

Struggles for refugee and migrant inclusion

An ethnographic study into the practices and politics of 'doing' inclusion in civil society organizations

Laura Kangas-Müller

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This dissertation examines the 'doing' of inclusion in the context of civil society organizations (CSOs) promoting the social inclusion of refugees and migrants. Extending knowledge of how practices of inclusion can foster social change is ever more pressing, yet existing studies show how organizational inclusion efforts risk becoming complicit in the logic of exclusion they seek to eradicate. Thus, broadening our understanding of these contradictions is of crucial importance. Building on an ethnographic study of three CSOs promoting the social inclusion of refugees and migrants in Berlin, Germany, this dissertation delves into the challenges and complexities inherent in the organizational practices of inclusion, as well as the struggles of organizational actors in responding to them. I address this research aim through three empirical studies.

The first paper focuses on the constitution of the subject of inclusion through organizational discourse and practice and demonstrates how the intersectionally differentiated struggles for recognition and redistribution shape the inclusion project. The second paper explores how organizational actors engage in resistance as the everyday struggle to "do inclusion differently" and to challenge the constraining relations of power embedded in practices of inclusion. The third paper turns attention to care relations and practices as a site of struggle in which refugees and migrants negotiate inclusion through transformative claims-making for societal membership.

The dissertation makes three main contributions to organization studies and the emerging field of critical inclusion studies. First, it broadens our understanding of the dynamics of power and politics connected to the struggles for inclusion in the socio-political context of refugee and migrant inclusion. Second, it advances knowledge of the complexities emerging from the inclusion-exclusion boundary drawing inherent in the practices of inclusion. Third, it helps us better understand the conditions of organizing inclusion in ways that can foster social change.

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Contents

1.	Introduction.....	7
1.1	Aim of the study and research questions	8
1.2	Structure of the dissertation	9
2.	Inclusion and how it is organized	10
2.1	Approaches to inclusion: from mainstream to critical	10
2.2	Inclusion-exclusion relation.....	11
2.2.1	Subjects of inclusion.....	12
2.2.2	Conditions of inclusion	13
2.2.3	Norms of inclusion	14
2.3	'Doing' of inclusion as engagement with boundaries of inclusion- exclusion	15
3.	Methodology	16
3.1	Empirical context	16
3.2	CSOs as case organizations	17
3.3	Fieldwork and ethnographic materials	18
3.4	Reflections on researcher positionality and ethical considerations 19	
4.	Summaries of the essays	23
4.1	Essay 1.....	23
4.2	Essay 2	24
4.3	Essay 3	25
5.	Discussion and conclusions.....	27
5.1	Contributions.....	29
5.2	Concluding remarks	31
	Essays.....	40

List of Essays

This doctoral dissertation consists of a summary and of the following publications which are referred to in the text by their numerals

1. Kangas-Müller, Laura (2024) Dilemmas of recognition and redistribution: Constituting intersectional subjects of inclusion in migrant support work. *Gender, Work & Organization*. DOI:10.1111/gwao.13109

2. Kangas-Müller, Laura; Eräranta, Kirsi & Moisander, Johanna (2024) Doing inclusion as counter-conduct: Navigating the paradoxes of organizing for refugee and migrant inclusion. *Human Relations*, 77(3), 299-328.
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3. Kangas-Müller, Laura. Re-claiming care for inclusion. Perspectives for re-thinking societal membership and participation. *Unpublished manuscript*

Author's Contribution

Essay 1: Dilemmas of recognition and redistribution: Constituting intersectional subjects of inclusion in migrant support work

Sole author

Essay 2: Doing inclusion as counter-conduct: Navigating the paradoxes of organizing for refugee and migrant inclusion

Lead author of the paper, initial research idea and design, collection of empirical materials, analyzing the data and developing the findings, participating in the collaborative work of theoretically positioning the paper and in the development of discussion and contributions.

Essay 3: Re-claiming care for inclusion. Perspectives for rethinking societal membership and participation

Sole author

1. Introduction

*'If you work with inclusion, you can be doing the best programmes – giving people jobs and offering language courses – but if you're still talking about how "we" are integrating "refugees", nothing is really going to change'.
(Kayla, one of the founders of a civil society organization promoting social inclusion)*

*'Essentially, it feels like we're trapped by the power dynamics. We are funded on the conditionality to bring "refugees" and "non-refugees" together, even though we are saying that's not what we should be doing'.
(Amir, an employee of a civil society organization promoting social inclusion)*

Myriad organizational actors are increasingly taking up the challenge of promoting inclusive societies. Following the 2015 "refugee crisis"¹ in Europe or the more recent Russian invasion of Ukraine, questions related to how recently arrived refugees and migrants could 'become included' into their host societies have become ever more pressing. Yet, as suggested by the opening quotes by Kayla and Amir², both working to promote social inclusion in civil society organizations in Berlin, Germany (the context of this dissertation), questions related to how inclusion is best fostered are far from simple. On the contrary, the 'doing' of inclusion is fraught with contradictions, tensions, and complexities, to the point that it may become implicated to different degrees with the logic of exclusion it seeks to dismantle. These complexities and the ways organizational actors struggle with navigating them are the focus of this dissertation.

In organizational research, the notion of inclusion has been gaining ground within the broad field of diversity studies. As the critique towards the diversity management paradigm has become well established – including a high number of empirical studies demonstrating how organizational diversity programmes instrumentalize 'differences', conceal inequalities, and neglect relations of power (Pullen et al., 2017; Romani et al., 2018; Zanoni & Janssens, 2003) – there has been a plea to revitalize the field (Ahonen & Tienari, 2015; Calás et

¹ In this dissertation, I refer to the commonly used notion of 2015 "refugee crisis" in quotation marks aiming to highlight the contested nature of this term. Critical scholars have underlined that a more appropriate use of the word 'crisis' would refer to a political crisis or crisis of the EU asylum and border system (Fontanari and Ambrosini, 2018; Karakayali, 2018).

² I use pseudonyms throughout this dissertation for both the individuals and the organizations, in which I conducted my ethnographic study.

al., 2009) and “actively search for new, emancipating forms of organizing” (Zannoni et al., 2010, p. 19). Inclusion – as an approach to ‘organizing difference’ (Brewis, 2018, p. 2) – emerged against this background and has been presented as a ‘superior’ approach to diversity and its management (Oswick & Noon, 2014) that is not only about valuing diversity but about actively promoting environments in which all individuals are ‘fairly treated, valued for who they are, and included in core decision making’ (Nishii, 2013, p. 1754). In the literature on inclusion, scholars have studied the pre-requisites of inclusion and inclusive environments (Nishii, 2013; Shore, Randel, Chung, Dean, Holcombe Ehrhart, & Singh, 2011), explored the practices of inclusion, moving beyond the individualist perspective of inclusion as a personal experience (Janssens & Steyaert, 2019) and asked pertinent questions concerning how marginalized groups are included; on what terms and for what purposes (Dobusch, 2017; Priola, Lasio, Serri, & De Simone, 2018; Tyler, 2018). Critical perspectives are called for to recognize and scrutinize the conditions, mechanisms, and complexities of power relations in the practice and process of inclusion (Adamson et al., 2020). In fact, from a critical perspective, inclusion can be read as a technology of governance (Ahmed, 2012) or as a form of normative organizational control (Ortlieb et al., 2020).

