LUND UNIVERSITY

Mobilizing Knowledge

Framing Gender-based Violence and Negotiating Social Protection for Migrant Women with Precarious Legal Status

Di Matteo, Claudia

2025

Document Version:
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Link to publication

Citation for published version (APA):
Di Matteo, C. (2025). *Mobilizing Knowledge: Framing Gender-based Violence and Negotiating Social Protection for Migrant Women with Precarious Legal Status* (1 ed.). [Doctoral Thesis (compilation), School of Social Work]. Media-Tryck, Lund University, Sweden.

Total number of authors:
1

Creative Commons License:
CC BY

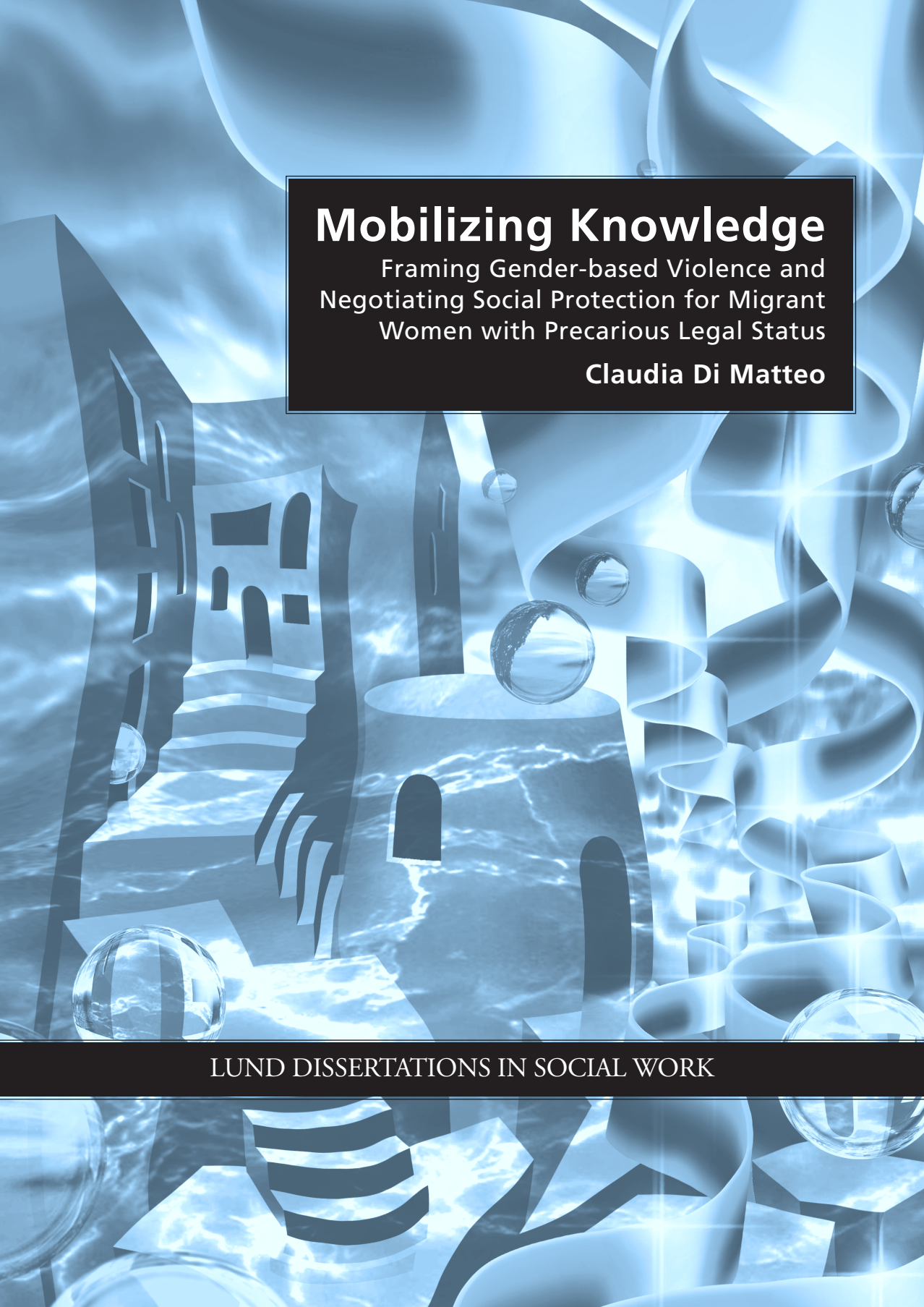
General rights
Unless other specific re-use rights are stated the following general rights apply:
Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.
• Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
• You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
• You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal

Read more about Creative commons licenses: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/

Take down policy
If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

LUND UNIVERSITY

PO Box 117
221 00 Lund
+46 46-222 00 00



Mobilizing Knowledge

Framing Gender-based Violence and Negotiating Social Protection for Migrant Women with Precarious Legal Status

Claudia Di Matteo

LUND DISSERTATIONS IN SOCIAL WORK

Mobilizing Knowledge.

Mobilizing Knowledge

Framing Gender-based Violence and Negotiating Social Protection for Migrant Women with Precarious Legal Status

Claudia Di Matteo

LUND
UNIVERSITY

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Doctoral dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at the Faculty of Social Sciences at Lund University to be publicly defended at the School of Social Work, Allhelgona Krykogata, 8, Lund on June 12, 2025, at 10 a.m.

Faculty opponent

Johan Vamstad, Marie Cederschiöld Högskola, Stockholm

Organization: LUND UNIVERSITY School of Social Work Box 23, 22100 Lund **Author(s):** Claudia Di Matteo	**Document name:** DOCTORAL DISSERTATION **Date of issue:** 12 June 2025 **Sponsoring organization:**

Title and subtitle: Mobilizing Knowledge. Framing Gender-based Violence and Negotiating Social Protection for Migrant Women with Precarious Legal Status

Abstract: In advanced welfare societies, traditional welfare programs are failing to recognize and respond to new social risks faced by groups in precarious life situations, including migrant women. This research explore how actors in academic and civil society settings recognize and frame the struggles of migrant women with precarious legal status, particularly in terms of gender-based violence (GBV) and access to social protection. In doing so, this study aims to gain a deeper understanding of how academia and civil society produce knowledge to frame social problems, increasingly acknowledging the GBV experienced by migrant women with precarious legal status in welfare terms. Inspired by practice theory approaches, the research design comprises two sub-studies, each presented in scientific articles that have been published or submitted for publication. The first study, based on a systematic literature review methodology, focuses on knowledge produced within academia, aiming to understand how research centered on everyday professional practices frames the problem of GBV and its solutions. The second study examines knowledge produced by civil society actors (CSAs) in Sweden and Italy. Those two countries were chosen to explore knowledge production within civil society settings while examining variations among local protection systems in the EU. A vignette method with three scenarios was developed, and interviews were conducted with activists and practitioners operating in Sweden and Italy. The findings discuss how academic and civil society actors produce and mobilize knowledge through processes that define migrant women as recognized welfare subjects. Despite operating in a highly politicized environment, professionals in both fields maintain dynamic interactions with each other´s ideas, creating micro-spaces where knowledge is produced, contested, and refined. These efforts aim to make the precarious situations of migrant women visible and recognizable in welfare terms, emphasizing the strategic mobilization of knowledge to advocate for social protection and change.

Keywords: Knowledge production; Categorization; Framing; Gender-based Violence; Migration.

ISSN 1650-3872 **key title**: Lund Dissertation in Social Work n. 72		**ISBN:** 978-91-89604-79-7
	Number of pages: 109	**Language**: English

I, the undersigned, being the copyright owner of the abstract of the above-mentioned dissertation, hereby grant to all reference sources permission to publish and disseminate the abstract of the above-mentioned dissertation.

Signature Date 2025-04-14

Mobilizing Knowledge

Framing Gender-based Violence and Negotiating Social Protection for Migrant Women with Precarious Legal Status

Claudia Di Matteo

LUND
UNIVERSITY

Coverphoto design by Sofia Palm and color by Claudia Di Matteo
Copyright pp 1-109 Claudia Di Matteo

Paper 1 © Springer Open
Paper 2 © Genova University Press Open
Paper 3 © Sage Journals Open
Paper 4 © by the Author(s)

Faculty of Social Sciences
Department of Social Work

ISBN 978-91-89604-79-7
ISSN 1650-3872

Printed in Sweden by Media-Tryck, Lund University
Lund 2025

Media-Tryck is a Nordic Swan Ecolabel certified provider of printed material. Read more about our environmental work at www.mediatryck.lu.se

MADE IN SWEDEN

To unconventional womxn, and their everyday forms of resistance.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments

First, I want to thank all the people and professionals who dedicated their time and energy to participate in this research. Your invaluable insights and expertise have been instrumental in shaping this thesis, and I am deeply grateful for your kindness and collaboration. Without you, there would be no doctoral thesis.
Secondly, I want to thank my two supervisors who shared this doctoral journey with me. Without you as well, this doctoral thesis would not be possible. Thus, I am grateful to Roberto Scaramuzzino and Norma Montesino for invaluable discussions, for our agreements and disagreements, for all the fikas, for your help in preparing and carrying out the interviews in Sweden and Italy, for your professional guidance, for suggesting readings and literature, for your understanding when I was stressed and for your compassion when I was angry, for the laughter, and the valuable and continuous comments and professional advice. I always felt I needed both friendship and professional distance in the supervision, and you gave me both. I felt you worked to support me, respect my work, and hear my point of view. So, big big thanks to you both from the bottom of my heart.

I am also grateful for the people who have given me their time and energy to review my work and provide comments: to Catia Gregoratti who read my papers and kappa in the last stages and asked me the right questions at the right time while suggesting changes, new and amazing literature to work with, and also helped me with networking in academia. So big thanks to you, and I owe you.
Many thanks to Kristina Göransson, Tina Mattsson, Maja Sager, Lars Skov Henriksen, Natalia Ribas Mateos for kindly agreeing to be part of the committee and reading my work; and to Johan Vamstad for agreeing to be my opponent. I am honored and grateful to you all.

A sincere thank you also to Malin Arvidson for the insightful and constructive comments during my final seminar; to Maja Sager who has reviewed my manuscript and provided very good suggestions during my middle seminar; and to Elinn Leo Sandberg and Lisa Norén who have read and discussed my research plan during my plan seminar. I feel very grateful to have you all as my commentators at the different stages, you all redirected my work and clarified my thoughts and ideas along the way. To Håkan Johansson, Tove Harnett, Håkan Jönson, Julia Bahner, Marie Sepulcre, and the many at the School of Social Work for giving me words of encouragement and having a warm and welcoming attitude towards me. Finally, I am grateful to the Global-ANSWER Network "Social Work and Human Mobility" for the research support, the interest in making my research relevant to social work practices, and the access to resources during the different phases of my doctoral research project.

My warm thanks to Kristina Göransson as the current Director of Doctoral Studies and to Katarina Jacobsson as the current Head of Department; to Håkan Eriksson for all the technical help and support in every request I had; to Ellinor Weise, Carina Olsson, Malin Persson, Helen Wiman, Erika Werner, Teres Hjärpe, Gabriella Scaramuzzino and those who helped me/us- the PhD students- to figure out information on employment, education, finance, and career development; special thanks to Anneli Nielsen, AnnSofie Åström, Annika Petré, and to everyone at the at School of Social Work who helped me socializing, learning Swedish, and shared lunches, fikas, discussions, vinprovning, and companionship.
I also would like to express my warm thanks to my PhD colleagues Elinn, Soumi, Monika, Glenn, Yeonjin, Jeanne, Marie, Maria, Karl, Ida, Johan, Kristin, Lisa, Markus, Linda, Stina, Hanna, and all in our doctoral group. To Elinn, Soumi, and Ge Bai, goes a special thanks because they share the office and social life with me at various moments, which means they share all of my stress, happiness, sadness, anger, and the everyday roller-coaster of emotions. A special thanks also to Emma Söderman and Christel Avendal for trusting I could teach with you, for the constructive discussions, for the good reading tips, and for the moments of joy and very loud laughs that I shared with you. Thanks to Muriel Côte who gave me the possibility to grow as a teacher, and also for the jam sessions, the activism, the pillows, and the many more to come, hopefully!

I am forever grateful for my lasting friendships, near and distant: Ilaria (sei la mia persona!), and alla mia nipote speciale Arianna, e alle mie nipoti acquisite (ma sempre nipoti nel mio cuore) Margherita e Maria: a voi tre nipoti lascio la mia unica eredità, ovvero questo libro, la mia tesi; than thanks to Sara, Virgi, the many Chiara of my life, Marzia, the many Giulia in my life, Robin, Andrea e Vincenzo, Elisa, and all the activists that share my passion for organizing everyday forms of resistance, to Lisarb and Ricardo, and all my Advances family. To all the people I met in conferences, visiting periods, and summer schools, to those who crossed my path in various academic spaces and then became friends: Ulrika, Aurimas, Tolu, Juan, Vasna, Riya, Marthe, Anne.

Thanks to my colleagues with whom I collaborate in Italy, and to Giovanni, my former boss at INRCA, who is my role model as a person and a professional. To my family (grazie all amia famiglia!), friends, and those who support me and put up with me; to those who lend a helping hand, and even to those who don't; to all my failures, mistakes, disappointments, broken heart, and unmet expectations: I have learned not to worry about anything, but to honor whatever comes my way and trust me more.
Thanks to everyone and everything in my life, and sorry if I miss some names but I have some problems remembering names (you know me!), but still thanks: I have become wiser, more present, grounded, and grateful for my life, thanks to all of you.

Sammanfattning

Idag lever allt fler människor under förhållanden som definieras som prekära. Även i avancerade välfärdssamhällen lyckas inte de traditionella trygghetssystemen erkänna och hantera de nya sociala risker som dessa grupper inom ”prekariatet” ställs inför. Bland dessa grupper finner vi migrantkvinnor med osäker rättslig ställning. Denna forskning undersöker hur aktörer i akademin och i civilsamhället erkänner och ramar in migrerande kvinnors utsatthet för genusbaserat våld och tillgång till socialt skydd. Studien syftar till att få en djupare förståelse för hur dessa aktörer formulerar problemet och i allt högre grad erkänner det genusbaserade våldet som upplevs av migrantkvinnor med osäker rättslig status i välfärdstermer. Inspirerad av praxisteoretiska metoder, undersöker därför denna forskning, kunskapsproduktion i skärningspunkten mellan genusbaserat våld, migration och välfärd. Forskningsdesignen består av två delstudier, vars resultat presenterats i vetenskapliga artiklar som har publicerats eller lämnats in för publicering. Den första delstudien fokuserar på den kunskap som produceras inom akademin. Här är intresset riktat mot att förstå hur forskning som fokuserar på olika professioners praktik ramar in problemet med genusbaserat våld och dess lösningar. Studie 1 baseras på en systematisk litteraturöversikt med två analysnivåer. Den första nivån undersöker kunskapsproduktionens geografiska och disciplinära sammanhang med hjälp av bibliometriska metoder. Den andra nivån analyserar kunskapen som akademiska aktörer producerar för att rama in genusbaserat våld och dess lösningar, med hjälp av kvalitativ innehållsanalys. Den andra delstudien fokuserar på kunskap som produceras av civilsamhällesaktörer i Sverige och Italien. Landjämförelsen i undersökningen av kunskapsproduktion inom civilsamhället möjliggör att fånga variationer bland nationella och lokala skyddssystem där civilsamhällesaktörer verkar. Jag använder mig av en ”vinjettmetod” med tre scenarier som presenterar ett fall av en migrantkvinna som vistas i landet med osäker rättslig status och som blivit utsatt för genusbaserat våld. Jag har genomfört intervjuer med aktivister och praktiker inom civilsamhällesorganisationer i Sverige och Italien. Delstudien visar civilsamhällets lokala produktion av välfärdstjänster och hur yrkesverksamma och aktivister genererar och använder olika kunskaper, såsom begrepp och ramverk, när de erbjuder socialt skydd till migrantkvinnor med osäker rättslig status. Det viktigaste resultatet av denna forskning är att den kunskapsproduktions som sker i skärningspunkten mellan genusbaserat våld, migration och välfärd suddar ut de traditionella gränserna mellan den akademiska världen och civilsamhället. Trots att de verkar i en starkt politiserad miljö upprätthåller yrkesverksamma inom båda områdena dynamiska interaktioner och skapar mikroutrymmen där kunskap produceras, ifrågasätts och förfinas. Dessa insatser syftar till att göra migrantkvinnors prekära situation synlig och igenkännbar inom välfärdssystemen, med betoning på strategisk mobilisering av kunskap för att förespråka socialt skydd och förändring.

Abbreviations

DV	Domestic Violence
DMP	Data Management Plan
CSA	Civil Society Actor
EU	European Union
GBV	Gender-based Violence
IBPA	Intersectional-based Policy Analysis
IBA	Intersectional-informed Bibliometric Analysis
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
LGBTQAI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Asexual, Intersex
NRM	National Referral Mechanism
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPM	New Public Management
PTA	Practice Theory Approach
PICOS	Population, Intervention, Comparison, Outcome, Study Design
QCA	Qualitative Content Analysis

List of Papers

Paper I

Di Matteo, C. and Scaramuzzino, R. (2022). Gender-based violence (GBV) against women with precarious legal status and their access to social protection in advanced welfare societies: an analytical contribution to reconstruct the research field and its institutional development. *Comparative Migration Studies,* 10(1), 40.

Paper II

Di Matteo, C. (2022). The Institutionalization of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Migrant Women's Access to Social Protection System in Advanced Welfare Societies.: A Systematic Qualitative Exploration of the Literature at the Cutting Edge of Gender, Migration, and Welfare. *AG About Gender-International Journal of Gender Studies*, 11(22).

Paper III

Di Matteo, C. (2024). De-bordering and re-bordering practices at the intersection of gender and migration. A multi-site exploration of specialized services for migrant women experiencing violence in Italy and Sweden. *Critical Social Policy.*

Paper IV

Di Matteo, C., Montesino, N., Scaramuzzino, R. (Forthcoming). Strategic framing used by civil society actors to renegotiate state authority. The case of migrant women with precarious legal status and their access to social protection in Sweden and Italy. Submitted to the *European Journal of Social Work.*

Introduction

In 2018, only two weeks after graduating with a master´s degree, I planned my transition back into the professional realm of social work. I chose France as my new home, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working with migrants as my preferred occupational area. In Paris, I was hired by a French NGO whose main responsibility is to provide shelter and comprehensive psycho-social support services to migrants, including asylum seekers and refugees. I worked in two emergency shelters — one only for male and the other only for female residents.

While starting my job, I was introduced to my professional tasks within the organization by reading templates and short manuals about different national and international policies affecting our work with migrant populations, organizational guidelines and procedures, the codes of conduct, and ethical regulations. I worked in a team with three other professionals with an educational background in social work and international development. The four of us were supervised by a manager with a background in political science. Each of us had more or less 20 individual cases to manage, which for the sake of simplification can be classified into three categories: 1) migrant men and women who had just arrived in France and asked for asylum; 2) migrant men and women stuck in the "Dublin process[1]," which means they had to go through administrative and legal procedures to obtain asylum in the host country or else be repatriated to other EU countries of first arrival; 3) situations that did not fit into any specific administrative asylum categories and had to be framed using different administrative categories. All migrant men and women I met in the shelters recall different experiences of violence and they all went through difficult migrant journeys to arrive in Europe. Finally, within the resettlement context, they had all been subjected to some type of administrative control from several public authorities, from the police to the migration agency to the social services.

While working in Paris, I encountered Fatima – one of the many migrants present in the women's shelter. Through her story, I want to highlight how the situations of

[1] The Dublin process relates with the Dublin Regulation, or Dublin III, which determines how EU states coordinate the handling of asylum applications process. Central to the process is that one has to submit their application in the first EU country they enter. Based on this principle, an EU country can transfer an asylum seeker back to the first EU country they arrived in. If the transfer has not been executed after 18months, the responsibility for processing the asylum claim falls to the member state where the asylum seeker is currently located.

migrant women, even if each of them is unique and diverse, are intrinsically connected with their experiences of violence. More specifically, I want to point out how those experiences are met by welfare systems within the EU context. Indeed, once the lived experiences are met in institutional and organizational settings, Fatima´s struggles are "categorized" and "framed" in welfare terms by diverse public authorities. Her real-life situations are "problematized" in a way that can be interpreted and seen as rendering Fatima a subject of welfare protection.

The Story of Fatima

In Paris, I met Fatima, an Ethiopian woman whose journey unfolded against the backdrop of a tragic event—her son's participation in a protest against the government, which had cost him his life. Her husband had succumbed to persecution as well, and another son had escaped Addis Ababa and hidden to save his life. Faced with arrest, sexual abuse while in prison, and a directive to surrender her surviving son, Fatima embarked on a solo journey to Europe, the path of which she never completely revealed. When I met her, she was already in the shelter navigating her "Dublin process." She escaped a first shelter of arrival in which she was hosted as an asylee, only to resurface in Paris 18 months after her escape. As she spoke only her native language, Oromo, I attempted to bridge our communication gap by using an interpreter and relying on nuanced non-verbal cues. In this way, Fatima and I embarked on a two-month journey to articulate the details of her experiences of violence. In agreement with Fatima, I contacted a legal counselor who specialized in migration laws to help us "build a case" for the migration officer who would then decide on her legal status. To provide both proof of her experience of violence and the psycho-social support she needed, I proposed to Fatima that she reach out to a women's center specialized in gender-based violence (GBV), with a specific focus on torture as well as to a gynecologist specialized in bodily traumas lived by people in the context of persecution. The legal support and (mental) health services were accessed through informal networking with individual professionals working mostly in NGOs whose mission was to support migrants regardless of their administrative situation. Each of those steps was a reminder of Fatima´s struggles and resilience, being in a condition of precarity for several years. However, Fatima prepared diligently for the impending interview with the immigration agency, offering a detailed account of her story. Despite her tenacity and the network of friends and allies she cultivated, the conclusion was disheartening: rejection by the migration agency and a harsh directive to leave the sanctuary she had desperately sought.

Fatima: Shaping the Subject in Advanced Welfare Societies

Fatima's story, her life journey, and her struggles are deeply personal, filled with emotions and challenges only she can fully express. Yet her situation is as representative of precariousness as it is unique. Fatima´s story can be certainly understood from multiple perspectives leading us to a variety of interpretations that reveal the broader forces and the gendered structures shaping her life. One perspective might view her experiences as being linked to the impact of war, violence, and the pursuit of power. One might also interpret Fatima's struggles as being a result of unmet demands for sanctuary, shelter, and protection by welfare states, despite their frequent portrayal as bastions of democracy, ethics, and morality. Finally, one might say that Fatima´s socio-political position in societies is a result of intersecting systems of oppression (e.g., racism, sexism, capitalism). Fatima endures a combination of physical and sexual abuse in her country of origin, which is compounded by other forms of physical, moral, and symbolic violence throughout her challenging migration journey. This pattern of cumulative violence continues upon her arrival in Europe. Despite the denial of Fatima's initial asylum request and the suspension of the Dublin Regulation, which permitted her to apply for asylum a second time, she found herself in a place of confinement. In the resettlement context, her exposure to violence is exacerbated by the classification systems used to frame her problem (e.g., GBV) and categorize her into those who are allowed protection and those who are not. Initially seen as an irregular migrant with a rejected asylum request, she was placed in a shelter for those people caught within the Dublin Process and later she claimed to be recognized as a woman victim of gendered persecution in her home country. These categorizations allowed her access to certain types of social protection, yet simultaneously, her administrative status subjects her to migration controls, exposing her to the risk of expulsion and deportation. In other words, Fatima´s story provides an insightful introduction to the challenges of accessing social protection for migrants exposed to GBV. It helps conceptualize the precarious situation of women who find themselves facing significant barriers to accessing social rights, welfare services, and a sense of stability and belonging because of a continuous state of deportability (De Genova, 2002).

Fatima's situation exemplifies precariousness as she lacks residency or citizenship rights, which limits her access to welfare and protection. At the same time, it is this precariousness, a product of the migration system, that increases her vulnerability to further violence. In this regard, in this doctoral thesis, I aim to approach Fatima's story examining how she became a *subject* defined through various categories that could make it possible for her to access some forms of social protection. Is Fatima a woman, a migrant, an asylee, a victim of GBV, or a survivor? These categorizations are framed by powerful types of knowledge that produce and

reinforce classification systems embedded in institutional practices. In Fatima's story, the many professionals she encountered in France categorized her in various institutional spaces—sometimes as a migrant woman, other times as an asylee, a victim to rescue.

I was discussing the situation of migrant women experiencing GBV with a professional working at a women's shelter, and the professional stated something like the following:

> When migrant women (like Fatima) want asylum, then it's the migration agency that needs to offer her the accommodation, right?

The quotation above highlights how institutional frameworks and societal norms can shape an individual's experience and opportunities. The label of "migrant" associated with “asylum” takes precedence over other subjects' identities; in the case of Fatima, for instance, the label asylee takes over the category of a woman experiencing GBV. Prioritization of migration status over the experience of GBV suggests that the migration agency, rather than being a shelter for victims of GBV, is deemed responsible for addressing Fatima's need for protection. This example underscores how institutional practices and categorizations can shape the type of support individuals receive, often based on the dominant categories available to professionals in their everyday institutional activities. By examining the various frames through which categories are assigned to Fatima, we can uncover how these labels influence professionals' ability to navigate different administrative systems of support and protection. This approach also sheds light on the power dynamics at play in these institutional spaces, where certain identities (e.g., gender, ethnicity, class) may be prioritized, marginalized, or ignored, affecting the level of assistance and recognition that Fatima receives. In other words, what I pinpoint by using the professional´s quotation above is how constructing people as subjects remains a significant aspect in defining “who gets what and how” in welfare terms, manifesting a logic for classifying those who can have access to specific welfare provisions, and which actor has the authority and responsibility to decide “who can get what” in advanced welfare societies.

The term *advanced welfare societies* highlights the critical positions of some countries and regions of the world at the forefront of global economic competition (Hogsbro and Shaw, 2017: 3). There are numerous forms of welfare systems, each offering various means for individuals and groups to access social protection. No single system is inherently superior or more advanced. What is advanced, however, is the controversial (i.e., colonial) politics and governance through which Western countries have maintained a higher standard of living (e.g., decent working conditions, access to social security, and education), which was enjoyed by the majority of their (male) citizens, especially during the Golden Age of Welfare (Fraser and Gordon, 1994; Ranci and Pavolini, 2015).

Institutional categorizations and frames within Western welfare states are deeply embedded with increasing global disparities between different world regions (Robinson and Acemoglu, 2012) and the accumulation of wealth in Western countries (Bhambra and Holmwood, 2018). The resulting inequalities in the redistribution of resources have led to people´s categories governing bureaucratic local social support (Bhambra, 2014; Robinson and Acemoglu, 2012; Quijano, 2007; Mignolo, 2000; Ribas-Mateos, 2021). In this context, contemporary welfare reforms characterized by new public management, reductions in public spending, and the outsourcing of services have influenced the convergence of diverse European welfare states (Henriksen et al., 2016), which limited even more migrants' access to public provisions. This debate on the convergence of EU Welfare systems and access to service provisions oriented my attention to studying welfare systems that are traditionally positioned in two different welfare typologies, namely Sweden (Socio-Democratic Welfare model) and Italy (Familistic Welfare model), and guided my attention to the local levels, particularly to non-state actors who act in the double role of service delivery for the public authority and civil society representing specific interests groups. This choice has been made to better understand the similarities and continuity between different countries (and welfare systems) when it comes to migrant´s women access to local social service provisions.

