

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 AboutGender
2022, 11(22), 64-108
CC BY-NC

Claudia Di Matteo
Lund University, Sweden

Abstract

This study critically engages with the knowledge produced in the field of gender-based violence (GBV) and migrant women's access to welfare services. The focus is specifically on empirical studies that look at women whose immigrant status is precarious, which means that their pathway to citizenship is uncertain and the acquisition of social and civil rights dependent on others. Some examples are asylum claimants and refused asylum claims, individuals whose permit has expired, spouses, and migrant (seasonal) workers in the sex industry, domestic sector, manufacturing, and agriculture. The contribution of this systematic literature review

Corresponding Author:
Claudia Di Matteo
Lund University, Sweden
claudia.di_matteo@soch.lu.se

DOI: 10.15167/2279-5057/AG2022.11.22.2032

is the investigation of how GBV against women having a precarious legal status, and their access to social protection in advanced welfare societies, is conceptualized in scholarly literature at the cutting edge of gender, migration, and welfare. Data were identified and selected by combining the Intersectionality-based Policy Approach (IBPA) with the evidenced-based protocol of systematic reviews, and were analyzed with a Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) to deconstruct categorical tags used to frame both migratory status and GBV (e.g. trafficking, domestic violence, female genital mutilation). A critical discussion will be made on how classification systems influence both the framing of the problem (GBV) and the social protection responses (solutions/interventions) to it.

Keywords: gender-based violence, migrant women, precarious legal status, welfare service, systematic literature review, intersectionality.

1. Introduction

In this study, the focus is on knowledge produced in relation to GBV experienced by migrant women having a *precarious legal status* (e.g. dependent spouses who derive their rights to stay from their husbands; temporary employees from their abusive employers; students visa or short-term permits related to tourism from public officers, and expired visas, asylum claimants and those refused asylum who are dependent on public officers and state institutions) (Di Matteo and Scaramuzzino 2022; Stoyanova 2021). The choice to focus on knowledge production is rooted in feminist approaches (Bacchi 1999; Fraser 1987; Razack 1995) to study GBV. First, Nancy Fraser (1989, 11) suggesting that think-tanks, universities, Civil Society (CSOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are all involved in a bundle of discourses based on some type of knowledge that is (re-)produced, and circulated among those actors, with the function of mediating between social

movements' demands and the welfare - nation - state response. Hence, in this study, the focus is on knowledge production at the cutting edge of welfare organizations, and academic-professional oriented disciplines.

Secondly, the analysis of the knowledge production is discussed here in terms of interwoven relations between the framing of the problem and of the solutions to it. In this regard, Bacchi (1999) elaborates a theory based on problem interpretations, in which discourses are owned by different actors involved in the policy-practice arena, and they do not only "create" the problem in a certain way, but the representation of it has a direct impact on the service provided, and the funding allocated. A clear example is given by Bacchi (1999, 6-9) on the different ways to frame Domestic Violence (DV) in policy programs. Indeed, at first feminist movements were oriented to transform violence against women from a private matter to a public issue, and were willing to engage with the state to claim social, civil, and legal recognition. Political recognition, however, meant that violence against women was framed inter-nationally as a crime and a public health matter, having consequences on the mental and physical health of victims. However, the latter achievement overshadowed the feminist analysis that pointed out the power dynamics inscribed in the *patriarchal family* that allowed violence to be enacted in the first place. Further, to frame the problem as a public health problem, DV was eventually owned by "the law-and-order lobby" (Ivi, 8), in which professional views prevailed in claiming recognition for the victims and the persecution of the men, acknowledging the demands for protection and psycho-social interventions. In this process, for instance, in Canada (*Ibidem*) the priority in public expenditure was shifted from women shelters to criminal justice and police systems, redirecting the public recognition (and resources) from women's self-help and power struggles to demands for police (male) protection and rehabilitation programs for battering men.

1.1. Knowledge production at the cutting edge of welfare, gender and migration

In this study, the focal point is knowledge produced within welfare practices, which are at the cutting edge of welfare, gender, and migration with the aim to expand and actualize the historical feminist debate on what Fraser (1987) called “the coming of welfare wars”. In this regard, I propose below two arguments that sustain this choice.

First, Fraser (1987), as early as the 1980s, emphasized the responsibility of feminist theories and practices to recentre the attention around two interlocking processes: the fiscal crisis of the welfare state and the feminization of poverty. She wrote (1987, 88) “what some writers are calling the coming welfare wars will be largely wars about, even against, women. Because women comprise the overwhelming majority of social-welfare program recipients and employees, women and women’s needs will be the principal stakes in the battles over social spending likely to dominate national politics in the coming period”.

A critique of welfare programs in advanced capitalist societies should not aim at undermining the welfare systems per-se, but rather should support the existing welfare architecture to challenge the basic structure of inequalities. In this sense, Fraser (1987), in line with Bacchi (1999), emphasized the importance of framing the problem. In a patriarchal social order, the welfare programs are meant to answer women’s needs, without posing the question of “what do various groups of women really need, and whose interpretations of women’s needs should be authoritative?” (Fraser 1987, 89). In other words, to challenge dominant *politics of needs interpretation (ibidem)*, feminist analysis should consider the ideological dimensions of *welfare practices*, which incapsulate at once how the problem is framed, its ownership, and the consequent solutions which offspring from the politics of needs interpretation.

The second element refers to the choice of addressing attention to women’s precarious legal status to include more directly colonial processes into feminist

works on welfare policy-practice. This means looking also at the neo-colonial system, in which welfare programs originated to answer the question of whose states' authority is responsible over women needs, without addressing the issue of what is the role of states' authority in relation to the racial and gender persecutions of women, and their civil and social rights, including freedom of mobility?"

In the early feminist work on welfare programs (Fraser 1987; Razack 1995), there was an account on the position of women of colour and immigrant women within programs granting protection for gender-related persecution. Because of the work of early feminists involved in migration studies (Morokvasic 1984), the inclusion of migrant women in studies about migration became evident in the 1990s, when Castels and Miller (1993) named the feminization of migration as one of the four trends characterizing migration processes, with a growing emphasis on women in forced migration and gender-related persecutions (Kofman 2020). Nevertheless, the literature related to the debate on "the coming of welfare wars" (Fraser 1987) still lacks a clear account on the nexus "migration and gender", here operationalized as precarious legal status and GBV. This study aims to partially fill the gap by clearly pointing out the nexus between gender and migration by considering the literature that extends the knowledge to a whole range of situations where migrant women are constrained in a subordinated position because of their limited, or uncertain, legal and administrative situation.

In this regard, emerging research (Sharma 2017; Abji 2016; Benhabib 2004; Crepaz 2022; Parella and Speroni 2018) calls the attention on the nexus between nation-state and welfare provisions, highlighting the exclusionary regime of social provisions encountered by migrant women having a precarious legal status in the context of resettlements. Binion (2010) argues that the intensification of immigration control in advanced welfare societies linked with dramatic neoliberal reforms of the social protection systems had a negative impact on resources devoted to GBV service provisions, increasing the role of bureaucratic surveillance to access

social protection, and strengthening the link between immigrant status and the status of victims, the latter essential elements for non-citizens to access services. In other words, although feminist demands related to the fight against GBV has been included into the international human-rights arena and the legal frameworks (Binion 2010), “the neoliberal projects of privatization and state withdrawal” (Bernal and Grewal 2014, 8), combined with intensified immigration regulations and procedures, prevent the advancing of human rights claims in national settings (Cook 2010). Furthermore, feminist studies at the cutting edge of welfare and migration (Bernal and Grewal 2014; Binion 2010), increasingly looked at the paradoxical relationship between states, feminist theories, and feminist practices situated in the non-governmental sector (NGOs), pointing out how, on the one hand, the neo-liberal welfare reforms potentiate the role of NGOs as both service delivery and key actors to fight against GBV, while on the other hand, have appropriated the gender equality language, attempting to de-politicize feminist movements.

In this study, the above discussion was taken into consideration in the process of a systematic literature review, in the sense that all the literature analyzed is empirically based on what is actually going on in the field of GBV policy-practices; all the research selected had a practice-oriented focus, and all studies involved professionals, street-level workers, and activists in their sample; participants were all working in the field of social protection in welfare advanced societies, and with migrant women having a precarious legal status. Thus, this systematic literature review is based on conceptualization of the problem of GBV and the responses that offspring from academic-professional oriented discursive practices, which have the potential to reclaim a political role against discrimination, marginalization, and inequalities or else they run the risk of being co-opted by a neo-liberal state of mind, inadvertently supporting a racial, gender, and sexual punitive system of control.

1.2. Gendered memberships for accessing the social protection systems in advanced welfare societies

It has been noted that women represent a significant component of mixed migration flows in western advanced societies (Degani and De Stefani 2020). The composition of migratory movements is complex, characterised by regimes of mobility and immobility, by transnational and localised connections, by feelings of belonging and cosmopolitan imaginaries lifestyles (Schiller and Salazar 2016); the areas or country of origins are diverse, the choice to migrate might be correlated, and might span from family, interpersonal, economic, occupational, and geopolitical factors (Ambrosini 2020); finally, the purpose of migration usually defines the routes, the means of transits, and the entry permits depending on the country of resettlement (Ambrosini 2020). The complex regimes of migratory movements are also impacted by an increased or at least renovated closure of borders and restriction in the legal pathways to enter the nation-state, and consequently the national welfare provisions (Anderson 2014; Rydnyk, Suter and Odden 2021). Despite women being considered a vulnerable group (Srivastava 2020; Ratzmann and Sahraoui 2021; Fassin 2016), exposed most frequently to the risk of GBV, very little knowledge focuses on the intersection of precarious legal status produced by migration policies which makes migrant women more vulnerable to violence.

