

## **Nepali Female Migrants From the First and Second Generations in Portugal: Integration and Discrimination Issues**

### **Summary**

In this study, I will introduce three different questions which arose from my Integral Human Development Postdoc research project's conceptualization and development (all of them are related with themes found under the umbrella of female international migration) and I will focus my attention especially on one of them: how can we define a successful integration and evaluate it by considering specific criteria such as the capabilities of the females, but also by contrasting it with operationalized discrimination experiences, narrated by the Nepali female migrants from the two different generations interviewed? I will then depart from theoretical issues regarding integration (Penninx, 2019), migrations and gender discrimination (Timmerman, Fonseca, Van Praag and Pereira, 2018; Ruysen and Salomone, 2018), together with an analysis of Nepali international female migration (World Bank, 2022; Borelli, 2022; Shrestha, 2022; Chaudary, 2020). I will proceed by introducing my project's research question and by operationalizing the most relevant key concepts involved – such as the main forms of female migrant discrimination (OECD's SIGI Index; Honneth, 1992), the competencies and capabilities of the Nepali female migrants (Nussbaum, 2000, 2014) and what I will consider as descriptors of a successful migrant integration (Pereira, 2022). I will describe in detail the impacts of my project (introducing a model for short and long-term objectives according to Porticus Foundation's intervention procedures for people on the move) and I will conclude by discussing the novelty and future implications of my research project's contributions.

### **Key-Words**

Nepali Female Migrants; Discrimination; Integration; Capabilities

## **1. Introduction**

I intend to provide here a theoretical framework and a series of useful operationalizations for the clarification and execution of my research project with Nepali female migrants: namely by introducing and discussing theoretical issues regarding integration, migrations, gender discrimination and Nepali international female migration, together with my guiding research question and operationalizations of: skills and capacities of the female migrants, forms of female migrant discrimination, and a successful migrant integration.

First of all, I recognize that it is possible to unravel, within the scope of this research project with female migrants from two distinct generations, three different questions: 1) we can define a successful integration and try to evaluate it through specific criteria such as the capacities of women, while also contrasting it with the operationalized experiences of discrimination, or inequalities reported by migrant women from both generations interviewed; 2) we can try to determine what it means to have a feminine identity and a well-resolved identity, knowing that identity construction is played out in ambivalence; 3) we can seek to establish whether or not migrant women are able to accept the normative costs of the host society. Although these questions correspond to different themes articulated under the umbrella of international female migration studies (in this case, we refer specifically to female migrants from South Asia), I will necessarily focus my research on the first question elaborated above. I will then introduce and analyze issues connected with integration, gender discrimination and migrations, and international Nepali female migration. Finally, I will operationalize concepts, define the impact of the project, draw conclusions and implications.

## **2. Integration Matters**

Some authors in the field of migration studies are currently debating the colonial and neoliberal implications of the concept of “integration”, as well as a certain homogenization of society that the use of such expression would imply (cf. Anderson, 2013; Mezzadra/Nielson, 2013; Korteweg, 2017; Schinkel, 2018; Morris, 2020; Meissner and Heil, 2020). However, other authors defend the use of that same concept, by differentiating it further (cf. Penninx, 2019; Abdou, 2019; Klarenbeek, 2019; Gisselquist, 2020). This debate is connected to the discussion around another concept (that of “nation-states”) and as to whether nation-states have declined or, in fact, have just changed drastically, while still implementing and enforcing strong migration controls in our world

today<sup>1</sup>. Penninx (2019), when discussing problems and solutions for the study of the “integration of migrants”, agreed with three observations made by Willem Schinkel in 2018 (the undefinition surrounding the concept, the selectivity/normativity of its use and the strong influence of policy in what topics are researched and how they are addressed). However, he considered Schinkel's diagnosis on why these deficiencies existed and to whom they were attributable to be “erratic”. This author argued that Schinkel did not recognize the essentially distinct functions of the concept of “integration” in policy and research, which turned his diagnosis mistaken. As such, Penninx offered a **triple solution** to the research problems on the “integration of immigrants” previously pointed out by Schinkel, **a solution which still seems to present clear and guiding advantages:** **a)** the use of a broad, heuristic and scientific definition of the integration process (independent from any political concept), which would study the results of the interaction between the newcomers and the host society at three levels (individual, collective and institutional), by considering the juridical/legal, socio-economic and cultural/religious dimensions; **b)** the study of integration policies should be conceived of as fundamentally different from the scientific analysis of the integration process; **c)** researchers should be aware of the consequences of the relationship established between policy and research (particularly at the level of funding) and should guarantee their own scientific independence. In this sense, I will, firstly, provide a framework for my research by examining the discernible relationships which exist between gender discrimination and migrations and, secondly, I will move on with the analysis of Nepali migration policies and international female migration from Nepal. In a third moment, and departing from my research question and all of those previous considerations, I will propose the operationalization of: 1) the forms of discrimination potentially experienced by migrant women; 2) their developmental capabilities; 3) a successful “integration” for Nepali female migrants in Portugal, based on a set of criteria and taking into account the recommendations made by Penninx (2019). Finally, I will briefly present some of the impacts expected for my research, while framing them in the concerns and the long-term planning models of the sponsored intervention, within the scope of the philanthropic activities followed by the Porticus Foundation in different domains.