Furthermore, this study primarily focuses on exploring the complex interplay between frames, categorization, and access to social protection, as illustrated in Fatima's story. Historically, academia and civil society have played an important role in producing knowledge (e.g. frames, categories, concepts) that shape classification systems embedded in institutional practices. In particular, academic and civil society knowledge production has been considered credible and legitimate when constructing social problems, such as in the case of GBV experienced by migrant women, and possible solutions to solve societal issues.

Categories, Frames, and Knowledge Production

In this doctoral thesis, frames and categories are explored as tools used to govern people within a specific territory, where the welfare system is accessible to recognized citizens of a nation-state (Herz and Bečević, 2024). Frames and framing are common in neo-institutional literature (Goffman, 1974; Cornelissen and Werner, 2014) and relate to social and political categories. Both frames and categories are seen as knowledge-based systems rooted in values and beliefs, used to organize life and assign political and social rights, influencing access to welfare and protections (Harrits and Ostergaard, 2011; Acosta-Jimenez et al., 2021). In particular, frames are understood as stable knowledge structures that help interpret and assign meaning to events and situations, aiming to mobilize people and gain social support. Frameworks are established frames within an institutional context, embedded in

laws, regulations, and procedures to assign meanings when making decisions. Within this institutional context, processes of framing and categorizing show the agency of specific social actors, such as researchers and activists. These actors use knowledge to interpret reality, negotiate, redefine, reinvent, and sometimes replace established normative frames and categories.

Different types of knowledge play a crucial role in the categorization of individuals, particularly in how subjects are constructed within institutional frameworks. It is often more accurate to refer to 'knowledges' in the plural, acknowledging the diverse, socially produced types of knowledge that shape social practices and welfare interventions. These interventions are developed by different social actors who have the power and authority to establish the boundaries of what is considered permissible to say and do within the social protection system. As exemplified by the quotation discussed in the previous section, we can see how the doings of categories work in practice, where the category of asylee prevails over the category of a woman experiencing GBV, and the authority to provide shelter is given to the migration agency. Thus, the categories of migrant women are created and used—categories that produce a divide between "aliens" and "citizens"—reinforcing distinctions that shape social and political belonging alongside the real possibility of having social rights and access to welfare benefits. Boundaries between aliens and citizens infiltrate everyday work in institutions through classification systems, but at the same time, they are also actively reshaped by social actors, who through their actions can reimagine and constantly refine who is included, excluded, or transformed by people's categories.

Production of the *knowledges* that shape the welfare subject who has access to social protection in advanced welfare societies is the problem this thesis unpacks. In particular, attention is focused on the subject of *migrant women* who have *precarious legal status*. The precarious legal status of migrant women is defined here as a particular condition of dependency created by legislation compounded with insecure socioeconomic conditions into which certain women are positioned (Butler, 2004: 25). Thus, the precarious migration status creates a specific structural dependency that exposes migrant women to the risk of GBV, while at the same time making it difficult for them to exit the violence and access social protection. Recalling the story of Fatima, her problems can be framed as "GBV," while Fatima can be categorized as a "migrant woman," and her position vis-à-vis the nation-state is framed as "precarious legal status" outside the recognition of citizenship rights in advanced welfare societies. Their precarious legal status increases the risk for migrant women to experience real forms of GBV (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2012; De Genova, 2002; Khosravi, 2010; Sager, 2011). Migrant women like Fatima often face unique challenges due to their precarious legal status, which can make them more vulnerable to GBV and simultaneously limit their ability to seek help or protection. This situation is compounded by the lack of recognition of migrant women's rights within the host country's legal and social protection systems. Because of this lack of

recognition and rights, the knowledge produced and made available to interpret the situations of GBV migrant women's experience can have profound implications for their ability to access social protection. Hence, the knowledges through which professionals (re-)produce and assign categories while framing situations of GBV can determine the level of support migrant women receive as well as which institutions are deemed responsible for addressing their needs.

Moreover, the use of different types of knowledge highlights the power dynamics at play between different social actors who produce and use knowledge that may reproduce the dominant social structure. Within welfare systems in the EU, control over dominant narratives and frameworks often has the power to shape policies and resources. Historically, the academic and political fields have been dominated by men who considered women their subordinates, establishing categories of motherhood that relegated them to the household (Lundqvist, 2011). Within this context, even today, some migrant women who fit into the dominant categories and frames of motherhood might receive adequate support while others might fall through the cracks of the system due to differing interpretations of their status and needs. For instance, the GBV framework linked to child protection may ensure rights and access to services for migrant women who are married and have kids in the resettlement context compared to those who are not married and do not have kids, or those like Fatima who are wives and mothers in their home country (Lundkvist, 2011; Schmoll, 2024). In all those instances, migrant women may have precarious legal status and may be subjected to violence, but the categories of married women and motherhood in the host country or home country could play a role in determining who can access social protection and what authority is responsible for it. This can also lead to reproducing inconsistencies in access to services.

In conclusion, this thesis critically explores various knowledges that categorize Fatima through specific frames designed to protect subjects identified as migrant women with precarious legal status who are experiencing GBV. The knowledge underpinning this issue is produced by a diverse array of actors, including social science researchers, professional groups such as practitioners and social workers, and civil society actors (CSAs), as well as the state apparatus that wields influence over laws, policies, and public institutions (Bacchi, 2009: 25). In this doctoral thesis, however, the focus is exclusively on academics and civil society actors (CSAs), which contribute to the production of knowledges that seeks to frame the issues of GBV and the precarious legal status of migrant women in an institutional framework (Abji, 2018; Bhuyan et al., 2016; Baksh-Soodeen and Harcourt, 2015). Academic research plays a crucial role in framing the problem at hand and the solutions to it, providing insights that inform the practice of social protection. Simultaneously, CSAs produce knowledge alongside other sources of expertise to address the complex issues faced by migrant women with precarious legal status, framing the problem and its solutions. The study of the dynamic interplay between academia

and civil society knowledge production not only enriches both fields, but also increases our understanding of the many influences shaping the social protection systems available to migrant women with precarious life conditions.

I do not know what happened to Fatima. In a probability scenario, she might have stayed undocumented in France; she might have fled to a new EU country as an undocumented person and be exposed to other types and forms of violence and exploitation; she might have been deported, or instead, found a helping hand and a community where she could belong.

Research Problem

In advanced welfare societies, we are witnessing a progressive erosion of public welfare expenditure through neo-liberal state politics, oriented in favor of economic interests and individual gains (Bhambra and Holmwood, 2018). Consequently, the welfare state is facing a contraction of public resources that can be redistributed to protect people from the social risks to which they are exposed. Historically, welfare programs were built around the category of risks related to the working class (e.g., older age/pension, sickness/social security, joblessness/unemployment), whose economic status was linked to citizenship, which entailed the recognition of civil, political, and social rights protected by the state (Ranci and Pavolini, 2015). Nowadays, a growing number of people in advanced welfare societies are experiencing precarious job positions and lacking labor-related security. Additionally, they lack one or more citizens' rights that prevent them from accessing state benefits, community support, private insurance, and supplementary money earnings (Standing, 2011:12). As a result, those groups living precarious existence, defined as the new social class of the "precariat" (precarious and proletarian) (Standing, 2011:7), face new social risks that are not recognized, or only partially recognized, within the traditional categories protected by existing welfare programs. Among the variety of people falling into the category of the precariat, migrants are one of the groups who have access to fewer welfare entitlements and social rights and, therefore, to a system of protection.

Zooming in on the social protection in different welfare systems linked to migrant groups in precarious conditions, a focus on welfare typology (e.g., Liberal, Conservative, Social Democratic) can help us illustrate how diverse welfare systems may offer various levels of social protection. For example, social democratic states like Sweden have historically provided universal benefits to migrants (e.g., language training and employment support) although access to such benefits has still been contingent on residency status. In contrast, liberal states such as the UK have had an assimilationist political agenda, often tying the social rights of migrants to employment and, thereby, negatively impacting groups more likely to work in precarious jobs and informal markets. The legal status of migrants (Sainsbury, 2012) —whether they are documented, undocumented, refugees, or asylum seekers—has also played a crucial role in determining migrants´ access to social rights. For instance, documented migrants in many countries may have had access to hospitals and schools, while undocumented migrants may have been excluded from these

services, depending on the availability of universal healthcare and education. Finally, refugees and asylum seekers often have specific social rights under international law, but the extent and enforcement of these rights could vary based on national systems (Sainsbury, 2012).

When examining the social rights of migrants through the lens of traditional welfare typologies, several limits and critiques arise. One major critique is that these models often oversimplify the complex and dynamic nature of welfare systems, overlooking the nuances and hybrid forms that exist within individual welfare nations (Ranci and Pavolini, 2015). Traditional welfare typologies (see Esping-Andersen, 1990) underestimate the ways in which many welfare states incorporate elements from multiple models (Ranci and Pavolini, 2015). Additionally, the focus on state-provided welfare can overlook the role of informal networks and community-based support systems offered by different CSAs that are crucial in organizing and delivering social protection in many advanced welfare societies (Ryndyk, Suter, Odden, 2021). A clear example of how CSAs are important players in organizing and delivering welfare support *is* the field of social protection available to women in general, and migrant women in particular (Baksh-Soodeen and Harcourt, 2015; Campomori and Ambrosini, 2020). Indeed, in this field, the role of CSAs such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community groups (i.e., associations) is crucial in providing specialized services that are more attuned to the needs of migrant women (e.g., multilingual support, culturally competent counseling, medical and legal assistance), highlighting the limitations of welfare state programs that often are designed with a one-size-fits-all approach, which considers the needs of the "general" population, neglecting the unique challenges faced by migrant women in precarious conditions.

In this regard, the group of migrant women, even if diverse and heterogenous, is particularly subjected to the kind of social, economic, and political precariousness that exposes them to a great risk of experiencing GBV. Examples of this precariousness can be identified in the global care chain (Hochschild, 2012; Parreñas, 2015), where migrant women are segregated in the so-called 3-C sectors (cooking, caring, cleaning) and comprise the majority of domestic workers with little or no job security, being exploited in the shadow economy, or being dependent on their employers for access to residency and shelter. Another example of a precarious condition is the migratory situation linked to transnational marriage or family reunification, where migrant women are dependent on their partners for access to regular permits and social rights, which in turn, may expose them to greater risks of violence and abuse within the household (Ambrosini, 2020; 2022; Mezzadra and Nielsen, 2012). Moreover, migrant women can also be undocumented or fall into the categories of refugees and asylum seekers, whose lack of social, civil, and political rights makes them more vulnerable to the risk of violence and chronic precarity (Standing, 2011: 92).

Nowadays, we are witnessing a general increase in reliance on CSAs in providing welfare support for diverse groups of the precariat that fall outside the traditional categories recognized and protected by welfare programs (Ranci and Pavolini, 2015). The important role played by CSAs in supporting and protecting migrant women with precarious legal status can also highlight the changing dynamics characterizing the welfare systems (Villa and Johansen, 2019; Bonetti and Villa, 2014). This changing context emphasizes the paradoxes and contradictions in the organization of different levels of social protection that are increasingly dependent on contextual institutional relationships between state and non-state actors and civil society's ability to organize and deliver interventions in the social protection field, replacing public authorities.

Previous Research

Literature (Kuhlmann and Bouckaert, 2016; De Vita and Lucciarini, 2019) sheds light on the transformations of the welfare systems within the EU in the last two decades. Those changes have increasingly aligned with new public management principles, which focus on making services more efficient and cost-effective. As a result, responsibilities and resources have been shifted between national, regional, and local governments through a process known as rescaling (Kuhlmann and Bouckaert, 2016). Territorial rescaling processes in Europe have been commonly driven by austerity measures and the pursuit of administrative efficiency, influencing the reorganization of welfare service delivery, through the externalization of local services to private, for-profit, and non-profit providers. The common development within EU-countries towards externalizations of service provisions has created a welfare mix (Henriksen et al., 2016; Ciarini, 2020) at the local level, with a growing trend towards involving both non-profit and for-profit organizations. In this new context, non-profit organizations have become appealing partners for public authorities because they offer professional flexibility, meaning reduced costs of trained personnel and the possibility to rely on volunteers. The institutional arrangements between governmental and non-governmental actors in the welfare mix have led to more similarities in how social services are delivered at the local level across the EU, despite differences in both national welfare systems and the relationships between state and non-state actors in each system (Henriksen et al., 2016).

Contemporary local governance is characterized by similar reforms guided by NPM and neo-liberal principles. These changes highlight also another similarity among local service delivery within the EU, namely austerity and state control limiting the access to welfare provisions for an increasing number of people belonging to the precariat (Standing, 2012; Ciarini, 2020). In this sense, previous research highlights that access to services is crucial not only for understanding the functioning of EU

local welfare mix but most importantly for unpacking the relationship between precarious groups and state authority (Norstedt et al., 2022). This relationship is particularly evident in the field at the intersection of GBV and migration when studying continuity and similarities in access to local welfare provisions. Indeed, by focusing on migrant women with precarious legal status and their access to social protection, we can see how local welfare provisions may contribute to their precarious situations or reduce precarity.

In this regard, some researchers (Kolankiewicz and Sager, 2021; Ribas-Mateos, 2021) emphasize the importance of understanding how categories and frames are used by diverse institutions to manage people's movements, sorting people into those who are deserving and those who are not. This process of filtering people creates different paths for accessing social protection based on factors like nationality, gender, race, and legal status, reinforcing borders and differentiations (Ribas Mateos, 2021; Sager, 2018). In other words, traditional welfare systems are increasingly limiting the recognition of the emerging social risks faced by the precariat, particularly the risk of GBV that migrant women with precarious legal status encounter, and this social recognition is performed by using categories and frames to filter people.

However, the process of categorizing and framing takes place in an unstable and contested political landscape (Ambrosini 2021). Within this unstable context, various local social actors, such as researchers, welfare professionals, migrant-rights activists, and other civil society actors are working to make visible and recognizable in welfare terms those migrant women in precarious situations who are exposed to the risk of GBV. Concerning the efforts to make migrant women's precarity more visible, CSAs are mobilizing knowledges and creating micro-local acts of solidarity (Poulakidakos et al., 2024). Hence, non-profit organizations at the local level not only play a key role in delivering social services, but they are also crucial in contesting, challenging, and renegotiating categories and frames mobilizing knowledges for social change.

In sum, knowledge producing categories and frames plays an important role in recognizing the social risks faced by groups within precariat falling outside the social protection systems. In this regard, I focus on the production of knowledge by academics and CSAs. This focus aims to understand the role of these actors in framing the issue of GBV and recognizing migrant women with precarious status as subjects of welfare that can access some forms of social protection. By doing so, in this doctoral thesis, I seek to better understand how knowledges influence the local contexts of service delivery, particularly within Sweden and Italy.

The recognition of migrant women's precarious situations within GBV frameworks

Violence against women as well as GBV has historically been one of the central concerns of different societal actors and social movements (Baksh-Soodeen and

Harcourt, 2015). The mobilization of women in the 1960s globally marked a significant space to reframe the socially accepted superiority of men over women, which was the foundation for sexist discrimination and patriarchal structures of domination (Baksh-Soodeen and Harcourt, 2015). During the 1990s, domestic violence (DV) became a recognized area of public interest, and governments were concerned with developing policies in this field (Bacchi, 1999). In turn, the solutions proposed and endorsed by different feminist groups located in Western countries (Bacchi, 1999) were centered on gender equality between men and women in diverse spaces such as the domestic sphere, the workplace, and society at large. For the issue to be recognized, individuals coming from social (feminist and women's) movements had entered international agencies and state institutions, and through their lobbying and advocacy work, they pushed to influence plans of action and social programs at the global, international, national, and local levels (Razack, 1995; Bacchi, 1999; Moghadam, 2015). However, by engaging with the public bureaucratic systems, the framings of GBV in advanced welfare societies were incorporated into the public administration, assigned to different branches of the state (e.g., the police, the criminal justice system, the social services), hence managed by different groups of professionals (see Bacchi, 1999: 6-8).

In the same period, within advanced welfare societies, the frame of GBV, with particular reference to DV, began to be incorporated into the terrain of migration policies (Razack, 1995; 2021), where specific forms of GBV were recognized in the context of migration and asylum processes. The idea was to acknowledge that some migrant women might be fleeing their home countries due to GBV, and therefore, they could be classified as victims of gender persecution. This classification could potentially grant them access to asylum and protection in the host country. Various academic disciplines, including medicine, law, and social work, played a crucial role in shaping the discourse around this issue (Bacchi, 1999: 9), engaging in debates on how best to understand and address the needs of migrant women (Razack, 1995). Further, culturally related concepts were then developed and drove the expansions of classification systems framing DV, such as honor-based violence, forced marriages, and female genital mutilation (Ozcurumez et al., 2021). In the same way, trafficking became an area of public interest and through lobby activities carried out by CSAs and other academic experts (Mai et al., 2022), a certain mainstream frame of trafficking was included in international policies and national laws, providing a system of protection for those situations classified as prostitution and work exploitation, where categories of victims, including migrant women victims, were created.

In other words, since the ´90s, governments have increasingly recognized GBV experienced by migrant women who have precarious legal status as a social problem worthy of policy intervention (Bacchi, 1999; Spector and Kitsuse, 1987). At the same time, the framing of GBV has involved determining how different types and forms of violence against migrant women should be understood and addressed

within the context of welfare, and thus regular permits and social protection granted by different public authorities. This discussion about framing GBV also included the debate on what types of actions and services should be provided by specific professionals who have a governmental mandate to support migrant women. In this sense, within the prevalent frames included in governmental actions, it is possible to recognize professional interests involved in it and that the prevalence of certain framings might have problematic effects, favoring professional power and recognition over migrant women´s interests (Bacchi, 1999). For instance, legal professionals might focus on the justice system and protection under the law, while social workers might emphasize the importance of shelters and counseling services; instead, medical professionals might pay more attention to women´s physical and mental health. Each profession has its own interest in putting forward a specific framing to redistribute authority and resources between the different welfare programs. Thus, access to social protection cannot be studied in isolation from the actors' relations and interests, which shape the interpretative frames defining the social issue at hand (Bacchi, 1999; Spector & Kitsuse, 1987).

In sum, it is important to acknowledge that CSAs linked to women´s movements and other groups such as professionals and academic disciplines have played a significant role in recognizing violence against women and GBV in policy terms (Bacchi, 1999; Fraser, 1987), proposing specific welfare programs and interventions in the intersecting fields of GBV and migration. Within advanced welfare societies, civil society and academic disciplines have had a great impact on translating GBV and migrant women´s subjects into welfare terms (Baksh-Soodeen and Harcourt, 2015), thus entering into the migration-gender field and producing a system of social rights that facilitate (or limiting) access to social protection by specific categories of migrant women.

The current political and historical context of migration control and neo-liberal state politics has an impact on the ways in which social protection can be accessed by migrant women in precarious conditions. Thus, concepts, classification systems, frames, and categorization processes are increasingly relevant in legitimizing the on-the-ground social protection accessed by the new class of the precariat (Standing, 2011), such as migrant women with precarious legal status. Accordingly, this study emphasizes the importance of knowledge production in shaping concepts, categories, and frames that recognize the particular risks to which migrant women are exposed and of using different knowledges to identify the different avenues through which migrant women in precarious conditions can access social protection.

Positioning the Research Aim

This study aims to understand how processes of knowledge production shape the framing related to the problem of GBV experienced by migrant women with precarious legal status, as well as their access to social protection. The broader interest in how knowledge influences the understanding of GBV in the context of migration is particularly relevant in today's political and historical climate. In many advanced welfare societies, the rights of migrant women, along with those of other marginalized and oppressed groups, are increasingly threatened by the rise of xenophobic and far-right parties (Farris, 2017). Moreover, traditional welfare typologies often fail to acknowledge this shifting political landscape and its impact on access to welfare provisions. Therefore, this study investigates the processes of knowledge production to better understand the ways in which diverse social actors work to recognize and uphold the rights of migrant women in an increasingly threatening welfare context.

Different types of knowledge co-exist, compete, conflict, and generally constitute a system where different social actors in different places and times become important in shaping what are considered valid concepts, categories, and frames (Burke, 2016), thus impacting the available solutions to the problem at hand. In this study, two settings of knowledge production that are constitutive of the problem of GBV and its solutions are investigated: academia and civil society (Table 1).

Table 1. Processes of Knowledge Production

SETTINGS	AGENTS	TYPES OF KNOWING
Academia	Researchers/Academics	Knowing about
Civil Society	Practitioners/Activists	Knowing how

The focus on academia and civil society stems from the fact that those are two of the most important settings for knowledge production. In academic and civil society settings, the actors who produce knowledge are researchers/academics and practitioners/activists, respectively.

Operating within academic institutions, academics/researchers can “know about,” which means gaining insights into social problems and solutions by conducting research in collaboration with practitioners and activists holding positions within civil society organizations and who work directly with migrant women. However, in conducting research with practitioners working with migrant women experiencing GBV, academics can take on different approaches. One approach may emphasize the role of CSAs in challenging immigration authorities, highlighting the need to address structural violence. Another approach may focus on collaboration between state and non-state actors, emphasizing the role of CSAs in navigating the social protection system, and securing access for these migrant women. Hence, the

research grounded in the empirical reality of civil society in various settings may produce different types of knowledge depending on whether the focus is on activism against migration control or collaboration with state authorities.

In civil society settings, the actors who produce knowledge are practitioners and activists who can "know how" to work daily with migrant women facing precarious legal status and address their problems. Similarly to academic knowledge production, civil society knowledge production may take on different approaches, either by developing alternative frameworks to reduce the power of immigration authorities or by navigating existing systems to help migrant women access existing state protection. These non-state actors may use academic knowledge to inform their actions, many of them may have obtained academic degrees, and some activists and practitioners may also hold academic positions, contributing to both civil society efforts and academic debates.

In other words, I emphasize that knowledge production in both academic and civil society settings arises from the interactions and collaborations among academics, researchers, practitioners, and activists. This thesis specifically explores how these interactions produced knowledge framing the problem of GBV experienced by migrant women with precarious legal status in welfare terms. To achieve this, I employed a mixed-methods approach grounded in two studies. Study 1 focuses on academic knowledge production. I conducted a systematic literature review, using grey literature from civil society reports to guide the selection of the academic materials. During the selection of these academic materials, a key criterion was their empirical basis and their examination of civil society actions. Study 2 investigates knowledge production within civil society settings. I conducted interviews with professionals in Sweden and Italy, using the vignette method. I designed three vignette scenarios that were constructed and developed based on the analysis of the academic knowledge selected with the systematics literature review method.

In sum, while the thesis examines academia and civil society as distinct settings for knowledge production, I aimed to highlight their epistemological interconnectedness through the whole research process, including the choice of the methods of both studies.

Positioning the Research Questions

The research attention is directed on identifying who, within academic and civil society settings, has the authority to represent the social problem of GBV experienced by migrant women, which type of knowledge is produced, and whether those who "own" the social issue (Bacchi, 1999: 9) are committed to including the precarious situations of migrant women and the GBV they experience in ways that do not reproduce or reinforce oppressive and discriminatory power structures. Thus,

I am interested in identifying knowledge frameworks that conceptualize the issue of GBV faced by migrant women with precarious legal status, particularly in the context of their intricate interactions with migration policies in advanced welfare societies. To paraphrase Bacchi (1999: 10-11), by analyzing the production of knowledge on the social issue at hand, we can gain deeper insights into how various interpretations of the multifaceted precarity experienced by migrant women, along with the social risks of GBV to which they are exposed, foreclose some courses of action within welfare programs and/or can potentially open new avenues for access to both social protection and social change.

Academic knowledge production is taken as one of the primary settings where the process of knowing about social problems, such as the problem of GBV experienced by migrant women, has the authoritative power to say what concepts, categories, frames, observations of certain experiences and ways of knowing count as valid knowledge (Burke, 2016) and, in turn, have the potential to influence governmental policies and professional everyday work within welfare services. In this regard, the processes of knowledge production in academia can shape policies and practices in different ways, as exemplified below.

On the one hand, academics are regarded as experts, and some of them are placed in higher positions where they advise governments on how to address specific social problems. Moreover, their knowledge becomes trendy in scientific communities. In this sense, an order of knowledge (Burke; 2016: 26) exists where some concepts, categories, and classifications are at the top of a hierarchy of credibility. Knowledge and concepts that have been placed at the top of the order/hierarchy might also be changed and challenged by other conceptualizations and types of knowing that are considered unworthy at certain times and in certain spaces (Burke, 2016). On the other hand, the development of academic disciplines linked to institutionalized professions (e.g., medicine, psychology, social work) has historically impacted the production of specialized language in advanced welfare societies (Høgsbro and Shaw, 2017). Thus, everyday institutional and organizational life has become elaborated by academics into a precise set of professional actions abstracted through categories, notions, and classification systems that are useful for each profession. In turn, the role of academic disciplines is to spread information that is considered *true* knowledge to the minds of students, such as future practitioners, educated to fit into the professional world of organizations (Freire, 1970: 72-77), including civil society and state bureaucratic institutions.

Similarly, this study sees civil society as one of the primary settings in which different knowledges are produced and used in the doing of social protection, which means organizing and managing the welfare services available to migrant women with precarious legal status who are experiencing GBV. This study explores how various practitioners and activists working on the ground produce and use diverse knowledges when providing and delivering different degrees of social protection to migrant women who have precarious legal status. The focus is particularly on the

practical value of different concepts, categories, and classification systems that underly how and under which conditions different knowledges, with their hierarchical categories and frameworks, can be used strategically by CSAs as a tool and resource that ensures or justifies the provision of forms of social protection for migrant women with precarious legal status.

The role of those CSAs remains ambivalent (Campomori and Ambrosini, 2020). This is because, on the one hand, they perform service delivery for the state, using laws, policy frameworks, and bureaucratic state categories to justify (or limit) the protection and assistance of the precarious groups; on the other hand, some CSAs are also an expression of collective interests and social movements (e.g., feminist and women´s groups), which can organize, negotiate, and push the boundaries of state categories and policy frames to make room for marginalized or neglected groups (Vamstad and Karlsson, 2022). The agency of CSAs does indeed produce usable knowledge (Wagenaar, 2012) for professionals who work to address the real-life challenges faced by migrant women in accessing various forms of social protection. Additionally, civil society knowledge production contributes to the debate on GBV and explores solutions that are more suitable for different groups of the precariat that are often excluded from traditional welfare-state programs.

