

Faculty of Social Sciences

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**CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL
INCLUSION IN INTEGRATION
EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR
ADULT MIGRANTS**

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DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the process of social inclusion of adult migrant learners enrolled in integration education programs. It reveals the *Inclusectionalities* denoting the intersections of inclusion and exclusion through which liminal spaces are revealed that position migrant students as between and betwixt belonging and othering. The study is based on research findings obtained during multiple case study fieldwork in Finland and Canada between 2015-2017 consisting of in-depth and group interviews with migrant students and staff as well as extended periods of participant observation. The Finnish case studies consist of Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) programs at The Swedish Adult Education Institute (Arbis) in Helsingfors and The Civic Institute (Medis) in Mariehamn, on the Åland Islands, while NorQuest College's Language Integration for Newcomers to Canada program (LINC) in Edmonton represents the Canadian case. Anti-oppressive methodologies (AOP), as well as perspectives integrated from Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) and Critical Migration Studies (CMS) with their ideals of challenging structural racism and working for social change inform the theoretical framework of critical social inclusion as well as the study's research design.

The empirical findings show that social inclusion within the educations was tangled, episodic, and far from uniform or straightforward. Its negotiations revealed the presence of widely contradictory and conflicted responses which oscillated between Civic Integrationism's striving to inculcate a "coherent" national narrative and Transformation Inclusion's more "incoherent," critical and egalitarian interpretations. The findings, presented in three main themes: *Inclusion Within the Walls*, *Inclusion Beyond the Walls* and *(Colour) Blind Spots*, also reveal that both enabling and disabling factors emerged in implementing critical social inclusion within the case studies' different educational, social and national environments.

Educational programs where integration was myopically equated with host country language acquisition often lost sight of the breadth and depth – the "real life" focus – broader social inclusion demanded. Secondly,

where an integrationist normative narrative – as in, “aren’t we supposed to teach them how to live here?” – justified prevailing power and racial hierarchies, it stood in the way of reciprocal learning and student agency in reshaping curricula and inclusion efforts. A third factor concerned how willing staff, administrators and other stakeholders were to turn the majority gaze inwards in interrogating their own role in maintaining cultural and structural inequalities as well as white entitlements. By diverting this gaze, the white social frame grounding these inequalities became institutional background and “common sense” views of culture, learning and integration eluded critical analysis. The fourth factor refers to the prevailing social and political climates in which integration education programs were embedded. Where these climates emphasized controls and compliances which racialized and othered migrants, they accentuated students’ abjection from the social body. Lastly, social inclusion necessitates robust expressions of joint political agency yet implementations of LINC and SFI were generally characterized by a politics of apoliticality. Because programs were not developed around critical citizenship foundations but emphasized more “neutral” incarnations of language and cultural learning, they extended limited sanctioned opportunities for teachers and students to collectively challenge social and structural injustices.

A key discursive and cognitive transposition is the study’s contention that if critical perspectives of social inclusion are to become a lived reality for *all* program participants, then majorities must also be subjected to the “integration spotlight.” Turning the majority gaze from the migrant inwards, presumes a sea change in attitudes, aims and program implementations. How one answers the question of who serves as an arbiter over which expressions of migrant diversity are judged as beneficial or as obstacles to inclusion is crucial here.

ABSTRAKT

Denna avhandling undersöker processen av social inkludering av vuxna migrantelever som är inskrivna i integrationsutbildningsprogram. Den klarlägger *inklusektionaliteter*, d.v.s. skärningspunkter mellan inkludering och exkludering, där de liminala utrymmen som placerar migrantelever emellan tillhörande och andrefiering framträder. Studien är baserad på ett omfattande material som samlades in genom flerfallstudiefältarbete i Finland och Kanada mellan 2015–2017, bestående av djupgående enskilda och gruppbaseade intervjuer med migrantelever och personal samt perioder av deltagande observation. De finländska fallstudierna består av Svenska för invandrare (SFI) utbildningsprogrammen vid Svenska arbetarinstitutionen (Arbis) i Helsingfors och Medborgarinstitutionen (Medis) i Mariehamn på Åland, medan NorQuest Colleges Language Integration for Newcomers to Canada program (LINC) i Edmonton utgör det kanadensiska fallet. Antiförtryckande praktiker (AOP), samt perspektiv integrerade från Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) och Critical Migration Studies (CMS) har med sina ideal att utmana strukturell rasism och att arbeta för social förändring format både teori och forskningsdesign.

De empiriska resultaten visar att den sociala inkluderingen inom utbildningarna var rörlig, tillfällig och långt ifrån enhetlig. Försöken att implementera social inkludering blottade motsägelsefulla och motstridiga reaktioner som växlade mellan försök att införa en ”enhetlig” nationell berättelse (*Civic Integrationism*) och mer ”osammanhängande,” kritiska och jämlika tolkningar (*Transformation Inclusion*). Resultaten – presenterade i tre huvudteman, *Inkludering inom murarna*, *Inkludering bortom murarna* och *(Färg)Blinda fläckar* – avslöjar att både möjliggörande och begränsande faktorer uppstod vid konceptualiseringen och implementeringen av kritisk social inkludering inom de olika pedagogiska, sociala och språkliga miljöerna.

Program där integration likställdes med världlandsspråkförvärv saknade det bredare perspektivet och fokus på ”det verkliga livet” som en konkret medborgarinkludering kräver. För det andra, i de fall rådande

makt- och rashierarkier motiverades inom en integrationistisk normativ berättelse, så som ”ska vi inte lära dem att leva här?”, blev ömsesidigt lärande och studenternas egen agens svårare att förverkliga. En tredje faktor var hur beredd personal, administratörer och andra aktörer var att vända majoritetsblicken inåt för att granska sin egen roll i upprätthållandet av kulturella och strukturella ojämlikheter och vita privilegier. Bristen på introspektion sedimenterade dessa orättvisor som institutionell bakgrund inom ett vitt socialt ramverk, och ”självklara” uppfattningar om kultur, inläring och integration undgick kritisk granskning. Den fjärde faktorn berör det rådande sociala och politiska klimatet inom vilket integrationsutbildningsprogrammen existerar. När dessa förhållanden betonade kontroll av migranter och krav på anpassbarhet förstärktes elevernas fjärmning från samhället. Trots att verklig social inkludering kräver kraftiga åtgärder för en gemensam politisk agens, kännetecknas implementeringar av LINC och SFI vanligtvis av apolitiskhet. Eftersom programmen inte utvecklats utgående från en grund i kritisk medborgarskap, utan betonade mer "neutrala" former av språk- och kulturinläring, gav de lärare och studenter begränsade möjligheter att kollektivt utmana sociala och strukturella orättvisor.

En av studiens centrala slutsatser är att ifall de kritiska perspektiven på social inkludering skall bli en levd verklighet för *alla* programdeltagare, måste en diskursiv och kognitiv omtolkning möjliggöras genom att även majoriteter granskas av ”integrationsstrålkastaren.” Att vända majoritetsblicken inåt, och från migranten, förutsätter en genomgripande förändring av attityder, mål och programimplementeringar. Svaret på frågan om vem som beslutar över vilka uttryck för migrantdiversitet anses fördelaktiga eller utgöra hinder för inkludering är avgörande här.

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It is good to have an end to journey toward; but it is the journey that matters, in the end.

— Ursula K. Le Guin

As this monograph represents the culmination of my meanderingly espial journey along the doctoral path, these acknowledgements recognize that it is the collective nature of such a journey that truly imbues it with its intrinsic meaning. In these few insufficient words of thanks, I therefore attempt to recognize the myriad contributions, both continuous and brief as well as planned or serendipitous, of those who have been involved in this work. As such, I will seek to adhere to the conventions on orders of preference and hierarchies generally subscribed to in texts of this sort, while also departing from them on occasion. To begin, my most heartfelt debt of gratitude extends to the students, teachers, administrators and support staff involved in LINC and SFI integration education programs at Arbis, Medis and Norquest College who opened their doors, lives and affective worlds to me in agreeing to participate in this study. I applaud their perseverance, ingenuity and commitment as well as the boundless humanity with which they invested their work and studies. The concerted efforts of contact persons who vouched for me, such as Ann-Jolin Grüne at Arbis, Patti Hergott at Norquest and Ann Westerlund at Medis, ensured that I was welcomed with goodwill from the outset. The many months spent in classrooms and in conversations with staff and migrant learners also revealed the intangibles inherent in reciprocal multicultural learning, something which interviews and logbook entries were never able to fully capture. The resulting feeling of embeddedness and community made “leaving” or disengaging from the schools a distinctly difficult experience.

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CONTENTS

1	Introduction	1
2	Theoretical Perspectives	12
2.1	Points of Departure in Exploring Migrant Social Inclusion.....	13
2.2	The Inclusion-Exclusion Nexus	17
2.3	Integration.....	18
2.4	Critical Perspectives on Social Inclusion.....	23
2.4.1	Participation Inclusion	24
2.4.2	Transformation Inclusion.....	27
2.4.3	Transposition Inclusion.....	29
2.5	Anti-Oppressive Practice.....	32
2.5.1	Key Concepts in Anti-Oppressive Practice	34
2.5.2	Anti-Oppressive Practice’s Intersectional Models.....	38
2.5.3	Anti-Oppression in Education.....	41
2.5.4	Anti-Oppressive Models and Practices: Critiques and Replies	43
3	Previous studies	47
3.1	The Inclusion-Exclusion Nexus in Research on Educational Programs for Migrants.....	47
3.2	Social Inclusion in Research on Educational Programs for Migrants	50
3.3	The Inclusion-Exclusion Nexus in Research on LINC Programs	53
3.4	The Inclusion-Exclusion Nexus in Research on Swedish Minority Integration and SFI Educations	57
4	Case Study Descriptions & Participants.....	60
4.1	NorQuest College LINC in Edmonton.....	60
4.2	Arbis – The Swedish Adult Education Institute in Helsingfors....	64
4.3	Medis – The Civic Institute in Mariehamn.....	68

5	Methodology.....	76
5.1	Research Objectives.....	76
5.2	Aims of Critical Qualitative Research.....	77
5.3	Anti-Oppressive Critical Research.....	78
5.3.1	Considerations in Anti-Oppressive Research.....	79
5.3.2	Collaborative Researcher – Participant Relationships.....	80
5.3.3	Social Change Agendas.....	83
5.3.4	Researcher Positionality.....	85
5.4	Case Study.....	91
5.4.1	Case Selection.....	93
5.4.2	Types of Case Study Approaches.....	93
5.4.3	Critiques of Case Study Approaches.....	95
5.5	Data Collection.....	98
5.5.1	In-depth Interviews.....	99
5.5.2	Group Interviewing.....	101
5.5.3	Participant Observation.....	104
5.5.4	Gaining Access.....	104
5.5.5	Observation Process.....	106
5.5.6	Researcher Role.....	107
6	Data Analysis.....	109
6.1	Inductive Content Analysis.....	109
6.2	Transcription.....	110
6.3	Process.....	111
6.4	Initial Coding.....	112
6.5	Organizing Codes.....	113
6.6	Multiple Case Study Analysis.....	114
6.6.1	The Mapping Stage.....	115
6.6.2	The Theming Stage.....	116

6.6.3	Write-up Choices	118
6.7	Ethical Considerations.....	119
6.7.1	Power Dynamics and Researcher Positionality	120
6.7.2	Power and Positionality in Interactions with Students	121
6.7.3	Power and Positionality in Interactions with Staff	124
6.7.4	Informed Consent, Harm Reduction and Confidentiality.....	127
7	Empirical Findings	134
7.1	Inclusion Within the Walls.....	135
7.1.1	Critical Consciousness and Change Agency	136
7.1.2	Inclusion in Program Aims and Curricular Contents.....	142
7.1.3	Cultural Accommodation Practices	151
7.1.4	Teaching “Culture”.....	158
7.1.5	Critical Citizenship.....	164
7.1.6	Institutional impacts	171
7.2	Inclusion Beyond the Walls	183
7.2.1	Looking Inwards while Looking Beyond.....	185
7.2.2	Building Societal Partnerships.....	196
7.2.3	Structural Barriers to Inclusion Beyond the Walls.....	208
7.3	(Colour) Blind Spots	227
7.3.1	Racism’s “Pastness”.....	228
7.3.2	White Social Frame.....	240
7.3.3	Language Implicitness.....	254
8	Conclusions	268
8.1	Retracing Inclusion Outcomes	269
8.2	Factors influencing Migrant Social Inclusion.....	272
8.3	Study Contributions and Future Research.....	279
	References.....	283
	Appendices.....	307

1 INTRODUCTION

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)

Assimilation, Integration and Inclusion, are all labels describing processes. They are fluid and multifarious yet attached to persons labelled immigrants where *immigrant*¹ is perceived as a static condition of existence rather than a pattern or description of movement (Back & Sinha 2012). “Immigrants” are acted upon to act in ways that correspond to what we mean by the labels or what we imply the labels to mean. What is left out and absented is as important as what is communicated by them. This is precisely why, as Sara Ahmed states, describing the process of social inclusion becomes so crucial, because a change of labels can be cosmetic, – of form over substance – which serves to conceal hegemonies and extend exclusions. It is the description of this process of social inclusion of adult migrant learners in integration education programs in its myriad of interpretations which constitutes the core of my thesis. It explores inclusion’s fractured, interrupted vicissitudes through which the position of migrant students as between and betwixt belonging and *othering*² comes into view. Inclusion constitutes a work in progress or a “social becoming” where, akin to traversing different rooms, migrants wander in and out of spaces of belonging and non-belonging on their educational journeys (Askonas 2000). The paradoxical liminality of their position within the stop-gap of integration programs is that they seem to have all the time in the world and yet experience that time is running out for them.

¹ Due to the static and often stigmatizing implication of the term “immigrant,” I have chosen to employ the more fluid and less pejorative description of “migrant” within my thesis in referring to adult students in integration education programs, while acknowledging that it too is a contested term.

² The term “othering” is used to refer to the process of marginalizing and socially excluding those individuals and groups in society that are deemed other than the norm. (Krumer-Nevo 2012)

In this age of global modernity, characterized by increasing flows of both internal and external migration, seemingly instantaneous global communication, complex and contested identities, and value pluralism's apposition with resurgent nationalisms, a varied analytical toolbox is required in order to make sense of the world (Eriksen 2015). With reference to migration this raises two different challenges. The first one is whether territorial democracies can include migrants as equal citizens and the second is whether transnationally fluid societies can be reimagined democratically as communities of equal citizens (Bauböck 2011). Given migrants' complex national "belongings", their transnational social, political and economic enmeshments and their entitlement to socially just, egalitarian forms of participation, addressing these challenges is crucial. Presently, the social policy responses to migrant incorporation into Western societies, fuelled by the 2015 "border crisis"³ have often sought to manage differences in the guise of strict border regimes, integration programs, stringent citizenship criteria, etc., instead of endorsing policies of inclusion predicated upon reducing power hierarchies, recognizing the contingency and malleability of social structures and supporting organic, grass roots forms of participation (Crul, Schneider & Lelie 2012, Trilling 2018). Such responses have engaged social educators, social workers and other welfare providers in a series of seminal yet also contradictory discourses. "Integration" has emerged as the policy and rhetorical rubric promising general social cohesion while simultaneously reassuring migrants of their "belonging" to the nation-state if they adhere to integration regimes. These regimes conflate liberal values with national values that function as boundary mechanisms and become "legitimate" means of inclusion and exclusion (Lægaard 2007). As such, they become arbiters not only in separating desirable from undesirable immigration statuses and integration strategies but also in adjudicating over migrants' perceived integrability – their short and long-term potential in becoming socio-economically self-sufficient and conforming to a preordained cultural order (Tittley 2019).

³ I have employed the term "border crisis" instead of "migrant or refugee crisis" to shift the problem definition from the latter (i.e. migrants) to the fractured system of European border regimes, which they encounter on their journeys (Andersson 2014).

The staggered process of integration includes tests and measures designed to educate and “produce” the desired migrant subject. These essentially “function as another regulatory technique for the state to manage access by the non-national” (Guild et al., 2009, p.42). In so doing, integration regimes also have the potential to dis-integrate. Hierarchies in immigrant statuses and legitimacies create hierarchies of belonging which have become fundamental to the politics of the “nation” in sustaining a narrative of “home” as a bounded and cohesive national society. Ghassan Hage (2000) argues that in such stratified conceptions of home, certain approved spaces for (multi)cultural performances are cordoned off as replacements for more influence extended to migrants in mainstream political and social processes. Given that integration education programs are integral components of national integration regimes, my thesis sheds light on how this dialectic between civic integrationism and critical social inclusion is played out in relations between staff and students and between schools and the societies in which they are embedded.

Turning to the objectives and aims that provide the structural scaffolding for this study, the thesis’ main goal was to conduct a multiple case study of integration educations for adult migrants who were enrolled in the national integration education programs of Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) in Finland and Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) in Canada. Describing how social inclusion is envisaged and practically implemented in LINC and SFI programs, recognizing the complex and multiple linguistic, cultural and political environments in which they are embedded, represent the thesis’ main research focus. As such, the study was informed by three exploratory research questions: 1) How is social inclusion conceived, contested and practically operationalized within LINC and SFI integration educations? 2) What are the experiences of social inclusion of those who work in implementing the integration education programs and those who participate in them? and 3) What possibilities and limitations exist in incorporating principles of critical social inclusion into different educational, social and linguistic environments? These queries explore the various ways in which inclusion is negotiated within and beyond school walls, as well the factors that work to obfuscate or enable its realization. As such, they target personal, cultural and

Introduction

structural levels while endeavouring to foreground participants' own experiences and voices.