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<sup>1</sup> Anderson (2013), for example, analyzed the impact of nationalism in Europe since the Second World War and noticed that, in the 1990s, all European Union countries were affected by immigration. However, within them, political debates and controls on immigration, or the obstacles placed on the free movement of citizens, took very different forms.

### 3. Gender Discrimination and Migrations

According to Timmerman, Fonseca, Van Praag and Pereira (2018)<sup>2</sup>, although migration can influence and contribute to a change in gender norms, leading to more gender equality, agency and the empowerment of females, “gender normativity also influences both the practices of the community in its reaction to migration, and the creation of migration policies, which affects the way how migration is experienced by men and women” (Timmerman, Fonseca, Van Praag and Pereira (2018: 261-262). Some research shows that gender stereotypes mediate the institutional approach towards groups of females who belong to ethnic minorities and who are migrants (cf. Baracsi, 2018). Thus, it is particularly important for researchers to reflect about their research designs and “recognise that migratory processes, projects and aspirations occur within [social, political] structures and gendered relations” (Timmerman, Fonseca, Van Praag and Pereira, 2018: 264). On the other hand, historical studies focusing on the 19th century mobilities in north-central Europe show that migrant women did not limit themselves, already back then, to following male migrant pioneers – they made different migratory decisions and explored their own migration routes, depending on the opportunities and circumstances, constituting themselves as agents of change (Verbruggen and Greefs, 2018). The relationship between gender and migratory processes is not linear, nor is it direct:

«Emancipatory and discriminatory results can take a multiplicity of forms and influence each other at each stage, sequence and moment of the migratory process [and of integration/reception in the country of destination]. Furthermore, (...) migration control and migration policies – sometimes referred to as migration infrastructure – are also inscribed in particular gender understandings and gender roles, producing specific and unequal impacts on the migration of men and women.” (Timmerman, Fonseca, Van Praag and Pereira, 2018: 264)

If gender-focused research can help to elucidate the occurrence and results arising from relatively recent and large migratory flows, including the ones occurring towards Europe (e.g. in 2016), from a human rights and development perspective, more knowledge about intersectional and gendered migratory *drivers* and the migratory experiences of females is needed and becomes fundamental, in order to improve responses to migratory crises

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<sup>2</sup> Timmerman, C., Fonseca, M. L., Van Praag, L., & Pereira, S. (Eds.). (2018). *Gender and migration: A gender-sensitive approach to migration dynamics* (Vol. 3). Leuven University Press.

and to promote “gender equality and the rights of refugees and migrants” (idem, ibidem: 264).

According to Ruysen and Salomone<sup>3</sup>, while “previously women migrated mainly as wives, mothers or daughters of male migrants, they now increasingly move as independent or single migrants” (Ruysen and Salomone, 2018: 150, cit. by Oishi, 2002 and Pedraza, 1991). The so-called “feminization of migration” is an inescapable reality which has been recognized consecutively by officials of the United Nations over the last decade, as well as by international organizations such as the Caritas<sup>4</sup>, as their representatives have stated, on several occasions, that “the face of migration is feminine”. Although most of the new international female migration is driven by economic factors (a majority of women migrate for work purposes to more developed countries, or to places where there is a shortage of labor, and an increasing number of them become the main breadwinners of their families), other factors such as conflicts and wars, political instability, persecution and insecurity, climate change, epidemics, loss of livelihoods and land degradation, famine and natural disasters continue to play an important role in female migration. A “non-economic determinant of female migration that has recently proved to be of particular importance (...) is gender discrimination”, or the inequalities recorded between genders, assessed in terms of comparative freedoms and opportunities (Ruysen and Salomone, 2018: 150, cit. Ferrant and Tuccio, 2015; Baudassé and Baziller, 2014; Nejad and Young, 2014; Nejad, 2013; Bang and Mitra, 2011). This determinant has, however, an ambiguous nature that turns its assessment difficult: not only does its impact depend on what is meant by “gender discrimination” at the outset; on one hand, gender discrimination can influence the decision to migrate, on the other hand however, it can be an obstacle to migration itself. The SIGI index<sup>5</sup> (compared across 160 countries) has shown that, despite major advances in recent decades, female disadvantages persist in

