

Portuguese Journal of Social Science
Volume 21 Number 1

© 2022 Intellect Ltd Editorial. English language. https://doi.org/10.1386/pjss_00044_2

Published Online May 2024

EDITORIAL

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Critically examining international migration

ABSTRACT

In this Editorial to the Special Issue, Góis, Oliveira and Gaspar offer a critical exploration of international migration, particularly in the Portuguese context. They challenge traditional perspectives, arguing that simplistic dichotomies are inadequate to understand the complexities of migration and integration. The authors delve into Portugal's changing migration landscape, advocating for an appreciation of the diverse motivations and experiences of migrants. Emphasizing the need for inclusive, multicultural policies, the article highlights the importance of recognizing the heterogeneity within migrant communities. Central to the discussion is the interplay between knowledge, politics and migration policies. The authors analyse the influence of institutions in shaping public perception and policy formulation, stressing the need for a nuanced approach in migration

KEYWORDS

integration
migrant descendants
racial and ethnic
categorization
science migration
categories of migration
migration policies'
implementation
migration dynamics
diversity in migration

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studies. The challenges in measuring immigrant integration are addressed, with a focus on the multifaceted nature of integration within sociology. The article also tackles the complexities of racial categorization in the context of migration, emphasizing the fluidity of identities and calls for more inclusive approaches to understanding racial dynamics. Through its critical examination of migration phenomena, the article aims to enhance understanding and inform the development of more effective and inclusive migration policies.

Over the past few decades and up to the present day, the migration landscape in Portugal has undergone a profound and significant transformation. Portugal can be viewed as a dynamic testing ground for experimenting with shifts in migration, the study of migration and the integration of migrants. When researching the heart of this transformation, it becomes evident that traditional dichotomies and essentialized approaches are no longer suitable for capturing the intricate tapestry of migratory processes and their profound impact on society. This Special Issue aims to serve as a compass guiding us through this evolving terrain, offering innovative theoretical, conceptual and methodological reflections that hold the promise of reshaping the future of migration studies in Portugal.

Instead of passively acknowledging international migration as a straightforward process of individuals crossing national borders, it is crucial to critically examine and analyse the multitude of factors that drive migration in the modern era. This entails the examination of political power and economic disparities, political conflicts, social inequalities and environmental factors that compel people to leave their home countries, as well as the pull factors that attract them to specific destinations. Only by problematizing international migration can we gain a better understanding of its complexities, challenge stereotypes and advocate for more comprehensive and inclusive migration policies.

One of the significant benefits of this critical scrutiny is its ability to challenge essentialized concepts and misconceptions about migrants and migration. By recognizing that migrants are not a monolithic group, we can dispel harmful stereotypes and nurture social empathy. For instance, some migrants are driven by economic opportunities, while others are fleeing conflict or environmental change. Acknowledging these differences is crucial for reducing discrimination against migrants. Furthermore, this critical examination highlights the diversity within migrant communities, by emphasizing that migrants come from various backgrounds, cultures and social experiences. Recognizing this diversity can lead to more inclusive policies that respect and celebrate multiculturalism. Consequently, problematizing concepts like migrants' integration, migrant descendants, racial and ethnic categories, knowledge mobility and science migration entail questioning their underlying assumptions, power dynamics and the implications associated with them.

The concept of integration is one of the most complex and challenging in sociology. This complexity is particularly evident when attempting to define boundaries in the context of integration. On the one hand, it is polysemic, allowing for multiple theoretical and political interpretations. On the other hand, the relationship between the observer and the object is always influenced by the quality of the observation tools. In simpler terms, assessing the integration of a given group requires considering the technical measurements embedded within the instruments used for that assessment.

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Regarding the first aspect, the polysemy of the concept of integration is closely intertwined with its discursive formulation. This relationship is apparent in both the use of 'immigration for politics' and the design of 'immigration policy'. In the first scenario, we refer to the politicization of immigration, which involves incorporating immigrant integration into political rhetoric. In the second scenario, integration policy is inherently tied to a specific aspect of social reality: it cannot be isolated from the existing structural relations.

