECD 2013). Additionally, some researchers adopt a spatial perspective, exploring "belonging in place" by examining access to essential services like health centers and institutions (Åkerlund and Sandberg 2014). Furthermore, interpersonal connections and social networks—formed through interactions with natives and fellow migrants—play a crucial role in fostering community and inclusion. These relationships are essential for developing a sense of belonging (Esteves and Rauhut 2023).

"Common home" is an expression shared between the UN 2030 Agenda for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG Sustainable Development Goals 2015) and the encyclical letter *Laudato Si'* (*Ls*). One of the important criticisms that have been made of the Global Agendas in the past is the maintenance of an imaginary that does not allow for the visibility of the interconnection of 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. Still, 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" (Francis 2015, n. 5).

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" (Francis 2015, n. 63).

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 recognizing spirituality as a source of resilience. This approach emphasizes the need for a new way of life that cares for both oneself and the environment (Francis 2015, n. 202–3). This new way of life is not confined to religious practices but is deeply connected to spirituality in a holistic way (Deane-Drummond [2008] 2016).

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, form a 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" (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 in natural disasters (Francis 2015, n. 25), in such a way that "to guarantee the protection of the environment" it demands to "regulate migration" (Francis 2015, n. 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" (International Organization for Migration 2022) for both migrants and local communities through significant benefits in the form of transferring skills, enhancing the workforce, fostering investments, and enriching cultural diversity.

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. Unlike a sphere that homogenizes all the parts, the polyhedron maintains the integrity and uniqueness of each cultural, social, and individual facet. This initial perspective of his pontificate fits perfectly with his proposal for a Synod, understood as a listening and inclusive dialogue involving the whole community in defining problems and making decisions (General Secretariat of the Synod 2021–2024). Otherwise, before Pope Francis, 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 a way that a one-dimensional view cannot capture: "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 are 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 analyzes the relationship between knowledge, power, and ethics. Foucault thinks of spirituality as a form of resistance against too much power, and a ground to create new knowledge and 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 societal elements 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.

This paper proposes using 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 focusing on the experiences of migrants in Lisbon to understand what spiritual spaces for integration mean for them.

The concept of a "polyhedron of intelligibility" can also be applied to the fact that spirituality and politics intersect in the reality of migrant integration. 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 intersecting with common engagement as a mode of political spirituality. This convergence becomes particularly relevant in integrating religious traditions within the framework of Agenda 2030. Spirituality here goes beyond a purely religious aspect and emerges as a shared experience encompassing choices regarding ways of life and different forms of commitments in a cooperative way, influencing not only personal life but also cultural, social, political, economic, and linguistic spheres. Spirituality can be connected with the multiple efforts to change the indifference against migrants to a positive view of partnerships in the common call to everyone to become sustainable development agents. 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.

### *2.1. The Concept of Spirituality and the "Spiritual Integration" in the Migration Process*

Spirituality, derived from the Latin word "spiritus", meaning breath, relates to how individuals seek and find meaning and purpose in their lives. However, the Greek concept of pneuma, as used by Hippocrates of Cos, in a different way to Plato, involves experiencing connections with the present moment, with oneself, with others, with nature, and with what one considers sacred or transcendent, but correlated with the health of the whole. Or, in contemporary terms, spiritual health would mean integral health (Villas Boas and Lamelas 2022). Rediscovering this dimension can be important for thinking about spirituality, from its personal care dimension to political spirituality, which involves a commitment to an agenda (Villas Boas et al. 2023).

*Fratelli Tutti* articulates a "spirituality of fraternity" (Francis 2020, n. 165) that combines the social meaning of existence, the inalienable dignity of each person, and the call to care for and welcome everyone (Francis 2020, n. 86). This vision extends spirituality beyond religious practices. It makes it an element of social and relational transformation. Inspired by St. Francis of Assisi, who listened to the voice of God, the poor, the sick, and nature, and made this listening a way of life (Francis 2020, n. 48), this fraternal spirituality is in deep dialogue with Michel Foucault's concept of spirituality. For Foucault, spirituality is a process of self-formation that goes beyond simple self-knowledge and requires a constant transformation of the subject with itself and others. By associating spirituality with resistance to forms of subjection, Foucault finds a connection with the pope's proposal of a life transformed by relationships with others and the world. Both emphasize the ethical and practical dimension of spirituality: While Foucault sees it as a way of challenging the impositions of power and building new subjectivities, Francis presents it as a bond that unites all people in fraternity, inviting them to live with compassion and mutual care. In this way, *Fratelli Tutti* complements Foucault's philosophical approach by working with spirituality as a social coexistence and solidarity, proposing an integration in which the spiritual manifests in concrete acts of welcoming and listening.