Migrants' access to social services within advanced welfare societies are subordinated to intersectional categories of inclusion/exclusion, including gender (Ratzmann and Sahraoui 2021). Migrants' differential access to welfare provisions (Mezzadra and Neilson 2012) has been investigated in relation to different welfare models and societal discourses related to migrant deservingness, pointing out the ideologies and normative structures operating at the policy level (Saar, Sojka and Runfors 2022; Carmel and Sojka 2021). Others (Shutes 2016; Könönen 2018) have highlighted the constructions of administrative/legal conditions of migrants, linked to race and ethnicity as a factor impacting the access to services. Nevertheless, little systematic analysis has been developed on multi-agency social protection

systems that can be accessed by women having a precarious legal status in advanced welfare societies, considering the changing characteristics of welfare systems dealing with people seeking international protection from GBV.

In light of these limitations, the aim of this study is to investigate how the literature, empirically based within welfare service delivery, conceptualizes GBV against women, with a focus on those having a precarious legal status, *and* their access to social protection in advanced welfare societies.

2. Methods

Following the evidence-based protocols of systematic literature reviews (Cochrane 2019, Di Matteo and Scaramuzzino 2022) (see Annex 1), 2,734 documents, published between 2010 and 2021, were collected from 10 databases, covering multiple sources of knowledge and time periods.

A screening protocol with eligibility criteria (Table 1) was created, and records were screened by first reading the title and abstract, from which 289 records were selected. For these, a full text reading was performed, and n.25 documents (see Annex II for context information) were included for qualitative analysis.

The theoretical orientation of this study relates to intersectionality in two different ways. First, I used the so-called Intersectionality-Based Policy Analysis (IBPA) framework (Hankivsky 2012; Hankivsky *et al.* 2014) as a baseline for my systematic literature review. The IBPA Framework (Hankivsky 2012) was used originally to study the context of healthcare policies; it was inspired by the “what’s the problem” approach developed by Bacchi (1999), and the intersectionality lens was used to analyze how policies not only impact citizens, but even define the boundaries of what a citizen is (Hankivsky 2012, 8).

CATEGORIES	DIMENSIONS	CRITERIA
GBV	Types and forms of GBV	All the documents address explicitly and exclusively the attention towards situations of violence related to migrant women (eg. not children)
MIGRATION	Precarious Legal status	People who are subject to migration controls but have not been granted refugee status, and are thus denied access to refugee resettlement programmes. More specifically, I refer to asylum seekers and refused asylum requests; special visa categories, such as spousal and some human rights cases, such as migrants who have overstayed their visa
SOCIAL RESPONSES TO GBV	Street level bureaucrats, social workers, activists, advocates	All the documents contain references to welfare provisions and are empirically based, which means that the focus on social protection system is related to professional practices. All the studies involved street level bureaucrats, social workers, street level workers, activists and advocates involved with women services/GBV services and that work with migrant women.

Table 1- Protocol for eligibility. All the criteria must be present in documents to be selected

Based on guiding principles such as *diverse knowledge* and *equity* (Hankivsky 2012), the IBPA seeks to help analysts to understand the framing of the problem and of the solutions, having complex implications on “*processes shaping power differentiation within and among populations; and accounting for resistance and resilience to it*” (Hankivsky 2012, 33).

The problem of GBV, in this study, was investigated using the following research questions (RQs): 1a) In which terms is the problem named? and 1b) In which terms is the problem framed?

In relation to the above, the subject "migrant women" was also investigated, which means attention was given to how gender, race, class, and any other relevant organizing mechanisms of reference play a major role in producing knowledge about GBV. Thus, I asked the question: 1c) How is the subject experiencing the violence named and framed? In this regard, in the section 3.2, I explored if intersectionality is incorporated within the literature analyzed, and used this either as

a theoretical framework or as an analytical and methodological approach, to explore “how scholars do intersectionality?” (Hvenegård-Lassen, Staunæs and Lund 2020). In doing that, I first looked at all documents in which the word intersection in all lemmatical forms appears. Secondly, I read the full text, investigating if intersectionality is used in a way that contributes to social change. In this regard, potential solutions to the problem of GBV are investigated with the RQ: 1d) How are the solutions named and framed? Solutions, here, are conceptualized as professional discourses on what gets to happen to change the situation (interventions).

In addition to the IBPA framework, my analysis draws on qualitative content analysis (QCA) (Bengtsson 2016; Altheide, and Schneider 2012; Bahner 2021).

Following the QCA method (Bengtsson 2016), four main stages were performed during the analysis: the coding process started with an open coding strategy, referring to the words used in the original texts (manifest content); codes were then condensed and rephrased following the aim and scope of the study; consequently, codes were transformed into categories and sub-categories using a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, the latter performed using word counts and code matrix (see section 3) with the help of MAXQDA Software. Finally, once categories were established, the analysis and writing up began.

3. Results

Following the QCA approach, I first read through all 25 documents, and then divided them into sets (Table 2), trying to investigate what types¹ and forms² of

¹ For types of violence we refer here to specific GBV typology such as domestic violence, trafficking, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, honored-based violence, all of which are expressions of different forms of violence.

² Forms of violence refers to physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering, including threats of such acts, coercion, arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in

violence are recognized by the literature while referring to the precarious legal positions of migrant women.

Numbers 7 documents were grouped in the set “Immigrant status + (X) GBV” (Table 2).

Immigrant status refers to a system of power relations where state immigration control plays the major role in structuring the violence, and “x” can represent any form or type of GBV; n. 7 documents referred to mainstream definitions of Domestic Violence (DV), and n. 5 documents referred to mainstream definitions of Trafficking.

<i>Set</i>	<i>numbers of documents</i>
Immigrant status + (X) GBV	7
Domestic Violence	13
Trafficking	5

Table 2 - Numbers 25 documents grouped into n. 3 sets

Within the three sets of documents, texts have been codified using a QCA method in answering the RQs.

3.1. The naming and framing of the problem: migrant women and gender-based violence (GBV) in the context of welfare advanced society

In answering the RQ “*How is the problem named?*”, three main resulting categories were codified (Fig. 1): a) Domestic Violence (DV), b) Trafficking, and c) State Immigration Control.

private settings (based on Istanbul Convention, 2011, art. 3; European Institute of Gender Equality -EIGE-2022).

Code System	Immigrant status + X (GBV)	Domestic Violence/IPV	Trafficking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In which terms the Problem is named <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Immigration Control Institutional violence Domestic Violence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intimate partner violence domestic violence Female genital mutilation Trafficking (+) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trafficking + sex work Sexual violence and rape 			
	■	■	
	■	■	
		■	
	■	■	
		■	
	■		■
			■

Fig. 1 - Code Matrix

Source: Author's codifications; the matrix visualizes which code (rows) have been assigned to which document set (column), providing an overview of how many document segments from each document set has been assigned to a specific code.

The categories a) and b) referred to mainstream conceptualizations of particular forms and types of violence; documents assume or follow mainstream international definitions of GBV while looking at immigration status, and migratory background, as an aspect that shapes the experience of violence and the difficulties in accessing social protection systems. The category c), instead, centres the debate around both state immigration control and the global division of labour (both market and reproductive) while naming the problem of GBV, whose mainstream definitions within the policy arena are critiqued.

In answering the question “*how is the problem framed?*”, in the situation of migrant women and their precarious legal status in advanced welfare societies, the literature refers to the political racist context (Rajaram *et al.* 2020; Sharma and Marsh 2017; Alcázar-Campos and Cabezas 2017; Lee 2014b; Bhuyan and Vela-gapudi 2013; Sigh 2010; Deckert *et al.* 2018), in which anti-immigration policies are combined with xenophobic and nationalist sentiments at all societal levels. The context in turn creates a hostile environment in which immigration control (Fig. 2) is heightened. Women with a precarious legal status are positioned in socially and economic poorer conditions within the resettlement context, and at the same time discriminated against for their skin colour, their country of origin,

and/or their “cultural” characteristics (e.g. Sharma and Marsh 2017; Canning 2014).

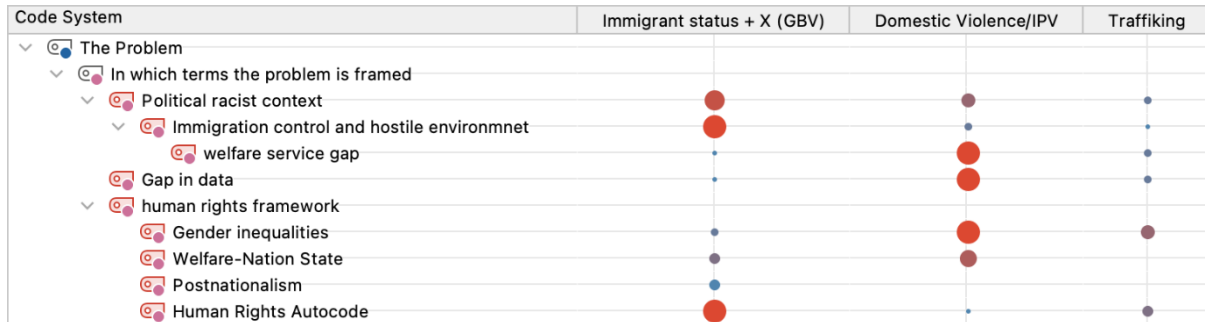


Fig. 2 - Code matrix
 Source: Author’s codifications; the matrix visualizes which code (rows) have been assigned to which document set (column), providing an overview of how many document segments from each document set has been assigned to a specific code.