As Bommes (2000) states, the key institutions of the welfare state are organized in a manner that presupposes the readiness and willingness of individuals to equip themselves for a series of structured life experiences in various social domains and their corresponding organizations. The life trajectories, in the author's words, represent 'the accumulation of possibilities for structural participation' (Bommes 2000: 42). Hence, what political mechanisms seek to gauge when assessing the degree of 'integration' is precisely 'the accumulation of structural participation' (Bommes 2000: 42). In this context, a sizeable portion of immigrants find themselves 'structurally disadvantaged'. This, to a large extent, accounts for the enduring patterns of specific regional migration flows – from the southern to the northern hemisphere – and the prevalence of push and pull factors that coincide with regional spheres.

In the context of immigration, and to borrow Max Weber's terminology, the idea of integration establishes an 'elective affinity' with the welfare state. Nevertheless, integration encompasses different domains and is not confined solely to the national state level, even though the measurement tools are typically tailored for the enactment of national-level policies. For a reflexive sociology of migration, addressing this issue is of paramount importance.

At another level, the relationship between knowledge and politics plays a pivotal role in shaping the boundaries of integration. In this context, knowledge extends beyond the academic or scientific realms and encompasses the insights derived from a diverse array of institutions that impact the lives of immigrants, such as associations, churches, local administrations and private organizations. These entities, without exception, contribute to the knowledge that informs (or should inform) policies. This, the interplay between the 'state's knowledge' and 'the state of knowledge' involves a set of intermediary bodies that are integral to the formulation of policies in their current form. Recognizing this process means that knowledge about immigration – and by extension, integration – is multifaceted and the product of a permanent network that informs political discourse on immigration-related matters. However, this has not always been the case. In Portugal, as in other European contexts, the urgency of the migratory phenomenon did not always lead to an immediate political response. Indeed, the development of this framework took time, and much of its history is intertwined with political cycles. To such an extent that anti-immigration constituencies and the political platforms supporting them have at times regarded their actions as a regression (often sudden) from the 'imperative of integration'. Therefore, there exists a technical level that conveys the extent and comparability of the imperative labelled 'integration', but this dimension is inextricably linked to the political and cultural context that imparts its meaning.

For instance, the concept of *migrant descendants* pertains to individuals born in a host country to parents who migrated from another country (Mateus 2021). To problematize this concept involves acknowledging and questioning the common practice of labelling and treating migrant descendants as perpetual foreigners or as individuals who do not fully belong to

either their ancestral culture or the host society (as discussed by Seabra and Cândido). This process requires challenging stereotypes, understanding the diverse experiences and identities within migrant communities, and advocating for inclusive policies that recognize and embrace the multicultural nature of societies.

This group represents a growing and diverse segment of populations in many countries. However, despite their diverse backgrounds, they often share common experiences and challenges related to their hybrid identities (Mateus 2021). One of the fundamental issues that need to be addressed is the tendency to relegate them to the irreducible status of foreigners. This labelling stems from a deeply ingrained perspective that often views them through the lens of their parents' or ancestors' country of origin, rather than recognizing them as fully fledged members of the host society. This can result in a sense of otherness or of not fully belonging, which can lead to feelings of exclusion and discrimination (Abrantes and Roldão 2019; Gaspar and Iorio 2023).

Moreover, migrant descendants often face a unique set of challenges in terms of cultural identity. They may grapple with questions about where they truly belong, navigating a complex terrain between their ancestral culture and the culture of the society receiving migrants. This can be a rich source of identity and cultural diversity, but it can also engender feelings of displacement and confusion, especially when societal expectations and stereotypes come into play.

To address these issues, and as discussed by some authors (Mateus 2021; Seabra et al. 2016), it is crucial to challenge stereotypes and preconceived notions about migrant descendants. Recognizing that this group is not homogeneous and that individuals within it have diverse experiences, aspirations and cultural connections is essential. This involves moving away from generalizations and acknowledging the uniqueness of each individual trajectory.

In terms of policy, societies must adopt inclusive approaches that celebrate the multicultural nature of their populations. This involves educational curricula that reflect the diversity of students' backgrounds, anti-discrimination measures to ensure equal opportunities and initiatives that promote intercultural understanding and dialogue. Policies should be designed to empower migrant descendants to participate fully in all aspects of society without being hindered by stereotypes or prejudices.

