Against the Current:

Migrant Rights Activism in Malmö as Resistance to Sweden's Hostile Migration Regime

Master of Science
International Relations: Global Refugee Studies
Johanna Rasmusson
Supervisor: Marlene Spanger

Abstract

In this thesis, I examine how migrant rights activism in Malmö unfolds within Sweden's hostile migration regime. Malmö, Sweden's third largest city, has long been a hub for migrant rights movements, shaped by its social, political and geographical positioning. Against the backdrop of the recent "paradigm shift" in Swedish migration governance, characterized by restrictive policies, the study explores how migrant rights groups respond to intensifying political pressures. Situated at the intersection of critical migration studies, activism and resistance research, I further analyze how resistance is enacted, shaped, and negotiated in this particular political moment. Empirically, the thesis draws on semi-structured interviews with activists from local migrant rights groups along with a netnographic study of their digital presence. The study is informed by practice theory (Schatzki 2001), intersectionality (Crenshaw 1989), and situated resistance (Baaz, Lilja & Vinthagen 2018), further conceptualizing political activism as local political practices associated with migrants' rights.

The analysis demonstrates that resistance is enacted through a range of situated practices that navigate, negotiate and challenge the exclusionary logic of migration governance. The practices of the migrant rights groups are increasingly oriented toward legal, social and practical support that respond to the marginalization of migrants produced by the regime. Resistance emerges as both adaptive and ambivalent, negotiated through tensions between visibility and safety, dependence and autonomy, and as a means to sustain belonging, collectivity and the capacity to act within and against the hostile migration regime.

Key words: migrant rights activism, situated resistance, malmö, practice theory, intersectionality

Character count: 167 995

1. Introduction

Malmö,

Sweden's third largest city, located in the southernmost region, has long been a hub for migrant rights movements, shaped both by its geographical position as the key entry point to Sweden and strong activist networks (Hansen 2022: 457). The city is commonly associated with civic action for solidarity, against racism and exclusionary politics, in activist circles narrated as "the capital of resistance" (Frykman & Mäkelä 2019: 9; Hansen 2019: 19). In the early fall of 2015, amid the refugee reception crisis[1] in Europe, hundreds of civilians joined forces under the banner of "Refugees Welcome to Malmö", as civic mobilizations played a key role in organizing the reception for newcomers to Sweden (Sjöberg 2018: 5-6). At the time, the political debate was still largely dominated by sentiments of humanitarianism and international solidarity, something that led to remarks of Sweden as an 'outlier' in the European context (Hagelund 2020: 7). *Today, the Swedish migration regime is drastically different.*

In the last decade, Swedish migration politics have undergone significant transformations, characterized by the mainstreaming of radical right-wing populism and xenophobic rhetoric pushing for stricter migration policies (Hellström 2023: 3). At the end of 2015, in a major political turning point, the Social Democrat-led government declared a 'respite' from high levels of migration, closing the national borders overnight (Kessler & Haapajärvi 2024: 17). Following the national election in 2022, Swedish migration politics entered yet another chapter as the elected right-wing coalition, led by the Moderate Party and supported by the populist radical right party Sweden Democrats[2], announced their agreement for a "paradigm shift" in migration governance (Liberalerna 2022: 29). The coalition holds migration deterrence as a

[1] Popularly referred to as 'the refugee crisis' in media and political debates, I follow critical migration scholars in using 'refugee reception crisis' instead. The term 'refugee crisis' frames migration and the influx of migrants as a threat, often with racialized undertones. In contrast, 'refugee reception crisis' highlights the state of crisis in relation to the management and coordination of reception by European states (Rea et al. 2019: 17).

[2] The Sweden Democrats are widely classified in political science as a typical populist, radical right party. For details, see Kenes (2021).

national priority, proposing and enacting restrictive policies that render legal, social and economic rights of migrants uncertain and unpredictable (Emilsson 2025: 64, Government Offices of Sweden 2025). The ongoing shift in migration politics is effectively transforming Sweden's migration policy into one of the strictest in the European Union (EU), reflecting an increasingly *hostile migration regime* (Kessler & Haapajärvi 2024: 25). In response to the agreement, the National Council of Refugee Groups (FARR), alongside Sweden's leading human rights organizations, issued a joint statement condemning "a xenophobic migration policy", further pledging their commitment to "protect those who need protection and stand up for our common society where the state fails" (FARR 2022). At the same time, civil society organizations warn of political proposals that threaten the autonomy of Swedish civil society, coupled with political rhetoric aimed at silencing critical voices (CRD 2023: 5, 8).

This shifting political terrain forms the backdrop of this thesis as I explore the ways in which activism for, and with, migrants in Malmö unfolds in response to intensified political pressures. Located at the intersection of migration studies, activism and resistance research, I investigate how migrant rights groups navigate, negotiate and respond to the migration regime, further examining how resistance is enacted, shaped and negotiated in this particular political moment in time.

1.1. Research Puzzle

The local level has become increasingly prominent in critical migration studies, historically dominated by national and supra-national dimensions (Scholten 2022: 17). The city of Malmö is a particular empirical case. Its geographical, social and political positioning within Sweden makes it a site where tensions, contestations and solidarities become strikingly visible. Malmö is a city of many reputations, often situated at the heart of ideological struggles (Schclarek Mulinari 2017: 217). It is home to a highly diverse population, shaped by migration from across the globe, and serves as Sweden's southern gateway, connected to Europe via the Öresund Bridge (Frykman & Mäkelä 2019: 9). Malmö is frequently at the center of polarized national debates on migration, segregation and crime, with far-right actors portraying the city as a symbol of the dangers of multiculturalism (Hansen 2019: 152). Malmö is also known as *the*

activist city in Sweden, characterized by a vibrant and predominantly leftist civil society. It is associated with a vivid political life of "radical love", against injustices and inequalities (Frykman & Mäkelä 2019: 9; Hansen 2019: 104).

Although there is a growing scholarly interest, research on migrant rights activism in Sweden is limited (Hansen 2019: 28). While Malmö has served as a key site in studies on migration and civic engagement, existing literature primarily centers on the mobilizations of 2015 (*see* Nordling 2017; Kleres 2018). Given the shifting political landscape, there is a notable lack of research on the present dynamics of migrant rights activism in Malmö. Hansen (2022: 465) calls for updated research on the evolution of the field, while Nordling et al. (2017: 715) emphasize the continuous transformation of activist networks in Malmö, shaped by political and legal developments. Consequently, the ways in which local migrant rights groups navigate and respond to heightened political pressures emerge as both a puzzling and timely site of research.

Furthermore, this thesis offers a contribution in its local context by examining how migrant rights activism in Malmö enact *resistance* through varied forms of political activism. Resistance, in its multiple forms, is a key feature of democratic societies that negotiate, challenge and shape the boundaries of the political order. Indeed, political action can be viewed as an expression of democratic vitality, making such practices important subjects of political research (Clark 2000: 4). Traditionally, resistance studies have focused on large-scale, public protest (Baaz et al. 2018: 6). However, in the context of increasingly repressive global (Northern) migration regimes that regulate mobilities, limit citizenship rights and produce exclusion, resistance evolves and adopts new shapes (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009: 13; Caraus & Paris 2019: 1). In consideration of this, I draw on a theorization of situated resistance, as outlined by Baaz, Lilja and Vinthagen (2018) to examine how migrant rights groups articulate and enact resistance in the local context. Importantly, resistance is relational to power and can, at times, reinforce existing power relations. For this reason, it is the *critical* study of resistance, including its limitations and contradictions, that contributes to a nuanced understanding of the phenomenon (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009: 15).

1.2. Research Objectives

The objective of this thesis is to examine how migrant rights activism in Malmö unfolds within a shifting and increasingly hostile migration regime. The study explores the activist groups involved, the practices of political activism, as well as how migrant rights groups navigate and respond to political constraints. Drawing on a feminist understanding of 'the political', political activism is conceptualized as *local political practices associated with migrants' rights.* The migrant rights groups represented in this thesis vary in structure, claims and methods, yet share the common ground of their struggle and support for migrants in the local civic sphere.

To examine the *doings* of the migrant rights groups, I employ practice theory as outlined by Schatzki (2001) in combination with intersectionality, originally coined by Crenshaw (1989). Further bringing in situated resistance, I analyze how the practices of migrant rights groups function as forms of contestation and negotiation within the migration regime. Empirically, the thesis draws on semi-structured interviews with seven activists from eight migrant rights groups along with netnographic data, analyzed through reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2023) in dialogue with the theoretical framework. Finally, the thesis is grounded in a feminist epistemological understanding of knowledge as situated and partial, acknowledging that research is inherently shaped by the positionality of the researcher. I seek to maintain reflexive awareness of how my analytical lens, interactions with participants, and interpretations of the material influence the knowledge, and to make these dynamics visible throughout the thesis.

The overarching research question is as follows:

> *How do migrant rights groups in Malmö create and enact resistance within the contemporary migration regime?*

The working questions further guiding the thesis are:

i. Who are the (key) actors involved in migrant rights activism in Malmö, and how are they organized across various levels and formations?
ii. What practices characterize contemporary forms of migrant rights activism in Malmö?
iii. How do these actors navigate, negotiate and respond to the constraints of the current migration regime?
iv. In what ways do these practices of activism constitute forms of resistance, and how are they understood by the activists themselves?

1.3. Thesis Overview

The following section offers a conceptual and terminological reflection. Chapter 2 situates the study empirically by outlining the urban and political context of Malmö, as well as provides an overview of Swedish migration politics. Chapter 3 reviews academic literature, further positioning the thesis within scholarly debates. Chapter 4 introduces the theoretical framework, while Chapter 5 details the methodology, including critical reflections and analytical strategy. Chapter 6 constitutes the analysis, Chapter 7 a summarizing discussion. Finally, Chapter 8 concludes the thesis.

1.4. Terminological and Conceptual Reflections

In the following section, I outline and reflect on my conceptual and terminological choices. In line with my epistemological position, this serves to clarify the key terms used throughout the thesis and the theoretical assumptions underpinning these choices.

First, I use the term *migrant rights activism* to refer to the *local political practices associated with migrants' rights*. Such practices span a broad spectrum, encompassing all forms of pro-migrant efforts, including political advocacy (online and offline), legal, material or language aid and community-building. I understand this as a subset of political activism oriented specifically towards advancing migrants' rights.

Notably, the definition of political activism has significant implications for its study. Traditional political theory has often conceptualized political activism within a state-centered understanding of 'the political', associated with public, disruptive protest or collective action directed at the state or its formal institutions (Clark 2000: 3). While this view has contributed valuable insights on political movements, feminist and critical migration scholars have problematized its narrow scope, emphasizing that it excludes and devalues political acts that unfold beyond the formal governance of nation-states (*see* della Porta 2018; Nyers & Rygiel 2012). Particularly within migrant rights struggles, activism may challenge traditional notions of political activism, as precarious conditions often make visibility or public protest difficult or even counterproductive (Nicholls & Uitermark 2017: 3). In such contexts, community-building, fostering social relations or redistributing resources may serve as equally significant political practices, thus highlighting the diversity and complexity of political activism (Johnson 2012: 125).

Building on this discussion, I adopt an operational conceptualization of migrant rights activism that integrates these theoretical insights with the empirical realities of Malmö. I draw on Rzadtki's (2022) definition of political activism as *political practices*, which, situated within feminist and critical migration debates, expands the scope of 'the political' to include informal, everyday, and small-scale practices alongside conventional mobilizations. Grounded in the local context of Malmö, this conceptualization offers a flexible approach that allows me to remain attentive to the

situated realities of the field and to explore the diverse forms of activism that emerge from, and are shaped by, the conditions in which people are embedded.

Migrant is used here as an inclusive term encompassing various categories of individuals with *experience of displacement for a variety of reasons*. While there are legal implications embedded in categorizations of displaced individuals (e.g., refugee, asylum seekers, migrant), these are also social constructs that infer political and social meanings (Goodman 2017: 106). The activists participating in this study employ a variety of terms to describe the recipients of their support, including refugees, individuals with experience of flight, friends and immigrants. Moreover, as the activists themselves emphasize, further explored in the analysis, the current migration regime in Sweden has increased the fluidity of legal and judicial categories related to migration status. For these reasons, I maintain a broad usage of the term migrant, while noting that the activism in question is primarily oriented towards migrants in precarious legal, social, economic or political situations.

I make use of migrant rights *groups* to refer to the organizational units with which the activists are affiliated. The groups constitute different constellations, size, degrees of formalization, yet all operate politically in the struggle for migrants' rights within Malmö's civic sphere, understood as an arena of society distinct from both state and market interests (Paffenholz 2015: 108). While I maintain the flexibility to specify organizational forms when relevant, groups serve here as an embracing term indicating a collective effort of some kind involving multiple activists. An *activist* is defined through action, in line with the conceptualization of political activism. 'Activist' carries many meanings, some of which not all interviewees identify with. Therefore, it is important to emphasize that I use activist, not to describe the identity of the individuals involved, but in reference to their political practices. Likewise, categories of 'activist' and 'migrant' should not be understood as mutually exclusive but may intersect and overlap.

The concept of *migration regime* is used to highlight not only the legal and policy frameworks that regulate migration, but the broader assemblages of institutions, practices and norms through which migration is governed (Hameršak 2022: 1). This perspective allows for analytical attention beyond official policies to include

bureaucratic practices, societal attitudes and public rhetoric that intersect to regulate and negotiate migration (Wyss 2022: 9-10). Drawing on critical migration scholarship, I refer to the contemporary Swedish migration context as a *hostile migration regime,* using the notion of *hostility* to emphasize an overarching mode of governance characterized by deterrence and deliberately punitive approaches that generate uncertainty, conditionality, and precarity for migrants in Sweden (Sandberg et al. 2025: 1998; Canning 2021: 11).

2. Setting the scene

In this chapter, I set the empirical scene in which the migration rights activism unfolds. First, I present the local context of Malmö and its tradition of political activism. I then briefly trace the historical past of Swedish migration governance and map out the current migration regime.

2.1. Malmö - "the Capital of Resistance"

Malmö is the third largest and fastest-growing city in Sweden, with a population just over 365.000 (Malmö City 2025a). Over the past 30 years Malmö has transformed from an industrial, blue-collar city into a more divided twenty-first century city with a growing service and 'knowledge' sector alongside relatively high levels of unemployment (Nordling et al. 2017: 714). Malmö is known as a multicultural city with a diverse population, with around a third of the population born outside of Sweden. Income and residential segregation is high in Malmö, with distinct low-income, high unemployment areas with higher proportions of residents with migrant background (Andersson & Hedman 2016: 748). The municipality of Malmö has traditionally been governed by the Social Democrats, currently governed by a coalition consisting of Social Democrats, the Green Party and the Liberal Party (Malmö City 2025b).

The location of Malmö at the Southern border to Sweden has contributed to making it one of the main cities of arrival for migrants to Sweden. Malmö is often at the heart of polarized debates on migration, segregation and crime (Nordling et al. 2017: 714). Far-right politicians and media have worked to popularize the idea of Malmö as "Sweden's Chicago"[3], connecting crime images of Malmö to migration to criticize notions of multiculturalism (Schclarek Mulinari 2017: 217). Local authorities, on the other hand, promote a city brand centered around diversity and modern entrepreneurship (Ibid.: 207). Additionally, Malmö is also associated with its activist

[3] A reference to Chicago during the 1920s and early 1930s, often associated with organized crime under mob leader Al Capone (Schclarek Mulinari 2017: 207).

scene consisting of a predominantly leftist civil society. It is commonly associated with anti-racist and solidarity-based political movements, which has sourced the nickname "the capital of resistance" (Frykman & Mäkelä 2019: 9, Hansen 2019: 19). The anti-racist movements challenge the crime-migration nexus discourse of Malmö, while also criticizing the racialized socio-economic segregation in the city (Nordling et al. 2017: 714). According to Hansen (2022: 456), the migrant rights activism scene was particularly vivid in the 2010s with a variety of organizations and networks oriented towards political advocacy and action in the public sphere, and several large anti-racist mobilizations of thousands of people protesting proposed migration policies (Frykman & Mäkelä 2019: 9).

Civil mobilizations played a pivotal role for the reception of newcomers to Sweden during the 2015 refugee reception crisis. During this period, Sweden received record numbers of asylum claims, compromising the highest number of applicants per capita in the EU. The majority of migrants arrived at Malmö Central station as the first point of entry, where approximately 800 volunteers coordinated the immediate support for up to 1000 migrants a day between September and November, under the grassroot initiative of "Refugees Welcome to Malmö" (Ibid.: 2). A large variety of established civil society organizations, such as the Red Cross and Salvation Army, were also present at the station, providing clothes and food, information and practical guidance. Extra-parliamentary, local leftist groups such as Kontrapunkt (Counter Point) and Allt åt Alla (Everything to Everyone) contributed practical support such as safe houses for migrants but were also politically vocal against authorities (Sjöberg 2018: 48; Frykman & Mäkelä 2019: 304, 311).

2.2. The Birth of and Fall of "Swedish exceptionalism"

2.2.1. Fundamentals of Swedish Migration Policies

The fundamental features of modern Swedish migration governance were formulated in the 1960s and 1970s, shaped by reforms on migration and integration, grounded in ideals of an inclusive welfare system and equal citizenship rights (Schierup & Ålund 2011: 47). These reforms were built on three pillars of equality, freedom of choice,

and sociability, which underpinned a generous asylum policy as well as fast-tracks for migrant "naturalization" based solely on criteria of residence (Ibid.: 45, 57).

Although subject to periodic legislative adjustments, these foundational principles remained central in shaping the modern migration regime, positioning Sweden as an "outlier" in the European context with comparatively liberal migration policies (Emilsson 2018: 2). Consequently, sometimes referred to as "Swedish exceptionalism", Sweden has traditionally been portrayed as an inclusive society that defends human rights by "opening its doors" to those seeking refuge (Dahlstedt & Neergaard 2016: 122). Such policies contributed to making Sweden a key destination for humanitarian migration, and since the early 2000s until the refugee reception crisis, no other OECD state has granted international protection to more persons per capita (Emilsson 2018: 2). However, while the 'Swedish model' was founded on ideals of universalist citizenship and egalitarianism, it should not be uncritically reviewed (Lidén & Nyhlén 2021: 1). From the perspectives of minorities and migrants, this representation has been contested, highlighting a contradiction between political rhetoric and institutional practices. Sweden's relationship with its racialized population has been described as paradoxical, aligning with the notion of "included subordination" (Schclarek Mulinari 2024: 20; Schierup & Ålund 2011: 49).