Michel Foucault defines spirituality as a process of personal transformation that enables the subject to access truth. Foucault emphasizes that spirituality requires ethical work and self-transformation. Spirituality establishes a particular relationship between truth and subjectivity: "There can be no truth without conversion or transformation of the subject" (Foucault [2001] 2005, p. 15). "Spirituality", he says, "postulates that the truth is never given to the subject by right . . . [or] by a simple act of knowledge . . . that for the subject to have the right of access to the truth he must be changed, transformed, shifted, and become . . . other than himself" (Foucault [2001] 2005, p. 15). Drawing from Greco-Roman

classical thought, Foucault links spirituality to the care of the self (epimeleia heautou), emphasizing practices such as meditation, self-examination, and mindfulness for the sake of continuous transformation. Unlike the mere "knowledge of the self" (gnôthi seautón), care of the self requires ethical effort to embody truth (Foucault [2001] 2005, p. 462). In the political context, Foucault views spirituality as a catalyst for resistance and change. Reflecting on the Iranian revolt, he argues that spirituality functions as a "collective will", challenging oppressive regimes (Foucault 1980, p. 212–13).

In general, spirituality is a complex and multifaceted concept that lacks a universally agreed-upon definition, often leading to ambivalence in its interpretation (Tanyi 2002). It is an inherent aspect of human existence, characterized by its subjective and diverse nature. While spirituality and religion are sometimes used interchangeably, they are different concepts. Spirituality typically refers to a personal and individual quest for meaning and purpose in life. In contrast, religion is often associated with organized systems of beliefs, rituals, and practices centered on a higher power. Although spirituality can overlap with religion for many individuals, it can also exist independently, as seen in the experiences of atheists or yoga practitioners (Tanyi 2002). In light of this, this article adopts a broader understanding of spirituality, positioning it as an umbrella term encompassing personal and non-religious practices and organized religious traditions. In line with this broader conceptualization, the article includes Catholic, Muslim, and Buddhist practices without differentiation, emphasizing spirituality as a universal and inclusive phenomenon. By doing so, we recognize that diverse religious traditions, while distinct in their doctrines and rituals, share commonalities in their spiritual dimensions. The article works with a holistic understanding of spiritual experiences across cultures and beliefs.

### *2.2. Subjection and Subjectivation as an Effect of Integration*

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 subjection in their new country (cf. Arendt 2013, pp. 5–16). Even in less extreme cases, 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, under hospitality often lies inequality, where the migrant is expected to show gratitude, reinforcing a power imbalance (Boudou 2017, pp. 177–78).

Foucault associates "subjection" ("assujettissement") with "individualization". This 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 1994, p. 212). It is a form of power that makes the individual a subject, 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 1994, p. 212).

In the lesson of 22 February 1978 of the course Sécurité, Territoire, Population, Foucault pointed 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 [2004] 2007, p. 239). In his 1978 lesson, he raises a crucial question: "How can one be a subject without being subjected?".

The answer to this question would not be possible without the introduction of the concept of governmentality. It is through the development of this concept that Foucault arrives at the processes of subjectivation. In 1978, he developed a genealogy of governmentality in the West by analyzing the emergence of pastoral power in monastic life and later in Christian life. In this context, governmentality refers to how the behavior of individuals is directed and how they accept this guidance or resist it through practices of counter-conduct. This immanence between power and resistance, or between attempts at guidance and counter-conduct, is particularly evident in the tensions between obedience and asceticism.

In the context of medieval monasticism, accepting pastoral power means accepting obedience not as a single act but as a state of life. This obedient state of life requires the rejection of one's own will to conform to the will of God. However, Foucault argues that the strength of pastoral power is measured by the resistance it generates around and against it. Paradoxically, asceticism stands out as a remarkable form of resistance to this model of obedience (Foucault [2004] 2007, p. 200). Through obedience to another, asceticism develops a relationship of the self with itself, aimed at transforming the subject or spirituality. As Foucault notes, asceticism is fundamentally "an exercise of the self on the self, a kind of hand-to-hand combat that the individual imposes on themselves, in which the authority of another, the presence of another, or the gaze of another is, if not impossible, at least unnecessary" (Foucault [2004] 2007, p. 272). Through the difficulty and suffering experienced by the ascetic in progressing from one stage to another of spiritual elevation, they recognize their own limits, and, in doing so, they become the "guide of their own asceticism" in overcoming these limits. In this sense, by reaffirming the immanence between power and resistance, between governmentality and counter-conduct, Foucault arrives at the processes of subjectivation—in other words, at the exercise of the self on the self.

