

# Secondary Victimisation of Migrant Women

Reflections through the lens of Narrative Victimology

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# Where I am coming from

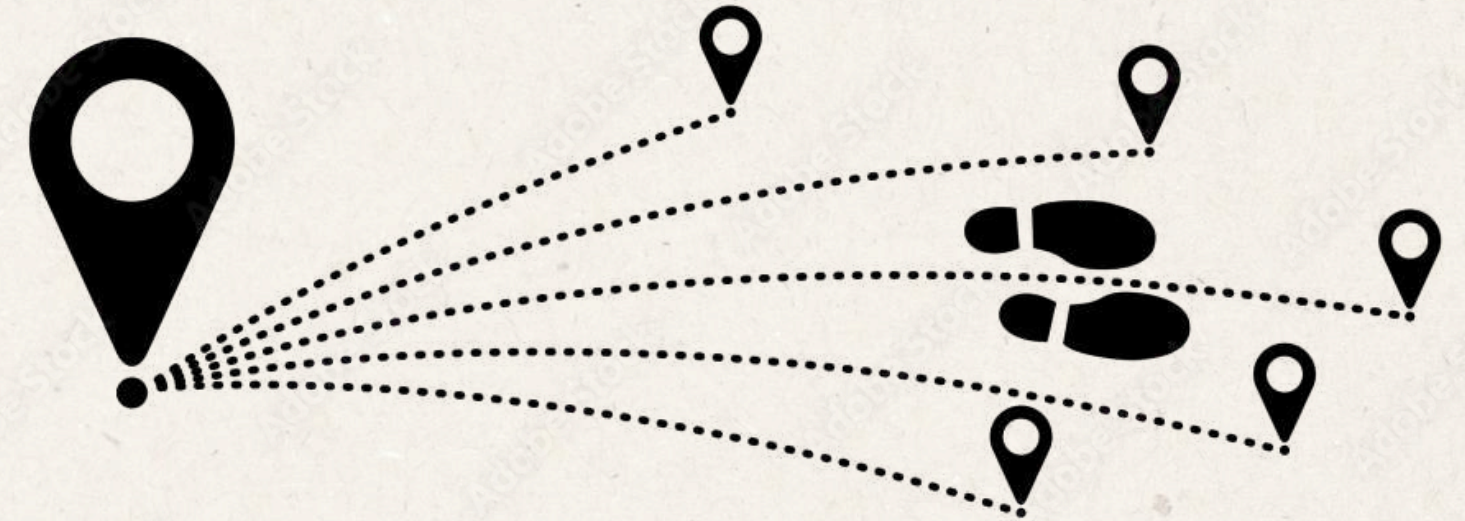


Background in Law and professional experience in the criminal justice system assisting victimised people (Brazil)

Master's in Criminology, PhD Student in Criminology (UPorto), and a Brazilian migrant woman researching migrant women (Portugal)



# The Journey



**01** STATE OF THE ART

**02** AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

**03** NARRATIVES OF VICTIMISATION  
OF MIGRANT WOMEN

**04** THE NARRATIVITY AND THE  
EXPERIENCES OF VICTIMISATION

**05** THE VICTIMS' PARTICIPATION  
IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

**06** THE PHD PROJECT

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# State of the Art

**Migrant Women, a heterogeneous group.**



**The feminisation of migration** and the related vulnerabilities  
(Bastia & Piper, 2019; Boyd & Grieco, 2003; Green, 2012).

Gender, race/ethnicity, nationality, and class:  
**experiences of migrant women as an intersectional stories**

## **The role of the Justice System**

The State can be an agent that practices and perpetuates gender-based violence in an institutionalised way  
(Bodelón, 2014).

## **Becoming a Victim**

Victim Identity and the double process (H. Moreno, 2014)  
The Ideal Victim (Christie, 1986)  
Marginalised groups and the denial of victim status  
(Strobl, 2004)

## **Secondary Victimisation**

Critical Victimology (Walklate, 2023)  
A social construction that can emerge from the interactions and discursive practices between victims and the justice system (Quinney, 1972)

# State of the Art

## Secondary Victimisation

- Victims' Perceptions
- Interpretative dimension of others' behaviour
- Reactions of third-party observers
- Structural elements

\*Damage, frustration, and persistence of the victimisation;  
\*Related to how professionals and institutions manage the victimisation process;  
\*The Belief in a Just World, by Lerner (1980)  
(Manzanares, 2014; Peixoto, 2012).