However, much goes unexamined between approaches that praise inclusion as satisfying everyone’s needs for belongingness and uniqueness (Shore et al., 2011) and denounce it as a form of control (Burchiellaro, 2020a; Ortlieb et al., 2020). Recognizing the complexities and contradictions involved in the practices of inclusion does not mean we should deem the inclusion project as failed (Dobusch, 2020). Instead, acknowledging the shortcomings of inclusion requires us to move from attempts to define the parameters of organizational or social inclusion to scrutinizing the organization of inclusion. As this dissertation shows, organizational actors respond to the complexities inherent in the ‘doing’ of inclusion in varied ways. While these efforts remain necessarily unfinished, they can, nevertheless, teach us important lessons about the mechanisms and dynamics of power involved in the practices of inclusion, as well as about the conditions that are conducive to fostering social change.

1.1 Aim of the study and research questions

This dissertation addresses questions related to the ‘doing’ of inclusion in the context of civil society organizations (CSOs) that work in the field of promoting social inclusion for refugees and migrants in Berlin, Germany. The overall aim of the dissertation is to advance our understanding of the challenges and complexities connected to the organization of inclusion and the struggles of organizational actors responding to them. The findings of the study are reported in three essays. The specific research questions of the essays are the following:

- 1. How do organizational discursive practices constitute subjects of inclusion as intersectional, and with what 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?*
- 2. How can organizations engage in counter-conduct and practice inclusion differently to challenge and destabilize unduly constraining power relations in the context of refugee and migrant inclusion?*
- 3. How do refugees and migrants negotiate inclusion through (re-)claiming care needs and responsibilities?*

All the papers draw on an ethnographic study conducted in 2018-2019 with civil society organizations (CSOs) that promote refugee and migrant inclusion in Berlin, Germany. Essay 1 explores the constitution of the subject of inclusion, placing attention to the differentiated struggles and strategies as well as to the dynamics of disadvantage and privilege that shape the inclusion project. Essay 2 seeks to better understand how individuals and organizations struggle with the mechanisms of power that the inclusion project is imbued with by drawing focus to counter-conductive practices through which the CSOs 'do inclusion differently'. Essay 3 turns to care relations and practices, investigating their re-negotiation and claims-making as entwined with the politics of inclusion of refugee and migrant groups.

1.2 Structure of the dissertation

The dissertation consists of two parts. Part 1 includes the five introductory sections and Part 2 consists of the three essays. In Part 1, the second section will offer an overview of the ways in which inclusion has been approached and conceptualized in the existing literature as well as explicate the theoretical approach adopted in this dissertation. The third section focuses on methodology, and I will describe the research context, the ethnographic case and the materials as well as reflect on my positionality and discuss ethical considerations highly important to the context of my study. Section four offers a summary of the key findings of the essays and in section five, I will discuss the contributions this dissertation seeks to make in relation to previous studies. Part 2 presents the three essays.

2. Inclusion and how it is organized

The very promise of inclusion can be the concealment and thus extension of exclusion. This is why a description of the process “of being included” matters. (Ahmed 2012, p.183)

My starting point in this dissertation is the ‘inclusion turn’ within the broad field of organizational diversity studies (Adamson et al., 2020; Brewis, 2018; Ferdman & Deane, 2014). In this literature, inclusion has been given various definitions typically referring to meanings attached to both the process and the end state of ‘being included’. The popularity of the concept can partly be explained by its orientation toward action and change, offering a positive way forward in contrast to the perspectives that emphasize the persistent nature of inequalities and other problems connected to diverse societies and organizations (Ferdman & Deane, 2014). Yet, while it is essential to forge paths toward social change, the ‘happy inclusion’ story (Dobusch et al., 2021) needs to also be approached with caution. As suggested by the opening quote by Sara Ahmed, the first step to understanding the complexities inherent in inclusion is to delve into the process and practice of inclusion.

In this section, I first briefly present how inclusion has been conceptualized in both mainstream (Ferdman & Deane, 2014; Nishii, 2013; Shore et al., 2011) and critical research (Adamson et al., 2020; Priola et al., 2018; Tyler, 2019) within organization and management studies. Second, I provide an overview of how the nexus between inclusion and exclusion has been discussed in the existing literature. Finally, I explicate the theoretical approach adopted in this dissertation.

2.1 Approaches to inclusion: from mainstream to critical

Organization scholars typically cite the definition of inclusion developed by Shore et al. (2011: 1265), according to which inclusion refers to ‘the degree to which an employee perceives that he or she is an esteemed member of the work group through experiencing treatment that satisfies his or her needs for belongingness and uniqueness.’ As such, inclusion is about balancing two needs: enabling individuals to perceive themselves both as ‘insiders’ (both in terms of a

psychological feeling of being accepted and, more functionally, as having access to information, resources and decision-making) and as recognized in the organization as one's authentic self (valuing difference without pressures for assimilation) (Mor-Barak and Cherin, 1998; Nishii, 2013; Roberson, 2006).

Inclusion is referred to as the key driver and basis for reaping the benefits of diversity for both individuals and organizations (Ferdman, 2014; Nishii, 2013) and is suggested to concern and benefit everyone. In organizations, inclusion targets the whole organization with its structures, processes, practices, norms, and values, aiming to create a 'new normal' (Nkomo, 2014, p. 585). In this vein, the notion of inclusion responds to the critique of diversity management, which is often criticized for singling out certain individuals or groups as 'diverse' (Ahonen et al., 2014; Pullen et al., 2017). The process and practice of inclusion calls for a transformative change that creates organizations in which individuals of 'all backgrounds—not just members of historically powerful identity groups—are fairly treated, valued for who they are, and included in core decision making' (Nishii, 2013, p. 1754).

The objectives of inclusion are commendable but also ambitious, which means that reaching a state of 'full' inclusion remains an elusive goal. Moreover, beyond describing the characteristics of this desirable end state, capturing the action-oriented potential of inclusion requires calling attention to the process of change. For example, given the emphasis on inclusion to consider everyone, instead of bringing to the foreground historically marginalized groups, there have been concerns that inclusion represents an 'identity-blind' approach to diversity (Roberson, 2006). Another stream of critique concerns the individualist assumptions prevailing in much of the literature on inclusion (Janssens & Steyaert, 2020). As argued by Janssens and Steyaert (2020), many empirical studies place focus on individuals' perceptions or experiences of inclusion, drawing from socio-psychological theories. Thus, they tend to understand inclusion practices as those oriented toward individuals and their behavioural change. This approach together with the 'identity-blind' approach risks overlooking different structural factors and, consequently, renders the practices of inclusion inefficient for tackling issues of structural inequality and exclusion (Adamson et al., 2020).

2.2 Inclusion-exclusion relation

Existing literature has also called into question the relation of inclusion-exclusion as opposite binaries (Dobusch, 2014, 2020; Rennstam & Sullivan, 2018). The acknowledgement that inclusion and exclusion are mutually constituted – as for every 'inside' there is something which is 'outside' (Goodin, 1996, p. 349) – challenges the simplistic accounts suggesting that inclusion implies the absence of exclusion or that more inclusion and less exclusion is always desirable. As pointed out by van Eck et al. (2023), the boundary-drawing implicit in practices of inclusion is not in itself necessarily a problem in terms of the advancement of historically marginalized groups. Instead, it is important to scrutinize

on what bases and with what implications boundaries of inclusion/exclusion are being drawn (van Eck et al., 2023).

As we recognize that every inclusion implies exclusion and vice versa (Dobusch, 2014), we can turn attention to the different ways this relation manifests in the organizational ‘doing’ of inclusion. The issue at stake here is three-fold: how practices of inclusion—and their embedded exclusionary logic—constitute those being included, the conditions of their inclusion, and the social entity which they are being included into (‘who’ is being included, ‘how’ and ‘into what’). These are examined in more detail next.