The processes of subjectivation that Foucault focuses on in the 1980s aim to find another way of constituting the subject. It is a question of resisting "subjection to" by means of the "relation of the self with itself"—in other words, using a certain number of techniques that allow the individual to constitute himself as a subject (Foucault 2024). In essence, subjectivation is about maintaining a dynamic relationship with oneself rather than sticking to rigid, pre-determined identities. This approach can help resist objectification and exclusion 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 2001). 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. A migrant is usually objectified in a relationship in which he is "subject to", in the sense that his or her "self" is uprooted from any belonging (Cf. Djigo 2019).

Foucault's thoughts on both 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 can still 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. Portugal's Migration Landscape

This section offers a genealogical analysis of the Portuguese migration apparatus, tracing how discourses of national and religious identity and economic necessity have shaped opinions about migrants over time. Following Foucault's method, we explore the shifts in power relations from the Salazar regime to contemporary EU migration policies, identifying how these regimes have limited or enabled migrants' practices of self-care and resistance. Under the Salazar regime (1933–1974), migration policies were integrated to consolidate a Catholic, nationalist, and colonial identity. In this regime of *governmentality*, migrants and colonial subjects were expected to assimilate and were regulated through strict control by the state. The policies morally surveilled and economically exploited migrants, who were seen as both a resource and a potential threat to national homogeneity.

Millions are starting new lives in our modern world due to economic challenges, opportunities for work or study, and the need to escape political conflicts or environmental issues. In 2022, around 781,000 foreign nationals lived in Portugal, which is 7.4% of the total population (Machado and Lopes 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 stimulated 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 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. The pleasant climate and vibrant cultural scene and the presence of many universities and educational institutions also drive migrants to Portugal (Góis and Marques 2018).

Portugal has implemented progressive immigration policies, particularly after joining the European Union. Portugal's legal framework facilitates migrants' access to residence permits and nationality. Laws such as the Immigration Law (Portugal Act 23/2007 2007) and the Nationality Law (Portugal: Law No. 37/81 2018) have been revised to allow for easier pathways to citizenship, particularly for those with long-term residency. John W. Berry, the Canadian psychologist known for his work on the adaptation of migrants, suggests that integration involves the coexistence of preserving cultural heritage and active participation in the host society (Berry 1997). Portugal's policies, such as those supporting cultural events and religious freedom, promote this dual process.

This article's authors chose to focus on Portugal because it has had migrant flows arriving for a long time due to its colonial legacy. In theory, Portugal has "easy" migration laws compared to other European countries (High Commission for Migration 2022); however, practical implementations face difficulties. The great migrant flows affected the system, and SEF, the immigration and border service, collapsed recently. A new entity (AIMA) is trying to work on a huge backlog of unprocessed residency requests from migrants from different countries (Nascimento and Zósimo 2024).

In the international context, among others, Kogan et al. (2019) and Vishkin and Bloom (2022) highlighted the role of religion in integration, arguing that religious affiliation and practices can serve both as a source of community support and as a barrier to integration

depending on the interrelation of specific practices and the host society. In the Portuguese realm, Trovão (2017) and Tiesler (2011) examined different aspects of the role of religion in migrants' integration from Muslim countries into Portugal. They both highlighted that religious practices not only help with belonging to a community but also can support building a certain kind of resistance towards some aspects of citizenship.

### *3.1. 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", a heterogeneous network of elements 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, and architectural practices (Foucault 1980)—have evolved in the context of migration since Portugal's democratic transition.

This brief analysis of the "apparatus" in Portugal is not only intended to explain the historical and political background of the host country. Rather, it helps to reveal how spirituality functions as a form of resistance within the framework of power. According to Foucault, the genealogy of power, the mechanisms through which power is established and maintained, is analyzed through the concept of the "apparatus". The polyhedron of intelligibility provides a way to understand how the "apparatus" operates because it reflects the complex and multifaceted nature of these power structures. If the genealogy of power defines how individuals are shaped and controlled within a society, the genealogy of ethics represents how individuals resist that control. Spirituality, as a form of ethical self-formation, functions as this mode of resistance. Understanding how power is exercised through the "apparatus" allows us to see how spirituality becomes a tool for resisting subjectivation. This is not simply a historical question; it is about how spirituality interacts with and pushes back against the power system.