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<sup>3</sup> Timmerman, C., Fonseca, M. L., Van Praag, L., & Pereira, S. (Eds.). (2018). *Gender and migration: A gender-sensitive approach to migration dynamics* (Vol. 3). Leuven University Press.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.caritas.org/what-we-do/migration/female-face-of-migration/#:~:text=The%20female%20face%20of%20migration%20is%20one%20of,come%20at%20the%20end%20of%20a%20long%20day> [last accessed on the 22nd of May, 2022].

<sup>5</sup> The SIGI (Social Institutions and Gender Index of the OECD Development Centre) establishes **five dimensions** for discriminatory social institutions, covering the main socio-economic areas that affect women's lives: discriminatory family code, restrictions to physical integrity (including gender-based violence and lack of reproductive autonomy), biases favoring male children and offspring (including in household investment and care provided by the household to boys, or social practices and norms that devalue daughters), restrictions on resources and assets that females may own or have access to, and restrictions to women's civil liberties (laws and discriminatory practices in women's access to the public space, political participation and public life in general) (Ruysen and Salomone, 2018: 158).

terms of opportunities and freedoms in three major areas, and especially in developing countries: education, political empowerment and the labor market (there is an increasing access to it by women, but with less secure jobs than men). Ruysen and Salomone (2018) sought to elucidate the relationship between gender discrimination and female migration, by using *Gallup World Polls*, unexplored at the micro level and across different countries (*cross-country analysis*): these authors found out that perceived gender discrimination was significantly and positively correlated with the intentions to move to another country, however they did not find a direct relationship between perceived gender discrimination and migratory behavior – having suggested such result as a first indication that women who feel discriminated against are more willing to migrate, but precisely that discrimination constitutes the first factor preventing them from actually carrying out, *de facto*, their desired migration. They also proposed a microeconomic multivariate analysis, as a future study necessary to better assess and examine the evidence, already collected by different authors, regarding the relationship between gender imbalances and female migration (Ruysen and Salomone, 2018: 168).

#### **4. International Nepali Female Migration**

Nepali migration policies tend to reproduce some aspects of gender inequalities: migration is more difficult and bureaucratic for women and there have been age bans for female migration in the past (e.g. in 2012), partial bans (e.g. in 2017<sup>6</sup>), or even total bans (e.g. in 2014). As such, many women are pushed towards irregular migration channels when they want to leave their country of origin. This use of irregular migration channels represents an important risk factor for sexual violence, physical abuse and economic exploitation (ILO<sup>7</sup>, 2015<sup>8</sup>). They seek better living conditions elsewhere: despite the fact that Nepali population is generally young, unemployment levels in the country are high and the average salary in Nepal remains very low. According to the World Bank (April 2022), Nepal's labor market exposure to the COVID-19 crisis was significant and vulnerable Nepali households are at risk of falling back into poverty. Inflation is accelerating due to higher non-food related inflation, an increasing number of imports of

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.nepalitimes.com/banner/homes-away-from-home/> e <https://www.nepalitimes.com/here-now/ban-the-ban/>. [last accessed on the 10th of May, 2022].

<sup>7</sup> International Labor Organisation.

<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, the forced choice of irregular migration «(...) deprives migrant women from the benefits of private and government insurances, which include financial compensation and repatriation in the event of accident or death, as well as pre-emigration training courses, fundamental to face migration in a conscious and informed way.» (Borelli, 2022: 59).

more expensive goods and lower remittances, all of which contributed to the accumulation of debts and expenditures in the trade balance of Nepal (World Bank, 2022<sup>9</sup>). The ILO – International Labor Organization (2017) reviewed the laws and policies openly aimed at regulating the migration of working women from Nepal, focusing in particular on the legal and policy provisions granted to domestic migrant workers and clothing industry workers, based on relevant international labor standards, and domestic migration and forced labor laws and practices<sup>10</sup>.