The notion of *race* is a complex social construct that attempts to classify individuals based on their perceived physical or genetic attributes. However, it is imperative to engage critically with this concept, as it is not a biologically determined or fixed characteristic, but rather a product shaped by historical, cultural and social influences. Problematizing race entails delving deep into the power dynamics, systemic prejudices and inequalities that are intrinsically linked to racial categories (Raposo et al. 2019).

This critical examination requires an understanding of how race intersects with other social categories, such as class, gender and nationality. It is not sufficient to consider race in isolation; instead, we must recognize how it interacts with these other facets of identity, creating complex and multifaceted experiences for individuals.

Problematizing race compels us to confront racism in all its forms. By acknowledging the constructed nature of racial categories, we can better understand how discriminatory systems and biases have become deeply embedded in societies over time. This awareness is a crucial step towards promoting social justice and advocating for policies that address racial disparities and work towards achieving equality. It involves dismantling the harmful

legacies of racial categorization and striving for a more equitable and inclusive future for all.

Knowledge mobility is a concept that encompasses the dynamic flow and interchange of knowledge, ideas and expertise across the often fluid and porous borders of the *learning society* (Ranson 1994). However, delving deeper into this concept involves a critical examination that goes beyond surface-level observations. Problematizing knowledge circulation entails peeling back the layers to reveal the intricate power dynamics and hierarchies deeply embedded within the processes of knowledge production and dissemination. It is a call to question and challenge the existing structures that determine which knowledge is considered valuable, deserving of recognition and subsequently promoted, and which knowledge is consigned to the margins or even excluded entirely.

This critical perspective compels us to confront epistemic injustices: that is, those related to the production and distribution of knowledge. It encourages us to examine how certain voices, often from dominant or privileged groups, are given prominence, while others, particularly those from marginalized or less influential backgrounds, are silenced or overlooked.

Problematizing knowledge migration is an invitation to re-evaluate our understanding of what constitutes legitimate knowledge. It calls for the inclusion of diverse perspectives and epistemologies, recognizing that there is no single, universally applicable way of knowing. Instead, it promotes the idea that knowledge is multifaceted, and shaped by culture, context and experience.

Moreover, this critical perspective advocates for the establishment of more equitable collaborations and exchanges of knowledge. It urges us to dismantle the existing hierarchies and power structures within academia that perpetuate inequality in the global dissemination of ideas, publications and other resources (Ampudia de Haro 2017, 2021). By doing so, we can foster a more inclusive and just landscape in which knowledge circulation becomes a tool for empowerment and understanding, rather than a means of reinforcing existing disparities.

In this context, science migration represents the mobility of scientists and researchers across national borders, driven by various motivations such as career advancement, collaborative prospects, and the exchange of knowledge and expertise. However, to gain a comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon, we must look beyond its surface and engage in a critical examination.

Problematizing science migration entails researching the complex web of reasons underlying these movements. It involves scrutinizing the factors that push scientists to leave their home countries, such as limited opportunities, political instability or economic challenges. It also compels us to explore the pull factors that attract scientists to particular destinations, including improved research infrastructure, funding opportunities and academic environments (Khan 2021).

One crucial aspect of this critical perspective is the consideration of brain drain – the departure of skilled professionals from their home countries. This phenomenon can have significant negative consequences for countries losing their intellectual capital, including reduced research capacity and limited opportunities for knowledge generation and innovation (Cerdeira et al. 2016). Problematizing science migration requires a thoughtful examination of these repercussions and a consideration of strategies to mitigate the brain drain's impact on source countries.

Furthermore, it involves addressing the power dynamics and inequalities within scientific communities. Frequently, scientists from lower-income or less-privileged backgrounds encounter difficulties in accessing the resources and opportunities available to their counterparts from more affluent regions (see Khan 2021). Examining science migration encourages us to question and rectify these disparities, promoting inclusivity and diversity in the global scientific landscape.

Ethical considerations are also paramount. Collaborations between scientists from different countries can give rise to questions about equity, exploitation and the fair distribution of benefits. Examining science migration encourages us to assess these collaborations critically, ensuring they adhere to ethical standards and contribute to the betterment of all parties involved.