The experience of GBV in its multiple types and forms puts migrant women more deeply at risk of being culturalized as “others” by public officers, to be deported or administratively detained in state-run shelters, or alternatively, they have to prove themselves to be worthy victims, thus, to deserve access to GBV services (e.g. Alcázar-Campos A.; Cabezas 2017; Lee 2014b).

a. Domestic Violence

Within the document-set “Domestic Violence”, the DV definitions in all the articles analyzed (Rajaram, Barrios, Novak, Rogers 2020; Critelli and Yalim 2020; Sabri, Hartley, Saha, Murray *et al.* 2020; Ogbonnaya, Fawole and Rizo 2020; Martinez-Roman, Vives-Cases, Pérez-Belda 2017; O’Neal and Beckman 2017; Bhuyan and Velagapudi 2013b; Voolma 2018; Kapur, Zajicek and Gaber 2017; Lee 2019a; Connelly, Murray, Baillot and Howard 2018; Briones-Vozmediano, La Parra and Vives-Cases 2015; Singh 2010) refer to physical, sexual, psychological, economic harm enacted by a former partner or spouse, in an intimate relation-

ship, or within the nuclear/extended heteronormative family, including situations of forced marriage, or in the migrant community at large, especially in the case of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). DV, thus, is used interchangeably with Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). The literature follows explicitly or implicitly the mainstream international framework, such as the United Nations declaration on the Elimination of VAW, which defined IPV (e.g. Briones-Vozmediano *et al.* 2015, 2995), and the 2011 Council of Europe Convention (e.g. Voolma 2017, 5), as exemplified in the following quotes:

- *DV (also known as intimate partner violence) is a global health as well as a human rights issue and occurs in every country and culture (WHO 2013). (Critelli and Yalim 2020, 3);*
- *Intimate partner violence (IPV) perpetrated against women is a form of discrimination that is compounded by a multitude of other forms based on factors such as migration, age, disability, or belonging to an ethnic minority (United Nations 2013). The European Union and the Council of Europe are working on the specific challenges of migrant women and the incidence of gender violence (Martinez-Roman, Vives-Cases and Pérez-Belda 2017, 1).*

The immigrant status is defined first and foremost as the framework that shapes migrant women's "experience of violence" (e.g. Martinez-Roman *et al.* 2017, 208). Migrant women in a precarious legal status, thus, have limited options to exit situations of violence, and their migratory status isolates them from their network. But immigrant status has been also linked to a specific migratory background that relates to an ethnic, cultural, and religious community. In this sense, conceptualizations around DV look at the migrant community (e.g. groups of individuals related to each other because of their ethnic and/or religious background, country of origin) as both the social location where the violence is experienced, perpetrated, or transmitted and at the same time the social solution to the problem being the community itself silenced and marginalized. This

double dimension of the migrant community such as being both the cause and solution of GBV is especially exemplified in conceptualizations related to FGM, such as the following:

Often defined by geography, interest or identity, communities are not homogeneous or static but rather diverse, dynamic and multifaceted entities. This article primarily describes communities of identity, where the common bond is often nationality, ethnicity, and the experience of exile (...) FGM is described as a ‘tradition in transition’, with some experts asserting that empowering affected communities will lead to its elimination. (...) (However) Minimal investigation has been conducted on the role of diaspora communities and their contributions to challenging and responding to FGM (Connelly *et al.* 2018, 2).

The tradition of FGM is both what makes groups of individuals stick together in the same community and at the same time the locus of a transitioning phase where the practice must drop.

When the naming of the problem DV/IPV is considered under mainstream definition of GBV, and the framing of the problem appears to be related to “health”, the “individual experience”, “the culture”, then as we will see in section 3.4, the position of scholars is guided by a specific logic that aim at answering the question of “why women do not leave the violent men?”, leading to solutions that aim at solving gender persecutions reinforcing the ability of social services to empower women in their autonomy, or else, as in the case of FGM, solutions aim to reinforce the sense of responsibility of particular migrant communities. This means that within the document-set of DV, emphasis is on the structural barriers to access social protection systems within the welfare state, and its service articulations (Fig. 3) (Rajaram *et al.* 2020; O’Neal and Beckman 2017; Bhuyan and Velagapudi 2013; Briones-Vozmediano *et al.* 2015; Singh 2010; Deckert *et al.* 2018). For instance, studies in the DV sub-set imply that it is the

categorizations of deserving women that creates barriers to obtain services (Rajaram *et al.* 2020, 188); others (Ogbonnaya *et al.* 2020, 2256) sustain that welfare services are also deemed to have been originally developed to address the needs of white middle-class women using a colour-blind approach. In turn, solutions to GBV entails services working with more inclusive categorization systems that can be ethnically oriented, but always with the aim of facilitate women to exit the violent relationship.

b) Trafficking

Moving to the set of documents related to trafficking (Caretta 2015; Canning 2014; Hanley, Oxman-Martinez, Lacroix and Gal 2006; Paasche and Skilbrei 2017; Deckert, Warren and Britton 2018), the immigrant status is again conceptualized as shaping the migrant experiences of violence and putting migrant women in vulnerable positions, including a particular form of forced marriage, such as the phenomenon of mail-order bride (e.g. Hanley *et al.* 2006). This scholarly stance, as in the case of DV, springs from narratives that align with the current national and international legal/administrative frameworks (e.g. Council of Europe ‘Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings’, the UN Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in people, especially women and children), which have been incorporated into national plans of action, reinforcing the category of *victims of crime* while naming migrant women, such as in the following quote:

The U.S. defines severe forms of trafficking as “sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age” (U.S. Department of State 2017, 3). It also includes “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary

servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery (Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 in line with the Palermo Protocol)” (Deckert *et al.* 2018, 3).

Furthermore, in the context of trafficking, the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol do not consider individuals at risk of exploitation as eligible for asylum, but they do recognize the humanitarian protection for specific cases of “vulnerability” reduced to cases of prostitution and sex work, with the possibility for women to apply for voluntary returnee programs (Paasche and Skilbrei 2017, 4). In turn, the policy framework creates a lack of legibility of human trafficking cases in social service organizations in resettlement contexts, such as highlighted in the following quote:

Women fleeing conflict may be subject to sex trafficking, as well as less internationally acknowledged forms of exploitation, such as rape at borders and coercive sex for travel and border access. Women (...) having survived sexual violence are less likely to be believed (by public officers), even if they choose to disclose instances of abuse. (...) even when women do relay instances of rape or sexual abuse, these can be undermined by cultures of silence, shame, and stigmatization all of which can also have been contributors to migration in the first place (Canning 2014, 34).

The naming of the problem of trafficking such as “victimhood”, “sex slavery”, “prostitution” is linked to the mobility of migrants. The framing is then embedded in the human rights approach, and instances of humanitarian protection, linked to specific forms of violence, emphasize the importance of a victim-centred approach. Thus, scholars in this document-set point out where the international laws and their national articulations fall short, and consequently call

the attention of nation-states to their obligation to protect women, whose precarious legal position and experience of violence is linked to crime and prostitution (Caretta 2015; Paasche and Skilbrei 2017) and harsh contexts of deprivation and abuse related to war, conflicts, or work exploitation (Caretta 2015; Hanley *et al.* 2006; Deckert *et al.* 2018).