In framing my inquiry, I deliberately chose three case studies which represent “difference” in the broader scope of national and international contexts in order to enhance my understanding of the multiplicitous practices and contestations of social inclusion, reserving a particular focus for SFI programs. By focusing on integration educations with varying points of departure, majority-minority relations and practices, I sought to discover both new information well as commonalities about processes of social inclusion that transcended the individual cases as well as their national borders. As such, all three case studies exhibit “typical” and “atypical” components. As research methodologist, Robert Stake (2006) points out, the atypical in case selection can complement the typical and offer valuable insights for our understanding of other cases. While LINC at NorQuest College in Edmonton, Alberta is taught in the majority language of English and follows national curricular guidelines, thereby positioning it as “typical,” it represents the only case where an integration education is provided alongside other vocational streams at a post-secondary level, atypical even by Canadian standards. Furthermore, in terms of student and staff numbers, it represents by far the largest case in the research. The Civic Institute (Medis) on the Åland Islands also displays typical components by providing SFI education in the majority language of the surrounding community. However, it operates within a semi-autonomous, minority Swedish-language enclave within Finland, enjoying unique constitutional protections, including wide-ranging control over educational policy and practice. The Swedish Adult Education Institute (Arbis) in Helsingfors, in contrast, is the only case study, embedded within a majority language (Finnish) environment offering integration education in the other official language, Swedish.

Aside from their differences, however, the cases also share commonalities that facilitated making points of connection. The first of these consisted of common curricular components comprising language acquisition, cultural skills training and short work-life internships which embraced the goal of providing migrant students with opportunities to develop linguistic, cultural and vocational competences. All three programs

also aimed their inclusion efforts both within the school walls and beyond them to wider society and developed strategies, to greater or lesser extents, of ensuring that migrant students engaged in a dialectic with the world around them. This dialectic between school and society was equally circumscribed by prevailing social climates and governmental policies that set both tangible and intangible parameters dictating which forms inclusion could and should take.

The focus on structural or societal impacts, crucial in conceptualizations of critical social inclusion, represents another reason for choosing to focus on SFI educations, with Arbis SFI representing a unique case. Integration in a minority, albeit national, language operates from an entirely different precarity than educations which are embedded within majority cultural and linguistic landscapes. An ancillary yet worthwhile question to consider was, therefore, whether this minority status imbued Arbis' integration program with a greater sensitivity to principles of critical social inclusion. It was also partly in response to divergent social climates and societal impacts that NorQuest College was selected. The Canadian perspective provided an example of an established LINC program in a country with a long history of immigration and integration strategies, and one whose emphasis on multiculturalism in national discourses on inclusion differs from integration traditions in Nordic welfare states. Although, it is beyond the scope of this research, and not my intention, to provide a social policy comparison of integration regimes in Finland and Canada, the international perspective does broaden the scope of examining social inclusion strategies which, given their diverse points of departure and socio-cultural milieus, revealed a surprising number of similarities as well as dissimilarities.

Extended periods of fieldwork during 2015 and 2016 in Helsingfors, Edmonton and Mariehamn comprising stays from three to six months in each case study environment ultimately yielded a rich source material. It consisted of in-depth interviews with teachers, administrators and support staff, group interviews with adult migrant students within LINC and SFI as well as months of participant observation in classrooms and other learning or extra-curricular environments. Interview transcripts and observation logs generated a multifaceted qualitative database in providing the raw

Introduction

material for my findings. The latter are presented in three main empirical themes, *Inclusion Within the Walls – Inclusion Beyond the Walls* – and *(Colour) Blind Spots*, whose structure moves from the concrete, institutional discourses and manifestations of inclusion to more of an exploration as to where and how these efforts intersect. Particularly *(Colour) Blind Spots* shifts focus from the more observable and tangible to those discourses or conversations which in their taken-for-grantedness seem to be “absent” from debates on social inclusion and ultimately recede into institutional background.

My theoretical foundation informing the study and the aforementioned themes examines competing understandings of social inclusion as juxtaposed with the rubric of integration and its attendant civic integrationism. It draws upon critical theories derived from the fields of social work, education, and sociology. In examining how the various interpretations of social inclusion/integration recalibrate the interdependent relations of exclusion and inclusion, theory illuminates the liminal spaces in which migrants are positioned which emerge from this inclusion-exclusion nexus. Social work and education have contributed cogent theoretical supports derived from Anti-Oppressive Practice (AOP) theories and methodologies rooted in social conflict analyses of society and social relations. AOP is informed by radical, anti-racist, anti-discriminatory, decolonial, and structural social work theory (Morgaine & Capous-Desyllas 2015). Its ideals of challenging oppression, promoting equity and working for social transformation on a myriad of interconnected structural levels have expanded my understanding of critical social inclusion while also grounding my research approach, methodology and positionality as a researcher. From sociology, Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) with its focus on Whiteness as a largely “invisible” and unacknowledged yet salient factor in problematizing racism, has contributed valuable perspectives. The contention, that in uncritically positing whiteness as the norm one enables the often-unwitting marginalization of racialized others, is a recurrent theme in the thesis (Cabrera & Corces-Zimmerman 2019). In the same way that CWS research seeks to decenter the white subject, Critical Migration Studies (CMS), a related field of sociological inquiry, aims to debunk the statist gaze and the objectification of migrant subjects. Its point of departure, namely that research ought to highlight forms of situated

knowledge and practices of those who struggle against racist migration regimes while resisting modes of social organization that reify migrants, has made a valuable contribution (Anderson 2019). Ultimately then, AOP, CWS and CMS are linked in defining “the critical” in theories of social inclusion by their opposition to the objectification, “naturalization” and problematization of migrants as well as in their efforts of re-situating problem definitions associated with immigration within the social values, political ideologies and institutional structures of white Western nation states.

Explaining the *modus operandi* of this study, both theoretically and methodologically, would not be complete however without contextualizing it within my own personal (migrant) journey that set me on the path to this thesis. It shares the uncertainty and circuitousness of many of the winding journeys undertaken by my migrant participants. Refugee narratives were a quotidian part of my childhood. My mother’s family was forced to leave its home, possessions and livelihoods in the former Silesia after 1945 and migrate on foot for many weeks to what then constituted East Germany. The journey, the hardships, the constant fear and destitution as well as the ambivalent reception in the “new” homeland comprised stories which imprinted themselves on me at an early age. I recall that these stories were related with resignation rather than bitterness and as a confirmation of God’s grace in ensuring the family’s survival. This lent them a simplicity and naturalness which demystified them and removed the possible taboos broaching such topics could evoke. The “migrant narrative” then continued to follow me, constituting a pivotal component defining my life. After spending my formative years being inculcated in East Germany’s interpretation of “state socialism,” I emigrated as a child with my family to Canada and later, as an adult, to Finland.

Traversing each of these qualitatively different geographical, cultural and political spaces, I saw certain commonalities emerge. In each, one was forced to confront and mitigate the effects of being a member of a linguistic and cultural minority within majority society. As a child in Canada, labouring over “the sore points” of such negotiations was submerged by fervent wishes of belonging. One simply “got by” and postponed self-reflective ruminations until ... However, during my second geographical

Introduction

shift to Helsingfors where I integrated in Finland's other official language, Swedish, I (re)visited another minority position. I, essentially, became a "minority within a minority." Despite feeling welcomed within the smaller, yet tightly-knit Finland-Swedish community, I became distinctly aware of a permeating social climate within the Finnish majority in which "the other" national language was perceived as a provocation to myopic nationalist essentialisms. Such essentialisms were also structurally embedded within institutional cultures, aptly illustrated by the University of Applied Sciences in which I taught as Senior lecturer and coordinator of an International Program for Social Service students. Policies which marginalized and racialized international students and staff were so routinely adopted that they receded into *institutional backgrounds* (Ahmed 2012). The banality with which institutional racism was practiced was such that it made suspect or silenced all who challenged it. What it also gave rise to, however, were pockets of resistance consisting of shared solidarities between staff and students in opposing injustices. Such opposition meant that those who challenged institutional discrimination operated in a borderland – a liminal space – where seeing from the margins transformed shared experiences of exclusion into ways of connecting and pushing back. My own position during this time could best be encapsulated by the sentiments of one educator whom I interviewed during my doctoral fieldwork six years later. In speaking about her role in teaching migrant students, she stated, "Well, that is the nice thing because I never really did fit, and a lot of these people feel that they don't fit either so we're a team and I can give them encouragement and support."

In agitating from the margins, I was fortunate in being able to draw upon anti-oppressive practice theories that had founded my Master dissertation in social work at the University of Gothenburg. These had underpinned explorations of worker-client interactions at a group home for unaccompanied minor refugees, and essentially provided me with a vocabulary to analyze and confront the hierarchies of oppression operating at my own workplace. Moreover, the topic had reconnected me with refugee narratives of migrant youths and with the fractured complexities of their life situations. During my studies in Gothenburg, I was also approached to complete my doctorate at the Faculty of Social Work and despite returning to teaching and life in Helsingfors, thoughts of

completing a PhD. never left me. In 2015, these incoherent musings assumed coherent form as I moved to the Swedish School of Social Science at the University of Helsinki and the Centre for Research on Ethnic Relations and Nationalism to commence my doctoral studies. By focusing on the institutional environments of schools in examining the process of inclusion, I was able to combine my Degree in Education from the University of Alberta as well as the subsequent fifteen years of practical teaching experience with my ongoing interest in migrant journeys and critical theories. The latter's social justice focus coupled with structural critiques helps explain some of the theoretical orientations and methodological choices in this study. My own anfractuious personal and professional journey culminating in this thesis topic has been both joyously and arduously educational. It has taught me that becoming cognizant of the intersections between individual and cultural norms and bringing an openness to sharing the "other's" world in our encounters are both preconditions and outcomes of such a process (Yellow Bird et. al 2013). As a prerequisite for inclusion on such terms, I have found Gloria Anzaldua's encouragement to adopt a "borderland perspective" instructive. In such a positioning, one finds comfort in ambiguity and contradiction and makes oneself vulnerable to different ideas, thoughts, and ways of being (Brown & Strega 2005).

The importance of this thesis lies in its examination of the dialectic between the visible and the invisible, between observable manifestations of social inclusion and the unobservable or hidden personal and institutional positionalities and structural parameters from which they emanate. In focusing on the "process" of inclusion, my study also sheds light on the imprecision and disingenuousness of labels in articulating what is "actually" being done with, or to, migrant learners. Processes demonstrate that what is implied and omitted is as important as what said or done by efforts labelled *integration* or *inclusion*. I have therefore coined the term *Inclusectionalities* to describe this interdependent, concurrent process of migrant student inclusion and exclusion taking place in integration education programs, to be explicated in greater detail in the empirical chapters. The study is also of interest for employing the theoretical lens of anti-oppressive practice in grounding the research methodology and informing the process social inclusion within institutions. In partnership

Introduction

with ideas and discourses contributed by CWS and CMS, these constitute perspectives founded upon structural critiques and principles for social transformation which are not commonly integrated within social work or educational practice in Nordic countries. In addition, the thesis complements and expands on the currently limited research base exploring migrant integration in Swedish in Finland. As no previous research has examined the nature and implementation of Swedish language integration programs in an international comparison, this study fills a void. In fact, there is a paucity of studies examining national integration education programs for migrants from an international perspective which juxtapose and contrast such educations. Moreover, as the position of language minorities is actively debated in many countries, my thesis contributes to discourses and theoretical discussions on migrant integration within minority language enclaves.

This monograph is structured around eight separate chapters wherein Chapter 1, *Introduction*, briefly elucidates current debates on inclusion/exclusion, integration and migration. It also contextualizes the study's theoretical and methodological choices as well as positions the researcher within the critical social inclusion discourse. Chapter 2, *Theoretical Perspectives*, develops and deepens this discourse by employing a rhetorical device in which competing conceptions of integration and social inclusion are subsumed under separate headings in order to delineate differences in how these terms are given meaning. Anti-oppressive practice is also framed in more descriptive detail as its research practice fundamentally underpins my methodological approach. Chapter 3, *Previous Studies*, examines current research on social inclusion and the inclusion-exclusion nexus in LINC and SFI educational programs for migrants, while Chapter 4, *Case Study Descriptions and Participants* contributes representations of NorQuest College LINC and Arbis SFI and Medis SFI as well short descriptions of the students and staff which participated in the study. Chapters 5 & 6, *Methodology* and *Data Analysis* comprise descriptions of the methodological choices, processes and ethical considerations employed in the research. Chapter 7, *Empirical Findings*, presents the three main inductively generated themes; Inclusion Within the Walls, Inclusion Beyond the Walls and (Colour) Blind Spots with interwoven theoretical reflections, while Chapter 8, *Conclusions*, summarizes the empirical findings in light of the main

research questions, introduces five factors influencing migrant social inclusion, and elucidates the study's contribution as well as avenues for future research.

2 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

It has also been in the very nature of the dialectic of inclusion and exclusion that, while forced to open up these new inclusionary spaces for the settling migrants, White politics has tried at the same time to deploy different exclusionary processes to contain them within those spaces [...] 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, pp. 242-3)

The above quotation goes to the heart of immigration or integration debates because it interrogates not only their unfulfillment regarding “solutions” but posits that their inherent self-fulfilling unfulfillment is precisely the point. Their role is to adjudicate not only over those who are about to “be included” but also those who have already immigrated. As such, they reaffirm the white majority’s preordained right to judge and manage “good” and “bad” diversity and re-entrenches them as sole arbiters over non-white immigrants’ contributions to the nation. Perceptions of migrants as triggers of unease (De Roo, Braeye & De Moor 2016) and scapegoats for an implied decrease of social solidarity (Lorenz 2006) have resulted in the type of *Abwehrnationalismus*⁴ currently dominating many Western nations which interprets migration as a threat to domestic security, social cohesion, democratic integrity and ultimately, cultural identity (Kryzanowski & Wodak 2009, Rat für Migration 2017). Therefore, when talking about how the integration of migrants is conceived and practiced, this can only be interpreted within an *inclusion-exclusion nexus*. In short, an inclusion-exclusion nexus acknowledges that “tokens of inclusion may still persist within a dominant threshold of exclusion” (Parker 2016, p.6). The resulting liminal space created for migrants, described by Hage (2000), wherein they oscillate between those integration practices deemed acceptable by majorities and those deemed unacceptable, is something which my thesis explores. The ways in which inclusion was envisaged, and negotiated in the dialectic between staff, students and society in my study created certain spaces which became more egalitarian, participationist and

⁴Defensive Nationalism (author’s translation)

empowering, while others seemed circumscribing, restricting or disempowering, all of which happened sometimes simultaneously. The inclusion challenge, therefore, is to conceive of society as a multifaceted dynamic structure within which the boundaries of people's lives are contested by diverse groups with unequal access to sources of power and persuasion; and to recognize this inequality as largely structural while attempting to mitigate against it (Crul, Schneider & Lelie 2012).

2.1 POINTS OF DEPARTURE IN EXPLORING MIGRANT SOCIAL INCLUSION

My theoretical discussion will center on the concept of social inclusion informed by critical perspectives derived from anti-oppressive theories in social work and education, and the fields of critical whiteness studies and critical migration studies within sociology. The designation "critical" here implies calling up for scrutiny, whether through embodied action or discursive practice, the rules of exchange within a social field. This requires a move to cognitively and analytically position oneself as Other from the dominant text(s) and discourse (Luke 2004, p.26). "Critical" demands that theory has a practical intent, as in not simply revealing present societal injustices – and leaving it at that – but in advocating changing society by linking social theory and political practice. As Stephen Leonard (1990, p.3) argues, without a practical dimension critical theory would be bankrupt on its own terms. He contends that critical theory must fulfill three requirements. It must locate the sources of oppression in actual social practices, it must present an alternative vision beyond oppression and, it must translate these tasks in a form that is intelligible to those who are "othered" in society. Such an approach has also underpinned the methodological and empirical components of my study.

In selecting a theoretical framework composed of critical perspectives drawn from AOP, CWS and CMS, I recognize that these more embedded within the course syllabi of social work and pedagogical education in Anglo-American countries such as Canada, Australia and the U.K. than in their Scandinavian counterparts. This may partially be attributed to the fact that different and at times competing discourses on the nature of society

predominate the theory and practice of social welfare in these countries. Scandinavian social democratic welfare states – despite national and regional variations – are said to incorporate *social order* or *structuralist* views of society (Mullaly 1997). These entail a cooperative view of social institutions that are claimed to function much like an organism, with each interdependent part contributing to the purported benefit of the whole. Social order perspectives promote a consensual view of practice where inequalities are ameliorated through high levels of social engineering within political and organizational givens. Watchwords are equilibrium, stability, maintenance, integration and social control (Davis 1991). Peter Kivisto (2015) posits that Social Democratic welfare models are biased by the working assumption that members of a society who share an identifiable condition of need should be satisfied with a similar choice and level of services. However, this standardization neglects differences arising from divergent personal or cultural backgrounds or social values.

