

**Title** Nepali Migrants in Portugal: Personal Agency and Collective Strategies to Challenge State-Created Categories

**Area** **CERC Policy Categories and Migrant Resistance: A Reflexive Inquiry**

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**Abstract**  
(250 Words)

In this study, we depart from a theoretical analysis of resistance, defiance and challenge of state-created categories by migrants in different destinations (Stierl, 2018; Mayer, 2018; Safouane et al., 2020; Rydzik and Anitha, 2020; Esposito and Kellezi, 2020; Aboim and Vasconcelos, 2021; Perolini, 2023) together with a description of Portuguese policy categories and recent extraordinary documentation processes at the national level (Roseta, 2019; Gorjão-Henriques, 2020; PDGL-MP, 2020-2023). This is a qualitative and interpretative research: we analyzed the data collected from four case studies of Nepali migrants who arrived to Portugal more than four years ago (seasonal worker, college principal, female community leader, student who became an expert engineer). We conducted 1h30 semi-structured interviews with them and combined the data collected with participant observation, the field diary and ethnographic method. We used non-probability sampling (purposive or judgmental sampling) and analyzed the data via NVIVO 12. Our aim was to examine how these particular migrants contested the Portuguese state-created categories, both at an individual level (e.g. agency, resilience, navigating different categories) and at a collective level (e.g. community organisations, migrant associations, political and ethnic activism, transnationalism, resistance, activist journalism and blog writing contesting the Hindu dominance both in Nepal and in the Nepali diaspora). The novelty of our results lies in the fact that they reveal several strategies adopted by Nepali migrants to navigate state-created categories, while also detailing the multiple ways how they contest, circumvent, blur, reshape and resist to those categories, in a complex continuum of statuses and experiences.

**Key words** State-Based Categories; Migrant Resistance; Migrant Policy; Challenged Statuses

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