Over the past decades, the 'Swedish model' has been substantially eroded. Sweden has experienced a shift toward neoliberalism, alongside the rise and gradual mainstreaming of radical right-wing policies which has brought elements of nationalism and populism in Swedish politics (Bevelander & Hellström 2019: 76). Research points to increasing economic inequality, labor-market division, and political polarization, accompanied by rising electoral support for nationalist and xenophobic ideologies (Elgenius & Wennerhag 2018: 140). The dramatic rise of the Sweden Democrats, currently the second largest party in Sweden, has been particularly notable in relation to the refugee reception crisis of 2015 (Ibid.: 147). The post-2015 Swedish migration regime is often described as "path breaking" from earlier policy traditions (Kessler & Haapajärvi 2024: 17). During the refugee reception crisis, the Social Democrat-led government initially adopted welcoming policies, yet the political discourse shifted in the late months of 2015 (Ibid.: 12). Referencing issues of capacity and overburdening of municipalities, the government implemented a

temporary law in November 2015, designed to lower the number of asylum claims (Anderson et al. 2025: 2). This law introduced external border controls and represented a significant policy shift in establishing temporary residence permits as the norm (SOU 2015/16:174; Dahlstedt & Neergard 2016: 2). Although initially framed as temporary, the legislation was renewed in 2019 and made permanent in 2021 (Anderson et al. 2025: 3).

2.2.2. Towards a "Paradigm Shift"

The reorientation of the Swedish migration regime has intensified in recent years. In 2022, a right-wing coalition led by the Moderate Party entered government, reliant on the support of the Sweden Democrats. The foundation of their collaboration is the "Tidö Agreement", a written agreement outlining policy areas and proposals that the government is expected to implement to maintain its parliamentary support (Pelling 2023: 7). Migration constitutes one of the agreement's central priorities, presenting proposals for a "paradigm shift" in Swedish migration governance (Government Offices of Sweden 2025). The agreement presents 33 proposals aimed at establishing a "responsible" migration policy, including key objectives of reducing "irregular" migration, tightening of eligibility for asylum and family reunification, and imposing stricter conditions for acquiring Swedish citizenship (Liberalerna 2022: 29, 31; Emilsson 2025: 71).

The proposed reforms span multiple stages of the migration process. Pre-entry and admission measures include stricter regulation for labor migration, family reunification, and humanitarian protection, as well as the downscaling of Sweden's asylum policy to the minimum standards required by EU (Liberalerna 2022: 29, 34-35; Kessler & Haapajärvi 2024: 24).[4] In parallel, the government seeks to reduce "attraction factors" for migrants to Sweden by limiting access to economic and social rights for non-citizens, e.g., through a qualification model for welfare benefits based on employment and residence status (Liberalerna 2022: 42; Dir 2023:149). Post entry-measures include "strengthened return operations" through improved coordination

[4] It should be noted that Ukrainian citizens are eligible for protection in Sweden under the Temporary Protection Directive, activated by the EU in 2022. The directive includes residence, and work permits and is currently valid until 2026 (Migration Agency 2025a).

among relevant authorities, expanded use of technology and biometric data, and enhanced incentives for voluntary repatriation. The agreement also commissions a legal inquiry to examine expanded possibilities for revoking residence permits and directs the Migration Agency[5] to prioritize such cases (Liberalerna 2022: 33, 39, 41). Other proposed reforms to the asylum process include raising the "burden of proof" for applicants, restricting access to publicly funded legal and language aid and shifting the costs of reception to asylum seekers (Ibid.: 34, 37, 38).

Several proposals have passed into legislation. Key legislative changes include the extension of the statute of limitations for deportation decisions and re-entry bans to five years, requiring individuals to leave Sweden and the EU before this period begins. Simultaneously, the so-called "track-change" system which previously allowed rejected asylum seekers to apply for work permits while remaining in Sweden has been abolished (Prop. 2024/25:92). In the area of border enforcement, the Police Authority has been granted greater capacities and resources for internal ID checks and body searches in case of suspected unlawful residence (Prop 2023/24:12). Moreover, asylum seekers are now required to stay at state accommodations for the duration of their asylum process to qualify for economic assistance, where participation in civic courses is mandated, covering Swedish laws and societal norms (Prop. 2024/25:49). Furthermore, the income threshold for labor migration has been raised, requiring salaries to reach at least 80% of the national median wage (Prop. 2021/22:284).

Other legislative proposals are under review. Stricter citizenship requirements are in the final stages of legal inquiry, encompassing economic self-sufficiency, knowledge of Swedish society and culture, and adherence to an honest lifestyle (SOU 2025:1: 23). Another proposal, expected to take effect in July 2026, introduces a "good conduct"[6] requirement for decisions of granting or revoking residence permits, based on an overall assessment of an individual's behavior (SOU 2025:33). A further proposal, also expected to enter into force in July 2026, expands possibilities for

[5] The Migration Agency is the government agency responsible for processing applications from individuals seeking to work, study, or seek protection in Sweden. Its operations are regulated by laws and regulations, as well as yearly regulatory letters from the government (Migration Agency 2025b).

[6] In Swedish, "krav på vandel". In the legal inquiry referring to an individual living in an honorable and decent manner, in compliance with Swedish laws and regulations. A lack of good conduct may otherwise encompass behaviors, actions, or attitudes that society discourages, including abuse to the welfare system, close affiliation with criminal networks, or dangerous behavior due to substance abuse (SOU 2025:33, 32, 303).

information-sharing between government agencies. This law, referred to as the "Snitch Law" by critics, includes an obligation for certain actors to provide information on undocumented individuals to enforcement agencies, including the Swedish Police and the Migration Agency (SOU 2024:80; CRD 2023: 32).

2.2.3. The Mainstreaming of Xenophobia and Pressures on Civil Society

The ongoing shift in the Swedish migration regime is effectively transforming it into one of the strictest in the EU, featuring stricter migration controls, enhanced enforcement mechanisms and reduced rights for migrants (Kessler & Haapajärvi 2024: 25; Emilsson 2025: 64). The outlined proposals and legislative changes should not be read as exhaustive, but as a general overview of key developments in Swedish migration politics. Importantly, these policies unfold within a broader context of polarized debates on migration. Previously confined to the political margins, anti-migrant rhetoric has gradually been mainstreamed in the Swedish political and public sphere to gain acceptance, and today, official sanction in the government (Hellström 2021: 21). Such rhetoric involves portrayals of migrants as cultural threats to the nation, burdens on the welfare resources, and as a major cause of criminality (Ibid.: 10).

In a joint statement in protest of the Tidö Agreement, Sweden's leading human rights organizations warn that the policies will leave migrants vulnerable to exploitative employers and other forms of criminality unless supported by civil society. The organizations pledge to continue to protect those in need and to "stand up for our common society where the state fails" (FARR 2022). At the same time, human rights group Civil Rights Defender (CRD) highlights increased pressures on civil society actors, with Tidö proposals perceived as threats to freedom of speech and association, including the withdrawal of state funding from organizations with critical views. In 2024, the longstanding state funding agreement for civil society organizations was reformed, effectively terminating all agreements to be reviewed (SIDA 2024). CRD further stresses the increase of political rhetoric that scapegoats marginalized groups while questioning and threatening critical voices within civil society (CRD 2023: 5, 8).

3. Literature Review

The following chapter offers an overview of the existing research relevant to the thesis, situating it within ongoing scholarly debates. By engaging with previous studies, I establish the thesis' relevance and contribution to the field. I begin by outlining key debates in critical migration studies, then turn to literature on political mobilizations, whereas I lastly explore migrant rights movements with a particular focus on Sweden and Malmö.

3.1. Critical Migration Studies

Migration studies is the interdisciplinary field of research dedicated to the study of mobilities and migration-related issues, spanning topics of economics of migration to studies of race and ethnicity (Scholten 2022: 4). Emerging in the early twentieth century, the field has produced a distinct body of research on why people migrate, how migration occurs and the consequences of migration (Ibid.: 3). Historically shaped by state concerns about migration, the field long relied on the nation-state as its central unit of analysis (Ibid.: 4). Wimmer and Glick-Schiller (2003: 583) frame this tendency as "methodological nationalism", underlining that it naturalizes sedentary assumptions of national boundaries and communities that positions migrants as threats to the imagined coherence of nation-states. Since the turn of the century, migration studies have evolved into a more diversified field, incorporating critical and reflexive perspectives. Critical approaches generally share the view of migration as a natural phenomenon that should be critically discussed rather than managed, thus opening new directions for research (Rzadtki 2022: 60).

The 'local turn' marks a significant research shift that redirects attention from national framework to subnational actors and contexts. As noted by Muhammed (2025: 9), this approach is often framed as pragmatic, since migrants lived experiences and everyday interactions unfold in local settings, and as local actors often are those who address related issues of integration, housing or social care. On a similar note, Alexander (2007) highlights the local level as the site where national policies ultimately are tested, interpreted and enacted. My thesis is situated within research that emphasizes

the importance of attending to the local level in migration studies. Departing from Malmö as a case study, I view the local level as a key site to understand and examine how migrant rights struggles are articulated and enacted in practice, embedded in specific local, political and economic conditions. However, Bernt (2019) observes, localities are embedded in broader constellations of national and supranational configurations of power. Here, Purcell (2006) warns against the "localist trap", arguing that the power of the nation-state is not fading, but being reconfigured. This perspective is central in my thesis: recognizing that the practices of migrant rights groups in Malmö unfold in its local context, but also in direct relation to the national legislative and political setting. I thus position my thesis in a perspective that attends to the local setting in which activism, simultaneously viewed as embedded in formal national migration governance.

Connected to migration governance, critical migration scholars have increasingly explored the ways in which migration and experiences of migration are shaped by institutionalized border and mobility regimes (Nyers & Rygiel 2012: 2). The intensification of border control reforms and strict migration regimes across Europe and North America in recent decades have been conceptualized in various ways, such as the *securitization of migration*, *politics of deterrence* and *hostile environments* (e.g., Huysmans 2006; De Genova 2013). Scholars of critical border studies have further examined the constructed nature of borders, exploring both the effects of bordering practices and the ways in which migrants respond to them. Empirical sites like Calais in northern France and the Greek Islands have been studied as spaces where border regimes are particularly visible but also challenged (Oikonomakis 2018; Rygiel 2011).

As for Sweden, a major research topic concerns the reconfiguration of the migration regime. This shift has been analyzed from multiple perspectives, including policy reforms, political discourse, and media representation (*see* Dahlstedt & Neergaard 2016; Kessler & Haapajärvi 2024). Sager and Öberg (2017: 2) identify a departure from a human-rights based approach during the 2015-2016 policy interventions, replaced by a framework linking migration to labor-market dependency. Anderson et al. (2025: 14) display how migration debates between 2015-2021 reframed migration as a logistical issue, rather than a humanitarian one through a focus on migrant *numbers.* Several scholars highlight the racialized dimensions of contemporary migration governance. Ericsson (2016: 3) traces policy orientations to

historical racial ideologies, while Groglopo et al. (2023: 16-17) demonstrate how structural racism shapes negative attitudes toward racialized migrants, influencing both public opinion and policymaking. Schclarek Mulinari (2024: 29-30) characterizes this development as "a race to the bottom", arguing that Sweden is evolving into a racial security state, where a migration-crime nexus serves to justify expanding control measures and restrictive legislation.

Importantly, there is a growing self-reflection within migration studies, relating to issues of epistemic violence and institutional racism embedded in the field (Scholten 2022: 18). Critical scholars, such as Talebi (2023: 3) shine light on how Eurocentric logic continues to structure knowledge production within migration studies, thus reproducing racialized hierarchies. As a reflection, bottom-up perspectives increasingly gain prominence, foregrounding migrants' agency, lived experiences, and contestations of migration regimes (Zapata-Barrero & Yalaz 2018: 4). I draw on these necessary insights, applying an intersectional lens and striving to remain reflexive about how my positionality informs the assumptions, priorities and representations within this thesis. I return to these reflections in section 5.2.

3.2. Political Struggles, Activism and Resistance

The study of migrant rights activism intersects with broader research on social movements, collective action, and resistance. Scholarship on collective action has expanded considerably in recent years, encompassing diverse theoretical and methodological approaches (Lilja 2022: 202). Much of this work is situated within social movement studies, which traditionally examines organized, large-scale mobilizations aimed at social or political change (Della Porta & Diana 2015). However, classic social movement theory has been criticized for its limited capacity to capture the complexity and fluidity of contemporary political movements (Rzadtki 2022: 75). Brought forward by Bernstein and Armstrong (2008: 78-79) these frameworks remain largely state-centered, privileging formal protests aimed at institutional politics while overlooking dispersed, everyday and informal forms of organizing. In response to these limitations, I situate this thesis at the intersection of activism and resistance studies that allows for a more dynamic and relational approach to political practices.

Furthermore, research on political struggles spans multiple and often overlapping concepts relevant to this thesis, including political participation, civil society and activism. Political participation was long defined in institutional terms, tied to electoral politics, but later debates have expanded it to include diverse forms of non-institutional engagement within democratic life (Clark 2000: 2). This expansion further links political participation to the democratic role of civil society as an arena where citizens may articulate their interests and influence social change (Arvidson et al. 2018). Chandoke (2010) characterizes civil society as "the antonym of authoritarianism", while Arvidson et al. (2018: 341). suggest that the scope of civic engagement reflects a society's political climate. Yet, recent research points to increasing state-imposed restrictions on civil society organizations (CSO:s) globally, often described as the *shrinking of civic space* (Roggeband & Krizsán 2021: 23).

In Sweden, civil society has traditionally been understood as a popular movement of voluntary engagement and membership, serving as a channel for political voice and civic participation (Kings 2022: 195). Earlier research largely depicts the Swedish state-civil society relationship as cordial, with CSO:s expected to act as watchdogs of authority (Arvidson et al. 2018: 359). Kings (2022: 198) however points to a reconfiguration of this relationship since the 1990s, marked by growing bureaucratization. CSO: have increasingly assumed a "productivist" role, delivering social services once provided by the state, marking a shift from "voice to service." (Scaramuzzino & Scaramuzzino 2017). These insights are particularly relevant to this study, as the migrant rights groups examined here operate within the civil sphere of Malmö. I further build on this literature to explore this relationship unfold, specifically in relation to migrants' rights.

Political activism is another central concept. In both popular imagination and traditional political theory, activism is often associated with public, disruptive protest directed at the state (Johnson 202: 119). Much of this scholarship centers on political opposition or claims-making aimed at the state or structures of inequality (*see* Millward & Takhar 2019, Serrat & Cannella 2019). Mullenmeister et al. (2022: 377) simply refers to activism as "what people do to bring about social transformation", ranging from voting to volunteering and protest. Feminist scholars have contributed to expand the range of political activism by challenging the public/private divide in

line with the feminist slogan "the personal is political" (Rzadtki 2022: 175). Pointed out by Armstrong & Bernstein (2008: 79) such theorizations capture the practices of movements that long have been dismissed as non-political, especially relevant in relation to contemporary migrant rights mobilizations. Nicholls and Uitermark (2017: 3) note that in increasingly hostile political climates, public and disruptive forms of protests can appear as counterproductive or even riskful. In response, critical migration scholars emphasize that activism often takes more subtle, small-scale and everyday forms (Rzadtki 2022: 175). In the context, practices of community-building, providing material support or fostering social networks can be understood as meaningful and political practices (Johnson 2012: 125).

Digital activism[7] has increasingly gained academic attention as a means of recruitment, mobilization, and information sharing (Dumitrașcu 2020: 72). Özkula (2021: 61) highlights online communities as key sites for building relationships and collective identities within social movements. Such spaces can also expand opportunities for political expression, particularly for marginalized groups otherwise excluded from political life (Ortiz et. al 2019: 21). In migration contexts, digital technologies further facilitate the exchange of information, e.g., on border crossings, support networks or missing persons (Vukomanovic 2021: 65). In consideration of the proliferation of digital activism, I employ netnography and incorporate online resources as empirical material.

Lastly, the study of *resistance* has exploded over the last decades, particularly within feminist, queer and subaltern traditions. Resistance is closely entangled with activism, sometimes used interchangeably (Lee 2023: 96). This is perhaps not surprising, as activism often is understood as resistance to structures of power (Johnson 2012: 119). Some scholars instead challenge the coupling of them, arguing that resistance could be considered a disposition of some, but not all, acts of activism (Lee 2023). Hughes (2020) points out that activism often is viewed as a productive term, i.e., representing an active *doing,* while resistance may take the form of non(action) of passivity or strategic non-participation. These debates illustrate a broader trajectory in resistance studies, like research on activism, has moved from narrow definitions to more

[7] Political activism on the internet, also referred to as 'cyber activism' and 'online activism' (Özkula 2021: 61)

expansive approaches that recognize diverse forms of resistance, ranging from violent to non-violent, public to hidden and individual to collective (Lilja 2022: 202).

Positioning my thesis within existing debates on activism and resistance, I view the two as interrelated but not interchangeable. I approach activism as a specific political practice, while also providing an entry point to the study of resistance. Resistance, in this sense, functions as a theoretical lens through which activism can be understood as a means of negotiating and contesting power.

3.3. Migrants Rights Movements

In recent years, there has been a sharp increase of academic interest in migrant rights movements, encompassing both migrant-led initiatives and those in solidarity with them. While such political struggles have been present in a European context since the 1970s, their scale and nature have intensified over the past two decades (Nicholls & Uitermark 2017: 38; Steinhilper 2021: 11). Marciniak and Tyler (2014: 5) describe this as a global expansion of protests in response to deteriorating conditions for migrants, particularly in the Global North. Research has focused especially on the mobilizations for, and against, migrant rights during the refugee reception crisis in Europe. Existing research further highlights the diversity in forms of mobilizations, strategies and claims-making in migrant rights struggles, reflecting specific geographical, political, and cultural contexts (Steinhilper 2021: 14). In a turn to "bottom-up" perspectives, dissidence, disobedience and resistance as performed from "the margins" have started to receive attention. Here, *migrant agency* is a central perspective, emphasizing the ways in which migrants assert themselves as political subjects through claims-making (Rygiel 2011: 6). Emerging from critical citizenship studies, the concept of *acts of citizenship* offers a lens to study how migrants negotiate rights and belonging, claiming citizenship beyond legal recognition (Steinhilper 2021: 16).

In Sweden, research on migrant rights struggles remains limited but steadily growing. Jämte (2013: 258) traces the emergence of a broad migrant rights movement in Sweden to the 1980s, while Sager (2011: 3) documents intensified migrant rights mobilizations in the early 2000s in response to increased public debates on migration. Notably, much scholarship focuses on the refugee reception crisis, broadly

acknowledging the key role of civil society during this period. Studies of initiatives such as *Refugees Welcome* examine volunteer motivations, organizational dynamics and support structures (Kleres 2018; Frykman & Mäkelä 2019). Joorman (2018) contributes research on self-organized refugee activism in Sweden, examining the Asylum Relay Walk ("Asylstafetten"), a campaign initiated in 2013 by an Afghan asylum seeker to advocate for asylum rights. Sager (2018: 175) further examines undocumented migrants' struggles for social rights, emphasizing dynamics of visibility and systemic invisibility under state control.