It is this “difference-centeredness”, which distinguishes *conflict* theories’ view of the nature of society. Represented in anti-oppressive practices, critical migration studies and critical whiteness studies, conflict perspectives hold that society emerges from a contested struggle for power and resources among groups with opposing aims and ideologies, rather than the cooperative symbiosis suggested by social order rationales (Mullaly 1997). The state is seen as an instrument utilized by more dominant groups – either knowingly or “coincidentally” – for their own benefit. Its institutions serve to justify and normalize the oppression of weaker or othered groups who are defined by differences in race, gender, ethnicity, religion, age or disability. It is this “created inequality” which is claimed to constitute the prime source of social conflict. Thus, conflict-based theories argue for radical changes to existing social structures which perpetuate inequalities (Adams, Dominelli & Payne 2002). Indeed, even statutory social work itself, as an element of state control, is indicted as being complicit (Davis 1991). This “structural shift” in understanding social problems and disadvantage repositions the focus of social work from individualist psychological and behavioral models to critical practices aimed at dismantling institutional oppression, informed by the voices emanating from vulnerable communities (Graham & Schiele 2010). Given the divergent visions of society inherent in social order versus conflict

perspectives, with their attendant social interventions, this may help to explain why care and maintenance practice models such as psycho-social and social pedagogical methodologies still comprise the norm in Scandinavian countries, while more socially-critical, adversarial approaches are less well established.

A further point of departure in grounding views on migrant inclusion are the integration regimes of Finland and Canada within which my case studies are entrenched. While an exhaustive immigration policy comparison is outside the purview of this study, a short description of differences may be warranted⁵. Thomas Huddleston, (2012, p.247) in his comparative assessment of Canadian and European integration practices, argues that migrants in the EU have very different starting points than migrants in Canada. He cites structural labour market barriers, narrow definitions of the family, and extended temporary migration statuses as impediments to social inclusion within the European Union. In addition, member states are censured for failing to appreciate migrant contributions to society and neglecting their naturalization. This extends to how policies of anti-discrimination are implemented, where complaints mechanisms in the courts are not reinforced in society by positive actions encouraging civic organizations to diversify. In the case of Finland, this gap between legislation and integration practice is echoed, among others, by Saukkonen (2013), and Martikainen, Valtonen & Wahlbeck (2012).

Biles and Frideres (2012) developed a broad comparative typology of migrant settlement and integration policies of nation states from around the world. While in this framework Finland and Canada are both subsumed under the *proactive* policy orientation, characterized by the presence of programs, such as settlement schemes, language training, and refugee initiatives, the authors do outline a number of cogent differences. Finland is distinguished by its relatively short recent immigration history – being an emigration country until the 1950's – which is evaluated as more homogenous than that of Canada. In fact, until 1999, Finland did not have an officially defined immigration policy (Blomberg-Kroll et. al 2008). It is

⁵ For a more in-depth analysis of Canadian and Finnish immigration policies and integration regimes please consult Frideres and Biles (2012), Kivisto and Wahlbeck (2013), Kraus and Kivisto (2015), Kymlicka (2010), Ugland (2014) and Vad Jönsson et al. (2013).

also described as promoting a more static, essentialist narrative of national identity. In addition, definitions of “integration,” are said to focus more narrowly on economic priorities at the expense of cultural or social factors, and the role played by host society in the espoused “two-way” reciprocity of integration is judged to be minimal. In contrast, Canada’s national identity is described as dynamic, resting on policy directions promoting multiculturalist objectives. There is also the recognition that a greater variety of actors from civil society, such as private sponsors, are involved in migration and settlement schemes. Moreover, Canada is distinguished by a long history of immigration measures and heterogeneous migrant flows (Ibid 2012). In fact, Canadian immigration policy has evolved from the racial discrimination of the 1960’s to the assessment of prospective migrants on a “points system”, which, in recent times, has meant the active recruitment of highly skilled foreign professionals for “designated” occupations to meet Canada’s present and future economic needs (Boyd & Alboim 2012). However, such a system has also been critiqued for not guaranteeing migrants’ successful settlement and integration (Kaushik & Drolet 2018). This is a point echoed in Biles and Frideres (2012, p.295) assessment of Canada’s integration policies which – on paper – they judge to be strong in framing the reciprocal role society must play, yet weak in their implementation.

In the following chapter, I will explore the key concepts of *social inclusion* as juxtaposed against *integration* and interrogate their critical contestations. I will further seek to illuminate the inclusion-exclusion nexus by examining how the various incarnations of social inclusion serve to reconfigure the interdependent relations of exclusion and inclusion on a fluid continuum. This protean interdependency will become clearer in my employment of a theoretical framework where competing conceptions of inclusion are arranged under the headings of *Participation Inclusion*, *Transformation Inclusion* and *Transposition Inclusion*. Such a framework acts as a rhetorical device. It functions as an analytical construct in which the divisions between integration and the different conceptualizations of inclusion may appear artificially sharper than they are for the sake of analysis. For example, owing to the concepts’ malleability in local or national interpretations there may be few differences between *Integration* and *Participation Inclusion* when these are explained and practically implemented. The rhetorical framework is

largely informed by theoretical positionalities derived from critical migration studies and critical whiteness studies. In addition, I will delve more deeply into the theory of anti-oppressive practice as envisaged in social work and pedagogy as it underpins and drives my research design and methodology. Conceived as a critical, multidimensional, utilitarian theory, AOP is especially suitable to the examination of institutional environments such as schools as it is a structural approach at heart (Mullaly 2010). Furthermore, AOP was specifically developed for educators and workers in social welfare service who engage daily with “difference” in their students or clients. As these represent the bulk of participants in my study, my selection of this perspective in informing social inclusion seemed ideal.

2.2 THE INCLUSION-EXCLUSION NEXUS

It has been argued (see for example Popkewitz 2008a, & Atac and Rosenberger 2013) that using the conceptual paradigm of Inclusion-Exclusion as a relational pairing in unmasking the economic, social and political (non)participation of migrant residents has distinct advantages. The dual perspective enables one to examine the heterogeneity of migrant groups and individuals – the effects of differing “labels” denoting their residence statuses on their labour and civic rights – in a much more nuanced manner than the terms integration, or acculturation are able to convey. It is a pairing which captures processes of marginalization and dispossession or, as Robert Castel (2008, p.73) postulates,

Es geht darum, das Kontinuum von Positionen zu rekonstruieren, durch das die drinnen und die draußen verbunden sind, und die Logik zu erfassen, nach der die "drinnen" die "draußen" produzieren. Ein- und Ausschließung ist demnach kein Entweder-oder, sondern ein Kontinuum, ein Nebeneinander, ein Sowohl-als-auch.⁶

The malleability of points of inclusion is echoed by Thomas Hylland Eriksen (2015) who likens this continuum to a grey zone or frontier area

⁶“It is about reconstructing the continuum of positions that connects those on the inside with those on the outside, and to grasp the logic that the ‘insiders’ produce those ‘outside’. Inclusion and exclusion are therefore not an either-or, but a continuum, a juxtaposition, an as-well-as.” (author’s translation)

which morphs, contracts and grows depending upon the situation, its boundaries shifting and negotiable. In such an understanding, individuals transition through different social processes much as through revolving doors which demark varying zones of exclusion and inclusion. Sometimes they can be both included and excluded within the same shifting zone (e.g. the labour market). Consequently, migrants might enter and exit many contexts of inclusion-exclusion over time (Fangen, Johannsen & Hammaren 2012). Within critical education theory, Thomas Popkewitz (2008a, 2009) has described the *abjection* from the social body resulting from these “double gestures of inclusion and exclusion” which position migrant students in a liminal space betwixt and between the inside and the outside. Migrant students are targeted as individuals and groups who may be included – may sometimes become insiders – but whose dispositions, cultural practices and ethnic networks still pervade ways of acting that interfere with the professional practices as well as the goals of inclusion found in educational policy.

In my theoretical discussion, I will begin by exploring this inclusion-exclusion nexus and interrogating and problematizing the concept of migrant *integration* as embedded in theory, policy and practice. This discussion will be followed by an examination of *social inclusion* and its various incarnations all of which hold unique implications for practice within national integration educations.

2.3 INTEGRATION

Given that, the terms of integration and social inclusion are often used interchangeably in juxtaposing them with assimilationist immigration ideologies, which are taken to stand as antitheses to “good” diversity, it becomes essential to clarify what we mean by them. In fact, the meaning(s) of these terms are actively debated and critically contested. An important question to consider when the term “integration” is being used, is to clarify *who* is supposed to be integrated *to what, how* and *by whom?* (Eriksen 2015, p.15). By taking these questions as points of departure, I suggest that the most distinctive differences between migrant integration versus inclusion will reveal themselves.

The International Organization for Migration defines integration as “the process by which immigrants become accepted into society, both as individuals and groups” (IOM 2005, p.459), a definition echoed by Biles & Frideres (2012) who define this “acceptance” as the end goal of a reciprocal process involving newcomers and host societies. The Finnish Integration Act of 1999 construes integration to mean the personal development of immigrants, aimed at participation in working life and society while preserving their own language and culture, as well as participating in the statutory measures of the welfare state designed to support this. The primary focus here rests on participation in the labour market as well as in welfare services (Martikainen, Valtonen & Wahlbeck 2012). Other definitions emphasize a type of civic integration which sutures economic integration to civic engagement, the latter being expressed as migrant commitments to becoming “good” citizens. Integration, in this context, is widely interpreted as demonstrating language proficiency, host country knowledge and the acceptance of a canon of liberal and social values (De Roo, Braeye & De Moor 2016). There have also been attempts to replace the problematically perceived term “integration” with words such as the Finnish *kotoutuminen* or the Swedish *att bli hemmastadd*, which equate the nation with *home* and compare integration with making oneself at home (Salo & Sarin 2010, p.16). While commendable in recognizing the often assimilationist subtext of integration, the conflation of nation with home itself contributes to a *domopolitics*⁷ which can be “overtly culturalist and exclusionary, or it can fetishize integration while structurally precluding it” (Titley & Lentin 2011, p.210). “Home” encapsulates radically different meanings than the more objectivist, democratic definitions of “nation.” “Home” clearly implies the presence of those who occupy a privileged habitus and who decide who can stay or go or how one should behave, something which Hage (2000, p.46) refers to as *governmental belonging*. Here newcomers are objects to be managed, and possibly removed from the national home by those historically empowered to do so. These entitled,

⁷ Domopolitics is a term coined by William Walters (2004) that denotes an ominous conflation of “home”, with land and security. To guard the sanctity of “home”, security measures are employed to protect those who belong naturally, from others who do not. Despite the hearth and home connotations, the term also subsumes meanings of taming, subduing or domesticating the Other.

often white, groups perceive themselves as enactors of a national will – a will which migrants are unable to inhabit, thereby relegating them to the margins (Sivanadan 2008).

As we return to Eriksen’s question eliciting the *who, to what, how and by whom* of integration, it becomes obvious that the aforementioned definitions all clearly target migrants as the *who*, even if a certain host society reciprocity or “tolerance” is required. The *to what* is also unequivocal, namely to the present host society where the structural inequalities of said society are rarely interrogated. In discussing the *how*, integration espouses the ideal of facilitating migrants’ participation in both public and private spheres with responsibilities shared between newcomers and the host society (Reinsch 2001, Kymlicka 2010). In practice though, this has been criticized as a thinly veiled attempt of many Western countries to assimilate cultural and other differences into the essentialist narratives of “homogenous” national cultures, effectively revealing the hypocrisy of the “two-way street” discourse as terminating in a one-way cul-de-sac of ethnic hierarchies and social exclusion. The domineering arguments used to justify the *how* of assimilative integration measures are often couched in paternalistic terms citing economic or social justifications which disenfranchise, silence and render migrants legally incompetent. The underlying attitude of “we know what’s best for immigrants” robs the latter of their critical engagement and agency creating relationships of dependence for which they are later chastised (Goldberg 1994, Pöttsch 2018). Kritnet (Netzwerk Kritische Migrations- und Grenzregimforschung), a network of critical researchers and academics examining topics of migration and border regimes, has gone so far as to depict integration as the “enemy of democracy” in an initiative entitled *Demokratie statt Integration*, where integration is taken to mean “das man Menschen die in diesem Land arbeiten und Kinder bekommen, alt werden und sterben, einen Verhaltenskodex aufnötigt, bevor sie gleichberechtigt dazugehören”⁸ (Kritnet). Ann Laura Stoler (2016) has gone even further in equating integration practice with neocolonialism, the result of “colonial

⁸ “Where integration means that people who work and have children, grow old and die in this country, have a behavioural code imposed upon them before they can belong as equals.” (author’s translation)

duress”, in which the raced work of cultural classifications and hierarchies is reproduced.

In considering the *by whom* of integration, many definitions perceive this too as a multifarious and reciprocal process. However, given the nationalistic interpretations of said process, the heaviest burden of proof is consistently imposed on the foreigner to demonstrate his/her assimilation into a homogenous framing of the nation (Joppke & Morawska 2014, Schinkel 2018). Integration so conceived, cements inequalities both economic and social, thereby exacerbating the social exclusion of already marginalized migrants. Another problem is that integration is often measured either as a present state or an outcome. It is assessed in educational diplomas, labour market participation, language competence etc. and thus shrouds the link between outcomes and institutional or structural arrangements (Crul & Schneider 2012). In fact, Carrera and Atger (2011) argue that when conditions for residence or access to basic fundamental rights (or both) hinge upon participation in mandatory integration programs and tests, these should be interpreted as mechanisms of exclusion rather than of integration. Other authors (see Kostakopoulou 2010, De Roo, Braeye & De Moor 2016) assert that by resorting to sanctions and controls, migrants to a large extent will not integrate, and that integration regimes paradoxically *dis-integrate* (Tittley 2019).

They are not able to be part of the new society as equal citizens, unless – and that is the overall condition imposed to them through the civic integration policy – they fully adjust to the new society, discard their past and the place they have come from and be ‘re-socialized’ and re-educated. (De Roo, Braeye & De Moor 2016, p.10)

While integration practices must be understood within specific national contexts instead of being compared against one single, monolithic standard (Hannah 2007), a fact also borne out in my fieldwork in Canada where *integration* was more positively equated with pluralist, multicultural ideals than in Finland, they do share certain similarities. The new millennium’s integrationism is commonly founded on a kind of domopolitics which sutures migrants’ adoption of “values canons” to national projects around social cohesion (Lentin & Tittley 2011). Inculcating core liberal values in cultivating new kinds of citizens has become integration’s *raison d’être* in

the post 9/11 era (Tebble 2006). This includes defining which expressions of diversity are desirable and conversely, which are undesirable. The “good” in diversity is anchored in shared liberal values, while the “bad” is typified as ethnic or racial separateness (e.g. migrant community activism) and decried as ghettoization. The “bad” includes overt exercises of critical citizenship such as participating in adversarial political activism to challenge burka bans, for example. It essentially encompasses all that which eludes sanction and control *von oben* (Fortier 2010). Invoking liberal values as national values can exhibit essential features of nationalism that function as boundary mechanisms and as a means of “excluding to include” migrant minorities. You exclude their voices, their agency, and their diversity in efforts to “include” (Boucher 2015).

There are those who question not only the extent to which “we” want “them” to integrate but also if “we” wish that at all. These theorists argue that migration worries may in fact mask fears of “real” integration (Lentin & Titley 2011, Beauzamy & Féron 2012). On the one hand, “we” must be seen to want to integrate “them” while needing to simultaneously reaffirm the “truth” of their unintegrability in order to justify their illiberal treatment. Christian Joppke (2009) posits that these integration efforts reimagined as a new civic integrationism are aimed at a compliance with values, not their internalization. The projected image of compulsion and compliance is more important than the actual efficiency of integration measures as long as apprehensions of migrant unintegrability justify their continued existence. By placating “white worries” in demonstrating control, while migrants demonstrate compliance, integration really does become a “two-way street.” The “real” integration alluded to above is that which newcomers construct as autonomous subjects outside of the supervisory auspices of the state. It is expressed in the quotidian negotiations of everyday living within neighbourhoods, schools and communities which weave unsanctioned branchworks of belonging. Hage (2000) argues that it is this “organic integration” evolving independently of governmental control which autochthonous groups try to prevent through the dialectic of inclusion and exclusion. One could go a step further and posit that this fear of real integration extends to migrants actually making use of critical citizenship practices which lay claim to constitutionally enshrined democratic rights and freedoms as a way of challenging

dominant views of belonging. After all, what would happen if they took our liberal assurances of egalitarianism seriously?

Before I commence with a discussion of the different conceptualizations of inclusion, and as a way of bringing this examination of integration to a close, it may be helpful to explore where these concepts diverge. Integration is often associated with being imposed or facilitated from without rather than from within (e.g. via focusing on individual and community agency, needs and competences). It targets integrating the migrant Other, not general societal transformation. With the aim of inculcating shared values defined by a *Leitkultur*⁹ in order to achieve social cohesion and thereby social security, it has often been portrayed as “the final step en route to assimilation” (Ratcliffe 2000, p.171).

