Dilemmas of recognition and redistribution: Constituting intersectional subjects of inclusion in migrant support work

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Abstract
In this study, I explore how the subject of inclusion is constituted as intersectional in the organizational discursive practices of a civil society organization promoting migrant and refugee inclusion. Drawing on Crenshaw’s notion of political intersectionality and Fraser’s politics of recognition and redistribution, I analyze the political dimension of an inclusion project by showing how intersectional categories are connected to differentiated struggles and strategies of inclusion. The ethnographic study illustrates how two subject positions are constituted as being underpinned by either the logic of recognition or redistribution. Moreover, the findings show how the two strategies interact, revealing the dynamics of privilege and disadvantage at play in the inclusion project. The paper contributes to critical studies on inclusion and intersectionality in organizational contexts by extending our understanding of power dynamics and tensions as integral parts of the intersectional approach.

KEYWORDS
disadvantage and privilege, inclusion, intersectionality, migrants, politics of recognition and redistribution
Organization scholars have directed increasing attention to refugees and migrants as targets of varied organizational projects of inclusion (Ortlieb et al., 2021; Romani et al., 2019; Tomlinson, 2010). These organizational efforts aim to tackle different forms of disadvantages faced by migrants in societies, caused by subtle and blatant discrimination, under-employment, administrative and language barriers and the consequent lack of access to cultural, social, economic or political resources (Ressia et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2022). Importantly, migrants are a heterogeneous group and social categories, such as gender, class, race, ethnicity, age, language, nationality, migration status, or religion and the complex ways they interact, are key in understanding migrants' societal positions and experiences of disadvantage (Andrijasevic et al., 2019; Netto et al., 2020). Thus, to avoid faulted assumptions of universal "migrant disadvantage," organizational projects of inclusion need to approach their subjects through an intersectional lens.

Intersectionality was first coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, building on the legacy of Black feminist scholarship, as she demonstrated how individuals, who should have benefitted from anti-discrimination legislation either based on their gender or race, benefitted from neither (Crenshaw, 1989). Soon after, she highlighted how feminist and anti-racist social movements operated in tandem to marginalize the issue of violence against women of color (Crenshaw, 1991). Since then, intersectionality has become a "buzzword" which is also increasingly employed in organization studies (Rodriguez et al., 2016; Villeseca et al., 2018). Organizational researchers have studied the experiences of individuals whose identities are formed at the intersection of several social categories (the identity-based approach to intersectionality) (Atewologun et al., 2016) or focused on the intersections of different structures of inequality (the structural approach) (Healy et al., 2011; Ruiz Castro & Holvino, 2016). However, we know less about how intersectionality is navigated in organizational change projects aimed at tackling varied intersectional disadvantages.

In this paper, I seek to advance knowledge in this field and broaden our understanding of "putting intersectionality into practice" (Rodriguez et al., 2016). I draw on Crenshaw's (1991) notion of "political intersectionality," which focuses on how intersectional identities are captured and strategically used to change agendas. Political intersectionality offers a lens through which to reveal the faulted universalizing assumptions behind inclusion strategies and to show how a strategy along one axis of inequality is not neutral toward strategies along other axes (Verloo, 2006). While political intersectionality recognizes that the struggles and strategies for inclusion (between and within groups) are differentiated, it says little about the nature of these struggles. For this reason, I place Crenshaw's political intersectionality in dialog with Nancy Fraser's work on the politics of recognition and redistribution (Fraser, 1995, 2003). Fraser maintains that recognition (addressing cultural injustices) and redistribution (addressing economic injustices) are mutually implicated and are necessary requirements for justice. However, she also discusses the relationship between them as "dilemmatic," meaning that they require distinct remedies that are not easily pursued simultaneously (Fraser, 1995). Following Fraser, we can acknowledge that the disadvantaged position of refugees and migrants stems from both the political-economic and the cultural-valuational structures of society and efforts to promote their inclusion require reconciling both recognition and redistribution (Andersen et al., 2009; Näre, 2013). However, the intersectionality differentiated sub-groups of refugees and migrants suffer from injustices that are more rooted in one or the other. This has implications for how the organizational projects promoting inclusion address and discursively construct the disadvantages attached to their target groups. To explore the difficult reconciliation of recognition and redistribution in relation to intersectional categories, I follow critical diversity scholars who have focused on the discursive construction of "diversity subjects" and the power effects of discourses in terms of making certain positions in/visible or il/legitimate (Ahonen et al., 2014; Dobusch, 2017; Kornau et al., 2021; Zanoni & Janssens, 2003). From the perspective of political intersectionality, this implies the disadvantaging/privileging of specific intersectional positions, as discussed above. Thus, the research questions guiding the study are as follows: How do organizational discursive practices constitute subjects of inclusion as intersectional and what are their effects in terms of possibilities and limitations of reconciling recognition and redistribution for different (sub-)groups of migrants in the context of a civil society organization promoting refugee and migrant inclusion.