Scholars in this sub-set contest the “voluntarily return programs” because of its neo-colonial logic. Indeed, the assumptions under the label of *vulnerability*, *resilience*, and *empowerment* is that women can improve their own situation in their own country with the assistance of benevolent civilised states. The colonial logic of “safe return” is compounded by the same logic which shapes the programs within the context of resettlement, which mostly referred to the Palermo Protocol. In this sense, the logic of white men saving black women from black men (Spivak 1988) used by states-run programs is also contested by scholars which calls for states’ accountability. Lastly, some scholars in the sub-set (Hanley *et al.* 2006), imply the existence of the rule of law as a logic guiding the solution of outreach for the purpose of informing migrant women of their rights, and the best ways of accessing it. However, in all the above cases, scholars highlighted the authority of the states in redirecting anti-trafficking solutions into humanitarian protection, while less attention was given to geo-political and economic reforms as main solutions to gender persecution.

c) State Immigration Control

A reconceptualization of both DV and trafficking categories is instead displaced in the last set of documents, in which forms and typologies of violence are re-articulated in relation to “State Immigration Control”. This means that the migration regimes become the point of departure for a critique of essentialist legal categories of violence and migrant victims, pointing out how the economic and

geo-political relationships between nation-states, coupled with patriarchal gendered norms, produce the system in which multiple forms and types of violence can take place in multiple locations and under multiple circumstances (Abji 2018; Sharma and Marsh 2017; Alcázar-Campos and Cabezas, Lee 2014b; Baye and Heumann 2014; Robillard, McLaughlin and Cole 2018; Bhuyan 2012a). In most cases, migrant women, and, as mentioned in one case, transwomen (Alcázar-Campos and Cabezas 2017), might be all victims and perpetrators of different forms of violence, both within the family/interpersonal relations and the labour market, for the purpose of sex work and exploitation or not, in different moments of the migratory movements. Further, the immigration status is dynamic and variable, which means that regular and irregular migrants might end up in situations of exploitation and violence that fall short in being recognized in the rigid classifications of “the pure victim” and “the crime” as defined by the legal framework. For instance, one of the elements most contested as the characterization of sex work is the paternalistic heteronormative conceptualization that does not consider the social, geographical, and historical locations of migrants having a precarious legal status, reducing women and children to “perfect victims to be rescued” while excluding from social support a whole range of situations of exploitation, as expressed in the following lines:

The (Palermo) protocol’s focus on ‘women and children’ and ‘trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation’ (...) but, in many cases, it is people from within immigrant communities, with whom women have some kind of pre-existing relationship (boyfriends, husbands, friends, lovers, relatives), who may facilitate forging of documents, smuggling, and who couple these activities with coercive and abusive practices. A woman may also be a “collaborator” (...) and still experience forms of labour abuse. In short, it can be, and often is, people from within women’s own networks, who form part of the webs and

organizations of people, in both the receiving and sending countries, that facilitate crossing borders and attaining work (Alcázar-Campos and Cabezas 2017, 42-46).

It is clear that situations of abuse and exploitation might have an intrafamilial, transnational, dimension involving both the domestic and work settings, which might be interlocked in viscous ways, and migrant women might shift positions between abuser and abused, without respecting the image of pure, innocent victim. Nonetheless, when violence is experienced, people must be ensured protection, regardless their images of non-pure victims.

The set of documents “Immigration status and (X) GBV”, strongly linked the immigration control and hostile environment to the human rights framework (Fig. 3) but presenting an important ideological differentiation in relation to the other two subsets.

While within the “DV” and the “Trafficking” mainstream definitions, GBV is framed in terms of gender inequalities seen as a human rights violation, whose protection must be ensured by and within the welfare nation-states, in the set “immigration status + (X) GBV”, scholars are questioning the very legitimacy of state authority over borders and over the protection of migrant women with precarious legal status (Abji 2018; Sharma and Marsh 2017; Alcázar-Campos and Cabezas and Lee 2014b; Baye and Heumann 2014; Robillard, McLaughlin and Cole 2018; Bhuyan 2012a). Abji (2018, 503) proposes the following post-national framework:

Postnational approaches sought to move beyond national membership altogether by questioning the legitimacy or relevance of state borders and authority over rights and belonging, and by reimagining how citizenship might be otherwise organized. In short, for postnational scholars, “the logic of personhood supersedes the logic of national citizenship” (Abji 2018, 503).

In sum, scholars within this latest set framed GBV as at the core of anti-borders movements, discussing the human rights of migrants beyond the state authority. The nation-state and its formation worldwide become the main locus structuring GBV in advanced welfare societies and set the boundaries for control over borders and territory, and over the culturalized bodies of migrant women in an economic and social global structure of inequalities.

3.2. The framing and naming of the subject: migrant women having a precarious legal status

The identification of how the subject is constructed by the literature is the object of this section.

Results show that the subject is framed by scholars using gender and women as a unitary homogenous category in all the documents analysed. The categorial tag “gender/women” interacts with the category of “migrant”, creating the group named “migrant women”, which is in focus in all the literature. Further, migrant women are positioned in a particular situation of precarity when it comes to their immigrant status, and this precarity is framed in both legal terms such as structural barriers to accessing social entitlements and service provisions, and in social terms referring to the lack of understanding of what the migrant women’s needs are when experiencing GBV and having a precarious legal status. The latent meaning is that among scholars there is an acknowledgment that migrant women face structural barriers to accessing welfare provisions due to the immigration regimes, and at the same time there is the analytical intention to understand what type of interventions and solutions might be available for them, regardless of their immigrant status, or there is an analytical interest in identifying the failure of specific interventions tailored “for migrant women” in resettlement contexts.

In relation to GBV, migrant women are named as “survivors” or “victims”, and those two terms are used interchangeably in all documents analyzed, with few exceptions. Indeed, Paasche and Skilbrei (2017) name migrant women as victims

interchangeable with vulnerable groups; Hanley (2006) used to refer to migrant women exclusively as victims of trafficking; Connelly *et al.* (2018), instead, refer to women and girls in potentially affected community while describing FGM.

The process of naming and framing the subject “migrant women having a precarious legal status” is articulated mostly in three different ways:

a) the use of categories results in an implicit use of group boundaries, which means that immigrant women were identified in terms of migration flows in the resettlement context from countries of origin and nationalities (e.g. statistical analysis of number of women per nationalities and country of origin) or in terms of country of origin and ethnic groups in relation to specific typology of violence, but without a strong differentiation among social groups:

Although forced marriage exists in many communities, with Canadian men seeking brides in their countries of origin who will then be dependent on them for their immigration status, the phenomenon of mail-order brides to Canadian-born men seems especially problematic for *Eastern European* (especially *Russian and Ukrainian*) and *Filipina women* (Hanley *et al.* 2006, 91).

Moreover, b) the use of categories seeks to maintain group boundaries to account for neglected experiences of violence lived by marginalized groups, which are considered understudied in research and silenced by policy makers. The literature used the analytical category of “gender/women” with the category “race-ethnicity”, incorporating in the analysis the group of “black women and women of color” (Ogbonnaya *et al.* 2020; Deckert *et al.* 2018), or in some cases oriented towards a specific ethnic group within a racial group, such as Nigerian women.

Nigerians constituted by far the largest national group of ‘possible victims of human trafficking’ in 2016. While the category of Nigerian asylum seekers includes both victims and non-victims, overall only six percent of applicants were granted asylum in 2016 (in Norway). Nigerians routinely rank at the top of statistics on deportations and expulsions from Norway, partly due to the combination of high rates of rejections and low uptake in assisted return (programs) that is typical for this group (Paschee and Skilbrei 2017, 151).

Nigerian women are by far the most researched group within the documents related to cases of trafficking in the EU and US (Caretta 2015; Baye and Heumann 2014; Paasche and Skilbrei 2017; Deckert et al. 2018), and in one case in relation to DV experienced in US (Ogbonnaya, Fawole and Rizo 2021). Another group identified within the same categories’ gender/women and race/ethnic axes is “Latinas”, with a further specification of DV experiences in US (Rajaram *et al.* 2020; O’Neal and Beckman 2017), and in one case with reference to black Latinas (Rajaram *et al.* 2020). Finally, the literature refers to Asian/South Asian migrant women (Lee 2014a; Kapur *et al.* 2017; Deckert *et al.* 2018). Within this group, special consideration has been devoted to trafficked women in Malaysia, Thailand, Taiwan, Sri-Lanka, Nepal (Lee 2014), and to DV experiences of Asian Indian women with further identity-based groups (e.g. Hindu, Muslim) in US (Kapur *et al.* 2017).

Finally, c) the use of categories complicates the articulation of group boundaries, which means scholars displaced the categories of gender and race-ethnicity from the group boundaries, articulating a complex reality in which multiple dimensions of advantages and disadvantages are lived by specific groups in relation to others positioned in geo-political and historical orders. Cabezas and

Campos (2016), indeed, include processes of colonial history, social and economic development with current history and characteristics of Dominican migration to Puerto Rico:

In conclusion, the African heritage – Dominicaness – and hypersexualization, are epitomized in the stereotype of the black Dominican prostitute connected to eroticization, disgust, and criminality. Trans-Caribbean irregular migration, racialization, socio economic background and historical period establish how Dominican women are perceived in Puerto Rico. Their labor in intimate spaces, and the fact that their laboring configurations are criminalized, means that they are illegible under the discursive paradigm of the social protection for trafficked victims. (...) We contend that their racialization in conjunction with their omnipresence in intimate, frequently ill-regulated spaces of sexualized labor (bars, cafes, domestic and care-giving spaces) position Dominicans as invisible subjects for social recognition, rendered them unworthy of social protection (Alcázar-Campos and Cabezas 2016, 35-40).

The articulation of categories used by scholars to represent the subject experiencing GBV is investigated to understand *who is represented and who is not* in the selected literature, and if categories are used to fix identities or, instead, are used to capture the complex relationship between fluctuating subjectivities and power dynamics structuring relationships among social groups. Following this line of reasoning, the scholarly use of group boundaries analyzed above is compounded in this study with the investigation of the use of intersectionality described as “the most important contribution of women’s studies” (McCall 2005, 1771), which has the capacity to analyse the complexity governing the relationship between the subject and the structures towards the use of interlocking analytical categories (McCall 2005).