Inclusion, on the other hand, shifts the burden of responsibility for adaption from migrants to society by emphasizing the proactive role of public and private institutions in addressing structural obstacles to migrant integration such as racism and discrimination. Among other things, principles of reciprocity and egalitarianism are to serve as the rules for exchange in negotiations concerning our various experiments in living. However, in discussing the differences between these concepts, the most important aspect rests on the ideological and practical contents with which they are invested. Thus, certain interpretations of integration can exhibit a large degree of inclusion while some types of inclusion may mask some very exclusionary outcomes. This reflects the interdependency of the inclusion-exclusion nexus and the *glocal* arenas in which it is played out.

2.4 CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL INCLUSION

Those perspectives on inclusion that focus on questions of value integration and social cohesion [...] deny the inescapable reality of the pluralism of the modern world, of a diversity of interests...and the requirement of a politics of

⁹Dominant or guiding culture.

negotiation as the desirable mechanism of an inclusive society whatever the geographical boundaries. (Askonas & Stewart 2000, p.294)

The above quotation attests to the fact that the concept of inclusion is not perceived as entirely unproblematic and that it, like integration, is critically contested. Therefore, competing understandings and conceptualizations of social inclusion will be presented under separate rubrics.

2.4.1 PARTICIPATION INCLUSION

This formulation of inclusion emphasizes migrants' engagement with and participation in society and the removal of obstacles which obfuscate societal interaction. Introducing anti-discrimination legislation to combat labour market exclusion is a cogent example. Inclusion is hereby defined as the "realization of full and equal participation in the economic, social, cultural and political dimensions of life in the [immigrants'] new country" (Omidvar & Richmond 2003, p.1). Such a participation is envisaged to be both systemic, referring to the macro level of contributing to the maintenance of societal institutions, and social by supporting people's relational and operative networks (social capital) and feelings of belonging. In this liberal conception of inclusion, the responsibility to participate is also enjoined on mainstream society. Autochthonous groups are encouraged to join members of minority communities in celebrating their ethnic and religious festivals, but also to "contribute" to society's diversity in general. Rainer Bauböck (2008) refers to this as *celebration multiculturalism*. It is *inclusion lite* which ignores systemic structural inequalities and privileges while electing to focus instead on maximizing migrants' access to educational, labour market and social opportunities which have traditionally favoured majority populations. While this interpretation tacitly recognizes that inclusion is primarily a state and societal responsibility, there is a naiveté about what is required in order to achieve inclusion's egalitarian ideals. This is epitomized in the unreflective comments of some politicians which equate having a job, or a certain language dexterity with a panacea for all manners of social exclusion experienced by migrant residents.

In essence, arguments characterizing a Participation Inclusion outlook can be divided into those which see integration into employment and other state structures as sufficient, notwithstanding society's structural inequalities, and those that emphasize the self-determination of migrants in negotiating the nature and boundaries of such inclusion efforts, even if this has implications for present power structures. The latter view stresses the importance of democratic citizenship, which presupposes that "inclusion is not only an adequate share of resources but equality of participation in the determination of both individual and collective life chances" (Askonas & Stewart 2000, p.9). Here, equality is interpreted as "one of (migrant) role sharing in the mainstream of public life" where they become acculturated when they are able to assume "more socially visible and valued roles of responsibility in economic and social life" (Martikainen, Valtonen & Wahlbeck 2012, p.142). Social exclusion in this conception takes place when welfare state measures prove inadequate in ensuring sufficient spheres of migrant participation or in devoting sufficient resources to inclusionary projects. The resulting migrant disenfranchisement exacerbates existing ethnic hierarchies which are then inherited by the second and third generation.

However, the participation discourse as a guarantor of social inclusion suffers from several deficiencies. While the importance of a shared discursive space is a necessary step towards inclusion, it falls short of interrogating the power dynamics at play in the process of migrant participation (Leung 2008). By skirting or downplaying the role of ingrained and pervasive structural inequalities, as well as the privileges these endow upon dominant white groups, participation will remain an interaction among unequal partners and create new arenas of exclusion. Thus, it is possible to be well integrated socially while being poorly integrated at a systemic level (Eriksen 2015). Participation Inclusion does not envisage a fundamental reimagining or reconstitution of society. In recognizing the structural upheaval which would follow in the wake of literally implementing egalitarian understandings of participation where "all is up for grabs" and no one is entitled by birth, length of residence, status or citizenship to more voice or influence, a kind of *progressive inclusion* has been proposed instead. Here migrants' inclusion in the host society is achieved through the gradual extension of their rights which, in time, approximate

those of national citizens. Factors taken into consideration in such a bestowment of rights are the duration of migrant residence and citizenship status in the country, as well as migrants' social and economic ties to the host society (Farahat 2009).

A compelling example of progressive inclusion is encapsulated in the citizenship practices of many Western nations where the attainment of citizenship has been formulated as the prize at the end of the integration road. This prize is contingent upon complying with a number of conditions. Akin to a "means-testing" of civic integrationism, these conditions revolve around obligatory participation in language and integration courses, citizenship oaths and exams (Guild et.al 2009). Sweden represents an important exception to this rule in that it sees citizenship as a precondition for, instead of an outcome of, inclusion (Borevi 2012). Measuring inclusion based upon the gradual statutory extension of, among others, citizenship rights is problematic for several reasons. In the first instance, it presumes that migrants share our interpretation of such extensions as "inclusive" instead of perceiving them as parsimonious expansions of the liminal space of "almost belonging", of "almost" achieving some semblance of equal treatment. Secondly, it exposes a growing rift between the state's formal acceptance of newcomers and majority society's everyday acceptance of such people. In nations where there is a clearly defined, dominant group that delineates the borders of belonging according to ethnic and or racial categories, this becomes particularly true. Here, the acquisition of formal rights gives no indication of the extent of practical national belonging granted by the dominant cultural community (Eliassi 2013, p.176). Questions of cultural descent and myopic definitions of approved cultural practices, especially in times when the dominant community feels threatened, weigh far heavier than state acceptance (Hage 2000).

Ultimately, Participation Inclusion is still largely an inclusion on the terms of dominant society where the rights granted can also be taken away and the levels of migrant participation and self-determination depend largely on the boundaries majorities set for them. While the responsibilities of the host society are far more pronounced in such interpretations, they share the goal of social cohesion with civic integrationism. Normative standards describing good and bad diversity still exist. These are rooted

within a non-negotiable set of core liberal values, enforced adherences to which seek to stave off *Überfremdung*¹⁰. Inclusion on these terms sanctions democratic political systems to discriminate all those who do not seem to embrace these values. License to discriminate is being granted by the commitment of working “against discrimination” such as by removing certain obstacles to migrant social, political and economic participation. Social “equality” is only granted to minorities when they are judged to be adapting in ways that align with our definitions of good diversity.

2.4.2 TRANSFORMATION INCLUSION

Conceptualizations around social inclusion, I have subsumed under “Transformation Inclusion” recognize the limitations of approaches which mask or ignore structural inequalities in fabricating a type of social cohesion where the rallying cry around shared values, beliefs or histories often results in policies of negation and exclusion. Instead, they go further in suggesting that sweeping structural transformations are required in the way we arrange our societies in order to achieve inclusion. Angus Stewart, for example, posits that a commitment to social inclusion necessitates the pursuit of deliberative democracy and a distributive justice of equality; “Such a pursuit addresses inequalities of class, gender, race, and religion as structured obstacles to the effective exercise of political agency and confronts institutional domination whether bureaucratic, economic or cultural” (Stewart 2000, p.69). A prerequisite for social transformation on this scale is the recognition that societal structures are contingent, impermanent and visisitudinous. Inclusion so envisaged is not based on “integrationist” responses which often presume absorption into something like a pre-defined, static, national entity. Instead, it demands a “participationist” response where one is not included into pre-existing political, social and economic frameworks but rather into a structural process where the fluid nature of such arrangements is systematically renegotiated on principles of egalitarianism and the full exercise of *political agency*¹¹ (Askonas & Stewart

¹⁰ *Overforeignization*

¹¹ Political agency is hereby defined as; actions that can transform political relationships, that is, structures that incorporate and mediate power. Change necessitates an awareness of, and engagement in multi-professional networks, and their social, environmental and community origins. (Adams, Dominelli & Payne 2002, p.259)

2000). Inclusion here is not prescriptive. It is a dynamic, involving and evolving process. Its means and schemes are mutable and adaptable to the singularities of social circumstances. As such, it must be recognized that all projects of inclusion potentially generate new forms of exclusion which are subject, in their turn, to critique and democratic reform (Pöttsch 2018, p.55).

Ecofeminist Ynestra King's (1983) declaration, "we don't want a piece of your rotten pie" encapsulates Transformation Inclusion's core. It entails a clear recognition that inclusion's egalitarianism goals are illusory if the assumptions and practices regulating everyday social and institutional life remain ethnically skewed and racially blinkered. Eriksen's (2015) query – *into what* are we integrating migrants? – is crucially relevant here. It forces us to turn our gaze from the Other onto ourselves to interrogate how our taken for granted entitlements are reflected in and reproduced by our institutions. Inherently, this implies a radical redefinition of the aims and "performance" of inclusion. The boundaries of solidarity are redrawn, "not by transforming those on the outside to clones of insiders, but by valorizing the diversity that they bring with them" (Kivisto 2015, p.25). In the process of renegotiating existing societal and structural arrangements, a reframing of those arrangements by insiders takes place, and insofar as that happens the boundaries of solidarity can expand. A part of this expansion demands the inescapable redefinition of who can be "included" in such negotiations. Instead of referring to *citizens*, it might be more inclusive to also extend the right to speak to *residents* or *non-citizens* when talking about those entitled to participate in the discourse. This necessitates the uncoupling of political rights from citizenship while allowing non-citizens more liberal access to the latter (Atac & Rosenberger 2013).

The transformation of social arrangements therefore presupposes a *parity of participation*. Parity of participation has a two-fold meaning that affirms the inherent reflexive character of democratic justice. On the one hand it is an "outcome" which permits us to judge social arrangements as just only if all relevant social actors participate as equals. On the other hand, it is also a "process" which sets out specific procedural benchmarks allowing us to assess the democratic legitimacy of norms, the latter being legitimate only if they can be embraced by all in a fair and open process of

deliberation (Hick & Thomas 2009). In this understanding, mere social participation is not enough if the structures within which such participation takes place are skewed in favour of dominant groups (e.g. Anglocentric hiring practices). The other part of the definition; namely the procedural standards enabling us to gauge the legitimacy of norms, refers specifically to the structural conditions in which such participation takes place. Are these and the hegemonic ideologies underpinning them also open to critique and reform? What constitutes a fair and transparent process before conditions for parity can be met (Pötzsch 2018)?

The potential of achieving the radically reimagined Transformation Inclusion is constricted, however, “within the straightjacket of territorial organization” characterizing all self-enclosed nation states (Stewart 2000, p.68). Here democratic practices are sutured to “spaces of place” which often generate nationalist projects of social cohesion regurgitating the norms set by privileged groups. Inclusion can also be stymied by the creation of closed and exclusive supranational bodies which remove migrants even further from influence and the levers of power. In contrast, Transformation Inclusion extends the possibility of “governmental belonging” to all residents which necessitates a reconceptualization of what social cohesion is taken to mean. Instead of imposing a national value canon as a prerequisite for cohesion, the latter becomes an outcome of inclusion’s deliberative democracy. Practicing Transformation Inclusion’s participationist ideal then becomes equivalent with achieving a cohesive society. This turns conventional tropes about social cohesion on their head (Gray 2000). With its emphasis on structural reformation based on a radical egalitarianism extending to non-citizens, Transformation Inclusion represents a fundamental departure from Participation Inclusion’s progressive inclusion. Underlying power structures are interrogated, and change is reciprocally negotiated and “experienced” by all members of society.

2.4.3 TRANSPOSITION INCLUSION

If you can imagine a world where there are no interminable immigration debates “sating” and fueling “white worries” and where the migrant is not the object of either draconian or benign operationalizations of integration,

then you have some idea of the discourses subsumed under Transposition Inclusion. Here, the spotlight is *transposed* from the migrant Other and focused squarely on autochthonous whites, as the targets of inclusion measures. Transposition Inclusion seeks to rectify the dispensation from integration which has been granted to white citizens where they have not had to “appear on the integration monitor” (Schinkel 2018, p.4). It is this omission which is consequential, and which affirms and further entrenches distinctions between those acknowledged to make up “society” and those who are not; those who need to further “integrate.” Perhaps the central question here is how well dominant white groups are integrated into a modern, global reality characterized by cultural hybridity, increasingly varied migration patterns and complex networks of attachment. Sociologists Maurice Crul & Jens Schneider (2012, p.400) in discussing the increasing urbanization and cultural diversity of American and European metropolitan centers, argue that these forces have major ramifications for how we understand inclusion. In an urban glocality where no single ethnic group is able to claim a numeric majority, they query: “How much longer, can ‘native whites’ be the yardstick for measuring the integration of other ethnic groups?” In their comprehensive study of second-generation migrant urban youths, they also raise other critical points about a “migrant-targeted” integration policy:

In cities like Stockholm, Zurich and Paris, our results revealed that the majority of our respondents’ friendship groups are multi-ethnic [...] the second generation is taking the lead here. They are the ones who more often and more easily cross and blur ethnic boundaries. In this regard, young people of native-born parentage show the most serious “integration problems.” More often than any second-generation group, the “majority” seems to be in a mono-ethnic world, inhabiting an impervious parallel to the increasingly diversifying society around them. (Crul & Schneider 2012, p.401)

Taking the dwindling white critical mass and the mono-ethnic social bubbles of autochthonous populations as points of departure, Transposition Inclusion reframes traditional immigration worries and redirects these at dominant white groups. Questions such as, “How ethnically diverse are your social and professional circles or those of your children?” now aimed at white groups, recollect charges of ghettoization frequently levelled at migrant groups. Enquiries about levels of community

involvement, the extent of local and national knowledge, even linguistic dexterity, traditionally directed at migrant residents are now levelled at the new “white target group.” Transposition Inclusion thus inverts the subject-object paradigm which characterized previous interactions between dominant and minority groups where the former demand compliance from the latter to conform to integration measures. It also moves into focus the debilitating personal, social, economic and societal costs of racism, discrimination and white privilege for both autochthonous groups and newcomers. Here the *majority gaze* is redirected inwards. This reframing makes it possible to explore the inclusion-exclusion nexus by looking, for example, at how cultural spaces of inclusion such as multicultural festivals etc. are opened up as substitutes to effective inclusion in mainstream political processes. Transposition Inclusion highlights the psychological and economic costs counted in wasted talents and thwarted hopes, effected by structural obstacles and repressive immigration policies, for societies as a whole.

A Transposition Inclusion perspective also draws parallels between the agendas of white exclusionary nationalists and white diversity liberals as ultimately related, by being built upon different degrees of tolerance. Tolerance has often been described as the cornerstone of Western attempts at achieving ethnic and racial coexistence. However, such tolerance is perceived as unidimensional (Hage 2000). It is dependent on the magnanimity of those with power who deign to tolerate. Tolerance is not simply acceptance; it is to accept and position the other within the specific limits or boundaries majorities set. The advocacy of tolerance never really challenged white Westerners’ capacity to unilaterally exercise this power. It merely reproduced and reasserted their “right” to act intolerantly when these boundaries were transgressed.

Like the “evil nationalist” engaging in exclusion by categorizing the other as undesirable, the “good, tolerant nationalist” engages in inclusion by categorizing the other, if not as “desirable”, at least as “not that undesirable”[...] This leads us to an important conclusion: the difference between those who practice nationalist exclusion and those who practice nationalist inclusion is not one of people committed to exclusion versus people committed to inclusion, but rather one of people with different thresholds of tolerance. (Ibid 2000, p.92)

Therefore, where one places oneself on the shifting continuum from tolerance to intolerance designates the separation of nationalists and diversity liberals, yet both are empowered within dominant culture. By refocusing the inclusion lens on dominant whites and examining how their entitlement shields them from Transformation Inclusion's egalitarian import, Transposition Inclusion exposes white groups' own "integration problems." It also undermines the myth of "sameness", a cornerstone of liberal democracies' individualism, by unmasking the hypocrisy of such claims (hooks 1992). As such, it exposes the need for inclusion efforts to be aimed at dominant populations lest the illiberal treatment of migrant and minority groups masked as expressions of tolerance and equality persists.