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 (Eaton and Corkill 1998). Following Portugal's decolonization process, the discourse shifted towards inclusivity and multiculturalism, promoting values of diversity and human rights (Pereira and Azevedo 2019). In line with this shift, institutions 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, except 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-Pereira 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 and Pinto 2015). In contrast, contemporary academic discourse has shifted towards critical studies of race, migration, and multiculturalism, focusing on liberal, socialist, and humanist ideas (Castelo 1999). Similarly, philanthropic

actions during the Salazar era aimed to " civilize" or assist migrants, reinforcing the colonial mindset (Eaton and Corkill 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-Pereira 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 this time, they may lack access to essential services, legal employment, or social benefits, and in some cases, this social uncertainty can even lead to deportation (Malheiros and Peixoto 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 migrants, reflects both significant changes since the Salazar era and 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 values, the recent rise of a right-nationalist movement reflects the old exclusionary and xenophobic attitudes (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 then, while there was a general lack of control over the "informal" housing market (Malheiros 1998). Lands without building permits were sold at very low prices, and an illegal real estate market emerged, parallel to the legal one (Salgueiro 1972, p. 37). Informal housing was transferred from rural migrants to new arrivals from Africa, spreading to Lisbon's northern outskirts. The state itself boosted informal construction by organizing small plots of land where poor families could build "shacks", paying low monthly rent. Meanwhile, the state favored real estate companies and large contractors to build housing units in the most valuable urban areas (Santos 2014). The current housing crisis in Lisbon, 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. Some elements of the "apparatus" in the contemporary Portuguese context, such as administrative measures, moral norms, and architectural forms, constitute a national political identity that excludes migrants.

### *3.2. (Re)Searching Needs and Hope Through Visual Storytelling*

This article works with the post-doctoral research project, (Re)Searching Needs and Hope through Visual Storytelling (Koncz 2023–2024). The project focuses on how 40 migrants from 36 different countries and backgrounds integrate into Lisbon, Portugal. The interviews are from the UK, the 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. One of them is a second-generation migrant, and one is a returnee (who both consider themselves in the process of integration), and the rest of the participants are first-generation migrants. One of the article's authors created

the project and interviewed the participants individually. The same questions were asked of migrants with different socio-cultural backgrounds. The questions can offer a starting point for understanding the experiences and perspectives of migrants. They can help to understand what has helped or compromised their integration into their new home.

The research project asks migrants the same 19 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). They are from a versatile group, between 25 and 55 years of age, with 15 men and 25 women. Most of them are remote workers or work at local companies; some created their own businesses; some are PhD students, educators, or refugees.

The questions of the project, (Re)Searching Needs and Hope through Visual Storytelling (Koncz 2023–2024), 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 the migrants describe about their integration experience and does not work with quantifiable data about the migrants' backgrounds. These real-life stories and statements stand here not as scientific proof but as examples to enrich the theoretical discussion on integration. The project aimed to have participants elaborate on their subjective narrative of living in another country, away from their origins. This qualitative research works with interviews conducted as a sample of convenience; the project explores self-narrated life stories. Educational biographies provide a way to learn from personal narratives, offering an alternative form of education through anecdotes (Dominicé 2000). Besides the educational field, the biographical approach is used in the context of multiculturalism and migration (Keating and Solovova 2011). This qualitative interview project aimed to give a face and voice to individual migrants in contemporary Lisbon to look for personal narratives behind the statistics.

In this article, we focus on the spiritual and religious aspects of the integration stories. Besides building social and cultural connections, spiritual connections can be critical to successful integration, as they 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 project's responses, social gatherings and cultural associations are the most effective in supporting integration. Many participants mentioned 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 (Koncz 2024o). 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 on a very different scale, which hints at a possibility of partial integration (Koncz 2024o). This finding is also aligned with the previous examination of how different elements of the "apparatus" evolved differently in the context of Portuguese migration.

As mentioned before, the questions of the interview project focused on the participants' journey to Portugal, professional background, housing, health care issues, family ties, language learning, and social and cultural activities, and three questions included the religious and spiritual aspects of their integration: In your opinion, what are the most significant differences between your home country and Portugal, for example, in lifestyle, culture, religious, social, and political aspects? What are the most important cultural, social, and religious events and activities in your daily life, and how did they change in your new country? Are there any cultural practices or traditions you keep practicing here, and how? Do you feel that your religious or spiritual practices help your integration? The participants were given the liberty to answer the questions based on their own understanding of what religion and spirituality mean to them and interpret the questions in a subjective way. (The complete list of questions can be found in the Appendix A).

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

Several participants, including the Armenian, Scottish, Kazakh, Palestinian, Polish, Colombian, Russian, Chinese, Singaporean, Slovenian, Uzbeki British, German, Brazilian, and one of the Indian and one of the Nepalese interviewees; two Americans; and two participants from mixed cultural backgrounds, indicated that they do not actively practice a particular religion. Yet, one of the Capo Verdian participants stated:

> I believe in many different aspects of 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 know, 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. (Koncz 2024i, 08:07–08:45)

The UK participant said that although he does not do any spiritual practice, he belongs to a more spiritual friendship circle here in Portugal than back in the UK:

> I don't really have any (spiritual practice), but I think people here are more spiritual. It's not forced upon anyone, you don't have to be spiritual, but they are very much interested in astrology and zodiac and nature, much more you. It might just be my friendship circles, I'm not sure, but it is a way to bond with people, I guess, if you understand it a little bit and talk about it. (Koncz 2024e, 08:19–08:54)