The paper draws from ethnographic fieldwork conducted with a civil society organization that supports the socioeconomic inclusion of refugees and migrants through offering free digital education. Due to the organization's
attempt to recognize and account for the heterogeneity of migrants, I understand their work as guided by "intersectional sensibilities" (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1243; Healy et al., 2011). In inquiring into how everyday discursive practices in the organization constitute subjects of inclusion, I focus on how intersectional categories are deployed as connected to differentiated strategies of inclusion. First, the findings reveal how the migrant subject is constituted through the dynamic interplay of disadvantage/privilege along the axes of socioeconomic class, gender, ethnicity, and migration background in distinct ways depending on whether the subject is underpinned by the logic of recognition or redistribution. Second, the findings draw attention to the power effects of the practices and how the strategies of recognition and redistribution intersect. This reveals both the tensions inherent in attempts to reconcile the two strategies, as well as the structures of power that condition "who" can become recognized as an "includable" subject.

This paper contributes to the critical literature on organizational inclusion efforts (Adamson et al., 2021; Ortlieb et al., 2021; Romani et al., 2019) and to studies on intersectionality in organizations (Rodriguez et al., 2016; Villeseche et al., 2018) by drawing attention to the political dimension of how intersectional categories are employed in the differentiated strategies and struggles for inclusion. I argue that this perspective is important for understanding how an intersectional approach to inclusion becomes characterized by tensions and requires continuous attention to the operation of dynamics of privilege and disadvantage. Extending our understanding of these tensions and power dynamics is key in ensuring that intersectionality can be a transformative tool to promote inclusion and social justice.

2 | THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 | Migrants as intersectional subjects of inclusion

Different types of migrants are marginalized in societies in various ways, but it is worth asking whether they can be regarded as a structural group due to the differing societal positions (Young, 2001). This question is pertinent especially in today’s societies shaped by superdiversity, which refers to “a condition [...] distinguished by a dynamic interplay of variables among an increased number of new, small and scattered, multiple-origin, transnationally connected, socio-economically differentiated and legally stratified immigrants” (Vertovec, 2007, cited in Ozkazanc-Pan, 2019, p. 479). Hence, assuming an intersectional perspective is key to understanding migrants’ societal position of disadvantage (Andrijašević et al., 2019; Ressia et al., 2017). Intersectionality—which can be defined as “the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relations and subject formations” (McCall, 2005, p. 1771)—draws our attention to how categories such as ethnicity, gender, religion, class, migration status or nationality mutually constitute the disadvantaged position of migrants in societies (Ressia et al., 2017). Existing intersectional literature has increasingly accounted for the simultaneous and dynamic processes of disadvantage/privilege, instead of merely focusing on different forms of oppression, and captured the complex and context-specific ways in which the interaction of categories can explain outcomes of inequality (Risberg & Pilhofer, 2018; Tatli & Özbilgin, 2012a). For instance, due to the categories’ relational nature and the contextualized meanings attached to them, embedded in a specific time and place, categories can be connected to unexpected outcomes in terms of inequality in different empirical contexts (Alberti & Iannuzzi, 2020; Ruiz Castro & Holvino, 2016; Tatli & Özbilgin, 2012a). At the core of these approaches is a perspective on intersectional categories as “always in the process of creating and being created by dynamics of power” (Cho et al., 2013, p. 795).

How should organizational projects promoting inclusion and addressing intersectional disadvantages navigate the complex connections between categories and power dynamics? Existing research on organizational diversity and inclusion efforts has mainly emphasized how, instead of constructing their subjects as attached to a single category (Ortlieb et al., 2021; Tomlinson, 2010; Zanoni et al., 2010). Critical studies underline how in corporate contexts, inclusion efforts tend to benefit only those individuals whose “difference” can be instrumentalized for business purposes (Dobusch, 2017; Tyler & Vachhani, 2021). For example, refugees, as subjects of inclusion, are expected to be more of the “same” (to
fit the norm) to show their "difference" as added value (Ponzoni et al., 2017, p. 232). This has obvious intersectional implications, meaning that some sub-groups of refugees (who are closer to the norm) benefit from inclusion more than others, leading to "unequal dynamics of inclusion" (Dobusch, 2017) across different intersectional categories. Given the heterogeneity of any social identity group constructed as a target of inclusion, the effects are always differentiated and perhaps inevitably unequal. However, as pointed out by Dennissen et al. (2018), the existing organizational research on diversity and inclusion programs has not sufficiently addressed these points from an intersectional perspective.

" Differences" are, however, not used only for business benefit. Instead, the discourse of any change project, originating from organizations, policy or social movements, always constitutes its subjects and objectives in specific ways that may privilege the interests of some at the expense of others. As Chun et al. (2013) highlight, as a "social movement strategy," intersectionality "promotes thinking strategically and situationally about which differences matter and why" (Chun et al., 2013, p. 925). Studies on social movements demonstrate that such "intersectional thinking" is not easy to put into practice (Luna, 2016; Townsend-Bell, 2011). Questions of what equality issues to focus on are far from straightforward and those relatively more privileged within the group may dominate in determining the "shared" goals and agendas (Laperrière & Lépinard, 2016). More generally, the implementation of change projects runs the risk of being subject to the very processes and structures they are designed to disrupt (Healy et al., 2011; Rodriguez et al., 2016; Romani et al., 2019). Thus, the dynamics of disadvantage and privilege always shape the inclusion project, even when agendas are not determined for business interest or by the more powerful group members. The more complex ways power operates can be investigated by turning to political intersectionality.