2.5 ANTI-OPPRESSIVE PRACTICE¹²

If a state effectively defines certain groups as undesirable or unacceptable as migrants or potential residents, this sends very clear signals to both the extant minority communities and to those from majority communities who seek to bolster their hegemonic social, cultural and political identity. It therefore undermines claims on the part of the state that it espouses "non-exclusion" in the form of say, anti-discrimination policies. (Ratcliffe 2000, p.172)

The allegation of state mendacity, referred to by Peter Ratcliffe's quote, in presuming to work anti-discriminatorily while simultaneously racializing and stigmatizing select migrant groups is a salient one. Widespread claims in many liberal democratic welfare states propounding to have already dealt with the fall-out of xenophobia and racism, seemingly immunize dominant white groups within Western nations from interrogating their own privilege and hegemonic positions. The subtlety of *effectively defining* but perhaps not *literally defining* certain groups as undesirable allows states to maintain this schizophrenic discourse. Lentin & Titley (2011, p.84) argue that it is precisely this abandonment of the language of race and oppression before such forces have ceased to have a lived significance for racialized people that is the "main expression of racism in our times." In elucidating the

¹² Portions of text in this section have been drawn from my book chapter; Pötzsch, T. (2018). *Assimilation vs. Inclusion: An Anti-Oppressive Perspective on the Experiences of Participants in Integration Educations*. In A. A. Alemanji (Ed). *Antiracism Education: In and beyond schools*. Palgrave Macmillan Books.

theory and practice of anti-oppression drawn from social work and education in the sections below, I am cognizant of the fact that it too has not been immune from similar charges of hypocrisy in countries where it has been institutionalized within social services (McLaughlin 2005). Therefore, an appropriate point of departure for an anti-oppressive discourse is the admission that social workers and educators, have thus far failed to be “anti-oppressive” and to begin from a position of discomfort. Accepting this discomfort and taking responsibility in challenging oppression is the first step in overcoming this false sense of neutrality (Sakamoto & Pitner 2005).

It has also been alleged that current practice methodologies do not sufficiently incorporate structural critiques and anti-racist agendas. (e.g. Kumashiro 2002, Hick et.al 2005, Danso 2007, Baines 2007, Laird 2008, Mullaly 2010, Ahmed 2012, Vad Jönsson, et.al 2013, Cox & Pawar 2013, De Roo, Braeye & De Moor 2016). Although many services aimed at the integration of ethnic minorities claim to be based on values of empowerment and “cultural equality”, these concepts are often variously interpreted and founded on little specific theory or practical methodology (Sue 2006, Sisneros et.al 2008). It is not surprising then, that anti-oppressive practice developed in the U.K. and Canada within the fields of social work and education in the 1980s and 90s, with its more radical interpretation of work as a partial, political enterprise and its aims of challenging oppression and power imbalances has been one alternative formulation seeking to redress these shortcomings. AOP’s dissemination has also been facilitated by changing attitudes among othered and racialized groups who began to challenge present power structures. This enabled practitioners to co-develop alternative working models centering on the needs and challenges of disempowered groups (Morgaine & Capous-Desyllas 2015).

In anti-oppressive models, “the personal becomes political” signifying that social inequalities and personal problems are not placed at the door of individual pathology or family shortcomings. Instead, they are seen as reflections of structural inequalities in society through which dominant groups socially exclude others from true participatory citizenship (Mullaly 2010). Therefore, the foundation for social interaction within AOP is derived from a detailed analysis and understanding of the views and

experiences of othered groups while enabling their coequal involvement and self-management. Definitions of anti-oppressive practice have sought to reflect this reality of placing service users within wider structural networks that include both the individual, client/student-centered components as well as social transformational elements. Lena Dominelli (1998, p.7) defines it thus:

Anti-oppressive practice embodies a person-centered philosophy, an egalitarian value system concerned with reducing the deleterious effects of structural inequalities upon people's lives; a methodology focusing on both process and outcome, and a way of structuring relationships between individuals that aims to empower users by reducing the negative effects of hierarchy in their immediate interaction and the work they do together.

From a pedagogical point of view, Kevin Kumashiro (2001, p.9) describes anti-oppressive education as a way of learning which disrupts one's common sense view of the world and which works through the crisis that results from unlearning:

Anti-oppressive education involves constantly re-examining and troubling the forms of repetition that play out in one's practices and that hinder attempts to challenge oppressions. It involves desiring and working through crisis rather than avoiding and masking it. It involves contesting the standards that currently define education in the disciplines. And it involves imagining new possibilities for who we are and can be.

Other common elements in definitions of AOP are self-reflexivity, client partnership, social equality, empowerment and structural analyses of power (see Preston-Shoot 1995, Dalrymple & Burke 1997, Mullaly 1997 & 2010, Dominelli 1998 & 2002, Keating 2000, Valtonen 2001& 2002, Russell & White 2002, Chand et. al 2002, Hick 2002 & 2009, Shera 2003, Lundy 2004, Sakamoto & Pitner 2005, Brown & Strega 2005, Baines 2007, Morgaine & Capous-Desyllas 2015).

2.5.1 KEY CONCEPTS IN ANTI-OPPRESSIVE PRACTICE

In exploring some of the key concepts of anti-oppressive practice, I will focus on three in particular, namely *oppression*, *power* and *critical consciousness*

because they most clearly delineate AOP's points of departure from other practice-oriented models within social work and education. Underpinning them all, however, is the need to adopt a *dual perspective* (Dalrymple & Burke 1997, p.12) which recognizes the embeddedness of the individual in society. Adopting a dual perspective means that individuals become aware of the connections that exist between their own personal life circumstances and the society in which they live. Positing the personal in the structural and seeing the effect of the structural reflected in the personal everyday is the critical dialectic which informs the dual perspective. It therefore mitigates against a "victim blaming" mindset that incriminates clients for problems which have social origins – privatizing their troubles – and cutting them off from wider social support and social analyses.

In discussing the first key concept of *oppression*, Mullender and Ward (1991, p22) advance a working definition which, though being rather short and pointed, is fluid enough to convey oppression's dynamic and relational character. "Oppression is a state of affairs in which life chances are constructed (by others) and the process by which this state of affairs is created and maintained." This definition avoids the simple binaries and fixed identities of a world divided into "oppressors" and "oppressed" where dominant groups with power assert a hegemony over those without. Such a dichotomy does not reflect the complexity of social and structural relations where one could simultaneously be the oppressor and the oppressed, as in the case of economically marginalized white workers and their treatment of impoverished migrant workers (Brown & Strega 2005). The description also allows for oppression to be organized around multiple interconnecting factors including race, gender, class etc., in a complex social world where people have come to understand themselves in terms of more subtle and intricate patterns of diversity (Tew 2006). In such a world, ideologies, actions, and structures are complicit in oppressing individuals or groups.

Theorists on anti-oppressive practice have presented a more multifaceted understanding of oppression by situating it as a phenomenon which takes place on different levels extending from interpersonal relations to the way we construct our society: its cultural values and institutions (Dominelli 2002, Thompson 2006, Barnoff & Moffatt 2007, Mullaly 2010,

Hines 2012). It is also, more often than not, group-based, meaning that differences on the basis of class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, age, or disability are sufficient for individuals belonging to one of the othered categories (black, poor, gay) to be systematically reduced, molded and immobilized. Oppression is therefore not accidental but often largely unintentional, being woven into the very fabric of society. It is rooted, almost unwittingly, in cultural traditions and norms and thus protects the interests of dominant groups without a conscious awareness or critical interrogation as to why this is so ever having to take place.

Gil (1998) points out that once oppression becomes woven into a society's institutional order and culture and into the individual consciousness of its people through socialization, it permeates almost all relations. In today's Western democracies, Iris Young (1990, p.41) argues, "people suffer disadvantage not because a tyrannical power coerces them but because of the everyday practices of a well-intentioned liberal society." Oppression can take the forms of exploitation (economic or social), social exclusion (from work or participatory citizenship), disempowerment, cultural imperialism and violence. It has the debilitating effect of self-censorship among oppressed groups who have internalized the negative picture of their difference in the eyes of others and may act accordingly in their dealings with dominant groups. However, the interdependent social, political and economic relations within which oppression operates are not static or constant. They vary according to the small or sizable acts of resistance to tyranny by those on the margins. The margins in AOP are spaces of power. Resistance by those suffering from oppression forces a subsequent recalibration of existing social relations (hooks 1992).

The themes of malleability and flux associated with oppression in social relations as described above are continued in anti-oppressive theories' second key concept, *power*. As Robert van Krieken (2003, p.118) suggests:

Instead of power being a thing which persons, groups, or institutions possess to a greater or lesser degree, we should think of power relations in terms of ever-changing balances or rations of power between individuals and social units and that all human relationships are essentially power relations.

Power here becomes a multidimensional construct. The idea of it being personal property – as in some have it and some do not – fixed and homogenous, is rejected (Keating 2000). The value of this analysis lies in describing power relations as fluid and social relational. Power as constructed in and through the social relations between individuals and groups takes various forms, from the more intimate negotiations in interpersonal interactions to the systematic patterning of the social whole. It operates in a multiplicity of sites and can thus give rise to resistance. This realization of the malleability of power relations and the recognition that no matter how oppressed certain groups are, they possess the agency to affect change, is what distinguishes anti-oppressive theories. In this interpretation also lies the positive, affirming, and transformational use of power. The centrality of voice of dominated individuals or groups to define and name sources of power imbalances is essential in this process.

Anti-oppressive practice is conceptualized as a political activity operating within the context of different sets of power relations: the power of law and the state, the power inherent in social divisions, and the micro level power of personal relations (Thompson 2006). Interventions must, accordingly, address the question of power imbalances in these different contexts. The multidimensional power matrix developed by Jerry Tew (2006) representing combinations of *power over* and *power together* illustrates how othered groups in interacting with social workers or educators can be involved in cooperative endeavours to transform power relations while simultaneously experiencing oppression from above through processes of collusion, or ethnic closure. This insight invests professional practices and interventions aimed at migrants with the possibility of exposing such processes as extensions of a repressive state apparatus (Althusser 2014). It may also mitigate against paternalistic notions of “doing empowerment” for people where their needs and aspirations are essentially defined by the state.

Critical consciousness represents the third key concept underpinning anti-oppressive practice. It sutures self-reflexivity to social action and thus involves an interplay between inward and outward processes in a reciprocal network of community exchanges (Fook & Gardner 2007). The aim of critical consciousness is to “integrate the identity/sense of self of the

practitioner into her/his work practice” (Heron 2005, p.342). Within AOP, critical consciousness defines the process through which we continuously examine how our own biases, assumptions and cultural worldviews blinker the ways we perceive “difference” and power dynamics. However, this journey of (re)discovery entails that one immerses oneself in dialogues with service users to uncover one’s own complicities (Sakamoto & Pitner 2005). It is only within these interactions embedded in migrant groups’ own realities and narratives that the practitioner actively unpacks his/her own cultural baggage. In other words, critical consciousness presupposes that self-reflexivity in a social vacuum, confined to one’s own private ruminations, is insufficient because much of the undisclosed only becomes visible in interactions with “difference.” Critical consciousness is often delineated as a starting point for practitioners in working anti-oppressively as it focuses change efforts on that part of the worker-client-society dynamic over which one exercises the most control, namely oneself. However, it also represents a point of return, a yardstick against which one’s own and collective efforts are constantly measured and recalibrated. Developing critical consciousness is thus ongoing and never completed. Interestingly, in a study of Canadian social workers, Hillock (2012) found that those who identified as “other” were more likely to identify experiences of oppression in their client’s narratives. An active, embodied critical consciousness forces practitioners to reformulate their professional roles as partners and enablers rather than omnipotent experts, a shift from being “on top” to being “on tap” (Taket et. al 2013, p.27). The self-reflexivity-in-action orientation of critical consciousness also prevents AOP’s social change agenda from becoming tokenistic or merely aspirational by challenging personal/structural factors which marginalize clients in institutions and society (Hines 2012).

2.5.2 ANTI-OPPRESSIVE PRACTICE’S INTERSECTIONAL MODELS

Anti-oppressive practice has often been visually represented by concentric models which emphasize the need for practitioners to strive concurrently for change on personal, cultural and socio-structural levels (see Dalrymple & Burke 1997, Thompson 2006). These models demonstrate the embeddedness of the person in the social environment and the multi-

positional strategies necessary for resistance. AOP frameworks emphasize critical consciousness and interpersonal interactions as being equally important as collective struggles to confront oppression. Neil Thompson's PCS (personal-cultural-structural) (2006) model, for example, contributes a theoretical rationale for practice confronting a range of discriminatory and social-exclusionary processes. In it, interventions targeted at the *personal* level refer to the practitioners' individual thoughts and attitudes, as well as to the interpersonal relationships in which these are expressed, such as in worker-client interactions. Interactions are portrayed as constantly reconstructed and therefore reflexive. Elisabeth Lynn (1991) has developed an anti-oppressive self-evaluation questionnaire which allows workers and teachers to become conscious of cognitive "feed-forward" mechanisms whereby their assumptions of what they expect to see strongly influence what they do see (Cooper & Maidment 2002). It includes questions such as, What values and theories inform my practice? How do I respond to difference? What is my definition of oppression? What power do I have to change practice? and What is my worldview and how does it hinder or help my ability to build mutual relations with othered groups?

The *personal* is then embedded in the *cultural* level where shared ways of thinking, feeling and acting shape cultural values, ideologies and behaviours. It signifies the cultural skin which envelopes us with its assumptions of shared commonalities and norms. This process of interaction between the personal and cultural levels is not deterministic with the individual simply internalizing social mores, but it is a dialectical relationship in which both individuals and cultures are changed. It is precisely the social constructivist, fluid nature of cultural values – their inherent possibilities for change – which provides the impetus for social transformation in anti-oppressive practices. At the *structural* level, the dominant values often articulated by privileged social actors are concretized and made (in)visible in institutional and organizational arrangements which protect and reproduce the established social order. According to Thompson (2006), practitioners can exert more individual influence on the personal level, while such influence decreases in interactions with the cultural and structural levels.

It is important to point out that interventions on the PCS levels do not occur step by step, nor do they necessarily begin at the personal niveau and culminate in political action. All levels are interdependent. The models are thus not static and deterministic but rather malleable, the crucial element being the practitioner's obligation to strive for change on all three levels. AOP's multi-level practice focus is of particular relevance with reference to examining critical social inclusion in my study. In promoting multidimensional efforts at social transformation, it presents a counterpoint to those discourses in anti-racist education which restrict change efforts to "within" institutions while limiting their engagement beyond them (Kumashiro 2000). Building community and societal partnerships represents an integral component of anti-oppressive practice's social change agenda. It is based on the recognition that issues of racism and racialization require cross-sectorial, collective responses.

By pointing to the intersections of a myriad of factors such as race, class, or disability and their cumulative effects in shaping marginalization, anti-oppressive perspectives can offer advantages over single strand models of oppression. Singular models tend to assume a certain non-existent homogeneity within or among groups subjugated by racism or any other form of oppression, often reducing origins to singular causes. They thus fail to take into consideration oppression's "neglected points of intersection" – the overlapping dimensions of difference which are inextricably interwoven and have a potentiating effect (Sallah 2014). In addition, such approaches hold little potential for solidarity and joint action by othered individuals or groups and provide few answers for overcoming the divisions currently existing among them (Mullaly 2010). Humphries (2004) argues that we must develop an appreciation of how such divisions intersect and interact, lest we end up with a distorted understanding of people's lived experience. AOP has the potential of being

a more fine-tuned framework for action that taps into the "processes" of racialization, as opposed to static pictures of racism; that seeks an understanding of the mobilization of difference and the mobilization of category as contextual and not necessarily antithetical [...] (and) acknowledges the way in which these intersections between groups are potentially conflictual as well as complimentary. (Williams 1999, p.220)

Representations of the intersectionality of different oppressions such as Sisneros et.al's (2008, p.87) *Web-model* and Wineman's (1984) *intersectional oppression model* illustrate how othering categories change and become mutually reinforcing in everyday life. In the Web-model, categories of race, socio-economic status, gender/sex, age, and religious difference, among others, radiate outwards out from a central hub of privilege, power and resource access. They overlap but are not hierarchical, or additive but rather cumulative. The inclusion-exclusion nexus is measured by how/where these categories intersect and their position from the center. An unemployed migrant male may thus be closer to the center on the gender axis but further away relative to ethnic and socio-economic status. He is more or less included/excluded depending on the specific social context. Making links between oppressions requires practitioners to recognize commonalities and differences in the way these are constructed and experienced as prerequisites for efforts at social transformation. In making these links, anti-oppressive practice contributes a wider perspective to those debates on anti-racism in education which predominantly focus on issues of racial or ethnic discrimination as forces of social exclusion within school curricula, pedagogies and institutional practice.

2.5.3 ANTI-OPPRESSION IN EDUCATION

Within schooling, anti-oppressive education is interpreted as an anti-racist, inclusive process that should be embedded in all curricular programs and teaching, social interactions, and in networking beyond school walls with other actors (Parker 2016). Critical citizenship discourses have been advanced as practical means to equip members of migrant groups with tools to embrace and manage conflict, rather than erasing differences (Bickmore 2006). By interrogating conflictual issues (which in turn teaches critical engagement and structural critiques), citizenship education challenges accusations of schooling's main aim being the shaping of compliant migrant citizens. Christina Parker (2016) argues that minority students who have personally experienced oppression would particularly benefit from practicing these skills to find their voice and participate in dissent. Such *conflict dialogue* challenges and disrupts hegemonic ideologies and presents a way to achieve recognition of difference.

Anti-oppressive education's very goal is to elicit diverse and critical perspectives that question dominant assumptions. A curriculum characterized by *interruptive democracy* – the frequent generation of dialogue and deliberation – engages in praxis (Davies 2004b). For migrant students enrolled in integration education programs, conflict dialogues extend possibilities for them to participate in meaningful discussions, something which is vital for second-language acquisition (Norton & Toohey 2011). Interruptive democracy learning encourages students to read and write about relevant social issues that resonate with them (Cummins 2011, 2009). At the heart of such reframing is the recognition that literacy practices are political – not neutral or simply functional. They “stand as emblematic of nation or ethnicity and are at root social arrangements, embedded in and constitutive of issues relating to unequal distributions of power within communities and institutions” (Morgan & Ramanathan 2005, p.151). When “conflictual” topics are avoided and curricula seek to homogenize diverse viewpoints, structural inequalities remain unacknowledged.

