



Western
Centre for Research on
Migration and Ethnic Relations

**Winter Colloquium
Series 2021**

Tobias Pötzsch



Tobias Pötzsch works as a Senior lecturer in Social Work at the University of Helsinki's Swedish School of Social Science. His doctoral dissertation; *Critical Perspectives on Social Inclusion in Integration Education Programs for Adult Migrants (2020)* explored inclusion strategies through the lenses of anti-oppressive practices, critical whiteness studies and critical migration studies in Finland and Canada.

Born in East Germany, raised in Canada, and living in Finland since 1997, Tobias has integrated himself in Swedish. He earned his doctoral degree in Social Sciences (Social Work) from the University of Helsinki and degrees in Social Work (M.Sc.) at Gothenburg University in Sweden and Education (B.Ed.) from the University of Alberta. He has worked as a researcher at CEREN (Centre for Research on Ethnic Relations and Nationalism). His areas of expertise include social work theory and ethics, multicultural/anti-oppressive/anti-racist social work, multicultural client counseling and qualitative research methods.

Critical Social Inclusion: An Alternative to Integration Discourses.

This is the dialectic of inclusion and exclusion, and its mode of positioning the migrant in the liminal space of the *'not too excluded, but not too included either'* (Hage 2000 :243). This presentation explores the intersections of inclusion and exclusion or inclusions, that position adult migrant learners enrolled in SFI (Swedish for Immigrants) and LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) integration programs as between and betwixt belonging and othering. The resulting liminal spaces are ones wherein they oscillate between those practices deemed acceptable by majorities and those deemed unacceptable. Based on research findings obtained during multiple case study fieldwork in Finland and Canada between 2015-2017, it examines contested understandings of social inclusion in juxtaposing them with the rubric of integration and its attendant civic integrationism. By interrogating how social inclusion is contested within the walls of these institutions, it shines a particular spotlight on the (Color) Blind Spots, denoting narratives which are ubiquitous, yet seemingly nameless in imposing themselves on inclusion efforts.

**Thursday, January 28th, 2021
2:00 pm, Virtual Zoom Event
All Welcome!**

<https://westernuniversity.zoom.us/j/93903976058>