In sum, academic knowledge plays a role in shaping and reframing how experiences of violence are understood, particularly in the context of migrant women categorized as welfare beneficiaries of specific forms of social protection. CSAs can provide unique and novel insights into knowledge production by leveraging diverse types of knowledge at the intersection of GBV, migration, and welfare. Thus, CSAs re-organize, reshape, and re-negotiate access to social protection for different groups of migrant women, offering different tailored approaches to meet the variety of their precarious situations and needs. Unlike public agencies, which are often restricted by legal mandates and specific policy areas, CSAs have more flexibility to define and frame the issue of GBV and migrant women's precarious status. This freedom allows them to generate and mobilize knowledge that may reorganize, reshape, and renegotiate access to social protection for various migrant women groups. By doing so, CSAs not only fill gaps left by public agencies but also contribute to a more nuanced understanding of social protection needs and solutions. Given the aim of this study, the following research questions guided the analysis (see Table 2):

1) Who are the academic actors producing the knowledge related to the problem of GBV against women with precarious legal status and the solutions to it? (Paper I)

2) How do different academic and civil society actors frame the problem of GBV against migrant women with precarious legal status and the solutions to it? (Paper II and Paper III)

3) How do different civil society actors use frames strategically to negotiate migrant women’s access to social protection? (Paper IV)

Table 2. Overview of four empirical analysis

Papers	Research Aim	Research Question	Research Data
Paper I	Paper I explores who are the academic actors producing knowledge; to which disciplines they belong to; and where the knowledge is produced.	Who are the academic actors producing the knowledge related to the problem of GBV against women with precarious legal status and the solutions to it?	I carried out a bibliometric analysis of 2174 published academic documents using bibliometric software.
Paper II	Paper II examines how the knowledge produced by academic actors frame the problem of GBV experienced by migrant women with precarious legal status and the solutions to it.	How do different academic actors frame the problem of GBV against migrant women with precarious legal status and the solutions to it?	I carried out a systematic literature review, analyzing 25 published academic documents using qualitative content analysis (QCA).
Paper III	Paper III showcases how professionals working in diverse civil society organizations in Sweden and Italy use different logics to frame the problem of GBV, making it possible for migrant women to access social protection in some cases and not others.	How do different civil society actors frame the problem of GBV against migrant women with precarious legal status and the solutions to it?	I carried out n.31 interviews with professionals working in diverse civil society organizations in Sweden and Italy using the vignettes method. I analyzed the data with an interpretative approach to coding interviews.
Paper IV	Paper IV reveals how professional working in civil society organizations in Sweden and Italy used diverse strategies and tactics to frame the situation of migrant women with precarious legal status when negotiating their access to social protection.	How do different civil society actors use frames strategically to negotiate migrant women's access to social protection?	I carried out n.31 interviews with professionals working in diverse civil society organizations in Sweden and Italy using the vignettes method. I analyzed the data with thematic analysis.

Limitations of the study

The aim and scope of this doctoral thesis come with limitations. The focus is neither to describe nor collect the stories of migrant women subjected to violence or their experiences in accessing social protection systems. I made this choice, on the one hand, because I had very limited time and resources. On the other hand, as discussed in the introduction, I worked with NGOs for several years and I have documented the situation of migrant women in precarious legal status throughout my everyday work with them. What I am most interested in, instead, is the critical investigation of the ways in which institutions and organizations within advanced welfare societies recognize, acknowledge, and define the precarious situations of migrant women, which impact the organization of welfare responses to these situations.

I addressed only partially the definition of GBV, unable to fully and extensively address the complexity of categories of gender and sexuality in the intersecting fields of gender, migration, and welfare. Perhaps I should have focused on defining GBV. However, in this doctoral thesis, the reader will not find a specific definition of GBV. I did not have a specific definition in mind when I started this research because my study is precisely about knowledge production and how certain concepts and ideas are dominant over others in defining what GBV is. Thus, my intention has always been to treat GBV as it emerges in my empirical material.

Similarly, I do not discuss in-depth categories of ethnicity, national origin, or religion, but I exclusively define and work with the concept of "precarious legal status." The precarious legal status in this doctoral thesis refers exclusively to women asylum seekers or refused asylum requests, special visa categories, such as spousal and temporary workers, and some human rights cases, such as migrants who overstayed their visas, irregular workers, and undocumented women. The category of precarious legal status is operationalized to limited situations of precarity that involve migrant women in the EU. I direct my analytical attention to migrant women with precarious legal status and how these precarious situations impact the interpretation of GBV and the consequent access to social interventions. I chose to exclude from my analysis the situations of refugee women experiencing GBV, not because refugee women are less precarious and more protected than other migrant women groups, but because the category of "refugee" entails specific international regulations and welfare programs within advanced welfare societies. Thus, it is less of a struggle for a person with refugee status to access specific social protection programs and provisions when experiencing GBV.

The intent of this study is not to separate migrant women from other groups of women or marginalized communities nor to stereotypically represent their experiences of GBV. I acknowledge that "women" is a reductive category, and do not fully account for a queer and LGBTQAI+ female representation. I acknowledge

that, from a queer perspective (Ahmed, 2017), the sisterhood does not only refer to bonding or affinity experiences among women but includes gender-diverse people who are subjected to patriarchal norms and capitalist, colonial exploitation. Sisterhood is about believing the stories of other people, understanding their unique positions, and recognizing the common interests of marginalized people to resist the structure of power and oppression.

I acknowledge that violence against women is a worldwide phenomenon and a violation of human rights. I also acknowledge that women, including migrant women, are not a homogenous group, and not all women experience violence to the same degree, with the same dynamics or the same consequences, or have access to the same resources. The limited situations linked to the precarious legal status operationalized in this research is an analytical lens that helps me investigate and reflect on how different social actors have conceptualized and recognized the intersection of GBV, migration, and welfare.

Finally, this study offers some limited insights into the ways in which social protection is organized to respond to migrant women with precarious legal status that is however relevant and comparable to other contexts and might suggest some general, critical reflections on the way we understand, think, and organize social protection systems in advanced welfare societies.

Theoretical Framework

Experiences of violence must be collectively recognized to become relevant for policy intervention. Accordingly, the process of framing a violent situation is the necessary element to produce the social problem and the consequent solutions to it. Further, as discussed in the introduction of this thesis, the people experiencing violence must be categorized as welfare subjects, which means classified in certain ways to have access to social protection in advanced welfare societies. However, for a violent situation to be framed as a social problem and for a person to be categorized as eligible for some type of social intervention, knowledge needs to be generated by social actors. Finally, this knowledge must be considered credible and believable in organizational and institutional settings if it is to produce effects (Loseke, 2017).

This study addresses the different types of knowledge that professionals working in academic and civil society settings produce, use, and mobilize to frame GBV experienced by migrant women with precarious legal status and the solutions available within the social protection system. In doing so, this research overcomes traditional limitations in welfare studies where policies are usually analyzed as the attempt of governments to frame social problems (Bacchi, 1999:1) and practices are analyzed as the implementation of governmental policies through street-level bureaucrats working in public services (Zacka, 2017; Lipsky, 1980). It is argued in this study that governments and public officers are not the only actors that frame social problems and shape their solutions (Bacchi, 1999:1; Loseke, 2017:11). Indeed, activists and practitioners in civil society settings, as well as researchers in academic settings, are key actors in constructing social problems and the consequent solutions.

Academic and civil society knowledge production do indeed play different roles in framing the problem and supporting and representing the stories of individuals and groups who experience GBV, including migrant women with precarious legal status. The knowledge they produce has different degrees of credibility among various stakeholders, and they can put forward arguments and proposals that tend to resonate with different audiences, for instance, governments developing social policies (Loseke, 2017: p. 36-37). In other words, the ways in which a social problem is framed can significantly influence the solutions proposed, and, vice versa, the solutions proposed can have transformative potential and further reframe the formulations of social problems (see Study 1 and 2 for an in-depth discussion).

For instance, in the context of social work, the complexity of GBV experienced by migrant women can be framed and interpreted by a heterogeneous group of professionals, including those working in different governmental and civil society organizations as well as in different academic contexts. Thus, the problem can be framed in many ways, from a governmental, civil society, or academic perspective. Starting from these different perspectives, professionals may uphold diverse positions that range from the micro-individual level to the macro-structural level. Those looking at the micro-individual level might focus on family violence, reducing GBV to issues within "dysfunctional heteronormative migrant families." They would emphasize specific elements such as violent behavioral patterns, traumatic experiences, and the protection of children (Bacchi, 1999). Consequently, they would organize solutions that include behavioral therapy for fathers, counseling for mothers, and child protection for children, reinforcing a particular problem frame. Conversely, others might look at the meso-macro-structural level and reframe GBV as a product of patriarchal and colonial power relations (Razack, 2021; Saini, 2024), focusing on the material and historical conditions that shape men's and women's lives in various locations and social positions. Therefore, their solutions do not only support social protection for migrant women, who, among other marginalized groups, are victims of GBV, but also advocate for changing the structures of oppression that enable and condone GBV in the first place (Razack, 1995; Bacchi, 1999:10). In situations of migrant women´s precarious status, for instance, those actors might lobby for changes in immigration laws. They might allow migrant women to access social protection regardless of exclusionary administrative regulations and make legal counseling and economic aid available for women independent of their migratory status. Those solutions, in turn, have the power to reorient the public and political discussion on how to frame the problem of GBV.

In this study, thus, the term *solution* is used to indicate not only what is included in social policies, but also the wide range of *social interventions* enacted by CSAs who try to respond to the needs of different groups of migrant women while actively engaging with different types of knowledge to confront everyday reality. Solutions enacted by professionals are grounded in lived experiences and collective practices that contribute to the theorizing and writing about social problems done by activists, scholars, universities, and organizations. The solutions studied in this thesis are forms of social interventions carried out by professionals within CSAs. Those solutions are identified by academics (see Study 1) and by CSAs in different advanced welfare societies (see Study 2). However, the possibility to frame a violent situation, which means different actors' ability to say and do something, is given by knowledge rooted in historical and social contexts (Nicolini, 2012). Consequently, what professionals in academia and civil society can say and do is deeply embedded in, and limited by, the knowledge available to them.

Academic and civil society actors produce diverse types of knowledge, and in the process of knowledge production, researchers and professionals engage with each other in multiple ways, continuously redefining the broader repertoire of knowledge available in advanced welfare societies (della Porta and Pavan, 2017: 304). For instance, academic knowledge plays an important role because it can be used as a resource for CSAs to justify their actions when confronting public authorities in the field of social protection. However, CSAs can also challenge, contest, and reshape academic knowledge through the very same activities carried out by different CSAs, and in doing so, the practices become a stimulus to boost new academic research and debates (della Porta and Pavan, 2017; Choudry, 2020a). Thus, the types of knowledge available and considered acceptable in framing the social problem and the consequent solutions are dynamically produced and reshaped by different actors operating in different sites of knowledge production.

In other words, it is only when a violent situation and the people involved in it are framed through specific categories, concepts, and classification systems that it becomes possible for the person experiencing violence to have access to specific forms of social protection. The gist is that social interventions within the field of social protection are practices closely connected to the historical material conditions in which they occur. This means that the knowledge through which social problems are framed in the field of social interventions/practices is influenced by their historical time and the accumulation of previous ways of knowing (Nicolini, 2012). This does not imply that professionals in academic and civil society settings merely act based on existing knowledge. Instead, they also influence what knowledge is used and contribute to creating new knowledge by testing and experimenting with new concepts, categories, and frames that are better situated in the everyday struggles in which they operate. Consequently, this new knowledge can serve as a resource not only for professionals who are trying to help migrant women access social protection, but also for academic debate, creating new institutional alliances that can challenge dominant categories and classification systems.

This study is grounded in the Practice Theory Approach (PTA), which defines practice (i.e. social interventions) as a type of saying and doing ingrained in a historical and social context that dynamically shapes what can be said and done within the practice itself (Nicolini, 2012:90). Furthermore, professional sayings and doings can also renegotiate and reshape the limits of what can be said and done, redefining the political and social context in which the practice is rooted. The ontological stance of the PTA (Nicolini, 2012; Nicolini, Gherardi, Yanow, 2003) used in this study is that *practice,* rather than individuals or structures, shapes the social. Within the social realm, knowledge occurs with and is an aspect of the field of practice (Schatzki, 2001, p.2). This means that the types of knowledge produced by academics and practitioners are analyzed as knowledges that occur with and are an aspect of the practices shaping the social protection field, hence the social

interventions, available to migrant women with precarious legal status who are experiencing GBV.

In other words, the idea is that knowledge is not just something that individuals or organizations possess; rather, it emerges from and is part of the practices that occur within the field. By focusing on practices, researchers can gain insights into how knowledge is created and transformed in real-world organizational settings, and how it contributes to shaping the support systems available to migrant women in advanced welfare societies. At the same time, by focusing on practices, the knowledge is not only held by the political and social context in which the practice is rooted, but also shaped by the day-to-day work of CSAs providing support to migrant women facing GBV. This includes how practitioners working in civil society organizations interact with migrant women, the procedures they follow, and the way in which they negotiate the struggles of navigating the social protection system. Practices shape the existing knowledge and, in turn, influence access to the broader social protection field.

Knowledge Production

This study is grounded in a set of theoretical research traditions linked to the PTA (Nicolini, 2012). PTA is often used by scientists to explore how knowledge and learning occur within the field of organizational practices (Nicolini, Gherardi, Yanow, 2003: 12). Indeed, when discussing practices, PTA research typically focuses on the actions of practitioners, emphasizing the organizational environments in which these practices take place (Nicolini, 2012). However, the PTA theoretical traditions (e.g., Bourdieu, 1977; Giddens, 1984; Schatzki, 2001) do not only emphasize the practical activities performed by practitioners, but also enable the scientific analysis to expand the study of practices by including two key, interwoven elements. First, practice is created and constantly shaped by what professionals say and do. Second, and at the same time, practice exists independent of professional sayings and doings because they are rooted in the knowledge that makes them possible and maintains them. Indeed, knowledge is informed and shaped by practical lived experiences, such that professionals interpret real-life situations through pre-existing concepts, categories, and frames with which they can make sense of and give sense to the world. At the same time, the practical experience of the world has the potential to move the boundaries of knowledge to what has not previously been known (della Porta and Pavan, 2017:303).

This is the case when we look at the field of GBV where different social movements, representing the interests of groups such as LGBTQAI+, migrants, and racialized women, are pushing to move the boundaries of the concept of "gender" centered on the inequality between women and men to acknowledge the concept of precarity,

allowing alliances between a plurality of social positionings (e.g., gender, race, and class) (Nijensohn, 2022; Roth, 2021). For instance, within the field of social protection against GBV, some shelters initially available only to women victims of GBV in advanced welfare societies are now also available to other groups such as men and LGBTQAI+ individuals. Thus, in this example of access to shelters, it is possible to emphasize that shelters exist because of an established set of rules and frames that are independent of what professionals say and do. Professionals´ saying and doing, however, are what maintain the practice of sheltering and at the same time are what can constantly and dynamically reshape them, rethinking and renegotiating concepts, categories, and frames of reference, widening the possibility of accessing shelters by a more diverse group of people who are victims of GBV. In turn, the ideas and debates brought up by these CSAs provide knowledge to influence the activities of academics, who, among other actors, are involved in various ways within the field of social protection.

In other words, from a PTA perspective, the social protection available to migrant women with precarious legal status who are experiencing GBV can be understood as a series of sayings and doings (Schatzki, 2001) embedded within knowledge (e.g., concepts, categories, frames) that operate across time and space. The practices of social protection ensure the doing of tangible actions and support systems that take a similar form in different geographical and historical contexts within advanced welfare societies, for instance, protected shelters. At the same time, knowledge production contributes to shaping the contextual social, legal, and cultural dimensions in which professional practices take place. This means that protected shelters can take a similar form in many different contexts, but at the same time are embedded in local spaces where different social actors (re-)define how protected shelters can be organized, financed, managed, and accessed.

In sum, practice is not only practical action, but also the knowing that sustains the possibility to act (Nicolini, 2012:92). PTA and diverse stream of research in it (e.g., Law, 1992; Latour, 1986; Gherardi and Nicolini, 2016; Latour and Woolgar, 2013; Lindberg and Czarniawska, 2006) emphasize that even though practice has to be performed in the real world, there are powerful intangible intermediaries, such as rules, norms and procedures, and material intermediaries, such as books, policy texts, and administrative forms that maintain the practice. The interconnectedness of these elements shapes and defines what is possible to say and do in the realm of the practices. In this study, the focus is on knowledge production as a medium between the possibility of professional agency and the structure that delimits/enables the possibility to act (Nicolini, Gherardi, Yanow, 2003; Ghorashi and Rast, 2024; Choudry, 2020b).

My theoretical contribution in this regard is to overcome the strict separation between theory and practice, acknowledging that practice is not only what people say and do, but also requires certain thinking, which is a certain theory of the world. To do so, I focus on knowledge production in academic and civil society settings.

While knowledge production in academia has been more frequently addressed as important for theorizing practices and supporting the work of professionals within civil society (Loseke, 2017; Ghorashi and Rast, 2024), recognizing professional knowledge as a way to both reorient academic knowledge production and theorize the practices has received less attention (Choudry, 2020a). Hence, in this study, the analysis of knowledge production partially fills the gap in how both academia (see Study 1) and civil society (see Study 2) produce, use, negotiate, and reshape a repertoire of concepts, categories, and classifications systems that frame the problem of GBV and sustain the field of social protection accessed by migrant women with precarious legal status.

Methodologically, I use a variety of elements (e.g., interpretative methods/categories; social learning methods/epistemic community; symbolic interactionism/framings) from different scholarly traditions that are all part of the PTA family but not directly connected to each other (Nicolini, Gherardi, Yanow, 2003: 12 – 19). There are several challenges in integrating a diverse apparatus of theoretical and methodological contributions, but this effort is necessary because, with this doctoral thesis, centrality is given to the complex dynamics between the reproduction of existing concepts, ideas, categories, and classification systems to frame the problem at hand as well as the contestation and transformation of this knowledge to frame the same problem at hand.

Thus, PTA provides a comprehensive understanding of how the practice is maintained and organized through the interplay of intangible and material elements and professional actions. Accordingly, in this study, the focus on knowledge production in academia and civil society settings helps us better understand how different social actors within those settings have the power to reproduce, shape, and challenge concepts, categories, and frames perceived as the truth, thus having the power to justify legitimate actions, shaping the institutional context and the practices in it (Foucault, 1984).

Power dynamics and inequalities among actors that can produce knowledge considered credible are, indeed, central to practice theory (Nicolini, 2012: 89). In this regard, PTA helps in understanding how actors' relations influence who can participate in the production of knowledge and how knowledge production can contribute to reinforcing or challenging existing power structures upheld by actors producing knowledge, which have an impact on the social field and shape social practices. In turn, processes of knowledge production have practical consequences that influence the ways in which a situation of violence is framed, and consequently, solutions are identified along with categories and concepts that can potentially allow migrant women to be recognized as subjects who have the possibility to access social protection.

Knowledge Production in Academic Settings

The knowledge produced in academic settings theorizes and influences the field of practice in different ways.

First, academia has been historically considered one of the most authoritative sites of knowledge production when constructing social problems and possible solutions to solve societal issues (Loseke, 2017). This is especially true in the field of GBV and migration, where research interest in this topic has grown in recent decades alongside the debate around gender, race/ethnicity, class, sexuality, citizenship, and other categories of social inequalities (Loseke, 1992; Sager, 2018; Ozcurumez, Akyuz, Bradby, 2021; Amelina and Lutz, 2019).

Second, researchers in academic settings have the power to consider some knowledge useful and disregard others (Burke, 2016), reshaping the interpretation of social problems and solutions. In this regard, I briefly discuss the "case" of intersectionality, because it is emblematic in representing how a previous order of knowledge can be challenged with a new one, through a dynamic process of knowledge translation, where ideas travel between different settings. Indeed, the term intersectionality was first developed in the African American civil rights movements (Amelina and Lutz, 2019: 7) and then entered academia through the work of African American critical race scholars active in different disciplines, from gender studies to sociology. The intersectional theoretical model was fully developed by the legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), whose initial work addressed the attention to racial and sexist discrimination and how those discrimination claims were interpreted by judges in legal cases involving African American women in the US. In so doing, the intersectional model reoriented academic attention to the problem of racism and sexism against minority groups of women, using the real-life experiences of African American women and the knowledge developed in social movements.

Similarly, this study acknowledges that several feminist groups and women´s movements globally raised their voices and started paying attention to violence against women and gendered inequalities (Baksh-Soodeen & Harcourt, 2015). Women and minority groups, some of them coming from social movements, entered universities and began producing knowledge about social inequalities and discrimination, adding a gender/intersectional lens to academic debates while emphasizing that there are different ways of knowing and experiencing privileges and discrimination in the world (Burke, 2016; Haraway, 1988).

Thus, processes of knowledge production are rooted in historical circumstances, and social movement activism entering academia influenced the development of a body of academic work known as critical race theory (Fanon, 1952; 1961; Delgado and Stefancic, 2017), post-colonial feminist theories (Mohanty, 1988; Mohanty and Carty, 2015; Razack, 1995), and black feminism (Davis, 1982; hooks, 1984; 1989),

whose effort was directed to analyzing the forms of inequalities experienced by women and minorities (Fraser, 1987; Butler, 2004), including migrant women (Morokvasic 1984; 1987). This body of work emphasized how the mainstream social construction of the problem of GBV against women (Loseke, 1992), and the solutions identified (Bacchi, 1999), did not consider the dimensions of gender/sex intersecting with other social positioning and identities. Therefore, they pushed to include other categories such as race/ethnicity, class, religion, age, bodily abilities, and nationality to reorient the framing of the problem of GBV and the solutions.

Third, scientists producing the analysis of social reality are sometimes moving the boundaries of concepts, classification systems, frames, and categories of understanding rooted in social movements. In doing this, researchers can also be activists (Choudry, 2020a; Loseke, 2017) or coproduce knowledge with social movements and CSAs (Ghorashi and Rast, 2024), using their positions within academia to leverage the arguments and propositions made by specific CSAs. Again, this is evident in the example of intersectionality. Kimberlè Crenshaw (1989) used her intersectional analytical framework in her role as a social activist to promote the social campaign made by the social movement called #SayHerName, which seeks to address the injustice lived by African American women facing police brutality in the US. In this case, scientific knowledge was considered believable and had a higher position in the hierarchy of credibility (Loseke, 2017), thus could then be (re-)used by social movements to support their allegations, having the power to make things happen (Assiter, 2000).

Continuing with the example of intersectionality, as Crenshaw mentioned in an interview (Vox, 2019), to become popular her theoretical model had to leave the ivory tower of academia and enter the practice of socially organized groups. Intersectionality was used and is still used today by a multiplicity of social justice and human rights movements, from the LGBTQAI+ movements and Black Lives Matter to the work of organizations for women and minorities (Roth, 2021). Similarly, GBV against migrant women with precarious legal status has spread out through the actions of what is called “movimento transfeminista” (transfeminism movement) such as Ni Unas Menos (No One Left). Originating in Argentina, the movement has gained global resonance since 2015, contributing to unifying and encompassing multiple feminist struggles around experiences of precarity (Medina, 2023). The transfeminism movement is not only connected and supported by those producing academic knowledge (Medina, 2023), but also deeply embedded in the work of CSAs and their local-global alliances, through which much of the political activism is organized alongside the concrete social protection available to migrant women (Nijensohn, 2022).

Finally, theorization of the field of practice in academia is also influenced by power relations. Disciplines that are practice-oriented, such as social work, medicine, and psychology, as well as disciplines that are oriented toward organizational and institutional processes more broadly, such as sociology, anthropology, political and

gender studies, are also involved in research with an institutional mandate to transfer mainstream knowledge, educating students seen as the future generations of citizens and professionals that should fit into the social and institutional context. In the field of GBV, especially since the 1970s, several professional and administrative positions, public agencies, and international organizations have been pursuing the task of addressing the GBV problem (Baksh-Soodeen and Harcourt, 2015: 189). The types of knowledge that have become mainstream in the state's bureaucratic system are the products of experts and professionals who address the problem of GBV and are involved in networks and coalitions that historically gained recognition and legitimacy (Sandler, 2015), reorienting the public debate and the government policies.

In this regard, the critics argue (Roth, 2021; Nijensohn, 2022) that mainstream feminism, despite its successful integration into governmental policies and administrative practices (including welfare systems), fails to advocate for the dismantling of power relations and privileges, such as class inequalities, gender discrimination, and racial injustice. Instead, it tends to reinforce neo-liberal ideals, emphasizing individual empowerment and career progression within capitalism, while prioritizing the interests of privileged women (e.g., cis, white, middle class, educated, Christians) in positions of power. Consequently, the process of academic knowledge production is not immune from theorizing GBV in neo-liberal terms, which perpetuates heteronormative, patriarchal, and conservative ideologies.

In my study, processes of knowledge production in academia are studied to shed light on knowledge that mediates between the possibility of professional agency and the structure that delimits the possibility of acting. In this regard, I also want to highlight that practitioners and activists get their educational degrees in universities; and students, as future professionals, can be exposed to mainstream theories that sustain dominant practices, which reproduce marginalization and exclusion. Moreover, they can also be challenged by alternative social theories and be educated to critically think about social problems and reflect on how to use theories and ideas, moving the boundaries of established concepts, categories, and frames to support the interests of marginalized and excluded individuals, groups, and communities.

Knowledge Production in Civil Society Settings

The knowledge produced in civil society settings theorizes and influences the field of practice in different ways (Choudry, 2020a: 32).

First, social activists and social movements are traditionally described as key actors in constructing social problems as expressions of specific social groups who are experiencing the problem (Loseke, 2017:37). CSAs can therefore represent and advocate for these groups' interests, producing knowledge that is tied to the struggles of oppressed individuals and groups (Freire, 1970), such as those living a condition

of precarity. The CSAs, in their role of knowledge producers, intercept concrete aspects of the social problems by being and interacting with ordinary people. Oftentimes, CSAs create a space where ordinary people can reflect on how to overcome real-life constraints and challenges. Thus, in those spaces, CSAs develop ideas about what they see unfolding in their everyday realities while theorizing about different courses of action to overcome their struggles. These ordinary people´s thinking about problems and reflections on possible solutions are sustained by some type of knowledge. One example of this process of knowledge production is the continuous effort made by some activists and grassroots organizations to comprehensively acknowledge gender and racial issues and incorporate them into the framework of GBV, having the potential to move the boundaries of what has been known and accepted as GBV. This approach seeks to encompass the wider experiences of individuals impacted by wars, militarism, land exploitation, and dispossession (Razack, 2021), seeking to ensure that the framing of the problem of GBV and the solutions available can take into consideration the interplay of various social, political, and economic forces and how it shapes the violence to which different groups of women, including migrant women, are subjected.

Second, and related to the previous point, because of the specific proximity to ordinary people´s struggles, knowledge production in civil society settings may address the solutions to their problems, and whose reflections and thinking on how to solve the problem have a greater potential for action (Choudry, 2020a: 29; 2020b). CSAs produce forms of knowledge that call for being conscious of the political struggles affecting diverse groups and communities and therefore being capable of finding concrete ways to overcome social struggles. To effectively push back against everyday challenges, CSAs try to move the boundaries of concepts, categories, and classification systems, reframing the content of knowledges in ways that better address the diverse realities of people, creating micro-spaces for negotiations and adjustments to meet the needs of those communities and individuals that were not previously met in the (social protection) practice. Accordingly, at times, the theories and theorizing of CSAs may be grounded in a critical reflection on what makes struggles and injustice possible, imagining new situations where those forms of oppression could be overcome through transformative, liberatory actions (Freire, 1970: 47). This means recognizing the important contribution of CSAs in producing knowledge that emerges from a collective effort to change something in the field of social protection. These types of knowledges are forged in everyday struggles that have the potential to dialectically inform both academic and civil society settings.