The Ukrainian, the Kenyan, and the Colombian 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. (Koncz 2024d, 07:10–07:54)

The Kenyan participant said:

> 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. (Koncz 2024j, 09:23–10:03)

The Turkish participant had a similar observation on religion in a general sense:

> So it's more like religiously, I feel like it's more free here, more secular. And even our people are practicing their religion, it doesn't affect other people. I don't feel the pressure of religion on people here. (Koncz 2024a, 02:30–02:44)

One of the Indian interviewee referred to the relief of getting away from their home allowing him to question his understanding of religion and understand his own belief system:

> Okay, I'm not a religious person but the place I come from is aligned towards it if I would say it respectfully that way which is great. I think what changed for example every day I would go to temple in India or at least every alternate day if I'm not there is in terms of well go to temple which I'm happy to really. That doesn't happen here. With all due respect, there is a level of relief, because it's helping me question the value system, the belief system. Because is it really going to temple or is it having faith? And what does faith really mean? Because from the reliefs context, you say God is everywhere. So do we really have to go to temple? temple. But now that's the thing, this is where, what changed, this is the belief factor which shifted, because now I'm not looking at temple as a religious source or medium, I'm trying to understand what is the possible science behind it, right? Because they do say, where in India, when temples are placed in a particular location, they are placed based on the magnetive vibes, which do resonate with the human interferences. So is it that? How I felt it? Have I not? Should I be aware of it? So I think there's been a lot of questioning that's happened here compared to following a particular stream of path back home. And just to be very clear, India is really a rock country in terms of experience one can go through. This is my experience because I know a lot of them who have also achieved so much more by being there. So when I say this, I want to be very clear that I do not mean to demean India or anything like this it's just a whole new experience wherein I was streamed like I'm a 90s kid if you're a middle-class 90s kid you know how it possibly is being here just gave me the sense of responsibility and freedom and trying to balance it and I'm honestly I'm not the best at it I'm just trying to so that's it. (Koncz 2023a, 17:57–19:49)

The interviewee from Florida highlighted 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. (Koncz 2024m, 16:58–17:05, 17:49–17:58)

The Turkish, 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 housemate, and the Turkish participant became part of a Sangha and developed an interested in Buddhist philosophy and practices since living in Portugal.

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, she fasts Ramadan with me, so I don't have a problem with that. (Koncz 2024f, 17:46–18:32)

### *4.1. Celebrating Religious Traditions from the Old and the New Home Country*

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 local ones, therefore creating a cultural exchange that is an open dialogue, a form of integration. One of the Brazilian participants described how 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. (Koncz 2024k, 11:47–12:16)

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 neighborhood, 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 7000 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. (Koncz 2023b, 13:27–14:47)

One of the Nepalese interviewees focused on the importance of teaching their rituals to the next generation:

> And in terms of here in Portugal, we are organizing some of the ritual events in the collective form, people who are associated. We try to organize ritual functions and where we can get together more people there. And we try to enjoy our cultural practices like singing and dance and the foods. And that kind of thing we can manage ourselves here in Portugal as an immigrant community. Sometimes, we organize it in the halls, and sometimes we organize it in the parks, free space, and sometimes in the smallest, if we are in the very small in groups, so we organize sometimes even in my one home apartment also. That helps me to get together with the people and sometimes refreshments and sometimes it's also nostalgic. Sometimes it also works like we are transferring our knowledge to the next generations because here in Portugal we have some next generations, they are also growing up, so we are trying to introduce our culture to new generations. (Koncz 2024g, 09:28–10:53)

The Afghan interviewee described the difficulties of practicing his own religious and cultural celebrations in his new home country and how it can make him lose part of his identity:

> People from the Middle East or the South Asia, where Central and South Asia, where I come from, like countries, I would say like Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, or the Middle East countries, the Muslim countries, religious practices makes a big portion of our lives. We are very bound to that because we tend to grow up in that type of society. From the very childhood that when you are born, you are part of those religious practices and you gradually grow up with all the stuff that you do every day, and that becomes part of your character, that becomes part of your identity and personality, who you are. And when you lose that part of your life, it makes it really, really difficult for you to understand who you are because you are missing a big part of your characteristic, a big part of your identity, because you are not able to do that, or maybe the facilities are not available to do that. The environment is not aware of those type of religious practices. For example, we have three big days of the religious, we call it Eid and the days of Ramadan, I'm sure you already know that, that we fast for one month, and after that we have Eid and then we have another Eid, and these type of practices, it's not available here. We do it at home because we don't have a lot of religious centers here, which of course I'm not complaining that why we don't have it. It's totally normal, but we miss those type of stuff. It's our identity, it's part of our culture part of who we are, and when somebody takes out, takes away the part of you. . . You gradually lose your identity, and then you become confused in your life because you are missing a big portion of your life. So it's difficult for us especially for me. I'm trying to adapt but for my family especially for my wife and my kids, they miss a big portion of their life. But we are trying together, and we are hopeful for the future. (Koncz 2024c, 23:48–25:45)