2.2 Political intersectionality and politics of recognition and redistribution

Crenshaw’s notion of "political intersectionality" (Crenshaw, 1991) is a useful heuristic to draw attention to the differences between political strategies to tackle intersectional inequalities (Borchorst & Teigen, 2010). First, political intersectionality highlights in-group power dynamics through which specific intersectional positions become privileged or marginalized in the articulations of a "shared" position of disadvantage (Laperrière & Lépinard, 2016). Second, political intersectionality recognizes that "strategies on one axis of inequality are mostly not neutral toward other axes" (Verloo, 2006, p. 213). This means that specific ways of approaching inclusion may benefit one (sub-)group but inadvertently disadvantage another. Verloo (2006) underlines that inequalities connected to social categories are not equivalent and focusing on their similarities overlooks the political dimension of establishing equality goals. To illustrate, she examines the distinct origins and mechanisms of inequality associated with commonly understood social categories (in her comparison, gender, race/ethnicity, sexuality and class). These differences also manifest in the unique struggles, strategies and approaches to addressing these inequalities (Verloo, 2006, pp. 217–220).

To further explore the claims and strategies for inclusion as differentiated, I follow, for example, Verloo (2006) and Yuval-Davis (2006), who have discussed intersectionality in conjunction with another seminal theory in feminist politics, Nancy Fraser’s politics of recognition and redistribution (Fraser, 1995, 2003). Politics of redistribution refer to socioeconomic injustice concerning questions of economic marginalization, exploitation and deprivation from an adequate material standard of living, while recognition deals with cultural injustice rooted in social patterns of representation, interpretation and communication (Fraser, 2003, p. 13). Fraser emphasizes that the two are intertwined: "cultural norms that are unfairly biased against some are institutionalized in the state and the economy and meanwhile, economic disadvantage impedes equal participation in the making of culture, in public spheres and in everyday life [...] The result is often a vicious circle of cultural and economic subordination" (Fraser, 1995, p. 71). Together, misrecognition and maldistribution signify social subordination in the sense of being prevented from "participating as a peer in social life" (Fraser, 2003, p. 29). In Western societies, the disadvantaged position of refugees and migrants can similarly be tied to the interplay of cultural and economic injustices, as, for instance, migrants of Middle Eastern and African origins are discursively constructed as the "inferior Other" through neo-colonial
representational patterns and attached to a “discourse of lack” that also affects their position in the labor markets (Holck & Muhr, 2017; Ponzoni et al., 2017; Romani et al., 2019).

Fraser underlines that marginalized groups need both recognition and redistribution. However, she maintains that the relationship between them is “dilemmatic” and reconciling the two can prove difficult for claim-making. For example, public assistance programs (affirmative redistribution remedy) targeting the disadvantaged may accomplish some material redistribution but simultaneously stigmatize their target groups as “deficient,” fostering misrecognition (Fraser, 2003, p. 65). In turn, affirmative remedies for misrecognition that focus on valorizing group specificity fail to address issues of equitable redistribution of resources and can further contribute to misrecognition by reifying group identities (Fraser, 2003, p. 92).

Fraser does not explicitly use intersectionality theory but her discussion on recognition and redistribution is in line with it in both underlining the in-group heterogeneity as well as how groups struggle from misrecognition and maldistribution in distinct ways. Fraser’s critics have challenged the usefulness of separating recognition and redistribution (Butler, 1997), but Fraser has underlined that the distinction is analytical and exposing their distinctive logic is useful for extending our understanding of central political dilemmas (Fraser, 2003). The strategies for remedy depend on the context-specific injustices of misrecognition and maldistribution that are, in turn, differently connected with intersectional categories.

3 | METHODOLOGY

3.1 | Empirical context and case organization

The study draws from ethnographic fieldwork with a civil society organization supporting refugees and migrants, Do IT (pseudonym), located in Berlin, Germany. The focus of Do IT’s work is on free digital training, particularly more advanced courses on programming, but also on basic digital skills. Do IT began their work in the wake of the “refugee crisis” in 2016, during which an unprecedented number of asylum seekers arrived in Germany. Civil society promptly responded to the situation, as numerous initiatives were launched to address the needs of people arriving (Hamann & Karakayali, 2016). Do IT was among them, seeking to leverage Berlin’s technology sector to provide opportunities for newcomers. By providing free digital education and connecting students with partner companies, with the mission to “Provide high-quality education and use technology to connect people and help create new opportunities for all” (website), Do IT believed that digital inclusion was key to promoting the socioeconomic inclusion of refugees and migrants more generally. At the time of the fieldwork, Do IT had around 10 employees, most of them working part-time and a much bigger community of volunteers. Their funding mainly came from corporate partners.