\*SV adds other components distinct from those of an emotional nature;  
  
\*Inclusion of Fricker's notion of Epistemic Injustice;  
(Pemberton & Mulder, 2023)



# An Empirical Study

**‘Experiences of victimisation of migrant women:  
the interaction with Portuguese criminal police agencies’**

- The experiences of victimised migrant women in contact with Portuguese police officers
- The characteristics of secondary victimisation
- The intersections of gender, migrant status, race, nationality, as well as the type of crime suffered, to potentialise the secondary victimisation



**Victim Identity**

**The Ideal Victim**

**The Belief in a Just World**

**Secondary Victimisation**

**Intersectionality**

**Non-probabilistic Sampling**

Purposeful + Snowballing

**Interviews**

Semi-structured

Online format

**Final Sample**

9 participants

Brazilian nationality

Empirical saturation

# An Empirical Study



● Qualitative Study

● Narrative Victimology approach

(Pemberton et. al., 2019a, Pemberton et. al., 2019b, Walklate et. al., 2019, Hourigan, 2019; Cook & Walklate, 2019)

{ The victims' voices at the centre of the analysis  
The meaning given to the suffering  
The role of narratives -»» Agency and Communion

● Narrative Analysis

(Fraser, 2004)

{ Perspective of Narrrative Victimology  
Intersectional lens



## Axes of Analysis:

(Pemberton & Aarten, 2018)

Identity  
Emotions  
Culture

# Narratives of victimisation of migrant women



Ângela

Maria

Rosa

Simone

Nísia

Firmina

Sílvia

Antonieta

Patrícia

## Crimes

Prevalence of gender-based violence crimes

## Initial Space-Time

The process of becoming a migrant

Adaptation in Portugal

## Analysis Time

Before | During | After

» the police contact «

# Identity

## **Actions contesting the identity of the victim**

(Furnham, 2003)

→ Reformulation of the victim's image

→ Questioning of the facts and denial of suffering

**"(...) I felt that, as a victim, it seemed that I was the perpetrator of the crime. (...) I went there to give my statement to the police officer...'oh, well, you could have defended yourself'. (...) I didn't feel that I was seen as a victim."**

(Firmina)

## **Turning point in the sense of continuity of the life journey**

(Crossley, 2000)

**‘(...) It was horrible, it was traumatic. So traumatic that I said that I have a pain called the ‘pain of Portugal.’**

(Firmina)



# Emotions



Strong emotions in experiences of victimisation and the importance of the active listening (Brison, 2002, cit. in., Borg., 2020)

Inappropriate, indifferent to the victims' suffering, and discriminatory behaviour

**‘(...) I was super fragile, I was crying, I was really bad. There was no privacy. It was a lot of men, there wasn't a woman to see me. (...) I had to speak very loudly, imagine (...). You're reliving a process, you're recounting processes of violence. (...) I had to impose myself because he wasn't paying attention to what I was saying.’**

(Patrícia)



# Culture



From warm-hearted to prostitutes: Brazilian women and stereotypes (Padilla, 2007)

Intersectional lens: socially marginalised groups and the internal positions of privilege (Fathi, 2017)



**‘(...) our profile was exposed in the newspaper, which was also embarrassing. And he said there was nothing wrong with that. And my husband is like ‘No, he’s saying she’s fiery’. And he even asked me, ‘Yeah, isn’t she Brazilian?’ (...) At that moment, I was already super embarrassed, I already had tears in my eyes because it’s embarrassing, right?’**

(Nísia)