Here, I investigate if an intersectionality approach was explicitly used by scholars while studying the vulnerable positions of migrant women having a precarious legal status. Results show that despite lemmatical forms of the term “intersectionality” appearing in n. 21 out of n. 25 documents, the explicit incorporation of intersectional analysis in research is very limited (only n.8 documents out of 25). Numbers 7 articles out of n. 13 (50%) used intersectionality either as a theoretical framework or as an approach within the DV sub-set. When analyzed, intersectionality is used as theory, principle and in the interpretation of data (Critelli and Yalim 2020), or else as a universal language to criticize hegemonic culture while promoting an intersectional professional perspective (O’Neal and Beckman 2017; Kapur *et al.* 2017) to frame the experiences of specific groups shaped by categories of race, ethnicity, gender (O’Neal and Beckman 2017) sexuality, poverty, age, national origin, citizenship, disability, sexuality, migration, and class (Martinez-Roman *et al.* 2017). Intersectionality is also used to theorize the experiences of GBV and the structural barriers to access the services (Bhuyan and Velagapudi 2013; Voolma 2018; Kapur *et al.* 2017). Finally, intersectionality is used as “theory”, which means scholars take into account the immigrant status as a category that structures the identity alongside race, gender, class, sexual orientation (Critelli and Yalim 2017). Within the documents in the sub-sets “Immigration Status + (X) GBV”, Abji (2018) quotes the feminist intersectional critiques referring to migrant women’s exclusion from social rights and entitlements, and in the document set “Trafficking”, intersectionality is used by Caretta (2015) as a methodological viewpoint, to position the researcher within the ethnographic fieldwork and in relation to participants’ socio-economic background.

A last note of interest is that those studies included in the set of documents “immigration status + (X) GBV” do not use intersectionality in their theoretical framework or in their methodological and analytical investigations. Nevertheless, those scholars presented the articulation of a complex reality within micro-macro

processes of social structuration of inequalities. In contrast, intersectionality is openly included and operationalized in studies referring to mainstream definitions of DV, and with a rigorous use of categories (e.g. gender, race and ethnicity), highlighting the positions or experiences of specific social groups, without fully engaging with the dynamic structuration of inter-subjective experiences of power and oppression *in contextual systems*.

3.3. The solutions to the problem of GBV

The literature analyzed pointed out that the precarious legal status of migrant women produces structural barriers to accessing the social protection system within a nation-state world order. In this regard, the focus on service provisions retraceable in all the documents considers how social policies are enacted, given the precarious legal status of women and their different life-stories that might or might not fit with the welfare requirements to access social protection.

As described in the methods (see para. 2), this study investigates how the framing and naming of the problem is linked with the identification of a particular solution to GBV. The assumption is that different interpretations of the problems produce different epistemological and political perspectives, which impact knowledge production in relation to innovative potential contributions to social change, addressing the attention to solutions to GBV experienced by migrant women having a precarious legal status.

A total of 24 practice-related interventions were conceptualized by the selected literature, and those were further categorized into three sub-categories (Fig. 3):

1. Practice of resistance to state immigration control in the field of GBV;
2. Practice-related interventions against DV;
3. Counter-trafficking measures.

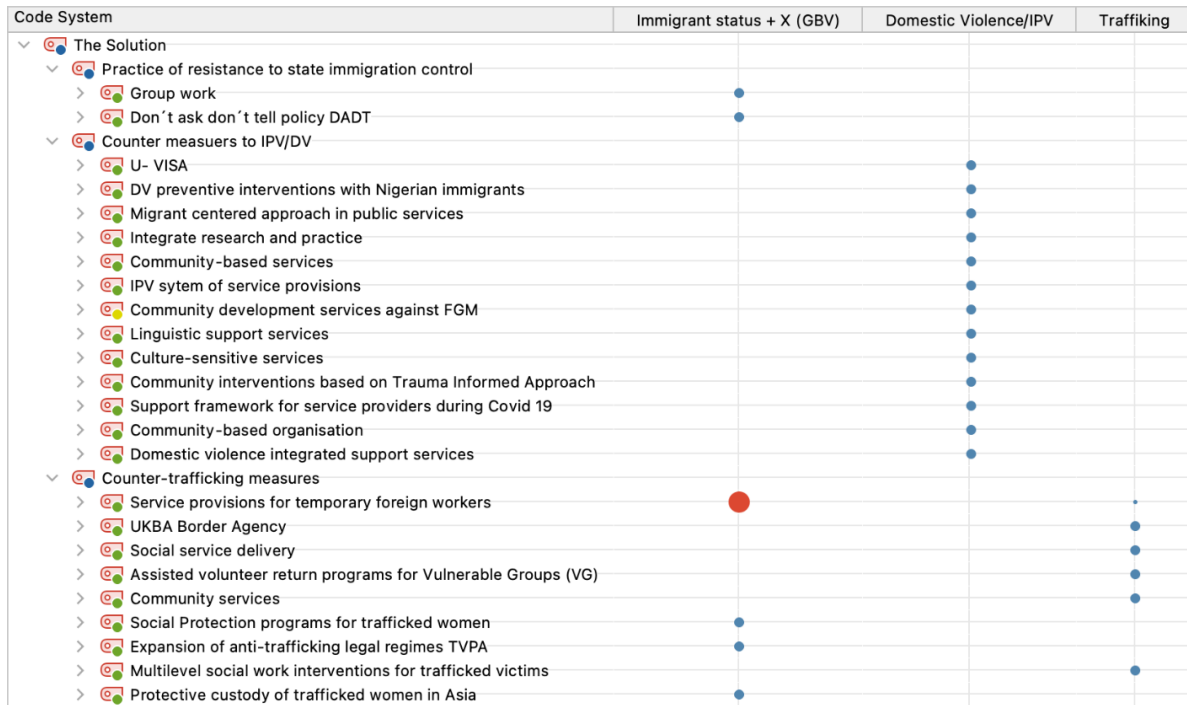


Fig. 3 - Code Matrix

Source: Author’s codifications; the matrix visualizes which code (rows) have been assigned to which document set (column), providing an overview of how many document segments from each document set has been assigned to a specific code.

Category 1, *practice of resistance*, includes two interventions named “Group Work” (Sharma and Marsh, 2017), originated by an NGO run by women of color who are survivors of violence, and “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell - DADT” (Bhuyan 2012; Abji 2018), offspring from grassroots feminist activists in Canada. Both interventions were discussed within the document set “immigration status and (X) GBV”, meaning documents defining GBV in relation to a system of power relations within the nation-states and the global labour market. Both interventions are organized within women NGOs and are grounded on an explicit mission of being at once feminists and anti-racist (Sharma and Marsh 2017) in open contrast with state border authority. In particular, the DADT focus on a specific policy-practice in which “*referring to feminism as a guiding principle, service providers state that they ‘don’t*

care ' about women's status when providing services" (Bhuyan 2012, 16-17), which means "DADT requires that service providers do not ask clients about their immigration status, lest this be misinterpreted by clients as an eligibility restriction. The 'Don't Tell' component often refers to the active protection of clients' information from border authorities (Abji 2018, 510).

Category 2, *measures to contrast Domestic Violence*, includes 13 interventions discussed by all the documents in the set of "DV". Solutions presented here have as a common thread the aim for professionals in public offices or community services to navigate the system of state-immigration control. Scholars, using professional perspectives, are looking for appropriate treatments to answer the needs of specific target populations such as Nigerian women (Ogbonnaya 2020), or Latinas (O'Neal and Beckman 2017), trying to develop culturally appropriate interventions. To this aim, the improvement of a range of services was discussed, such as linguistic support available in legal service offices, police departments, prosecutors' offices and courts, social and healthcare settings, and confidential legal advocacy (Lee 2019), as well as increased collaboration among agencies, with the aim to advocate for policy changes or to provide services that would benefit all clients (Bhuyan and Velagapudi 2013). Different approaches to guide interventions with individuals and communities were also suggested, such as a migrant-centred approach to ensure the protection of human rights of all migrants (Martinez-Roma *et al.* 2017); a trauma-informed approach to address the multiple effects of trauma that may coincide with both the experience of being an immigrant and of DV (Crittelli and Yalim 2020). Finally, staff training was suggested to identify at-risk immigrant women while creating safety plans and referrals to local domestic violence shelters (Sabri *et al.* 2020). More interesting is the acknowledgement that for a migrant woman it is not sufficient to be identified as a victim of crime to access services, but it is also required for her to be collaborative with public agencies (Rajaram *et al.* 2020) and to prove that the violence inflicted by the perpetrator

is the main cause of relationship dissolution (Voolma 2018). Within the legal and administrative framework, for instance, “*service providers indicated that they do not encourage victims to phone the police unless they are in immediate danger. They operate according to feminist principles of empowerment and support women’s own choices about how to best deal with the abuse in their lives*” (Singh 2010, 31).