In essence, a critical perspective on science migration calls for the promotion of equitable partnerships and international collaborations. It emphasizes the importance of supporting scientific capacity-building in source countries, creating opportunities for knowledge generation and retention, and ensuring the benefits of scientific advancements are distributed fairly across the global scientific community. Through this lens, science migration becomes a force for positive change, fostering international cooperation and the advancement of knowledge for the betterment of society.

UNLOCKING INSIGHTS: WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM ARTICLES?

Measuring immigrant integration: Institutional challenges and policy monitoring

One of the key themes explored in this collection of articles is the multifaceted nature of social integration. Catarina Reis de Oliveira's contribution uncovers the complexities of integrating migrants into Portuguese society. Furthermore, the attempt to portray the integration of migrants using available statistics presents its own set of challenges. Traditional notions of integration are deconstructed, making way for a more nuanced understanding that considers the dynamic process through which migration shapes and reshapes social fabric.

The transformation of Portugal into an immigration country over the past few decades has presented a multitude of challenges and opportunities. With a steady influx of immigrants, the country has had to contend with the need to develop effective integration policies, monitor their outcomes and engage in a constructive dialogue between policy-makers, academics and statisticians. This transformation has been marked by a growing diversity of nationalities, languages, cultures and religions within the resident population, ushering in a new era of complexity in migration dynamics.

Early integration policies in Portugal lacked a solid foundation in official data monitoring. While several studies addressed the issue, they were often perceived as fragmented and did not provide a comprehensive picture of immigrant integration. Furthermore, the crucial dialogue between academe and policy-makers was notably absent. This led to the establishment of the Immigration Observatory in 2002, renamed the Migration Observatory in 2014. The primary objectives of this institution were multifaceted: first, to construct a robust evidence base for policy formulation in an area in which knowledge was scarce; second, to inform public opinion through the provision of relevant data and facts; third, to serve as a catalyst for knowledge creation

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through a network of research groups; and last, to facilitate the learning curve in the pursuit of new knowledge and research endeavours.

This institutionalization process of research–policy relations in Portugal in the past two decades highlights the often-debated dichotomy between facts and values. In the realm of migration research, this dichotomy is manifested in the bureaucratic model that structures research–policy dialogues. According to this model, research is tasked with supplying the data and facts required by policy-makers to formulate policies and make decisions. Over the last decade, migration observatory has shifted its focus more towards statistics-driven research and away from conceptual research. This transformation reflects the distinct types of knowledge encompassed by immigrant integration research, ranging from theoretical and conceptual knowledge to applied research, statistical analyses, policy analysis and evaluation.

The journey towards establishing a robust immigrant integration monitoring system in Portugal was not without its trials. One significant challenge was the absence of a direct data source for monitoring immigrant integration. The commonly shared variable in most data sources across Portugal and other European Union (EU) countries was residents' nationality. This often led to the use of citizenship as a proxy for migration. This choice, seemingly inconsequential, holds implications, as the concepts of 'immigrant' and 'foreign' do not precisely align. Not all foreigners are immigrants, and not all immigrants are foreigners, as some may have acquired Portuguese citizenship or were not foreign citizens at the time of immigration. The definition of 'immigrant' in statistics primarily depends on the availability of national data sources, highlighting the practical challenges in defining and measuring immigrant integration.

The critical questions emerged: what to measure, how to measure it, how frequently to measure it, and how to interpret the data. This quandary has become central in the production of Portuguese statistical reports on indicators of immigrant integration, published annually since 2016. Furthermore, it is essential to acknowledge that none of the official data sources readily allow a characterization of immigrant integration outcomes, as most of them are tailored to specific areas of intervention rather than focusing on migrant integration. Many of these sources provide administrative information, which is not collected for statistical purposes, limiting the analysis to aggregate data sets or variables defined by the objectives of government ministries. The quality of such data often hinges on the capacity of the administrative bodies to validate information for inconsistencies and coding errors.

The process of establishing a comprehensive immigrant integration monitoring system in Portugal necessitated the combination and harmonization of various data sources. Cooperation between institutions holding administrative data and those collecting data for statistical purposes has only materialized in the past decade. EU recommendations on immigrant integration indicators since 2010 have played a pivotal role in promoting cooperation among Portuguese institutions and harmonizing methodologies, variables and data consistency.