2.2.1 Subjects of inclusion

The exclusionary logic within practices of inclusion concerns, first of all, the target group of inclusion. Any organizational inclusion effort is premised on, either explicitly or implicitly, determining the ‘insiders’ and ‘to-be insiders’ and ‘outsiders’. This process could not be more apparent than when discussing inclusion in the context of migration as the inherently exclusionary nation-states seem to be mostly concerned with who to keep out (Antonsich et al., 2016; Hackl, 2022). In other cases, practices and approaches of inclusion imply more tacit assumptions that still determine who is being left out or whose needs, perspectives, and interests are not equally considered. For instance, as van Eck et al. (2020) demonstrate, the prevailing conceptualizations of organizational inclusion have an implicit assumption of a high-wage labor context, which renders them not suitable for studying low-wage contexts, in which many historically marginalized groups find themselves working. In addition, Dobusch (2020) reveals how both critical and mainstream approaches to inclusion rely on ableist assumptions of ‘doing social’ that exclude the interests and needs of autistic people, in particular. What these studies underline is not to deem the inclusion project as failed, but instead, to recognize its inevitable partiality and turn attention to the boundary-making and the resulting inclusion–exclusion configurations (Dobusch, 2020; van Eck et al., 2023).

However, exclusionary logic does not only follow as something external to inclusion – what or who is left out – but as internal to it (Adamson et al., 2020; Hackl, 2022). Of particular interest here are questions relating to how the target group of inclusion, the ‘excluded’ /‘to-be-included’, is discursively constructed. Critical literature has directed extensive attention to unpacking how organizational diversity and inclusion efforts risk essentializing the ‘difference’ attached to the target group, which leads to reproducing ‘othering’ (Ghorashi & Sabelis, 2013; Ossenkop et al., 2015; Zanoni & Janssens, 2003; Zanoni et al., 2010). Inclusion programs targeting specific social identity groups may turn these ‘diversity attributes’ into controllable entities (Ahonen et al., 2014) and individuals into tokenized, representatives of these reference groups (Zanoni & Janssens, 2003). Becoming a mere representative of a social group can be an especially harmful form of misrecognition when the group is historically disadvantaged or even stigmatized (Lamont, 2018). For instance, existing research shows how refugees, as targets of inclusion, may still be constructed as deficient, attached to the ‘discourse of lack’ (Ponzoni et al., 2017).

Thus, while inclusion attempts need to be premised on recognizing historically determined structural inequalities – to avoid becoming ‘identity-blind’ as discussed above – they also need to remain aware of the danger of the reification of categorizations (Risberg & Pilhofer, 2018) and reproduction of forms of ‘othering’ (Ghorashi & Sabelis, 2013; Zanoni et al., 2010). Even if being mindful of the various inequalities, it becomes important to ask how boundaries are delineated in the first place for those constructed as ‘included’ or ‘excluded’ and which purposes the boundaries serve (Dobusch, 2014). To an extent, inclusion practices inevitably construct asymmetric power relations between those ‘bein included’ and the majority, if the assumption is that the former are entering spaces that were intended only for the latter (Ozkazanc-Pan, 2019). Paradoxically, then, efforts to ‘include’ may produce a ‘politics of belonging’ (Yuval-Davis, 2011), divides of us-them, that pitches the ‘outsiders’ against an allegedly homogenous ‘majority’ (Scuzzarello & Moroşanu, 2023). For Goodin (1996), the problem with the language of inclusion politics is precisely the way ‘including the excluded’ only pushes people ‘just over the line’, where they remain ‘outsiders’, far from bringing them to the centre of social and political lives (Goodin, 1996: 348).

2.2.2 Conditions of inclusion

Asking how boundaries are drawn and for what purpose brings us to the question of conditions attached to these boundaries. Probing the conditions of inclusion is paramount in seeking to understand how processes and practices of inclusion may be exclusionary and moreover, how different conditions for inclusion create and reinforce existing hierarchies between groups. For instance, studies in corporate contexts have demonstrated how inclusion efforts are premised on instrumental co-optation of ‘difference’ of those ‘being-included’. Tyler and Vachhani (2020), who study corporate LGBTQ+ inclusion building on Butler’s writings on recognition, call this process ‘over-inclusion’, which operates dialectically with exclusion as ‘inclusion, as an organizational strategy, involves both an instrumental appropriation of difference and an abject expulsion of difference that cannot be appropriated; inclusion is also, always, a process of over-inclusion and of exclusion’ (Tyler & Vachhani, 2020, p. 12). Inclusion is conditional upon the performance of ‘right kind of diversity’ that is desirable and can be instrumentalized for organizations’ goals (Burchiellaro, 2020a; Priola et al., 2018).

In addition to the performance and instrumentalization of the ‘right kind of diversity’, existing studies underline how inclusion is heavily conditioned by accommodation or assimilation to the dominant norms that prevail in the social entities groups and individuals are included to (Adamson et al., 2020; Ahmed, 2012; Priola et al., 2018; Romani et al., 2018). In the context of migration, critical literature has underlined how dominant discourses normalize the expectation that migrants must assimilate into the dominant cultural norms (Joppke, 2007; Schinkel, 2018). For instance, in practice, programs that support mi-

grants' employment may focus on teaching them how to build their CVs or operate in the labour market in ways that 'demonstrate the enactment of normality' and thus, conform to the local norms (Risberg & Romani, 2021, p. 18). Other conditions of inclusion for refugees and migrants may include the performance of 'good' and 'grateful' identities (Ortlieb et al., 2020), for example, by being politically and religiously moderate, while contributing to the national economy through hard work, and not becoming public burden or demand welfare (Hackl, 2022, p. 990). Hackl (2022, p.990) calls this the 'hidden battleground of inclusion', in which the implicit and explicit conditions of inclusion are determined.

Conditions of inclusion reveal the exclusionary logic of inclusion practices especially because of the hierarchies involved and the subsequent (re)production of inequalities (Hertner, 2021; Kunz, 2019). Intersectional categories such as race/ethnicity, gender, class, migration status, religion, sexuality, nationality, ability, and the complex ways they intersect are important in understanding which and how strict conditions of inclusion groups and individuals are faced with (Scuzzarello & Moroşanu, 2023). However, conditions per se are not necessarily a problem if we recognize that unconditional inclusion seems to be unattainable in organizational and social lives, especially in the context of contemporary capitalist work organizations (Dobusch, 2020). As far as inclusion-exclusion boundaries, in fact, constitute the collectives or social entities people are 'included into', unconditionality may not be preferable (Ferdman, 2018). The more pertinent question to ask is how and which conditions are drawn (Dobusch, 2020; Dobusch et al., 2021).

2.2.3 Norms of inclusion

The conditionality of inclusion is closely related to the norms of inclusion. If inclusion denotes transformation or second-order change (Nkomo, 2014), or 'changing the mould' (Adamson et al., 2020, p. 8) the question becomes what this change should look like. In the more mainstream literature, the norms of inclusion seem to imply a pre-determined normative framework that regulates individuals' behavior, meaning 'a particular way of being and working together – with and across differences' (Ferdman, 2018, p. 100). Ferdman (2018) pleads for precision in terms of clarifying both the meaning and the limits of inclusion, underlining that 'inclusion does not mean that everything goes' (Ferdman, 2018, p. 100). Yet, he also touches on the dilemma of who has access to determining the norms pointing out how this process requires the participation of a priori defined members of a collective, while at the same time a willingness to relax that definition of the collective and being open to new members (Ferdman, 2018, p. 102).