3.2 | Ethnographic fieldwork and reflexivity

The ethnographic fieldwork was part of my PhD project, which focused on civil society organizations that promote the inclusion of refugees and migrants in Berlin. At the beginning of the project, I contacted many organizations working in this field and initially met with and conducted interviews with representatives of nine different organizations. I then became more active as a volunteer with three organizations that focused on different activities to promote inclusion in the areas of education, employment, entrepreneurship, language, mentoring, and social activities (Kangas-Müller et al., 2023). The organizations were generally quite receptive to new volunteers and interested in my research plans, which facilitated gaining access to the organizations. Early on during the fieldwork, I paid attention to how the different organizations attracted and targeted different migrant groups and how the heterogeneity of migrants came to matter in the organizations’ work. This led me to consider intersectionality as a theoretical framework. I selected Do IT as the focus of the study on intersectionality because their participants were the most heterogeneous as a group and they had made intentional efforts to target different groups of migrants. Thus, their
approach can be understood as motivated by “intersectional sensibility” (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1243), even though it was not explicitly labeled as such.

My main volunteer role was a support teacher for a weekly basic digital skills class, which involved teaching, but also planning content for classes together with other volunteers. Additionally, I observed a variety of other classes and attended community events, training for volunteers and information events for interested new students and volunteers. These served as an opportunity to not only observe but get to know the community and have numerous informal conversations with employees, volunteers and participants. The informal conversations are included in the field notes, which amount to over 90 pages. In addition, I conducted ten semi-structured interviews with three employees and seven volunteers, two of whom were also participants and two former participants (see Table 1). Interview participants were selected as representatives of somewhat different roles and backgrounds, but all of them were regarded by themselves and others as active members of the community. All interviewees were non-German nationals, which was characteristic of the international group of employees and volunteers at Do IT. To ensure the anonymity of the interview participants, the table includes regions instead of countries of origin. Finally, I gathered a rich collection of documentary data published by Do IT during the 4 years of 2016–2019. This included blog posts, media interviews, social media posts and videos, including live recordings of informational and end-of-semester events.

Reflexivity about power relations and ethical considerations guided the research process before, during and after the fieldwork. In particular, reflections about my positionality affected and oriented my engagement in the field with employees, other volunteers and course participants. Before and during the fieldwork, I lived in Germany as a White, European and socioeconomically privileged migrant, which meant that I shared some commonalities in migrancy experiences within the heterogeneous group of migrants and that various aspects of my social identity came to shape in situated ways my positionality in relation to my research participants (Rodriguez & Ridgway, 2023). However, typically, there was a significant power asymmetry between myself and the participants, at times exacerbated by my position as a volunteer teacher. I approached power asymmetries as something that cannot be resolved, which means that I sought to take responsibility for my privileged position (Skeggs, 2001). Thus, ethical considerations were situated and ongoing and resulted in me, for example, not pursuing interviews when it seemed cumbersome for participants or when I could not be certain that consent was knowingly given, which could happen due to language barriers. In my informal conversations with people in the field, I have always disclosed my identity as a researcher and informed people about my research.

### 3.3 Process of analysis

The discursive perspective assumed in the analysis focused on how subject positions are constituted in the organizational discursive practices, which are understood as intertwined with the "material practices that envelope and

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Maria</td>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>Western Europe</td>
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<td>Cinthia</td>
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interpolate them" (Hardy & Thomas, 2015, p. 690). Thus, my focus encompassed the everyday talk of organizational actors (employees and volunteers) and the texts produced by the organization, as well as organizational practices, including the design and organization of training or student selection processes.

I began with a close read of the entire data set: field notes, interview transcripts and texts. First, I analyzed how the disadvantage of the refugee and migrant subjects was discursively constructed and the emergent intersectional categories (Tatli & Özbilgin, 2012b) that this form of disadvantage relied on. These categories were socioeconomic class, ethnicity, gender and migration background (combining legal status and circumstances of migration). Informed by the intersectionality literature and the discussions that reject a static approach to categories (e.g., Risberg & Pilhofer, 2018), I focused on the dynamic nature of how the categories and their mutual constitution were associated with disadvantage/privilege, instead of specific meanings attached to the categories. At this stage, I recognized differing logics underpinning how the categories were deployed in the discursive practices and turned to Crenshaw's notion of political intersectionality and Fraser's politics of recognition and redistribution to make sense of these differences. Finally, following Fraser's discussions of recognition and redistribution as necessary requirements for justice which are also difficult to reconcile in practice offered me a suitable framework to examine how the strategies interact and what implications this may have for promoting inclusion for different sub-groups of refugees and migrants.

4 | FINDINGS

The findings demonstrate that intersectional categories of socioeconomic class, ethnicity, migration background, and gender were deployed in two distinct ways to constitute the subjects of inclusion in the organizational discursive practices. Connecting these two subject positions to the differentiated strategies and struggles behind the inclusion project, I illustrate how the subject positions are underpinned by either the logic of recognition or the logic of redistribution. Subsequently, I analyze how the strategies intersect and unveil the power effects of the discursive practices by examining the possibilities and limitations of reconciling recognition and redistribution for intersectionally diverse migrant groups.