Third, knowledge production among CSAs also involves building coalitions across different communities (della Porta and Pavan, 2017). Some CSAs might target public agencies at the local, national, or international levels, while others might engage with academic researchers, and in both cases, the effort aims to create support for a specific framing of the social problem and the solutions to it through

knowledge production. On the one hand, activists and practitioners can use scientific knowledge as leverage to support and validate their arguments (Loseke, 2017: 43-44). There are many examples of this kind of knowledge production in the field of GBV perpetrated against diverse groups of migrant women. For instance, within the EU, knowledge is sometimes produced through participative research projects, data collection, and the sharing of experiences among researchers and professionals actively engaged in the social protection field. In other examples, some CSAs engage in research and education, in partnership with public agencies. For instance, in the case of GBV, the Council of Europe expressively requested periodical country reports on implementation of the Istanbul Convention (2011) that was authored and produced by "Violence against Women and Girls organizations" working in the field across the EU. In addition, the EU network of governmental and non-governmental organizations for women against violence (Wave, Women Against Violence Europe Network) produces training material, social campaigns for improving or changing national and EU legislation, and research supporting specialized services and their operations across Europe.

Finally, the risk of idealizing and romanticizing CSAs as the activists inherently involved in challenging and changing the system of domination may lead to overlooking power relations in civil society settings, which impact knowledge production (Choudry, 2020b). Indeed, some literature has highlighted (Choudry, 2020b; D´Souza, 2018) that much of the work on knowledge production in social movements (and by extension actors within civil society) takes for granted that practitioners with specialist academic training do activism for social change. In reality, as described at the beginning of this chapter, CSAs in advanced welfare societies are constrained by a political context of welfare retrenchment and privatization of services. This means that CSAs assume the double role of service delivery for public authorities as well as (and at the same time) support systems for groups of the precariat that fall between the cracks of the system (Vamstad and Karlsson, 2022). In turn, CSAs are caught in a tension where, on the one hand, they have to work with state authority to gain resources and legitimization and, on the other hand, they have to face the limits imposed by the state authority, thus working to hold the state accountable in protecting the interests of marginalized groups and communities.

In sum, much of the knowledge produced in civil society settings does not come from a panel of experts, but is rather created by practitioners, mostly holding academic degrees, who may possess academic knowledge and may be working with migrant women, finding possible courses of action in the social protection system (Choudry, 2020b: 29-30). Nevertheless, knowledge produced by CSAs is limited by the different roles assumed by CSAs in the institutional context in which they operate. In turn, they may use categories and classification systems that represent the interests of marginalized people or may reproduce and dominant ideas and concepts supported by those holding powerful political positions. Further, CSAs can

work also to adjust and negotiate existing knowledge with new knowledge, putting forward new courses of action, and confronting the social and political struggles lived by marginalized social groups. Thus, the confrontation, the conflicts, and the tensions represent the space in which it is possible to identify the theorizing of CSAs and the knowledge-producing diverse courses of action.

This doctoral thesis explores the knowledge produced in civil society settings and realistically engages with the rich diversity of the knowledge produced. In doing this, it emphasizes the contradictions and paradoxes inherent in those settings, rather than simply portraying civil society work in the field of social protection as either an emerging force for social change or as a type of organization forged to maintain the dominant system.

Conclusions

In sum, PTA has been chosen to support the theoretical framework of this study, because it provides important insights into the notion of *practice*, which encompasses practical actions, and includes the knowledge that sustains the ability to act (e.g., possibility of saying and doing something that is believable and can impact the courses of action).

Hence, my focus on knowledge production serves as a bridge between the potential for professional agency and the structures that both limit and enable action. It highlights the significance of two primary settings for knowledge production, namely academia and civil society, as well as the diverse human agents involved in it, such as academics and practitioners. Both professionals working in academia and civil society produce knowledge that informs the framing of social problems, including the problem of GBV experienced by migrant women with precarious legal status, and the solutions to it. Academics and practitioners can influence the formulation of the problem and its solutions in different ways, yet they remain key actors in shaping both the understanding of and the solution to the issue at hand.

Furthermore, at times, there exists a dialectical relationship between researchers and activists, which means those two actors influence each other and mutually impact each other's ideas. These interactions can challenge existing power structures and taken-for-granted knowledge by thinking about and interpreting the social problem by considering new perspectives and ideas. Conversely, there are cases where the knowledge generated may be used to reinforce dominant ideas and concepts that perpetuate power positions supporting the interests of dominant political and economic actors. It is important to critically acknowledge that both academics and CSAs are embedded in a system of power relations. Individuals and groups of academics and practitioners acting within these settings may possess varying levels of social, economic, and cultural resources, which can lead to a process of

knowledge imposition from one group to another, from one professional to another, from one organization to another, and from one discipline to another. Indeed, academia and civil society are both positioned in an institutional field that is determined by rules that give the different actors the possibility to act (Bourdieu, 1984).

Only by first understanding "the rule of the game" can actors within academia and civil society play a part in it. The rule of the game refers to the underlying power structures that govern how individuals and organizations operate (Bourdieu, 1984) within academia and civil society settings. For instance, in academia, the rules might include the importance of publishing in prestigious journals, securing funding, or adhering to certain research methodologies. In turn, academics may reproduce taken-for-granted categories and frames while doing research with/on CSAs because they are moved by the need and obligation to secure grants and publications. In civil society, the rules could involve navigating political landscapes, building networks, or aligning with influential stakeholders. In turn, CSAs may collaborate with powerful political and social actors, reproducing their dominant knowledge and supporting their interests to secure resources and recognition vital for them to operate in the field.

Thus far, in my theoretical contribution, I have emphasized that, in studying the knowledge produced and used in the framing of social problems and their solutions, we see how the divide between academics/thinking and CSAs/doing is blurred. CSAs and people working in them do not merely and mindlessly implement solutions, nor are academics solely elites in privileged positions who theorize about social problems while sitting behind their desks. In this regard, the first part of this study focuses on academics who produce knowledge linked to the work carried out by CSAs involved in the social protection field. The second part of this study focuses instead on the knowledge produced in civil society settings, directing attention to CSAs who work with migrant women with precarious legal status in Sweden and Italy. In conclusion, this doctoral thesis advances the notion that knowledge produced in academic and civil society settings may reshape the framing of the social problem of GBV and the solutions to it, and that it has the transformative potential to access social protection for migrant women.

Methodology

The two settings in which the processes of knowledge production are investigated in this doctoral thesis are academia and civil society. In this regard, in line with my theoretical framework, I grounded the research design in two studies and coherently adopted the research methodology. The decision was made in consideration of my overall research interest, which is the investigation of academic and civil society actors producing knowledge that frames the social problem of GBV experienced by migrant women with precarious legal status, and its solutions.

In Study 1, first, I wanted to identify the academic actors who are producing knowledge, and determining where they are operating. These insights help discern whether knowledge is predominantly produced by an individual/discipline or through collaborative, interdisciplinary efforts. Indeed, as described in the theoretical framework, collaboration among academics/disciplines as well as with other CSAs may indicate a type of knowledge that challenges dominant structures and moves the boundaries of concepts, categories, and frames. Additionally, I wanted to qualitatively identify academic knowledge production that is oriented toward civil society actions, particularly concerning migrant women with precarious legal status who experience GBV. This analysis helps to understand whether academic knowledge is produced to challenge, reshape, and reorient the framing of the problem and its solutions, or if it perpetuates mainstream frameworks rooted in bureaucratic and neoliberal logics. Accordingly, I employed an adapted version of a systematic literature review, which was the most suitable method for this study 1 (see Table 3 below).

In Study 2, I wanted to understand how civil society actors produce and use knowledge when working with migrant women with precarious legal status who experience GBV. For that purpose, I explored the relationship between knowledge production and its relevance for professionals in the social protection field. As discussed in the theoretical framework, activists and practitioners in civil society organizations interpret GBV situations involving migrant women based on different concepts, categories, and frames, which can affect migrant women´s access to social protection. This act of framing and interpreting the problem in certain ways may also challenge and reshape dominant concepts, categories, and frames allowing migrant women, under certain conditions, to be recognized as welfare beneficiaries. Accordingly, I developed a vignette method composed of three scenarios, which is the most suitable method to incorporate this interpretative/framing aspect into study

2 (see Table 3 below). I conducted interviews with activists/practitioners working within civil society organizations in Sweden and Italy. I chose a two-country design to investigate civil society knowledge production, using a multisite approach because more apt to capture context-dependent knowledge while at the same time focusing on different national and sub-national settings. Hence, similarities and differences in the empirical material are deemed important to explain variations among local protection systems where CSAs operate, gaining a meaningful and rich understanding of what is going on in the field of local service provisions.

Overall, this doctoral thesis uses two types of primary and secondary data: interviews and published academic documents. Table 3 displays an overview of the methods employed for each study, followed by detailed descriptions of the type of analysis adopted in each set of empirical data, including the software used, and the (published) papers.

Table 3. Overview of the empirical data

Methods	Type of Analysis	Dataset	Software	Paper
STUDY 1				
Systematic Literature Review	Bibliometric Analysis	n. 2174 published academic documents	VOSviewer Zotero	Paper I
	Qualitative Content Analysis	n. 25 published academic documents	Ryaan Zotero MAXQDA	Paper II
STUDY 2				
Interviews using Vignettes	Interpretative Analysis	n. 31 interviews in Sweden and Italy	MAXQDA Zoom	Paper III
	Thematic Analaysis	n. 31 interviews in Sweden and Italy	MAXQDA Zoom	Paper IV

In the following sections of the chapter, I begin to describe Study 1, giving a detailed overview of the methods chosen to gather and analyze the data. These data are the baseline for Paper I and II of this doctoral thesis. I then move on to explain in detail the methods used in Study 2, including the design of the vignette scenarios and preparation for the fieldwork. The data gathered are the baseline for Paper III and IV of this thesis. Finally, in the last part of the chapter, I share some ethical considerations, delving into my positionality and reflecting on the ethical principles that guided me during my research journey.

Study 1

The first study focuses on the knowledge produced within academia. The specific interest in knowledge production in academia is to better understand how research focused on civil society practices frames the problem of GBV and the solutions to it. In doing so, I investigate who has the authority to represent the social problem at hand, which type of knowledge is produced, and whether those who "own" the social issue (Bacchi, 1999: 9) are committed to including the precarious situations of migrant women and the GBV they experience in ways that do not reproduce or reinforce oppressive and discriminatory power structures (Hertz and Becevic, 2024: 2). For this purpose, Study 1 is based on a systematic literature review which focuses on two levels of analysis. The first level of analysis concerns the geographical and disciplinary contexts of knowledge production, which are examined using bibliometric methods. The second level of analysis is linked to the types of knowledge that selected academic actors produce to frame GBV experienced by migrant women having a precarious legal status and the solutions to it, which is analyzed using qualitative content analysis.

Bibliometrics

Bibliometrics helped me assess the geographical and disciplinary academic contexts, providing insights into where and in what fields knowledge is being generated. Traditionally, bibliometric analysis is not used to study power relations in academic knowledge production; instead, it is mostly used as a tool to map out the research that has been produced in a field of study, creating a general overview of the literature published, of the most successful authors, and of their theoretical contributions (Plomp, 1990; Aksnes and Sivertsen, 2019; Pisarevskaya et al., 2019). In general, also the systematic literature review is a method traditionally used to identify the gaps in knowledge to be filled with/by future research (Nakamura et al., 2015) rather than to critically study the knowledge produced in a research field. In this regard, the first methodological innovative element in this doctoral study is the use of bibliometrics as an empirical tool to critically investigate academic knowledge production, identifying the academic actors and disciplines that in different times and spaces have more or less power to (re-)produce, shape, and challenge dominant knowledge, which means knowledge recognized as the *truth* (Foucault, 1984). Thus, the dominant framing of the problem of GBV has the power to justify legitimate solutions to the problem of GBV experienced by migrant women with precarious status.

Bibliometric analysis of published literature is chosen to investigate who is producing knowledge, which disciplines are the most productive, and where the academic disciplines are located geographically and epistemologically within the scientific community working at the intersection of gender, migration, and welfare. The idea of a bibliometric analysis of the literature comes from an ongoing

discussion within migration studies. Levy, Pisarevskaya, and Scholten (2020) published an article based on a bibliometric analysis of the epistemic community that constitutes "migration studies" as a research field. In response to that article, Kofman (2020) wrote a commentary article, pointing out that reconstruction of the migration studies field, as described by Levy et al. (2020), did not mention those who produce knowledge about "gender" in the field of migration. Indeed, Koffman (2020) maintained that, even though "gender" had a significant place within the research area, the authors and disciplines addressing the intersection of gender and migration are marginalized and hard to reach using evidence-based software/methods.

From this debate, I wanted to better explore the epistemic community at the intersection of gender and migration by including another element, that of welfare. Further, I wanted to reconstruct the epistemic community at the intersection of gender, migration, and welfare by taking into serious consideration the power dynamics characterizing the academic field of knowledge production. In doing that, I decided to test the software used for bibliometrics by Levy et al. (2020), taking into consideration the critical element pointed out by Koffman (2020), which indicates that "gender" seems to be relegated to a peripherical space of knowledge production when using bibliometric software. I wanted to look at how migrant women with precarious legal status are constructed as welfare subjects. I also wanted to make sure to include diverse actors and disciplines who are considered at the margins of academic production. Thus, I chose to integrate the bibliometric software used by Levy et al. (2020) with the Intersectional-Based Policies Analysis Framework (IBPA) (Hankivisky, 2012; CIJ, 2020), given its potential to combine guiding principles of inclusion of marginalized concepts and data with hard-to-reach sources, authors, and disciplines. I then developed a step-by-step guiding framework. Below, I present all the steps undertaken to develop what I call an Intersectional-informed Bibliometric Analysis (IBA).

- *Background readings to select the bibliographic material*

The first step involved doing a background reading, following the IBPA principle, which encourages inclusion of *diverse knowledge fields* (Hankivisky, 2012: 37), giving analytical attention to selected grey literature in the form of reports and texts produced within several EU projects, but not limited to them.

The specific EU framework addressing the intersecting problems of GBV and migration (EU, 2020) highlights the significant political recognition given to the work done by CSAs (WAVE, 2019). CSAs are assumed to play a critical role in discursively representing the problem of and solutions to GBV while constructing the subject of migrant women. They identify specific needs linked to the precarious legal status of these migrant women and propose practice-based real solutions. In turn, the efforts made by CSAs in framing the problem at hand and providing the solutions to it can significantly impact government policies, including laws,

regulations, and legislation. Additionally, they can influence public perceptions, beliefs, and opinions related to the problem of GBV and its practical solutions. This multifaceted approach, as discussed by Hankivisky (2012: 9), suggests that CSAs are pivotal in shaping both policy, public discourses, and practical solutions to the recognized problem of GBV in the context of migration.

While reading the grey literature[2], IBPA suggests (Hankivisky, 2012) that the focus should be on processes such as naming, labeling, counting, defining, and representing "the problem." The framing of the problem we are discussing here refers to "GBV experienced by migrant women with precarious legal status." In particular, attention was paid to how the problem of GBV is linked to being a migrant and a woman, and how the intersections of multiple categories were constructed by different authors in a multiplicity of texts, by using a variety of wordings, creating concepts and labels that allow the social problem to be named and framed, knowledge to be produced, and public responses to be legitimized and supported.

- *Choice of the research question and PICOS strategy*

Second, IBPA methodology (Hankivisky, 2012) suggests using specific questions to orient the research while collecting the knowledge produced by the epistemic community working at the intersection of gender, migration, and welfare.

The IBPA-specific questions are:

- *How have representations of "the problem" come about over different times and spaces?*
- *Who was involved in defining the problem in this way?*
- *Who produces the knowledge related to the problem?*
- *What types of evidence were used?*

I then adapted and operationalized these questions (see Article I) to explore the epistemic community at the intersection of gender, migration, and welfare. Moreover, the research questions above were redefined following the guidelines introduced by Cochrane (2019). Cochrane (2019) proposed a structured framework

[2] The projects selected for the grey literature are: 1) the 2019 Report on the situation of Women´s Specialist Support Services in the EU, published by WAVE (2019), a network of European women NGOs working in the field of violence against women; 2) the Co-creating Counselling Method for Refugee Women GBV Victims (Inka et al., 2019), which involves a Consortium composed of HEUNI, the European Network of Migrant Women and six other NGOs coming from respective EU Countries; 3) the EU project SWIM - Safe Women in Migration project (Fondazione L'Albero della Vita Onlus, 2020), which involves six partners representing four EU Countries; 4) the SEREDA Project (2020), which includes a multi-country team across the UK, Australia, Sweden and Turkey; 5) the PROVIDE – Proximity on Violence: Defence and Equity" (ISMU, 2020).

called PICOS, which should ensure that the research questions are well-defined and that the search itself is relevant to the study. The key components of the PICOS strategy are **Population (P)**, which describes the target group or population; **Intervention (I)**, which defines the study's intervention, exposure, or treatment; **Comparison (C)**, in the case the intervention is linked to alternative or control groups; **Outcome (O)**, which outlines the specific outcomes or effects or measure to observe; **Study Design (S)**, whether the study looks at specific research methodologies (e.g., randomized controlled trials, cohort studies, case-control studies).

The combination of IBPA guiding questions alongside the PICOS strategy was then adapted to the overarching aim of my study (Table 4). The P- Phenomenon of gender-based violence (GBV), the I- interventions to contrast GBV, and the T- Target group of migrant women with precarious legal status were operationalized into a list of concepts and wordings.

Table 4. Adapted PICOS Strategy

	AND				
OR	Phenomenon	Intervention	Target Group	Years	Geography

The grey literature was used as a baseline for selecting search terms as part of the so-called PICOS strategy (Cochrane, 2019). The initial list of concepts and wordings that were found recurrently in the grey literature was combined with Boolean operators, which are simple words (AND, OR, NOT) used in combination to control the search of documents that are relevant to the results and data I wanted to capture.

The final complex query (list of words in the table below), which was later tested several times in different databases, is the following:

(Violence against women OR trafficking OR prostitution OR sexual abuse OR interpersonal violence OR rape* OR sexual violence* OR honour based violence OR sexual assault OR forced marriage* OR stalk* OR domestic violence* OR intimate partner* violence OR sex work* OR victim* OR violence* OR institutional violence*)*
AND *(helpline OR shelter* OR social protection OR social work* OR social support OR welfare service* OR rehabilitation OR social polic* OR welfare polic* OR welfare service*)*
AND *((women OR woman OR fem*) W/5 (migrant* OR asylum seeker* OR immigrant* OR displace* OR stateless))*

The final query was saved in a Log Report (Cochrane, 2019), including the name of the database, the date on which the search was carried out, the search word strategy, the number of hits of records identified with the search, and the link to retrieve the saved search.

- *Identifying the databases*

The third step is identifying the databases that contain the knowledge, which means a repository where texts and documents are available and accessible. Ten different databases (Table 5) were selected to include knowledge produced at the intersection of gender, migration, and welfare.

Table 5. List of Databases

Academic Databases	Grey Literature Databases
Scopus	EU Council of Europe Library
SOCIndex	European Commission Library
Web of Science	Find-eR
Academic Search Complete	Citation Hand Searching
Criminal Justice	
LGBTQ+ Source	
Open Dissertation	

- *Selection and analysis of the material*

Fourth, metadata were collected from ten databases, aiming to include multiple sources of knowledge. Filters were added, which means that only documents published after the year 2010 were included. This choice has been made because very few documents could be found in the previous years, and 2010 was the political threshold, opening the path to the Istanbul Convention (2011), which is the first legally binding policy tool in the field of violence against women and GBV, including migrants with precarious legal status. The number of documents identified was 3176. After duplicate removal in Zotero, 2790 remained.

Finally, given the relatively large number of texts identified, VOSviewer software (van Eck & Waltman, 2020) was used to explore bibliometric trends. When using software with bibliometric data from different sources, data cleaning must rely on a structured file in which all the imported data display the same comparable variables. In the data cleaning process, I encountered some limitations in applying the IBPA's diverse knowledge principles. In the process of data extraction and selection, a clear limitation encountered was that the databases did not include the same information, leading me to retrieve data only from Scopus database (see Paper I for details). This highlights the power of databases in gathering and systematizing academic

knowledge, which means some authors and some disciplines are better organized within databases than others are, which reproduces the power relations between them. This initial observation points to the fact that academic actors' positions and the power relations among them can be discovered when reconstructing the field of knowledge in bibliometric terms.

Additionally, the bibliometric analysis helps to better understand the geographical and disciplinary locations where different types of knowledge are produced and can provide insights into the degree of specialization and interdisciplinarity that characterize academic knowledge production. As such, interdisciplinarity is viewed as an antidote to hyper-specialization, which can lead to the hierarchization of knowledge (Burke, 2016:22).

The analysis and results of the study are presented in detail in Paper I.

Qualitative Content Analysis

As part of this dual approach to knowledge production in academia, the qualitative content analysis (QCA) (Bengtsson 2016; Altheide and Schneider 2012; Bahner 2021) of the systematic literature review, as a second level of analysis, offers a qualitative perspective on the types of knowledge produced and the roles of various academic actors in producing it. Indeed, the QCA was conducted to qualitatively explore who produces knowledge in the field and how these academic actors conceptualize the problem of GBV against migrant women with precarious legal status, as well as the solutions to it. This qualitative analysis helps identify and reflect on what concepts, categories, and classification systems are used to generate knowledge related to the problem at hand, and how this knowledge relates to ideas grounded in professional interventions that are put in place to respond to the GBV experienced by migrant women.

Furthermore, the selection and qualitative analysis of the bibliographic material were useful for critically analyzing the ways in which the academic community focuses on different social interventions in the field of GBV, giving relevance to specific concepts, categories, and frames. Thus, depending on the social interventions analyzed, researchers in different positions within academia can either engage in so-called activist research (Choudry, 2020a: 31), learning from social movement contexts and engaging with people's struggles for social change, or conform to more traditional academic knowledge production, centered on specialist knowledge and training for professionals and students (Choudry, 2020a). Thus, the qualitative analysis of data within the systematic literature review delves into a critical examination of the power relations between concepts, categories, and frames used by the researchers in different positions within academia, exploring conflicts and controversies between differing theoretical perspectives among academics writing in various periods and locations.

The QCA of the systematic literature review is the baseline of Paper II of this doctoral thesis. While the bibliometric analysis was limited to the collection and analysis of a large amount of bibliometric information within the published documents, the QCA was applied to zoom in on the qualitatively relevant content of the documents. Specific criteria were developed for the selection of the documents to be analyzed using a process composed of two phases, as shown in Table 6 and 7 below. The 2790 documents identified after duplicate removal in Zotero were screened with the help of Ryaan, software used for qualitative selection of literature. After additional screening, duplicates were removed manually in Ryaan, and the total number of documents was 2734. Different from the bibliometric software, Ryaan offered the possibility to include all the literature retrieved in all the databases. Thus, the limitations of the bibliometric software were not encountered for the selection conducted in this second level of the systematic literature review. I used Ryaan software to manually screen 2734 titles and abstracts to determine their eligibility for review of the full-text articles. The documents included in the grey zone (Table 6) were screened a second time in a triangulation process with my supervisor to ensure that the assessment criteria were met, reducing the risk of bias.

Table 6. Inclusion/Exclusion criteria of eligibility - 1st round.

	IN	GREY ZONE	OUT
PHENOMENON	Gender-Based Violence (GBV)	GBV is present but not on focus	No explicit reference to GBV
INTERVENTION	Social Welfare Programs, Services Provisions	Specific Programs for Refugees	Health, Medicine, Education
TARGET GROUP	Asylum Seeker Women, Stateless Women, Irregular Women, Legally Dependent Women	Focus on LGBTQI+, women with impairments, older migrant women	No legal precariousness No Migrant Women

The number of articles included for full-text screening was 289, and inclusion/exclusion criteria were further developed in this second screening, as shown in Table 7 below.

Table 7. Inclusion criteria of eligibility - 2nd round

CATEGORIES	CRITERIA	INCLUSION
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)	Types and forms of GBV	The document must pay attention exclusively to migrant women
MIGRATION	Precarious Legal Status	The document must pay attention to asylum seekers, refused asylum seekers requests; special visas; spousal visa; displaced, stateless, undocumented

WELFARE RESPONSES	Street-level workers, professionals, activists	The document must contain a reference to welfare provisions and be empirically grounded in professional practices

Following the inclusion/exclusion criteria (Table 7), I screened 289 documents, of which 26 were selected and included for full qualitative analysis and synthesis. After additional full-text review, the final number of texts selected was 25. Qualitative analysis of the documents was performed using QCA with the help of MAXQDA Software. The results and discussions of the qualitative analyses are included in Paper II of this thesis.

Here below, in conclusion, Table 8 summarizes Study 1, Paper I and Paper II composing this doctoral thesis.

Table 8. The Summary of the Papers from Study 1

Papers	Title	Dataset	Focus
Paper I	Gender-based violence (GBV) against women with precarious legal status and their access to social protection in advanced welfare societies: an analytical contribution to reconstruct the research field and its institutional development.	n. 2174 documents	Who are the actors and disciplines producing the knowledge
Paper II	The institutionalization of gender-based violence (GBV) and migrant women's access to social protection systems in advanced welfare societies. A systematic qualitative exploration of the literature at the cutting edge of gender, migration, and welfare.	n. 25 documents	How the knowledge produced frames the problem of GBV experienced by migrant women and its solutions

Study 2

The second study focuses on knowledge produced by CSAs. In particular, it explores how various practitioners and activists working on the ground generate and use diverse knowledges (e.g., concepts, categories, frame) when providing and delivering some forms of social protection to migrant women who have precarious legal status. Consequently, I investigate how different types of knowledge are (re-) produced, accepted, renegotiated, challenged, and contested by CSAs while providing some forms of social protection to migrant women with precarious legal status.

Choice of the multisite approach

The countries selected to investigate the knowledge produced by CSAs in Study 2 are Sweden and Italy. The two-country research design has already been used in previous research on GBV against migrant women (Voolma, 2018). Even if within traditional welfare studies (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Ferrera and Rhodes, 2013) Sweden and Italy seem to belong to different welfare typologies and traditions that are not commonly compared, the task of "combatting violence against women and GBV" is at present harmonized at the EU level, being regulated by several EU conventions and directives that both Sweden and Italy have signed and ratified. Further, as members of the EU, both countries are also subject to the Europeanization of the policy area relevant to international migration and its regulations (Meeuwisse & Scaramuzzino, 2019). Finally, during the past thirty years, both Sweden and Italy have undergone a similar process of shifting responsibility and resources from the public to the non-profit sector, including the privatization and marketization of welfare services (Hartman, 2011; Panican and Ulmestig, 2016; Borzaga and Fazzi, 2011). Although there are distinctions between the two countries regarding the process of privatization and the role of CSAs in it (Kallio et al., 2016), the devolution of responsibilities from the state to non-state actors is of key importance when looking at the social protection systems in the field intersecting migration and GBV in both countries (Campomori and Ambrosini, 2020; Ataç, Schütze, Reitter, 2020). Indeed, in both countries, non-state actors are involved in the task of protecting groups belonging to the precariat, including migrant women. Moreover, looking at implementation of the Convention to combat violence against women and GBV (Istanbul Convention, 2011), the WAVE country report (2019) on Sweden and Italy pointed out the commonality of minimum standards in organizing social interventions and management of social services by similar types of organizations in those two countries. Finally, the reason for selecting Sweden and Italy is given by the specific focus of this study, which is the knowledge produced by CSAs. Indeed, by looking at Swedish and Italian contexts, it is possible to contrast the similarities and differences between the knowledge mobilized by CSAs to shape, (re-)produce, renegotiate, and contest the dominant framing of the problem and the solutions to it.