Chaudary (2020) also analyzed the laws and policies linked to international migration from Nepal and its challenges: international migration has been an important source of income for many Nepali families, for decades now (57% of Nepali families rely on international migration and its remittances contribute to 26%-30% of the national GDP, which turns Nepal into one of the most remittance-dependent countries in the world). Officially, Nepal issued more than 4 million work permits for migrant workers between the years of 2008 and 2018 – among those, there were more than 176,000 permits for migrant women. In addition, many Nepalis living abroad are believed to be undocumented and challenges such as labor exploitation and human trafficking (for labor, sexual, for domestic servitude) persist; it is estimated that “more than 6,000 Nepali emigrants returned home in coffins” over a decade (Chaudary, 2020<sup>11</sup>). The emigration of females is still also partially stigmatized by the Nepali civil society – which traditionally tended to associate the unaccompanied movements of women to sexual exploitation and issues around “impurity” of females (Bajracharya, 2015 and Shrestha, Mak and Zimmerman, 2020, cit. by Borelli, 2022). Nepali females represent only 12-15% of the total international migrants from Nepal who are documented in official records and 6-7% of the total volume of Nepali labor migrants (Bajracharya, 2015; ILO, 2015; Borelli,

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<sup>9</sup> World Bank (2022). Nepal Development Update. April 13, 2022. [available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nepal/publication/nepaldevelopmentupdate>, last accessed on the 12th of May, 2022].

<sup>10</sup> These provisions are described as a system that partially influences the decisions of potential migrants, in addition to other systemic “push” and “pull” factors. ILO (2017). *Migrant women workers and overt migration policies in Nepal: A law and policy baseline study*. International Labour Office, Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch (Fundamentals), Geneva. ISBN: 978-92-2-130546-0 (Print).

<sup>11</sup> Chaudhary, D. (2020, November). International Migration Policy, Law And Governance In Nepal: An Overview. In *The Migration Conference 2020 Proceedings: Migration and Politics* (pp. 11-21). Transnational Press London. This author mentions: «For example, the Foreign Employment Policy 2012 has some provisions related to international migration, such as training centers, psychosocial counseling and rehabilitation within the scope of the Foreign Employment Welfare Fund and the creation of productive investment for migrants returning to Nepal. The Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security is the highest body of migration governance, responsible for the periodic monitoring and evaluation of policies and their implementation. Despite such laws, policies and efforts, international labor migration has often been questioned in terms of security, trafficking and exploitation” (Chaudary, 2020: 11).

2022), but the general flow of migrant women has been gradually increasing since the 1980s<sup>12</sup>.

The Nepali diaspora is now estimated at more than 4 million (most of these international migrants live in India) and the religion of the members of the diaspora is polytropic (it takes on different varieties and there is a mixture of religious practices within the diaspora<sup>13</sup>). According to Sahina Shrestha for the *Nepali Times* (March 9, 2022<sup>14</sup>), “(...) Their experience abroad instills in [Nepali] women new self-esteem and assertiveness when they return, leading to a positive shift in their gender roles within the family and community” and “(...) many female migrant workers who returned to Nepal also became active in social work, small businesses, or even entered politics” (Shrestha, 2022). Bijaya Rai Shrestha from AMKAS Nepal (an organization supporting repatriated female migrants) declares that empowerment starts from the moment a migrant worker leaves Kathmandu’s airport, travels to a new location and is exposed to a different culture, but soon migrants learn to adapt: “(...) They take the first steps towards economic independence, many [of them] open bank accounts for the first time when they apply for a job. Once back in Nepal, they can take care of their own financial affairs” – says Bijaya, herself a returnee (Shrestha, 2022). This represents a somewhat optimistic perspective: considering both its background (ie., ignoring the dangers and weaknesses of the migrants' lack of experience and skills) and its consequences (e.g. when contrasted with the numerous cases of labor slavery and sexual abuse reported by Nepali female migrants in the Middle East, especially in Qatar and Saudi Arabia, or in Malaysia, or the human trafficking reported in Israel). Migrants for whom, in some cases, specific rescue and repatriation operations had to be organized by Nepali NGOs and authorities, in order to