4.1 | Constituting the intersectional migrant subjects

4.1.1 | Subjects of recognition

Vignette 1: There was a sense of possibility in the air. "Fifty thousand open positions in the IT industry, and the number is only going upwards," Maria said waving her hands enthusiastically and pointing at the number on the slide. "It's a win-win situation," she added. I had arrived at a volunteer info event, in which Maria, responsible for volunteer recruitment, was just giving a short introduction to Do IT's mission. I turned to Amir on my left, a migrant from Iran who was already employed by the technology sector in Berlin and was now keen to help others find jobs. "Wow," he whispered, impressed by the number. The Facebook post for the event highlighted the huge amount of talent that can be found among the recently arrived refugees and migrants. Instead of representing a problem, they could become a solution and help fill the shortage of IT professionals in Germany. The room was packed with people eager to help make that happen.

(Field note)

This vignette demonstrates how the logic of recognition constituted refugees and migrants as skilled and talented individuals, a "solution" rather than a problem. This operated to remedy the misrecognition of refugees and ethnic minority migrants that results from the institutionalized forms of stereotypical and neo-colonial representation that attach them to the "discourse of lack" (Ponzoni et al., 2017). The emphasis on qualifications has evident class-based implications, that is, suggesting that many refugees and migrants are highly educated. The educational background
was deemed important to highlight, as Elise noted: "Sometimes people assume that the people are really poor. Some of them are, but others—they want to be treated as normal people because that’s what they used to be. They lived in perfect houses and had cars and all that." Thus, employees and volunteers strategically emphasized the high-skill level of refugees to serve the recognition project. Do IT’s external communication included messages such as: "When you used to be a doctor or an engineer or a teacher and you come here and you’re just a refugee, all you crave is meaning" (a quote highlighted from a media interview; Facebook post, 2018). The privileged background was paralleled with the current position of disadvantage, as illustrated in the following quote:

I met Ali, who had studied computer science for three years at Baghdad University. He then arrived in Germany and wasn’t able to continue his studies. He wasn’t able to continue programming simply because he was lacking a laptop. And I thought “this can’t be!” Here we have a young talented man, who has a skill, that is so sorely needed by the German industry.

(Zara, Founder and CEO, video recording of an event 2016)

In this example, emphasizing a higher education background promotes recognition by rejecting an essentialist disadvantaged subject and de-normalizes ("I thought this can’t be") the disadvantaged situation they currently inhabit.

Remedying the misrecognition of refugees was evident in the way the employees and volunteers sought to counter negative stereotypes: "When we talk to a company, we tell them, ‘hey, a refugee is not what you think’, or ‘a refugee is someone who can be as qualified as you are and has a super cool background’," Maria explained. Importantly, instead of aiming to positively recognize the “difference” of refugees, the group was detached from their “excessive ascribed difference that prevents them from participating as peers in social life” (Fraser, 2003, p. 36). As part of this detaching, Do IT had opened its classes to different migrant groups. "If we have only refugees, we tag them as ‘refugees.’ […]. We should not label anyone or generalise," Cinthia explained.

Ethnic disadvantage was not highlighted in Do IT’s external communication or in the events that rather focused on representing refugees and migrants in a positive light, as illustrated in vignette 1. However, the disadvantage resulting from ethnic discrimination was acknowledged especially in discussions among the volunteers: "Many people do find jobs. But from what I’ve seen, I do think students who are not from Middle Eastern countries have an easier time finding jobs than those who are," volunteer Rick emphasized. At the same time, ethnic disadvantage was discursively co-constituted with socioeconomic privilege which made it seemingly easier to overcome. Employment in the IT sector was especially underlined as a strategy for overcoming ethnic and migration-based disadvantages. The characteristic of the IT industry as already international in the local context of Berlin was deemed crucially important. The accessibility of the IT industry was captured with statements such as: “If you can code, you are welcomed in the German tech industry. Skin color and nationality do not matter” (Facebook post, 2017). In this statement, structural discrimination and racism are recognized, but the IT industry is created as the exception. Similarly, the employees emphasized that introductions to companies help overcome disadvantages resulting from ethnic discrimination: "It was quite difficult to get our students into actually getting interviews, not even hired, but just getting interviews. But what really was helping a lot was that we were going with the students to companies, making workshops, so they could get to know them," Maria noted.

In sum, the subject of recognition was co-constituted through class privilege and migration-based and ethnic disadvantages. The class privilege operated to construct the disadvantaged position as more fluid, which allowed for clear approaches for tackling the (ethnic and migration) disadvantages: introducing students to companies and prepping their digital skills to become employed in the IT industry.

4.1.2 Subject of redistribution

Vignette 2: “I want to make a difference in these women’s lives. Their situation is so bad." I was attending a volunteer training event and we were doing a round of introductions. Alya, an Iranian woman
who had lived for long in Germany was just explaining why she wanted to volunteer. The topic of the training was “how to keep up students’ motivation.” It was evident that Alya herself did not struggle with motivation to volunteer. The round went on until it was Ben’s turn. “I am teaching basic introduction to computer. And it is immensely difficult,” he said emphasising the last words. His comment was followed by silence. Everyone looked serious. Cinthia, the programme coordinator, nodded. She knew what he meant.