Educators' discomfort or inadequacy in debating sensitive or conflictual issues in open classroom forums is well documented (see Kumashiro 2002, Bickmore 2008b, Parker 2016, Pötzsch 2018). The resulting defensive teaching where teachers refuse to engage their students in discussions about racism because it might “demoralize” or “sadden” them, results in such topics being classed as taboo and thus best left untouched. Antithetically, by failing to address such inequalities, one reinforces standardizations of hegemonic school knowledge. Kumashiro (2001) postulates that perhaps we resist anti-racist or anti-oppressive pedagogical practices because they unpack not only how we think and feel about the Other, but also – by forcing our gaze inwards – about ourselves.

He identifies four approaches to anti-oppressive education: education for the Other, education about the Other, education that is critical of privileging and Othering, and education that changes students and society (Kumashiro 2000). The first two approaches interrogate how oppression is embedded in school environments and suggest ways of ameliorating its harmful othering (e.g. racializing) consequences for students. Such strategies include “disrupting knowledge” by integrating otherness throughout the curriculum to achieve recognition. Disruptive knowledge in

language education programs for migrants, for example, would be to reconceive English language instruction as “Englishes.” This entails a shift away from a position that stresses the norms of grammatical and phonemical accuracy to one where English is viewed as plural (Englishes) with multiple vernaculars reflecting the local specificities in which it is entrenched, learned, and appropriated. It makes room for English to be positioned as a syncretic language open to diverse incarnations with the ability to cross boundaries and create linkages. Prejudice against nonstandard varieties is thus challenged, while the status and confidence of their users is enhanced when language diversity becomes the focus of classroom instruction (Kubota 2001). The last two approaches to anti-oppressive education promote critical social transformation by equipping students and staff to engage in wider cultural and societal critique and democratization. As such, anti-oppressive pedagogy also directs change efforts at interpersonal, cultural and structural levels and emphasizes the intersectional processes of othering in which macro-level discourses are played out and reframed within the microcosm of the school.

2.5.4 ANTI-OPPRESSIVE MODELS AND PRACTICES: CRITIQUES AND REPLIES

While proponents of AOP claim that it offers a better conceptual model for understanding the multiplicity of oppression, privilege and power dynamics at a structural level and a clearer linkage between work practice and social justice, the approach has been critiqued from both ideological and practical perspectives (i.e. how it has been operationalized within statutory services) (Sakamoto & Pitner 2005). The first of these ideological criticisms relates to the “tension between universalism and particularism” subsumed under the umbrella of anti-oppressive theory (Williams 1999, p.223). AOP’s dilemma, it is argued, is whether such universalizing paradigms, exploring linkages between different categories of othering, conversely operate to dilute differences and singularities inherent in single-strand models as well as the mobilization around them. While this is a compelling concern, it ignores the fact that anti-oppressive practice was never envisioned as a zero-sum game. Thus, in cooperation with clients/students, one can very well engage in anti-racist, feminist or anti-disablist work but AOP’s dual perspective also obliges one to recognize and

confront the homogenizing effects of structural oppression. The challenge lies in not losing sight of the *queerness* of specific othered positions while connecting them within wider movements for equality.

McLaughlin (2005, p.299) indicts anti-oppressive practice for being overly negative, or its *politics of defeat*, stemming rather from disillusionment with the “now” than emancipation objectives. One could alternatively interpret AOP’s critique of the failure of traditional practice methodologies as a necessary point of departure for transformational attempts to redress these shortcomings. It is true that AOP’s ultimate objectives of sweeping structural changes designed to eradicate oppression while reimagining social interactions can be seen as discouragingly lofty, especially for already overburdened practitioners. Negative outcomes may range from potentially alienating frontline workers, who believe that they have always been working anti-oppressively, to practitioner apathy (Sakamoto & Pitner 2005). However, as Dalrymple & Burke (1997, p.163) remind us, “we are not talking about changing the world overnight, we are talking about informing our practice.” Therefore, if practitioners use the power they have, “even little bits here and there,” and are not only content with remedial changes at interpersonal levels, they can work transformationally.

The more damaging criticisms relate to the actual practical implementation of AOP. Rush and Keenan (2012) argue that AOP is rarely implemented in ways that combine public policy advocacy rooted in user-participatory research with emancipatory practice involving service users at the micro level. In claiming to work anti-oppressively yet without a political agenda, practitioners run the risk of actively or tacitly condoning forms of structural oppression. By de-emphasizing aims of radical social change and social justice, critics claim that statutory anti-oppressive practice reverts to re-emphasizing agency and promoting personal change over egalitarian social relations (Danso 2007). In short, the detractors point to a stark contrast between the rhetoric surrounding anti-oppressive practice and the daily reality experienced by many services users at the receiving end of such practices. A related claim is that theorists have co-opted the experience of oppressed peoples by claiming to “know” them and speak for them and have thus silenced their voices and their contributions. Consequently, the power to define what constitutes anti-oppressive practice (or theory)

remains with teachers, tutors, workers and other academics, rather than service users or students. This has, in turn, fostered a general sense of self-deception among practitioners (Wilson & Beresford 2000).

The difficulty of integrating AOP within the hierarchical organization of state institutions propounds this self-delusion. Institutionalization within state welfare services, which seem more concerned with “care” and “control,” is posited as antithetical to anti-oppressive practice’s revolutionary core (Shera 2003, Thompson 2006). It is argued that in co-opting AOP by stripping it of its grass-roots, Other-centered, transformative zeal, the state has been allowed to reposition itself as a neutral arbiter between competing identity claims:

When every agency is flying the anti-racist flag, including those agencies charged with upholding, both legislatively and physically, ever more punitive measures on immigrants and asylum seekers, it is time to view the contemporary anti-racist with a degree of scepticism. (McLaughlin 2005, p.298)

The observation of an “anti-oppressive backlash” in the U.K., for example, by those who insist that oppression has already been addressed in practice and is therefore passé and those who challenge its apolitical, hierarchical state incarnation is a sobering fact. It reminds one of Lentin & Titley’s (2011, p.76) contention that by discounting “race” and racializing practices as cogent processes in modern social organization the “right of the racialized to define and oppose racism on their own terms, has simply been dismissed.” If this focus on combatting othering and structural social exclusion is diverted in anti-oppressive practices, it would render them indistinguishable from the multiple colour-blind versions of psycho-social and socio-pedagogical approaches AOP has critiqued.

In contextualizing the bulk of critiques which center on the practice of anti-oppression, Rush and Keenan (2012) argue that AOP’s specific “challenges” must be seen within the light of the different welfare regimes in which they are embedded. They distinguish between Scandinavian welfare regimes, with their aims of reducing poverty and gender inequalities, and Anglo-Saxon welfare regimes, which they characterize as being in the business of controlling the growing residua of the poor and the marginalized. The resulting manner in which “practice” is conceived

diverges when seen on a continuum from social democratic egalitarian welfare ideologies on one end to neo-liberal free market values on the other. Thus, the singularities of the U.K.'s "failure" to incorporate AOP ought not to be universalized (Ibid, p.12). This is an important point because it shifts the focus from anti-oppression's "inherent" flaws to the cultural and structural constraints placed upon its implementation within specific national contexts. Nordic welfare regimes with high levels of social engineering and state paternalism may, however, present other problems in implementing AOP (Valtonen 2001, Blomberg-Kroll et.al 2008, Kivisto & Wahlbeck 2013, Vad Jønsson et.al 2013).

Indeed, even the ideological critiques mentioned earlier have an inherently insular dimension with few references to literature or empirical studies emanating from outside the U.K. This is surprising given the fact that anti-oppressive theory-building and practice is well-integrated within the disciplines of social work and education in Canada and Australia, to name but a few. These contributions to theory and practice incorporate a unique focus on oppression and white privilege by foregrounding the perspectives and lives of indigenous populations and making links with decolonial struggles at grassroots and community levels (Brown & Strega 2005, Yellow Bird et.al 2013). By advocating fundamental social transformation in interrogating the intersectional potentiating effects of different oppressions, they shine a spotlight on an ever-mutating inclusion-exclusion nexus.

3 PREVIOUS STUDIES

Selecting studies which meaningfully connect with issues of critical social inclusion in integration education programs for adult migrants has simultaneously been quite easy and rather difficult. Critical perspectives on migrant inclusion are well-represented within the social sciences and education exploring socio-cultural, institutional, economic and political points of connection. However, structural analyses of the societal and institutional norms which “colour” what is taught and how, are more difficult to find especially those interrogating educational curricula and practices meant to “integrate” migrant students into national spheres. Similarly, under-researched are the intersectional effects created by structural forces such as policies pertaining to the recognition of foreign qualifications, or national social assistance regulations and how these circumscribe the lives of migrant students and thereby their educational participation. I am referring here to forces from beyond the walls of the institution and their effect(s) on program participants and program delivery. Therefore, I have chosen to highlight relevant international and domestic studies which examine intersectionalities of oppression, and the inclusion-exclusion nexus inherent in program design and delivery. I explore studies which shed a critical light on social inclusion and its obfuscating factors within integration programs for migrants with a special focus on LINC and SFI educations.

3.1 THE INCLUSION-EXCLUSION NEXUS IN RESEARCH ON EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR MIGRANTS

In this section, the four studies discuss the manner in which “inclusive” educational policies and measures, despite their good intentions, are inextricably enmeshed within blinkered and racialized curricular, cultural and administrative structures. Terhart and von Dewitz’s (2018) study focuses on the current situation of newly arrived migrant youths in ten city schools in Cologne, Germany. It examines how pedagogical practices used

by teachers designed to include the students' diverse (language) skills are affected by educators' own attitudes towards teaching migrant students and fettered by mono-lingual school practices. They point out that students' future opportunities or disadvantages are molded in the complex interplay of these including and excluding practices. For instance, whether schools opt for mainstreaming, language immersion or separation as responses to educating migrants all of these "inclusive" strategies take place within pedagogical settings described as "areas of tension" (Ibid, p.302). In shaping and reshaping these areas, Terhart and von Dewitz argue for an egalitarian participationist response involving all stakeholders, including migrant students. They conclude that a differentiated analysis of educational practices with migrant students is not possible without focusing on both the institutional structures governing schools and schooling as well as the quotidian practices shaping interactions in class.

Line Hilt (2015) approaches the inclusion-exclusion nexus by taking a meta-view in analyzing Norwegian education policy documents from 2004-2012 on the inclusion of minority language pupils. She points to the paradoxical contents of the documents whereby minority students are being included as excluded as well as excluded as included. Hilt argues that groups of minority language students are identified by what they lack, such as competences in the native language complicated by the "encumbrance" of speaking a minority language. Their perceived exclusion thus prompts needs for inclusion. However, by subsequently correlating ethnic group characteristics with poor learning outcomes and dropout trends, minority language pupils are labelled as a "problem" and become objects for political, remedial measures. Explanations for their (lack of) performance are attributed to the observed characteristics or otherness of the group and are not placed at the door of the educational system in which they participate or which they subsequently leave. However, responses in educational policy documents to this increasing migrant worry are characterized by re-doubled efforts in seeking to re-include migrant students through homework help, summer schools and separate introductory classes. They, as a group, become the objects of specific ameliorative efforts, thereby being excluded as included. Hilt concludes by posing the question of whether the policy goal – "full" inclusion in society

– is at all realizable if exclusion processes are an internal part of inclusion processes.

Frederik Hertzberg (2015) explores the inclusion-exclusion nexus in a Swedish study of educational and vocational guidance with migrant youths. He begins by scrutinizing the narratives of career counselors in which they describe those desired learning outcomes they emphasize in their meetings with migrant students. This scrutiny is then also shifted to their reflections on the “school to work” transitions of migrant youths. Learning to be an autonomous individual capable of making independent rational choices surfaces as the most central desired learning outcome. Autonomy is equated with inclusion while a perceived lack of autonomy – and thereby lack of inclusion – is allegedly ascribed to the category of immigrants, and the “immigrant condition.” Some counselors cite parental influence on the vocational/educational choices of their children and migrant youths’ overattentiveness to parental demands as irrational factors impeding this autonomy. Hertzberg posits that a tangential connection between the lack of autonomy and (non-Swedish) identity is established while making autonomous, rational choices is connected with the dominant Swedish ethnicity. However, an interesting complementary finding also showed that some counselors did not explain migrant student abjection with references to different “mores,” or “culture,” but rather as an effect of the migrant condition in Sweden characterized by unequal distributions of social and cultural capital. Ideas of inclusion here centered around concepts of social justice rather than social cohesion. Some counselors implicitly critiqued the neoliberal “New Public Management” ethos of contemporary educational policies as well as the pervasive structural inequalities stratifying society in reframing the situation of migrant students.

Anna-Leena Riitaoja and Fred Dervin’s (2014) ethnographic study examining interreligious dialogues in two Helsingfors primary schools also sheds light on inclusion–exclusion’s interconnectedness by examining the exclusionary outcomes of learning strategies designed to facilitate intercultural understanding. The authors adopt a post-colonial, post-structural theoretical approach in analyzing teacher interviews and field notes to discover how interreligious dialogues and negotiations on religion in schools can contribute to othering if the parameters circumscribing them

remain unexamined. Their findings show that educational aims of cultivating secular liberal citizens create implicit power asymmetries which sabotage the foundations of togetherness, dialogue and understanding upon which such dialogues are to be based. Secular notions emphasizing rationality, objectivity and distance from “backward” traditions are juxtaposed with the subjectivity, positionality and irrationality of the “religious.” As such, interreligious dialogues can become tools for domesticating and mainstreaming minority students unless they deconstruct taken-for-granted subtexts. Riitaoja & Dervin expose the inherent bias of such strategies of inclusion and ask whether the aims of fostering interreligious, intercultural dialogues in the school context are truly possible. They then posit questions which resonate with the principles of critical inclusion inherent in my theoretical framework: Who is going to learn about whom, and whose knowledge is to be learned? Are knowledge and understanding about the Other constructed with her and in her own terms (Ibid, p.12)?

3.2 SOCIAL INCLUSION IN RESEARCH ON EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR MIGRANTS

Next, we turn to studies that address migrant social inclusion within different educational contexts. Rebecca Thomas’ (2016) study of inclusion strategies targeting migrant students in Hartford CT., U.S.A. recommends a cross-sectorial community approach including further education for teachers and social workers in addressing areas of trauma, increasing parental involvement and developing student peer mentoring initiatives. In a qualitative study of a business language-oriented SFI course within the Swedish city of Gothenburg, Marie Carlson and Bengt Jacobson (2019) focused on the sweeping transformations which SFI educations have undergone as a result of the entrenchment of principles of neoliberalism and New Public Management as well as their ramifications for teaching. They posit that as a result of political steering by the municipality’s Adult Education Authority (AEA), earlier curricular emphases on welfare ideology, public service values and equality have been replaced by priorities championing “effectiveness”, “entrepreneurship” and “competition.” This

mindset of *commercialized professionalism* (Ibid, p.134) whereby students are to be included by fostering their self-sufficiency and employability has, in turn, created an administrative and teaching culture marked by increasing levels of evaluation and monitoring. For instructors, this has entailed diminished professional discretion, and increased workloads at the expense of an inclusive pedagogy.

Sue Webb's (2017) qualitative interview-based study with representatives of organizations involved in adult migrant education within Australia's Greater Shepparton regional area also takes a critical look at immigration and educational policies which are primarily driven by narrow economic justifications. Her analysis demonstrates that predominating narratives of "fitting in to fill the domestic skills gap" ignore the reality of transnational migration processes in which mobilities and affiliations continue to connect migrants tangibly to their countries of origin. She argues that in economic-driven narratives, the recruitment of skilled migrants becomes a "hegemonic tale" that allows states or employers to neglect investing in the education and training of adult migrants beyond that which fits "them" into "our" labour markets. The debilitating outcome is that immigrants' prior work skills and qualifications are devalued. Related Canadian studies, (see Gibb 2015, Slade 2015, Guo 2015) reveal that Canada's language acquisition and increasing employment skills focus in adult learning for migrants has the unintended consequences of repetitive training for low skilled work that leads to de-professionalization and downward mobility. Shibaο Guo (2015, p.14), proposes an alternative, social justice-based *recognitive adult education* in which the qualifications, experiences and transnational networks of migrants are recognized by educators and employers. He advocates the creation of spaces for transformative learning which acknowledge different social and cultural groups.

There are also critical studies which specifically examine the role of migrant women in integration educations, or so-called introduction language programs. Johanna Ennsler-Kananen & Nicole Pettitt's (2017) study weaves together qualitative data from interviews, participant observations and classroom recordings from a mixed-gender L2 (host country language) adult migrant classroom in Austria and an all women L2

migrant classroom in the United States. They challenge the view which portrays women as passive recipients of education in need of emancipation, while pointing to the vital strength of community in transformative efforts. Their findings underline that L2 proficiency alone is not a guarantor for migrant women's social inclusion or socioeconomic advancement. Instead, migrant women's complex challenges and opportunities for agency need to be recognized and addressed within their educations. The research concludes with several suggestions for program development centering on the experiences of migrant women. The first calls for increasing the imaginative and transformative opportunities for language learning through activities and materials which connect students' experiences to feminist thinking and to more overarching social discourses. The second insists on the "bidirectionality" in learning exchanges by which teachers of migrant women become "learners of our students' aspirations, histories and ways of being in the world, but also about our own cultures, biases and histories" (Ibid, p.601). This entails that all stakeholders including teaching and support staffers, administrators, etc., ought to be encouraged to become learners of their own experiences of oppression, including their complicity in it.