At the local level, Malmö emerges as a key site for migrant rights activism connected to its political tradition and geographical position (Hansen 2019: 29). Research on migrant rights struggles in Malmö have explored themes of citizenship, social rights, and issues of (im)mobility (Nordling 2017; Solano 2025). Djampour and Söderman (2016: 22) explore 'the doing of politics' in specific migrant-led initiatives, illustrating both difficulties and possibilities of political agency. Hansen (2019) contributes important research on the pro-migrant activist milieu between the years of 2013-2016, illustrating how collective action generates forms of solidarity across social and legal boundaries that create pathways migrant emplacement. In a series of research articles, she further elaborates on the role of activism in Malmö, focusing on how it empowers political socialization and creates inclusive urban spaces (Hansen 2020, 2021, 2022).

Collectively, this body of research provides crucial insights into the history and dynamics of migrant rights movements and activism in Malmö, mapping its development and highlighting key actors, initiatives and spaces. Building on this foundation, my thesis offers a contemporary perspective on local migrant rights activism amid an increasingly repressive political climate. Hansen (2022: 465) calls for updated research, particularly in light of the national political context of stricter migration policies. The landscape of actors has also shifted, with previous key groups such as Kontrapunkt and Refugees Welcome no longer active. This evolving and hostile environment calls for renewed analysis of how migrant rights groups respond, negotiate, and resist political constraints. By examining a broad range of groups across the civic sphere through the lens of political activism, practice theory and resistance, I both draw on and depart from earlier studies, using them as an important source of knowledge and point of contrast to advance a new understanding of contemporary migrant rights activism in Malmö.

4. Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, I present the theoretical framework of the thesis. I begin by outlining intersectionality, which serves as an overarching theoretical lens. I then turn to practice theory, which is employed to examine the *practices* of the migrant rights groups. Finally, I elaborate on situated resistance, which provides the analytical foundation for exploring how these practices may be understood in relation to resistance.

4.1. Intersectionality

The notion of intersectionality is rooted in a long tradition of activism, emerging from the experiences of black feminists in the United States in the late twentieth century (Crenshaw et al. 2013: 303). Centering these experiences, feminist and critical scholar Crenshaw introduced the term in 1989 to address the marginalization of black women in feminist and antiracist theory and politics. Since then, intersectionality has evolved to encompass a wide range of social identities, issues, power dynamics and political systems. Today, it is variously described as a critical framework, research paradigm, method and theory (Crenshaw et al. 2013: 304).

As a theory, intersectionality emphasizes the interconnections between social categories and systems (Atewologun 2019: 1). It makes visible how interlocking systems of oppression shape inequality and how such relations of power positions individuals and groups within hierarchies of privilege and disadvantage (Ibid.: 12). Underlined by Crenshaw (1989: 139), it challenges the "single axis" framework to oppression, which treats social locations as separate and mutually exclusive categories. In contrast, intersectionality recognizes that individuals are shaped by simultaneous membership in multiple interconnected social categories, producing shifting patterns of privilege and oppression. An *intersection* denotes the juxtaposition of two or more social categories, or systems of power, dominance or oppression. These may include social identities (e.g., woman), sociodemographic categories (e.g., gender), social processes (e.g., racialization), and social systems (e.g., patriarchy) (Atewologun 2019: 7). Intersectionality thus emphasizes that multiple social positions

interact to shape personal experience and placement within broader social structures. Crucially, it does not simply add together forms of inequality but illuminates how co-constituting categories operate to produce unique institutionalized practices and lived experiences (Ibid.: 12).

Intersectionality has become increasingly influential in migration studies, highlighting the interconnected and constitutive forms of oppression in migration processes. It draws attention not only to individual experiences of marginalization but also to the structures of domination that states construct in migration regimes (Bastia 2014: 238). *Racialization* is an important element to this, referring to the processes that make cultural and biological features key features in the separation and allocation of symbolic and material resources in society, constructing hierarchies of superiority and inferiority (Dahlstedt & Neergaard 2019: 123). The socio-legal construction of 'migrants' is a constitutively racializing process, as ideas of race are closely linked to nationhood, often underpinning policies and laws that define and regulate migrants (Ponce 2014: 12). Intersectionality is also increasingly applied in the study of collective action, highlighting how organizational structures and coalitions are shaped by differing forms of privilege and disadvantage, which affect inclusion, participation, and agenda-setting (Roth 2020: 2). Applied to migrant rights activism, intersectionality illuminates the structural forces of hostile migration policies, racialized hierarchies and social inequalities that shape the possibilities and constraints of activist practices.

For the purpose of this thesis, intersectionality serves as a theoretical lens for analyzing activist practices and resistance. It allows for highlighting multiple structures of power that inform and shape political opportunities, risks and practices. At the same time, it allows attention to how activists' social positions, such as nationality, race, legal status or gender, shape possibilities of engagement and internal group dynamics, illuminating both privileges and vulnerabilities within activist practices. As such, intersectionality offers a necessary foundation to recognize and examine the intersecting power relations and social hierarchies embedded in migrant rights activism. The intersectional lens further informs and complements the theoretical perspectives in this thesis, functioning as a critical guiding thread throughout the analysis.

4.2. Practice Theory - On the 'Doing' of Activism

This thesis employs a theory of practice in order to understand and analyze the political practices that constitute migrant rights activism in Malmö. Drawing on critical debates on the tension, and distance, between action and theory within activist studies, I attend to a theory that makes the practical *doings* of activism visible. Practice theory here allows for a useful theoretical lens that offers analytical resources for identifying and examining political practices. This approach further aligns well with my conceptualization of migrant rights activism, emphasizing the situated realities of the field and the diverse forms of political practices that emerge from, and are shaped by, the conditions in which people are embedded.

There is no unified theory of practice, but it refers to a collective concept embodying a group of social theories which treat practices as the central object of study. Practice theory evolved at the intersection of anthropology, sociology and related subfields of history with central theorists including Foucault (Rouse 2007: 499). 'The practice turn' across disciplines have contributed the expansion of practice theory to studies of collective action, political participation and social movements (Welsh & Yates 2018: 361). In this sense, practices are viewed as foundational to social life and phenomenon, whereas social change occurs with the emergence, transformation or disappearance of practices and their material arrangements (Ibid.: 365).

Practice theorist Schatzki (2001: 12) defines practices as "embodied, materially mediated arrays of human activity centrally organized around shared skills and practical understandings". Practices are sets of "doings and sayings" that consist of integrated elements. Shove et al. (2012: 14) build on Schatzki's understanding of practices, adding three constitutive elements of practices: materials, competencies, and meanings. Materials reference physical objects, infrastructures, tools and bodies, whereas competencies include the practical knowledge, skills and understandings that enable the enactment of practices. Meanings refer to mental activities, emotion, cultural norms, motivational knowledge and social values that give practices sense-making within a given context. The emergence, persistence or decline of a practice can therefore be understood as changes in combination of the different elements (Ibid.: 21).

Practice theory is inherently relational, understanding the social world as composed by, and transpiring through, assemblages of practices (Rouse 2012: 3). It underscores the recursive relationship between practices and social structures, where structures emerge and are sustained through continuous practices while also shaping which practices are possible. Practices are thus both constituted by, and constitutive of, broader social orders and remain in a continuous state of tension and flux (Nicoloni 2012: 3). Highlighted by Welch and Yates (2018: 363), a practical theoretical analysis, then, necessarily attends to both the local sites of situated practices and the broader structures in which they are embedded. This speaks to practices as situated occurrences and positions them within a specific set of sociopolitical conditions.

Practice theory is fruitful for the study of a broad variety of activities, ranging from everyday acts to highly structured activities in institutional settings (Rouse 2007: 499). It is particularly useful for making sense of movements that is often overlooked, as it foregrounds the actual practices of movements, accounting for the large variety of groups and practices of contemporary political movements (Welch & Yates 2018: 361). It demonstrates compatibility with examining practices of collective actions and collective political struggles, viewing them as shared, patterns of activities that are continuously reproduced through collective effort (Ibid.: 366). Practices of activism depend on shared knowledge, tools and are connected to meanings of collective identity, groups norms and routines. It can thus be viewed as interdependent bundles of practices that persist through cooperation, coordination and shared understandings tied to movement aspirations (Lomelin & Peterson 2023: 212).

In this thesis, practice theory provides a framework for empirically examining how migrant rights activism is carried out in practice. It directs attention to the situated, embodied and material aspects of political activism; what activist groups do in their engagements and how practices are enacted, maintained and negotiated through skills, meanings and materials. Aligned with the conceptualization of political activism, this perspective makes visible the diverse political practices that constitute migrant rights activism and situates them within the hostile migration regime. Activist practices can thus be understood as sites where social and political tensions become tangible: negotiations, contradictions and ambivalences take form in the unfolding of concrete practices. Placed in dialogue with intersectionality, it further allows for an

examination of how activist practices are shaped by social positions and intersecting structures of inequality, influencing what forms of action are possible, how practices are carried out and experienced. Combining practice theory with an intersectional perspective thereby enables an exploration of not only what activists do, but also how practices are conditioned by relations of power. At the same time, this opens up space to examine how activist practices can reproduce, negotiate or contest these structures. In the next section, I therefore turn to a theorization of *resistance.*

4.3. Resistance Theory

4.3.1. The Power-Resistance Nexus

As highlighted in the literature review, the notion of resistance is complex, encompassing a wide range of definitions and theoretical interpretations. There is no universal understanding of resistance, but scholarship has long emphasized its multiple manifestations across specific historical, political and cultural contexts. Baaz et al. (2018) describe resistance as a *reaction against power*, thereby pointing to its inherently relational nature. Similarly, Lilja (2022: 204) underscores that resistance always exists *in relation* to power, and that its particular manifestations are shaped by, and responsive to, specific configurations of power. From this perspective, resistance must be situated within, and understood through, the constellations of power from which it emerges.

Hence, while the analytical focus of this thesis lies on resistance, this inevitably requires reflection on the meaning of power. In early political science, power was predominantly conceptualized in terms of sovereign state capacity and formalized authority (Lilja 2022: 203). More recent approaches, particularly influenced by Foucault's theorizations of power (*see* e.g., Foucault 1982) have reconceptualized power as relational and dispersed, operating not only through coercion and punishment, but through productive networks of power techniques and practices (Lilja 2022: 203). Drawing on an interpretation of Foucault, Baaz et al. (2018: 41) outline power as both repressive and productive, manifesting in multifaceted and intersecting ways: sovereign and legislative mechanisms, institutional and bureaucratic practices, as well as through social norms and practices that shape everyday life. An

intersectional perspective further highlights how power materializes through social processes and identity formations that sustain hierarchies of privilege and domination. Power is thus understood as always exercised and circulating, embedded in institutions, relations, and practices, ultimately located at the levels of struggle and manifested in its effects (Ibid.: 40). Consequently, if power manifests in its effects, and resistance is relational to power, this points to a plurality of resistances that must be examined in their specific situated contexts and configurations of power (Ibid.: 58).

The close relationship between power and resistance, however, introduces potential contradictions. Resistance may be parasitic on power, reproduce the structures it seeks to challenge, or generate new relations of domination (Ibid.: 25). Importantly, individuals experience and practice power differently according to their positionalities and may simultaneously be empowered and subjugated within parallel systems. For this reason, it is important to study resistance *critically*, remaining attentive to contradictions and limitations (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009: 15).

4.3.2. Situated Resistance

To enable a situated examination of resistance, I draw on Baaz et al.'s (2018) theorization of resistance as a complex, unstable, and context-dependent social construct that must be analyzed with regards to its specific manifestations, mechanisms and actors, in relation to particular configurations of power it confronts. In short, resistance is defined *as an act or patterns of action that might challenge, negotiate or undermine power.* It is viewed as a particular act that prevails in response to power, often enacted from 'below' by those in subordinated positions or on behalf of, or in solidarity, with marginalized groups. The intersectional lens here helps highlight that such dynamics do not represent fixed categories of domination/subordination but reflect *positions* within systems of oppression (Ibid.: 26). Furthermore, resistance is understood as interlinked with social change, whereas Baaz et al. (2018: 4) view the study of resistance as foundational in understanding how social change occurs.

To capture the multiplicity of ways resistance materializes, Baaz and colleagues (2018: 28) suggest the concept of *repertoires of resistance*. Repertoires refers to the

historically and socially shaped sets of tactics and tools available to those resisting domination, shaped by the interplay of social structures, power relations, activist agency and situational contingencies (Johansson & Vinthagen 2013: 3). Additionally, while existing research often distinguishes between the "ideal types" of organized and everyday resistance, empirical practices rarely fit neatly within either category. Instead, Baaz et al. (2018: 28) suggest a *spectrum between organized and everyday resistance* that accommodates both formalized, collective action as well as more covert, dispersed or individual acts of resistance. Here, the relational nature of resistance is highlighted, as forms of resistance might intersect or act mutually reinforcing organized resistance may inspire everyday acts, while everyday resistance may evolve into more structured mobilizations (Ibid.: 29).

Everyday resistance is defined by Johansson and Vinthagen (2013: 1) as "a specific kind of resistance that is done routinely yet is not publicly articulated with political claims or formally organized". This definition highlights an ongoing debate within studies of resistance of whether intentionality is a necessary component of resistance. While traditional approaches tend to assume that resistance requires explicit intent, feminist scholars caution against that such assumptions exclude subtle or ambiguous practices that nonetheless challenge power. Resistance may sometimes be unconscious, contradictory or only recognized in retrospect (Baaz et al. 2018: 23). Baaz et al. (2018: 24) suggest that while intentionality should not be a defining criterion for resistance, the contents of intention (e.g., political, material, emotional) can help recognize how and why resistance emerges.

Finally, resistance is emphasized as situated in both space and time. Spatial dimensions direct attention to the material and symbolic sites where resistance unfolds; streets, workplaces, community centers or digital spaces (Baaz et al. 2018: 30). This reflects an embodiment of resistance that can be understood as negotiation over the relations of power inscribed in the spatial ordering of society, influencing who can act, where, and how (Johansson & Vinthagen 2013: 9). Temporally, resistance unfolds not only in a particular moment ("the when") but also in relation to the past and the future. Baaz and colleagues (2018: 39) observe how activists may draw on historical narratives, invoke utopian visions, or act with anticipated futures in mind. Moreover, spatial and temporal dimensions often intersect. Everyday resistance,

for instance, entails spatially grounded practices that are temporally patterned through repetition and familiarity (Johansson & Vinthagen 2013: 11).

Drawing on this understanding of resistance as a multifaceted, situated and relational phenomenon provides a valuable theoretical foundation for examining the empirical manifestations of resistance in Malmö. In the analysis, I apply this theorization to explore how the migrant rights groups' activist practices contest, negotiate, and navigate the structures of domination and power relations of the hostile migration regime. It enables a contextualized analysis that captures diverse articulations of resistance emerging within this setting, additionally attending to valuable spatial, temporal and relational dimensions through which resistance unfolds.

5. Methodology

The following chapter outlines the thesis' methodological approach. I first present the research design, including philosophical assumptions and reflexive considerations that guide the study. This is followed by an account of the research methods, data collection, and materials, including limitations.

5.1. Research Design

This thesis adopts a qualitative research strategy of a mixed-methods approach of semi-structured interviews and netnography of digital materials. The combined approach allows for in-depth engagement with individual activists and insights into organizational practices, as well as public-facing dimensions of activism. It enables exploration of the dual nature of contemporary activism that often unfolds across both physical and digital spaces and further allows for *triangulation* that strengthens the credibility of the findings.

Methodology further involves reflection on the researcher's position, including the sets of assumptions about knowledge and the social world that guides the study (Atkinson 2017: 34). I adopt a feminist epistemological and ontological position grounded in the concept of *situated knowledge,* which emphasizes the contingent, contextual and relational nature of knowledge production (Caretta 2014: 490). Knowledge is understood as co-produced through researcher-participant interactions in a dynamic process of meaning-making. Importantly, it challenges positivist notions of 'objectivity', highlighting how the researcher's position, values, and biases shape interpretation (Ibid.: 491).

Accordingly, this thesis offers a situated and interpretative, rather than universal or objective, account of migrant rights activism in Malmö. To ensure research credibility, *reflexivity* is a central element of the research process, involving the continuous critical reflection on how positionalities shape knowledge production (Palaganas et al. 2017: 427). Reflexivity is not simply about stating bias, but an ongoing effort to understand how social locations, norms and assumptions influence the research process (Ibid.: 428). Accordingly, I begin the methodological chapter with critical and

ethical positional reflections on the research context, participants and broader conditions shaping the study. Importantly, I strive to maintain reflexive engagement throughout the thesis.

5.2. Critical Reflections

5.2.1. Reflexivity

Throughout the research process I grappled with challenges related to my positionality, ethical responsibilities and practicalities of conducting research in a politically charged context.

First, I am partially embedded in the social and political scene under study. I am politically engaged, although unaffiliated with any specific organization or political party. My prior involvements include activism for migrants' rights, both in established organizations in Malmö and informal networks across Europe. I regularly participate in protests related to solidarity and anti-racism, through which I have developed personal ties to activist communities in Malmö. My position can be described as "insider/outsider" (Hansen 2021: 41) as I have social ties to activist circles, yet I am not directly involved in any organization. Moreover, I have friends involved in activist scenes in Malmö, and their networks have benefited me throughout the research process. The most prominent advantage concerns *access to the field.* In my case, personal networks provided me with a degree of trust that enabled both access to the field and recruitment[8]. Second, my political views align with the core principles of the broader migrant rights movement in Sweden: I oppose the restrictive policies of the migration regime and strongly believe in the fundamental right to asylum and protection. Engaging with this topic, and closely following policy debates in Sweden, has been emotionally challenging. The interviews, in particular, deeply affected me, and the representations of injustices produced by the migration regime evoked frustration, anger and shame. At the same time, these emotions strengthened my commitment to conduct this research in a thorough and responsible manner.

My proximity to the field presented both opportunities and challenges. A key concern was maintaining the ability for *critical inquiry* while sharing commonalities with

[8] It should be noted that I do not have any previous knowledge of any of the interviewees.

many of the research participants. As Blee and McDowell (2022: 3) note, close identification with interviewees risks obscuring taken-for-granted assumptions and overlooking contradictions. Political and social commonalities enabled me to understand implicit meanings but also risked impacting what I found surprising or analytically significant. Another concern related to representing activists' accounts, as drawing analytical conclusions from lived experiences is a task that demands both sensitivity and transparency. Throughout the research process, I grappled with anxieties over the fact that the participants might feel misrepresented or disagree with my interpretations, while remaining committed to pursue critical research. These tensions overall motivated me to approach the analytical process with care, striving to avoid oversimplification and to represent the activists' voices in a nuanced, contextually grounded manner. In addition, I continuously reminded myself of the research aim, and to let the theoretical framework guide critical engagement with the material.