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<sup>12</sup> Through monetary and social remittances, migrant women support their families: they provide cultural and economic support by paying for the education of their children and siblings in Nepal, by sending material goods back home, by paying for food, housing, or for rituals and appointments related to spiritual leaders and health services. But they do so at the expense of significant human and emotional resources, such as the risk of violence, discrimination, violation of labor rights and the weakening of mother-child relationships (Bhadra, 2007). “Other women decide to emigrate to escape domestic violence or, in the case of separated or widowed females, to escape social rejection in their own communities. Furthermore, labor migration is used as a way of circumventing the social pressures of marriage [traditionally, it occurs by arrangement] and dedication to domestic life. The desire of a better future for their children, starting with educational opportunities and equal opportunities and rights, represents the driving force of the migratory choice, in most cases (Pereira 2019). Nepalese women’s migration trajectories were initially directed towards Southeast and East Asia (India, Japan and Hong Kong) where they were concentrated in the domestic and service sectors.” (Borelli, 2022: 58-59).

<sup>13</sup> This mixture can often include Hindu, Buddhist, Shamanic, Animist and Christian practices.

<sup>14</sup> Shrestha, S. (2022). Female migrant workers hold up half the sky – Migration offers Nepali women a chance to become financially independent, yet the government tried to restrict it. In *The Nepali Times*, 9th of March, 2022 [available at: <https://www.nepalitimes.com/here-now/female-migrant-workers-hold-up-half-the-sky/>, last accessed on the 11th of May, 2022].



receive female migrants back home in support structures, as they found themselves segregated from their own families upon arrival in Nepal (cf. Donini, 2019; Simkhada et al, 2018; Malla and Rosenbaum, 2017; Bruslé, 2012, among others).

Nepali migration to Portugal grew mainly from the economic crisis of 2008-2009 onwards and increased 2360% (25 times) over the past 10 years (Borelli, 2022). The growth in the number of entries into the national territory was accentuated with the humanitarian crisis after the 2015 earthquake(s) in Nepal and the closing of its southern border by India, while concurrently it increased after the successive revisions to the Nationality Act and the Immigration Act of 2007 in Portugal as well. With Portugal having one of the lowest fertility rates and one of the highest rates of demographic aging in Europe (INE, 2021), in the last five years there were almost 2 thousand newborns of Nepali mothers in the country. In 2019, this nationality ranked 4th, behind babies born to Brazilian, Angolan and Cape Verdean mothers in Portugal (Reports on the Integration of Immigrants by the Migration Observatory; coord. Oliveira, 2019 and 2020). Much of the Nepali labor migration to Portugal is motivated by the shortage of labor, the growing tendency to adopt *jus soli* to the detriment of *jus sanguinis*<sup>15</sup> in the country, and the still relatively easy, comparatively (albeit time-consuming and bureaucratic), regularization process in Portugal, within the framework of the European Union and the Schengen Area.

## 5. Operationalization of Concepts

In the context of my current research project with Nepali female migrants in Portugal, I begun by asking the following *research question*: What are the main discriminations faced by Nepali female migrants in Portugal and what are their main skills and abilities, which can be mobilized? In the sense of attenuating the former, preventing their reproduction and enhancing the empowerment of those women and their daughters. Or, if we wish, helping them to build inter-community spheres of belonging and also what I have come to call the *compound identities* of those migrants.

I will be able to **operationalize the main forms of discrimination** potentially experienced by the migrant women interviewed by referring, in a useful manner, either to the *five dimensions of the SIGI Index* (discriminatory family code, restrictions to physical integrity, prejudice/bias favoring male children, restrictions on the resources and goods that females may possess, and restrictions to women's civil liberties), or to the *three forms*

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<sup>15</sup> *Jus soli* or “soil right” indicates a principle by which a nationality can be assigned to an individual according to his/her place of birth. It contrasts with *jus sanguinis*, which determines the “blood right”.

*of disrespect as described by Axel Honneth (1992): mistreatment and rape (threatening the “physical integrity” component of one’s personality); deprivation of rights and exclusion (threatening the “personal integrity” component of one’s personality); and degradation and offense (threatening the “honor and dignity” components of one’s personality).*