Recognizing the need for systematic data collection to monitor immigrant integration, Portugal initiated action plans and strategic plans. The creation of annual statistical reports on indicators of immigrant integration became a crucial component of these plans. These reports, produced in partnership with the National Statistics Institute (INE), aim to provide a comprehensive view of immigrant integration in Portugal by analysing a multitude of

indicators across various dimensions. These dimensions include demography, education, language learning, employment, welfare, housing, health, justice, ethnic and racial discrimination, electoral registration, citizenship acquisition and remittances. Additionally, these reports compare Portuguese nationals to total foreigners and the most prominent foreign nationalities. Over the past decade, these reports have played a crucial role in monitoring the situation of immigrants and national integration policies. They have brought together knowledge and information to support the identification of areas for policy intervention at the national level.

In 2019, the national plan to implement the global pact on migration emphasized the need to enhance the quality of administrative and statistical data. The continued publication of the Migration Observatory's annual statistical reports on immigrant integration indicators has provided a sense of continuity and reliability to the work conducted in this field.

As Catarina Oliveira aptly summarized, the increased migration patterns witnessed during the twentieth century led to a heightened emphasis on promoting the integration of immigrants within host societies throughout Europe, Portugal included. This focus led to the conceptualization of integration and the establishment of research, policy and data collection mechanisms to address the complex issue of immigrant integration. The Portuguese case is presented as an important model for navigating these intricate transitions between research, policy-making and statistical monitoring.

Integration policies have evolved significantly over the years, reflecting the changing political climate and societal dynamics. The normative nature of integration has been underscored by policy developments, with an increasing emphasis on both socio-economic and cultural dimensions of integration. Despite being a relatively new immigration country, Portugal has gained international recognition for its integration policies. It has invested in evidence-based policies, fostered research-policy dialogues and published statistical reports to monitor integration progress.

However, the path to understanding and quantifying integration is fraught with challenges. The multifaceted nature of integration resists straightforward definitions and universal solutions. Instead, it calls for a nuanced approach that recognizes the intricate interplay of factors at the individual, collective and structural levels. Dialogues between research, policy and statistics continue to evolve, adjusting to a dynamic political landscape and the growing politicization of migration and integration.

Gathering and interpreting data to depict integration outcomes continues to present a challenge. Although data sources are more readily available, they are not always comprehensive or tailored to the needs of integration researchers. Integration is a dynamic concept, rendering it difficult to assess policies and outcomes objectively. This intricacy places significant demands on data producers, policy-makers, scholars and statisticians to navigate the inherent ambiguity in concepts, indicators and their interpretations.

The question of what constitutes the 'best' integration policies and the benchmark for comparison continues to be a matter of ongoing debate. Nations such as Portugal, with distinctive migration experiences and diverse immigrant profiles, challenge the applicability of a one-size-fits-all model. The ever-changing nature of integration policy formulation calls for adaptability and continuous reflection, taking into account emerging developments and the adjustment of policies, institutions and data collection methods.

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Diversity and academic achievement in Portugal's educational system

The article by Teresa Seabra and Filipa Cândido delves into the multifaceted landscape of immigrant student experiences within the Portuguese education system. Employing a detailed analysis of various categorization criteria, generational status and mixed origins, the research provides valuable insights into the complexities of understanding academic performance among immigrant students in Portugal (see also Seabra et al. 2016; Seabra 2010).

The study begins by underlining the importance of employing diverse categorization criteria when examining the backgrounds of immigrant students. It underscores how distinct criteria can either obfuscate or unveil particular subgroups, ultimately offering a more nuanced and comprehensive perspective on school performance. By doing so, the research questions reductionist perspectives that tend to homogenize immigrant students and their experiences.

One of the central findings of the research is the benefits of using birthplace-based as opposed to citizenship-based classifications. By categorizing students according to their place of birth, including those born abroad but with Portuguese nationality, the study tackles the problem of the underrepresentation of students with immigrant backgrounds. This expanded classification sheds light on the experiences of students who have experienced immigration (Mateus 2021) and helps mitigate the difficulties associated with categorization solely based on citizenship.