Critical scholars approach the question of norms differently and draw attention to the dominant norms prevailing in organizations and societies. While inclusion in practice tends to imply assimilation of minorities to these dominant norms, as discussed above, as a normative goal, inclusion would concern the 'broadening of norms', for instance, with regard to valuing different competencies (Holck & Muhr, 2017; Janssens & Zanoni, 2014). However, as pointed out

by van Eck et al. (2020, p. 14), this perspective is still premised on an instrumental and reifying approach to differences. At the societal level, multiculturalism may similarly operate to produce a reified, simplified understanding of cultural differences, signalling 'happy multiculturalism' (Ahmed, 2010) that still becomes pitched against an imagined, static national culture (Kymlicka, 2010). Thus, while pre-determined blueprints for creating inclusion as a 'new normal' (Nkomo, 2014) seem to fall short of actually transforming the norms, critical scholars are increasingly calling for a more open-ended, processual view of social change (Janssens & Zanoni, 2021). This means that while the boundaries of inclusion-exclusion delineate the social entities people are 'included into', the boundaries need to remain permeable and evolving to 'permit ongoing, rich, and equitable engagement across differences' (Ferdman, 2018, p. 101).

2.3 'Doing' of inclusion as engagement with boundaries of inclusion-exclusion

To conclude, the perspective on inclusion developed in this dissertation brings to the fore the intricate complexities that are an inherent part of 'doing' inclusion in organizational contexts. Complementing the critical inclusion literature in organization studies, I draw from inclusion conceptualizations in sociology and migration studies (e.g. Goodin, 1996; Hackl, 2022; Schrover & Schinkel, 2013; Scuzzarello & Moroşanu, 2023) to turn attention to the organization of inclusion, instead of organizational inclusion. Thus, I join organization scholars, who have broadened the scope of analysis by approaching inclusion as 'a vision that includes not only the organization itself but also its surrounding community and its national and international context' (Mor Barak & Daya, 2014, p. 392; see also Bendl et al. 2022 for 'internal and external inclusion' and Fujimoto et al., 2014 for a community-oriented inclusion framework).

Moreover, to scrutinize the complexities and mechanisms of power embedded in this organization of inclusion, I focus attention to the explicit and implicit ways boundaries of inclusion-exclusion are drawn and contested, approaching inclusion and exclusion as 'mutually constitutive, processual and relational' (van Eck et al., 2023, p. 3). The perspective proposed here approaches these boundaries as being manifested in the ways the organizational inclusion project delineates its subjects, conditions, and norms. The following section introduces the ethnographic approach employed in this dissertation to study the practices of inclusion.

3. Methodology

This dissertation adopts an ethnographic approach to study the ‘doing’ of inclusion with its inherent complexities and struggles in the context of the organizational efforts to promote refugee and migrant inclusion. Assuming a practice-based perspective (Schatzki, 2001), I am joining scholars who have conducted ethnographies to focus attention to the inclusion and diversity work as it is performed in everyday life in organizational settings (Dobusch et al., 2021; Holck, 2018; Janssens & Steyaert, 2020; van Eck et al., 2023). In what follows I will first offer a description of the empirical context followed by an introduction to the three case organizations. After this, I will describe the fieldwork and collection of ethnographic materials. Finally, I will reflect on my researcher positionality and the ethical considerations that are crucially important in conducting ethnographic research in the context of the study.

3.1 Empirical context

The fieldwork took place in Berlin, which has a long history of being a diverse, multicultural city. Approximately one million people, constituting 30% of Berlin's population, have a migration background—indicating that either they or at least one of their parents was born without German nationality (OECD, 2018). During the so-called European “refugee crisis” of 2015, Germany's politics were first marked by solidarity towards refugees and attracted international attention with the famous decision of Angela Merkel to open the borders to refugees waiting in Hungary to pass through Austria to Germany in September 2015. Subsequently, during this short period in 2015, 890,000 people applied for asylum in Germany, while the number of people who arrived in the country was far higher (Futák-Campbell & Pütz, 2021). The German public expressed solidarity by welcoming the arriving asylum seekers at train stations and volunteering in record-high numbers of people (Fleischmann & Steinhilper, 2017; Hamann & Karakayali, 2016).

However, it was not long after that German politics faced a drastic shift. In March 2016, Germany played an important role in making a deal with Turkey to reduce the number of people arriving in Europe. Around the same time, the right-wing populist party Alternative for Germany (AfD) gained for the first time enough votes to enter the parliament, while Merkel's party lost in what many interpreted as a backlash against her refugee policy (Futák-Campbell & Pütz,

2021). Against the backdrop of heightened societal debates framing the newly arrived refugees as a problem, a new integration law was enacted. The law reflected demands for refugees to assimilate into German culture and uphold its values (Hertner, 2021; Vollmer & Karakayali, 2017).

During the fieldwork, in 2018 and 2019, societal discourses on refugees and migrants continued as polarized and the momentum of the ‘refugees welcome’ movement had noticeably waned. In Berlin, the countless civil society initiatives launched in 2015-2016 to support the people arriving were no longer in operation. However, some of them had continued their work or grown from small volunteer-led initiatives to organizations with employees, as the case organizations of this study introduced next.

3.2 CSOs as case organizations

Civil society has been widely recognized as playing a key role in responding to the 2015 “refugee crisis” while the European states were in many regards unprepared for the situation (Feischmidt et al., 2019). There are varied definitions for civil society and a huge variety of civil society organizations (CSOs), but one approach to understanding civil society broadly highlights it as a sphere between the individual and the state, relatively independent of government and the market (Schoenefeld, 2020), and traditionally representing a counterbalance or a ‘watchdog’ to the state (Seligman, 2002). I chose to refer to my case organizations as CSOs instead of, for example, volunteer or non-profit organizations, due to this relation to state-led organizations (and their integration programs, as discussed in Essay 2), as well as the recognized role of civil society in seeking to prefigure ideals of inclusive society as a response to the “refugee crisis” (Pries, 2019).

At the beginning of my fieldwork, I contacted several organizations working in the field of promoting refugee and migrant inclusion in Berlin, and initially met with and conducted interviews with representatives of ten different organizations. This led to ethnographic fieldwork with three case organizations, Do IT, Co-Kitchen and CESH (all names are pseudonyms), because they had ongoing activities in which my involvement as a volunteer seemed a good fit. Moreover, I was interested in the ways they all shared an ethos of rethinking the work on inclusion, especially distancing themselves from the governmental integration efforts. The organizations were interested in my research and generally very open for new people to join their communities, which made negotiating access easy. Do IT, Co-Kitchen, and CESH have different emphases for their work, but all aim to promote the socio-economic inclusion of refugees but also migrant communities more broadly. At the time of the fieldwork, Do IT focused on basic and advanced digital training and provided employment services. CESH offered entrepreneurship training (including mentorship programs), organized social events, and ran a language café. Co-Kitchen organized social events (mainly related to cooking), provided mentoring and “buddy” programs, and managed

language cafes. All of them had small teams (of 10–20 mainly part-time employees) supported by larger communities of volunteers and both the teams and volunteer communities were characterized by involving lots of people who had either recently or earlier migrated to Germany. The funding of all organizations was a mixture of private (corporate and foundation sponsors) and public (national and city levels) support.