On the other hand, the **interviewees' competencies and capacities**, which can be mobilized and developed, may be operationalized based on Martha Nussbaum's (2000) *capabilities approach*, which differentiates capacities related to: 1) life; 2) bodily health; 3) bodily integrity; 4) senses, imagination and thought; 5) emotions; 6) practical reason; 7) affiliation; 8) other species and the natural world; 9) playfulness; and 10) control over one’s environment (political and material). For Nussbaum, there is no right exercised without the ability to exercise it nor without freedom. Citizens must be given the possibility to decide whether or not to adopt the functioning of a certain capacity, in all areas. For a capacity to be guaranteed to a certain citizen, it is not enough to create a public sphere of non-interference: we must create a material and institutional environment that provides the necessary support to all the capacities which are considered relevant. Thus, the protection of physical and mental capabilities will be part of the requirements needed to ensure any of the capabilities on the list (Nussbaum, 2014: 68-69). Our interviewees' abilities were usefully operationalized by pondering 7 different dimensions: 1) migratory path, 2) family relationships, 3) labor relationships, 4) social relationships, 5) community relationships, 6) sexual relationships, and 7) legal self-determination. These dimensions define layers, or a constellation of belongings, and capture the negotiations carried out by Nepali female migrants.

Finally, considering all of the data above, **I propose to define a successful migrant insertion/integration** (integration, a much disputed term, is used here only in the sense of the definition previously provided by Rubin et al., 2011<sup>16</sup> and taking into account the remarks made by Penninx, 2019) as follows:

*- In general, the interaction between the Nepali newcomers and the Portuguese host society, together with the results of such interaction, can be considered as more positive*

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<sup>16</sup> The very concept of “immigrants” tends to be replaced by the concept of “newcomers”, under some circumstances – or the term “integration” is passed over in favor of “social cohesion” and the convivial aspects, relational practices, asymmetries of power and materialities involved in the negotiation of differences (Meissner and Heil, 2020). Rubin et al. (2011) defined people who “integrate” as involved both in their cultural heritage and in the culture of the host society.

*than negative, on three levels (individual, collective and institutional) and considering three dimensions (juridical/legal, socio-economic and cultural/religious) (Penninx, 2019);*

*- Migrants express a personal acceptance of their migratory project, portray it as satisfactory, feel successful and manifest symbolic independence (there are more gains than losses resulting from the migratory process – including gains in rights, self-determination and identity);*

*- In the various dimensions of analysis (7) and within the spheres, or layers, of belonging (migratory path, family relationships, labor relationships, social relationships, community relationships, sexual relationships and legal self-determination) there are no descriptions of experiences concerning discrimination, nor any marked inequalities;*

*- There is more harmony than tension and a happy articulation is observed, or a successful balance, between aspects of the axiological community of belonging and aspects of the normative host community (belonging is more a source of meaning than a source of taboo, and it is lived more as an opportunity than a threat);*

*- The constellations of belonging, when articulated, form what I have come to call the “compound identities” of the female migrants.*

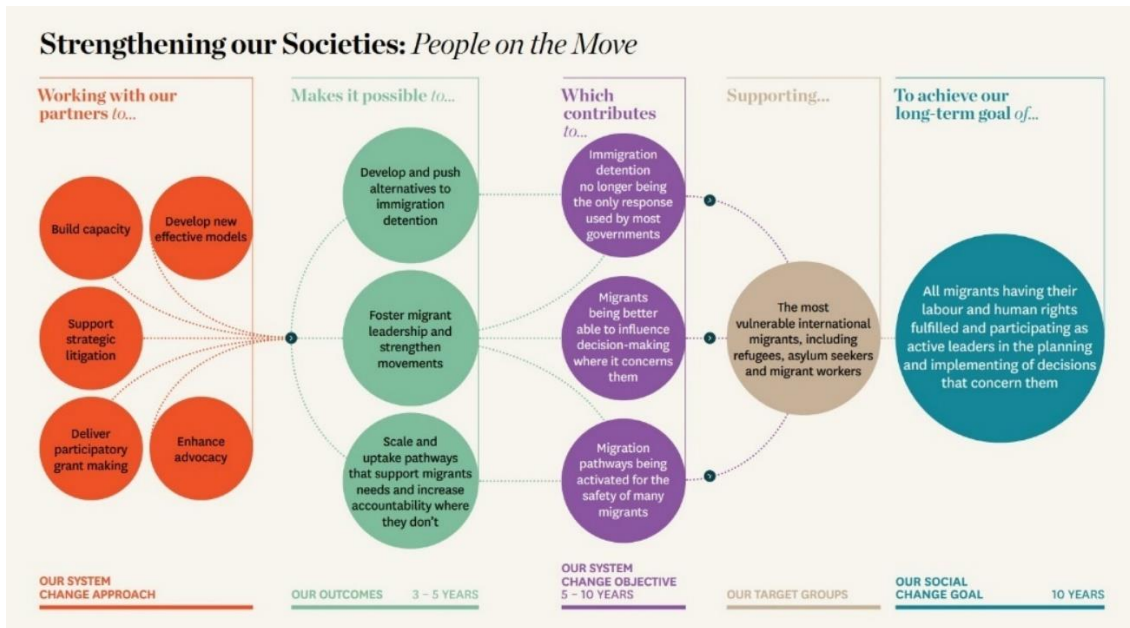
Based on this definition, I will analyze how the answers by the first and second generations of Nepali female migrants in Portugal, both interviewed, correspond (or not) to the criteria defined above.