While some positivist traditions regard explicit acknowledgement of normativity as problematic, I instead view claims of neutrality or objectivity as inherently so (Rzadtki 2022: 33). In line with my epistemological standpoint, I understand all knowledge as situated and shaped by partial perspectives. Accordingly, I view the articulation of my positionality as a commitment to transparency, accountability and ethical research practice (Palaganas et al. 2017: 427).

5.4.2. Ethical Reflections

Furthermore, I engaged with several ethical considerations throughout the research process. A key dilemma is that all knowledge on resistance, in principle, can be used to undermine it (Baaz et al. 2018: 139). In this case, interviewing activists involved in migrant rights work raises concerns about the participants' legal, social and political vulnerabilities, and the potential consequences of their involvement in the study. For instance, one of the participants, Lisa, requested:

> As recently as just a week ago, the border police were standing on the other side of the street outside our adult activities and checking people's IDs. [...] You're very welcome

> to write what I say but not connect it to [group C]. Because I don't want a cop outside my door.

There is a tangible risk that my research could unintentionally expose the participants, their groups, or the recipients of their support to harm, whether through legal repercussions, threats to employment or exposure of activist practices. For this reason, I took several precautions to mitigate potential risks.

First, all interview participants were carefully informed about the purpose of the thesis, and where it will be published. Second, I addressed issues of confidentiality and anonymity with each participant. While some activists opted for anonymity and others did not, the interviews revealed increasing surveillance and pressures from authorities. In light of this, I ultimately decided to anonymize all participants and affiliated groups, and to remove details that might permit easy identification. Nonetheless, given Malmö's relatively small activist community, the risk of indirect identification remains. Third, I have excluded some information that the interviews generated, based on my assessment of potential harm to individual activists, groups or their practices. Although the questions were designed to elicit specific information, the participants ultimately decide on what to share, and this decision should not be interpreted as questioning their capacity for informed decision-making. Furthermore, anonymity may be viewed both to deprive participants of recognition of their contributions as well as to compromise research transparency (Blee & McDowell 2022: 5). However, after careful reflection, I choose to follow Baaz et al. (2018: 144) in their research ethical argument that "the highest value must be to 'protect' the ones carrying out resistance".

Online data collection raises additional ethical concerns, particularly in regard to the blurred boundaries of public/private on the internet. Material deliberately and voluntarily shared on public websites poses fewer issues, while social media presents a more complex case. On social media platforms, content may technically be publicly available but shared by private users who are not anticipating, or consenting, to participate in research (Bryman 2012: 679). To navigate this, I restricted the netnographic data collection to material that is openly accessible without permission or membership (e.g., excluding content in closed groups), and focused solely on

content published by the migrant rights groups on official websites or public social media pages.

5.3. Research Methods and Data Collection

5.3.1. Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews is a qualitative research method used to explore individuals' experiences of specific situations or social phenomena (McIntosh & Morse 2015: 1). The method combines structured questions to generate descriptive information with open-ended questions that enable deeper exploration of participants' experiences. The researcher guides the conversation while also allowing for topics to emerge naturally (Halperin & Health 2017: 289).

The method was chosen for its flexibility and suitability for capturing both descriptive accounts of the migrant rights groups' practices and activists' deeper reflections on meaning-making and interpretations of these practices. The format allowed me to ensure that key themes were addressed while also enabling exploration beyond predefined questions. The latter was particularly valuable as it provided insights into dimensions of activism, I had not anticipated beforehand. The choice was further motivated by considerations of access. In research on political activism, interviewing is widely used to access representations beyond official communications, capturing everyday practices and dynamics that might otherwise be obscured (Blee & McDowell 2022: 1-2). Given the limited public visibility of some groups in Malmö, interviews were a crucial means of access.

The interviews followed an interview guide[9], divided into four parts aligned with the research aim and questions. The guide included a mix of direct, open-ended and probing questions to encourage elaboration (Halperin & Heath 2017: 292). Prior to the interviews, I conducted pilot interviews with fellow students. This practice helped me assess the clarity and relevance of the questions and offered me a valuable lesson in asking for clarifications and follow-up on responses. All interviews were conducted face-to-face, except one held via Zoom due to scheduling difficulties, lasting between

[9] *See* appendix A.

45-90 minutes. All participants signed a consent form[10], and the interviews were recorded with permission. Conducted in Swedish, all interviews have been translated into English by me.

5.3.1.1. Sampling and Data Collection

I employed purposive and snowball sampling to recruit interview participants. I began the process by mapping the field to identify key migrant rights groups in Malmö, drawing on existing research, my prior knowledge of the field, visits to public and community spaces of interest, online searches and recommendations from my network. Based on this mapping, I purposively contacted groups that aligned with the study's scope: migrant rights initiatives operating in Malmö's civic sphere, distinct from formal state institutions. I then relied on snowball sampling, asking interviewees to suggest additional participants and to identify key actors in the field. This process enabled me to reach both public and less visible segments of the migrant rights activist milieu. In two cases, I contacted activists directly via network recommendations.

The sampling process presented several challenges, and access was often mediated by organizational representatives. Some groups declined to involve activists in interviews due to concerns of confidentiality and safety, while others referred to limited capacity with activists facing heavy workloads and scarce resources. The mediated access inevitably shaped the sample, and shines light on issues of representation. As one activist, Thea, noted:

> [S]omething typical that researchers don't get is that most activism and social work that is anti-racist and for the right to asylum is done by people with experiences of displacement. It's so easy to just see white people like myself who have a public role on some project and talk about our work.

Thea's comment captures a common limitation in research on migrant rights activism that centers the experiences of national citizens while obscuring migrant agency and self-organization (Rygiel 2011: 6). In addition to my position as a white national

[10] *See* appendix B.

citizen, the majority of the participants in this study are born national Swedish citizens. This inevitably shapes the knowledge generated and the perspectives represented, and although greater diversity would be desirable, this limitation reflects the challenges of access. Moreover, I view the activists as representatives of their groups, which raises an important question of whether individuals can represent group practices or experiences (Blee & McDowell: 5). I argue that they provide *a* representation based on their knowledge as group 'insiders'. Once again, it is thus important to underline that the findings of this thesis reflect particular and situated knowledge shaped by these delimitations.

In total, I interviewed seven activists representing eight migrant rights groups, between April and August 2025. The groups vary in size, organizational structure and focus, thereby offering diverse perspectives across the field. To ensure confidentiality, all groups and activists have been anonymized and assigned pseudonyms. An overview of the sample is presented in the table below, further introduced in detail throughout the analysis.

Migrant rights group	Description	Interview participant	Position
A	Project-based, non-profit intiative for access to fundamental rights and needs youth migrants	Thea (30-40yrs)	Activist, staff member in project
B	Non-profit association for youth migrants	Ali (20-30yrs)	Activist
C	Local branch of a national non-profit organization providing social care and support for marginalized individuals and groups	Lisa (30-40yrs)	Head of unit, youth project
D	Informal, non-profit association for supporting migrants in Malmö	Daniel (30-40yrs)	Activist
E & **F**	Local branch of national non-profit support association for youth migrants Non-profit organization providing legal and social support for migrants in Malmö	Barbro (70-80yrs)	Activist
G	Religious association, social community center	Yousef (60-70yrs)	Activist
H	Non-profit student association offering legal assistance to individuals in socioeconomically vulnerable situations	Anna (20-30yrs)	Activist

Figure 1. Overview of interview participants and migrant rights groups.

5.3.2. Netnography

Netnography is a form of virtual ethnography, described by Kozinet (2015: 19) as participant-observational research based on online fieldwork. It is a flexible qualitative method for observing social phenomena in its digital context, such as on social media, websites and online forums and is suitable for combination with other qualitative approaches (Ibid.: 2).

Netnography is a useful method as digital spaces are increasingly integral to social life, blurring the boundaries between online and offline worlds. In this sense, digital spaces constitute an important arena through which people enact and experience social life (Addeo et al. 2020: 12). As noted in the literature review, digital platforms constitute an increasingly important role for activism, serving as sites for mobilization, advocacy and contestation (Dumitrașcu 2020: 72). In this thesis, netnography thus provides a valuable approach to explore these dimensions of migrant rights activism in Malmö, examining how political practices unfold online. Moreover, it provides a point of comparison for how political activism is enacted across online and offline arenas.

The flexible nature of netnography is one of its key advantages, as it is a timely, cost-efficient and accessible method (Kozinet & Nocker 2018: 4). However, it also poses challenges related to large amounts of data and sampling of relevant material. Kozinet and Nocker (2018: 9) describe each netnography as a customized project, requiring researchers to identify and collect data relevant to the specific research aim. The emphasis in netnographic is often on small data based on defined criteria. Accordingly, I established a set of criteria in sampling the data. First, aligned with the previously discussed ethical considerations, I included only publicly accessible content. In order to align the data sets, I limited the scope to content produced by the same migrant rights groups represented in the interview sample and within the same time period. Within this scope, I focused primarily on “high traffic” posts, that is content that generated attention. Finally, I only included text-based content in order to maintain the same interpretative strategy across all the material.

In total 17 pieces of online material were selected. Some groups have limited, or virtually no, digital presence. As only purposive data were included, this resulted in an uneven distribution of the material across the groups. However, the absence of digital presence itself offers an analytical entry point in relation to different modes of public visibility. In the analysis, references to the netnographic material are denoted as "NM: x", indicating "netnographic material" and assigned number.[11]

Code	Source	Description	Date of publ.
1	Group B	Social media post, Facebook	2025-02-11
2	Group E	Social media post, Facebook	2025-05-23
3	Group G	Social media post, Facebook	2025-06-12
4	Group A	Web page, project description	n.d.
5	Group A	Web page, project description	n.d.
6	Group E	Social media post, Facebook	2025-02-16
7	Group E	Social media post, Facebook	2025-06-12
8	Group E	Social media post, Facebook	2025-05-02
9	Group C	Webpage, project description	n.d.
10	Group C	Webpage, group description	n.d.
11	Group B	Web page, group description	n.d.
12	Group B	Social media post, Facebook	2025-05-12
13	Group B	Social media post, Facebook	2025-08-12
14	Group G	Social media post, Facebook	2025-02-08
15	Group G	Social media post, Facebook	2025-05-26
16	Group H	Social media post, Instagram	2025-05-16
17	Group H	Social media post, Facebook	2025-09-07

Figure 2. Presentation of the netnographic data.

[11] *See* appendix C for the netnographic material.

5.4. Analysis Strategy

5.4.1. Reflexive Thematic Analysis

To make sense of the data, I employed *reflexive thematic analysis* (reflexive TA), developed by Braun and Clarke (2023). Reflexive TA is a qualitative analytical method that provides tools for developing, analyzing and interpreting patterns across datasets (Braun et al. 2023: 1). It is a flexible approach suited for a wide range of research aims and theoretical frameworks, enabling the researcher to unpack and reassemble data into meaningful insights about patterned meanings and their significance (Ibid.: 1). Within reflexive TA, the researcher is an interpretative instrument, with subjectivity recognized as a resource integral to the analytical process. Reflexivity functions as a tool to interrogate the assumptions and positions shaping interpretation, understood as strengthening analytical quality (Ibid.: 4). Reflexive TA thus aligns well with my epistemological stance and offers a valuable framework for analyzing the material in an interrogative manner.

Reflexive TA involves an iterative and cyclic process of engagement with the data, aimed at identifying patterned meanings and constructing *themes*. A theme is understood as "a pattern of shared meaning united by a central idea" that cuts across several topics and data items. Themes are developed by organizing codes around a core commonality or central concept interpreted from the data through a recursive process of engagement and refinement (Byrne 2021: 1393).

5.4.2. Operationalization

Braun et al. (2023: 5) outline a six-phase process that guides the analytical process: (1) familiarization (2) coding (3) generating initial themes (4) developing and reviewing themes (5) refining, defining and naming themes (6) writing up. Accordingly, the analytical process began with immersion in the data. In this case, the familiarization with the data naturally started in the stages of data collection, as conducting and transcribing the interviews required repeated listening and close attention. The netnographic process similarly involved immersion with the data, through the exploration of the digital field and the purposive sampling of the material.

Already at these stages, I started to engage analytically with the material, observing and noting aspects that I found interesting or relevant to the research aim.

After re-reading the material until "intimately acquainted" with it, I moved into the process of coding, described as breaking down the dataset in smaller analytical units (Braun et al. 2023: 6). Using the software NVivo[12], I labeled segments across both the interview and netnographic data, integrating them within a coherent coding structure. My approach was predominantly deductive, or analyst-driven, guided by the working questions and theoretical framework. Drawing on my conceptualization of political activism, practice theory and intersectionality, I coded for various dimensions of migrant rights activism: actors, groups and institutional stakeholders; relationalities and networks; practices and activities; and reflections on meaning-making, particularly in relation to political action and resistance. I also attended positionings within the migration regime and across intersecting social locations.

From this foundation, I generated initial themes by re-aggregating codes around shared meanings (Byrne 2021: 1403). I reviewed, compared and clustered coded into potential themes, further experimenting manually on paper to visualize relationships between codes and test configurations. The remaining stages of the analytical process involved iterative reviewing and refining of themes, continuously assessing analytical validity and coherence, and making adjustments where necessary. The final themes form the analytical foundation of the thesis. Each theme centers on a distinct aspect of migrant rights activism, yet all themes are interconnected across the analysis.

[12] NVivo is a computer software to help organize, manage and structure qualitative data. I used NVivo for practical reasons, as it helped visualize and structure the data.

6. Analysis

This chapter presents the analysis, divided into three major themes with related subthemes. The first section of the analysis examines intersecting constraints, challenges and opportunities faced by the migrant rights groups within the migration regime. The second theme turns to the *doings* of the migrant rights groups, analyzed through practice theory. Finally, the third theme builds on this foundation to analyze the practices from the theoretical perspective of situated resistance. Intersectionality operates as an overarching theoretical lens throughout the analysis.

6.1. Constraints and Opportunities in the Migration Regime

The material illustrates how Sweden's rapidly shifting political and legislative climate shapes both migrants' everyday realities and the work of the migrant rights groups. The interviewees consistently describe an increasingly restrictive landscape that generates new uncertainties and reorients the practices of migrant rights groups. To understand contemporary migrant rights activism in Malmö, it is therefore essential to situate it within this broader institutional and political setting, examining how activists interpret and articulate constraints, challenges and potential possibilities.

6.1.1. A Reorientation of the Legal Field

Across the interviews and the digital material, the groups and activists consistently describe a migration regime that produces legal constraints from multiple, intersecting directions. As a collective, they portray an intricate web of legislative reforms steadily closing possibilities for migrants to enter, live and remain in Sweden, extending to processes related to asylum and protection statuses, work permits, family reunifications, and citizenship.

Thea is an activist engaged in Malmö's migrant rights scene since 2016, currently working for group A, a three-year project aimed at advancing access to fundamental rights for migrants. Reflecting on the current migration regime, she remarks: "I would say that the right to asylum is completely dismantled in Sweden by now, and it's

happening very, very fast[13]" She also expresses concern that the legal development is targeting a larger group of people than originally anticipated: "[T]he whole thing with being able to revoke citizenship and permanent residence permits means that a much larger group of people are at risk". Lisa, head of a youth-oriented unit group C at a national non-profit for social care for the past three years stresses the pace and intensity of legal reforms: "We see how laws are being introduced at an enormous scale. This government is extremely efficient when it comes to changes in migration law." She further notes how the government, uniquely in relation to migration issues, are circumventing institutional protocols to avoid slow legal process: "They manage to solve things without legislating, but by doing it through regulatory directives or in other ways so they avoid the lengthy process that laws require."

The temporalization of residence permits through the temporary law turned permanent in 2021 is commonly represented as a watershed moment that reshaped the migration regime. Thea notes: "[T]emporary permits becoming the rule has changed the entire situation because it means that people can never start their lives." However, this shift is simultaneously compounded by increasingly stringent requirements across all migration processes. Several of the migrant rights groups point to raised thresholds to achieve asylum or protection statuses, interpreting as increasingly unattainable. Online, group E, a non-profit association providing economic aid to youth migrants in Sweden, frames this as an "inhumane migration policy" with systematic rejections of asylum applications (NM: 7). Sharpened economic requirements embedded in migration processes also emerge as a central concern that functions as a mechanism of exclusion. Anna, a third-year law student and vice president of group H, a non-profit association offering legal aid to individuals in socioeconomic precarious positions, represents the financial criteria as decisive in migration processes: "It often comes down to this financial requirement, and if I understand it correctly that will be raised now.

[13] When presenting quotes, I omit filler words such as "like" or "you know" for readability, unless the exclusion alters the meaning of the sentence.

The activist further points to a pervasive legal uncertainty within a complex legal system with overlapping frameworks and unclear regulations. Highlighted by Thea, the legal reforms result in legal categories becoming increasingly blurred: “What we can see in recent years is that there is a lot of fluidity between legal positions. Nowadays there’s really no secure position.” This legal fluidity is represented as generating jurisdictional uncertainty between authorities, with migrants referred back and forth between offices, often falling through the cracks. Some activists further perceive the decision-making from the Migration Agency as arbitrary, or politically motivated. Ali, who is engaged in group B, a non-profit association for youth migrants, describes his experience: “I have talked to many young people, I’ve read their files [...] and you can clearly see that the Migration agency has made something up so they can reject them.” Barbro, a long-time activist with over two decades of engagement in migrant rights work and vice president of group E, echoes this sentiment: “We know that they [the Migration agency] have directives, so they try to make them deportable. Sometimes they wait with a decision for two days, or change the dates, so that they turn 18.”[14] Anna points to difficulties of navigating highly formalized legal processes, where even minor technicalities such as a missing signature, can result in rejection: “For many, the difference comes down to saying the right thing and submitting the right document, or failing to do so, which result in a denial”

The rapid pace of reforms, continuously shifting requirements and inconsequential decision-making is portrayed to create an unpredictable legal field that is difficult to navigate not only for migrants but for migrant rights groups. “We barely have time to open our mouths about one thing that’s happened before a new law comes the next day that’s even worse”, Thea explains. The activists further express concern that the legal shift is narrowing legal pathways to remain in Sweden, with Barbro describing the removal of the statute of limitation for deportation decisions as eliminating the final legal lifeline: “When they call now you almost always have to say: ‘I’m sorry, there's nothing to do in Sweden. It’s over.’” Daniel, a social worker who is engaged

[14] Children under 18 years are entitled to different rights and support than adults. Children may be eligible for asylum on grounds tied to their status as minors (Migration Agency 2025c).

in group D, a grassroots association for supporting migrants in Malmö, points to a central consequence of the politics.

> You have people who have been in Sweden for ten years, they have steady jobs, first-hand rental contracts and in some cases family here, and you give them a decision of deportation. But you can't deport them, so you just make them undocumented and then you take away their job, their housing and put them on the street. (Daniel, 2025).