Seabra and Cândido's article illuminates the significant intra-group variability among students of immigrant origin when considering subcategories based on generational status and ancestral background. It challenges the prevailing assumption that all immigrant students or their descendants encounter similar educational outcomes. For instance, second-generation students born in Portugal perform at par or even outperform their native peers in some cases. This nuanced perspective disrupts the monolithic view of the school performance of immigrant students.

The research thoughtfully navigates the complexities of genealogical continuity and its ramifications for categorization. Initially, a more comprehensive classification that includes students with at least one parent born abroad might seem to suggest an inherited migratory experience. However, upon closer examination, it becomes evident that students with immigrant parents do not necessarily exhibit lower academic performance. Notably, second-generation students often demonstrate equivalent or even superior performance in both primary and secondary education, thereby challenging the idea that parental immigrant status is a decisive factor.

In the pursuit of reaching an understanding of the multifaceted aspects of immigrant student experiences, the study underscores the importance of subcategories. It argues that subcategories serve as a potent tool for unravelling the complexities of distinctions and similarities within the broader population of immigrant students. These subcategories help researchers avoid generalizations and promote a more profound understanding of the heterogeneity among students of immigrant origin.

While the research makes significant progress in revealing the complexities of immigrant heterogeneity, it acknowledges the need for an intersectional perspective in the future. Recognizing that social conditions, national origins and cultural elements play pivotal roles in shaping student experiences, Seabra

and Cândido encourage future investigations to incorporate these dimensions for a more comprehensive analysis.

This article also identifies several promising avenues for future research. These include a more in-depth exploration of distinctions within and between national origins, a focused examination of students of mixed origin without Portuguese descent, and an investigation into the educational performance of children of returned emigrants. Additionally, factors such as the type of migration and naturalization are suggested as valuable elements to consider in future inquiries.

Racial categorization and the identity conundrum

Nuno Oliveira's contribution examines the debate surrounding racial categorizations and their institutional applications. Starting from the premise that there is no consensus on either their reality or their implementation, the author demonstrates how different lines of thought contemplate the societal role of racial categories. Oliveira suggests contemplating racial categorizations through three dimensions – the ontological, the genealogical and their contemporary practical applications. Stressing that these three aspects are interconnected, the author challenges the presumed technical nature of the statistical use of racial categories, contrasting it with the cultural and ideological levels of their institutionalization.

Hence, the article delves into the intricate web of ethnic and racial categories in Portugal. It dissects traditional concepts, revealing the need for a more sophisticated approach that acknowledges the complexities of these categories in a multicultural society. He demonstrates how the concept of race has had a profound and enduring impact on society, shaping how we perceive ourselves and others. It is a topic that has sparked intense debates, discussions and controversies throughout history.

Racial categorizations are not arbitrary inventions; they have deep historical roots that stretch back centuries. To understand the problematic nature of racial categories, it is essential to recognize their historical institutionalization. One crucial historical context for the development of racial categories was the era of European colonialism (Nobles 2000; Kertzer 2001; Blackburn 1997). During the age of exploration and expansion, European powers sought to legitimize their dominance over native populations in newly discovered territories. This led to the creation of a hierarchical system that categorized people based on perceived racial differences and served as a tool of control and exploitation, justifying the subjugation of certain groups.

Fredrik Barth's (1969) concept of 'ethnic boundaries' and Thomas Hylland Eriksen's (2002) work on ethnic identity highlight the fluidity and constructed nature of ethnicity. Ethnicity is not a fixed, inherent quality but a dynamic aspect of identity shaped by social, cultural and historical factors. This perspective challenges the essentialist view of ethnicity, which assumes it is an unchanging attribute.

A significant point of discussion within the realm of racial categorization is the relationship between race and ethnicity. Are these distinct concepts, or is race merely a subset of ethnicity? This question has given rise to two contrasting viewpoints.

Some scholars argue that race should be considered a specific form of ethnicity, with racial categories reflecting the most immediately visible distinguishing differences among groups. In this perspective, race represents a

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subset of the broader phenomenon referred to as ethnicity (Gordon 1988; Sollors 1989). Others, however, maintain that race and ethnicity should be treated as distinct categories (van den Berghe 1978; Gilroy 2000; Banton 2002). They contend that race is a unique and 'objective' category that cannot be equated with the broader concept of ethnicity.