(Field notes)

Vignette 2 highlights how, in stark contrast to the logic of recognition, the subject position underpinned by redistributive logic was characterized by an emphasis on the severity of the disadvantage. Noting that the situation of students is “so bad” and the big motivation to help speak to assumptions of material deprivation and lack of resources (instead of cultural patterns of representation as above). As a redistributive remedy, Do IT had begun to offer targeted classes in basic digital skills for those migrant groups who were not typically reached by them. Importantly, this meant primarily women. “We realized that we had less than 10% women in our program so we wanted to change that,” Maria explained. To change this, Do IT created a specific program only for refugee and migrant women to redirect resources and extra support for them. “It was an attempt to make a bridge and create a program that would allow more women to jump into the [regular] tech program.” (Maria). This redistributive remedy was, thus, aimed to compensate for the disadvantaged position of women in the courses and in the labor market in general.

As Do IT created targeted courses for women, the organizational practices constructed their disadvantage through an “additive assumption” (Hancock, 2007, p. 70), illustrated in the following quote:

We spoke with the women already taking classes to understand what could be the challenges that kept women from joining. We discovered three points. First, our classes took place in the evenings and many women did not feel comfortable joining so late. We decided to move the course to weekends, but on the weekends, the daycares are closed. So, we decided to offer childcare. Third, unfortunately, we discovered that the skill level of women was much lower—both language skills and computer skills. Many women did not speak English—even the higher educated ones. I’m not sure why that was—probably because women tend to stay more in their communities.

(Elena, employee)

The way disadvantage is constructed as additive based on gender, ethnicity, migration background and socio-economic class can be discerned here, even though Elena does not explicitly refer to these categories. First, difficulties in joining evening courses, lack of support for childcare duties and lack of English skills (due to staying in “their communities”) are all conditions more pronounced for women, who had migrated from societies with traditional, more hierarchical gender roles. Second, even though Elena highlights that also higher-educated women lacked English skills, the decision to offer basic digital literacy classes made the courses more accessible to women from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. This, together with the more direct way of targeting certain groups through offering specific language translations (which were Arabic, Tigrinya and Farsi), allowed those women to participate who came from countries in which women are more commonly deprived of educational opportunities. The employees and volunteers also underlined the pre-migration situation of gender disadvantage: “If you think about the Afghani women, for example, so many people did not have any access to education. […] For them, it has been so bad for a long time,” Cinthia explained.

Redistributive objectives are evident in terms of identifying groups socioeconomically most marginalized at the societal level and redirecting the organizations’ resources to those groups. Many volunteers deemed this highly important as demonstrated by vignette 2. “Educating women is so important. […] The other courses are these kinds of luxury courses,” Elise noted referring to advanced-level courses and high-skilled participants. In this way, the employees and volunteers acknowledged the power relations within the group of migrants. Maria underlined: “We can see we’re making a huge impact and we’re sticking with it.” Targeting socioeconomically disadvantaged groups was seen...
as "making a huge impact," even if Do IT struggled to find clear solutions to tackle their disadvantage. As vignette 2 illustrates, volunteers were often baffled by the challenge of how to improve the situation of most disadvantaged migrants.

The women's program also included courses with more advanced skill levels, such as coding fundamentals, which were more about learning the logic of coding and targeted at adolescent girls, and UX/UI and graphic design. However, at the time of the fieldwork, most of the female students took part in the beginners' level classes. Importantly, adjustments in terms of course timing or childcare were not made to more advanced courses. Consequently, the practices constructed gender disadvantage either as non-existent for the women with higher skill-level (by extension socioeconomic class status) or as triggering additive disadvantage, through gender, migration background, ethnicity and socioeconomic class.

4.2 | Intersecting effects of recognition and redistribution

4.2.1 | Recognition with limited redistribution

Strategies for recognition and redistribution always intersect—any claim of recognition will have some redistribution effects—whether intended or unintended and vice versa (Fraser, 2003, p. 64). Following political intersectionality, it is important to acknowledge how the effects are differentiated for different migrant (sub-)groups (Verloo, 2006). For the subjects of recognition, recognition and redistribution were reconciled when opportunities for employment in the IT sector were the focus. Beyond claims-making of recognition, the employees and volunteers underscored the importance of participants finding employment after courses. "What matters the most is that participants find jobs," Rick underlined. Employment in the high-skilled sector is particularly important in terms of socioeconomic justice, given how migrants typically face under-employment ending up in low-skilled jobs (Risberg & Romani, 2021). However, whose employment should be prioritized was not a straightforward question. This is demonstrated in the following vignette:

Vignette 3: “Any questions”? Safiir, responsible for student recruitment asked. I was attending an information event for interested new students. Safiir had just explained how Do IT facilitated course projects with companies that can give students internships. A woman in the audience raised her hand. “Could I do this project in my current company”? she asked. Safiir was quiet for a moment. “Mmmm, I mean if you already have a job, maybe you should give your place to someone else. There are so many talented people without jobs,” he responded.

(Field notes)

This vignette shows how relatively privileged migrants, for example, those already employed by the IT sector, also became potential students of Do IT. In general, as the disadvantage connected to subjects of recognition was constructed as fluid, as presented above, more and more privileged groups were also considered legitimate subjects for the inclusion project. The logic of recognition drew emphasis away from structural sources of disadvantage (based on migration status or ethnicity, e.g.,) to individuals' skills and potential to be employable in the IT sector. However, when relatively more privileged groups became the focus, the effects of redistribution were limited. The question of leaving economic injustices intact was raised, especially by the volunteers. Rick put this bluntly: "[As a volunteer] you don't want to help someone who is already a high-paid professional to earn even more money." In this way, claim-making of recognition was risking displacing meaningful redistribution.

