

## A Critical Discourse Analysis of Intersectionality, the Ideal Worker and the Professionalized UK Non-Profit Sector

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**Abstract :** Drawing on the concept of the Ideal Worker and Intersectionality as a Critical Social theory, this research examines to what extent minority ethnic female workers are excluded from the Ideal Worker concept in non-profits, specifically whilst these organizations undergo change to become more professionalized. Critical Discourse Analysis was used to analyse semi-structured interviews from 21 workers, including minority ethnic female, male and non-binary workers, who all represent a range of job roles across the non-profit sector (e.g., trustees, consultants, fundraisers, recruiters, Human Resource (HR), Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) professionals, etc.). Organizational literature, which provides the symbolic capital for the Ideal Worker concept within this sector and used by these workers within career development and recruitment practices, was further examined. Non-profits present an interesting context of tensions, given their historical ethos of philanthropic social change, whilst changing their present-day organisational practices to reflect the professionalized for-profit sector. This research aims to examine the technologies of inclusion that are used to validate the Ideal Worker concept and the tensions between the projected organisational rhetoric advocating for societal change and those internalized organizational practices that perpetuate workplace inequalities for minority ethnic females. In doing so, this research will provide an insight into the interplay between inclusion, performativity and underrepresentation; examining whether the latter can improve. This research contributes to the call for action regarding effective inclusion practices within non-profit organizations by advocating the use of a critical framework to be incorporated within organizational equity and inclusion strategies; thereby enabling effective sector-wide representation for minoritized workers.

**Keywords :** critical discourse analysis, professionalization, organizational change, ideal worker, non-profit, third sector, charity, intersectionality, inclusion, minority ethnic female

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