3.3 Fieldwork and ethnographic materials

The nature of my involvement depended on the organization. At Do IT, I assumed the role of a supporting teacher or a principal teacher for basic digital skills classes for women that took place once a week. This involved teaching but also planning the curriculum and content for classes together with other volunteers. Additionally, I observed a variety of other training sessions, ranging from coding to basic digital training, which served as an opportunity to not only observe the sessions but also get to know the community and talk with numerous volunteers and participants during the breaks and before and after the class. At CESH, I joined the entrepreneurship training sessions either as an observer or in an expert role (depending on the topic and the preferences of the organizers). Volunteers' typical engagement at CESH involved becoming a mentor for one participant, giving a workshop on a topic of expertise, joining workshops as an expert, assisting the workshop leaders, and giving feedback to participants during different exercises. Finally, at Co-Kitchen, I was part of a volunteer group that met once a month to plan social activities for the following month. Usually, there were four to five social events taking place in a month (cooking events were always in the program, but other events depended on the interests of volunteers), and they were planned in small groups. I joined the organizing group for several social events and took part in others as a participant. For all the organizations, I also took part in various information events for new volunteers and networking and other social events targeted to volunteers, participants, and people interested in getting involved.

At the site, I took field notes when possible and wrote up detailed accounts afterward. The ethnographic participant observation was complemented by 23 semi-structured, in-depth interviews conducted with employees, volunteers, and participants of the three organizations, and seven more interviews with representatives of other organizations working in the same field. All the interviews were conducted in English, which was the language commonly used in organizations, but the participants were given the option to be interviewed in German too. Countless informal interviews and 'ethnographic small talk' (Driessen & Jansen, 2013) with individuals engaged in the case organizations' work in different roles are recorded in field journals.

Coming from a position that emphasizes the co-production of knowledge both methodologically and from an ethical viewpoint (e.g. Manning, 2018; Rhodes & Carlsen, 2018), the relationships I developed that extended way beyond interview situations were crucial in allowing the discussion of emergent ideas,

themes, and findings with the research participants. While seeking to make my research design and process inclusive (Just et al., 2021b), meaning that the research participants had diverse backgrounds, there were issues (most notably language barriers) that complicated this. For instance, the research participants I frequently discussed with had sufficient language skills either in English or German and were also active members of the communities formed by Do IT, CESG and Co-Kitchen, which meant that they had resources to actively participate. This has implications in terms of whose voices are represented in this work (see e.g. Manning, 2018; Ozkazanc-Pan, 2012). Ethical questions of positionality and representation are discussed in more detail next.

3.4 Reflections on researcher positionality and ethical considerations

I adopt a feminist approach to ethnographic research, recognizing that all knowledge produced is situated and that the researcher is not a detached and objective observer but part of the field (e.g. Haraway, 1988; Skeggs, 2001). I recognize that I do not 'see and speak from nowhere' (Just et al., 2021a, p. 2) and, for instance, as the topic of my research is politically value-laden, I explicitly take a side in these political debates. Discussions on the societal debates on migration and integration were common topics to discuss with my research participants during the fieldwork and in these situations, I was an active conversant, sharing my opinions and feelings, and being open about my pro-asylum and anti-racist stances, for example, and past involvement in solidarity movements and organizations supporting refugees and migrants. Before and partly during the fieldwork, I was myself living in Germany as a migrant; as a White, Northern European, privileged migrant. My interest in researching topics related to migration stems from my personal experiences of migrancy and the reflections this ignited about the vast hierarchies constructed between different migrant groups. Given that my research participants had various backgrounds in terms of ethnicity, nationality, migration status, gender, or socio-economic class, our commonalities and differences varied. Still, during the fieldwork I often discussed the shared experiences of living in Germany, navigating German bureaucratic systems and learning German. Importantly, the reflections about the extent to which these experiences were 'shared' – when did commonality vs difference come to matter – were crucial for yielding analytical insights for my study.

Being reflexive about my privileged position meant first and foremost that I sought to take responsibility for my position, understanding that the power hierarchies are not something I can transcend (Skeggs, 2001). Simultaneously, I tried to build (more) equal and reciprocal relationships with my research participants, engaging with them through ethical sensibilities and efforts to enact care during the fieldwork and throughout the research process (Antoni & Beer, 2023). Beyond following standard ethical guidance, for instance, with regard to

ensuring participants' anonymity and informed consent for interviews, I approached ethical considerations as ongoing, embodied and situated negotiations (see e.g. Thanem & Knights, 2019). I sought to encounter and engage with people by not assuming anything about their background or by resorting to stereotypical assumptions about who is a 'refugee' or who is 'excluded'. I approached potential interviewees with sensitivity, ensuring they did not feel pressured to agree or that it did not require too much effort and time from their side. During interviews, I was careful to not ask questions that would make assumptions about their experiences of exclusion or pressure them in any way to share difficult personal experiences.

Yet, the above examples only scratch the surface in terms of the questions connected to ethical considerations in the context of my study, especially those linked to representation that are not easily resolvable. In their discussion of the possibilities of white researchers to engage in progressive and critical ethnography in neo-colonial settings, Muhr & Holck underline the importance of drawing attention to the affective embodied experiences that expose and make visible how 'white researcher bodies played an undeniably active part in the way the fieldwork was conducted and experienced' (Holck & Muhr, 2020, p. 44). Citing Adjepon (2019) they highlight how ethnography can become decolonial when it destabilizes the position of the researcher as a non-disruptive, innocent observer by interrupting the ethnographic narrative with the ethnographer's disorientations (Holck & Muhr, 2020). Following their example, I have paid attention to episodes during the fieldwork, in which the questions of power relations and representation became apparent through my own disorientations i.e., embodied feelings of awkwardness, embarrassment or confusion. Next, I will offer an example of such situation that took place at the beginning of my fieldwork.

I was interviewing Amir from Co-Kitchen. Earlier that day he had told me they had organized a Critical Whiteness workshop for their volunteers. I was truly impressed by the organization's sensitivity to questions of power relations. We were discussing the thorny question of reproducing 'othering' by attaching people to a 'refugee' identity. "Our work attracts interest and sometimes journalists or researchers come and want to meet a member of our team and a beneficiary of our work. Makes total sense. But then I must have this discussion. Sorry, we don't do this. We do not offer a platform to talk to a 'refugee', I'm not going to just call [someone] and tell them to come... For me, what counts is my dynamic with the target group. I mean, it doesn't work", he explained somewhat agitated. I could feel a blush burning up my cheeks. Was he referring to this discussion? Did he think I wanted to ask him the same question? Did I? 'Yeah, totally', I said nodding vigorously. I wanted to convey that 'I get it'. I was not one of those researchers, I would not ask him to interview "a refugee".'

(Field note)

This example from the field speaks to several issues I faced when navigating ethical questions in the context of the study. The first point concerns the question of categorizing individuals in the research process (Risberg & Pilhofer, 2018), in my case, especially, 'refugees'. As we show in Essay 2, rejecting categorization was one of the counter-conductive practices of inclusion that the organizations engaged in. In terms of methodology, critical migration scholars have called attention to the problematic nature of unreflectively using the categories of the migration governance system in research as they mainly serve political purposes and fail to capture the varied motivations and reasons behind people's migratory journeys (Crawley & Skleparis, 2017). During the fieldwork and in the presentation of the findings, I did not refer to individuals as 'refugees' and I did not categorically inquire research participants about their migration status. While I got to know many research participants and learned about their backgrounds, whether a certain individual was a 'refugee' or not was not relevant to the study. Still, even if I tried to detach the refugee label from individuals, I am in this dissertation using the term 'refugee', because the discursive meanings attached to the label and the ways it operated emerged as important for the study. I typically use the categories of 'refugees and migrants' together, underlining the contested ways boundaries between the two are drawn.

Second, like the researcher who asked Amir to interview beneficiaries, I was also interested in giving space for the voices and perspectives of those 'being included', and especially for the societally most marginalized groups (see e.g. Manning, 2018). What this meant, however, was that while the organizations sought to find ways to overcome the includer-included asymmetry, I found myself in the awkward position of wondering whether a certain individual was an 'includer' or 'being included'. My reflections on the problematic nature and occasional impossibility of this endeavor turned out highly valuable in terms of the analytical process of the study. I sought to not enforce rigid binaries of 'included-included' when reporting the findings of my study, but I could not always escape this, especially when the focus was on presenting the ways these positions were challenged and resisted.