Doris Warriner's (2007, p.355) study of Sudanese refugee women in an American ESL (English as a Second Language) program echoes the conclusions above by finding that although many women met their short-term goals of language proficiency and work practice, "few possibilities for long-term social advancement, economic stability, or educational opportunity" arose from the successful completion of the integration language course. Warriner attributes this outcome to the workings of neoliberal adult ESL education policies and practices as played out in migrant women's lives which leave them at the whim of capitalist markets. While host country language proficiency allows for increases in social, cultural and economic capital and access to new networks, this is a time-consuming process. Neoliberal policies truncate the time and networks available with their goals of work-life integration by the fastest route possible. As a result, the adult ESL case study was not able to provide the support the women needed to access jobs which would enhance their financial stability and social inclusion.

3.3 THE INCLUSION-EXCLUSION NEXUS IN RESEARCH ON LINC PROGRAMS¹³

Studies examining the LINC program have been prolific and wide-ranging since its inception. They have critically interrogated issues of program aims, teaching ideologies & practices, curriculum contents, and accessibility, among others. LINC studies can roughly be divided into those examining pedagogical practices and ideologies and those focusing on curricular issues. I have particularly chosen to highlight those which discuss the role of structural factors in obfuscating the social integrationist aims of such programs, as these are more uncommon.

With reference to teaching and teaching culture, studies have pointed to the need for more self-reflection and critical thinking skills among teachers as well as the re-examination of teacher roles leading to the development of empowering educator-learner partnerships (Sauvé 1996, Khalideen 1998, James 2000, Ilieva 2001). They have further exposed structural obstacles affecting how programs are conceived and delivered. One such obstacle concerns the marginalization and disempowerment of teachers within the program. Richardson's qualitative study (in Pinet 2006) based on LINC teacher interviews attests to teacher disenfranchisement from decisions affecting LINC program mandates and curriculum development. Haque & Cray (2007), in a study examining the situation of ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers found that the latter often garner lower wages, are insufficiently resourced and have limited opportunities for professional development in transitory workplaces. As a result, few teachers have time to develop "disruptive" pedagogies fostering critical citizenship and subsequently rely heavily on materials that are superficially and essentializingly Canadian. This echoes Richardson's findings (in Pinet 2006) which demonstrated that teachers from the dominant culture had internalized myths about Canada's "tolerant" multiculturalism preventing them from thinking critically on inclusion and subsequently failing to validate student experiences of racism and

¹³ Portions of this discussion have been adapted from Pöttsch, T. (2018). *Assimilation vs. Inclusion: An Anti-Oppressive Perspective on the Experiences of Participants in Integration Educations*. In A. A. Alemanji (Ed). *Antiracism Education: In and beyond schools*. Palgrave Macmillan Books

Previous studies

discrimination. Cervatiuc and Ricento's (2012) study examining the "hidden curriculum" of unstated norms, values and beliefs guiding teachers and teaching, complements such findings. It concludes that the "hidden curriculum" was either reflected in teacher indifference to migrant problems or the idyllic belief that migrants face no challenges borne of a blinkered, overly positive view of Canadian society. As a consequence, critical thinking on social issues related to student lives was not promoted, learners had little input in selecting topics for discussion and were encouraged to adapt to society.

Research on the aims and usage of LINC curricula and how these reflect a particular integration ideology has also yielded interesting conclusions. Thomson and Derwing (2004) point to the lack of a participatory citizenship orientation in LINC, where a predominant focus on language proficiency often precludes opportunities for social inclusion. Their recommendations in promoting "participation" include facilitating migrant students' social networking possibilities and sharing information on successful inclusion programs between various governmental institutions. Brian Morgan (2002) in a critical study of LINC curricula emphasizes a shift towards topics of identity politics as well as social and community engagement to challenge inequitable power relations outside of the classroom. This transformative pedagogy is also espoused by Robert Pinet (2007) whose research analyzes LINC curricular materials complemented by staff interviews. His findings like those of James (2000) expose a *discursive discrimination* (Boréus 2006) present in the clear imbalance between narrow interpretations of Canadiana vs. other curricular materials reflecting cultural diversity and students' migrant experiences. According to these studies, the conspicuous absence of references to minority groups reflects the general curricular discourse instead of being a one-off omission in an instructional text. Related studies also throw a critical spotlight on LINC's curricular foundation, namely the Portfolio Based Learning Assessments (PBLA) which theoretically envision a collaborative approach between educators and students in individualizing learning by collecting and evaluating evidence of competencies in individual portfolios. However, findings by Fox (2014), Desyatova (2018) and Drew and Mudzingwa (2018) among others, indicate that PBLA's inclusive potential has been coopted by the evidence-based ethos of New Public Management thereby turning it

into an assessment-bloated, teacher-centered process that renders learners passive, multiplies instructor workloads and ironically reduces learner decision-making on portfolio content, all in the name of increasing “accountability.” These studies conclude that PBLA’s therefore undermine the quality of language learning and teaching.

Tara Gibb’s (2008) study of ESL and CLB (Canadian Language Benchmark) documents and curricular discourses situated in employment program contexts concluded that these do not take into consideration migrant students’ multiple subjectivities. She argues that newcomers to Canada ought not to be portrayed or treated merely as potential workers useful for fueling the Canadian or global economy but that they are also “parents, spouses, community members, politically engaged citizens, sometimes survivors of war and poverty – subjectivities that cannot be parked at the door of the classroom” (Ibid, p.330). She exhorts policymakers and educators to be wary of inscribing processes that reduce learning to an individualized, psychologized process and to confront the sociohistorical structures and policies that normalize linguisticism and learner deficit. In addition, she argues that so-called pragmatic educational policies outlining the prescribed skills and standards migrant workers are to “perform,” mask whose knowledge is to be adopted and performed. Instead, she advocates collective responses in addressing structural inequities that includes making visible the ways in which elites are absolved from this responsibility. Gibb suggests that exploring the effecting traces of Canada’s colonial history, which “continues to position non-native English or French speakers as Other, should be considered in the policy-making process for adult language learning” (Ibid, p.322).

In another study of how of critical citizenship for social inclusion is conceptualized within CLB curricula, Brian Morgan (2009) argues that the focus on migrant language learner’s rights and responsibilities pertains mainly to them being good consumers. Utilizing pedagogical methods such as critical narrative inquiry, textual juxtapositions, teacher talk, and the use of multimodal resources, Morgan advocates a type of critically inclusive citizenship practice which foregrounds the complex negotiations of power in the positioning of migrant-subjects. He argues, that student awareness is heightened by facilitating oppositional readings and practices around

Previous studies

dominant constructions of nation-state citizenship. By reconnecting their everyday life experiences in work and schooling within this framework of hierarchical power relations, migrant learners move from their positionings as object to those of subject. Douglas Fleming's (2008) interview-based study also looks at conceptions of citizenship as described by migrant students enrolled in a LINC program. It shows that they understood "being Canadian" primarily in legalistic terms. Their conceptions centered on rights, adherence to law and respect for a hierarchical view of the cultural mosaic instead of on citizenship as a participationist, co-created and shifting process which involves them as subjects with agency.

Turning to the impacts of structural factors which circumscribe migrant students' learning from beyond the walls of the school; Gill and Gormley (2007) in a focus group study of students and teachers involved in a LINC program in Hamilton, Ontario found that family obligations, financial and work concerns were frequently cited by migrant learners as tangible barriers to accessing LINC programs. Suggestions for improvement include students receiving income supplements and the extension of support services within LINC schools to address students' unique academic and personal needs. The study also explores a gender-sensitive perspective by acknowledging the unique challenges facing female newcomers. It found that LINC eligibility rules regarding Canadian citizenship are forcing mothers with small children to choose between becoming Canadians or attending LINC classes with free child-care. Because Canadian citizens are ineligible for integration education programs, some migrant mothers were opting for LINC with free childminding instead of applying for citizenship which would exclude them from both program access and childcare. The study thus calls for revisiting these eligibility rules.

Lastly, in examining how LINC programs support or obfuscate the social inclusion of students with previous professional backgrounds within the labour market, Peter Grant (2007), in a qualitative interview-based study with migrant professionals, found that LINC must be complemented with more tailored programs focused on providing advanced language training for learner's specific needs. Ann Brooks (2009) study of best practices within workplace integration programs offers other practical suggestions for improvement which include providing on-site language and

communication skills training offered by employers. These LINC specific studies echo conclusions on strategies for work-life inclusion of migrants in Canada arrived at by Gibb (2015), Slade (2015), and Guo (2015).

3.4 THE INCLUSION-EXCLUSION NEXUS IN RESEARCH ON SWEDISH MINORITY INTEGRATION AND SFI EDUCATIONS

With regards to the inclusion of migrants choosing Swedish as a national yet minority language in Finland, this is an under-researched field and studies examining SFI educations are fewer still. Part of this may be due to the fact that SFI programs are still relatively small with some just recently established (e.g. Arbis SFI in 2012). Important contributions have been made, however, by Creutz and Helander's (2012) study of migrants' Swedish language integration in the capital region of Helsingfors. It documents a widespread interest in Swedish language integration among newcomers to Finland but also exposes structural problems such as service gaps and the dismissive or uncooperative attitudes of Finnish civil servants and authorities.

While the former study gave voice to migrants who had chosen to integrate in Swedish, Mika Helander's (2015) follow-up study represents an overview of organizations and authorities' experiences with Swedish-language integration, as well as the administrative arrangements designed to facilitate it. Among the myriad of structural problems acting as obfuscating factors to inclusion in Swedish, outlined in the research, were economic justifications (lacking funds for integration programs in Swedish), paternalistic attitudes (citing the lack of employment possibilities in Swedish despite the absence of such statistics), lack of information on the availability of SFI programs, and the posited "lack of migrant interest" in such alternatives for inclusion. However, one factor stands out above all others. It concerns the arbitrary nature of decision making and misuse of power of individual civil servants. Nearly all migrant respondents report discrimination by authorities including negative attitudes and extended waiting times for service, as well as the fact that integration in the Swedish

language was not being recognized in decisions affecting studies and benefits by the National Employment Service (AN-byrån).

Such discrimination underpinning the illiberal treatment of migrants is also borne out in other studies (see Creutz & Helander 2012 & Teikari 2015). Helander (2015, p.72) argues that this conscious social exclusion runs contrary to the Finnish Integration Act and posits that the reason why integration in Swedish in the region of Nyland, where Arbis SFI is situated, is so underproportioned is that “the Finnish-dominated capital area (...) emphasizes a national monoculture and underappreciates cultural and regional diversity.”¹⁴ However, there are also studies of thriving migrant inclusion in Swedish, such as Mattila and Björklund’s (2013) research within the municipality of Närpes in Ostrobothnia which found that Swedish language integration has succeeded well due to functioning social networks, communal participation and the presence of a supportive infrastructure including housing, schools, and job guarantees.

Although, the Inclusion-Exclusion Nexus with reference to SFI educations in Finland is an under-researched field, in Sweden several groundbreaking studies have illuminated this topic. For example, Marie Carlson’s (2002) study of SFI educations in Gothenburg used interpretative frameworks of social-constructivism and discourse analysis in order to explore knowledge production and learning within SFI as well as the programs’ impacts upon participants. It reveals an educational norm both articulated and implied where “the Swedish,” reified in language use and other majority stereotypes, is juxtaposed against a “deficiency discourse” that positions migrant learners by “what they lack” with accompanying paternalistic measures obliging their compliance. This discursive exclusion exposes a paradox where the tropes of “student participation,” and “[personal] responsibility” lauded in educational and curricular documents conversely translate into real life practices that extend limited influence and educational ownership to migrant learners. In addition, the study finds that this deficiency discourse constitutes “the tie that binds” in SFI’s dealings with stakeholder institutions such as employment services and social welfare offices, despite ideological differences in other matters. However,

¹⁴ Original quote: ”den finskdominerade huvudstadsregionen (...) betonar en nationell enhetskultur och underskattar kulturell och regional diversitet”

Carlson also identifies practices of reflexive resistance to dominant discourses on the part of migrant students which could be seen as the unintended integration outcomes of the education programs.

Another relevant contribution is made by Karin Sandwall's (2013) study examining SFI students' opportunities for interaction and language learning at work placements. It finds that despite the inclusive potential of practical internships within working life, students' rudimentary and solitary workplace tasks combined with inadequate tutoring regimes contributed to migrants limited social and linguistic interaction. In addition, the lack of reciprocally integrated learning between school and work resulted in these two worlds being perceived as separate entities with few points of connection. It was therefore not possible to claim that practical work experience components within SFI implicitly resulted in more expeditious language acquisition or economic self-sufficiency. The study further concludes that the increased administrative burden of arranging internships coupled with staff inexperience in practice tutoring meant that the individually tailored learning approaches advocated in curricular guidelines had to be sacrificed on the altar of economic and temporal priorities. It also critiques grammar textbook-based curricula in which work-life skills and vocabulary are reduced to short, general themes like "the labour market" or "writing CVs." Moreover, the issue of staff structural disempowerment in affecting tendering processes and educational policy is raised, specifically those policies narrowly focusing on employment and "efficiency objectives."

4 CASE STUDY DESCRIPTIONS & PARTICIPANTS

The selection of Arbis SFI, Medis SFI and NorQuest College LINC as representative cases in my analysis owed as much to a conscious decision that they should fulfill a number of specific criteria as to a certain serendipity. I deliberately chose three case studies which represent a broad scope of both national and international practices and contestations of social inclusion within integration educations, reserving a particular focus for SFI programs. However, I was also fortunate enough to have made personal connections with key gatekeepers representing the three schools years earlier and these informed my choices and cleared the way for introductions. In fact, these personal relations based on mutual self-regard vouchsafed my entry into environs which were foreign to me. By exploring integration educations with widely varying points of departure and practices, I aimed to discover both new information well as commonalities about processes of social inclusion that transcended the individual cases as well as their national borders. Indeed, all of the three chosen case studies incorporate both typical and atypical components (for an in-depth discussion of case selections see pp.4-5).

4.1 NORQUEST COLLEGE LINC IN EDMONTON

LINC or *Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada* is a federally-funded program introduced by the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission (CIC) in 1992 (Cervatiuc & Ricento, 2012). According to its mission statement, it aims to facilitate the integration of migrants into Canadian culture by providing language and settlement training and by offering students possibilities to develop their academic, social and employment competences. In the province of Alberta, and its capital Edmonton, prerequisites for student eligibility include having attained permanent residence status and completed a preliminary Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) assessment conducted by the Language

Assessment Referral and Counselling Centre (LARCC), within the previous 6 months. CLB levels are assigned by looking at how learners accrue skills and develop competences in completing assigned learning tasks, although they focus primarily on linguistic competence (Derwing & Waugh, 2012, Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2015).

NorQuest College's LINC program during the time of my field work was located at two rather different campuses. The Westmount campus, housed in an old elementary school, and LINC's original home, was small, cramped and slightly dilapidated, yet homey. It still accommodated a large number of staff and students, many of whom were fiercely loyal to Westmount and slightly dismissive of LINC's more glamorous downtown cousin, the main NorQuest College campus. The latter housed not only selected LINC courses but also other vocational educations such as Nursing and Business Administration in a modern College environment. Staff regarded the "Westmount enclave" as too paternalistic and stifling. Instead, they lauded the student diversity and the integration of LINC within a post-secondary educational environment as facilitating student societal inclusion.¹⁵ In the past, the largest group of LINC students were university educated, though their numbers have now been clearly declining while the numbers of students with 0 to 9 years of education are increasing. The main countries of student origin were China, Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea and Republics from the former Soviet Union, and these also represented the bulk of participants in my group interviews. Many were unemployed but seeking work and there was a clear upward trend in terms of students' part-time employment. The majority of those working, commonly within the cleaning and retail sectors, had career aspirations in Health Care and other related fields, something which NorQuest readily encouraged in an effort to funnel students into its other vocational streams after they graduated from LINC or ESL.

The program was structured around three educational streams: foundational/literacy, building academic skills, and basic studies in order to allow students of the same educational background to be grouped together. Thus, literacy or foundational classes included students having 0-9 years of

¹⁵ At the time of publication, all NorQuest LINC programs have been moved to the downtown campus and Westmount has been closed.

education while regular integration stream classes comprised those with more than 10 years of formal schooling. LINC studies sought to help students improve their English proficiency, as well as develop intercultural, teamwork and IT skills. Unlike the Finnish SFI courses, however, obligatory work placement periods for all participating students were not an integral part of LINC. Work practice components were restricted to specialized courses like the Work Volunteer Program¹⁶, available to limited amounts of students who had to undergo a vetting process prior to being accepted. In recognition of the varied life situations of students, however, NorQuest College offered a wide range of LINC incarnations including full and part time studies, day and evening courses, as well as specialized classes organised in flexible time schedules to accommodate employed students, daytime care givers etc. In fact, all courses contained various synchronous, asynchronous and online learning strategies. An added benefit was the existence of a comprehensive net of student support services in recognition of the special needs and challenges faced by adult migrant students, many with family, work, daycare and transnational commitments. These included career counselors, settlement or social workers, and student advisors.