Category 3, *Counter-trafficking measures*, refers to nine national or inter-governmental interventions construed on protocols and programs dealing with situation of sex slaves in extremely abusive, degrading, and violent circumstances (Alcázar-Campos and Cabezas 2017, 44), labelling “women and children” as innocent victims (Canning 2014; Hanley *et al.* 2006; Paasche and Skilbrei 2017; Deckert *et al.* 2018). The discussed interventions mainly provide three options (Alcázar-Campos and Cabezas, 2017; Baye and Heumann, 2014; Canning, 2014; Hanley *et al.* 2006; Paasche and Skilbrei 2017; Deckert *et al.* 2018; Caretta 2015). The first is the assisted return program (ARP), described as serving the interests of northern states in migration control (Paasche and Skilbrei 2017), including cases in which shelters, where women wait “to be returned”, are defined as a quasi-punitive system of protective custody (Lee 2014, 218). Another option relates to outreach programs that involve trafficked women and trans-women (Alcázar-Campos and Cabezas 2017; Baye and Heumann 2014; Robillard *et al.* 2018; Bhuyan 2012) using an empowerment approach, such as providing workshops and information sessions on migrant rights, and available services for migrants working in specific job sectors (Baye and Heumann 2014; Robillard *et al.* 2018). However, those interventions lack both funding and collaboration among stakeholders within and outside the sex industry, including migrant women and sex workers. A third intervention that is described paradoxically as innovative (Caretta 2015) and at the same time repressive (Baye and Heumann 2014), is the Italian Social Protection Program from which the Palermo Protocol originates (UN 2000), which includes two paths, a judicial

and a social route. Nevertheless, Baye and Heumann (2014) describe its *victim rights centred approach* and the *rehabilitation component* as reproducing repressive notions around migrant sexualities and problematic notions of victimhood and redemption (94-96). Caretta (2015), in contrast, defines the intervention as innovative because policy makers took into account the requests of NGOs and social workers to grant residence permits to trafficked migrant women without a regular permit (Caretta 2015, 11).

4. Discussions and conclusions

4.1. The use of group boundaries and its implications for the construction of migrant women as objects of intervention

In the situation of migrant women having a precarious legal status in advanced welfare societies, the overarching theme discussed by the literature while framing GBV is the political racist context and the hostile environment created by a mix of immigration control and far-rights populist movements, which all have a significant impact both on the forms of GBV experienced by migrant women as well as their access to service provisions. Within this context, in relation to how the problem of GBV is named, the focus of scholars is mostly on DV, within which different typologies of violence become salient (e.g. IPV, FGM, forced marriage). In this regard, however, mainstream definitions, if used too narrowly, operate as a normative structures at the policy level, reinforcing the image of “deserving migrant women” (Saar, Sojka and Runfors 2022; Carmel and Sojka 2021; Keskinen 2016), which means the individual must fit with the definitions identified within different types and forms of DV which have been institutionally recognized through policies, legal frameworks, risk assessment, scales, and evaluation tools in order to access service provisions otherwise reserved only for citizens-residents. When the subject is named and framed in relation to specific group boundaries, such as “Nigerian

women” or “Latinas women”, the constructions of administrative/legal conditions of migrants (Shutes 2016; Könönen 2018) linked to race and ethnicity bare the promise of multicultural feminist service provisions based on ethno-racial principles, regardless of immigration status (Singh 2016). Nevertheless, following the logic of ethno-specificity (Ivi, 510), in Canada, for instance, the institutionalization of ethno-specific anti-violence services reinforced the process of “othering” the racialized migrant women as well as migrant activists who were hired for anti-violence work (Singh 2016). The risk of “othering” migrant women and communities is present also within studies that referred to mainstream definitions of FGM (WHO 2008), such as all kinds of non-medical motivated procedures to change or “cut” female genitals. For instance, this definition assumes FGM as contextual in specific countries and traditions without extending the debate to the controversial, medical Western justified practice of assigned sex at birth while “correcting” genital formation of babies when deemed ambiguous (Fusaschi and Cavatorta 2018). Finally, GBV named as trafficking, following the narrow definitions included in regional/national plans of action while referring to the Palermo Protocol (2002), reinforced the image of “innocent pure victims” reduced to “women and girls” or “women and children” in extreme exploitative situations, mostly related to sex work and prostitution, excluding from the protection programs a whole range of situations where women are at risk of exploitation.

4.2. Critical perspectives and intersectional implications on the use of categories

The three different ways used by scholars to articulate the subject “migrant women having a precarious legal status” (see para. 3) and the experiences of GBV within a structural system of inequalities confirmed the tripartition discussed by McCall (2005) and used by feminist scholars and women studies when accounting for the diversity of women’s experience of privileges and oppression (McCall 2005, 1772). Indeed, the results here show that some studies refer to migrant women

using an anti-categorical methodological approach (McCall 2005, 1773), avoiding group boundaries and essentialist categories. This approach is supported by post-colonial scholars (Spivak 1988; Pinelli 2020; Mohanty 1986; Abu-Lughod 2011, 2013), who highlighted how the politics of *gender* within advanced welfare societies reduced “migrant women” to a construct of cultural superiority, in which there is a “white male savior”, who protects the national borders and saves the victims such as women and children, and there is a “white female savior” who is already empowered and emancipated.

Other scholars included in this study (see para. 3), instead, emphasise group boundaries referring to categories such as gender, race, ethnicity, to name just a few, with the ambition to position specific marginalised and invisible groups at the centre of knowledge production. However, at the same time, this intra-categorical approach (McCall 2005, 1773) “has a tendency to describe rather than deconstruct” (Nash 2014, 58), without acknowledging the complexity that characterizes living subjects and their multiple changing identities.

Finally, a small number of scholars analyzed in this study (see para. 3) focus on cumulative forms of violence, directing the attention on immigration control, welfare-nation state, and citizen-membership regimes within a global economic system where violence is produced and enacted. In this sense, using an inter-categorical approach (McCall 2005, 1773), scholars move beyond intersecting categories, putting the historical and geographical structure of relations among social groups at the centre of the analysis. For instance, Cabezas and Campos (2016) demonstrate a new analytical way to design and implement empirical research, which takes into account the geographical contexts in genealogical terms, and the historical relations among social groups in which the subject is embedded, and finally, uses a critical lens while referring to legal and administrative categories that reproduce racial, essentialist, logics.

4.3. Implications for researchers working at the cutting edge of gender, migration, and welfare

The concluding remark of this study is that an analysis of GBV requires a recentering of the debate around logics of interpretation of the problem, and the proposed solutions' effects, within advanced welfare societies. An understanding of how diverse policy-practices against GBV support or deny the access of specific migrant groups, accounting for where solutions lead, and by whom they are led, is a milestone for analysts to produced knowledge aiming at social change.

The findings of this study point out that there is a tension between knowledge produced to improve the access and delivery of services within the welfare-nation state and knowledge produced to contest the nation-state as protector, and so alternative post-national solutions are required. Further, the disciplines involved in the knowledge production analyzed here are mainly involved at the intersection of gender, migration, and welfare, and have an academic-professional related orientation. Those two elements combined support the argument that there are contradictory forces within *the politics of needs interpretation* (Fraser 1987) that are not imposed from one discipline to another, but that occur *within* disciplines such as social work, medicine, health, psychiatry, psychology, nursing, which have the institutional mandate to protect and rehabilitate. This reinforces the point that, as much as benevolence, the focus on social protection runs the risk “to shift attention away from structural forms of power and inequalities, to focus instead on questions such as what the symptoms of traumatic experience are, and who is responsible and must therefore pay for social interventions and treatment” (Di Matteo and Scaramuzzino 2022, 21).

In line with the above, a total of n. 20 articles out of n. 25 analyzed in this study included feminist references and analysis to conceptualize GBV against women, with a focus on precarious legal status, *and* access to social protection in advanced welfare societies. This might reflect the fact that within the *politics of need interpretation* at play, the use of feminists' differential interpretations is present in

professional-oriented disciplines and might lead to sometimes complementary, or sometimes contradictory, solutions to solve the problem of GBV (Bacchi 1999, 9).

The complementary-contradictory forces characterizing the nexus between gender, migration, and welfare can be complicated even further, assuming the nation-state as both the responsible entity for social protection and the perpetrators of GBV and migration control, pushing Orloff (2009) to ask the provocative question “*can feminists count on welfare states – or at least some aspects of these complex systems – as resources in the struggle for gender equality?*” (Orloff 2009, 317). Adding the *colonial* into the debate about the “coming of welfare wars”, we can also question if practice-oriented disciplines can reformulate the GBV problem around instances of social change. In this regard, we can ask: will practice-oriented disciplines working at the cutting edge of gender, migration, and welfare be able to reformulate the interpretation of women’s needs by proposing criteria for social entitlements (other than needs) for those excluded by the fiction of nation-state and citizenship regimes?