## **6. Impact of the Project**

The **impact** of my research project will, therefore, focus on empowering migrant females and the several professionals who receive and interact with them on a daily basis (in the context of migrant associations, health institutions, schools, public services). I seek, above all, to support the needs of a specific and vulnerable<sup>17</sup> group of migrant females and to promote migrant leadership and self-reflection among them. I aim to guarantee respect for their human and labor rights, as well as their active participation in the planning and implementation of current decisions that concern them and affect them daily. The long-term model *Strengthening Our Societies: People on the Move*, proposed by the Porticus Foundation and represented in the Figure 1, seems to be a good starting point to discuss and ponder broader objectives and goals:

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<sup>17</sup> “Vulnerable”, mainly due to the use of irregular migration channels and their atypical migratory paths, health issues and occupational challenges, and discrimination faced in their country of origin (Nepal).



**Figure 1 – Theory of Change: Strengthening Our Societies: Migrant People**  
(Source: Porticus, 2022)

We find that the model represented above suggests short-medium term goals after the implementation of the pilot project (3-5 years), system change goals (5-10 years), and even social change goals (10 years) for the work with vulnerable migrants, in particular international migrants – including refugees, asylum seekers and migrant workers. The objectives of the partnerships established (the most immediate ones and the long-term ones) should be: to build capacity, to develop new, efficient models of action, to increase the advocacy and empowerment of migrant groups, to support the strategic litigation and participatory financing methods of migrant minorities. The ultimate goal is for all migrants to have their human rights respected and participate as active leaders in the planning and implementation of decisions that affect them daily. To this end, working with partners shall allow for the development and promotion of alternatives to immigrant detention, promote migrant leadership and strengthen support movements, increase the scale and integration pathways that support the needs of migrants, in addition to increasing the accountability of the different actors involved. All of this will help to empower migrants to shape decisions that affect them, to create more and safer migration routes and to reduce migrant detention, health and labor migrant problems around the world.

## **7. Conclusions**

I sought to summarize above some of the theoretical issues related to the integration of migrants and the triple solution proposed by Penninx (2019), and gender discrimination in its relationship with migration. I have also compiled data on international Nepali female migration and I operationalized a set of concepts, which will allow me to answer to my research question. The novelty of my project is to focus on a migrant population that the IOM – International Organization for Migration, the OECD – Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the WHO – World Health Organization, the Asian Development Bank – ADB or the World Bank consecutively identified as being especially vulnerable, considering the data available on international migration, migratory policies in the origin country (Nepal) and the health of migrants (Nepali female migrants). Gathering that with the few data available on a migrant population which is still under-studied in Portugal, I propose an intergenerational dialogue and a pilot-project as part of my field intervention, comprising innovative aspects and the establishment of unprecedented partnerships. I will suggest ways to prevent various types of inequalities and exclusions faced by these female migrants, while adopting an intersectional perspective and seeking to place the peripheries at the centre of the debate on their own social inclusion. The future implications of the contributions of my research project are connected to the feasibility of partnerships, the promotion of gender equality and migrant integration as well as female leadership, the negotiation of belongingness within the Nepali community in Portugal and together with the reception community – aimed at promoting greater well-being for the migrant women involved and studying the mechanisms by which an inclusive and successful integration process could be promoted in the future.

## **8. Online Media**

<https://www.caritas.org/what-we-do/migration/female-face-of-migration>

[last accessed on the 22nd of May, 2022]

<https://www.nepalitimes.com/banner/homes-away-from-home/>

<https://www.nepalitimes.com/here-now/ban-the-ban/>

[last accessed on the 10th of May, 2022]

<https://api.cofraholding.com/media/2882/toc-people-on-the-move.pdf>

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