I have opted for a multisite case study (Mangen, 1999; Jenkins et al., 2018) involving two countries to investigate the activities of CSAs. A multisite approach has been selected because it helps capture context-dependent knowledge and experiences (Flyvbjerg, 2006), while at the same time focusing on different national and sub-national settings. Hence, differences and diversity are deemed important to gain a meaningful and rich understanding of what is going on in the micro-social context. The choice of a multisite approach exposes the research to some challenges, such as dealing with a cross-national and multilingual context, and a sample of various professionals working in similar positions and organizations but in different urban contexts within the two countries. However, a multisite approach (Mangen,

1999; Jenkins et al., 2018) has the advantage of collecting data beyond one specific setting and case country without losing context-specific information (Mangen, 1999: 116; Flyvbjerg, 2006: 225-228). Indeed, the diversity and differences in cross-national as well as, or as much as, in sub-national locations and settings still enable the analysis of qualitative data to connect with site-specific findings. But, on top of that, a multisite research design also allows the research to join the everyday micro-actions together in a landscape where it is possible to look at geographical variations in real-life experiences within the same practice. It is this diversity between and within the two countries and the different settings chosen that allow nuances to arise and data to be contrasted, which means developing a better and more diversified understanding of the complexity, contradictions, conflicts, agreements, compromises, and paradoxes implicit in social protection practice.

However, questions may still arise concerning the appropriateness of national or sub-national analysis of CSAs operating in countries where deep and pervasive differences exist (Mangen, 1999). To complicate the picture, usually to observe and interpret differences between contexts, researchers are required to have a general understanding and experience of the cases, and issues are posed when the researcher does research in unfamiliar settings, or in foreign lands, where cultural and language references might be difficult to grasp. Hence, in the next section, I explain how I navigated issues of reliability and validity.

Explorative fieldwork and selection of the participants

Traditionally, in small-scale cross-national qualitative research, the primary focus is often on how to select participants and how to construct valid methodological tools to gather qualitative data (Mangen, 1999: 114). In this regard, below I describe the phases that guided the selection of the sample of participants in Study 2, and design of the vignette method as the chosen tool for conducting the interviews.

There is a wide stream of research in comparative studies on the subject of welfare (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Hill and Møller, 2019). However, a review focusing on the types of comparative research in the field of street-level organizations (Saetren in Hill and Møller, 2019) pointed out that only 20% of all comparative studies are cross-national. In this regard, Zacka (2017) also highlighted that comparative research addresses differences among countries by mostly focusing on the broader political context within which policy delivery occurs. In turn, the study of everyday micro-practices in welfare comparative studies is considered less relevant or has less significance. Accordingly, comparative welfare theories still struggle to acknowledge and explain the similarities and variations among countries when studying everyday situations encountered by street-level workers.

Moreover, welfare reforms and externalizations of service shaped the role played by CSAs in the social protection field, replacing the traditional street-level bureaucrats in the service delivery industry (Campomori & Ambrosini, 2020).

Hence, the debate on comparative welfare studies oriented my attention to street-level workers operating in diverse welfare systems. Particularly, my initial attention to street-level workers was focused on those actors working within civil society settings. Finally, CSAs operating in Sweden and Italy were selected because acting within two different welfare systems but at the same time having a similar positioning, which is the double role of service delivery for the public authority while, at the same time, representing marginalized social groups and their interests, which could be in tension with those of the state authority (Campomori and Ambrosini, 2020).

I carried out explorative fieldwork to familiarize myself with the two national contexts in which CSAs operate. Between March and June 2021, I attended several workshops and training courses organized for practitioners working in the field of GBV/Migration both in Sweden and Italy. I also read several country reports on specialized social services written by various CSAs in Sweden and Italy. I concluded my explorative fieldwork by contacting via email and video/phone calls a total of 12 professionals: six practitioners working for different CSAs in Italy and six in Sweden. In Italy, a field visit to a women's shelter was also added. Having informal discussions and conversations with experts and reading documents and reports during the explorative phase helped me clarify what types of CSAs have a similar role in Italy and Sweden as regards protecting migrant women with precarious legal status. Thus, the types of organizations included in my study are women-led NGOs, faith-based organizations, and other civil society actors such as associations and foundations, all of which were present in both countries and organize and deliver similar service provisions to migrant women with precarious legal status who are experiencing GBV.

Finally, the explorative phase increased my familiarity with the broader political and social context in which professional everyday activities take place. The practitioners I met during this fieldwork helped me access the context and get in contact with professionals working for CSAs in the respective sub-national contexts, helping me start a dialogue with key informants and helping my intuition in further choosing a sampling strategy to select participants working as CSAs in Italy and Sweden.

CSAs were all chosen using purposive and convenience sampling (Weiss, 1994). In Italy and Sweden, the CSAs were purposively selected from national registers where organizations providing services in the field of GBV are listed. In particular, in Sweden, both Roks and Unizon are the two largest member organizations of women's shelters operating in the country and have an online freely accessible database with all contacts of the member organizations. Given the accessibility of their online members' list, I first emailed around 180 women´s shelters in Sweden, sending them an information letter and inviting them to participate in the research. I mostly wrote the emails in Swedish, and all the material was sent out in Swedish. In Italy, the largest member organization of women´s shelters is D.i.Re., which has

an online freely accessible repository of all the contacts of every single member organization. I emailed around 70 women´s shelters in Italy. All emails were written in Italian, and the material was available in Italian. Moreover, several CSAs were selected based on purposive sampling and were not part of the national registers of women's shelters. The CSAs intentionally selected were mostly from faith-based organizations with which I had been already in contact, and they organized and managed several service provisions, including women´s shelters, for migrant women victims of GBV in both Italy and Sweden.

The design of the vignette method

In Study 2, I employed a sample selection (Mangen, 1999) that increased the validity of the qualitative data and I developed a reliable instrument, using the so-called vignette method (Møller, 2016; Harrits, 2019), that maximized the potential of qualitative data collection to account for the context-specific information, while also being applicable across different countries, settings, cultures, and languages (Jenkins et al., 2018: 1970).

In this study, I was particularly interested in understanding the relationship between knowledge production and its use and relevance for professional action (Choudry, 2020a), which impacts the framing of the problem of GBV and solutions to it that are available for migrant women. To integrate this argument into the research design, I have developed three scenarios (Table 9) constitutive of the so-called vignette method using the data collected and analyzed in the systematic literature review (Study 1). In particular, analysis of the academic literature in the first study informed the content and wordings included in those three scenarios (see Table 4 for more details). The precarious legal conditions of Samirah, the protagonist in the vignettes, are linked to her migratory journey. In Scenario I, Samirah is an asylum seeker in the resettlement context, and she has been subjected to family violence and forced marriage. In Scenario II, she just fled her home country, and she is crossing national borders without a regular permit, which exposes her to sexual abuse perpetrated by public officers at the borders. In Scenario III, she lives in a resettlement context while being dependent on her boyfriend for shelter, work, and the regular permit, even though her legal situation in the country is not clearly described. She is subjected to different types of violence, which are not defined but clearly related to domestic violence and trafficking.

Table 9. Vignette Scenarios

Scenarios	Content
Scenario I	Samirah was born in 1988. She applied for asylum in Sweden in December 2021, claiming that she had just arrived in the country. Initially she claimed she had left her home country because of the war. But then she changed her story to allege that she had fled with her boyfriend to avoid an arranged marriage with an older man. She now fears maltreatment by her family on her return.
Scenario II	Samirah fled her home-country with her boyfriend to avoid marriage with an older man. During her migratory journey, she asked a friend to find someone who could

	get her across the borders. At one of the checkpoints, a policeman asked her for sexual favors in exchange for a pass permit.
Scenario III	Samirah now lives with her boyfriend. She relied on him initially for shelter and food and they both have debts to repay for their journey. Lately, they fight often, and things can get violent. With the help of some countrymen, she has found occasional jobs, in nightclubs, in agriculture, in a food chain, and the domestic sector. She usually works extra hours, is underpaid, and is exposed to extremely difficult work conditions.

I then tested the scenarios during the explorative phase and adapted the information based on the feedback given by experts in Sweden and Italy. Thus, the situations represented are academically sound, while at the same time, the information in the scenarios displays contextual variation in both the legal situation of the migrant woman and the violence to which she is/was exposed. After reading the scenarios one by one to the interviewees, a series of open-ended questions (see Appendix) were posed to understand the initial thoughts of the professionals, and how those thoughts and ideas could lead to specific actions to help migrant women with precarious legal status such as represented in the vignettes.

It has been pointed out in the literature (Guidi et al., 2016) that one of the limits of the vignette method is that the scenarios are realistic but not real-life events; this entails that the respondent's answer is to be regarded as a possible stream of action that they would do in theory rather than what they do in an everyday practice situation. However, the aim of the empirical fieldwork in Study 2 is not to describe day-to-day organizational life but rather to represent a web of sayings and doings that allows the participants to interpret their realities delimited by historical and material circumstances. Thus, interviews with professionals can reveal the universe of meanings, values, concepts, categories, and classification systems that are constitutive of the practice itself and delimit their day-to-day range of possibilities for action. In this sense, professional discourses and reflections can be seen as everyday language (Shaffer, 2006) structured to talk about a phenomenon named and framed in a certain way to obtain a particular interpretation of reality that can legitimate, challenge, negotiate, and reshape a course of action in the professional realm. In this regard, the vignette scenarios are an analytical tool that facilitates data collection within and between national settings (Jenkins et al., 2018:1971), increasing the validity of data interpretation (Mangen, 1999).

Investigating professional sayings and doings, however, is a difficult task for researchers. Professionals' reasoning, their ways of thinking and interpreting a problematic situation, and the logic used to solve the problems encountered by them are ambiguous, contradictory, hard to summarize, and hence difficult to analyze in a way that closely reflects the complexity faced by individuals in their everyday experiences (Flyvbjerg, 2006: 237). In this regard, during the interviews with the participants, I presented the vignette scenarios by providing a set of pre-determined realistic situations (i.e., three scenarios) that mirror as much as possible the

complexity and contradictions of the professionals' everyday reality, allowing the participants to use their reflexivity. As Bevir (2006: 285) puts it: “When we interpret an action, we interpret the actor´s interpretation of the world.” In this regard, the scenarios give the respondents the possibility to reflect on diverse possible actions they would take, and each of the actions they would discuss may represent a different way in which they could interpret the reality presented, and each action could lead to one solution or another. Hence, the scenarios presented with the vignette method are adaptable to different cross-national settings and facilitate the professionals' ability to reflect on their contextual particular realities, grounded in various types of knowledge and experience, which motivate their professional actions. In other words, the precarious situations described in the scenarios presenting diverse forms of GBV experienced by migrant women allow a grey area for interpretation, facilitating the emergence of a wealth of site-specific data while recognizing the similarities and differences within and between countries and settings.

Language flexibility and data collection

As has been highlighted in the literature on qualitative methods (Mangen, 1999:112), there are risks associated with using one language in multilingual settings. and it is important for the researcher to identify strategies to face the limitations and constraints imposed by language barriers. One of the most relevant challenges is that, by using only one language, the researcher would not be fully able to capture the meanings, turns of phrases, metaphors, and contextual elements of the reality under investigation. Further, at times, the resources for translation or interpretation are not available, and if the researcher decides to conduct the interviews in a language that is familiar to the interviewees but is not their native language, valuable elements might not be expressed by the interviewees or could be lost in translation.

To overcome the problem of language in this study, given that my native language is Italian, and that I have been working and studying in English for many years, I initially wanted to familiarize myself with the Swedish language so that I could conduct the fieldwork with the relevant spoken language used by the interviewees. Thus, I enrolled in a Swedish language course. However, despite my efforts, the time limits did not allow me to reach a proficient level of Swedish, and in turn, my supervisors helped me translate all the material into Swedish while supporting me during some interviews conducted in Sweden. Further, the text of the vignette scenarios was translated into Swedish and Italian to adapt the language to the context where the professionals work. The professionals could choose their preferred language to reflect on the scenarios and were also allowed to use multiple languages during the interviews, particularly if they wanted to discuss a key concept or use technical language they would use in their everyday work.

The data collection was divided into two phases: from March to August 2022, a total of 16 semi-structured interviews were conducted in Sweden, and from September to December 2022, a total of 15 interviews were carried out in Italy. In the Swedish context, 11 interviews were conducted on Zoom, while the other 5 were conducted face-to-face in the headquarters of the different organizations. The main language of the interviews was English, but in most cases, professionals used concepts and wordings expressed in their native language. In one case, the interview was conducted completely in Swedish; in another, the interview was conducted completely in Italian. In Italy, 10 interviews were conducted on Zoom, and the other 5 took place in the organization´s headquarters. The language of the interviews was Italian. The interviews were conducted under conditions of confidentiality and anonymity. Each respondent was informed about the study's content and objectives; they gave their oral informed consent to participate and permission to record the conversation. Ethical considerations were a constant part of my research journey (see next section), and accordingly, I also developed a data management plan (DMP) where I clearly defined how I intended to use and store the data collected.

Based on semi-structured interviews, the empirical material gathered through interviews with professionals using the vignettes is the baseline for the findings in Stusy 2. In Paper I, I analyzed the material using an interpretative approach (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, 2015) to coding qualitative interviews with practitioners (Declercq and van Poppel, 2023; Harrits, 2019), using MAXQDA software. In Paper II, I analyzed the qualitative material using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) combined with elements of the sociology of translation (Callon, 1984). Below, Table 10 summarizes Paper III and IV composing this doctoral thesis.

Table 10. Summary of the Papers from Study 2

Paper	Title	Dataset	Focus
Paper III	De-bordering and re-bordering practices at the intersection of gender and migration. A multisite exploration of specialized services for migrant women experiencing violence in Italy and Sweden	n. 31 Interviews	How knowledges inform professional logic to assess the GBV situations
Paper IV	Strategic framing used by civil society actors to renegotiate state authority. The case of migrant women with precarious legal status and their access to social protection in Sweden and Italy.	n. 31 Interviews	How knowledges are used to frame the situation of migrant women with precarious legal status when negotiating their access to social protection

Ethical Considerations

Throughout this study, I consistently reflected on my positionality, particularly from the perspective of knowledge production. As Marilyn Strathern notes (in Narayan 2012: 16), the question in doing research is not simply how to bring certain scenes to life, but how to bring life to ideas. This statement pushed me to pose important questions to myself: How and why is the researcher's attention directed to particular scenes, ideas, concepts, and not others? What are the pre-existing knowledge structures that motivate a researcher to study a particular situation or phenomenon? In trying to answer those questions, I want to emphasize the importance of ethical reflection on who the subject is that a) produces the academic knowledge and b) is produced by the academic knowledge.

Reflexivity on my social work professional journey helped me touch on fundamental issues concerning why I wanted to dedicate five years of my life to carrying out research on the topic of knowledge production in the field of GBV against migrant women who have precarious legal status. In this regard, feminist theories came to help in pointing out that my subjectivity is conditioned by the environment I am in. Indeed, subjectivity constructs the experience as much as the experience constructs subjectivity (humans are not machines and life events can change us). In this regard, my upbringing, the place where I was born and raised, my gender, sexual, and racial identities coupled with my socioeconomic background, my education, my work, and social relations all influence the way I experience and act in the world and the ways the world is made intelligible to me. And those experiences eventually led me to want to pursue a doctoral degree. Furthermore, past events within my professional and personal experiences led me to focus my attention on groups of migrant women in the EU who are exposed to both legal precarity and GBV. Finally, once I started my research, I got interested in exploring knowledge production. As with all things in life, what led me to study knowledge production in academic and professional settings was a sequence of events, readings, discussions, political debates, conferences, reflections, and my intention to carry out research that is close to activism, social movements, and civil society organizing.

Reflexivity on the question of validity was another important element I considered while carrying out this doctoral study. At the beginning of my doctoral journey, I wonder what constitutes "right" and "good" knowledge. Lakatos, as discussed by Chalmers (2013: 130), focused on how only certain types of knowledge come to be recognized as valid within scientific discovery, ultimately concluding that it is impossible to pinpoint the essential characteristics that make science valid. This inability to discriminate validity attributes led me to question whether I could, at least, be a “good researcher”: If we cannot determine what makes knowledge valid, then who is deemed the "proper" researcher responsible for producing credible, hence valid, knowledge? For centuries, men from the upper class have been

producing knowledge, shaping the structure of thoughts, influencing theoretical and methodological positions, and the attributes—such as gender, class, and ethnicity—of those who could be considered proper researchers. Given these considerations, I concluded that the validity I embraced requires an honest and accountable reflection related to my positioning inside and outside academia.

As Adler and Adler (2008: 2) pointed out, feminist research not only brings attention to issues of inequalities but also identifies forms of resistance to the dominant social order. Moreover, feminism reclaims the authority to question the very production of knowledge, the very structures or modes by which our society tells us what is true and what is false, what is valued and what is not, what is worth academic attention and what is not (Newton, 1993; Butler, 2011). Feminist scholars remind researchers that every knowledge is partial and situated (Haraway, 1988). According to Haraway (1988), the act of knowing involves a process of vision—seeing and representing what we see, and ascribing meaning to it. This implies that no meaning or interpretation can be neutral or objective; feminist objectivity is a practice of contestation, deconstruction, and hope to transform knowledge, which means to transform the ways we look at things and the ways of seeing (Haraway, 2013, pp. 584-585). Knowledge can be situated through a critical and reflexive relationship with our own subjectivity, which forms our epistemological stance. As knowing subjects, we cannot detach ourselves from the conditions that shape our interpretations. Therefore, understanding is always influenced by our perspectives, contexts, and desires. Feminist epistemology emphasizes the importance of research positionality, advocating for accountability in how we perceive and interpret the social world from our own social positions. In doing so, I strive for coherence and clarity in my writing, trying to ground my thinking and analysis in feminist and practice-oriented approaches.

Therefore, I acknowledge that my positionality in the fieldwork and within the social theories and methods employed in my scientific work is shaped not only by my ethical and moral principles, and my multiple identities (e.g., gender, race, class), but also by the academic institution that supports my research and the rules that organize my everyday work, which gives validity and credibility to what I do. As a matter of accountability, my academic background and education are partly rooted in the social work field and partially in the sociological field, impacting the blend of knowledge that the social sciences possess. This means that my research interest in organizational practices, welfare policies, institutional and civil society settings reflects my background. My class background, coupled with my past professional experience in the public sector as well as in NGOs across different countries, impacted my willingness to carry out international analysis, constantly looking at the interplay between global problems and local struggles. These frameworks shape the way I see and interpret the data, and I take full responsibility for using these perspectives – these ways of looking at things.

Furthermore, during my professional experiences in diverse contexts, several ethical dilemmas arose alongside a sense of frustration over my lack of knowledge, or more precisely over my limited ways of thinking and seeing things, which are a consequence of being educated in Western academic institutions. This element mirrors one of the elements in focus in my doctoral thesis, which is the power dynamics within and among disciplines, which call into question the effectiveness of social work, among others, in upholding democratic principles of social justice, equality, and activities such as advocacy, lobbying, and activism. Finally, the choice to focus on GBV and migration stems from my professional frustrations and quest for more comprehensive learning and knowledge that is committed to critical thinking and acting for social and political transformation against an oppressive social order.

In essence, my reflexivity is a call for a more political, comprehensive, and critical approach to social work and sociological research and, more broadly, to the social sciences, while addressing inherent power structures and ethical considerations to navigate the challenges present in today's institutional academic and non-academic contexts.

Ethical Dilemmas

Informed consent (see form in Appendix) as defined by the GDPR and the Swedish Act for good research (ALLEA, 2023; Swedish Research Council, 2017), should comprise three essential elements: a) adequate information, b) voluntariness, and c) competence.

Competence is quite a straightforward requirement, which entails that participants in the research have all the necessary knowledge, skills, and capacity to understand what it means to take part in a research project, do interviews, and comprehend the information related to the research project. The participants in my research are all professionals working in civil society organizations, which means that, because of their societal and professional positions, they all have the necessary competence to understand and interpret what my research project is about and what their participation in it entails.

Concerning voluntariness, participation in the research must be entirely voluntary. Participants should feel free to decide whether or not to take part without any coercion or undue influence. They should also be informed that they can withdraw from the study at any time without experiencing any negative consequences. I dedicate a section of the information letter (see Appendix) to explaining that participation is voluntary. Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the research at any time without providing reasons and that no consequences would follow their decision to withdraw. Additionally, I assured them verbally that all information exchanged between the researcher and participants would remain confidential, and that the data would be anonymized and securely stored. Before

starting the interviews, I asked whether they wanted more information on this point. I also informed them that the findings would be generalized to allow for comparability, and no individual characteristics would be described. Consequently, any names related to professionals and the organizations they work for would be omitted.

One ethical dimension I considered during the research process was “adequate information,” which required a more in-depth reflection on the ethical struggles involved in conducting qualitative research. Adequate information involves ensuring that participants are fully informed about the nature, purpose, and potential impacts of the research. It is crucial to communicate clearly and transparently, providing all the necessary details so that participants can make an informed decision about their involvement. This might include explaining the research objectives, methods, potential risks, and benefits, as well as how their data will be used and protected. I prepared a short description of my study, including the research objective and methods. I then reached out to CSAs via email and attached this short description to my email. All the professionals working as CSAs who expressed their willingness to participate in the study received additional information about the purpose of the project; they were able to ask me questions via email and to double-check the information about the purpose and objective of the study prior to their interviews.

In my empirical fieldwork, I conducted interviews with individuals who hold professional roles operating in the social protection field. One potential risk of conducting interviews with practitioners is that if the researcher asks direct questions about participants' professional conduct in the organizations they work in, the participants might feel like they are in an ethically uncomfortable situation. For example, social workers adhere to a professional code of ethics. According to the Swedish Social Work Code of Ethics (Akademikerförbundet, 2016, p. 13) "the social worker shall be aware of and stay loyal to the fundamental mission of the organization in which they work." Consequently, if the practitioners must adhere to these codes of conduct, it is ethically challenging to ask them to consider disclosing such information during interviews in my research. Therefore, the vignette method with open-ended questions was chosen because it can be used as an instrument adapted to assess the validity of the participants’ answers on a more general level, looking at their practices without referring to any specific situations and organizational constraints they might be living in their workplace. During the interviews, I asked about their everyday work by telling them to reflect on a hypothetical situation and interpret the possible ways they would act in relation to it.

Ethical considerations in academic settings

Despite the existence of a plurality of different ethical frameworks (Swedish Research Council, 2017), in the Swedish context, a medical-consequentialism-

deontological frame seems to prevail regarding the ethical rules applied to all academic research (Clark, 2012; Griffin and Leibetseder, 2019; Lincoln & Tierney, 2004; McCormack et al., 2012; Murray et al., 2012). Following this general tendency, the ethical revision process recognizes the importance of informed consent when it comes to human participants in research, regardless of the research field (ALLEA, 2023). In Sweden, the requirement for ethical review applies to all research involving humans. The Ethical Review Act (Görman, 2023) specifies that permission from the Ethical Review Authority is a legal precondition when the research processes sensitive personal data (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, political views, religion, trade union membership, sexual orientation). My doctoral research does not involve the collection and analysis of sensitive personal data. In this research project, I ask professionals working in a public organization to reflect on their work practices with migrant women who have precarious legal status. Accordingly, this research project does not cover the activities (Sections 3 and 4 of the Ethical Review Act) that require ethical review approval. Nevertheless, I collected some personal data while doing my fieldwork, such as names of the participants, emails, and names of the organizations in which they work. Because most of the interviews were conducted online, I also had to make video- and audio-recordings of participants. The handling and protection of personal information have been part of larger ethical considerations while designing and carrying out the different phases of this study, as explained in detail below.

As a researcher in the social sciences, I planned specific moments during my research process when I could reflect on the ethical dilemmas with peers and senior colleagues. Those ethical reflections can be summarized through a list of principles, such as those described in the EU document about Research Participant Rights (ALLEA, 2023: 7-8 comma 2.4 - Safeguard), which guided my decisions regarding the processing and protection of data:

- Following the principle of "*do no harm*", researchers should respect the dignity of the participants involved in the study. To achieve this, I paid particular attention to a) being aware of my researcher positionality (bias and perspectives) and b) choosing appropriate methods for carrying out research with other human participants.
- Participation was *voluntary*, meaning that I provided an information letter with all relevant information before the participants agreed to take part in the research. Further, informed consent should be required while maintaining a certain flexibility, which means written consent was not mandatory if the person did not want to sign a document and be identified. I asked for their consent, and the participants provided either their written or their oral consent. Participants were all informed that they could withdraw at any time if they did not wish to continue.

- *Anonymity* was ensured, which means I identified practical solutions and actions when documenting the fieldwork, such as the names of the participants, the emails, the place where the meeting took place, or any other geographical and personal information, all of which were kept safe, following the procedures developed at Lund University (see my data management plan).
- *Reciprocity*, which means I developed a relation of trust with participants, using languages chosen by the participants, making sure the results could be accessed by the participants, answering participants' questions about the research aims and its methodology, and sharing information on how the video-/audio-recordings and transcripts of interviews would be used. Finally, information about the published results was shared and discussed with the participants.

The reflexive work around these guiding principles was merged during the research process into the data management plan (DMP), which is a tool that helps manage empirical data, in terms of organization and protection. Lund University provides a DMP tool, which was used in this research to consider ethical issues related to the collection of data, the documentation produced, safe storage of the audio- and video-recordings as well as the written transcripts of interviews, and final consideration about intellectual property rights and long-term preservation of stored data. Every step and information on how I handled and protected the personal information of the participants are included in the DMP, which is public and can be freely consulted (DMPs online repository).

Last but not least, even if the prevalent ethical academic framework usually does not consider *reciprocity* as one of the principles of good research practice, my ethical considerations push me to dedicate some time and energy to reflecting on how to give the results back to all the participants. This ethical position is linked to my general interest in developing feminist and participatory research methods (see Caretta, 2018) within social work, and more broadly, the social science disciplines. Accordingly, as part of my dissemination plan was implemented during the final phase of my research (2024/2025), I reached out to all the participants and invited them to an online meeting. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the findings of my research project and explore whether these findings might be useful to their professional actions. I was also interested in understanding whether the findings provoked any ambivalent or negative reactions among them, and whether they had any critical thoughts. Only six participants from five Italian CSAs agreed to participate in the meeting. Interestingly, almost half of the participants in the Swedish context had changed their employment and could not take part in the meeting. During the meeting, I encouraged participants to share their thoughts, especially if they disagreed with any general elements of the findings, and I offered a space for them to give me advice and reflect on the research. Following this meeting, I developed a concise report summarizing our discussions and the research

results. This report was funded with the international grant made available at the School of Social Work, Lund University, and was translated in Italian, English, and Swedish, and sent to all organizations that took part in the study.