Group E further frames this as a "humanitarian crisis" that renders migrants in prolonged legal limbo and precarious positions without the right to work or access to socioeconomic support (NM: 2). Barbro speaks of this in "social death", stating: "You are socially dead when you have no legal, economic or social rights, and then you are ungrievable."

6.1.2. Institutionalized Exclusion and Hostility

Beyond the legal field, the migrant rights groups and activists situate the migration regime within broader political trends of increased repression, institutionalized racism and antagonistic rhetoric targeting migrants. Group F, a non-profit association for socio-legal support for migrants in Malmö, describe the injustices produced by the migration regime as systematic: "The life stories we encounter are not the results of isolated errors by the Migration Agency; they are consequences of a systematically exclusionary refugee policy." Daniel, similarly, underscores the systematic nature of exclusion: "There's so much injustice in the world [...] but this is a system that makes a clear distinction between people. Our whole societal system is structured as if these people are second-class citizens." Thea further characterizes the development as a testament to escalating fascism: "It's not just talk or racism on the streets but something very structural. It is embedded in our laws, in our authorities and it is happening so damn fast."

Racism emerges as a central theme in descriptions of the migration regime. Yousef, an activist engaged in group G, a Muslim religious association and social community center, with long-time experience of supporting migrants in Sweden, highlights an escalating racism fueled by those in political power: "The refugees that come now experience a lot of racism, it was not like that before. [...] The government matters,

there's a lot of racist signals from this government." Barbro and Daniel note the conflation of migration and criminality in public debate, with Barbro comparing the rhetoric to Nazi propaganda: "[T]oday it has become much more 'them' and 'they' should be thrown out, and they shoot, cheat, and they're all into drugs. All immigrants should leave Sweden so it will be calm here." Yousef highlights a dichotomous political rhetoric of "us and them" that targets the broader social categorization of 'immigrants'. In a Swedish context, immigrant ("invandrare") in a literal sense refers to a person who has migrated to Sweden yet often functions as a racialized category denoting individuals perceived as foreign or non-Swedish. As pointed out by Yousef, it sometimes functions to delimit national belonging: "That's why a Muslim always feels accused, an immigrant always feels accused, like they should get out of Sweden."

The recent school shooting in Örebro[15] is fresh in memory at the time of data collection, represented across the material as a violent attack on migrants and as a materialization of racism. The migrant rights groups express sentiments of fear, grief and a heightened sense of insecurity following the attack, and in a public statement online group E remarks: "The fact that the Örebro attack targeted SFI students and that most victims were immigrants, regardless of the perpetrator's motive, has created concern." (NM: 6). Group B characterizes it as a terrorist attack targeting migrants, announcing new security measures at their location due to concern for their safety (NM: 1). The attack is also discussed in relation to the broader pattern of migrant hostility. Thea situates the attack within a longer history of racially motivated violence: "There's been so much. Refugee camps burned, arson attacks, even armed attacks when we've protested outside the Migration Agency." Group E further continues their statement with an emphasis on the greatest threat against migrants in Sweden, rather than individual perpetrators, being a state that systematically violates those deemed non-Swedes (NM: 6).

From Daniel's perspective, the increasingly harsh rhetoric has influenced the public opinion, and contributed to the erosion of ethical boundaries as to what is politically tolerable: "Before there existed some ethical boundaries to what they [the

[15] On Feb 4th, Campus Risbergska in Örebro, an education center offering adult secondary education and Swedish language courses (SFI) was attacked by an armed perpetrator. Eleven individuals, including the perpetrator, died and six were injured. In May 2025, the police concluded that the shooter's motive was the desire to take his own life (Swedish Police 2025).

government] could do, but that doesn't exist anymore." At the same time, several interviewees highlight what they perceive as a pervasive lack of public awareness, or even deliberate avoidance, of repressive migration policies. Barbro characterizes the collective of migrant rights groups as "bearers of society's mistrust", frequently met with skepticism and dismissive responses when describing the lived realities of migrants in Sweden. Daniel continues: "There's a lot of frustration that no one talks about how bad it actually is. It just doesn't come through. [...] If people knew how things really are, I think they wouldn't agree that it should be this way."

6.1.3. A Shrinking Operational Space

The migrant rights groups also highlight constraints on activism within the civic sphere, spanning material, financial and security aspects that effectively produce what I interpret as a shrinking operational space.

A central represented concern is financial precarity. Despite diverse funding sources, groups express concerns of scarce resources and political constraints linked to securing funding. Lisa emphasizes funding as a particular precarity for groups operating within the civic sphere without guaranteed funding. Thea's group A is financed predominantly through a specific state fund for non-profits and social projects, and she observes that being politically vocal in issues linked to migration risks access to resources: "All of the sudden, there's a risk of losing funding if you say that like racism exists, or 'we are anti-racist'. Just by saying that means that so many resources are no longer available to us." Group C, funded by sponsors, navigates the tension between representation and scarce resources, whereas Lisa views strategic framing as a means to sustain funding: "[O]ne way to expand our activities is to avoid emphasizing migration. If we don't stress that it's our main target group but instead talk about socially vulnerable people, we simply attract more sponsors." The activists consistently describe financial constraints as one of the main challenges in their activism, and attest to how several groups are forced to limit their support. Group E's main objective is to provide economic support to youth migrants, but as they have less means available, the amount they provide has decreased significantly over the years. Daniel's group D, amongst other things, aid migrants with rent for housing, and he articulates the consequences of shrinking financial means: "We can do much less now.

So they [the government] succeed in that. [...] It's probably only a matter of time until we can no longer help some individuals with housing"

Another constraint concerns safety and potential risks for the groups, individual activists and migrants. The activists describe a heightened sense of vulnerability related to the increasingly hostile political climate and discuss a balance between visibility and security. Thea reflects on the risks involved in migrant rights activism, particularly for undocumented individuals: "It's always a balance in trying to stand up for our rights and not… There are risks involved in talking about rights for undocumented people, so we always think very, very carefully before deciding to say something" Lisa highlights increased police surveillance outside their locations, targeting racialized visitors and staff in search for undocumented migrants, which makes her wary of group C represented explicitly as a migrant rights groups, including in this thesis[16]. Daniel's group D conceal their migrant rights work, presenting themselves as a cultural association to "work around the system" and reduce some prevalent constraints: "You can't find it anywhere. Or you can find it, but then it is in the form of a cultural association."

The activists also note a less populated migrant rights scene, marked by the withdrawal of activists. Several interviewees connect this to heightened personal risks that discourage engagement, with Thea observing: "More and more people can't cope with activism anymore, because they're afraid. There are many more risks now." These risks include legal reprisals, threats to employment, violence, and fears of future repercussions. One aspect connects to the fact that as legal possibilities to remain in Sweden have decreased, the migrant rights groups engage in practices located in legal grey zones, such as hiding undocumented individuals or helping people across borders. Daniel reflects on this in relation to his municipal employment: "I have a really good workplace, a really good boss. But if her boss found out what I do, then it would be over. So, I can be political, but I have to be very careful." While Barbro stresses that the pressures she faces are minor compared to those she helps, her account reveals personal risks that activists face, including online harassment and threats from Nazis at protests. Thea further situates the risks within a broader trajectory of escalating repression as new laws expand state surveillance and curtail freedom of

[16] Related to this, Lisa requested anonymity for group C.

speech and association: “I think it’s very easy to see the consequences that are coming soon. We already know that the next step is that one could face legal consequences, and that makes people scared.”

6.1.4. Synthesis: The Regime as an Assemblage of Constraints

Taken together, the netnographic data and the activists’ account describe legal and political dimensions of the migration regime produce an assemblage of intersecting constraints for the migrant rights groups: economic precarity, heightened risks of surveillance and repression, threats and risks of violence, and antagonistic rhetoric, shining light on the conditions under which migrant rights activism unfold.

At the same time, the activists highlight opportunities specifically tied to organizing within the civic sphere of Malmö. Operating independently from state institutions are represented as providing degrees of flexibility and autonomy. Lisa, for instance, highlights group C’s dynamic structure without long processes of decision-making as a key strength: “Here we can really see: ‘do we need to extend opening hours?’ We can adjust all the time, and I think that is very important.” Malmö dense civic infrastructures, activist networks and traditions of engagement are further portrayed as key resources for the migrant rights groups. Yousef describes group G’s long-term involvement in migrant reception across crises in Bosnia, Iraq, Syria and Ukraine as accumulated experience that builds capacity. Similarly, Lisa recalls how the rapid mobilization during the 2015 refugee reception crisis developed skills that remain: “When the war in Ukraine broke out, we opened our center everyday for that group [...] We launched the Ukraine initiative without any funding, thinking we’d sort it out later because at that moment, it was really a crisis.” Such experiences are represented as part of a broader civic infrastructure that makes Malmö a comparatively favorable site for migrant rights activism. Group H, composed by law students based in a neighboring city, locates its activities in Malmö precisely for this reason. As Anna explains, Malmö offers greater opportunities for organizing due to its high density of associations and established networks. Beyond practical dimensions that sustain activism, this is also represented as fostering a sense of solidarity and collectivity. As Thea reflects: “I’m very grateful that I live in Malmö in these…dark times. Because at least I don’t feel alone in resistance.”

The migrant rights activism in Malmö thus unfolds within a field shaped by the interplay of structural constraints and collective resources. On the one hand, constraints limit possibilities, heighten risks and reduce available economic resources; on the other, groups mobilize embodied knowledge, experience and civic infrastructures to adapt, sustain or develop their practices. The analysis so far has traced the contours of this field, and in the following section I build on this foundation to examine how the practices of the migrant rights groups materialize within, and in response, to these dynamics.

6.2. The Practices of Migrant Rights Groups

Building on the previous section, which outlined the reshaped conditions under which migrant rights groups operate, I now delve into how the groups navigate, adapt and respond to these constraints by examining the practices of the groups with the use of practice theory. The material illustrates the multifaceted and fluid nature of activism with practices that often intersect and shift across legal, social and economic domains. However, to provide analytical coherence, the material is organized into three subthemes that reflect recurring patterns of practices. Rather than examining each practice in detail, I aim to capture the broader dynamics that sustain practices, focusing on the interplay of meanings, materials and competencies in the situated context.

6.2.1. Filling the Gaps: Assistance and Support

The legal and political developments in Sweden have generated increased precarities for migrants in Sweden, prompting a reorientation of the practices of migrant rights groups. As the Swedish state withdraws rights and welfare provisions, the migrant rights groups attempt to sustain the support once provided by public institutions. Yousef, who is Palestinian born in Lebanon and arrived in Sweden forty years ago, captures this shift: “The support we provide now [at group G], we received from the Swedish authorities back then. Everything you needed was given.” Thea similarly points to this development, noting: “As rights have gradually been withdrawn, the work within the movement has increasingly shifted toward social work and legal assistance.”

This reorientation of practices is evident in the material, illustrating how the migrant rights groups in Malmö collectively provide a wide range of social, economic, legal and practical support: housing, food, financial aid and clothing, alongside healthcare services, psychological counseling, language aid, legal support and assistance in various bureaucratic processes (NM: 4; 9; 10; 12; 13; 15; 17). These practices situate activism increasingly within an everyday social work-register, centered on sustaining basic necessities as well as social protection and rights. They can be viewed to both respond to and expose the consequences of the hostile migration regime, ultimately shining light on how practices are reconfigured to sustain support where institutional frameworks withdraw it.

Another driver of this shift is linked to the fluctuation of migrants' legal statuses. In addition to individuals falling through the cracks in complex legal systems, Thea highlights that migrants often lose access to their state-provided support as their legal status changes, prompting the migrant rights groups to orient their practices toward the in-between positions that migrants frequently occupy. An overall striking feature is the multifaceted and fluid nature of migrant rights activism, with practices that cut across social, legal and material domains. Daniel, describing the work of group D, explains: "It's very fluid because we support people in different processes of migration and all sorts of things. It's also social work, we can help with jobs, contact with authorities or whatever really." Yousef also points to an adaptive dynamic of their practices, adjusted to the needs of the community, ranging from language aid, trauma counseling, social support to legal aid: "We usually look at what is needed. It has really become like a community center here."

Legal assistance emerges as a central practice of the migrant rights groups within a complex legal system that not only determines migrants' right to remain in Sweden but also impacts their broader access to rights and recognition. Legal aid thus becomes a crucial site of intervention, further underscored by the fact that all groups provide legal support to various extents. Illustrating the interconnectedness of activist practices, legal aid extends beyond formal legal advice, encompassing guidance on bureaucratic procedures, interpretation of legal language, accompaniment to bureaucratic procedures and support with language barriers. Anna outlines aspects of group H's work: "We help in different ways, maybe finding out what they need to

submit, what permits they should apply for, and we assist with communication and writing the applications." Anna further describes material aspects of their support, highlighting that some individuals lack a permanent address or access to a computer, which limits their abilities to receive or respond to decisions from the Migration Agency: "On site, we have access to a computer, printer and scanner, so we can help right there. Both to get hold of the decision and read through and explain it." Moreover, positions of privilege can be mobilized to navigate racialized relations of power embedded within bureaucratic and legal processes. Thea frames the accompaniment to authorities as an anti-racist intervention, wherein her positionality as a white Swedish national function as a resource: "Individuals don't get access to their rights due to racism in different parts of society. So, I often accompany people to authorities, because people are treated completely differently if there's a white person present."

From a practice-theoretical lens, these actions illustrate how activist practices are not static but reorganize around shifting needs, power relations and temporal urgencies. The migrant rights groups orient their embodied, materially mediated practices toward immediate assistance and support through an interplay of elements of materials, competencies and meanings. Material infrastructures of financial and material resources form the tangible basis of support: physical locations, clothing, computers. At the same time, the practices are sustained by people: activists that contribute their time, knowledge, skills and personal networks. An intersectional perspective helps shine light on how embodiment functions as a strategic tool, where the presence of white bodies may be leveraged to navigate institutional constraints shaped by overlapping systems of racialization, citizenship status and social inequality. In the context of scarce and diminishing economic resources, networks and relations emerge as essential assets, mobilized to sustain and expand support practices. For example, group H borrows the location of group C free of charge, which enables their work, while visitors from group C in turn benefit from the legal aid offered by group H. Barbro further discusses a location she refers to as "the underground", where she has built connections with many activists with whom she now collaborates. I interviewed both Thea and Daniel in this space which hosts several migrant rights groups under the umbrella of a larger non-state institution. Here, a shared resource in the sense of a

physical space appears not only as an enabling material infrastructure, but as a catalyst for informal networks, cooperation and exchange of competencies across groups.

Practical knowledge and skills also sustain the practices. Legal aid, for example, constitutes both judicial and practical know-how in navigating formalized bureaucratic procedures. The interviews illustrate that such knowledge derives from both professional training and accumulated personal experience. “Insider knowledge” of Swedish society, institutional norms and social codes also emerge as a critical resource, often rooted in long-term residence or being born in Sweden. Yousef exemplifies how such knowledge is mobilized in practice to provide migrants guidance on Swedish society: “We have ongoing civic courses for refugees or those who already have received residence permits but aren’t familiar with how society works. We guide them on how to navigate society, what questions to ask or how to apply for jobs.” The interviews also underscore the centrality of collective, shared knowledge between migrant rights groups. The activists frequently refer to one another as sources of expertise, relying on mutual support to sustain their practices. Daniel, for instance, describes Barbro as holding extensive knowledge through her long-time experience: “There are a few real iron ladies around the country, and they hold a huge amount of knowledge. I’m in touch with all of them.” Conversely, knowledge gaps and limited competencies emerge as vulnerabilities that constrain or compromise support practices. Anna highlights how insufficient expertise restricts the group’s ability to respond to complex cases: “Sometimes people come to us with a really big need for support [...] and we don’t always have the tools that are needed. In some cases, it really ought to be a lawyer who looks at it.” Barbro further emphasizes how limited knowledge can have detrimental consequences, recalling a case where misinformation resulted in an individual losing their legal status despite eligibility: “It only works with those [activists] who don’t have prestige, and who know to ask when they don’t know something. Because a lot of damage has been done.”

From a practice-theoretical perspective, the emergence or transformations of practices are shaped by the interplay of materials, meanings and competencies within social structures and situated contexts. Linked to the migration regime that limits possibilities for migrants to remain in Sweden, a new activist practice has emerged: helping migrants to leave the country. For group D, practices have increasingly shifted in this direction. Daniel explains that while they previously focused on helping

undocumented migrants remain 'underground' while preparing for new hearings, the erosion of legal lifelines has redirected their work: "Nowadays it's more about helping people try their luck in other countries." The practice of helping migrants across borders to apply for protection in other countries is sustained by practical knowledge, coordination skills and transnational activist networks. It also relies on continuous monitoring of European migration policies and the strategic division of labor. Barbro describes a coordinated effort amongst activists in Malmö: "We have divided the work [amongst activists]. I help people flee to France and England because I have contacts there, and [another activist] helps people flee to Germany because I don't have contacts there." Beyond competencies and skills, the practice is also grounded in meaning-making and motivational knowledge within the situated context. Located in a legal grey zone, it carries personal risks but emerges as sustained by moral convictions and sentiments of justice, driven by the knowledge that it is a last resort for some migrants. Daniel says: This detail, helping people leave Sweden, it is illegal I think, but it feels so damn right."

6.2.2. Making Noise, Bearing Witness

The migrant rights groups further engage in practices related to political advocacy, claims-making and changemaking. These practices include the mobilization of support, influencing institutions, authorities or political parties, documenting oppression, raising awareness and organizing protests.

Lisa described the work of group C as multilayered: on one level directed at providing individual support, and on another, engaging in claims-making practices. The group responds to referrals in legislative and policy processes as well as pursues legal inquiries that, as explained by Lisa, sometimes intersect with individual support practices: "In some cases, we want to appeal decisions. I see this as a way of creating case law in court which is a kind of political work." She further represents this as a practice of agenda-setting, attempting to shift institutional awareness: "If we want to bring about social change, we can do it by pursuing cases, by asking questions, by getting authorities to place issues on their agendas." Group A similarly engages in what is described as accountability practices (NM: 5). Their approach is "rights-based" which materializes in support practices that simultaneously serve additional

purposes, as explained by Thea: “By participating in different processes we also collect statistics and write reports based on the data we collect.” A central objective is to document systematic violence against migrants within institutional settings, and to make use of such knowledge for various purposes: spread awareness about the lived realities of migrants in Sweden, to file complaints and pursue inquiries against authorities and to influence local authorities or politicians. Further highlighting the relational dimension of knowledge, the material is also shared with allied civil society actors that can leverage it for advocacy purposes. Thea also underscores the documentation as a form of archival resistance, a way of bearing witness to institutional and racialized injustice: “It’s about standing next to each other, seeing, witnessing the violence, so that it didn’t just pass by unnoticed.”