Still, Do IT emphasized redistribution, which is why the inclusion of more privileged groups led to tensions. The employees interviewed every potential student before they were accepted into the course so that priority could be given to those in disadvantaged situations.

It's very important that this screening is very individualised. It's not like we're going to take all the Syrian people, not just because they are Syrian. [...] It's important we continue screening people
individually and we take many factors into consideration. [...] Refugees come unprepared, many of them just running away. So, we keep that in mind, it’s one of our priorities. But it might be the case that a Spanish person is having a worse situation for whatever reason. We’re open to that.

(Maria)

The quote illustrates the organization’s intersectional approach, which takes into consideration intragroup heterogeneity. This approach of not constructing disadvantage categorically but prioritizing people who were in a disadvantaged position has the most potential in reconciling recognition and redistribution. However, it also implies a more individualized approach to disadvantages that goes against emphasizing structural inequalities.

The difficulties in reconciling the two strategies were evident as the employees and volunteers struggled to constitute socioeconomically disadvantaged migrant men as legitimate subjects of the inclusion project. Do IT also launched a basic digital skills program for migrant men, which had not been the original idea. The employees were hesitant about continuing it:

Our Eritrean colleague told us there are at least ten guys from Eritrea that she knows that would want to do basic computer skills courses and we don’t have that. We only have it for women. We thought, that’s true, that’s not great. So, we did one pilot last semester and it worked very well. [...] But at the same time, we realise that we can’t just offer all levels for everyone because in the end, our tech programme is something that is quite specialised and can lead you to employment. [...] So, we’re probably going to drop it.

(Maria)

The emphasis on the tech program that is “quite specialized and can lead you to employment” implies a focus on the specific offering for high-skilled (relatively privileged) refugees and migrants instead of “offering all levels for everyone.” The redistributive focus on socioeconomically disadvantaged migrant men seems to go against the recognition objective of highlighting the skills and potential of migrants to be employable in high-skilled IT jobs.

4.2.2 | No redistribution without recognition

The constitution of the subject of redistribution with additive gender, ethnic, class and migration-based disadvantages examined above had evident recognition effects. The emphasis on the severity of the disadvantaged situation runs the risk of perpetuating stereotypical representations, especially concerning migrant women. While the heterogeneity of migrants in general was highlighted, the same emphasis was not applied to migrant women, leading to the essentialization and reification of their “difference.” This unintentional perpetuation of “othering” was evident in how the employees and volunteers discussed the participants and how “different” they were: “Yes, we teach basic level. But then we have the question of what is basic for you and what is basic for them. [...] For them, just giving them a laptop, granting them this feeling of trust, is important,” Joe explained. This quote demonstrates how “us”/“them” divides were discursively produced.

Despite the redistributive motivations, there seemed to be no obvious ways that the socioeconomic injustices could be tackled for the refugee and migrant women. This was palpable, for instance, when the volunteers struggled to determine what exactly should be the content of the courses as demonstrated in the following vignette:

Vignette 4: We were preparing for the class with Ana. She seemed frustrated. “I know the plan was to teach them how to make a CV template on Word. But maybe that doesn’t make any sense. What are they going to put in there”?

(Field note)

The employees and volunteers explained that it was challenging to improve the situation of socioeconomically disadvantaged refugee and migrant women even if it was highlighted as important to reach them. “Maybe they’re not able to find a job or maybe they will not work for cultural reasons, because of the family. So at least get them involved in some
way, at least give them this," Elise noted. Instead of offering a path to employment, the value of the courses was discussed, for instance, as simply giving the refugee women a reason to leave their shelters, meet other women and have access to childcare: "I'm sure they're also happy to learn Word or something. But I think they like more the fact that they can come, meet other women and spend time together with the kids in the childcare; it's super social" (Maria). Without determining clear paths to improving the socioeconomic situation of the most disadvantaged groups, the possibilities for redistribution remained limited. This reveals the way redistribution impinges on recognition. As the socioeconomically marginalized refugee and migrant women were not recognized as neoliberal capitalist subjects, similar to high-skilled refugees and migrants, the employees and volunteers struggled to find alternative means to constitute them as subjects of recognition.

5 | DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This paper set out to explore how the organizational discursive practices constitute subjects of inclusion as intersectional in the context of a civil society organization aiming to support the inclusion of refugees and migrants. Figure 1 offers an overview of the analysis. It illustrates how the subject of recognition is constituted by deploying socioeconomic privilege and the categories of ethnicity and migration background that were connected to disadvantages but constructed as more fluid. The subject of redistribution is constituted by deploying gender disadvantage and the categories of socioeconomic class, ethnicity and migration background, which were constructed as additive disadvantages to gender. The two subject positions are placed on an axis of disadvantage/privilege not to depict specific positions but to illustrate the dynamic nature of how the categories and their mutual constitution move along the axis. The recognition agenda pushes toward privilege by considering (relatively) more and more privileged migrants as legitimate subjects of inclusion and the redistribution agenda pushes in the opposite direction. This point and other implications of the study are discussed in more detail next.

