

**Review of *Gender-Based Violence in Migration: Interdisciplinary, Feminist and Intersectional Approaches* (edited by Jane Freedman, Nina Sahraoui, and Evangelia Tastsoglou)**

This edited volume is the outcome of the EU-funded project “*Violence against Women Migrants and Refugees: Analysing Causes and Effective Policy Responses (GBV-MIG)*”, supported under the GenderNet Plus programme. Drawing on case studies from seven countries, the book rethinks how gender-based violence (GBV) is understood in the context of migration. It challenges the idea that GBV only happens in “traditional cultures” or isolated individual acts, showing instead how it is reproduced structurally through laws, labour markets, policies, and media discourses. By situating GBV within migration and citizenship regimes, the editors reveal how states’ explicit and implicit practices of “othering” deepen the risks faced by migrant women.

**Part I: Frameworks and Concepts**

The first section introduces the volume’s conceptual tools. Chapter 1 frames GBV as a continuum throughout the migration process: it can trigger displacement, intensify during transit, and continue upon arrival due to insecure legal status, precarious work, inadequate reception, and limited access to services. GBV, the authors argue, is embedded in racialised power relations, securitised borders, and institutional neglect. Challenging culturalist explanations that blame “other” cultures, the editors adopt *situated intersectionality* to analyse how gender, race, class, nationality, age, and ability intersect to shape experiences of violence and access to protection. They also discuss vulnerability, precarity, and precariousness, noting that policy often labels “vulnerable groups” in ways that reinforce stereotypes and overlook agency. The chapter closes with a call for reforms that address root causes, adapt to context, and amplify migrant women’s voices.

Chapter 2 develops this approach, showing how vulnerability, precarity, and intersectionality each highlight different dimensions of GBV: exposure to harm, systemic insecurity, and intersecting inequalities. Combined within a feminist perspective, they form a framework for studying diverse migration contexts, from voluntary movement to forced displacement, while accounting for migrants' shifting legal statuses.

## **Part II: Policies, Discourses, and State Practices**

Part II examines how GBV is framed and addressed in different national contexts.

Chapter 3 analyses Austria, where political and media discourses culturalise GBV by presenting it as an imported problem. Through *gender nationalism*, migrant women are depicted as victims in need of rescue, while migrant men are portrayed as dangerous, reinforcing a narrative of European superiority. This framing downplays structural causes of violence, isolates cases, and legitimises restrictive migration policies.

Chapter 4 turns to Canada, where protections exist on paper but often fall short in practice. Interviews with service providers and policymakers reveal major gaps: no coordinated national strategy, limited recognition of diverse forms of GBV, and barriers for undocumented and non-citizen women. Although Canada has gender-sensitive guidelines and a reputation as a pioneer in refugee protection, the chapter shows how GBV can still be reproduced within its immigration and protection systems.

Chapter 5 explores France, tracing how discourses on GBV in migration have long been tied to stereotypes about "foreign" cultures, especially Muslim communities. Using the concept of *femonationalism* (the use of gender equality rhetoric to stigmatise migrants) the chapter shows how such narratives extend across the political spectrum. By focusing almost exclusively on

practices like female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, the French state hides broader forms of violence while promoting racist and exclusionary policies.

Chapter 6 examines Israel, highlighting how asylum-seeking women face intersecting vulnerabilities due to gender, race, and lack of legal status. Using the concepts of *crimmigration* (the merging of immigration and criminal law) and legal violence, the authors show how policing prioritises immigration enforcement over protection from GBV. Victims often have no recourse and some are forced into prostitution, revealing how legal and institutional frameworks themselves become sources of violence.

### **Part III: Women's Experiences**

The third section focuses on lived experiences and coping strategies.

Chapter 7 looks at immigrant women in Atlantic Canada who experience family violence within the context of poverty, discrimination, and insecure immigration status. While services often rely on individualist approaches, women frequently draw on cultural and religious networks for support. The authors argue that service providers should engage with collectivist practices to develop culturally sensitive responses.

Chapter 8 investigates Norway's anti-trafficking regime through the case of a woman trafficked for sexual exploitation. Although Norway is committed to protecting victims and has signed multiple international agreements, permanent residency usually depends on cooperating with criminal investigations, leaving those who lack "useful" information or are unwilling to testify without protection. This reliance on the "model victim" image leaves many women unprotected. The analysis shows that restrictive immigration control and narrow definitions of "worthy" victims persist despite Norway's human rights reputation.

Chapter 9 returns to France, focusing on asylum-seeking women from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, and Mali. Their experiences illustrate a continuum of violence, from conflict and patriarchal control in their home countries to xenophobia in transit and systemic neglect in France. While policy labels them “vulnerable,” bureaucratic barriers and inadequate services reinforce their precarity. Using the concepts of continuum of violence and necropolitics, the authors argue that women are rendered vulnerable by institutions that maintain them in conditions of prolonged insecurity.

Chapter 10 concludes the volume, drawing together the theoretical, policy, and lived experiences. It identifies three main contributions: 1. It links interpersonal and structural causes of GBV across micro, meso, and macro levels., 2. Breaks new ground in comparing how GBV intersects with migration policies internationally. and 3. Offers a feminist-informed critical rethinking of concepts such as vulnerability, precarity, and intersectionality. The editors emphasise that GBV in migration cannot be fully understood without recognising how migration regimes and GBV policies interact to reinforce inequalities.

### **Contributions**

*Gender-Based Violence in Migration* makes an important and timely contribution to migration studies. It moves beyond culturalist explanations and highlights how GBV occurs across all stages of migration, including in destination countries. By focusing on the fluidity of migrant statuses, it shows how women can move between categories such as “economic migrant” and “asylum seeker,” facing new risks at each stage. The volume draws attention to structural forms of violence, through precarious labour, restrictive legal frameworks, or dependency on spouses, that are often ignored in mainstream debates.

The book's interdisciplinary and feminist lens is one of its greatest strengths, bridging theory, policy, and lived experience. Its comparative scope, spanning Europe, Canada, and Israel, highlights both shared dynamics and context-specific challenges. By highlighting migrant women's voices and resilience, the volume challenges portrayals of them as passive victims and emphasizes their agency within restrictive systems. The book calls for policies that address structural inequalities, engage with context-specific realities, and centre migrant women's own voices. As such, it is both an important academic resource and a timely intervention in broader policy debates.