

La soutenance de mémoire de Master en sciences sociales
- *pilier migration et citoyenneté* –
de

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Exploited in Transit, Forgotten Upon Arrival : Violence and
Institutional Neglect in Women's Irregular Migration

aura lieu le

Mardi 23 juin 2026 à 14h15

Salle 001, Auditoire, Institut ethnologie, Saint-Nicolas 4

Directrices de mémoire : Lisa Katarina Stalder

Experte : Marion Fresia

Background: Migrant women are exposed to gender-based violence across different stages of the migration trajectory. However, they experience this violence disproportionately. Existing literature views these experiences as isolated events. This tends to overlook the effect of structural inequalities and governance systems on vulnerability.

Aim: The study aims to explore how the migration governance structures, transit conditions, and institutional practices in the transit countries contribute to the vulnerability of migrant women to different forms of gendered violence and how the survivors experience access to support systems in Western Europe.

Methods: The study employs a qualitative methodology and an interpretivist approach. It draws on narrative, in-depth, semi-structured interviews with migrant women and key informants.

Findings: The study findings reveal that migrant women experience cumulative violence that evolves across their migration trajectory. This experience of violence is intensified when the women rely on smuggling networks. However, the structural inequalities that the women encounter in their countries of origin contribute to their initial vulnerability. This translates to coercive and inconsistent state responses when they reach Greece and along the Balkan route. Violence becomes less visible but persists through bureaucratic practices, institutional neglect, and lack of trauma-informed care when they arrive in Western Europe.

Conclusion: The study demonstrates that gender-based violence is structurally embedded across the migration trajectory. Additionally, the study highlights important implications for policy, practice, and future research on migration. However, the key limitations of the study are its qualitative scope and the sample participants. Therefore, this study may not capture the diversity of migrant experiences across different contexts.