The Algerian participant noted the opposite; according to him, there is no big difference in practicing his religion in his new home or his old home country:

> Actually not a big difference, like social life and religion, I have like a mosque nearby so like I almost go to prayers daily, like the night prayers after work and Friday prayers, so I go for the lunch time, I take myself like half an hour for this Friday prayer. So yeah, so it's not a big difference. And there's like many small mosques like everywhere here, especially in central Lisbon. So it's not an issue for me. Actually, it's one of the reasons I chose this accommodation because it's close to the mosque. (Koncz 2024n, 05:05–05:43)

Celebrating local 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 Santos Populares, a prominent street celebration dedicated to local Catholic saints.

### *4.2. 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. The Kazakh interviewee highlighted that she is not religious but that she likes to go to churches to admire their architecture.

One of the participants from the US referred to doing meditation and going to the gym and the park as his "daily rituals", and the Madagascarian woman said, "*Not really, not my belonging to a religious community, but totally belonging to a sports team and to the queer community*" (Koncz 2024l, 25:29–25:36).

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 prayer circles, and women's circles. (Koncz 2024h, 14:48–15:29)

The Indian interviewee from Bangalore 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. (Koncz 2023a, 25:36–27:04, 27:20–27:24, 27:36–27:52)

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. (Koncz 2024b, 09:28–11:50)

### *4.3. Connection Between the Theoretical Framework and the Empirical Research Project*

The polyhedron of intelligibility is analogous to the multiplicity of migrant identities. Foucault's polyhedron represents a structure where different facets of identity coexist. Migrants' identities are multifaceted, and their spiritual integration means balancing personal traditions with new cultural influences. The concept of the polyhedron is reflected in the interviewees' ability to maintain distinct spiritual identities while participating in Lisbon's broader cultural life. The Bangladeshi participant, for example, described how celebrating Eid with thousands of other Muslims in Martim Moniz allowed him to preserve his religious identity while forming social bonds with people from diverse backgrounds. This act represents the polyhedron in practice: different cultural and religious identities coexist in a shared social space without losing their individual trades. Similarly, the Brazilian participant's participation in Carnival represents how migrants bring their cultural heritage to the host society. Carnival functions as a shared cultural and spiritual celebration of the host society and the migrant communities. This reflects Foucault's idea that different facets of identity can intersect within a larger whole without erasing the singular.

Subjectivation and care of the self are connected to reinterpreting migrants' spiritual identity. Foucault's concept of care of the self refers to practices where individuals go through spiritual and ethical self-transformation. Migrants' adaptation to new spiritual and cultural settings reflects this process. The Indian participant questions his previous religious habits, which shifted from attending temples daily to reflecting on the nature of faith itself. This change demonstrates Foucault's notion of care of the self. The Indian interviewee engages in the process of subjectivation; he reshapes his spiritual identity through self-reflection. The Ukrainian participant's discovery of a less rigid form of Catholicism in Lisbon similarly reflects this process. In Ukraine, strict religious practices with formal rules left little room for personal interpretation. In Lisbon, attending mass without these restrictions allowed her to reconnect with her faith on her own terms. This example also represents a form of care of the self through reinterpretation. The Pakistani interviewee's sense of spirituality as a connection to family and cultural values also reflects the idea of care of the self. She maintains religious ties to her homeland while adjusting to the Portuguese context; in this way, she engages in a hybrid spiritual identity, including processes of both adaptation and preservation.

Spiritual practices of migrants are a form of cultural resistance. Foucault sees resistance as the ability to push back against the pressures of homogenization and control. Migrants' preservation of religious and cultural practices in spite of the pressure to assimilate reflects this kind of resistance. The Afghan participant's difficulty in practicing religious traditions in Lisbon illustrates resistance through preservation. He noted that the lack of mosques and public recognition of Islamic holidays makes it difficult to maintain his religious identity.

However, his efforts to celebrate Eid at home and teach his children Islamic values reflect a form of spiritual resistance against cultural erasure. He asserts his religious identity despite the barriers of the system by continuing these practices privately. Similarly, the Nepalese participant's effort to organize ritual gatherings with other Nepalese migrants reflects a form of communal resistance. In a society where their religious practices are not formally recognized, creating a shared spiritual space becomes an act of reclaiming identity and resisting cultural marginalization. This is connected to Foucault's idea that resistance comes from maintaining personal and collective identity within dominant structures.