Third, coming back to this fieldnote later during the research process, I could also see how I was eager to demonstrate to my research participants my own 'goodness' (Holck & Muhr, 2020). According to Ahmed (2004), white people's yarning to perform signs of 'good practice' risk overemphasizing the agency of white people to transcend racial power hierarchies with their own actions. Being painfully aware of the problems related to Western researchers representing non-Western 'Others' through research (e.g. Spivak, 1988), I was, especially at the beginning of my fieldwork, keen to pick up cues for how to do things 'right' and demonstrate that 'I get it'. As the research process progressed, it became increasingly clear to me that there was no normative rulebook to 'get' or follow. The questions related to doing research 'right' became enmeshed with the messy realities of navigating relationships with my research participants (Cunliffe & Karunanayake, 2013; Gilmore & Kenny, 2014); relationships in which I was 'personally affected, moved and changed by interactions with others' (Rhodes & Carlsen, 2018, p. 1297). While these relationships urged me to remain reflexive

about the relations and positionalities of power, they were also relationships formed between ‘actual human bodies’ in ways that are always more complex than being pre-determined by social identities, histories of inequality, or positions of researcher-researched (see e.g. Cunliffe & Karunanayake, 2013; Ellis, 2007; Gilmore & Kenny, 2014; Rhodes & Carlsen, 2018). Most importantly, placing focus on the relationships compelled me to ‘stay with the discomfort, tensions, messiness and troubles we experience when researching and writing’ (Mandalaki, 2023, p. 318).

4. Summaries of the essays

4.1 Essay 1

In Essay 1, I focus on the constitution of the subject of inclusion in organizational discursive practices, and by drawing from Crenshaw's notion of political intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991) and Fraser's politics of recognition and redistribution (Fraser, 1995), examine how the intersectionally differentiated struggles for recognition and redistribution shape the subject formation. I position the paper within the organizational literature on intersectionality (Rodriguez et al., 2016; Villesseche et al., 2018), which has to date mostly focused on how categories of difference intersect in shaping the experiences of individuals (Adib & Guerrier, 2003; Atewologun & Sealy, 2014) or how processes of power intersect resulting in intersecting structures of inequality (Acker, 2006). However, an intersectional approach also shapes the way organizational change projects constitute their subjects, which has been overlooked in the existing literature on organizational diversity and inclusion efforts that mainly demonstrate how subjects are constituted as essentialized, attached to a single category of difference (Ortlieb et al., 2020; Zanoni et al., 2010).

Drawing from ethnographic fieldwork with a civil society organization, Do IT which promotes the socio-economic inclusion of refugees and migrants through free digital education, the findings of the essay demonstrate how the intersectional categories of class, gender, migration status and ethnicity are deployed in distinct ways depending on whether the subject formation is underpinned by the logic of recognition or redistribution. The analysis demonstrates how the strategies of recognition and redistribution interact, revealing both the tensions inherent in attempts to reconcile the two as well as the broader context of power structures that operate in conditioning both recognition and meaningful redistribution. Moreover, it shows how the redistributive motivations emphasize the current state of exclusion but fail to recognize the subjects as 'includable', recognition draws attention to 'inclusion potential' and pushes the organization to consider increasingly privileged groups as legitimate subjects of inclusion, due to the rejection of categorical disadvantages and the focus on individuals' skills and talent.

The paper contributes to existing studies on intersectionality (Rodriguez et al., 2016; Villesseche et al., 2018) and critical inclusion studies (Ortlieb et al., 2020; Romani et al., 2018), by extending understanding of the political dimension of the inclusion project and the intersectionally differentiated unequal dynamics of inclusion (Dobusch, 2017). This perspective draws focus on the tensions that emerge as inherent in an intersectional approach by connecting them to the difficult reconciliation of recognition and redistribution. Moreover, the essay elucidates how dynamics of disadvantage and privilege shape the inclusion project, calling for an organizational approach to ‘putting intersectionality into practice’ (Rodriguez et al., 2016) that continuously examines and evaluates these unequal dynamics of inclusion (Dobusch, 2017) and situates them in a broader context of structural inequalities.

4.2 Essay 2

Essay 2 addresses the research aim of the dissertation by focusing on how three civil society organizations (CSOs) do inclusion ‘differently’, navigating the paradoxical effects and unduly constraining power relations involved. Prior studies on organizational inclusion and diversity efforts have demonstrated how organized attempts to ‘include’ refugees and migrants tend to come with paradoxical effects, resulting, for instance, in ‘benevolent discrimination’ (Romani et al., 2018). These exclusionary effects of ‘doing’ inclusion have been explained mainly as caused by the deep-rooted societal discourses that are unreflexively reproduced in organizations (Ghorashi & Sabelis, 2013; Ponzoni et al., 2017). In this paper, we complement the existing literature by turning attention to regimes of practices and dynamics of power and resistance by building a Foucauldian perspective to inclusion as counter-conduct against the pastoral government of a national refugee and migrant integration regime (Foucault, 1981, 1982, 2007).

Based on ethnographic fieldwork with three civil society organizations (CSOs), we identify three counter-conductive practices through which organizations “do inclusion differently”: contesting constraining categorizations, problematizing hierarchical power relations, and questioning the assimilationist goals and principles of the integration regime. The analysis demonstrates how through these three practices, the organizations continuously critique and renegotiate the ways in which boundaries of inclusion-exclusion are drawn within the integration regime, de-stabilizing inclusion-exclusion configurations instead of establishing new ones, and work toward conditions in which power relations remain fluid and allow for strategies to alter them.

The paper adds to existing critical inclusion studies (Adamson et al., 2020; Brewis, 2018; Ponzoni et al., 2017) by proposing a theoretical perspective on “doing inclusion” as counter-conduct and resistance against the pastoral government of individualization. This perspective turns focus from the exclusionary effects of institutionalized discourses on the lived experience of individuals and groups to the “regimes of practices” (Foucault, 1991) and “micromechanics of power” (Foucault, 2003) through which this experience gets shaped. Through

this everyday struggle organizations and individuals seek to subvert pastoral power by exploring ways of being and conducting themselves differently. Moreover, the paper demonstrates the workings of pastoral power in shaping the ways boundaries and conditions of inclusion/ exclusion are drawn and demonstrates how the dynamics of co-optation/ resistance shape how organizing for refugee and migrant inclusion emerges as inevitably entwined with the national project of inclusion and its pastoral government.

4.3 Essay 3

Essay 3 begins with the premise that care relations and practices represent an important site of struggle for the negotiation of inclusion for many marginalized groups such as refugees and migrants. While unequal care is a constraint for inclusion, feminist scholarship reminds us that instead of representing a problem to be solved, care ought to be brought to the centre of our social, political and organizational lives (Fotaki et al., 2020). In this paper, I draw from Tronto's theorization on care (Tronto, 2013) and Isin's work on 'acts of citizenship' (Isin, 2008), to explore how care becomes a site for negotiating inclusion through which norms of societal membership and participation, subsumed by inclusion, can be transformed. This is of particular importance given that the existing inclusion literature rarely unpacks the notions of membership and participation, even if existing studies underline the need to target the norms governing inclusion (Ahmed, 2012).