Contributions to Knowledge Production

Within advanced welfare societies, an increasing number of individuals belonging to the precariat (Standing, 2011) are left out or only marginally included in welfare provisions. Traditional welfare systems are struggling to recognize and address the new social risks faced by the precariat, particularly the risk of GBV to which migrant women with precarious legal status are exposed. Hence, various social actors are working to make visible and recognizable in welfare terms those risks that migrant women in precarious situations are experiencing.

In line with the above, the research presented in this thesis explores how GBV is framed as a social problem and examines the solutions proposed by academics and CSAs. Particularly, the thesis deepens our understanding of how actors within academia and civil society frame the problem, acknowledging the GBV experienced by migrant women with precarious legal status. For a violent situation to be recognized and for a migrant woman to be deemed eligible for social intervention, credible and believable knowledge must be generated by social actors within institutional settings. Accordingly, inspired by practice theory approaches (PTA), this research investigates the process of knowledge production at the intersection of GBV, migration, and welfare. It examines the ability of different actors in academia and civil society settings to generate and use diverse types of knowledge to frame violent situations as a social problem and to identify solutions.

This doctoral thesis comprises two studies, each detailed in scientific papers, three of which have already been published and one that has been submitted for publication. It is a compilation of four papers, each engaging with knowledge production that frames the problem of GBV experienced by migrant women with precarious legal status and the solutions to it. The first two papers focus on knowledge produced in academic settings, while the last two examine knowledge in civil society settings. Each paper delves into issues of power relations, highlighting how knowledge is intertwined with the ideologies, worldviews, and hierarchical positions of the actors producing knowledge. In the following section, I summarize the findings of each paper and discuss their contributions to knowledge production, emphasizing the relationships between academic and civil society settings.

Result Summary of Paper I

Gender-based violence (GBV) against women with precarious legal status and their access to social protection in advanced welfare societies: an analytical contribution to reconstruct the research field and its institutional development.

Claudia Di Matteo and Roberto Scaramuzzino

In Paper I, attention is paid to the development of academic knowledge production in the field at the intersection of GBV, migration, and welfare, identifying power dynamics among actors who produce knowledge. In doing so, the paper showcases academic knowledge production through scientific publications, co-authorships, and citations. The result emphasizes how those elements influence the formation of epistemic communities that have more or less power in producing knowledge, which means framing the social problem of GBV perpetrated against migrant women with precarious legal status and the solutions to it.

The findings of Paper I point out the growth and development of academic publications forming the epistemic communities in the field of "GBV against migrant women who have precarious legal status and social responses to it in advanced welfare societies." The growth in the number of publications in this field took place over a period between 2010 to 2021, highlighting the influence of international political debate and agreements (e.g., the Istanbul Convention, 2011) in helping to draw attention to the issue of GBV against migrant women. Within academic publications, the bibliometric analysis identifies key journals contributing to the field, noting that while there is a generally growing body of academic work, the intersection of migration and GBV is often absorbed by disciplines like health and medicine, while the role of the social sciences, including social work, is more marginal.

The citation analysis of 2,174 documents highlights the prominence of the health field, particularly medicine, psychiatry, and psychology, in research at the cutting edge of GBV, migration, and welfare. The dominance of the health field is evident, with 12 of the 20 most cited authors belonging to this area, covering subfields like sexual health, nursing, and clinical psychology. Authors from the social sciences, including social work and sociology, also feature but to a lesser extent. The analysis suggests that the psychological conceptualization of GBV as a traumatic experience has influenced the focus on solutions related to treatments for vulnerable groups, particularly migrant women. This focus is reflected in the citation patterns, where co-authorship practices in health-related disciplines contribute to higher citation counts. Further, the analysis shows that the most cited works are predominantly from English-speaking countries, with a significant number of authors affiliated with institutions in the US, UK, Canada, Australia, and some EU countries.

The co-authorship analysis, finally, reveals the structure and intensity of collaborations among researchers across different countries and disciplines. Out of 5,418 authors, 303 were identified as having co-authored at least three documents between 2010 and 2021. The analysis highlights that some authors from two clusters are creating an interdisciplinary field between social work and nursing, and several clusters are developing interdisciplinary collaborations increasingly oriented towards clinical, practice-oriented, and critical studies focusing on participatory methodologies. Based on co-authorship affiliation, the country networking shows that the US has the largest output but with fewer international co-authorships compared to its total publications. The US collaborates most with Canada, the UK, and Australia, while European countries show stronger international and inter-continental collaborations. Oceania, Asia, and Africa have varying levels of international collaboration, with South Africa showing significant links to several Western countries.

Result Summary of Paper II

The Institutionalization of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Migrant Women's Access to Social Protection System in Advanced Welfare Societies. A Systematic Qualitative Exploration of the Literature at the Cutting Edge of Gender, Migration, and Welfare.

Claudia Di Matteo

Paper II delves deeper into the literature produced by epistemic communities at the intersection of GBV, migration, and welfare studies, as discussed in Paper I. The documents selected as empirical material analyzed in Paper II are used to closely examine the content generated by the epistemic communities. The findings discuss how the framing of the problem and the solutions to it are approached by scholars working at universities in advanced welfare societies.

A total of 25 documents in the form of scientific articles were analyzed using qualitative content analysis (QCA). The results suggest that the scientific literature is framing the social problem of GBV in three different ways, namely domestic violence (DV), trafficking, and the influence of state immigration control. The first two frames (DV and trafficking) align with mainstream international definitions of GBV, while the third is a critique of these mainstream frames and proposes an alternative framing. The findings in Paper II suggest that each frame is inextricably linked to the specific solutions identified by the authors of the scientific articles.

The analysis of documents framing "Domestic Violence" reveals that DV is often used by scholars interchangeably with Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and is

framed within global health and human rights. In line with international conventions, the frame of DV generated by academics tends to look at violence within heteronormative relations based on marriage. Within this frame, relevance is given to the position of migrant women within heterosexual couples, and the problem of accessing social protection is identified in two elements: first, women are dependent on their husbands for regular permits, which makes it difficult for the women to leave the relations; second, various groups of women have a specific cultural and linguistic background that differ from that of the resettlement context, complicating women´s access to social services. Accordingly, the solutions proposed in the documents analyzed include 13 interventions aimed at helping professionals navigate the welfare system to support specific migrant groups, such as Nigerian and Latina women, given the precarious immigrant situations of specific ethnic groups in the resettlement contexts. Scholars also emphasize the importance of using culturally appropriate interventions, linguistic support, collaboration among agencies, and a trauma-informed approach to improve access to social protection. The literature finally notes the importance of empowering women to make their own choices and the need for CSAs to improve their collaboration with public agencies to access services.

The documents framing "Trafficking" discuss how immigrant status affects migrant women's vulnerability to violence, exposing them to the risk of being trafficked. Scholars highlight the limitations of international and national legal frameworks in addressing these issues. In particular, they point out the inadequacies of current laws that focus exclusively on victimhood. In turn, academics urge nation-states to fulfil their obligations to protect women. The focus on victimhood is at the base of what is defined in some of the documents analyzed as *neo-colonial approaches to social protection.* Framing women as pure victims who are unaware they are being exploited and trafficked is what justifies social interventions such as "voluntary return" and "safe return" programs. In this regard, some scholars challenge these mainstream frames, advocating for nation-states within the resettlement context to be accountable and assume responsibility by protecting trafficked migrant women. However, in some other documents analyzed, scholars (re-)produce different organizing ideas (logics) to frame trafficking, such as victimhood, sex slavery, sex work, and prostitution.

Furthermore, the findings in Paper II highlight the existence of different organizing academic ideas and positions that frame trafficking, leading to controversial academic debates and tensions in recognizing what interventions are more suitable to protecting migrant women with precarious legal status. On the one hand, some authors framing trafficking as work exploitation emphasize the importance of interventions of professional outreach based on empowerment approaches that can serve migrant women by giving them information about their labor rights. Other scholars, instead, focused on migrant women as victims of trafficking, emphasizing the importance of social protection programs based on the human rights approach

and the victim-centered perspective. Academics sometimes see interventions for the victims of trafficking as innovative and, at other times, as repressive because they focus exclusively on trafficking in the context of prostitution.

The third frame produced by scholars explores the intricate relationship between state immigration control and GBV as it affects migrant women. The main findings suggest that the scholars producing the literature are working to challenge traditional legal categories of violence and victimhood. First, they emphasize that rigid classifications of victims often fail to recognize the complex realities faced by migrant women who do not fit the image of "pure and innocent victims" who need to be rescued. Second, the authors of the documents highlight that immigration control and global economic and geopolitical relationships contribute to various forms of violence against migrant women, and, therefore, they emphasize the need to reconceptualize the definition of GBV accordingly. For instance, in the case of trafficking, the dominant framework conflates trafficking with prostitution, thereby excluding many situations of labor exploitation that can occur outside the field of prostitution. Scholars also put forward the organizing idea (logic) that sex work is not automatically a form of GBV, and the mainstream framing of trafficking is an expression of a moralistic ideology. Hence sex work should be framed as work, and in doing so only situations of exploitation and abuse should be sanctioned, while sex workers should be protected and supported as regular workers. Moreover, notions of womanhood framing GBV tend to reproduce binary and heteronormative gender categories, leaving outside the protection system many individuals from the LGBTQAI+ communities. Third, scholars question the legitimacy of the state having the authority to protect migrant women with precarious legal status. Indeed, they argue that the nation-state itself contributes to GBV by controlling borders and by enabling the exploitation of migrant women through various social and economic policies. Accordingly, three alternative interventions were identified by those authors. These social interventions are linked to the work carried out by CSAs and grassroots organizations trying to oppose and challenge the nation-state authority. For instance, the Canadian Government ordered all professionals working in health and social services to report irregular migrants to police authorities. In contrast, CSAs in Canada came up with an intervention called "don´t ask, don´t tell" to counteract the governmental policy. This means that the CSAs working with migrant women in situations of violence decided to not ask for information about their migration status, while delivering social protection to women experiencing GBV.

Discussion of Study 1

The findings from Study 1 help identify several key elements in the process of academic knowledge production related to the framing of GBV and its solutions.

First, the findings allow us to closely examine how violent situations experienced by migrant women with precarious legal status are increasingly recognized as worthy of academic research attention. Second, they highlight the various ways in which recent academic recognition of GBV experienced by migrant women is framed as a social problem. Third, Paper I and II emphasize that academic knowledge production not only acknowledges the importance of recognizing GBV experienced by migrant women, but also underscores the need to study the interconnections between organizing ideas (logics) that link the problem formulation and solution identified. In this regard, the production of academic knowledge in this field contributes to situating the problem of precarious legal status at the intersection of GBV, migration, and welfare, enhancing our understanding of how migrant women are recognized as subjects who can access different forms of social protection.

The bibliometric analysis of published literature highlights a growing research interest, over the past decade, in the field at the intersection of GBV, migration, and welfare. This shift in academic interest has the merit of drawing attention to the social and political forms of oppression and inequalities created by the precarious legal status assigned to various migrant women groups. Different epistemic communities have contributed to refocusing their research on this field. In doing so, they are increasingly drawing attention to migrant women with precarious immigrant status who were previously overlooked or insufficiently considered within the mainstream literature linked to gender, migration, and welfare. However, power dynamics are evident in the production of knowledge at the intersection of GBV, migration, and welfare.

Scientific collaborations, as described in Paper I, highlight the formation of epistemic communities with varying degrees of influence in producing knowledge recognized in the academic field. For instance, the number and intensity of collaborations between researchers with different affiliations, thus belonging to different academic disciplines, emphasize the formation of epistemic communities with more or less power to produce knowledge that is considered valid and relevant to imposing their organizing idea. Indeed, the literature retrieved belongs to disciplines affiliated with professional practices such as medicine, health, psychiatry, psychology, nursing, and social work, while the broader fields of sociology, economy, law, and other social and human sciences do not seem to have a prominent role in knowledge production within this field of study. This may indicate that the processes of academization and specialization of medicine, psychology, social work, and related organizational studies are producing knowledge as a tool for educating professionals to work in the field of welfare services. Hence, academic interest in the framing of the problem *and* its solutions results in knowledge useful for doctors, nurses, phycologists, and social workers, who are the people working in welfare services and interacting with migrant women experiencing GBV. The academic knowledge produced can have immediate

practical applicability in social interventions at the intersection of GBV, migration, and welfare.

However, is also worth noting that medicine and nursing are the most productive disciplines in terms of publications, and are usually self-referential, meaning they do not publish in collaboration with other disciplines. Thus, the knowledge they produce is hyper-specialized, which leads to the hierarchization of knowledge (Burke, 2016:22). Social work within professional-related disciplines is the least productive, but at the same time, scholars are developing collaborations with other social disciplines. Scientific collaborations, in turn, could be an antidote to knowledge hierarchization, creating an interdisciplinary space in which academics produce knowledge collectively.

The bibliometric analysis further indicates that, within the disciplines listed above, prominent scholars publishing in this field hold academic positions at universities in the US, Canada, and the EU, all of which constitute advanced welfare societies. Consequently, the knowledge frameworks they develop are rooted in and influenced by Western contexts. As a result, the approaches to understanding and addressing GBV are inherently tied to historical economic, social, and political opportunity structures. In turn, Paper I is limited in its analysis of knowledge production in academia to specific geographical and disciplinary contexts, confining the discussion to knowledge produced at universities located in advanced welfare societies.

The analysis in Paper II helps to zoom in on the content produced by epistemic communities working at the intersection of GBV, migration, and welfare. A first element worth noticing in the field of academic knowledge production is that the literature qualitatively analyzed is grounded in the work of CSAs who provide social support to migrant women with precarious legal status in several contexts. The authors of all the scientific articles selected and analyzed have done fieldwork with CSAs, some have collaborated in various ways with grassroots movements and activists, while others have interviewed practitioners, and all of them have produced research outputs based on this empirical material. Hence, the boundaries between scholars and practitioners, between theorizing and organizing, might be blurred. In other words, it is possible to argue that practitioners' sayings and doings produced largely outside academic spaces influence the research findings, and in turn, contribute to modifying and nuancing the larger academic debates, reorienting theories, categories, concepts, and frames of understanding. Based on some of the findings, it is also possible to acknowledge that academics who pay attention to the work of CSAs are also increasingly using an intersectional lens, discussing the social inequalities and discrimination in access to social protection lived by migrant women in precarious conditions and recognizing their situations. This may indicate that processes of academic knowledge production in this field of study are increasingly bounded by the political and social struggles of migrant women groups in precarious life conditions, and some researchers are creating a space in which

academia can meet CSAs and interchange ideas, frames, and concepts to discuss concrete alternative ways to think and act in relation to migrant women struggles.

In Paper I, the analysis is grounded in quantitative bibliometric data that point out the power positions of academics working in advanced welfare societies. Indeed, most of the knowledge produced comes from the US, Canada, and Europe. Also, the production of knowledge is dominated by specific disciplines in the field of health and to a lesser extent in the field of social work. Academics working at Western universities and doing research in professional-related disciplines have to adhere to academic standards, which may imply producing a high number of scientific articles, publishing articles in academic journals with a high impact factor and writing in English. In reading the results of Paper I, one may think that knowledge produced at the intersection of GBV, migration, and welfare is a Western-oriented, highly specialized knowledge characterized by very critical thinking and very little variation in ideas, concepts, categories, and frames.

Therefore, the qualitative exploration of the content of the scientific literature carried out in Paper II is deemed essential to investigating and clarifying the various positions of scholars producing knowledge in academic settings. Indeed, the results point out that academic production is much more diverse and critical than one may think only by looking at the bibliometric data. Indeed, Paper II points out how some academics produce knowledge that may reinforce dominant frames. These scholars may be carrying out their research on GBV experienced by migrant women with precarious status while (re-)producing and using mainstream concepts, classification, and organizing categories rooted in governmental policies and mainstream interventions. Conversely, other researchers are contesting mainstream knowledge, reframing the social problem of GBV and solutions to it. Various researchers are challenging the mainstream knowledge through a dynamic process that aligns with the efforts of activists and grassroots groups that are confronting the problem of migrant women and advocating for social change. Among these groups, many CSAs and movements involved in this field are mobilizing different knowledge in the form of frames, concepts, organizing ideas, and categories for understanding the issue of GBV as experienced by migrant women. Through collaborative and interdisciplinary research, academics are working in alliances with those CSAs to envision new courses of action and alternative interventions to address the root causes of migrant women's political struggles, while also organizing immediate responses to them.

In conclusion, the value of combining quantitative and qualitative analysis of academic knowledge production is that doing so may help in highlighting the different tensions, controversies, contradictions, and power relations in which academics are caught while framing the problem and the solution at hand.

Result Summary of Paper III

De-bordering and re-bordering practices at the intersection of gender and migration. A multi-site exploration of specialized services for migrant women experiencing violence in Italy and Sweden.

Claudia Di Matteo

The findings in Paper III can be situated within the work carried out by CSAs providing social interventions for migrant women with precarious legal status in Italy and Sweden. Interviews with 31 CSAs represent knowledge produced in civil society settings. Sweden and Italy are the contexts analyzed against the backdrop of diverse national social protection systems within advanced welfare societies. Within this context, CSAs play the double role of service providers for the state authority and support systems for groups of migrant women with precarious status who are falling into the cracks of the welfare systems.

The results showcase the dynamics between CSAs acting in collaboration with the state authority (so-called re-bordering practices) and those acting to protect and stand in solidarity with migrant women in precarious conditions (so-called de-bordering practices). The findings suggest that de-bordering and re-bordering practices represent CSAs' ways of thinking and acting based on diverse types of knowledge. On the one hand, dominant concepts, categories, and frames delimit the social protection field, leading professionals to reproduce taken-for-granted knowledge while providing specialized services. On the other hand, professionals' sayings and doings manifest a constant effort to reshape, stretch, negotiate, and/or push the boundaries of mainstream knowledge, offering social protection to migrant women who are not fully supported and recognized in dominant frameworks. The types of knowledge that produce de-bordering practices often bridge the gap between formal state protections and the informal support systems on which many individuals rely.

In the context of Italy and Sweden, de-bordering practices can take different forms due to the varying legal frameworks and material and historical conditions characterizing the CSAs. However, in both contexts, CSAs follow similar logic such as *sisterhood/personhood, treatment, and recognition of violence* for providing support to migrant women regardless of their legal status. In Italy, for instance, CSAs often work closely with local communities to provide support and advocacy for migrant women experiencing GBV, stepping in where formal statutory services may fall short. They might offer services like counseling, legal advice, and safe shelters. In Sweden, the welfare system is generally less residual, but CSAs still play a vital role in addressing gaps and providing specialized support that the public authorities might not fully cover. Hence, the de-bordering practices are particularly

significant, as they challenge the legitimacy of state control over its territory by addressing the needs of migrant women through alternative frameworks to motivate their actions, providing support to migrant women regardless of their legal status.

Conversely, re-bordering practices involve certain types of mainstream knowledge supporting dominant frameworks for social protection that align with the state's authority. These practices highlight the importance of state authorities in limiting, controlling, and regulating the work of CSAs when addressing GBV. Accordingly, CSAs act as service providers for the public authority, reproducing and navigating bureaucratic categories to grant social protection, thus, revealing the challenges faced by migrant women in accessing protection from GBV. In both contexts, we see how re-bordering practices produce knowledge that links dominant GBV frameworks to bureaucratic categories that exclude or assign a lower degree of protection to certain migrant women (e.g., asylum seekers and irregular migrants). In Sweden and Italy, the types of knowledge that produce re-bordering practices are grounded in three logics, namely the *bureaucratic logic*, the *logic of proof*, and the *logic of border*, pointing out how the bureaucratic category and classification systems enter the work of CSAs, limiting the possibility for interpreting situations of GBV to which migrant women are exposed and for offering the social protection they require. In Sweden, when the professionals working as CSAs categorize women as asylum seekers, they may refer those individuals to the migration agency or the police authority to let them determine the condition to access welfare services and assess the credibility of their stories. Hyper-specialized CSAs often deliver support only to migrant women who fall under the remit of their services, referring to "migrant women´s cases" and to GBV mainstream frameworks, and classification systems. In Italy, the re-bordering practices analyzed reveal the limits faced by CSAs in delivering services to migrant women. Like Sweden, CSAs play a crucial role in categorizing migrant women using a bureaucratic logic that assigns to social services or the migration agency the decision-making power to approve and fund accommodations for migrant women asylum seekers in shelters. The logic of proof to access protection often requires detailed evidence to assess migrant women's credibility, referring to when and where the violence occurred. Finally, the logic of the border emphasizes how the general lack of welfare resources, the high housing costs, and the racism within Italian society hinder professionals' ability to help migrant women access work, housing, and welfare services.

Result Summary of Paper IV

Strategic framing used by civil society actors to renegotiate state authority. The case of migrant women with precarious legal status and their access to social protection in Sweden and Italy.

Claudia Di Matteo, Norma Montesino, Roberto Scaramuzzino

Based on the analysis of 31 interviews with CSAs operating in Sweden and Italy, Paper IV explores the tensions between CSAs vis-à-vis the state in organizing and providing social protection to migrant women who are experiencing GBV and who have precarious legal status. The findings in Paper IV look at the framing strategies that allow CSAs involved in the field of social protection in both Sweden and Italy to reshape, renegotiate, and challenge the dominant knowledge imposed by the state authority. The analysis of CSAs in Italy and Sweden reveals a complex and dynamic interplay between diverse legal frameworks, social protection services, classification systems, and interpretations of migrant women's requests for protection from GBV, producing alternative knowledge.

One key finding is that CSAs employ framing strategies to navigate the social protection system. In doing so, they produce a type of knowledge that becomes a medium between migrant women's needs/requests and the formal categories required by the public protection system to access services. For instance, in both Sweden and Italy, access to women's shelters is usually regulated by the principle of territoriality, which means that the person must be a resident within the territory to access protected shelters. However, some CSAs employ strategies such as crowdfunding and leveraging informal networks to provide extended support when state resources fall short of providing residential services. The flexibility given by private economic resources and volunteers allows CSAs to mobilize different types of knowledge to modify the criteria for accessing shelters. Indeed, human rights principles, needs-based assessment, and women´s interests replace the bureaucratic limitations linked to categories of residency and citizenship.

Further, the framing of GBV employed by CSAs plays a crucial role in facilitating access to services. In Sweden, CSAs recognize the complex and multifaceted nature of GBV while working with migrant women and are aware of the challenges of reducing this complexity to a narrow frame of the problem. However, CSAs are also well aware of the importance of navigating the institutional field to enable migrant women to access the range of social benefits they need and require. In navigating the system, CSAs need to first acquire diverse knowledge of various regulations, laws, and frames regulating the institutional field at the intersection of GBV, migration, and welfare. Then, CSAs use those types of knowledge in new productive ways, negotiating categorial tags with other actors such as migration agencies or

social services. This process of negotiations helps reshape, extend, and adapt the criteria for recognition, allowing for the inclusion of a broader range of violent situations experienced by migrant women who are subjected to different levels of precarity.

In this regard, in Sweden, CSAs may strategically reduce complex violent situations to the single issue of domestic violence to align with well-established welfare policies, enabling migrant women to access a wide range of social protection, from shelters to economic benefits. Conversely, in Italy, a single-issue strategy is used by CSAs to make migrant women's experiences of violence comprehensible to public officers within migration agencies and police authorities, facilitating recognition of their rights and access to services. Use of a single-issue strategy presupposes the combination of various categories and frames, assembling traditional elements from the medical field to the judicial-legal and social policy fields, but giving them a new order. The complex story of a migrant woman may be reduced to essentializing categories, but at the same time, those dominant categories are assembled by CSAs to guide the migrant women into the delimited and narrow courses of action that the welfare state can offer them. While producing this assemblage of knowledge, CSAs seem to be aware that simplifying complex life situations of migrant women into essential categories is just a strategic approach to helping them navigate the protection system and determining possible courses of action to address their requests for social protection.

Finally, the findings also uncover the challenges CSAs face when dealing with restrictive migration policies and the consequent controversies between CSAs and state actors over regulatory frames, limited economic resources, and shifting responsibilities. In Sweden, framing violent situations as trafficking cases involves a specific legal architecture, often requiring the CSAs to collaborate closely with public authorities, such as police and migration officers. As an example, the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for trafficking is the main frame of reference that should be used by state and non-state actors while dealing with trafficking. The collaboration among several governmental agencies and CSAs is one of the elements characterizing the NRM, but this collaboration can usually lead to referring irregular migrants to police and immigration authorities, which entails deportation risks for migrant women. In response to the gaps and constraints of the NRM, a network of Swedish NGOs has established a parallel program called the National Support Program to provide services to trafficked people, including those who are irregular migrants, thereby challenging state-imposed categories and advocating for policy changes.

In Italy, the controversies between CSAs and state authorities such as police and migration agencies extend to application of the Dublin Regulation, which mandates that asylum seekers be returned to the first EU country they entered. This regulation often disregards the GBV experiences of migrant women, leading to their repatriation to countries where they previously may have faced labor and sex

exploitation as well as domestic violence. Thus, Italian CSAs collaborate with their European counterparts to support these women, using EU frameworks and funding to advocate for their protection. Further, transnational cooperation emerges as a vital strategy where some CSAs can collaborate across borders to provide support to migrant women without formal protection. This cooperation underscores the importance of framing GBV as grounds for social protection, especially when children are involved, invoking international child protection laws. In sum, the doings of CSAs can extend beyond national and local frameworks. Having knowledge of international laws and conventions linked to migration, gender, and violence is crucial to moving international funding opportunities and resources. Additionally, recognizing the importance of establishing transnational collaborations enhances civil society's understanding of various national protection systems. This knowledge enables CSAs to integrate their efforts, providing protection to migrant women who might otherwise be not recognized in any of the existing frameworks of social protection, such as in the case of the Dublin regulations.

Overall, Paper IV illustrates how CSAs in both Italy and Sweden operate within a multifaceted institutional landscape. These CSAs must strategically select and combine various frameworks and categories to create a knowledge assemblage that aligns with the needs of migrant women and the available social protection mechanisms. This adaptability is essential in ensuring that migrant women in precarious situations receive the necessary support. Despite the challenges posed by dominant frameworks and categories, CSAs have the potential to propose alternative perspectives that move, renegotiate, and challenge these boundaries. By doing so, they create micro-spaces for the social protection of migrant women. Even if on a small scale, these initiatives are mobilizing knowledge to drive social change.

Discussion of Study 2

The findings from Study 2 help identify several key elements in the process of civil society knowledge production related to the framing of GBV and its solutions. Findings showcase that CSAs are key actors in knowledge production, i.e., the ongoing construction of GBV as a social problem, and identify solutions accordingly. Second, the knowledge produced by these actors can reflect a variety of ideologies, beliefs, and positions, which can either align with existing categories and frames or contribute to reshaping and challenging them by elaborating, suggesting, and negotiating new meanings that reorient the framing of GBV against migrant women with precarious legal status and the solutions to it. Further, civil society knowledge production is crucial to making visible and recognizable the issue of GBV as experienced by migrant women with precarious legal status. In doing so, CSAs produce knowledge that links the problem formulation to the identified

solution. In this regard, civil society knowledge production contributes to framing the problem and the solutions at hand, enhancing the possibility for some migrant women to be recognized as subjects who can access diverse forms of social protection. Finally, the findings in Study 2 also emphasize the diversity, paradoxes, and contradictions between different GBV framings, highlighting that civil society´s possibilities for framing the problem and its solutions are delimited and embedded by power relations within the field of social protection.