Group E is highly engaged in political advocacy online, using social media platforms to share statements, debate articles, embodied life stories of migrants and critiques of policy changes (NM: 2; 7; 8). Based on my netnographic observation, I further interpret their online practices as oriented toward mobilizing support and encouraging action. In a Facebook post, the group critiques a proposal by the Sweden Democrats and issues a direct call to action: “Protest. Speak Up. Write your elected representatives. Get involved. Now is the time to act. Not tomorrow. Now.” (NM: 8). Here, the online post functions as a site of political intervention, circulating a message that draws on meanings of outrage and urgency to propose concrete modes of participation that extends into offline activism. Notably, the other migrant rights groups either lack an online presence or engage minimally in claims-making online. Overall, both the netnographic material and interviews indicate a decline in public-facing dimensions of political advocacy. Daniel reflects: “I’ve been very much like: ‘We need to work with public opinion. These things have to get out there” but immediately points to material constraints: “We don’t have the resources, the time or anything for that.” Thea attributes the lack of public advocacy to the redirection of limited resources toward social support: “Everyone who is engaged in asylum rights used to organize much more public voices and visible resistance, but over time those same people have become so overwhelmed by social work that it’s much more of what we do now.”

Bringing in a practice-theoretical perspective, material constraints are viewed to limit the capacity for migrant rights groups to sustain practices of public advocacy. While such practices still are recognized as meaningful, scarce resources and a shrinking activist base, largely absorbed by the immediate urgencies of social support, have reconfigured the possible forms of action. At the same time, some activists articulate a shifting motivational knowledge and sense-making of advocacy practices, shaped by the outlined risks of funding loss, the unpopularity of migration issues and growing concerns about personal and collective security. Lisa shares her perspective: "We're not out demonstrating on the streets as we might have done before. I think maybe we've become a bit smarter in that we work more strategically with advocacy." Thea further connects this shift to surveillance and safety concerns: "We have to be careful about how public we are with certain things we do as a movement, but I hope, and I want, for it to be more organized and public again." Ali provides another perspective as he reflects on the efficiency of the migrant-led demonstrations organized by group B to demand access to fundamental rights in Sweden: "We have had quite a few protests, but I don't think they had much impact. If more Swedes participate, maybe it could make a difference." His experience represents how practices of public advocacy are embedded within hierarchies of race and nationality that shape legitimacy, where the presence of Swedish citizens is perceived to amplify recognition, while claims voiced by migrants alone risks being disregarded.

However, as the netnographic material reveals, practices of public protests have not disappeared, but rather reorganized into what I interpret as event-driven and strategic interventions. Following the shooting in Örebro, group G organized a manifestation against racism, inviting civil society actors and local politicians (NM: 14) This protest can be understood as an immediate response to deadly violence viewed as racially motivated, providing a tangible site for mobilization, support and solidarity. Moreover, group E arranged a demonstration outside the Social Democrats' annual congress, targeting a political arena to raise awareness about the party's migration policies, distributing flyers and marking their presence (NM: 2). In both these cases, digital platforms were used to mobilize audiences, share event details and report from the protests, highlighting the interrelation between online and offline practices.

The migrant rights groups thus engage in diverse practices of claims-making, continuously shaped and negotiated within material and political constraints of the broader institutional field. While public-facing protests and advocacy persist to some degree, it has overall declined due to a shrinking civic space and increased demands for social and legal support. Instead, claims-making increasingly takes the form of targeted interventions: appealing individual cases to establish legal precedents, filing complaints against authorities and documenting injustices to produce knowledge that can be mobilized as a political tool. This illustrates a reconfiguration of activist practices, where efforts shift towards forms perceived as strategically meaningful within the situated context.

6.2.3. Building Community and Self-Organizing

Across the material, another pattern of *doings* emerges, centered on community-building, relationships and empowerment. These practices include creating spaces of belonging, organizing meaningful leisure activities and facilitating separatist migrant spaces for mutual support and self-organizing.

A key practice within this realm is the provision of community spaces, where emphasis lies on accessibility, belonging and social well-being. Group C, for instance, maintains an open meeting space available to anyone without explanation. Lisa explains: “We want to be a low-threshold operation, where people can just come without needing a specific reason.” Similarly, group B offers a meeting place framed as a site for well-being and community, where individuals are allowed to simply “be” (NM: 11). The meaning-making attached to such spaces are represented as configured in relation to the migration regime that positions migrants in protracted legal limbos and socioeconomic precarity. In this context, meeting spaces function as a cost-free, physical and social space of belonging that allow for safety, rest and social participation beyond the constraints of legal status. Ali, who has experience of both organizing and relying on such spaces while undocumented, shares his perspective:

> When you’re undocumented, you can’t do anything else. Nothing. You have no chance of living a healthy life. [...] I was active because if I hadn’t, I could have been… A lot of people get addicted, some go down the wrong path. (Ali, 2025).

Within these spaces, the migrant rights groups organize a variety of activities aimed at providing opportunities for "meaningful leisure": sports, arts, excursions and social gatherings (NM: 9, 15, 11). These activities are portrayed both as social practices that foster community and social networks and as highlighted by Ali, as everyday practices that sustain meaning and selfhood in conditions of prolonged uncertainty: "It was good because at the time I needed to be active somewhere where I felt comfortable. [...] It was really good to enter a social context, somewhere I could be active, talk to people." The fostering of relationships overall emerges as a central practice, both as an immediate form of support that counters exclusion and isolation, and as a foundation for empowerment and self-organization. On their website, group C describe that many of their visitors lack social networks, emphasizing the importance of providing spaces for shared experiences: "Meeting other parents, children and young people who face similar challenges can be a great source of support and help build personal networks of friends." Yousef describes the location of group G as a community center and situates its role in relation to hostile political rhetoric targeting migrants. He frames community-building as an important practice to generate a sense of belonging, and underscores how such spaces enable shared experiences and collective support: "Most of the people who arrive [in Sweden] come because of war. With the trauma they've experienced, we try to comfort them and offer this kind of social community so that they get the feeling that things will get better." Additionally, Lisa emphasizes relationship-building as not merely social, but generative of trust and agency, providing a foundation for empowerment: "What we really want is to help people toward self-empowerment and we do that through the relationships that are built when we can meet those basic needs."

Group B specifically centers on self-organization by and for migrants. For Ali, his contact with various migrant rights groups in Malmö and visits to group B's location created pathways to his own activism. It also provided him with a social network through which he and others in similar positions initiated a study circle for mutual support, sharing legal and social knowledge. His account underscores an important dimension of self-organizing, where lived experiences become a form of competence, mobilized as situated knowledge for collective support: "I've actually helped a lot of people. I have experienced those difficulties myself, I know what it's like, how it can

be made easier for someone who hasn't received help yet." Thea underscores that aspects of self-organization often is underrepresented and emphasizes it as both a key objective and structural feature of group A, with blurred boundaries between the categories of migrant/activist: We organize together because we need one another, and it makes a huge difference for me to have all the friends that I've got." Connecting back to my reflexive discussion on representation, this material predominantly reflects accounts of Swedish nationals organizing on *behalf of* or *in solidarity with* migrants. I lack deeper insights into migrant-led activism, and my representation risks reproducing a narrative that essentializes migrants as recipients of support rather than political agents. Here, it is thus necessary to point out that the analysis represents situated and partial knowledge, further mediated through my interpretation. At the same time, this limitation may reflect a broader structural issue: the material and institutional conditions that constrain migrant-led organizing. Thea points out that shrinking economic resources and the reorientation toward immediate needs have reduced spaces available for community-building and self-organization, consequently reducing separatist and migrant-led spaces: "Many places have had to close, or organizations are limiting their target groups. Specifically for people with experiences of displacement, a lot of resources have disappeared." The closure of physical spaces, such as a former migrant youth warm shelter that was merged into a general facility, thereby not only restricts accessibility but also reshapes social practices of belonging and empowerment. From a practice- theoretical perspective, these absences narrow the material and relational foundations upon which self-organizing practices depend.

Taken together, these representations illustrate relational practices of community-building and self-organizing that address both immediate needs and long-term empowerment. The interviews reveal processes of sense-making in response to exclusionary societal structures that produce precarity, where such practices offer connection, meaning and belonging. These practices are sustained through an interplay of meaning-making, situated skills and knowledge, but also the material resources of physical spaces and economic resources. Notably, when the material elements are withdrawn, as in the closure of community spaces or loss of funding, the practices are restructured, undermining the possibilities of belonging and community.

6.3. Negotiating Resistance

The previous sections have illustrated how the practices of the migrant rights groups are shaped by material, political and legal limitations yet sustained through persistence, adaptability and creativity. The *doings* of the migrant rights groups can thus be understood not only as responses to exclusion, but as enactments of agency within restrictive conditions that challenge the boundaries imposed by the migration regime. Building on the preceding analysis, the following section examines these practices through the lens of situated resistance, exploring how they constitute, negotiate and reimagine political contestation under constraint.

6.3.1. Repertoires of Resistance

Baaz et al. (2018) conceptualize resistance as an act that might challenge, negotiate or undermine power, emerging in response to specific configurations of power. In Malmö, power materializes through legal and political restrictions, socioeconomic precarities and everyday racialized exclusions, producing intersecting vulnerabilities for migrants while constraining the scope of migrant rights activism. Within this context, the practices of migrant rights groups, ultimately aimed at supporting migrants, reveal balancing acts, tensions and ambiguities in navigating the hostile migration regime. From the perspective of situated resistance, these practices can be read as contextually grounded responses to power, reflecting tactical adaptations that balance visibility and invisibility, cooperation and contestation, dependence and autonomy. In this sense, it can be interpreted as part of the available *repertoires of resistance,* referring to the socially and historically shaped sets of tools and tactics available under current political conditions (Baaz et al. 2018: 28).

Notably, a key feature of the contemporary migrant rights activism in Malmö is the reorientation toward sustaining immediate needs and everyday support in response to the state's withdrawal of welfare provisions and restrictions of rights. In the situated context, and as the groups attempt to fill these gaps through provision of housing, food or legal assistance, their practices emerge as a response to the politicization of basic needs and fundamental rights. Thea, for instance, reflects: "[I]t's about access to fundamental rights, which one could imagine wouldn't be political, but in this time

where rights are removed from specific groups, it suddenly becomes political to say that people should have human rights." Similarly, Anna links access to legal assistance to a broader political claim: "I think it is, in itself, a political position to believe that the law should be accessible to everyone, because it is not the reality. So to say that everyone has the right to that kind of help is political." In this sense, the social is political: everyday practices of support and assistance challenge prevailing logics of exclusion and dispossession that underpin the current migration regime. These practices further illustrate the blurred boundaries between everyday and organized resistance, as they emerge as routinized, rooted in collective efforts that may not be overtly confrontational but nonetheless contest the foundations of exclusionary governance (Baaz et al. 2018: 29).

At the same time, these practices are embedded in ambiguities, at times reproducing the structures they seek to contest. Lisa captures this tension as she discusses organizations that organize activities at the Migration Agency's "return centers": "I get the impression that they're [the Agency] very interested in having more of that, because the more there is, the less they have to do." Her reflection illustrates how support practices can be co-opted into logics of migration control, transformed into supplements of state governance. Similarly, the accompaniment of racialized migrants to authorities can be understood as an act of resistance in which racial positions are mobilized to mitigate the harms of structural racism. Yet, the reliance on white privilege within institutional settings may also reinforce the very racialized logic it seeks to contest. Both examples underscore the contradictions of resistance under constraint, where acts may simultaneously resist and reproduce power.

Moreover, the migrant rights groups engage in practices of community-building that foster belonging and create spaces for social connection. Against the backdrop of exclusionary rhetoric and the temporalities of the migration regime that confine migrants in prolonged states of precarity, such practices and spaces emerge as vital sites of resistance. Yousef, Ali and Lisa all emphasize the importance of accessible, inclusive spaces that offer respite from everyday marginalization. Yousef describes their community center as a counterpoint to divisive political rhetoric: "If you go somewhere else, you get called a terrorist but here… we want everyone to come here because we've seen great results, especially with children and young people."

Similarly, Lisa highlights the value of moments that disrupt everyday hardships: “Two days a week we have open activities where people can come with their whole family, have a warm meal and play. It’s meant to be something a bit magical, something that breaks the everyday routine.”

These spaces further highlight how resistance unfolds across spatial and temporal dimensions. Spatially, they reconfigure meanings of place by creating opportunities for gathering, recognition and visibility within an otherwise exclusionary context. Temporally, they respond to the violent temporalities of the migration regime, characterized by waiting, uncertainty and suspended futures. Ali’s accounts especially underscore this temporarily, wherein practices of leisure and community challenge temporal orders by generating moments of continuity, stability and respite. The practices of belonging and community also exemplify what Baaz et al. (2018: x) describe as resistance reinforcing resistance, as connections within these spaces can generate further engagement and collective empowerment. Thea and Yousef further illustrate the relational character of resistance as both link their activism to personal experiences of exclusion and exile. Thea represents her engagement as rooted in her queer positionality and search for belonging, while Yousef describes a sense of solidarity grounded in his background as a Palestinian refugee: “A lot of injustices, no rights, things that Palestinians born in refugee camps experience. I came to Sweden as a refugee, and I realized that not everyone should feel this way. That’s why we offer this help.”

6.3.2. Contestations and Ambivalences

Alongside the everyday, non-public forms of resistance, activists describe a decline in overt, public-facing forms of activism of protests, campaigns or visible claims-making, most notably with the exception of group E’s online presence. As outlined, this shift reflects a combination of factors: the redirection of efforts toward support practices, the scarcity of resources and activists, and heightened concerns over safety, surveillance and funding loss. The reconfiguration not only attests to the relationality between power and resistance, but also to the tensions migrant rights groups navigate between autonomy and dependence, visibility and invisibility and cooperation and contestation.

While political activism within the civic sphere is portrayed as offering opportunities for autonomy, it is simultaneously conditioned by dependencies on municipal institutions, funding bodies and policy frameworks. Several of the groups rely on public funding to sustain their practices, which requires navigating the expectations and risks embedded in such arrangements. Lisa, reflecting on the meaning of resistance, highlights balance as an important feature to secure funding: "We don't engage in organized resistance where we oppose everything because then I don't think we would be able to help our visitors. [...] I think we would lose collaborations, and that would mean losing out for the people we're here to support." At the same time, cooperation with authorities functions as a pragmatic strategy to gain access and achieve objectives. Thea discusses this practical necessity: "There are parts of social services that we deal with almost daily [...] and we want to have a collaboration with them. We try to find ways to bridge the barriers that exist for our target group to access their support."

These accounts illustrate how negotiations between autonomy and dependence, and between cooperation and compliance, shape activist practices. The risk of jeopardizing collaborations or funding constrains the range of possible actions, prompting some groups to adapt their modes of contestation. As previously described, Lisa underscores the importance of strategic representation as migration is a highly polarized issue that can impact funding. Here, the paradox is evident: the very tactics of resistance that enable group C to continue their work simultaneously contribute to the marginalization of migrant rights claims in the public sphere.

The migrant rights groups further seek institutional openings in various ways. This constitutes the outlined practices of agenda-setting, legal interventions and filing of complaints against authorities, by Lisa framed as a method to "make authorities aware when we see shortcomings." It also extends to attempts to build alliances within institutional settings. Barbro, for instance, describes how informal contacts within the Migration Agency function as a means to gain access to information about secret deportations. Both Barbro and Daniel recount instances where individual employees within Malmö municipality contact them in attempts to help individual migrants, and Daniel emphasizes a distinction between individual practitioners and the broader institutional apparatus: "Individuals in Malmö can turn to us, but the organization as a whole, it's more that we have to fight them in certain cases." Insider engagements

can, however, also introduce vulnerabilities. Lisa highlights this aspect as she describes her attempt to build an information contact within the border police in order to access information: "I'm deeply concerned that it was after I met with him that they [the police] showed up outside our premises."

Visibility and cooperation thus emerge as ambivalent, encompassing opportunities for access and influence while also increasing exposure to surveillance and repression. Daniel further highlights a negotiation of visibility and credibility as he describes a tactical positioning in the "underground." This space, where several of the migrant rights groups are located, emerges not only as a site where resistance fosters resistance through shared knowledge and community, but also as an institutional shelter that mitigates risks. Daniel reflects on how operating under the umbrella of the non-state institution with a high degree of legitimacy in society affords group D a protective form of credibility:

> I think that if we had our premises somewhere else, we would have been raided by the border police long ago. It's the same when it comes to contacts with authorities, I think their view of us would have been that we're just some woke leftist fools. (Daniel, 2025).

These accounts demonstrate how migrant rights groups exercise agency as they navigate issues of visibility, credibility and security, continuously negotiating the boundaries of possible resistances while operating within the structures of the hostile migration regime. It further illustrates the inherently complex and relational character of resistance, aligning well with Baaz et al.'s (2018: 4) theorization of resistance as an unstable social phenomenon shaped by an interplay of social structures, relations of power and activist agency (Baaz et al 2018: 4).

Lastly, the reflections on strategic spatial positionings, contestations of visibility, compliance and representations raise an interrelated and critical question: who can afford resistance? Here, the intersectional lens helps illuminate how migrant rights groups and individual activists occupy differential positionalities that afford varying degrees of autonomy, protection and discretion.

For Barbro, the potential risks to her family prompt her to exercise caution, particularly in light of the proposed legislation requiring migrants to demonstrate an

"honorable living" as a condition for residence permits. Since her son is not a Swedish citizen and is under threat of deportation, she is now careful in their communication: "I don't feel safe writing just anything now if the law were to pass. There can't be anything on his phone that could get him in trouble if he's taken." Her reflection illustrates how legal precarity and political uncertainty produce a form of self-censorship, revealing how oppression operates not only through explicit coercion but also through the anticipation of risk. It also alludes to broader constraints on freedom of expression that impacts migrants and their families, where self-organization becomes not only difficult but fraught with risk. Moreover, the capacity for sustained activism is shaped by socioeconomic status, institutional positions and racialized hierarchies of belonging. Ali, who holds a residence permit tied to employment, represents how the legal conditionality of residence permits can restrict political engagement, especially for those whose status depends on economic productivity: "I really want to be involved because I know a lot about migration, and the kinds of support young people in that situation need. But right now, participating actively is very difficult." Thea, by contrast, holds a salaried position in group A, providing her with a degree of economic stability that enables her to enact resistance from a relatively secure position. As otherwise portrayed, her case also illustrates how proximity to national citizenship, racial privilege and institutional knowledge mediates the possibilities for resistance. These intersecting hierarchies of race, class and legal status further shape exposure to risks associated with activism. Racialized migrants, in particular, navigate intensified structural racism, suspicions and threats of violence, as exemplified by the heightened security measures adopted by group B following the attack in Örebro, or Yousef's experience of unsafety following racist rhetoric. Taken together, these accounts demonstrate that capacities for resistance are unevenly distributed. While some activists can leverage their social, economic or institutional positions to enact resistance, others face structural vulnerabilities that constrain their participation and shape the forms their activism can take.