This second perspective on the separation of ethnicity and race raises concerns about the blurring of lines between ethnicity and race. Ethnicization involves attributing meaning to social-cultural identifiers of people, whereas in racialization, biological and somatic features, whether real or imagined, are signified. However, there is a substantive realm of race that encompasses a wider process that extends beyond social interactions, involving biopolitical, technological and scientific factors. This perspective underscores the complexity of racial categorization and its multifaceted origins.

The historical development of racial categorizations was significantly influenced by scientific racism, which aimed to provide pseudo-scientific justifications for racial hierarchies. Anthropology, biology and other disciplines contributed to the consolidation and acceptance of racial theories. However, it is essential to recognize that scientific and cultural factors were not the sole determinants of racial hierarchies. Political and economic factors also played a crucial role in their emergence and persistence.

As highlighted in Oliveira's article, a systematic link between the economic practice of slavery and the institutionalization of racial categories can be observed. For example, historian Robin Blackburn (1997) has shown how the historical development of slavery, racial ideologies and the institutionalization of racial categories in the Americas were mutually reinforcing. This historical context underscores the economic motivations behind racial categorization.

Racial and ethnic categories continue to be a part of daily life, shaping hierarchies of exclusion and discrimination. These categories influence social practices, interactions, attributions and cognitive and linguistic frameworks. However, their technical and biopolitical applications, such as exercises to delineate demographic categories, raise questions in contemporary society.

One fundamental problem with racial categorization is its lack of ontological reality. The concept of race is not rooted in biological attributes; instead, it is socially and individually negotiated and contested. Furthermore, individual memberships and constructions of race are not fixed: they can evolve.

The number and types of ethnic and racial groups that can be measured also vary, even within close geographical locations. Categorizing and measuring ethnicity and race can, in fact, influence their social construction. This suggests that the act of categorization itself plays a role in reinforcing the concept of race as a natural and immutable attribute.

The complexity of racial categorization is further highlighted when considering contemporary applications. Self-identification, which allows individuals to classify themselves based on race, often operates within a limited set of predefined categories. This implies that individuals must self-examine their phenotypic characteristics, such as skin colour, hair texture and other traits considered racially relevant. This practice asks individuals to stereotype themselves racially.

The arbitrary choice of skin colour as a reference system for racial categorization is highlighted as one example of this phenomenon. Psychologists have studied the construction of prejudice and have noted that humans tend to reinforce similarities within their group while magnifying differences with other groups. This underscores the arbitrary nature of racial categorization based on skin colour. Moreover, the insistence on categorizing individuals

within a limited set of racial categories perpetuates the notion of race as a fixed attribute, which contradicts the biological evidence that most people belong to a diverse range of backgrounds and intersections.

Contemporary society presents new challenges to traditional racial categories. Identity is no longer confined to rigid classifications, as individuals increasingly embrace fluid and multifaceted identities. The emergence of concepts like superdiversity and conviviality reflects the recognition of a society where differences are negotiated in everyday practice.

These shifting identity configurations challenge the notion of monolithic identity adhesions and emphasize the complexity of interactions and intersections between identities. While discrimination and stigmatization persist, social interactions are becoming more nuanced and multidetermined than the alignment or divergence between single, uniform categories would suggest.

Nuno Oliveira eloquently emphasizes the intricate and multifaceted nature of racial categorization, underlining the need for thorough examination. Racial categories have historical roots that are deeply entwined with colonialism, exploitation and hierarchies of power. They are not grounded in an ontological reality but are socially and individually negotiated. Given this feature, they should be regarded as interactive rather than natural types (Hacking 1999).

Contemporary society is marked by an increasing recognition of identity fluidity and the rejection of rigid racial classifications. The limitations of self-identification within predefined categories and the arbitrary focus on physical attributes like skin colour call into question the validity and relevance of traditional racial categories.

To understand the complexities of racial categorization, it is crucial to explore the interplay between historical institutionalization, the construction of prejudice, and the perpetuation of specific cognitive mechanisms.