# The narrativity and the experiences of victimisation

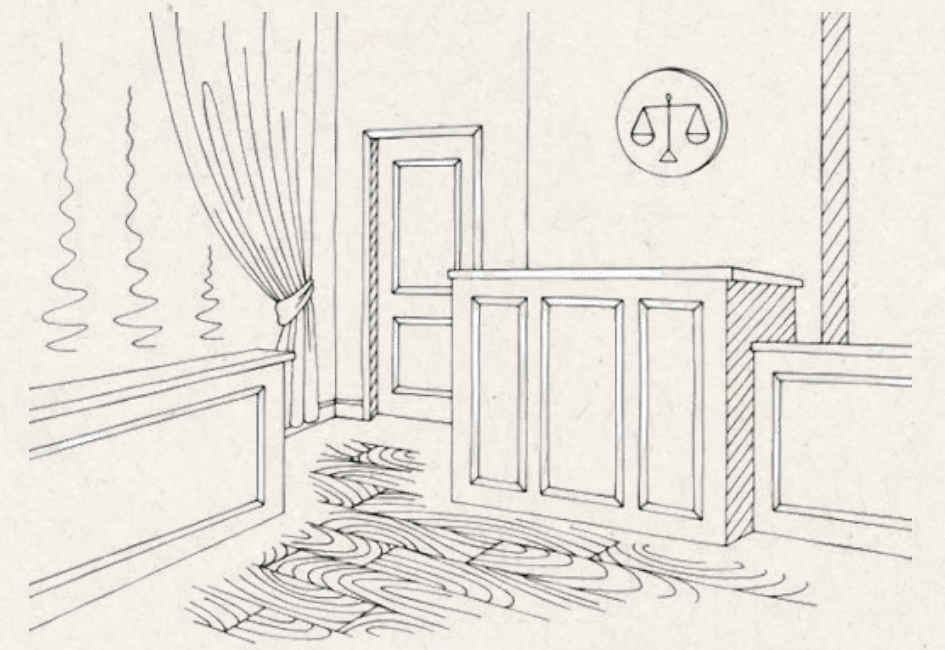
What are the benefits of applying a narrative approach to access experiences of secondary victimisation?

- 1) To organise human experiences and provide temporal order, a sense of coherence and purpose;
- 2) To provide a safe space for rebuilding individual and social skills that have been impacted, and
- 3) To achieve an understanding of the concrete meanings that victims give to their experiences

Narrative Victimology?



# The victims' participation in the justice system



## Narrative Victimology and the possibility to observe the third's reactions

Why do some narratives gain public attention and others do not?

What factors are involved in the dismissal or validation of narratives?

**‘(...) and he was very kind to me, he didn’t judge me at any point, he was very calm and listened to my story, unlike the police officer who kept laughing (...) At that moment, at the Public Prosecutor’s Office, was the only moment that I felt, really, a little better.’**

(Ângela)

**‘Soon I will have to sit in front of the judge and prove what psychological damage I have suffered, you know? And that is not fair. (...) (crying) And another thing, how do you prove psychological damage? Do I have to show how many medications I take...it’s a social life that I don’t have, right?’**

(Nísia)