The concept of governmentality refers to the institutional influence and structural challenges in migrants' lives. Foucault's notion of governmentality is connected to how states and institutions regulate individuals' behavior and integration through structures such as laws and policies. Migrants navigate in these structures both by adaptation and by resistance. The bureaucratic challenges many interviewees face (delays in obtaining residency permits and accessing social services) are representations of the influence of governmentality on their integration. The Algerian participant's decision to live near a mosque for easier access to religious practice demonstrates a strategy of negotiating within structural constraints. The American participant's difficulty in finding a welcoming church community similarly reflects how institutional structures shape the migrant experience. Her story is about seeking spiritual and social belonging, and her eventual success in integrating into a Portuguese-speaking church is very illustrative. It shows how migrants adapt to the structural limitations imposed by the host society.

The common home agenda is connected to migrants' reconciled diversity and fraternity. Pope Francis's notion of a common home emphasizes building a shared community where diversity is not erased but embraced. Successful spiritual integration reflects this reconciled diversity. The Gambian participant's connection with a Christian housemate, where both engage in each other's religious practices, reflects Pope Francis's call for reconciled diversity. The interviewee described how his Christian housemate occasionally joined him in fasting for Ramadan. This is a concrete example of fraternity and mutual respect. The Colombian participant's adoption of sound healing and ecstatic dance as new forms of spiritual practice also shows the idea of reconciled diversity. By blending her cultural heritage with practices learned in Portugal, she embodies Pope Francis's vision of an integrated yet diverse spiritual identity.

Fraternity, care, and spiritual practices can be used as tools for social integration by migrants. Pope Francis's *Fratelli Tutti* highlights the social and ethical dimension of spiritual practices and how they create bonds of fraternity and mutual care. The American participant's experience of finding a welcoming church community highlights how spiritual practices create bonds of fraternity. Sharing meals and participating in religious ceremonies provide her emotional and social support, reflecting Francis's vision of a community rooted in care and mutual belonging. The Indian participant's practice of sharing meals with his housemates similarly demonstrates the principle of fraternity. His belief that "a guest is God" represents not only a personal spiritual view but also an ethical value. This communal ethic creates social ties and a sense of home. The Chilean interviewee's participation in local festivals also reflects this dynamic. She engages with local traditions while maintaining her own cultural identity; in this way, she creates a bridge between her heritage and the host society's culture.

## 5. Conclusions

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 consist of multiple dimensions, such as religious practices, cultural rituals, moral values, and personal beliefs. The article discusses how migrants in Lisbon engage in various spiritual practices, including traditional religious ceremonies, personal activities, and participation in community-based spiritual events. These practices represent the different "facets" 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—interconnected through shared spiritual activities.

This article aims to explore how the notions of spirituality in Michel Foucault and Pope Francis complement each other, particularly in the context of the integration of migrants. For Foucault, spirituality is a process of subjectivation that requires a personal and ethical transformation that allows the subject to resist the forms of subjection imposed by the dynamics of power. Francis, for his part, extends this notion by proposing a "spirituality of fraternity" (Francis 2020, n. 165) in which individual transformation is intimately linked to the creation of supportive and inclusive relationships. In *Laudato si'* and *Fratelli Tutti*, Francis positions spirituality as a central element in building the "common home", emphasizing that welcoming and valuing differences not only enriches communities but also makes it possible to overcome oppressive structures that deny the dignity of migrants. Thus, while Foucault analyzes how the subject is constructed in opposition to the forces of homogenization, Francis proposes that this resistance takes place through dialogue, encounters, and spiritual fraternity.

The complementarity between Francis and Foucault therefore lies in the articulation between personal and relational transformation. Francis offers a communitarian and ethical dimension that reinforces the Foucauldian vision of spirituality as a field of resistance. He moves spirituality from an individual space to a collective sphere, where coexistence between migrants and host communities can generate new forms of subjectivity and belonging. For Foucault, spirituality challenges subjection; for Francis, it not only resists but also builds. This theoretical–practical integration suggests that spirituality, as an ethical force, allows migrants to maintain their cultural and spiritual roots, resisting the loss of identity while promoting the creation of bonds and belonging. Together, Foucault and Francis offer an integral model that combines individual resistance and collective fraternity, broadening the understanding of spirituality as a tool for personal and social transformation.

In this way, the polyhedron also represents the idea of resistance against being reduced to a homogenized identity. Migrants often use their spiritual practices as a form of resistance against the pressures of assimilation. The article shows that spiritual practices help migrants maintain their distinct cultural identities while integrating into Lisbon. By engaging in these practices, migrants 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 centers—serve as sites where different facets of migrants' identities intersect. The article discusses how these spaces in Lisbon not only provide a place for spiritual practice but also act as communal spaces where migrants can connect with others. These places become polyhedral in nature, as they support multiple layers of meaning and support the integration process.