Study 2 acknowledges that CSAs operating in advanced welfare societies take on the double role of service delivery for the state and of support service to represent the interests of marginalized individuals and groups, such as migrant women with precarious legal status. This double-contradictory position is manifested through the knowledge produced by CSAs, which is an expression of conflicting logics, beliefs, and interests. In this regard, in Paper III, de-bordering and re-bordering practices highlight the ways in which CSAs navigate their different roles in the social protection system by theorizing, organizing, and delivering social interventions for migrant women. Theorizing, organizing, and delivering social interventions means that professional knowledge is crucial in envisioning feasible courses of action to find concrete ways to overcome the struggles lived by migrant women. Thus, it is possible to say that the types of knowledge produced by CSAs, and investigated in this study, are to be found in the ways CSAs bridge the gap between the needs of migrant women with the formal categories required by the state. Accordingly, the ability of CSAs to work around bureaucratic limitations, such as residency requirements, demonstrates their role in producing knowledge that contributes in some ways to ensuring the protection of some migrant women groups in advanced welfare societies.

This type of knowledge does not challenge or change the institutionalized frames and categories of interpreting GBV experienced by migrant women, but it has the function of bridging the gaps between ideologically similar but disconnected frames. For instance, as shown in Paper IV, CSAs can mobilize knowledge used by migration agencies with knowledge used by some women´s movements and ideologies, making it possible for some individuals who are experiencing domestic violence to be recognized as women who are deserving of protection, regardless of their immigrant status.

Nevertheless, by aligning with existing institutionalized frames based on dominant beliefs, values, and understandings about immigrant legislation, gender equality policies, and access to public benefits, those same CSAs may reproduce mainstream knowledge, reinforcing dominant views on GBV, migration, and welfare. In other words, the alignment with mainstream knowledge, as described by re-bordering practices in Paper III and by the single-issue strategy in Paper IV, limits the possibilities of accessing social protection for migrant women who are not recognized within those frames, for example, LGBTQAI+ individuals, sex workers, irregular migrants, and migrant women subjected to situations of violence not

recognized as such (e.g., some forms of work exploitation). Hence, the knowledge alignment tends to reinforce the mainstream frameworks related to GBV imposed by some academics and governmental policies, helping CSAs who are aligned with dominant interests gain resources and social recognition, thus increasing their organization´s legitimacy to operate in the field.

Conversely, at times, the very same CSAs investigated in this study may represent the interests of oppressed and marginalized groups of migrant women living in precarious conditions. In doing so, CSAs tend to oppose and contest state authorities and mainstream concepts, categories, and frames, proposing alternative ideas and courses of action. In this regard, the de-bordering practices considered in Paper III and some of the framing strategies discussed in Paper IV highlight the importance of the knowledge used by CSAs in redefining the situations of GBV experienced by migrant women with precarious legal status and the consequent courses of action. By challenging dominant knowledge, civil society plays an important role in shaping the framing of the problem and the solutions at hand and contribute to a type of knowledge that moves the boundaries of the dominant framework. This is evident, for example, when in Paper IV CSAs disagree with national and international policies, such as the National Referral Mechanisms (NRM) in Sweden and the Dublin Regulation in Italy.

The disputes over framing and categorizations lead CSAs in both contexts to interpret the GBV situations experienced by migrant women with precarious legal status. At times, the disagreements between actors on how to interpret the struggles faced by migrant women can help mobilize diverse types of knowledge in new ways to understand what the problem is, envisioning different solutions and courses of action. In problem-solving, as discussed in Paper IV, disputes over the correct framing of trafficking led Swedish CSAs to generate an alternative frame, enabling collective action on the part of 20 NGOs, which redefined the problem and changed the solutions on the ground, even if the legal national frame of trafficking included in the mainstream NRM remained intact. Shifting or displacing the mainstream frame with a new alternative one is also the strategy used by some CSAs in Italy who were motivated to oppose the Dublin regulations with on-the-ground alternative solutions. They did so by building collaboration between CSAs across borders to support migrant women. Accordingly, transnational cooperation enabled the production of transnational knowledge, facilitating redefinition of the problem formulation and solutions available for migrant women who have precarious legal status. By blending and moving different knowledge grounded in ideologically similar but separated frames, such as child protection, women´s rights, anti-discriminatory values and policies, and transnational resources, those CSAs could advocate redefining GBV as a ground for social protection beyond national borders and immigration policies.

In sum, by creating micro-spaces for alternative ideas and courses of action, CSAs contribute to dynamic forms of knowledge production. This involves continuously

adapting strategies for framing and reframing the problem of GBV to ensure that migrant women receive some form of social protection, while at times, moving and pushing the boundaries of knowledge (e.g., concepts, categories, frames) to acheive broader political and social changes.

In the following concluding chapter, I discuss and summarize the main findings of both studies.

Concluding Remarks

The Story of Fatima: Between Legal Protection and Social Recognition

This thesis began with the story of Fatima, a migrant woman from Ethiopia who experienced various types of violence and ended up in France asking for social protection. Her struggles and the efforts to overcome them are emblematic when describing the situations of the precariat, where an increasing number of people lack labor security and one or more social rights, impacting their access to social protection in advanced welfare societies. In particular, the precarious legal status of some migrant women not only limits their ability to access social protection, but also exposes them to a greater risk of experiencing GBV. Fatima cannot access the social protection system without being seen by social actors through a set of frames, categories, and classification systems grounded in diverse types of knowledge. In other words, given their precarious legal situations, migrant women experiencing GBV need to be recognized as being eligible for social protection through specific categories, concepts, and frames. It is only by framing the story of Fatima using knowledge deemed credible and valid within the institutional context that it becomes possible for Fatima to be recognized as a welfare subject, who can access specific but limited forms of social protection.

Throughout this doctoral thesis, I critically examine the various types of knowledge that produce Fatima as a welfare subject, framing the situations of GBV she experienced, and identifying the consequent solutions to it. In particular, I focused my attention on academic and civil society settings, where different actors are producing knowledge that frames the problem and the solutions at hand. My findings highlight how the knowledge produced by those actors renders visible the precariousness lived by migrant women in the social protection field. Knowledge produced within academic and civil society settings forms a micro-space at the intersection of GBV, migration, and welfare. In this micro-space, various knowledge systems are mobilized by social actors to interpret and articulate the stories of migrant women with precarious legal status. This process helps in recognizing those women´s stories in welfare terms, impacting their ability to access social protection in advanced welfare societies.

At the end of this thesis, Fatima´s future remains uncertain due to her precarious legal status, which does not ensure any specific outcomes based on the traditional welfare framework linked to rights and entitlements. As in many cases, women in precarious legal situations face uncertainty due to a lack of clear legal protections in the resettlement context. Factors such as legal status, asylum claims, or residency issues can all contribute to this uncertainty. However, at the end of this thesis, it is possible to acknowledge that various actors producing knowledge in academic and civil society settings are playing a role in generating knowledge that brings visibility and recognition to Fatima's story. Categories and frames structured by certain rules and norms are mobilized to recognize Fatima´s struggles in welfare terms. Those rules are not set in stone and can be constantly reshaped by new knowledge. This possibility to reshape, renegotiate, and challenge dominant, taken-for-granted frames and categories is crucial because it allows some CSAs to respond to migrant women's needs within a shifting and restrictive political context. The fragility and contestability of frames, categories, and classifications of people into welfare subjects highlight the dynamic nature of these classification systems, where different actors—researchers and activists, among others—can advocate for change and propose alternatives. This ongoing and dynamic process of negotiation and contestation is essential in ensuring that social protection systems remain relevant when addressing the needs of all marginalized communities and individuals who are left out of or only partially included in traditional public programs.

In conclusion, the possibilities for different actors to mobilize knowledge for the recognition of Fatima´s story are still limited by the structure governing the social protection system. However, under various circumstances, Fatima can be socially recognized as a welfare subject, regardless of her legal status, through the production and mobilization of knowledge that dynamically shapes frames, categories, and classification systems producing the social problem and the solutions to it.

Final Discussions

As discussed above, the process of knowledge production is essential in ensuring some limited degree of social protection for migrant women subjected to GBV. In this regard, a significant finding of this research is that these processes of knowledge production contribute to blurring the traditional separation between academia, typically associated with theoretical knowledge, and civil society, often seen as the realm of practical knowledge.

By examining the processes of knowledge production in the particular field at the intersection of GBV, migration, and welfare, this thesis highlights how the *boundaries* between academia and civil society *are increasingly permeable*,

illustrating how the thinking and the acting of professionals in both academia and civil society influence, and are influenced by, each other´s knowledge. Together, academia and civil society are working collaboratively, creating an epistemic community at the intersection of GBV, migration, and welfare that can potentially influence policymaking and social practices, ensuring that diverse voices are heard, and thus strengthening democratic processes. Nevertheless, both academia and civil society are collaborating in a space that is highly politicized and institutionalized. For instance, we can look at commissioned research from governmental bodies that foster collaboration between academia and civil society, but that, at the same time, define the rules and limits governing what actors can say and do. This means that, in a politically shifting context, collaboration does not always equal a democratic process of knowledge production that serves the interests of marginalized communities.

The findings of the thesis suggest that professionals and civil society actors producing an epistemic community at the intersection of GBV, migration, and welfare have maintained a dynamic interaction with each other while remaining in their respective spheres of action, which means academia and civil society can collaborate and learn from each other while maintaining their distinct roles. Having said that, it is important to point out another key finding related to the epistemic community working at the intersection of GBV, migration, and welfare, which concerns the *micro-spaces* collectively created by actors in both academic and civil society settings to make visible the precarious legal situation of migrant women while ensuring some forms of social protection to migrant women with precarious legal status. Within this micro-space, as previously discussed, knowledge is not only produced but also contested and refined, contributing to a more diverse and pluralistic understanding of the problem at hand and its solutions. In this regard, within the landscape of micro-spaces, professionals in academia and civil society mobilize knowledge for negotiations, contestations, and disagreements about what concepts, categories, and frames are better suited to define the problem of GBV experienced by migrant women with precarious status and the solutions to it.

The *mobilization of knowledge* emphasizes the role of academics and practitioners in making migrant women's stories visible and recognizable in welfare terms. Indeed, professionals within academic and civil society settings are trying to generate knowledge to dynamically frame and reframe the situations of precarity lived by certain groups of migrant women. The framing of precarity is deemed necessary within the context of advanced welfare societies characterized by welfare retrenchments, privatizations of social services, and budget cuts increasingly guided by managerial and neo-liberal logics. In this context, the process of knowledge producing the framing of the problem of GBV and the solutions to it is crucial to recognizing migrant women experiencing GBV and to demanding that state authority assume responsibility for their welfare. The concept of mobilizing knowledge, as highlighted in the title of this thesis, refers to the process of making

knowledge accessible and usable for a specific purpose—namely, making migrant women´s stories visible and recognizable for organizations and institutions operating within the social protection system.

This mobilization involves several key processes. First, it includes transferring knowledge from one group to another, such as extending women´s rights to diverse groups of migrant women as a ground for social protection. Second, it involves translating knowledge that is often used in separate institutional fields that do not typically communicate with each other, such as integrating gender equality frames into the migration institutional framework, which is grounded in different categories and knowledge bases. Third, it requires using knowledge strategically to emphasize salient elements of a violent situation or characteristics of a migrant woman, making them more recognizable within the context of social protection. Fourth, by contesting, challenging, and renegotiating dominant categories and frames, the boundaries of knowledge and disciplines become blurred. Some academics are seeking to apply an interdisciplinary perspective to the question of gender equality, looking at the problem at hand and its solutions with alternative intersectional perspectives, including class, ethnicity, country of origin, and other categories of power and oppression. Some CSAs are developing intersectional, transnational, and intersectoral work, seeking to find alternative perspectives and approaches to develop social interventions that counterweight the current limitations of traditional welfare provisions. Finally, mobilizing knowledge involves knowledge sharing, which emphasizes the collaborative aspect of knowledge production that is shared or redistributed among various social actors. Hence, the collaboration between researchers and activists is key in producing knowledge that contributes to public debates, reshapes attitudes, and interpretations of the issue at hand, and collectively mobilizes people for social change. Concerning that, as a final note, I would like to discuss the reason why professionals in academia and civil society settings have a mutual interest in each other's work.

Since the establishment of European democracies after the Second World War, there has been a general political intention to divide and balance the relations of power and the redistribution of resources between diverse state authorities based on democratic principles. Hence, a free and independent academia as well as a free and independent civil society, in a democratic system of rules and regulations, are crucial to maintaining and ensuring the functioning of democratic institutions, including the social protection field and the welfare system at large. In a democratic state, a free academia allows scholars to critically debate without censorship or undue political or economic influences, fostering an environment in which diverse perspectives previously disregarded and overlooked in the scientific field can be recognized, examined, and understood. Similarly, a free civil society provides a platform for various groups and individuals to express their views, beliefs, and interests, advocate for positive change, and engage in public discourse while avoiding violence and riots.

Nevertheless, as emphasized in this doctoral thesis, the changing political landscape with the prevalence of liberal politics, on the one hand, and the rise of far-right parties, on the other, is impacting the role of universities and civil society as societal institutions. In this sense, the micro-spaces at the intersection of GBV, migration, and welfare that are offspring of the knowledge produced by some professionals in academia and civil society may be a testament to the struggles for freedom and autonomy that these actors are experiencing while producing knowledge concerning highly controversial social problems and alternative solutions to them.

In conclusion, knowledge produced by academics and activists working with marginalized communities may potentially be under threat in the future. Thus, further research on knowledge production could shed light on the extent to which researchers and activists can maintain their role and collaborations in the framing of social problems and solutions given the current politically changing context in advanced welfare societies.

Implications for Future Research

In conclusion, I would like to discuss my own contribution to knowledge production. In doing so, I would like to start by situating my research contribution within the group of so-called *activist scholars* (Choudry, 2020a: 31), who are researchers within academic institutions who have experience working within civil society settings and continue to engage with those contexts even while holding university positions. In this regard, my current position as a researcher crosses the line between academia and civil society. Indeed, before starting my doctoral study, I was working in a research center carrying out projects with civil society and governmental actors outside the academic settings. Moreover, I am a trained social worker, and I worked in the field with NGOs for several years; I obtained various master´s degrees within the social science disciplines; I produced articles, book chapters, and reports; I organized and delivered social interventions, and many more activities that spring from all the various roles and positions I hold.

Here is my contribution to knowledge production. In this thesis, I explore the process of knowledge production, focusing on bridging the gap between academia and civil society. Indeed, the scientific outputs I identified and analyzed in Study 1 derive from research projects conducted by researchers collaborating with civil society actors (see Study 1). At the same time, in Study 2, I investigated the thinking and the doing of civil society actors operating in the field of social protection (see Study 2). In both studies, my intention was to pinpoint processes of knowledge production that have the potential to become a form of useful knowledge (Choudry, 2020a: 31), which means producing joint learning material and activities for social change. Given my positions both within and outside academia and civil society

organizations, I am committed to making academic research, situated in the social work discipline, more relevant and accessible to civil society, and vice versa.

Nevertheless, this doctoral thesis comes from an academic setting. Furthermore, I am located within the social work department. Social work as both an academic discipline and a professional practice must navigate the realms of both academia and civil society. In this regard, this thesis is an invitation to reflect on the challenges and tensions involved in doing research that moves between the academic context and everyday work in civil society settings. For researchers in social work, it is crucial to produce knowledge that is recognized within the field of social sciences as influencing the academic world of research and knowledge production. Simultaneously, it is essential to conduct empirical work that is relevant and useful in relation to activities carried out by CSAs and other state and non-state actors. This is the space in which social work research moves, and efforts should focus on collaborating with the various actors to keep the connection between academia and civil society alive, in this way challenging institutionalized knowledge hierarchies and practices.

Traditionally, academia represents an ivory tower where abstract concepts and frameworks are developed, often detached from ordinary people's struggles and not usable for practical applications, particularly in civil society settings. In contrast, civil society actors are seen as the realm in which practical knowledge is applied, which has little to do with thinking and theorizing. This dichotomy has been critiqued in this study for oversimplifying the complex interplay between theory and practice, potentially hindering collaborative efforts as it restricts the flow of ideas and insights between these two settings. In response to that, activist scholarship in social work is committed to carrying out research that has the potential to be more useful to collective actions for social change. This does not mean that all social work research produced thus far has not been useful or critical, however, it takes a more marginal role within the field of science. At times, concepts related to activism, social change, social movements, liberation, and resistance to oppression can be easily exploited. As Choudry explains (2020a: 40), academic spaces are often places where people are highly rewarded for their supposed detachment from the problems faced by the rest of the world. To build an academic CV and get research grants, academics need to prove their worth, producing social impacts. The societal impact, however, is calculated by counting the number of publications in high-ranking journals or opinion papers, while researchers who play an activist role within civil society settings are not rewarded for their contribution to society. As such, the intellectual work done within civil society settings is not often appreciated in academic settings, and conversely, the academic knowledge produced does not hold a central place in the thinking developed in civil society settings.

Nevertheless, knowledge production can, for the time being, be helpful in challenging, renegotiating, and reshaping dominant scholarly and civil society

understandings of social problems, suggesting and envisioning new hopeful courses of action for social change across time and space.

References

Abji, S. (2018). Postnational acts of citizenship: How an anti-border politics is shaping feminist spaces of service provision in Toronto, Canada. International Feminist Journal of Politics, *20*(4), 501-523.

Acosta-Jiménez, M. A., Antonios, A. M., Meijer, V., Di Matteo, C. (2021). Categorization and Stigmatization of Families Whose Children Are Institutionalized. A Danish Case Study. Genealogy, 5(3), 76.

Adler, P. A., Adler, P. (2008). Of rhetoric and representation: The four faces of ethnography. The Sociological Quarterly, 49(1), 1-30.

Ahmed, S. (2017). Living a feminist life. In Feminist Theory: Two Conversations (pp. 229-232). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.

ALLEA. (2023). The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, revised edition. Available at https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/european-code-of-conduct-for-research-integrity_horizon_en.pdf

Akademikerförbundet, S. (2016). Ethics in Social Work – A code of conduct and ethical behaviour for social workers. https://akademssr.se/sites/default/files/files/ethics_in_social_work_0.pdf

Ambrosini, M. (2020). Sociologia delle migrazioni. (Sociology of Migrations). Il Mulino.

Ambrosini, M. (2022). Humanitarian help and refugees: de-bordering solidarity as a contentious issue. Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies, 1-14.

Ambrosini, M. (2021). The battleground of asylum and immigration policies: a conceptual inquiry. Ethnic and Racial Studies, 44(3), 374–395.

Amelina, A. Lutz, H. (2019). Gender and Migration. Transnational and Intersectional Prospects. Routledge.

Assiter, A. (2000). Feminist epistemology and value. Feminist Theory, 1(3), 329-345.

Aksnes, D. W., Sivertsen, G. (2019). A criteria-based assessment of the coverage of Scopus and Web of Science. Journal of Data and Information Science, 4(1), 1-21.

Ataç, I., Schütze, T., Reitter, V. (2020). Local responses in restrictive national policy contexts: welfare provisions for non-removed rejected asylum seekers in Amsterdam, Stockholm and Vienna. Ethnic and Racial Studies, 43(16), 115-134.

Altheide, D.L., Schneider, C.J. (2012), Qualitative media analysis (Vol. 38), London and New York, Sage publications.

Baksh-Soodeen, R., Harcourt, W. (Eds.). (2015). The Oxford handbook of transnational feminist movements. Oxford University Press, USA.

Bacchi, C. L. (1999). Domestic Violence: Battered Women or violent Men?. Chapter 9 in Bacchi, C., (1999). Women, policy, and politics: The construction of policy problems. Sage.

Bacchi, C. (2009). Analysing policy. Pearson Higher Education AU.

Bahner, J. (2021), Access to sexuality: Disabled people's experiences of multiple barriers., in Accessibility Denied. Understanding Inaccessibility and Everyday Resistance to Inclusion for Persons with Disabilities, London, Routledge, pp. 123-139.

Bhambra, G. K. (2014). Postcolonial and decolonial dialogues. Postcolonial studies, 17(2), 115-121.

Bhambra, G. K., Holmwood, J. (2018). Colonialism, postcolonialism and the liberal welfare state. New Political Economy, 23(5), 574-587.

Bhuyan, R., Osborne B.J., Juanico Cruz, J.F. (2016). "Once You Arrive, Se Te Sala Todo" (Everything is Salted): Latina Migrants' Search for "Dignity and a Right to Life" in Canada., Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies, 14:4, 411- 431.

Bengtsson, M. (2016). How to plan and perform a qualitative study using content analysis. NursingPlus Open, no. 2, pp. 8-14.

Bevir, M. (2006). How Narratives Explain. In: Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea (eds), Interpretation and Method. 1st ed. Armonk: M.E. Sharpe.

Bourdieu, P. (1977). Outline of a Theory of practice. Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu. P. (1984). Distinction. A social critique of the judgment of taste. Routledge.

Bonetti, M., Villa, M. (2014). In the shadow of legalism: understanding community participation in an overly bureaucratic context. Critical policy studies, 8(4), 447-464.

Borzaga, C., Fazzi, L. (2011). Processes of Institutionalization and Differentiation in the Italian Third Sector. VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations, 22(3), 409–427.

Burke, P. (2016). What is the History of Knowledge?. John Wiley & Sons. University of Chicago Press.

Butler, J. (2004). Precarious life. The power of mourning and violence. Verso Ed.

Butler, J. (2011). Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity. Routledge.

Braun, V. and V. Clarke. (2006). Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology. Qualitative Research in Psychology 3, no. 2: 77-101.

Callon, M. (1984). Some elements of a sociology of translation: domestication of the scallops and the fishermen of St Brieuc Bay. The sociological review, 32, 196-233.

Campomori, F., Ambrosini, M. (2020). Multilevel governance in trouble: the implementation of asylum seekers' reception in Italy as a battleground. Comparative Migration Studies, 8(1), 22.

Caretta, M. A. (2018). Striving beyond epistemic authority: Results dissemination in smallholder irrigation farming research. Annals of the American Association of Geographers 108:884–98.

Ciarini A. 2020, (ed.), Politiche di welfare e investimenti sociali, Bologna, il Mulino.

Clark, J. N. (2012). Fieldwork and its Ethical Challenges: Reflections from Research in Bosnia. Human Rights Quarterly, 34(3), 823–839.

Chalmers, A. F. (2013). What is this thing called science?. Hackett Publishing.

Choudry, A. (2020a). Social Movement Knowledge Production. Chapter 2 in P.P. Trifonas (ed.), Handbook of Theory and Research in Cultural Studies and Education., Springer International Handbook of Education. Springer Nature Switzerland.

Choudry, A. (2020b). Reflections on academia, activism, and the politics of knowledge and learning. The International Journal of Human Rights, 24(1), 28-45.

CIJ - Center for Intersectional Justice. (2020). Factsheet Highlights: Intersectionality at a glance in Europe. CIJ- Center For Intersectional Justice. Berlin. https://www.intersectionaljustice.org/img/5.6.2020_summary-factsheet-intersectionality-at-a-glance-in-europe_feqdge.pdf

Cornelissen, J. P., & Werner, M. D. (2014). Putting framing in perspective: A review of framing and frame analysis across the management and organizational literature. Academy of Management Annals, 8(1), 181-235.

Cochrane. (2019). *Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA)*. https://abstracts.cochrane.org/2019-santiago/preferred-reporting-items-systematic-reviews-and-meta-analyses-prisma-2019-statement

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Mapping the Margins. Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color., in Stanford Law Review, Vol. 43, No. 6, pp. 1241-1299.

Davis, A. (1982). Women, race and class: An activist perspective. Women's Studies Quarterly, 10(4), 5.

De Genova, N. P. (2002). Migrant “illegality” and deportability in everyday life. Annual review of anthropology, 31(1), 419-447.

De Vita, L., Lucciarini, S. (2019). Towards a welfare system that produces inequality? Interpreting the new conditions of inclusion and exclusion in two Italian cases in a macro-micro-macro perspective. International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, 39(9/10), 865-882.

Delgado, R., Stefancic, J. (2017). Critical Race Theory: An Introduction. NYU Press.

Declercq, J., van Poppel, L. (2023). Coding metaphors in interaction: A study protocol and reflection on validity and reliability challenges. International Journal of Qualitative Methods 22: 16094069231164608.

della Porta, D., Pavan, E. (2017). “Repertoires of knowledge practices: Social movements in times of crisis”. Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, vol 12(4): 297-314.

EU - European Commission, & Directorate-General for Communication. (2020). Striving for a Union of equality: The gender equality strategy 2020-2025. https://op.europa.eu/publication/manifestation_identifier/PUB_NA0420118ENN

Esping-Andersen, G. (1990). The three worlds of welfare capitalism. London: Polity.

Farris, S. R. (2017). In the name of women's rights: The rise of femonationalism. Duke University Press.

Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five misunderstandings about case-study research. Qualitative inquiry, 12(2), 219-245.

Fanon, F. (1952). Black skin, white masks. In Social theory re-wired (pp. 355-361). Routledge. First edition 1952.

Fanon, F. (1961). The wretched of the earth. Grove Weidenfeld.

Ferrera, M., Rhodes, M. (Eds.). (2013). Recasting European welfare states. Routledge.

Fraser, N. (1987). Women, welfare and the politics of need interpretation. In Politics and social theory (pp. 104-122). Routledge.

Fraser, N., Gordon, L. (1994). "Dependency" demystified: inscriptions of power in a keyword of the welfare state. Social politics: International studies in gender, state & society, 1(1), 4-31.

Freire, P. (1970). Pedagogy of the oppressed. In Toward a sociology of education (pp. 374-386). Routledge.

Foucault, M. (1984). The Foucault Reader. Edited by Paul Rabinow. Penguin Books.

Fondazione L'Albero della Vita onlus. (2020). Retrieved from Swim project—safe women in migration. https://swim-proje ct.alberodellavita.org

Giddens, A. (1984). The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Gherardi, S., Nicolini, D. (2016). To transfer is to transform: The circulation of safety knowledge. In Knowing in organisations: A practice-based approach (pp. 204-224). Routledge.

Guidi, P., Meeuwisse, A., Scaramuzzino, R. (2016). Italian and Nordic social workers' assessments of families with children at risk. Nordic Social Work Research, 6(1), 4-21.

Griffin, G., Leibetseder, D. (2019). "Only Applies to Research Conducted in Sweden…": Dilemmas in Gaining Ethics Approval in Transnational Qualitative Research. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 18.

Ghorashi, H., Rast, M. C. (2024). Theorizing as a Liberatory Practice? The Emancipatory Promise of Knowledge Co-Creation With (Forced) Migrants. Social Inclusion, 12.

Goffman, E. (1974). Frame analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience. Boston: North Eastern University Press.

Görman, U. (2023). Guide to the Ethical Review of Research on Humans Swedish Ethical Review Authority. Etikprövnings Myndigheten. Uppsala, Sweden.