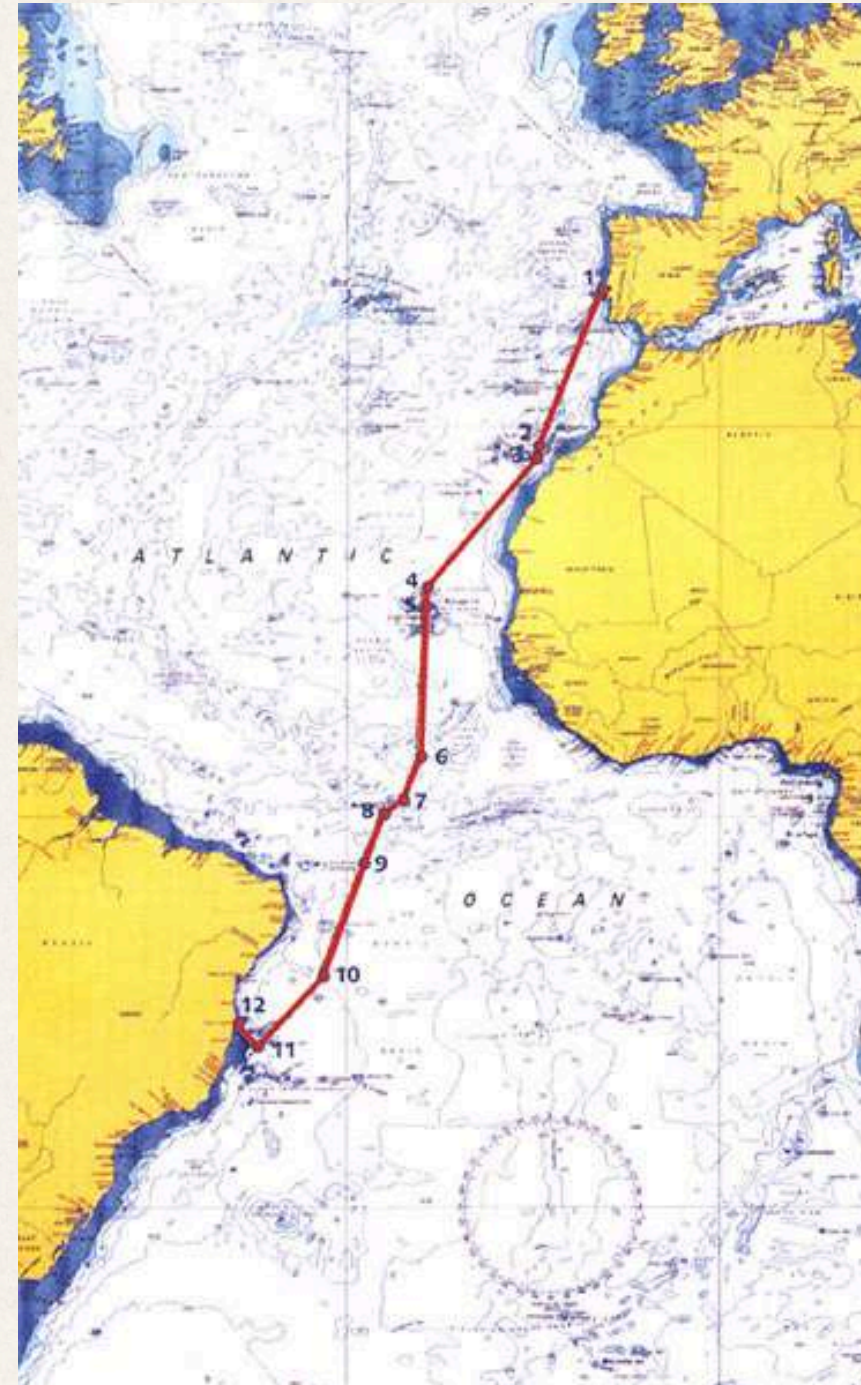
# The PhD Project

## PhD Research in Criminology

‘Victimised Migrant Women in Interaction with the Justice System: Vulnerabilities, Discourses and Practices between Portugal and Brazil’

## Aim of the Research

A comparative qualitative study to uncover whether migrant women are more vulnerable to SV in the justice system than non-migrant women



## Interdisciplinary Field

- 01** Critical Victimology
- 02** Feminisation of Migration
- 03** Interactions in the criminal justice system
- 04** Intersectional experiences

# The PhD Project

## » Triangulation«

### Data Collection and Methods

#### Subtstudy 1

Semi-Structured Interviews



Victimised Migrant Women

Victimised Non-Migrant Women

#### Subtstudy 2

Focus Group with  
Police Officers



#### Subtstudy 3

Observation of Court  
Hearings



# Ethical Reflections

**Dissolving expectations of neutrality**

**Safe space to deal with  
experiences and emotions**

**Subjectivity as a positive element  
of the analysis**

Responsibility  
Subjectivity  
Values  
Integrity  
Safe Space  
**Ethics**  
Background  
Neutrality  
Reflexivity  
Researcher  
Self-Management  
Transparency  
Tools  
Principles  
Positionality

**Transparency of the researcher's  
positionality**

**Reflexivity**



# Final Considerations



- **Victims' voices at the centre of the analysis**
- **The merits of using Narrative Victimology from an intersectional perspective:** accessing experiences of secondary victimisation in-depth
- **Importance:**  
How secondary victimisation manifests itself for different social groups
- **Future challenges:**  
Possible difficulties in accessing professionals from two different justice systems

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# Thank you!

## **For more information:**

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