The empirical analysis demonstrates how refugees and migrants enact societal membership through 'caring with' others and engaging in situated negotiations and claims-making for needs and responsibilities. Through these forms of claims-making, refugees and migrants create a site of struggle for inclusion in which they constitute themselves as political subjects (as 'activist citizens' (Isin, 2009)), reject their outsider status, and consequently shape the norms governing membership and participation. The findings demonstrate the risks of approaching the move from a care-receiver to care-giver as instrumental in becoming a full member of society, because for marginalized groups that suffer under oppressive forms of care, such change can be important for re-gaining some form of power. Yet, in a 'caring' society, both care-recipients and care-givers ought to be recognized as full members of society and these positions should be understood as dynamic and shifting (Tronto, 2013).

The paper contributes to the existing literature on inclusion and care by proposing a care-based perspective to inclusion that constructs care practices and relations as constitutive of the social, political, and organizational contexts marginalized groups are 'included into'. Thus, it shifts the focus from a static, hierarchic 'includer-included' relationship to a dynamic re-negotiation of relations and positionalities in care-giving and -receiving. Moreover, it underlined a political approach to care (Fotaki, 2023), in which positionality in caring relations is intertwined with the claims of societal membership, and illustrates how care is grounded in the existing realities of care practices and relations, shifting focus

from care values and their adaptation to the re-negotiation of positionalities, needs and responsibilities.

5. Discussion and conclusions

The aim of this dissertation has been to broaden our understanding of the complexities and challenges related to the organizational ‘doing’ of inclusion as well as the ways organizational actors respond to them in their efforts to promote refugee and migrant inclusion in the context of civil society organizations. The answer to this research aim, I conducted three empirical studies (Table 1) that address this research aim in different ways. The first essay explores the constitution of the subject of inclusion through intersectionally differentiated struggles and demonstrates how the difficult reconciliation of recognition and redistribution shapes the inclusion project. The second essay focuses on the dynamics of power and resistance showing how the CSOs ‘do inclusion differently’ as counter-conduct to the national integration regime and its pastoral government, while being an integral part of it. The third essay turns focus to care relations and practices as a site of struggle in which refugees and migrants negotiate inclusion through making claims for (caring) needs and responsibilities and concurrently, for societal membership. In what follows, I will bring together the findings and contributions of the three essays and discuss the contributions of the dissertation in relation to existing literature.

Table 1. Key findings and contributions of the three essays.

	Perspective to inclusion	Key findings	Contributions
Essay 1	<p>The constitution of the subject of inclusion</p> <p>Intersectionally differentiated struggles for inclusion</p> <p>Difficult reconciliation of politics of recognition and redistribution</p>	<p>The findings demonstrate how the subject of inclusion is constituted as intersectional in different ways depending on whether the subject formation is underpinned by the logic of recognition or redistribution and how</p>	<p>Extending understanding of the political dimension of an inclusion project and the intersectionally differentiated unequal dynamics of inclusion. This perspective (1) elaborates the tensions that emerge as</p>

		<p>the strategies of recognition and redistribution interact with one another. The implications in terms of who is recognized as 'an includable' subject reveal the dynamics of disadvantage and privilege at play in the inclusion project and the broader structures of power that condition recognition and meaningful redistribution.</p>	<p>inherent in an intersectional approach by connecting them to the difficult reconciliation of recognition and redistribution; (2) focuses attention to how the dynamics of disadvantage and privilege shape the inclusion project.</p>
<p>Essay 2</p>	<p>Practices of inclusion as counter-conduct shaped by the dynamics of power and resistance</p> <p>Pastoral government of the integration regime as a national inclusion project</p>	<p>The analysis identifies three practices of counter-conduct through which organizations "do inclusion differently": contesting constraining categorizations, problematizing hierarchical power relations, and questioning the assimilationist goals and principles of the integration regime. Through continuous critique and renegotiation of the ways in which boundaries of inclusion-exclusion are drawn within the integration regime, organizations work toward conditions in which power relations remain fluid and allow for strategies to alter them.</p>	<p>Proposes a theoretical perspective on "doing inclusion" as counter-conduct against the pastoral government of individualization. This perspective: (1) turns focus to the regimes of practices and the subtle, complex ways resistance operates as organizations and individuals explore ways of being and conducting themselves differently; (2) demonstrates the workings of pastoral power in shaping the ways boundaries and conditions of inclusion/ exclusion are drawn; (3) draws attention to the dynamics of co-optation/ resistance through which organizing for refugee and migrant inclusion emerges as inevitably entwined with the national project of inclusion and its pastoral government.</p>
<p>Essay 3</p>	<p>Caring relations and practices as a site of negotiating inclusion for refugees and migrants.</p> <p>Negotiation of inclusion as claim-making for societal membership</p>	<p>The findings show how refugees and migrants enact societal membership through (re-)claiming caring needs and responsibilities and re-negotiating their positionality in caring relations. Through these forms of claim-making, refugees and migrants create a site of struggle for inclusion in which they constitute themselves as political subjects and shape the norms governing membership and participation.</p>	<p>Proposes a care-based perspective to inclusion. This perspective: (1) turns the focus from a static, hierarchic 'includer-included' relationship to a dynamic re-negotiation of relations and positionalities; (2) turns focus to a political approach to care, in which claim-making for needs and responsibilities is entwined with politics of inclusion; (3) illustrates how care is grounded in the existing realities of</p>

			care practices and relations, shifting focus from adaptation of care values to the re-negotiation of positionalities, needs and responsibilities.
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5.1 Contributions

First, my dissertation contributes to the stream of literature that has focused on the ‘doing’ of inclusion in organizational contexts (Brewis, 2018; Burchiello, 2020b; Janssens & Steyaert, 2020) by broadening our understanding of the dynamics of power and politics involved and accounting for the broader socio-political context the organizational inclusion project is embedded in. In the emerging field of critical inclusion studies (Adamson et al., 2020; Priola et al., 2018), scholars have increasingly called attention to how power operates through organizational inclusion practices highlighting, for instance, how societal power hierarchies are unreflexively re-produced in organizations or how inclusion becomes conditional to representing ‘difference’ that can be instrumentalized (Pullen et al., 2017; Tyler & Vachhani, 2020; Zanoni et al., 2010). However, what has attracted less attention is how the inclusion project revolves around varied interests, strategies and perspectives that become differently captured, served and/or overlooked by organizational practices of inclusion. The three essays of this dissertation shed light on this politics of ‘doing’ inclusion as, for instance, Essay 1 foregrounds the differentiated struggles for inclusion and Essay 2 shows how organizational practices of inclusion are entwined with the national integration regime through dynamics of co-optation/resistance. Essay 3, in turn, draws attention to the politics of those typically regarded as ‘being included’ and their claim-making for inclusion.

Thus, the papers concur with approaches that reject ‘all-encompassing’ notions of inclusion (Dobusch, 2020; Ferdman, 2017) and rather ask whose interests and perspectives are considered in the inclusion project and how. As such, inclusion is (re-)politicized (Plotnikof et al., 2021; Pullen et al., 2021); less concerned with creating a ‘new normal’ than with continuously challenging the taken-for-granted aspects considered ‘normal’. As a socio-political project that brings structures of power to the surface, inclusion cannot be approached as a pre-determined, fixed normative ideal. Instead, it is premised on a processual and open-ended view of the social change (Janssens & Zanoni, 2021) that does not seek to neutralize its contested parameters and inherent tensions (Dobusch et al., 2021; Ferdman, 2017). Consequently, the organizational actors of this study, including refugees and migrants themselves, are not understood as possessing any ‘expertise’ on refugee and migrant inclusion, but instead, as actors taking part in the political struggles connected to boundary-drawing of inclusion and exclusion.

