My paper focuses on the special situation of migrant women, their double marginalization and exclusion due to their irregular status and gender. Self-perception and identity become crucial aspects in my analysis of their survival strategies at the margin of the European and Portuguese society as well as within the migrant community, asking for the existence and role of female social networks and further structures and ways of support.

Context
Portugal, borderland of the EU, is a new receiving area. Migrants are coming from the former African colonies and, very recently and with increasing numbers, from Eastern Europe and Asia. Their life situation is dominated by social exclusion and exploitation. Competition and conflicts amongst the migrants are emerging.