Hankivisky, O. (2012). An Intersectionality-Based Policy Framework. Institute for Intersectionality Research and Policy. Simon Fraser University, BC: Vancouver.

Harrits, G. S. (2019). Stereotypes in context: How and when do street-level bureaucrats use class stereotypes?. Public Administration Review, 79(1), 93-103.

Harrits, G. S., Møller. M.Ø. (2011). Categories and categorization: Towards a comprehensive sociological framework. Distinktion: Journal of Social Theory 12: 229-47.

Haraway, D. (1988). "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." Feminist Studies 14, 3: 575-599.

Haraway, D. (2013). Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective 1. In Women, science, and technology (pp. 455-472). Routledge.

Hartman, L. (ed.)., Konkurrensens konsekvenser: vad händer med svensk välfärd?, 1. uppl., SNS förlag, Stockholm, 2011

Hill, M., Møller, M. Ø. (2019). An approach to the development of comparative cross-national studies of street-level bureaucracy. Journal of international and comparative social policy, 35(2), 177-193.

Henriksen, L. S., Smith, S. R., Thøgersen, M., Zimmer, A. (2016). On the road towards marketization? A comparative analysis of nonprofit sector involvement in social service delivery at the local level. Chapter 12, 221-236, in Local public sector reforms in times of crisis: National trajectories and international comparisons, Kuhlmann, S., Bouckaert, G. (eds.). Palgrave Macmillan, UK.

Herz, M., Bečević, Z. (2024). Assembling the multitude: the transversal potential of categories for social work practice. Critical and Radical Social Work, 1-16.

Hochschild, A., Machung, A. (2012). The second shift: Working families and the revolution at home. Penguin.

hooks, b. (1989). Talking Back. Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black., Boston.

hooks, b. (1984). Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center. South End Press.

Høgsbro, K., Shaw, I. (Eds.). (2017). Social work and research in advanced welfare states. Abingdon: Routledge.

Inka, L., Kervinen, E., Lietonen, A., Ollus, N., Viuhko, M., & Jokinen, A. (2019). CCM-GBV project outcomes: Handbook and training materials on GBV among refugee women. http://heuni.education/ccm_gbv_outcomes

ISMU. (2020). "PROVIDE – PRoximity on violence: defence and equity", section on health, integration, and welfare. Retrieved from https://www.ismu.org/progetto-provide-proximity-on-violence-defence-and-equity/

Jenkins, E. K., Slemon, A., Haines-Saah, R. J., & Oliffe, J. (2018). A guide to multisite qualitative analysis. Qualitative health research, 28(12), 1969-1977.

Koffman, E. (2020). Unequal internationalisation and the emergence of a new epistemic community: Gender and migration. Comparative Migration Studies, 8(1), 1–6.

Khosravi, S. (2010). The 'illegal' traveller: an auto-ethnography of borders. Palgrave Macmillan.

Kuhlmann, S., Bouckaert, G. (eds.). (2016). Local Public Sector Reforms in Times of Crisis: National Trajectories and International Comparisons, Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016.

Latour, B.,Woolgar, S. (2013). Laboratory life: The construction of scientific facts. Princeton.

Latour, B. (1986) `The Power of Association', in J. Law (ed.) Power, Action and Belief: A New Sociology of Knowledge? London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Law, J. (1992) `Notes on the Theory of the Actor-network: Ordering, Strategy, and Heterogeneity', System Practice 5(4): 379-393.

Lindberg, K., Czarniawska, B. (2006). Knotting the action net, or organizing between organizations. Scandinavian Journal of Management, 22(4), 292-306.

Lincoln, Y. S., Tierney, W. G. (2004). Qualitative Research and Institutional Review Boards. Qualitative Inquiry, 10(2), 219–234.

Lipsky, M. (1980). Street-level bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the individual in public service. Russell Sage Foundation.

Levy, N., Pisarevskaya, A., & Scholten, P. (2020). Between fragmentation and institutionalisation: The rise of migration studies as a research field. Comparative Migration Studies, 8(1), 24.

Loseke, D. (2017). Thinking about social problems: An introduction to constructionist perspectives. Routledge. Second edition.

Loseke, D. R. (1992). The battered woman and shelters: The social construction of wife abuse. State University of New York Press.

Lundqvist, Å. (2011). Family policy paradoxes. In Gender equality and labour market regulation in Sweden, 1930–2010. The Policy Press Bristol.

Mai, N., Macioti, P. G., Bennachie, C., Fehrenbacher, A. E., Giametta, C., Hoefinger, H., Musto, J. (2022). Migration, sex work and trafficking: the racialized bordering politics of sexual humanitarianism. In The Sexual Politics of Border Control (pp. 123-144). Routledge.

Mangen, S. (1999). Qualitative research methods in cross-national settings. International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 2(2), 109-124.

Meeuwisse, A., Scaramuzzino, R. (2019). Europeanization, Civil Society, and the Swedish Welfare State. I A. Meeuwisse, & R. Scaramuzzino (Red.), Europeanization in Sweden: Opportunities and Challenges for Civil Society Organizations (s. 1-20). Berghahn Books.

McCormack, D., Carr, T., McCloskey, R., Keeping-Burke, L., Furlong, K. E., Doucet, S. (2012). Getting through Ethics: The Fit between Research Ethics Board Assessments and Qualitative Research. Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics, 7(5), 30–36.

Mezzadra, S., Neilson, B. (2012). Between inclusion and exclusion: On the topology of global space and borders. Theory, Culture & Society, 29(4-5), 58-75.

Medina, M. C. (2023). The feminization of resistance: the narratives of# NiUnaMenos as social transformative action. Journal of Political Power, 16(2), 237-253.

Mignolo, W. (2000). The Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference., South Atlantic Quarterly, 101(1), pp 57–96.

Mohanty, C. T., Carty, E.L. (2015). Mapping transnational feminist engagements. Chapter 7 in Baksh-Soodeen, R., & Harcourt, W. (Eds.). The Oxford handbook of transnational feminist movements, 82.

Mohanty, C. (1988). Under Western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses. Feminist review, 30(1), 61-88.

Moghadam, V. M. (2015). Transnational feminist activism and movement building. Chapter 2 in Baksh-Soodeen, R., & Harcourt, W. (Eds.). (2015). The Oxford handbook of transnational feminist movements. Oxford University Press, USA.

Morokvasic, M. (1984). Birds of Passage are also Women. International Migration Review 18 (4): 886-907.

Morokvasic, M. (1987). Immigrants in the Parisian garment industry. Work, Employment and Society, 1(4), 441-462.

Murray, L., Pushor, D., Renihan, P. (2012). Reflections on the Ethics-Approval Process. Qualitative Inquiry, 18(1), 43–54.

Møller, M. Ø. (2016). "She isn't someone i associate with pension"—A vignette study of professional reasoning. Professions and Professionalism, 6(1).

Nakamura, H., Suzuki, S., Hironori, T., Kajikawa, Y., Sakata, I. (2011). Citation lag analysis in supply chain research. Scientometrics, 87(2), 221-232.

Narayan, K. (2012). Alive in the Writing: Crafting Ethnography in the Company of Chekhov. University of Chicago Press: Chicago.

Newton, E. (1993). My best informant's dress: The erotic equation in fieldwork. Cultural anthropology, 8(1), 3-23.

Nicolini, D. (2012). Practice theory, work, and organization: An introduction. OUP Oxford.

Nicolini, D., Gherardi, S., Yanow, D. (2003). Knowing in organizations: a practice-based approach. ME Sharpe.

Nijensohn, M. (2022). Precarity and counter-hegemonic articulation: from the massification of feminisms toward a radical and plural feminism. International Feminist Journal of Politics, 24(1), 133-152.

Norstedt, M., Lundberg, S., Mulinari, P., Nordling, V., Öberg, K. (2022). Waiting in and for the welfare state. European Journal of Social Work, 25(6), 939-944.

Ozcurumez, S., Akyuz, S., Bradby, H. (2021). The Conceptualization problem in research and responses to sexual and gender-based violence in forced migration. Journal of gender studies, 30(1), 66-78.

Parreñas, R. (2015). Servants of globalization: Migration and domestic work. Stanford University Press.

Panican, A., Ulmestig, R. (2016). Social rights in the shadow of poor relief – social assistance in the universal Swedish welfare state. Citizenship Studies, 20(3-4), 475-489.

Plomp, R. (1990). The significance of the number of highly cited papers as an indicator of scientific prolificacy. Scientometrics, 19, 185-197.

Pisarevskaya, A., Levy, N., Scholten, P., Jansen, J. (2019). Mapping migration studies: an empirical analysis of the coming of age of a research field. Migration studies, 8(3), 455-481.

Poulakidakos, S., Rovisco, M., Veneti, A. (2024). Social Movements and Everyday Acts of Resistance: Solidarity in a Changing World. Taylor and Francis Group.

Quijano, A. (2007). Coloniality and modernity/rationality. Cultural studies, 21(2-3), 168-178.

Razack, S. H. (2021). Human waste and the border: A vignette. Law, Culture and the Humanities, 17(2), 322-334.

Razack, S. (1995). Domestic violence as gender persecution: Policing the borders of nation, race, and gender. Canadian Journal Women & Law, 8, 45.

Ranci, C., Pavolini, E. (2015). Le politiche di welfare. (Welfare Policies). Ed. il Mulino.

Ribas-Mateos, N. (Ed.). (2021). Handbook on human security, borders and migration. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Ryndyk, O., Suter, B., Odden, G. (eds.) (2021). Migration to and from Welfare States: Lived Experiences of the Welfare–Migration Nexus in a Globalised World. Springer IMISCOE Series.

Roth, S. (2021). Intersectionality and coalitions in social movement research—A survey and outlook. Sociology Compass, 15(7), e12885.

Robinson, J. A., Acemoglu, D. (2012). Why nations fail: The origins of power, prosperity and poverty (pp. 45-47). London: Profile.

Sager, M. (2011). Everyday clandestinity. PhD dissertation, Lund University.

Sager, M. (2018). Struggles around representation and in/visibility in everyday migrant irregularity in Sweden. Nordic Journal of Migration Research, 8(3), 175-182.

Kolankiewicz, M., Sager, M. (2021) Clandestine migration facilitation and border spectacle: criminalisation, solidarity, contestations, Mobilities, 16:4

Sainsbury, D. (2012). Welfare states and immigrant rights: The politics of inclusion and exclusion. Oxford University Press.

Saini, A. (2024) The patriarchs: How men came to rule. Fourth Estate.

Sandler, J. (2015). The "warriors within". How Feminists Change Bureaucracies and Bureaucracies Change Feminists. Chapter 7 in Baksh-Soodeen, R., & Harcourt, W. (Eds.). (2015). The Oxford handbook of transnational feminist movements. Oxford University Press, USA.

Schatzki, T. (2001). The practice turn in contemporary theory. Routledge.

Schmoll, C. (2024). Women and Borders in the Mediterranean: The Wretched of the sea. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

SEREDA Project. (2020). Sexual and gender-based violence in the refugee crisis: from displacement to arrival (SEREDA). Retrieved from https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/superdiversity-institute/sereda/index.aspx

Standing, G. (2011). The precariat: The new dangerous class. Bloomsbury academic.

Spector, M., Kitsuse, I. J. (1987). Constructing Social Problems. Routledge.

Swedish Research Council. (2017). Good research practice. Retrieved from https://www.vr.se/download/18.5639980c162791bbfe697882/1555334908942/Good-Research-Practice_VR_2017.pdf

van Eck, N. J., Waltman, L. (2020). Manual for VOSviewer version 1 .6.16. Retrieved from https://www.vosviewer.com/documentation/Manual_VOSviewer_1.6.16.pdf

Vamstad, J., Karlsson, M. (2022). Welfare between Social and Human Rights–Charity in the New Social Landscape of Sweden. Social Policy and Society, 1-14.

Villa, M., & Johansen, V. F. (2019). What difference does the context of activation make? Challenges and innovations in the Italian and Norwegian local welfare. International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, 39(5/6), 478-493.

Voolma, H. (2018). Love is Not a Passport to Sweden: Intimate Partner Violence against Migrant Women and the Proliferation of Rights' Statuses. United Nation.

Vox. (2019). The Intersectionality Wars. Interview with Kimberlé Crenshaw by Jane Coaston. Vox Online. Retrieved from https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/5/20/18542843/intersectionality-conservatism-law-race-gender-discrimination

Weiss, R. S. (1994). Respondents: Choosing Them and Recruiting Them., in: Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies. New York: Free Press. PP. 15-37.

WAVE. (2019). Country Report 2019. The situation of women´s specialists support services in Europe. WAVE - Women Against Violence Europe.

Yanow, D., Schwartz-Shea, P. (2015). Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn. New York, NY: Routledge.

Zacka, B. (2017). When the state meets the street: Public service and moral agency. Harvard university press.

Appendix

Informed Consent (Available in English, Italian, Swedish)

Consent to participate in the study

I have received oral and written information about the study and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I may keep the written information.

☐ I agree to participate in the study **on violence against women and migration (i.e., women with a foreign background who have an uncertain or unclear legal status, including asylum seekers, the undocumented, women who have lost their legal status in cases of divorce, those who have lost their residence permit, and other forms of precarious legal status.)**

☐ I agree that the information about me will be processed in the manner described in the information letter I received.

Information Letter (Available in English, Italian, Swedish)

Request for participation in a research project on violence against women and migration

We are staring a research project on violence against women and asking if you may want to be part of the project. Below we describe the project and what your possible participation will mean. The organization responsible for the project is Lund University.

What is the project and why is your involvement needed?

The research project focuses on the field of women's equality and in particular on interventions targeting abused women with a foreign background who have an uncertain or unclear legal status, including asylum seekers, and undocumented, women who have lost their legal status in cases of divorce, and those who have lost their residence permits, and other forms of precarious legal status.

We are contacting you because you work in the field of violence against women, and we would like to interview you about how social work with abused women is practiced in your organization. Your perspective is highly relevant to gaining knowledge about the conditions of social workers and organizations' opportunities to develop initiatives that address the problems that affect women who live in a precarious legal situation and who are exposed to violence.

We turn to you and others who work in organizations that make decisions about various forms of support for women who have fled violence from their home countries or / and who have been exposed to violence in close relationships in Sweden/Italy. We are focusing on civil society organizations, working at the local, national and international levels, including organizations that have some form of cooperation with public welfare organizations and authorities.

Your participation in the study

The interview will take about 1 hour, and you do not need to make any special preparations. If you agree, the interview will be recorded. You will also be asked in what ways you would like us to use any quotes from the interview.

Possible consequences and risks of participating in the study

There are no particular foreseeable risks in participating in the study.

What happens to your information?

No interviewees will be identified by name in the reporting of our results and analyses. Data collected through interviews will be presented so that it will not be possible to identify individuals based on the interview statements. However, we may state the names of organizations and the professional positions of individuals within the organization.

Your answers will be transcribed and saved in LUSEC's data management system, Lund University's platform for storing, managing and analyzing data securely and in accordance with the EU Data Protection Regulation. Research data will be archived in accordance with Lund University's archive rules.

According to the EU Data Protection Regulation, you have the right to access information about you that is handled in the study free of charge, and if necessary, to have any errors corrected. You can also request that information about you be deleted and that the processing of your personal data be restricted.

If you wish to access the information, please contact Claudia Di Matteo (claudia.di_matteo@soch.lu.se, 073 239 10 76).

The Data Protection Officer can be reached by email: dataskyddsombud@lu.se. If you are dissatisfied with how your personal data have been processed, you have the right to submit a complaint to the Swedish Data Inspectorate, which is the supervisory authority.

How do I get information about the results of the study?

You can contact the researchers in the project at any time to access the data that concern you. If you are willing to receive the results of the study, you can inform the researcher during the interview.

In the first instance, the results of the project will be presented in scientific articles. Results from the study will also be presented and disseminated through presentations in collaboration with relevant actors, including organizations working in the field and actors who have an interest in gender-equality-related issues. If and when it is possible, the results of the study will be available in both Swedish and English.

Insurance and compensation

No special insurance coverage applies to participation in the study. No compensation is paid for participation in the study.

Participation is voluntary

Your participation is voluntary, and you can choose to cancel your participation at any time. If you choose not to participate or want to cancel your participation, you do not need to state why. If you wish to cancel your participation, please contact the person responsible for the study.

Interview Guide

Questions repeated for each of the three vignette scenarios (Available in Swedish, Italian, English)

Describe your initial thoughts about what is happening in the vignette.

How do you value the information given in the vignette?

In your current position, would a situation like the one described in the vignette come to your attention? How would a situation like the one described come to your attention?

How would you react to Samira's situation?

Which actors or services would you work with/involve and which would you avoid working with/involving?

Conclusive questions

Is there something else that concerns you about Samira's situation?

If you had a magic wand, what would you do in general?

Any other comments?

Lund Dissertations in Social Work

1. Svensson, Kerstin (2001) *I stället för fängelse? En studie av vårdande makt, straff och socialt arbete i frivård.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.
2. Jönson, Håkan (2001) *Det moderna åldrandet. Pensionärsorganisationernas bilder av äldre 1941-1995.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.
3. Habermann, Ulla (2001) *En postmoderne helgen? Om motiver til frivillighed.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.
4. Jarhag, Sven (2001) *Planering eller frigörelse? En studie om bemyndigande.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.
5. Tops, Dolf (2001) *A society with or without drugs? Continuity and change in drug policies in Sweden and the Netherlands.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.
6. Montesino, Norma (2002) *Zigenarfrågan. Intervention och romantik.* Lund: Social- högskolan, Lunds universitet.
7. Nieminen Kristofersson, Tuija (2002) *Krisgrupper och spontant stöd. Om insatser efter branden i Göteborg 1998.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.
8. Laanemets, Leili (2002) *Skapandet av feminititet. Om kvinnor i missbrukar-behandling.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet
9. Magnusson, Jan (2002) *Ny situation - ny organisation. Gatutidningen Situation Sthlm 1995-2000.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.
10. Johnsson, Eva (2002) *Självmordsförsök bland narkotikamissbrukare*. Lund: Socialhög- skolan, Lunds universitet.
11. Skytte, Marianne (2002) *Anbringelse af etniske minoritetsbørn. Om socialarbejderes vurderinger og handlinger.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.
12. Trulsson, Karin (2003) *Konturer av ett kvinnligt fält. Om missbrukande kvinnors möte i familjeliv och behandling.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.
13. Bangura Arvidsson, Maria (2003) *Ifrågasatta fäder. Olika bilder av fäder till socialt utsatta barn.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.
14. Jönsson, Leif R. (2003) *Arbetslöshet, ekonomi och skam. Om att vara arbetslös i dagens Sverige.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.
15. Ingvad, Bengt (2003) *Omsorg och relationer. Om det känslomässiga samspelet i hemtjänsten.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.
16. Hedblom, Agneta (2004) *Aktiveringspolitikens Janusansikte. En studie av differentiering, inklusion och marginalisering.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.
17. Blomberg, Staffan (2004) *Specialiserad biståndshandläggning inom den kommunala äldreomsorgen. Genomförandet av en organisationsreform och dess praktik.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.
18. Granér, Rolf (2004) *Patrullerande polisers yrkeskultur.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.
19. Giertz, Anders (2004) *Making the Poor Work. Social Assistance and Activation Programs in Sweden.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

20. Hjort, Torbjörn (2004) *Nödvändighetens pris. Konsumtion och knapphet bland barnfamiljer.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

21. Wolmesjö, Maria (2005) *Ledningsfunktion i omvandling. Om förändringar av yrkesrollen för första linjens chefer inom den kommunala äldre- och handikappomsorgen.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

22. Hjortsjö, Maria (2005) *Med samarbete i sikte. Om samordnade insatser och samlokaliserade familjecentraler.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

23. Elvhage, Gudrun (2006) *Projekt som retorik och praktik. Om utvecklingsarbete på särskilda ungdomshem.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

24. Olsson, Martin (2007) *Unga vuxna med en historia av uppförandestörning. En långtidsuppföljning med ett salutogent och ekologiskt perspektiv.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

25. Panican, Alexandru (2007) *Rättighet och Rättvisa. Användbarheten av rättighet och rättvisa i sociala projekt.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

26. Raunkiær, Mette (2007) *At være døende hjemme. Hverdagsliv och idealer.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

27. Ulmestig, Rickard (2007) *På gränsen till fattigvård. En studie om arbetsmarknadspolitik och socialbidrag.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

28. Liedgren Dobronravoff, Pernilla (2007) *Att bli, att vara och att ha varit. Om ingångar i och utgångar ur Jehovas vittnen.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

29. Ponnert, Lina (2007) *Mellan klient och rättssystem. Tvångsvård av barn och unga ur socialsekreterares perspektiv.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

30. Gassne, Jan (2008) *Salutogenes, Kasam och socionomer.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

31. Righard, Erica (2008) *The welfare mobility dilemma. Transnational strategies and national structuring at crossroads.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

32. Larsson, Monica (2008) *Att förverkliga rättigheter genom personlig assistans.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

33. Martinell Barfoed, Elizabeth (2008) *Berättelser om adoption.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

34. Olsson, Tina (2009) *Crossing the quality chasm? The short-term effectiveness and efficiency of MST in Sweden: An example of evidence-based practice applied to social work.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

35. Nielsen, Tabitha Wright (2009) *Viljen til at frigøre. En undersøgelse af empowerment i praksis.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

36. Bohlin, Ulla (2009) *Habilitering i fokus. En människobehandlande organisation och dess utmaningar.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet

37. Kyhle Westermark, Pia (2009) *MTFC – en intervention för ungdomar med beteendeproblem*. Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

38. Angelin, Anna (2009) *Den dubbla vanmaktens logik. En studie om långvarig arbetslöshet och*

socialbidragstagande bland unga vuxna. Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

39. Linde, Stig (2010) *Församlingen i granskningssamhället.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

40. Rosén, Annika (2010) *Är detta seriöst? En studie av anhöriginvandring till Sverige.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

41. Hollertz, Katarina (2010) *Problemen förgår, lösningarna består. Organisering av kommunala insatser för unga arbetslösa med försörjningsproblem.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

42. Egard, Hanna (2011) *Personlig assistans i praktiken. Beredskap, initiativ och vänskaplighet.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

43. Andrée Löfholm, Cecilia (2011) *Multisystemisk terapi i Sverige – evidensbaserad metod i nytt sammanhang.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

44. Werner, Erika (2012) *Trygg, sviken eller osäker. Tankar och förberedelser inför pensioneringen.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

45. Ebsen, Frank (2012) *Udsat til børneforsorg. Om etablering af familiepleje, børnean- stalter og indsats i hjemmet for udsatte børn i Danmark*. Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

46. Söderberg, Maria (2014) *Hänsynstagandets paradoxer. Om äldre, närstående och biståndshandläggare vid flytt till särskilt boende.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

47. Eriksson, Erik (2015) *Sanktionerat motstånd. Brukarinflytande som fenomen och praktik.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

48. Jägervi, Lotta (2016) *Villiga stödjare och motvilliga offer. Självpresentation och identitetsskapande hos stödjare och brottsoffer.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

49. Ritenius Manjer, Åsa (2017) *Det motsägelsefulla beslutet. Om kvinnors syn på och erfarenheter av mammografiscreening.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

50. Helmersson, Sara (2017) *Mellan systerskap och behandling. Omförhandlingar inom ett förändrat stödfält för våldsutsatta kvinnor.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

51. Nordling, Vanna (2017) *Destabilising Citizenship Practices? Social work and undocumented migrants in Sweden.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

52. Thell, Nataliya (2018) *Public Talk on Personal Troubles. A study on interaction in radio counselling.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

53. Heintz, Maria (2018) *”Alla är ju med alla…” Kamratskapande gruppinteraktioner i skolan.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

54. Lindellee, Jayeon (2018) *Beyond Retrenchment. Multi-Pillarization of Unemployment Benefit Provision in Sweden.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

55. Schütze, Carolin (2019) *Attitudes matters. Perceptions towards welfare work with migrants in Swedish welfare organizations.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

56. Söderman, Emma (2019) *Resistance through Acting. Ambivalent Practices of the No Border Musical.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

57. Hjärpe, Teres (2020) *Mätning och motstånd. Sifferstyrning i socialtjänstens vardag.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

58. Linderot, Sofia (2020) *Av kärlek och plikt – att bli familjehem till ett barnbarn, syskon eller syskonbarn.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

59. Bengtsson, Mikael (2020) *Karriär och profession – om positioner, statushierarki och mobilitet inom socionomyrket.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet

60. Carlstedt, Elisabeth (2020) *Nursing homes on public display – Reputation management of the new landscape of Swedish eldercare.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

61. Avendal, Christel (2021) *Förhöjd vardaglighet. Unga på landsbygden gör vardag.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

62. Kläfverud, Maria (2021) *Iscensätta barnperspektiv. Före, under och efter Barnahusbesök.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

63. Cecilia Heule (2021) *Iscensatt inkludering: Gemenskap som mål och utmaning på socionomutbildningen.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

64. Yeonjin Kim (2022) *Korean Fatherhood in Policy and Practice.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

65. Kajsa Emilsson (2022) *Support for sustainable welfare? A study of public attitudes related to an eco-social agenda among Swedish residents.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

66. Karl Eriksson (2023) *Elusive Relations – A Phenomenology of Interpersonal Understanding in Social Work.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

67. Anders Jönsson (2023) *Professionellt pappersgöra - Att bemästra det komplexa handlingsutrymmet samt skriva beslutstexter rörande ekonomiskt bistånd.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

68. Rishi Jha (2023) *Politics of redevelopment: Rule, resettlement and change in Mumbai.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

69. Asbjørn Storgaard (2023) *A potential for democratic emancipation? Policy and discretionary practices in probation service.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

70. Petter Karlsson (2025) *Becoming an Addict means Coming Home: Narcotics Anonymous and the Genesis of the Global Drug Ethic*. Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

71. Ellen Parsland (2025) *Ojämlikhetsregimer i aktivering. Görande av klass, etnicitet och kön genom subventionerade anställningar.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

72. Claudia Di Matteo (2025) *Mobilizing Knowledge. Framing Gender-based Violence and Negotiating Social Protection for Migrant Women with Precarious Legal Status.* Lund: Socialhögskolan, Lunds universitet.

Printed by Media-Tryck, Lund 2025 NORDIC SWAN ECOLABEL 3041 0903

Mobilizing Knowledge

Framing Gender-based Violence and Negotiating Social Protection for Migrant Women with Precarious Legal Status

In an era where traditional welfare systems fail to address the social risks faced by groups of precariat, this thesis explores the critical role of framing societal problems and recognizing migrant women with precarious legal status as subjects of rights within welfare systems.

Through a systematic literature review and a two-country study in Sweden and Italy, it examines how academia and civil society actors shape the understanding of the problem of gender-based violence and the solutions to it. The findings highlight the strategic use of knowledge to advocate for the visibility and recognition of migrant women with precarious legal status as welfare subjects.

CLAUDIA DI MATTEO is a PhD student at the School of Social Work, Lund University. Her current research interests cover topics such as international migration, gender-based violence, welfare systems, and the role of Civil Society Actors in it. This book is her doctoral thesis.

SOCIALHÖGSKOLAN

LUND UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

ISBN 978-91-89604-79-7
ISSN 1650-3872

9 789189 604797