Second, this dissertation contributes to the studies that have focused on the relation of inclusion and exclusion (Bendl et al., 2022; Dobusch, 2020; van Eck

et al., 2023) by drawing attention to the ambivalent engagement with boundaries that the inclusion project is characterized by. While in parts of the existing literature, exclusionary effects of inclusion practices are framed more as unintended side effects (Ortlieb & Sieben, 2014) or the demonstration of prevalence of exclusionary discourses that permeates the ‘doing’ of inclusion (Ponzoni et al., 2017), the dissertation adopts a perspective of inclusion and exclusion as ‘mutually constitutive, processual and relational’ (van Eck et al., 2023, p. 3). As exclusion is not something external but internal to inclusion (Hackl, 2022), the practices of inclusion become marked by continuous challenging of their own exclusionary logic, i.e. ‘turning inwards’. Essay 1 shows how the doing of inclusion delineates two subjects of inclusion underpinned by either the logic of recognition or redistribution, while their difficult reconciliation and the organization’s intersectional approach move the boundaries in different directions. Instead of becoming settled, the conditions of inclusion are marked by the dynamic tension of highlighting either the current state of exclusion (serving redistributive goals) or ‘inclusion potential’ (serving recognition goals). In Essay 2 the continuous critique and challenging of the ways boundaries of inclusion-exclusion are drawn in the integration regime operates to de-stabilize the boundaries.

Hence, inclusion is understood as a site of struggle in which the boundaries considering the subjects, conditions and norms of inclusion are continuously under negotiation. The contradictory nature of this endeavour – meaning that drawing these boundaries by defining targets and objectives for the inclusion project always implies (some form of) exclusion – is inescapable. At the same time, as underlined by Dobusch et al. (2021, p. 19) this boundary-drawing is ‘always-already preliminary and, hence, open for negotiations by default’. The boundaries delineating subjects, conditions and norms of inclusion remain ambiguous, fragile, and dynamic. As the papers of this dissertation show, this ambiguity, in turn, can be used for the emancipatory goals of the inclusion project (see also Risberg & Corvellec, 2022; Risberg & Just, 2015).

Third, the dissertation extends the existing critical inclusion and diversity studies that have turned the focus to envisioning new and more emancipatory forms of organizing (Janssens & Steyaert, 2020; Janssens & Zanoni, 2014, 2021) by demonstrating how the conditions of possibility for new forms of subjectivity and social change can emerge. The three studies point towards this potential in different ways. By turning to the differentiated political struggles behind the inclusion project, Essay 1 demonstrates how an intersectional approach with its embedded tensions pushes the organization to continuously critically reflect on ‘who is included’. Essay 2 shows how through the three counter-conductive practices of contesting constraining categorizations, problematizing hierarchical power relations, and questioning the assimilationist goals and principles of the integration regime, the organizational actors explore possibilities for new forms of subjectivity, social relationships, and ways of thinking about the goals of refugee and migrant inclusion. These practices (especially the first two) can be likened to those Janssens and Steyaert (2020) referred to as inclusion-producing-practices – ‘mixing’ of diverse bodies, ‘inverting’ stereotypical

norms and power asymmetries, and ‘affirming’ these unusual relations. As argued by Janssens and Steyaert (2020, p. 22), such practices have the potential to ‘break the link with inequality-producing practices and make new connections through which multiplicity is accomplished’. However, in the context of this study, instead of resulting from a specific inclusion-exclusion configuration (van Eck et al., 2023), they emerged through the continuous de-stabilization of boundaries, as discussed above.

There are good reasons to seek to move beyond the boundaries in re-thinking inclusion because it is through this boundary-drawing that the exclusionary logic of inclusion manifests itself, as noted earlier. Such an approach has been proposed, for instance, by Tyler (2019), who puts forward a recognition-based perspective to inclusion (see also Johansson et al., 2023; Tyler & Vachhani, 2020). The recognition-based approach is grounded on an understanding of social relations as ‘ongoing, embodied, and situated negotiations of self/other relations, where a sense of equality emerges through the reciprocal recognition of others’ expressions of selfhood’ (Johansson et al., 2023, p. 2). Thus, as proposed by Tyler and Vachhani (2020), organizational life needs to be made not more ‘inclusive’ (due to the conditionality attached to inclusion) but relational as in ‘open to difference rather than seeking to control or contain it’ (Tyler & Vachhani, 2020, p. 14). In Essay 3, I move towards a similar approach by drawing from feminist theories on care, illustrating how inclusion, as premised on transformative approaches to ‘caring’ membership and participation, emerges as situated attentiveness to the caring needs of the self and other. Emphasis on care relations and practices illuminates bottom-up enactments of care that do not force ‘difference’ to the foreground, regulating and reifying it (Janssens & Zanoni, 2021; Tyler & Vachhani, 2020). Instead, the perspective adopted in Essay 3 places ‘relations with others at the heart of ethical considerations and political action’ (Pullen et al., 2021, p. 2562). Still, while efforts to re-think inclusion ‘beyond the boundaries’ are important, we also need to pay attention to rendering visible the ‘hidden battleground of inclusion’ (Hackl, 2022, p. 990), in which boundaries and their attached conditions are negotiated. In Essay 3, this becomes evident in the ways the enactment of care is entwined with political expressions of asserting societal membership by refugees and migrants, as claiming (caring) needs and responsibilities operate to reject an ‘outsider’ status. These are struggles taking place ‘at the boundary’, claiming societal membership while simultaneously seeking to transform it. Proceeding in practice as if the boundaries did not matter, because they should not matter, fails to show how they continue to ground social existence – to paraphrase Ahmed’s (2012, p. 182) remark on categories. Whether the ‘doing’ of inclusion concerns drawing, contesting, or transforming the boundaries, it is these boundaries that remain an important site of struggle for inclusion.

5.2 Concluding remarks

Migration itself is not a challenge or problem; instead, it is a natural, stable part of contemporary societies. Nevertheless, the challenges it poses to societies,

including combating marginalization, and xenophobia, and addressing rising inequalities, are ever more pressing. In a socio-political context that is increasingly hostile towards refugees and certain migrant communities, individuals and organizations aiming to promote inclusion are faced with various struggles. As this dissertation demonstrates, the struggles originate from the power dynamics and contradictions inherent to the inclusion project that need to be foregrounded instead of neutralized for inclusion to represent a political project conducive to social change. Consequently, future research in critical inclusion studies could increasingly turn the focus to forms of organizing that are explicitly political drawing inspiration, for instance, from theoretical discussions on the politics of coalition building, allyship and solidarity (Arruzza et al., 2019; Carastathis, 2013; Wickström et al., 2021). In the face of growing disparities and political climates tainted by xenophobia (Amis et al., 2021; Nkomo et al., 2019), developing these perspectives becomes increasingly important.

However, in the midst of these struggles, social change toward inclusion also emerges as a lived, ordinary everydayness in communities and spaces, in which people come together, from various backgrounds, with various motivations and reasons, in ways that escape (at least temporally) the delineation of boundaries. In organizational efforts aimed at promoting inclusion, recognizing this necessitates a careful balance – allowing space for these mundane relations to be formed without neutralizing the socio-political contexts of struggles for inclusion. To emphasize the potential for change rooted in everyday relations and activities, I'd like to conclude with a quote from one of my research participants, Yousef, a Syrian Berliner, who had engaged in the activities of one of the case organizations since arriving in Berlin in 2015. When I asked him how he benefited from the organization's work, he answered:

'We are having fun in this community. Wherever people are from – whether they are Germans or not Germans – it doesn't matter. Meeting Germans, learning the language, these things... That's not actually the purpose. The point is not integration. The point is to live your life and have fun.'

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