With the empirical findings and its theoretical framework, the paper contributes to critical literature on organizational inclusion efforts (Adamson et al., 2021; Ortlieb et al., 2021; Romani et al., 2019; Tomlinson, 2010) and to studies on intersectionality in organizations (Rodriguez et al., 2016; Villeseche et al., 2018; Woods et al., 2021) by drawing attention to the political dimension of how intersectional categories are employed for the differentiated struggles for inclusion. Applying Crenshaw’s less commonly used notion of political intersectionality allows me to highlight the ways intersectional categories are always connected to differentiated struggles and objectives that inevitably interact, being not neutral toward each other (Verloo, 2006). Since the existing literature underlines that recognizing intersectionality and eschewing the construction of an essentialized migrant subject is crucial for the inclusion project (Tomlinson, 2010; Zanoni et al., 2010), the implicit assumption seems to be that through adopting an
an intersectional perspective is not that the more privileged migrants should be excluded from the inclusion project because they were in a position of power to determine the “shared” agenda (Laperrière & Lépinard, 2016). Hence, the most privileged migrants were likely to benefit most from the inclusion project, but not because their interests were intentionally prioritized or recognized as subjects of neoliberal capitalism and thus not “includable.” Hence, the most privileged migrants were seen as “intersectional sensibility” (Crenshaw, 1991) and considered relatively more privileged migrants as legitimate subjects of inclusion because claim-making in the sphere of recognition operates to highlight individuals’ skills and talents. Second, even though the redistributive intentions aimed to focus on more socioeconomically marginalized migrants, the organization struggled to determine any meaningful strategies of redistribution to them. This revealed how the socioeconomically marginalized migrants were not recognized as subjects of neoliberal capitalism and thus not “includable.” Hence, the most privileged migrants were likely to benefit most from the inclusion project, but not because their interests were intentionally prioritized or because they were in a position of power to determine the “shared” agenda (Laperrière & Lépinard, 2016). Instead, the findings reveal how the structures of power condition the possibilities for both recognition and meaningful redistribution. This situates the study within the broader, historically specific structural context of power, which is crucial for intersectional analysis (Dhamoon, 2011; Yuval-Davis, 2006).

Hence, Do IT’s inclusion project unwittingly risked taking part in the politics of preserving privilege. The findings align with those of Dennissen et al. (2018) revealing how the need to construct subjects of inclusion as skilled individuals adding value (politics of recognition) forecloses meaningful ways to interrogate inequality. The point from an intersectional perspective is not that the more privileged migrants should be excluded from the inclusion project or that supporting their inclusion would not be important. As existing studies show, highly educated migrants and
refugees typically face underemployment, which makes supporting their employment in high-skilled sectors crucial (Risberg & Romani, 2021; Zhang et al., 2022). Instead, the findings point to the danger of how any project focused on a specific group runs the risk of benefitting the most those who are relatively most privileged within that group. Thus, organizations engaged in inclusion projects need to evaluate and reflect on the dynamics of privilege on an ongoing basis (Dennissen et al., 2018; Luna, 2016) and take a contextualized approach that considers broader power disparities. As such, I concur with Walby et al. (2012, p. 234) in recognizing how “some social relations of inequality are more important than others in structuring the environment which shapes these social relations.” In contexts marked by gross disparities (as in the case of socioeconomic inequalities of refugees and migrants), projects that benefit mostly the relatively privileged ones and operate mainly in the sphere of recognition risk “devolv[ing] into empty gestures” (Fraser, 2003, p. 66).

To conclude, the study offers a theorization of “putting intersectionality into practice” as a political project fueled by tensions, which should not be overlooked if we are to ensure that intersectionality can be applied as a transformative tool to promote inclusion and social justice. The study naturally has important limitations. Although the findings point toward the possibilities and limitations for redistribution and recognition, further studies are required to examine the effects of an intersectional approach in promoting socioeconomic inclusion for different migrant groups. Moreover, in the current study, the focus on subject formation did not consider the perspectives of refugees and migrants themselves. More studies are needed to examine how refugees and migrants both adopt and resist the forms of subject positions made available to them within the inclusion project.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT
The author declares no conflicts of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

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ENDNOTES
1 In a recent interview (Fraser & Schickert, 2018), Fraser commented on intersectionality: “There is now a buzzword, intersectionality. I have some criticisms of that language, but the main point is right. The main point is that not all women are in the same boat, not all working-class people are in the same boat and not all people of color are in the same boat. There are these cross-cutting structural asymmetries; asymmetries of power, of advantage and disadvantage, etc.” Her comment on the criticism of “that language” can be interpreted with regards to some applications of intersectionality that connect it to identity politics for which Fraser is known to be critique. However, as Woods et al. (2021, p. 3) note, Crenshaw’s original writings on intersectionality do not imply identity politics.

2 Originally all courses were taught in English due to the dominance of English in the technology sector jobs in Berlin and the many volunteers, who were themselves non-German speakers.
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