References

- Abji, S. (2018), Postnational acts of citizenship: How an anti-border politics is shaping feminist spaces of service provision in Toronto, Canada, in *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, vol. 20, no. 4, pp. 501-523.
- Abji, S. (2016), ‘Because Deportation is Violence Against Women’: on the politics of state responsibility and women’s human rights, in *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, vol. 23, no. 4, pp. 483-507.
- Abu-Lughod, L. (2013), “Do Muslim Women Need Saving?”, in *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?*, Harvard University Press - <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.4159/9780674726338/html>

- Abu-Lughod, L. (2011), Seductions of the “Honor Crime”, in *Differences*, vol. 22, no. 1, pp. 17-63 - <https://doi.org/10.1215/10407391-1218238>
- Altheide, D.L., and Schneider, C.J. (2012), *Qualitative media analysis* (Vol. 38), London and New York, Sage publications.
- Ambrosini, M. (2020), *Sociologia delle migrazioni (Sociology of Migration)*, Bologna, il Mulino.
- Anderson, B. (2014), “Precarious Pasts, Precarious Futures”, in Costello, C. and Freedland, M. (eds.), *Migrants at Work: Immigration and Vulnerability in Labour Law*, Corby, Oxford University Press, pp. 29-43.
- Bacchi, C. (1999), *Women, Policy and Politics: The Construction of Policy Problems*, London, Sage Publications.
- Baye, E.M.O., and Heumann, S. (2014), Migration, sex work and exploitative labor conditions: experiences of Nigerian women in the sex industry in Turin, Italy, and counter-trafficking measures, in *Gender, Technology and Development*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 77-105.
- 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.
- Bengtsson, M. (2016), How to plan and perform a qualitative study using content analysis, in *NursingPlus open*, no. 2, pp. 8-14.
- Benhabib, S. (2004), *The rights of others: Aliens, residents, and citizens* (No. 5), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Bernal, V. and Grewal, I. (eds.) (2014), *Theorizing NGOs: States, feminisms, and neoliberalism*, Durham, Duke University Press.
- Binion, G. (2010), *In an Abusive State: How Neoliberalism Appropriated the Feminist Movement against Sexual Violence*, edited by Kristin Bumiller, Durham and London, Duke University Press.

- Bhuyan, R. (2012), Negotiating citizenship on the frontlines: How the devolution of Canadian immigration policy shapes service delivery to women fleeing abuse, in *Law & Policy*, vol. 34, no. 2, pp. 211-236.
- Bhuyan, R., and Velagapudi, K. (2013), From one “dragon sleigh” to another: Advocating for immigrant women facing violence in Kansas, in *Affilia*, vol. 28, no. 1, pp. 65-78.
- Briones-Vozmediano, E., La Parra, D., and Vives-Cases, C. (2015), Barriers and facilitators to effective coverage of Intimate Partner Violence services for immigrant women in Spain, in *Health Expectations*, vol. 18, no. 6, pp. 2994-3006.
- Castles, S., and Miller, M.J. (1993), *The Age of Migration*, 4th ed., London, Palgrave MacMillan.
- Cabezas, A.L., and Campos, A.A. (2016), Trafficking discourses of Dominican women in Puerto Rico, in *Social & Economic Studies*, pp. 33-56.
- Carmel, E., and Sojka, B. (2021), Beyond welfare chauvinism and deservingness. Rationales of belonging as a conceptual framework for the politics and governance of migrants’ rights, in *Journal of Social Policy*, vol. 50, no. 3, pp- 645-667.
- Caretta, M.A. (2015), Casa rut: A multilevel analysis of a “good practice” in the social assistance of sexually trafficked Nigerian women, in *Affilia*, vol. 30, no. 4, pp. 546-559.
- Canning, V. (2014), International conflict, sexual violence and asylum policy: Merseyside as a case study, in *Critical Social Policy*, vol. 34, no. 1, pp. 23-45.
- Connelly, E., Murray, N., Baillot, H., and Howard, N. (2018), Missing from the debate? A qualitative study exploring the role of communities within interventions to address female genital mutilation in Europe, in *BMJ open*, vol. 8, no. 6.
- Cook, M.L. (2010), The advocate’s dilemma: Framing migrant rights in national settings, in *Studies in social justice*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 145-164.
- Critelli, F., and Yalim, A.C. (2020), Improving access to domestic violence services for women of immigrant and refugee status: a trauma-informed perspective, in

- Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, vol. 29, no. 1-3, pp. 95-113.
- Crepaz, M.L. (ed.) (2022), *Handbook on Migration and Welfare*, Edward Elgar Ed.
- Di Matteo, C., and Scaramuzzino, R. (2022), Gender-based violence in forced migration: An analytical contribution to reconstruct the research field and its institutional development, *Journal of Comparative Migration Studies* - <http://doi.org.10.1186/s40878-022-00314-z>
- Deckert, J.C., Warren, S., and Britton, H. (2018), Midwestern service provider narratives of migrant experiences: Legibility, vulnerability, and exploitation in human trafficking, in *Advances in Social Work*, vol. 18, no. 3, pp. 887-910.
- Degani, P., and De Stefani, P. (2020), Addressing Migrant Women's Intersecting Vulnerabilities. Refugee Protection, Anti-trafficking and Anti-violence Referral Patterns in Italy, in *Peace Human Rights Governance*, vol. 4, no. 1.
- Fassin, D., and Barnett, M. (2016), Rethinking paternalism: The meaning of gender and sex in the politics of asylum, in *Paternalism beyond borders*, pp. 75-96.
- Fusaschi, M., and Cavatorta, G. (2018), *FGM/C: From medicine to critical anthropology*, Turin, Meti Edizioni.
- Fraser, N. (1989), *Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory*, Minneapolis, MN, University of Minnesota Press.
- Fraser, N. (1987), Women, welfare and the politics of need interpretation, in *Hypatia*, vol. 2, no.1, pp. 103-121.
- Ghafournia, N. (2014), Culture, domestic violence and intersectionality beyond the dilemma of cultural relativism and universalism, in *The International Journal of Critical Cultural Studies*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 23-32.
- Hanley, J., Oxman-Martinez, J., Lacroix, M., and Gal, S. (2006), The 'deserving' undocumented?: Government and community response to human trafficking as a labour phenomenon, in *Labour, Capital and Society/Travail, capital et société*, pp. 78-103.

- Hankivsky, O. (2012), *An Intersectionality-Based Policy Analysis Framework*, Vancouver, BC: Institute for Intersectionality Research and Policy, Simon Fraser University.
- Hankivsky, O., Grace, D., Hunting, G., Giesbrecht, M., Fridkin, A., Rudrum, S., and Clark, N. (2014), An intersectionality-based policy analysis framework: critical reflections on a methodology for advancing equity, in *International journal for equity in health*, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 1-16.
- Hvenegård-Lassen, K., Staunæs, D., and Lund, R. (2020), Intersectionality, Yes, but How? Approaches and Conceptualizations in Nordic Feminist Research and Activism, in *NORA-Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research*, vol. 28, no. 3, pp. 173-182.
- Kapur, S., Zajicek, A. M., and Gaber, J. (2017), Nonprofit organizations serving domestic violence survivors: Addressing intersectional needs of Asian Indians, in *Affilia*, vol. 32, no. 1, pp. 50-66.
- Könönen, J. (2018), Border Struggles within the State. *Nordic journal of migration research*, vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 143-150.
- Kofman, E. (2020), Gender and the feminisation of migration, Chapter 15, in *Sage handbook of international migration*, pp. 2016-2231.
- Lee, E. (2018a), Linguistic support services for immigrant domestic violence victims, in *Journal of Social Service Research*.
- Lee, M. (2014b), Gendered discipline and protective custody of trafficking victims in Asia, in *Punishment & Society*, vol. 16, no. 2, pp. 206-222.
- Mezzadra, S., and Neilson, B. (2012), Between inclusion and exclusion: On the topology of global space and borders, in *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol. 29, no. 4-5, pp. 58-75.
- Martinez-Roman, M.A., Vives-Cases, C., and Pérez-Belda, C. (2017), Immigrant women suffering from IPV in Spain: The perspectives of experienced social workers, in *Affilia*, vol. 32, no. 2, pp. 202-216.

- McCall, L. (2005), The complexity of intersectionality, in *Signs: Journal of women in culture and society*, vol. 30, no. 3, pp. 1771-1800.
- Mohanty, C.T. (1986), Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses, in *Boundary 2*, vol. 12, n. 3, pp. 333-358.
- Nash, J.C. (2014), Institutionalizing the margins, in *Social Text*, vol. 32, no. 1, pp. 45-65.
- O'Neal, E.N., and Beckman, L.O. (2017), Intersections of race, ethnicity, and gender: Reframing knowledge surrounding barriers to social services among Latina intimate partner violence victims, in *Violence against women*, vol. 23, no. 5, pp. 643-665.
- Orloff, A.S. (2009), Gendering the comparative analysis of welfare states: An unfinished agenda, in *Sociological theory*, vol. 27, no. 3, pp. 317-343.
- Ogbonnaya, I.N., Fawole, O.I., and Rizo, C.F. (2021), Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Service Providers' Perspectives on Nigerian Immigrants' Domestic Violence Experiences, in *Violence Against Women*, vol. 27, no. 12-13, pp. 2255-2272.
- Ozcurumez, S., Akyuz, S., and Bradby, H. (2021), The Conceptualization problem in research and responses to sexual and gender-based violence in forced migration, in *Journal of Gender Studies*, vol. 30, no. 1, pp. 66-78.
- Parella, S., and Speroni, T. (2018), Las perspectivas transnacionales para el análisis de la protección social en contextos migratorios, in *Autoctonía. Revista de Ciencias Sociales e Historia*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 37-56.
- Paasche, E., and Skilbrei, M.L. (2017), Gendered vulnerability and return migration, in *Temida*, vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 149-166.
- Pinelli, B. (2020). *Migranti e rifugiate. Antropologia, Genere, e Politica*, Milano, Raffaello Cortina Editore.