Finally, the "polyhedron of intelligibility" aligns with the evolving nature of migrant subjectivation, where spiritual integration is not a static process but involves continuous negotiation 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 from the host society. Despite the differences in integrating into a specific community or 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. The spiritual aspects reported by the research project participants shed light on how different acts of acceptance, non-acceptance, learning, sharing, and even teaching are part of one's integration.

Spirituality and cultural traditions serve as forms of resilience against the pressures of subjectivation, as migrants use them to maintain a connection to their roots while integrating into their new environment. Some migrants of the interview project expressed how Catholicism in Portugal feels less strict compared to in their home country, allowing them more personal freedom in religious practice, which they appreciate, unlike the rigid, daily religious routines imposed in their home country. Other migrants found spiritual liberation by questioning traditional practices, using their new environment to introspect and explore personal beliefs beyond religious structures. Some participants highlighted the peaceful coexistence of different religious practices, pointing out how sharing spiritual spaces with people from diverse backgrounds contributes to integration. Other interviewees subjectively interpreted spiritual practices and felt free to consider a wide range of daily rituals for the purpose of their well-being. Finally, some of the migrants shared the importance of practicing and teaching their own heritage to the next generation and the locals of their new environment. These examples illustrate how spiritual practices function as tools for creating a more inclusive social environment and as means of personal resistance to assimilation, with migrants blending traditional practices with new experiences, forming hybrid identities.

Spirituality includes many disciplines and life choices, and 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 assimilate fully. 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. At the same time, they build a spatial sense of belonging, not just to a new physical space but also to new spaces of shared practices.

In conclusion, the insights gained from this study of spiritual integration in Lisbon have broader implications for other urban settings worldwide. As cities continue to become more culturally diverse, policymakers and communities can foster more inclusive environments by embracing the spiritual dimensions of migration. 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, which frequently state 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 migrants' integration experience.

The theoretical framework of Pope Francis and Michel Foucault manifests in the lived experiences of migrants in Lisbon. The interview findings reflect how migrants' spiritual and cultural practices embody forms of resistance and adaptation. These are key elements of Foucault's notion of subjectivation and Pope Francis's call for reconciled diversity. By preserving cultural and religious identities while engaging with the host society's norms, migrants create a polyhedron of intelligibility, a dynamic process where different facets of identity coexist without erasure. The interview data provide concrete examples of how spirituality functions as both a coping mechanism and a tool for integration.

This paper proposes an understanding of migrant integration through Pope Francis's concept of a common home where everything is interconnected, including spirituality. Using Foucault's polyhedral analysis as a tool, the authors have named their concept spiritual integration because of the importance of spirituality in analyzing the ethical role of migrant resistance in Lisbon. Spirituality is a way to connect the migrants and the host community in the integration process to achieve common dignity living in a common home.

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## Appendix A The Interview Questions of the Referenced Audiovisual Interview Project

- Can you describe your journey to Portugal (when and why did you decide to move here)?
- In your opinion, what are the most significant differences between your home country and Portugal (for example, lifestyle, cultural and religious aspects, social and political aspects)?
- What was your profession in your home country, and what is your profession here?
- What changed in your economic situation by moving here?
- How have you found employment?
- Do you have your family here or in your home country?
- What has changed in your housing situation since living here?

- Have you had any difficulty accessing healthcare or other social services?
- What are the most important cultural, social, and religious events and activities in your daily life, and how did they change in your new country? Are there any cultural practices or traditions that you keep practicing here, and how?
- Do you feel that your religious practices help your integration?
- Are you doing any artistic practice here in Portugal? Does it help in your integration process in any way?
- Can you tell us about specific experiences or interactions that have helped you feel more integrated into the community?
- What are some of the biggest challenges you have faced in Portugal, and what can be done to make it easier for newcomers, in your opinion? Have you had any negative experiences related to your status as a migrant?
- What social resources, if any, have you used to help you with the integration process? For example, have you sought help from local organizations or support groups?
- Have you had any difficulties in learning the language of the new country? How have you overcome those difficulties?
- Have you found opportunities to connect with others from your home country? How important has this been for your integration experience?
- Whom do you recognize as a mediator between the migrant community and the Portuguese community? Why?
- Do you see yourself also as a mediator between the migrant community and the Portuguese community? If yes, why? Please give an example.
- Do you have any other interesting fact or story about your integration to Portugal that you would like to share?

The participants only answered the questions they felt comfortable with and had the liberty to interpret the questions in the way they preferred. In some cases, the questions might have had some slight alterations according to what the participants had already said in the given interviews.

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