6.3.3. On Change-Making

This final section of the analysis turns to objectives and experiences of change-making as they intersect with enactments of resistance. If resistance is understood as an act that potentially challenges, negotiates or undermines power, it carries an implicit

potential for transformation or change-making. While Baaz et al. (2018) emphasize that acts of resistance do not necessarily presuppose an intention to challenge structures of power, imaginaries of change nonetheless run through the activists' accounts as well as the ethnographic material, often relating to ideas of justice, equality, humanity or solidarity. For instance, group F frames their activism as rooted in the struggle for equal value for all and a society where "human rights are not just ideals, but realities." (NM: 12).

All activists emphasize that the practices of the migrant rights groups make a difference for individual migrants. Reflecting on the everyday interventions of group C, Lisa says: "On an individual level, it definitely makes a difference; when we can help people get housing, secure their residence permits or assist them in making decisions about their lives so that they can start living them." Yousef highlights everyday, affective dimensions of change-making for individuals: "It makes a huge difference. [...] Those who have arrived recently are always struggling, even if they're smiling and laughing. Then small things, like helping with advice and guidance, can really make a difference."

These individual-level effects, however, are contrasted by skepticism regarding structural or political change. Thea points out that while their work contributes to meaningful impact for specific individuals, the structural inequalities persist: "The problem is that we can't change the system, unfortunately. So we can't promise people that their basic rights will be met, all we can do is our best." Ali doubts the impact of individual migrant rights groups on the migration regime, emphasizing the need for large-scale, collective mobilization: "I don't think migration policy changes just because one organization takes action. I believe that to influence change, many people need to get involved, raise awareness and demonstrate". Lisa, on the other hand, points to potential systemic influence through legal inquiries and agenda-setting: "I believe that if we push certain issues and respond to certain matters that can influence things in some direction."

Pessimism regarding the future of the Swedish migration regime is evident among Barbro and Daniel, preparing for its continuation. Barbro says: "We once believed that this would eventually end, but as things are now… I don't see much change in the

coming years." Yet this skepticism does not translate resignation, rather it recalibrates the meaning of resistance and change-making. In a political landscape perceived as increasingly immovable, care, solidarity and collectively emerge as central to how resistance is enacted and experienced. Anna, reflecting on the limits of assisting individuals, states: "The most important thing is making a difference for individuals. Even if they don't get the decision they're hoping for, or things don't work out for everyone, at least they didn't have to go through it alone." For Thea, precisely this collectivity constitutes an essential form of resistance that provides the strength to sustain ongoing activism: "Part of organizing together is simply being each other's family when everything is burning." In the situated context, change-making is thus less about large-scale political claims and more about grounded, relational and affective practices that preserve humanity, community and solidarity in the face of structural hostility.

At the same time, even among those pessimistic about the future, there remains an ambition for long-term change-making. Barbro is perhaps most adamant in this, emphasizing determination over "hope": "I never say hope, we're going to achieve it. Hope is the same as inshallah, it means that there is a 10% chance it won't happen. If you say that, you might as well stop there." Daniel similarly believes that at some point, things must change, and that until that point, the migrant rights groups need to adapt: "We'll see which path it takes. Maybe we have to reconsider entirely, and see if there are other paths, so to speak."

These reflections reveal a nuanced understanding of resistance as both constrained and continually redefined within the hostile migration regime. While few have faith in immediate structural transformation, they continue to act, not because they expect an imminent systematic change, but because action itself sustains meaning, community and hope. Change-making then, is not only about impacting policies or institutions but about preserving the capacity to resist within and against constraints.

7. Summarizing Discussion

In the analysis, I illustrate how migrant rights groups in Malmö navigate, adapt to and resist Sweden's hostile migration regime. The analysis highlights migrant rights activism as multifaceted, relational and contextually grounded, shaped by legal, political and material constraints yet sustained through persistence, adaptation and collective effort.

The first part situates activism within the political, legal and civic field in which it unfolds, demonstrating how groups operate amid continuous policy reforms, the temporalization of residence permits, and increasingly restrictive requirements across migration processes that generate legal uncertainty and socioeconomic precarity. These legal constraints intersect with broader political hostility, racialized discourse and security threats, constructing a landscape of structural exclusion and vulnerability. The section further demonstrates a shrinking civic operational space with regards to financial precarity, safety concerns and decreased participation which narrows the possibilities for action. This further aligns with referenced studies on state-imposed restrictions of civil society, what Roggeband and Krizsán (2021: 3) refer to as the *shrinking of civic space*.

The second part presents the practices of migrant rights groups, illustrating how these practices emerge as adaptive, relational and multifaceted responses to the constraints. The practices extend across material, legal and social domains, shaped by the interplay of materials, competencies and meanings. Current practices are overwhelmingly oriented toward filling gaps left by the state, providing legal, social, economic and practical support to migrants in precarious positions. While advocacy and claims-making persist, such practices are severely constrained, and emerge as targeted interventions rather than overt, public protests. Practices of community-building and self-organization remain central, although challenged by financial insecurity and the closure of physical spaces. Overall, the findings reconfirm existing research describing a shift from "voice to service", where activism becomes more service-oriented at the expense of advocacy (Scaramuzzino & Scaramuzzino 2017). Contrary to studies highlighting the rise of digital activism (Dumitrașcu 2020: 72), this study found limited use of online platforms, at least for political claims-making among the observed groups.

The third and final section examines these practices through the lens of situated practices, displaying how they challenge the boundaries of the migration regime while negotiating visibility, autonomy and cooperation. Activists balance their objectives with pragmatic considerations of safety, funding and institutional relations, revealing the negotiated and ambivalent character of resistance. Everyday acts of care and support, although non-confrontational, contest exclusionary state practices and reclaim agency. Community spaces and leisure activities function as sites of resistance by cultivating belonging and generating opportunities for collective empowerment. At the same time, resistance is shown to be ambiguous, sometimes simultaneously reproducing and undermining power, illustrating the paradoxes of acting within constraints. In the situated context, change-making is not necessarily tied to systemic transformation but to relational and affective practices that sustain solidarity and community. Here, the enactment of resistance itself constitutes both a meaningful strategy and an outcome, continuously redefined through persistence and adaptability. A further exploration of affective dimensions thus emerges as a fruitful avenue for future research, specifically centering on emotional meaning-making that sustains activism.

These findings contribute to feminist and critical perspectives that challenge traditional understandings of activism as necessarily public or confrontational. As critical migration scholars note, further reconfirmed by the analysis, public resistance in hostile political climates may be counterproductive or dangerous, underscoring the need to broaden conceptualizations of political action (Nicholls & Uitermark 2017). Reconnecting to previous studies of the local field, this study displays a shift from "vivid", public mobilizations to more covert and everyday forms of organizing (Hansen 2019), thus contributing to new insights on local contemporary migrant rights activism.

Finally, this thesis presents situated knowledge rather than a generalizable account of political activism in Malmö. The findings are mediated by my interpretation, shaped by my positionality, as well as by a limited and relatively homogenous participant sample in terms of national, racial and institutional positions; delimitations that must be considered when interpreting the results. Theoretically, the analysis foregrounds resistance, leaving aspects of power less developed. This was a conscious choice

aimed at centering activist agency and lived practices, and at countering the recurrent disconnection between academic theorizing and movement experiences (della Porta 2018). Nonetheless, a deeper interrogating of power upholding the hostile migration regime, particularly aspects of racial hierarchies, is a valuable suggestion for future research.

8. Conclusion

This thesis set out to examine how migrant rights activism in Malmö unfolds within the hostile migration regime, answering the research question:

> *How do migrant rights groups in Malmö create and enact resistance within the contemporary migration regime?*

Grounded in a feminist epistemological standpoint of situated knowledge, I have conducted a reflexive thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with seven activists representing eight groups, alongside netnographic material. Further guided by the detailed research questions, and applying a theoretical framework combining practice theory, intersectionality and situated resistance, the analysis demonstrates that resistance is enacted through a range of situated practices that navigate, negotiate and subtly challenge the exclusionary logics embedded in migration governance.

The hostile migration regime materializes through intersecting legal, political and social processes that produce conditions of precarity for migrants while simultaneously constraining the operational space for migrant rights activism. The findings reveal that activist practices are grounded in everyday realities, increasingly oriented toward legal, social and practical support that respond to the marginalization produced by the migration regime. In the situated context, these practices constitute political interventions that not only address material needs but also generate spaces of belonging and community that resist the dehumanizing effects of the regime through meaning-making, care and collectivity. The analysis further highlights that resistance is continuously negotiated through tensions between visibility and safety, cooperation and compliance, autonomy and dependence. These negotiations reflect how migrant rights groups balance their commitments with pragmatic constraints of risk, funding and legitimacy. Consequently, resistance emerges as both transformative and ambivalent, at times simultaneously challenging and reproducing existing power relations.

Finally, while few activists express belief in structural change-making, the enactment of resistance itself constitutes both a meaningful strategy and an outcome: sustaining humanity, collectivity and hope in face of hostility. In this sense, resistance entails not only confronting power, but preserving the very capacity to act, organize and endure within and against the hostile migration regime.

9. Bibliography

9.1. Literature

Addeo, F., Delli Paoli, A., Esposito, M. & Bolcato, M. (2019). Doing Social Research on Online Communities: The Benefits of Netnography. *Athens Journal of Social Sciences,* 7, pp. 9–38. https://doi.org/10.30958/ajss.7-1-1. [Accessed: 2025-04-11].

Alexander, J.C. (2007). *The Civil Sphere*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Anderson, J.T., Jern, J. & Franck, A.K. (2025). Numbers, ignorance and Swedish migration policy. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research,* 15(3):6, pp. 1–21. https://doi.org/10.33134/njmr.835. [Accessed: 2025-05-03].

Andersson, R. & Hedman, L. (2016). Economic decline and residential segregation: a Swedish study with focus on Malmö. *Urban Geography,* 37(5), pp. 748-768. 10.1080/02723638.2015.1133993. [Accessed: 2025-04-17].

Arvidson, M., Johansson, H., Meeuwisse, A. & Scaramuzzino, R. (2018). A Swedish culture of advocacy? Civil society organisations' strategies for political influence. *Sociologisk Forskning,* 55(2/3), pp. 341–364. http://www.jstor.org/stable/26632236. [Accessed: 2025-04-17].

Armstrong, E.A. & Bernstein, M. (2008). Culture, Power, and Institutions: A Multi-Institutional Politics Approach to Social Movements. *Sociological Theory*, 26(1), pp. 74–99. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9558.2008.00319. [Accessed: 2025-04-04].

Atewologun, D. (2018). Intersectionality Theory and Practice. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Business and Management.* https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190224851.013.48. [Accessed: 2025-08-25].

Atkinson, J.D. (2017). *Journey into social activism: qualitative approaches*. New York: Fordham University Press.

Baaz, M.E., Lilja, M. & Vinthagen, S. (2018). *Researching Resistance: Methodologies and Methods for Studying Social Change.* London: Routledge.

Bastia, T. (2014). Intersectionality, migration and development. *Progress in Development Studies,* 14(3), pp. 237–248. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464993414521330. [Accessed: 2025-08-25].

Bernt, M. (2019). The Limits of the Neoliberal City: Policy Reconfigurations and the Politics of Urban Development in Berlin. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 43(1), pp. 193–208. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12714. [Accessed: 2025-04-12].

Bevelander, P. & Hellström, A. (2019). Pro- and antimigrant mobilizations in polarized Sweden. In Rea, A., Martiniello, M., Mazzola, A. & Meuleman, B. (eds.) *The refugee reception crisis in Europe: Polarized opinions and mobilizations.* Bruxelles: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, pp. 75–94.

Blee, K.M. & McDowell, A. (2022). The (Un)Making of Activists: How Social Movements Shape and Are Shaped by Participants. *Social Movement Studies*, 21(1), pp. 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2021.1909480. [Accessed: 2025-03-26].

Braun, V., Joy, E., and Clarke, V. (2023). Doing reflexive thematic analysis: A reflexive account. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 20(2), pp. 209–231. https://uwe-repository.worktribe.com/output/10434562. [Accessed: 2025-03-26].

Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods*. 4th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Canning, V. (2021). Deportation, Harm and Everyday Violence. *Theoretical Criminology*, 25(1), pp. 3–20. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362480620922193. [Accessed: 2025-05-02].

Caraus, T. & Paris, E. (2019). *Migration, Protest Movements and the Politics of Resistance: A Radical Political Philosophy of Cosmopolitanism*. London: Routledge.

Crenshaw, K.W. Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics. University of Chicago Legal Forum: Vol. 1989, Article 8. https://chicagounbound.uchicago. edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8.

Crenshaw, K.W., Carbardo, D., Mays, V.M. & Tomlinson, B. (2013). Intersectionality: Mapping the movements of a theory. *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race*, 10(2), pp. 303–312. https://scholarship.law.columbia.edu/faculty_scholarship /2779. [Accessed: 2025-08-21].

Caretta, M.A. (2014). Situated knowledge in cross-cultural, cross-language research: A collaborative reflexive analysis of researcher, assistant and participant subjectivities. *Qualitative Research*, 15(4), pp. 489–505. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794114543404. [Accessed: 2025-06-02].

Chandhoke, N. (2010). Civil society. *Development in Practice*, 17(4–5), pp. 607–614. https://doi.org/10.1080/09614520701469658. [Accessed: 2025-05-13].

Civil Rights Defenders. (2023). *As a whole, it is worrying – One year with the Tidö agreement.* https://crd.org/2023/10/19/as-a-whole-it-is-worrying-one-year-with-the-tido-agreement/. [Accessed 2025-04-02].

Clark, W. (2000). *Activism in the Public Sphere. Exploring the discourse of political participation.* Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989(8). https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8. [Accessed: 2025-08-27].

Dahlstedt, M. & Neergaard, A. (2016). Crisis of Solidarity? Changing Welfare and Migration Regimes in Sweden. *Critical Sociology*, 42(1), pp. 69–88. https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920514530232. [Accessed: 2025-04-23].

De Genova, N. (2013). We are of the connections": Migration, methodological nationalism, and "militant research. *Postcolonial Studies,* 16(3), pp. 250–258. https://doi.org/10.1080/13688790.2013.850043. [Accessed: 2025-05-06].

Della Porta, D. (2018). *Solidarity Mobilizations in the 'Refugee Crisis': Contentious Moves.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Della Porta, D. & Diana, M. (2015). *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Djampour, P. & Söderman, E. Politisk organisering i en tid av ökad migrationskontroll. In F. Fernández, F. Awil, M. Svensson, & L. Kullving (eds.). *Tillsammans gör vi politik.* Stockholm: Tyfon.

Dumitrașcu, V. (2020). Online and Offline Activism. Literature Review. *Revista Universitară de Sociologie*, 2, pp. 72–78. https://sociologiecraiova.ro/revista/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/06.-ONLINE-AND-OFFLINE-ACTIVISM.-LITERATURE-REVIEW.pdf. [Accessed: 2025-03-21].

Elgenius, G. & Wennerhag, M. (2018). The changing political landscape in Sweden: Political cleavages, actors and processes. *Sociologisk Forskning*, 55(2/3), pp. 139–154. http://www.jstor.org/stable/26632227. [Accessed: 2025-03-24].

Emilsson, H. (2018). Continuity or change? The refugee crisis and the end of Swedish exceptionalism. *MIM working papers*, 18(3). https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1409918/FULLTEXT01.pdf. [Accessed: 5 2025-03-22].

Emilsson, H. (2025). Closing the Door to Sweden: Migration Legislative Changes and Government Inquiries in 2024. *Current Issues in Migration Research*, 2(1), pp. 1. 10.24834/cimr.2025.1.1918. [Accessed: 2025-10-01].

Ericsson, M. (2016). *Rasismens många ansikten: Några tankar om rasismens historia i Sverige och i världen.* Stockholm: Forum för levande historia.

FARR. (2022). *Vi protesterar mot Tidöavtalet och en främlingsfientlig flyktingpolitik.* https://farr.se/vi-protesterar-mot-tidoavtalet-och-en-framlingsfientlig-flyktingpolitik/. [Accessed: 2025-03-03].

Foucault, M. (1982). The Subject and Power. *Critical Inquiry,* 8(4), pp. 777-795. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1343197. [Accessed 2025-07-03].

Frykman, M.P. & Mäkelä, F. (2019). "Only volunteers"? Personal motivations and political ambiguities within the Refugees Welcome to Malmö civil initiative. In Feischmidt, M., Pries, L. & Cantat, C. (eds.). *Refugee Protection and Civil Society in Europe, pp. 291–318.* Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Goodman, S. (2017). The evolving (re)categorisations of refugees throughout the "refugee/migrant crisis. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 27(2), pp. 105–114. https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.2291. [Accessed: 2025-04-02].

Government Offices of Sweden. 2025. *The Government's priorities*. https://www.government.se/government-policy/the-governments-priorities/. [Accessed 2025-04-05].

Groglopo, A., Fereshteh, A. & Munobwa, J.S. (2023). Structural Racism in Sweden: Framing Attitudes towards Immigrants through the Diversity Barometer Study (2005–2022). *Social Sciences*, 12(421). https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci12070421. [Accessed: 2025-04-08].

Hagelund, A. (2020). After the refugee crisis: Public discourse and policy change in Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Comparative Migration Studies, 8(13). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-019-0169-8. [Accessed: 2025-05-02].

Halperin, S. & Heath, O. (2017). *Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hansen, C. (2019). *Solidarity in Diversity: Activism as a Pathway of Migrant Emplacement in Malmö.* Doctoral dissertation, Malmö University. https://doi.org/10.24834/ISBN.9789178770175. [Accessed: 2025-03-02].

Hansen, C. (2020). Alliances, friendships, and alternative structures: Solidarity among radical left activists and precarious migrants in Malmö. https://doi.org/10.1080/26884674.2020.1797600. [Accessed: 2025-03-16].

Hansen, C. (2021). A Critical Ethnography of Political Activism: Challenges Arising from Practical, Emotional and Theoretical Closeness to the Field. *Kritisk Etnografi*, 4(1), pp. 41–55. https://doi.org/10.33063/diva-457725. [Accessed: 2025-04-23].

Hansen, C. (2022). Migrants and Swedish Activists in Solidarity: Pro-Asylum Activism as a Pathway of Political Socialisation in Malmö. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research,* 12(4), pp. 452–468. https://www.jstor.org/stable/48711588. [Accessed: 2025-03-26].

Hameršak, M. (2022). Migration Regime. *e-ERIM: an online network of keywords of the European irregularized migration regime at the periphery of the EU*. https://e-erim.ief.hr/pojam/rezim-migracija?locale=en. [Accessed: 2025-03-26].