Looking ahead, society must grapple with the contradictions and limitations of racial categories. It should strive for a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of human identity, one that embraces the diversity and fluidity of individual experiences and discards the divisive and outdated notion of race as an essential and immutable attribute. The re-evaluation of racial categories is not just an academic exercise; it is a vital step towards realizing a fairer and more just society for all.

The intersection of science, knowledge and mobility

The world of science is in a state of constant flux, influenced by a complex interplay of factors that include mobility, job security and productivity. This dynamic is particularly evident in Portugal's scientific landscape. David Cairns's article delves deeply into the intricacies of these themes, offering insights into how they are impacting the country's scientific progress.

Scientific mobility, as Cairns's article highlights, is a multifaceted phenomenon. It encompasses the movement of both knowledge and individuals. Knowledge circulation, often measured through citations from international scholars, serves as an indicator of a nation's scientific vitality (see Ampudia de Haro 2021, 2017). Despite Portugal experiencing an expansion in its scientific workforce, this growth has not necessarily resulted in a proportional increase in knowledge circulation. This raises questions about the quality and influence of the scientific output produced within the country.

The recruitment of international scientists plays a crucial role in shaping Portugal's scientific landscape. Nevertheless, quantifying the geographic

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mobility of scientists presents challenges. Portugal's research institutions have attracted researchers from across the world, contributing to their internationalization. For instance, Iscte – Instituto Universitário de Lisboa boasts researchers and collaborators from 52 countries, constituting 16 per cent of its scientific community. This influx of international talent enriches the nation's scientific community.

Scientists are drawn to Portugal for a number of reasons. The country's appealing lifestyle, coupled with its robust tourism industry, can be attractive. However, Portugal faces stiff competition from research hubs in core countries, particularly concerning salaries, working conditions and scientific recognition. Additionally, the presence of an overwhelming number of tourists can dissuade career-focused researchers, who may perceive challenges such as over-tourism affecting local communities and housing markets.

One of the significant challenges for the scientific community in Portugal, as highlighted in the article, is job insecurity. Many researchers are on fixed-term contracts with no prospect of renewal. This not only raises questions about the sustainability of scientific investments but also diminishes the attractiveness of opportunities, leading to Portuguese and European brain drain (Khan 2021). Job insecurity is a significant deterrent for potential candidates and undermines the ability of scientists to compete on the international stage.

Cairns's article explores the issue of scientific productivity, particularly in the context of precarious employment conditions. It reports substantial growth in the number of doctoral-level researchers in Portugal. Still, the data regarding scientific publications and citations tells a different story. While there has been steady growth in the number of scientific publications, the number of citations received by authors based in Portuguese scientific institutions has seen a concerning decline. According to the author, this could be attributed to the high levels of precarious employment, which may hinder the production of high-quality research.

The article speculates about the evolving nature of scientific migration, suggesting that it may move away from traditional physical mobility towards virtual and blended formats. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the shift towards digital platforms, which could further transform the landscape of scientific exchange. This change may open new possibilities for recruiting foreign talent to Portugal without the need for physical relocation, ushering in a new era of scientific mobility.

In summary, according to Cairns's article, Portugal's scientific landscape is characterized by uncertainty, shaped by mobility, precarity and productivity. While the nation is making strides in internationalizing its scientific community, challenges such as precarious employment and declining productivity persist. Addressing these issues requires a rethink of funding models, greater job security, and a shift in the mindset of researchers from self-centred career pursuits to producing knowledge that is valuable to institutions and society. Portugal stands at the junction of tradition and innovation, seeking to expand its scientific horizons in an ever-evolving global landscape. Navigating this uncertainty will be essential to harnessing the full potential of scientific mobility and driving the nation's progress in the world of science.

In conclusion, this Special Issue aims to act as a guide through the evolving landscape of migration studies in Portugal. The articles contained within challenge conventional wisdom and offer fresh perspectives on social integration,

migrant categories, race and ethnicity, power dynamics, and research methodologies. As Portugal continues to grapple with the intricacies of migration, this collection of articles paves the way for a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of this multifaceted phenomenon. It is a journey through complexity, illuminating the difficult tapestry of migration in Portugal, and promises to lay the foundations for a fruitful discussion on a set of concepts that, while seemingly disconnected, complement each other when examining the migratory phenomenon in its various forms.

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