- Ratzmann, N., and Sahraoui, N. (2021), Conceptualising the Role of Deservingness in Migrants' Access to Social Services, in *Social Policy and Society*, vol. 20, no. 3, pp. 1-12.
- Rajaram, S.S., Barrios, A., Novak, E., and Rogers, J. (2020), 'It has given me life'. Latinas and the U-Visa: A Qualitative Study, in *Gender Issues*, vol. 37, no. 2, pp. 187-204.
- Razack, S. (1995), Domestic Violence as Gender Persecution: Policing the Borders of Nation, Race, and Gender, in *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, vol. 8, pp. 45-88.
- Ryndyk, O., Suter, B., and Odden, G. (eds.) (2021), *Migration to and from Welfare States: Lived Experiences of the Welfare-Migration Nexus in a Globalised World*, Amsterdam: Springer IMISCOE Series.
- Robillard, C., McLaughlin, J., Cole, D.C., Vasilevska, B., and Gendron, R. (2018), 'Caught in the Same Webs' - Service Providers' Insights on Gender-Based and Structural Violence among Female Temporary Foreign Workers in Canada, in *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, vol. 19, no. 3, pp. 583-606.
- Saar, M., Sojka, B., and Runfors, A. (2022), Welfare deservingness for migrants: Does the Welfare State model matter?, in *Social Inclusion Open Access Journal*, vol. 10, no. 1, Transnational Social Protection: Inclusion for Whom? Theoretical Reflections and Migrant Experiences.
- Sabri, B., Hartley, M., Saha, J., Murray, S., Glass, N., and Campbell, J.C. (2020), Effect of COVID-19 pandemic on women's health and safety: A study of immigrant survivors of intimate partner violence, in *Health care for women international*, vol. 4111-12, pp. 1294-1312.
- Schiller, N.G., and Salazar, N.B. (2016), *Regimes of Mobility across the Globe*, in *Regimes of Mobility*, London, Routledge.

- Shutes, I. (2016), Work-related conditionality and the access to social benefits of national citizens, EU and non-EU citizens, in *Journal of Social Policy*, vol. 45, no. 4, pp. 691-707.
- Singh, R. (2016), Importing feminisms: racialized migrants and anti-violence activism, in *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, vol. 23, no. 4, pp. 508-530.
- Singh, R. (2010), In between the system and the margins: Community organizations, mandatory charging and immigrant victims of abuse, in *Canadian Journal of Sociology/Cahiers canadiens de sociologie*, vol. 35, no. 1, pp. 31-62.
- Sharma, S., and Marsh, V. (2017), Group work: a powerful site of resistance for migrant women experiencing gender-based violence, in *Families, Relationships and Societies*, vol. 6, no. 2, p. 307.
- Sharma, N. (2007), "Global Apartheid and Nation-Statehood: Instituting Border Regimes", in Goodman, J., and James, P. (eds.). *Nationalism and Global Solidarities*, London, Routledge.
- Spivak, G.C. (1988), "Can the subaltern speak?", in Nelson, C., and Grossberg, L. (eds.), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, London, Macmillan, pp. 9-82.
- Srivastava, R. (2020), *Vulnerable internal migrants in India and portability of social security and entitlements*, Delhi: Institute for Human Development.
- Stoyanova, V. (2021), "Commentary on Article 59 of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence", in de Vido, S., and Di Stefano, A. (eds.), *Commentary on the Istanbul Convention*, Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Voolma, H. (2018), 'I must be silent because of residency': Barriers to escaping domestic violence in the context of insecure immigration status in England and Sweden, in *Violence against women*, vol. 24, no. 15, pp. 1830-1850.

Annex I

Complex Query based on evidence-based protocols for systematic literature reviews (Cochrane 2019):

("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 victimisation 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 policy*" OR "welfare policy*") AND (women OR woman OR fem*) W/5 (migrant* OR "asylum seeker*" OR immigrant* OR displace* OR stateless))

Annex II

Table of n. 25 selected documents including information on Author names, Document title, the location where the study has been carried out, the document format, year of publications and the types of violence addressed in the documents

<i>Author</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Study location</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Publication Year</i>	<i>Types of violence</i>
Rajaram, S.S.; Barrios, A.; Novak, E.; Rogers, J.	"It has given me life." Latinas and the U-Visa: A Qualitative Study.	US	Journal Article	2020	Domestic Violence
Critelli, F.; Yalim, A.C.	Improving access to domestic violence services for women of immigrant and refugee status: a trauma-informed perspective.	US	Journal Article	2020	Domestic Violence

Sabri, B.; Hartley, M.; Saha, J.; Murray, S.; Glass, N.; Campbell, J.C.	Effect of COVID-19 pandemic on women's health and safety: A study of immigrant survivors of intimate partner violence.	US	Journal Article	2020	Domestic Violence
Ogbonnaya, I.N.; Fawole, O.I.; Rizo, C.F.	Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Service Providers' Perspectives on Nigerian Immigrants' Domestic Violence Experiences.	US	Journal Article	2020	Domestic Violence
Martinez-Roman, M.-A.; Vives-Cases, C.; Pérez-Belda, C.	Immigrant Women Suffering From IPV in Spain: The Perspectives of Experienced Social Workers.	Spain	Journal Article	2017	Domestic Violence
O'Neal, E.N.; Beckman, L.O.	Intersections of Race, Ethnicity, and Gender: Reframing Knowledge Surrounding Barriers to Social Services Among Latina Intimate Partner Violence Victims.	US	Journal Article	2017	Domestic Violence
Bhuyan, R.; Velagapudi, K.	From One "Dragon Sleigh" to Another: Advocating for Immigrant Women Facing Violence in Kansas.	US	Journal Article	2013	Domestic Violence
Voolma, Halliki	"I Must Be Silent Because of Residency": Barriers to Escaping Domestic Violence in the Context of Insecure Immigration Status in England and Sweden.	UK/Sweden	Journal Article	2018	Domestic Violence
Kapur, Sonia; Zajicek, Anna M.; Gaber, John	Nonprofit Organizations Serving Domestic Violence Survivors: Addressing Intersectional Needs of Asian Indians.	US	Journal Article	2017	Domestic Violence
Lee, E.	Linguistic Support Services for Immigrant Domestic Violence Victims.	US	Journal Article	2019	Domestic Violence
Connelly, E.; Murray, N.; Baillot, H.; Howard, N.	Missing from the debate? A qualitative study exploring the role of communities within interventions to address female genital mutilation in Europe.	Scotland	Journal Article	2018	Domestic Violence

Briones-Vozmediano, E.; La Parra, D.; Vives-Cases, C.	Barriers and facilitators to effective coverage of Intimate Partner Violence services for immigrant women in Spain.	Spain	Journal Article	2015	Domestic Violence
Singh, Rashmee	In between the system and the margins: community organisations, mandatory charging, and immigrant victims of abuse.	Canada	Journal Article	2010	Domestic Violence
Abji, S.	Postnational acts of citizenship: how an anti-border politics is shaping feminist spaces of service provision in Toronto, Canada.	Canada	Journal Article	2018	Immigration Status + (X)GBV
Sharma, S.; Marsh, V.	Group work: A powerful site of resistance for migrant women experiencing gender-based violence.	UK	Journal Article	2017	Immigration Status + (X)GBV
Alcázar-Campos, A.; Cabezas, A.L.	Discursive paradigm surrounding the «trafficking victim». Social work with Dominican women in Puerto Rico.	Puerto Rico	Journal Article	2017	Immigration Status + (X)GBV
Lee, M.	Gendered discipline and protective custody of trafficking victims in Asia.	Hong Kong	Journal Article	2014	Immigration Status + (X)GBV
Baye, E.M.-O.; Heumann, S.	Migration, Sex Work and Exploitative Labor Conditions: Experiences of Nigerian Women in the Sex Industry in Turin, Italy, and Counter-Trafficking Measures.	Italy	Journal Article	2014	Immigration Status + (X)GBV
Robillard, Chantal; McLaughlin, Janet; Cole, Donald C.; Vasilevska, Biljana; Gendron, Richard	“Caught in the Same Webs”—Service Providers’ Insights on Gender-Based and Structural Violence Among Female Temporary Foreign Workers in Canada.	Canada	Journal Article	2018	Immigration Status + (X)GBV
Bhuyan, Rupa-leem	Negotiating Citizenship on the Frontlines: How the Devolution of Canadian Immigration Policy Shapes Service Delivery to Women Fleeing Abuse.	Canada	Journal Article	2012	Immigration Status + (X)GBV

Caretta, M.A.	Casa Rut: A Multilevel Analysis of a “Good Practice” in the Social Assistance of Sexually Trafficked Nigerian Women	Italy	Journal Article	2015	Trafficking
Canning, V.	International conflict, sexual violence and asylum policy: Merseyside as a case study	England	Journal Article	2014	Trafficking
Hanley, Jill; Oxman-Martinez, Jacqueline; Lacroix, Marie; Gal, Sigalit	The “Deserving” Undocumented?: Government and Community Response to Human Trafficking as a Labour Phenomenon.	Canada	Journal Article	2006	Trafficking
Paasche, Er-lend; Skilbrei, May-Len;	Gendered Vulnerability and Return Migration.	Norway	Journal Article	2017	Trafficking
Deckert, Jennifer Chappell; Warren, Sherry; Britton, Hannah	Midwestern Service Provider Narratives of Migrant Experiences: Legibility, Vulnerability, and Exploitation in Human Trafficking.	US	Journal Article	2018	Trafficking