Hellström, A. (2021). How anti-immigration views were articulated in Sweden during and after 2015. *MIM Working Paper Series*, 21(2). 10.24834/isbn.9789178771936. [Accessed: 2025-04-03].

Hellström, A. (2023). The populist divide in far-right political discourse in Sweden: Anti-immigration claims in the Swedish socially conservative online newspaper Samtiden from 2016 to 2022. *Societies*, 13(5). https://doi.org/10.3390/soc13050108. [Accessed: 2025-04-15].

Huysmans, J. (2006). *The Politics of Insecurity: Fear, Migration and Asylum in the EU*. London: Routledge.

Johnson, H. (2012). Moments of solidarity, migrant activism and (non)citizens at global borders: Political agency at Tanzanian refugee camps, Australian detention centres and European borders. In Nyers, P. & Rygiel, K. (eds.). *Citizenship, migrant activism and the politics of movement.* London: Routledge, pp. 109–128.

Johansson, A. and Vinthagen, S. (2013). Dimensions of everyday resistance: An analytical framework. *Critical Sociology.* https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920514524604. [Accessed: 2025-04-18].

Joormann, M. (2018). Asylstaffetten – A longitudinal ethnographic study of protest walks against the detention of asylum seekers in Sweden. *Justice, Power and Resistance*, 2(2), pp. 335–356. http://www.egpress.org/content/vol-2-no-2-2018-justice-power-and-resistance. [Accessed: 2025-04-17].

Jämte, J. (2013). *Antirasismens många ansikten.* PhD dissertation, Umeå university. https://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:oru:diva-80466. [Accessed: 13 May 2025].

Kenes, B. (2021). The Sweden Democrats: Killer of Swedish Exceptionalism. *European Center for Populism Studies*. Available at: https://www.populismstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/ECPS-Party-Profile-Series-1.pdf. [Accessed: 2025-03-08].

Kessler, S. & Haapajärvi, L. (2024). The Nordic migration regimes in crisis: The end of a European exception? *Global and European Challenges on Migration*, 1. https://www.icmigrations.cnrs.fr/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/POLICY-PAPER-REGIMES-MIGRATOIRES-PAYS-NORDIQUES_DEF.pdf. [Accessed: 2025-06-01].

Kings, L. (2022). Navigating Contemporary Developments in Swedish Civil Society: The Case of Save the Children Sweden. In Kravchencko, Z; Kings, L; Jezierska, K (eds.). *Resourceful Civil Society: Navigating the Changing Landscapes of Civil Society Organizations*, pp. 195–216. Cham: Springer.

Kleres, J. (2018). Emotions in the crisis: Mobilising for refugees in Germany and Sweden. In Pfetsch, B. (ed.) *Political Communication Cultures in Europe: Attitudes of Political Actors and Journalists in Nine Countries*, pp. 219–240. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kozinets, R.V. (2015). Netnography. In Ang, P.H. & Mansell, R. (eds.). The International Encyclopedia of Digital Communication and Society.

Kozinets, R. & Nocker, M. (2018). Netnography: Engaging with the Challenges. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198796978.003.0007. [Accessed: 2025-06-01].

Lee, C. (2023). Activism and resistance: Activist dispositions and the hidden hierarchies of action. *Critical Geographies of Resistance.* Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 92–106. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781800882881.00014. [Accessed: 2025-03-07].

Liberalerna., Moderaterna., Kristdemokraterna., Sverigedemokraterna. (2022). *Tidöavtalet - överenskommelse för Sverige.* [The Tidö Agreement - Agreement for Sweden]. https://www.liberalerna.se/wp-content/uploads/tidoavtalet-overenskommelse-for-sverige-slutlig.pdf. [Accessed 2025-02-18].

Lilja, M. (2022). The definition of resistance. *Journal of Political Power*, 15(2), pp. 202–220. https://doi.org/10.1080/2158379X.2022.2061128. [Accessed: 2024-03-03].

Lilja, M. & Vinthagen, S. (2009). Motståndsteorier. In Lilja, M., Vinthagen, S., (eds). *Motstånd.* Gothenburg: Högskolan Väst, pp. 47–93. Available at: https://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:hv:diva-2169. [Accessed: 2025-03-09].

Lidén, G. & Nyhlén, J. (2021). *Local Migration Policy: Governance Structures and Policy Output in Swedish Municipalities.* Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lomelín, C. & Peterson, A. (2023). Theorizing Social Movement Practices. *The Journal of Social Encounters,* 7(2), pp. 209–226. https://doi.org/10.69755/2995-2212.1214. [Accessed: 2025-03-06].

Malmo City. (2025a). *Så styrs Malmö*. https://malmo.se/Om-Malmo-stad/Demokrati-och-politik/Sa-styrs-Malmo.html. [Accessed: 2025-05-17].

Malmo City. (2025b). *Malmö växer – men i långsammare takt*. https://malmo.se/Aktuellt/Artiklar-Malmo-stad/2025-06-04-Malmo-vaxer---men-i-langsammare-takt.html. [Accessed: 2025-08-01].

Marciniak, K. & Tyler, I. (2014). Introduction: Immigrant Protest: Noborder Scholarship. In Marciniak, K. & Tyler, I. (eds.). *Immigrant Protest: Politics, Aesthetics, and Everyday Dissent.* New York: State University of New York Press, pp. 1–22.

Migration Agency. (2025a). *About the Swedish migration agency. This is what the Swedish Migration Agency does.* https://www.migrationsverket.se/en/about-the-swedish-migration-agency/this-is-what-the-swedish-migration-agency-does.html. [Accessed 2025-05-05].

Migration Agency. (2025b). *Apply for protection under the Temporary Protection Directive.* https://www.migrationsverket.se/en/you-want-to-apply/protection-under-the-temporary-protection-directive/apply-for-protection-under-the-temporary-protection-directive.html. [2025-05-03].

Migration Agency. (2025c). *Asylsökande barn* [Asylumseeking children]. https://www.migrationsverket.se/du-vill-ansoka/asyl/asylsokande-barn.html. [2025-05-03].

Millward, P. & Takhar, S. (2019). Social Movements, Collective Action and Activism. *Sociology,* 53(3). https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038518817287. [Accessed: 2025-04-03].

Muhammad, D. (2025). The Local Turns in the Field of Migration. *ABI Working Papers*, 25. https://www.arnold-bergstraesser.de/sites/default/files/2023-12/abi_workingpaper_25_muhammad_localturnmigration.pdf. [Accessed: 2025-05-21].

Müllenmeister, C., Maersk, J.L. & Farias, L. (2022). Exploring doing activism as a means for political action and social transformation in Germany. *Journal of Occupational Science*, 30(3), pp. 377–389. https://doi.org/10.1080/14427591.2022.2110146. [Accessed: 2025-04-26].

Nicholls, W. & Uitermark, J. (2017). *Cities and Social Movements: Immigrant Rights Activism in the US, France, and the Netherlands, 1970–2015*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Nicolini, D. (2013). *Practice Theory, Work, and Organization: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University.

Nordling, V. (2017). *Destabilising Citizenship Practices?: Social Work and Undocumented Migrants in Sweden.* Dissertation, Lund University. https://lucris.lub.lu.se/ws/portalfiles/portal/31006289/Destabilising_Citizenship_Practices.pdf. [Accessed: 2025-04-28].

Nordling, V., Sager, M. & Söderman, E. (2017). From citizenship to mobile commons: reflections on the local struggles of undocumented migrants in the city of Malmö, Sweden. Citizenship Studies, 21(6), pp. 710–726. https://doi.org/10.1080/13621025.2017.1341660. [Accessed: 2025-05-27].

Nyers, P. & Rygiel, K. (2012). *Citizenship, Migrant Activism and the Politics of Movement*. London: Routledge.

Oikonomakis, L. (2018). *Solidarity in Transition: The Case of Greece. In Della Porta, D. (ed.) Solidarity Mobilizations in the 'Refugee Crisis'.* Cham: Springer, pp. 65–98.

Ortiz, J., (2019). Giving voice to the voiceless: The use of digital technologies by marginalized groups. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, 45, pp. 1–32. https://doi.org/10.17705/1CAIS.04502. [Accessed: 2025.04-01].

Palaganas, E.C., Caricativo, R.D., Sanchez, M.C. & Molintas, M.V.P. (2017). Reflexivity in qualitative research: A journey of learning. *The Qualitative Report,* 22(2), pp. 426–438. https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol22/iss2/5/. [Accessed: 2025.04-02].

Paffenholz, T. (2015). Civil Society and Peacebuilding. *Development Dialogue*, pp. 108–118. https://www.daghammarskjold.se/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/DHF_DD63_p108-118.pd. [Accessed: 2025-05-12].

Pelling, L. (2023). Integrationens slut – en analys av Tidöavtalet. In Elsrud, T., Gruber, S. & Lundberg, A. (eds.) *Rättssäkerheten och solidariteten – vad hände?: en antologi om mottagande av människor på flykt*. Malmö: Malmö University, pp. 233–246.

Ponce, A. (2014). Racialization, Resistance, and the Migrant Rights Movement: A Historical Analysis. *Critical Sociology*, 40(1), 9-27. https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920512465210. [Accessed 2025-08-03].

Purcell, M. (2006). Urban Democracy and the Local Trap. Urban Studies, 43(11), 1921-1941. https://doi.org/10.1080/00420980600897782. [Accessed 2025-04-21].

Rea, A., Martiniello, M., Mazzola, A. & Meuleman, B. (2019). The refugee reception crisis in Europe: Polarized opinions and mobilizations. Bruxelles: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles.

Roggeband, C. & Krizsán, A. (2021). The Selective Closure of Civic Space. *Global Policy*, 12(S5), pp. 23–33. https://doi.org/10.1111/1758-5899.12973. [Accessed: 2025-04-01]

Roth, J. (2020). Intersectionality Strikes Back: Right-Wing Patterns of En-Gendering and Feminist Contestations in the Americas. In Dietze, G. & Roth, J (eds.). *Right-Wing Populism and Gender: European Perspectives and Beyond.* Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, pp. 251–272. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783839449806-014. [Accessed: 2025-08-07].

Rouse, J. (2007). Practice Theory. *Division I Faculty Publications*, 43. https://digitalcollections.wesleyan.edu/. [Accessed: 2025-07-06].

Rygiel, K. (2011). Bordering solidarities: migrant activism and the politics of movement and camps at Calais. *Citizenship Studies*, 15(1), pp.1–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/13621025.2011.534911. [Acccessed 2025-03-14].

Rzadtki, L. (2022). *"We are all activists". Exploring Solidarities in Activism By, With and For Refugees and Migrants in Hamburg.* Bielefeld: transcript Verlag. https://doi.org/10.14361/9783839463499. [Accessed 2025-03-03].

Sandberg, M., Schultz, J., & Kohl, K.S. (2025). The temporary turn in asylum: a new agenda for researching the politics of deterrence in practice. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2024.2441594. [Accessed 2025-06-01].

Sager, M. (2011). Everyday Clandestinity: Experiences on the Margins of Citizenship and Migration Policies. Doctoral dissertation, Lund University. https://lup.lub.lu.se/search/files/6179754/1770358.pdf. [Accessed 2025-03-26].

Sager, M. and Öberg, K. (2017). Articulations of deportability: Changing migration policies in Sweden 2015/2016. *Refugee Review*, 3, pp.2–14. https://espminetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/2-Sager-%C3%96berg.pdf. [Accessed 2025-04-03].

Sager, M. (2018). Struggles around representations and in/visibility in everyday migrant irregularity in Sweden. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research,* 8(3), pp.175–182. https://doi.org/10.2478/njmr-2018-0022. [Accessed 2025-02-17].

Scaramuzzino, G., & Scaramuzzino, R. (2017) The weapon of a new generation?—Swedish Civil Society Organizations' use of social media to influence politics. *Journal of*

Information Technology & Politics, 14(1), pp. 46–61. doi: 10.1080/19331681.2016.1276501. [Accessed 2025-03-01].

Schatzki, T.R. (2001). *Practice theory.* In R, Schatzki, T, Knorr Cetina, K. & von Savigny, E. (eds). *The practice turn in contemporary theory.* London: Routledge.

Schierup, C.-U., & Ålund, A. (2011). The End of Swedish Exceptionalism? Citizenship, Neoliberalism and the Politics of Exclusion. *Race & Class*, 53(1), pp. 45–64. https://doi.org/10.1177/0306396811406780. [Accessed 2025-03-03].

Schclarek Mulinari, L. (2017) Contesting Sweden's Chicago: why journalists dispute the crime image of Malmö. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 34(3), pp. 206–219. doi: 10.1080/15295036.2017.1309056. [Accessed 2025-04-13].

Schclarek Mulinari, L. (2024). Sweden's race to the bottom: advancing a racial security state. *Race & Class*, 66(3), 17-34. https://doi.org/10.1177/03063968241242743. [Accessed 2025-02-13].

Scholten, P. (2022). *Introduction to Migration Studies. An Interactive Guide to the Literatures on Migration and Diversity.* Cham: Springer.

Serrat, R., & Cannella, V. (2019). Political Activism. In Gu, D., Dupre, M. (eds) *Encyclopedia of Gerontology and Population Aging.* Cham: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69892-2_238-1. [Accessed 2025-03-03].

SIDA. (2024). *Samarbete med civila samhället utreds efter regeringsbeslut om CSO-strategin.* https://www.sida.se/om-sida/nyheter/samarbete-med-civila-samhallet-utreds-efter-regeringsbeslut-om-cso-strategin. [Accessed: 2025-03-18].

Shove, E., Pantzar, M., & Watson, M. (2012). *The dynamics of social practice: Everyday life and how it changes*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446250655. [Accessed 2025-08-02].

Sjöberg, K. (2018) *Ankomst Malmö. Röster om flyktingmottagandet hösten 2015*. Malmö: Malmö stadsarkiv.

Solano, P. (2025). 'Civil society hospitality': Welcoming initiatives and pragmatism targeting unaccompanied youth in Malmö. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, 15(1): 4, pp.1–17. https://doi.org/10.33134/njmr.796. [Accessed 2025-07-03].

Steinhilper, E. (2021). *Migrant Protest: Interactive Dynamics in Precarious Mobilizations.* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1cvvbgc. [Accessed 2025-04-21].

Swedish Police Authority. (2025). *Viljan att ta sitt liv – orsaken till skolattacken på Campus Risbergska.* [The desire to take one's own life – the cause of the school attack at Campus Risbergska]. https://polisen.se/aktuellt/nyheter/bergslagen/2025/maj/viljan-att-ta-sitt-liv--orsaken-till-skolattacken-pa-campus-risbergska/. [Accessed 2025-09-03].

Talebi, N. (2024). Talking Past Each Other: Politics of Knowledge Production in Transnational Power Relations. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, 14(4):2, pp. 1–18. https://doi.org/10.33134/njmr.776. [Accessed: 2025-06-07].

Vukomanović, D. (2021). Migration and Diversity – digital activism, identities and boundaries. In Giacomozzi, A. & Bondarevskaya, I. (eds.). *Political and Economic Self-Constitution: Education for Digital Citizenship in Post-Pandemic Times,* pp. 63–66. http://iriss.idn.org.rs/id/eprint/643. [Accessed: 2025-03-27].

Wimmer, A., & Schiller, N. G. (2003). Methodological Nationalism, the Social Sciences, and the Study of Migration: An Essay in Historical Epistemology1. *International Migration Review*, 37(3), 576-610. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2003.tb00151.x. [Accessed 2015-03-18].

Welch, D. & Yates, L. (2018). The Practices of Collective Action: Practice Theory, Sustainability Transitions and Social Change. Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour. https://doi.org/10.1111/jtsb.12168. [Accessed: 2025-08-01]

Wyss, A. (2022). *Navigating the European migration regime: Male migrants, interrupted journeys and precarious lives.* Bristol: Bristol University Press.

Zapata-Barrero, R., Caponio, T. & Scholten, P. (2017). Theorizing the "local turn" in a multi-level governance framework of analysis: A case study in immigrant policies. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 83(2), pp. 241–246. https://doi.org/10.1177/0020852316688426. [Accessed: 2025-05-05].

Özkula, S.M. (2021). What is digital activism anyway? Social constructions of the "digital" in contemporary activism. *Journal of Digital Social Research*, 3(3). https://doi.org/10.33621/jdsr.v3i3.44. [Accessed: 20251-05-19].

9.2. Legal Sources

Dir. 2023:149. *En ny modell för kvalificering till socialförsäkring och ekonomiskt bistånd för nyanlända och icke-medborgare.* [A new model for qualifying for social insurance and financial assistance for newly arrived individuals and non-citizens]. https://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/51322a910a5741d3a9b944e6b9a7c7b0/dir--2023-149-en-ny-modell-for-kvalificering-till-socialforsakring-och-ekonomiskt-bistand-for-nyanlanda-och-icke-medborgare.pdf. [Accessed: 2025-05-02].

Prop 2021/22:284. *Ett höjt försörjningskrav för arbetskraftsinvandrare* [An increased maintenance requirement for labor migrants]. https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/proposition/2022/09/prop.-202122284. [Accessed: 2025-06-01].

Prop 2023/24:12. *Effektivare verktyg vid inre utlänningskontroll* [More effective tools for internal immigration control]. https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/proposition/2023/09/prop.-20232412. [Accessed: 2025-05-08].

Prop. 2024/25:49. *En ny ordning för asylsökandes boende*. [A new system for the accommodation of asylum seekers]. https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/proposition/2024/11/20242549/. [Accessed: 2025-09-01].

Prop 2024/25:92. *Preskription av avlägsnandebeslut och vissa frågor om återreseförbud*. [Statute of limitations on expulsion decisions and certain issues concerning re-entry bans]. https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/proposition/2025/01/prop.-20242592. [Accessed: 2025-09-03].

SOU 2015/16:174. *Förslag om att tillfälligt begränsa möjligheten att få uppehållstillstånd i Sverige.* [Proposal to temporarily restrict the possibility of obtaining a residence permit in Sweden]. https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/proposition/2016/04/prop.-201516174. [Accessed: 2025-03-01].

SOU 2024:80. Vissa åtgärder för stärkt återvändandeverksamhet och utlänningskontroll [Certain measures to strengthen return operations and immigration control]. https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/statens-offentliga-utredningar/2024/11/sou-202480/. [Accessed: 2025-08-01].

SOU 2025:1:23. *Skärpta krav för svenskt medborgarskap*. [Stricter requirements for Swedish citizenship]. https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/statens-offentliga-utredningar/2025/01/sou-20251/. [Accessed: 2025-08-07].

SOU 2025:33. Skärpta och tydligare krav på vandel för uppehållstillstånd. [Stricter and clearer requirements regarding conduct for residence permits]. https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/statens-offentliga-utredningar/2025/04/sou-202533/. [Accessed: 2025-09-01].