A task and outcomes-based educational approach emphasizing applied knowledge and skills rather than content serves as the focal point of NorQuest LINC's pedagogical strategy (Lefebvre 2014). One outcome of this emphasis on applied, "real-life" skills has been the adoption of Portfolio-Based Learning Assessments (PBLA) as the foundation for curricular development. As an ideal, PBLAs have been conceived of as tools to empower students to take greater ownership of their learning and ways for teachers to re-conceptualize "learning" relationships in line with more horizontal power dynamics. They emphasize a collaborative approach where educators and students jointly set language-learning goals, collect evidence of competences in individual portfolios, and reflect on students' learning progress over time. Curricular theme choices such as Canadian Politics & Law, Health Care and Employment, among others, are to be negotiated and decided upon in student groups. The agreed upon themes are then constructed around the four skill areas of Listening, Speaking,

¹⁶ Eligibility was restricted to c. 20 students who need to demonstrate a language competence CLB 4 level, pass an introductory interview and undergo a police check.

Reading, and Writing and reframed as “real-life skills” to facilitate students’ adoption into their communities and spheres of employment (Pettis 2014). It must be added, however, that although LINC federal curricular documents only present “suggested” topics as well as teaching aides. How prescriptive these “suggestions” actually are is critically debated (Gibb 2008, Morgan 2009). Topic selection, structure and implementation, however, do leave a great deal of room for interpretation and experimentation. Moreover, given the various provincial manifestations of LINC; integration educations and curricula can vary widely from province to province or even from school to school.

In presenting myself and my research in introductory staff sessions at NorQuest, I solicited participants among teachers, administrators and support personnel who had been working a number of years within LINC in order to benefit from their wealth of experience and expertise. Ultimately, this cooperation yielded 22 in-depth interviews with predominantly white female staff members. However, two of the participants were male and a further two were visible minority staff members, though in general staff from non-white backgrounds were clearly under-represented. Four participants had administrative positions within the program, two represented support personnel and the rest taught in LINC at various CLB levels. As far as my student participants were concerned, I observed three student groups comprised of 25 students each, as well as the Work Volunteer program which included the only work life practice component. It had 12 remaining participants, with the rest having dropped out for various reasons. The students generally operated at a CLB level of 3-5, indicating that most spoke English reasonably fluently, could cope with a modicum of language complexity and had basic competences in writing and reading. I alternated my presence in these groups over a six-week period in July and August of 2015 which culminated in 9 group interviews with 46 students near the end of the participant observation period. They represented a wide international cross-section dominated by students from Eastern and Northern Africa as well as Asia. Though female students were slightly overrepresented, the interview groups consisted of a relatively even mix of genders. The vast bulk of my daily time was spent at the Westmount campus. Student group interviews and observations transpired there as well as many staff interviews owing to the fact that the

majority of participating teachers and support personnel were employed at Westmount. However, I shuttled back and forth between the downtown campus and Westmount quite frequently for meetings and interviews with some administrators and teachers, coming to appreciate the unique differences and similarities of each working environment. These repositionings also aided my reflections in analyzing my data (see Methodology chapter).

4.2 ARBIS – THE SWEDISH ADULT EDUCATION INSTITUTE IN HELSINGFORS

Arbis SFI came about as a pilot program within the Finnish national integration project “Delaktig i Finland”¹⁷ (Tarnanen et.al 2013). It acted as the platform for a new Swedish integration program for which Arbis, the Swedish Adult Education Institute in Helsingfors, assumed responsibility by arranging the education and developing information channels, personal counseling and mentoring possibilities (Grüne 2013). A shared observation of all participant pilot projects involved in “Delaktig i Finland” was that life in Swedish in Finland is generally connected to membership in various civic associations and that the third sector therefore has a central role to play in Swedish integration. As a result, a knowledge of and familiarity with these “Swedish Spaces” (*svenska rum*) must be part of a functional integration education (Saarela 2011, Tarnanen et al. 2013).

Helsingfors Arbis represents one of these Swedish spaces embedded within a largely Finnish-speaking majority environment and situated in a time-honored, classical building in the center of the city. Its mission includes “the promotion of Finland-Swedish culture and knowledge of Swedish”¹⁸, a striving which is not uncontroversial given the increasing domain losses of the minority language in public life and in increasingly essentialist language identity debates (Helsingfors Arbis integrationsgrupp 2012, p.4). Arbis’ environs are spacious, light, and rather affluent, especially when one compares them with NorQuest’s Westmount campus. As an

¹⁷ “Participating in Finland”

¹⁸ ”Arbis främjar den finlandssvenska kulturen och kunskaper i svenska.” (authors’s translation)

educational institute, Arbis provides many different types of short-term adult education courses in the Swedish language ranging from language studies to cooking, and handicrafts. The SFI program, established in 2012, represented somewhat of a departure from traditional educational practice as it provided full-time education for adult migrant students on a daily basis.

The curriculum guiding SFI's integration education is based on the curricular guidelines laid down by the National Board of Education (Utbildningsstyrelsen, 1/011/2012) and on the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration (1386/2010) whose stated purpose is the advancement of migrant integration, including supporting their active participation in working life and civic activities. SFI is primarily directed at migrant newcomers with statutory integration support but can also be accessed as voluntary studies as part of *fria bildningen*, or the non-formal, state-subsidized adult education system. According to Arbis' own mission statement (Helsingfors Arbis integrationsgrupp 2012, p.5), "the education aims at promoting social justice and helping migrants adapt to and engage with Finnish society while simultaneously affirming their own cultural background. It is a constant dialectic between the immigrant and the surrounding community."¹⁹ In seeking to promote Finland-Swedish culture, Arbis propounds to foster values such as student-centeredness, self-worth, flexibility, non-prejudice, and diversity. The SFI curriculum is based on a socio-constructive view of learning, which emphasizes student initiative and self-reflection; it is collaborative in nature and seeks to build upon the students' previous knowledge and expertise. Educational objectives include supporting students' opportunities to participate as active members in Finnish society. In addition, the SFI program claims to advance the *recognition* (Taylor 1994) of students and offer opportunities to interrogate cultural differences (Helsingfors Arbis integrationsgrupp 2012, p.9). A component of the socio-constructive pedagogical approach entails that students in dialogue with staff set personal learning goals according to their own needs, experience different learning styles (e.g. distance learning,

¹⁹ "Vår utbildning ska främja social rättvisa och hjälpa invandrare att anpassa sig till och involveras i det finländska samhället samtidigt som den egna kulturella bakgrunden bejakas. Det handlar om en ständig växelverkan mellan invandraren och det omkringliggande samhället." (author's translation)

self-study, group work and project form, network-based studies) and develop their abilities to apply for further education and/or employment.

Swedish language acquisition with an emphasis on communicative skills constitutes the largest part of SFI. Listening comprehension, oral proficiency, as well as skills in reading and writing provide the bases for evaluations. The aim is that participants achieve a B1.1 level language proficiency according to the European Reference Framework for Languages (Council of Europe 2001). The studies include components of vocational and cultural education as well as a work-life practice placement linked to students' individual study plans. They are also complemented by a basic course in Finnish language. SFI is divided into two 16-week semesters (at A1-2 & B1 levels) consisting of different learning modules and a six-week work practice. The aim of the latter is to create social networks and contacts with employers in the Helsingfors metropolitan area, who seek to recruit Swedish-speaking staff.

Each student is allocated a personal tutor teacher at the beginning of studies. The student's needs and wishes are to serve as the point of departure for a tutoring model which aims to provide tools and supports for studies, applying for work, navigating the Finnish bureaucracy, and participating in social activities. The tutor acts as an intermediary with authorities and also helps in securing external support persons for migrant students. Before the start of the course, the tutor, in dialogue with the student, charts the latter's educational background, work experience and future plans. Thereafter, a joint proposal for an individual language plan and study schedule is drafted, which should correspond to the student's language level, ambitions and life situation. The employment office (AN-byrå) is also consulted in this process. A constituent goal of the tutoring is to secure a work-life internship that reflects the student's own wishes and promotes the realization of future plans. Time schedules for the placement can be flexibly arranged and the working life period may be carried out in several different workplaces and/or educational establishments. It is also supported by a supervision agreement negotiated between tutor, workplace supervisor and the student. Arbis works actively with other educational institutions, organizations, and employers within and without the

municipality to facilitate the transition from SFI to working life and / or continuing education.

Given that Arbis SFI had a yearly intake of roughly 20 students in 2016 and that the number of teachers and study tutors who were integrally involved with the program were few, I sought to recruit them all as participants in my study, something I was able to achieve after preliminary introduction sessions. In fieldwork lasting from February to June of 2016, I completed 16 in-depth interviews with staff, administrators and support personnel all of whom were white females from Finland-Swedish backgrounds with the exception of one female migrant program planner/teacher. However, many also had quite multicultural family backgrounds including Russian, German, Estonian or French ancestral heritages. Some of the staffers had been specifically hired to work within SFI but many were employed in part-time contracts, with no firm guarantee of yearly renewal. Swedish language teaching in SFI comprised only a portion of their teaching workload. In this regard, Arbis represented the most precarious case study, a reality which also characterized the program's future within Helsingfors²⁰.

During my period of participant observation, I followed the daily routines of the only SFI group taught by three subject-specific instructors. The group comprised 18 students many of whom were highly educated and had extensive professional backgrounds. They were studying at an A2 language benchmark level and had developed a rudimentary grasp of the Swedish language. The majority of students were white of European or North American backgrounds. Many also came from former Soviet republics where their membership in various discriminated minority groups had been grounds for applying for refugee status in Finland. However, the larger influx of refugees from Northern Africa and the Middle East during 2015-16 could also be noticed in the composition of the group, which included students from Syria, Afghanistan and Tunisia. Of the 16 students who ended up participating in 5 group interview sessions during the fieldwork period, half were male and half female. Many of them had struggled in order to be allowed to integrate in Finland's other official

²⁰ At the time of publication, Arbis' role in educating adult migrants was being reformulated.

language, Swedish, citing family and personal reasons in their negotiations with civil servants at the employment office (AN-byrån). This demonstration of agency could also be witnessed in their pragmatic approach to integration which rested on calculations yielding that proficiencies in Swedish would open up a far greater employment possibilities in all of Scandinavia than would Finnish language competencies.

4.3 MEDIS – THE CIVIC INSTITUTE IN MARIEHAMN

Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) as implemented by the Civic Institute, Medis in Mariehamn on the Åland islands is a labour market training scheme available to unemployed adult migrants who seek to become more proficient in Swedish. Åland occupies a unique position within Finland because it represents a semi-autonomous, de-militarized, unilingually Swedish geographic region located in the Baltic Sea in close proximity to the Swedish mainland. This entails that the federal parliament of Åland has far-reaching powers in domestic spheres governing the social life of its inhabitants including decisions shaping the education and integration of migrant newcomers to the islands. Medis has been an integral part of Mariehamn's and surrounding counties' social and educational life since 1947. Like Arbis, it offers a varied selection of adult education courses and despite the school's more limited space and resources, the Civic Institute extends residents "opportunities for general education and meaningful employment in their free time in close a connection to their home town" (Medis, Medborgarinstitutet 2018).

Swedish language integration programs at Medis, have long roots dating back to 1992. Curricular guidelines are based partially on those specified by the National Board of Education (Utbildningsstyrelsen,1/011/2012) and the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration (1386/2010) but also on those drafted by the Ålandic government's educational agency (utbildningsbyrån). Their aim is to support adult migrant students in developing linguistic, social and cultural skills allowing them to manage "real life" situations in their new home and enabling them to procure

employment and/or access to further education (Ålands landskapsregering, utbildningsbyrån 2017).

In describing SFI's learning environment, the curriculum emphasizes a "knowledge-based approach" claiming to capitalize on students' past working and life experiences and linguistic skills in order to help them achieve their goals. It also addresses the importance of an emotionally supportive social environment including the essential role played by its leadership culture in motivating staff and students. Priorities of challenging prejudice, constructive conflict resolution and building tolerance in cooperation with others in creating a "multicultural environment" are also promoted (Ålands landskapsregering, utbildningsbyrån 2017). These, interestingly enough, were not as foregrounded in either NorQuest's or Arbis' learning guidelines. There is further a specific recognition that, in addition to the classroom, the surrounding community is a crucial component of this learning environment. Language acquisition and practice in a "natural context" meant to encourage students to utilize their language skills and experience in a variety of everyday situations is to be fostered by including excursions, study visits, and working life periods in the curriculum. Medis's physical environment, being housed in a smaller building from the late 1940's, constituted an intimate space somewhat akin to that of Westmount campus. Classrooms were bright and relatively spacious though given the larger student groups, seemed rather confined at times. A notable bonus was a student kitchen equipped with stoves and microwaves located in an adjoining building that doubled as a student meeting place. There was also a small café where alimentation could be purchased (Medis kursprogram 2014). In the deficit column, however, was the lack of any common room or office space for staff who either had to visit each other's classrooms or congregate in groups in the courtyard during breaks, making confidential discussions uncondusive. This detracted not only from teacher well-being but also from the curricular aim of building a mutually supportive learning environment. Another downside of space being at a premium was that the IT room was unable to accommodate an entire class and therefore underutilized.

In order to qualify for SFI program eligibility, applicants had to have permanent resident status on Åland, which included being covered by the

Finnish social security system (FPA) and registered as job seekers at AMS, the Åland Labour Market and Study Service Authority (Westerholm 2013). During my fieldwork period, course admission was granted by AMS in cooperation with Medis where representatives assessed and interviewed prospective students.²¹ The job seeker criteria for eligibility represents a distinct difference between Medis SFI and the other two case studies. At Arbis those receiving labour market support and referred by AN-byrån had to be unemployed, yet according to *fria bildningen's* principles, other categories of migrants (stay-at-home mothers, seniors, students etc.) could also join SFI. NorQuest LINC's scope was broadest of all in being available to all adult migrants with permanent residence permits for an unlimited time until one attained citizenship. Medis SFI was thus much more limited in scope and was envisioned primarily to be a labour market training scheme. Ironically, prospective students who were employed were forced to quit in order to access the integration education program. The initial eligibility survey assesses the migrant's prerequisites for employment, studies and language training needs. This included a level test to determine into which study path the student will be streamed. Components evaluating reading and writing skills, current Swedish proficiency, previous education and work experience, study skills, as well as one's own wishes for future work and education were included in the test. Based on this survey, an integration plan was devised, including necessary support measures.

Upon admission, the educational organizer is obliged to draft a needs-based personal study plan for each student with their input, which lays the foundation for studies. Its implementation is to be periodically benchmarked in individual or group tutoring sessions, which also serve to identify vulnerable students and their special needs. The aim of tutoring according to the curriculum is to support students' self-determination and their life and career choices, however, the details and staff responsibilities in this process were rather diffuse. Given that Medis SFI suffered from the same staff precarity as Arbis with part-time teachers who are paid according to hours taught, it remained unclear as to how the considerable investments of time and organization in a personally-tailored tutoring regime were to be

²¹ This responsibility has since entirely reverted to AMS (Ålands landskapsregering, utbildningsbyrån 2017).

shared. In conformity with similar SFI programs such as Arbis, Medis SFI is a predominantly language-acquisition-based education with a focus on reading, writing, listening and speaking competences up to a B1.1 level (Council of Europe 2001). Curricular boundaries are largely prescribed by the rhythm and chapter progression of language and grammar textbooks originating from Sweden. During the course of my fieldwork in 2016-17, no Finland-Swedish language learning resources existed though there was a bilingual Finnish web-based learning module entitled *Kotisuomessa.fi* that was underutilized²². Medis SFI consists of a 50-70 study week program depending upon on the particular study path. This corresponds to a 35-hour weekly time investment by students. Full-time attendance is compulsory and regularly checked, a precondition of the labour market support agreement. Curricular studies encompass the following components, which vary according to the study paths in which students are enrolled; Swedish and communicative skills including IT (30 -70 study weeks.), working life and social skills (15 study weeks), and tutoring (5 study weeks).

Medis SFI offers three distinct study paths. Study path 1 is intended for adults who have limited or no schooling (0-5 years). This path included illiterate students to whom a preparatory course, entitled, *Education in Basic Literacy* (spanning 30 study weeks) is offered prior to commencing with Beginners Swedish studies (A1 & A2 levels). This represented a qualitative difference when compared with Arbis SFI where such a path was not included in the curriculum, perhaps reflecting differences in student profiles as well as resource priorities. At Medis, a greater number of recent cohorts of migrant students lacked formal schooling backgrounds and created a need for the development of a literacy-focused study path to allow these students to even be able to access introductory integration education programs. Study path 1 included migrants who were unfamiliar with the Latin alphabet, those with learning difficulties and those who had been

²² In 2018, the first specifically Finland-Swedish instructional materials were introduced. These consisted of a published textbook, *Vi ses! Nybörjarsvenska* (See you! Beginners Swedish) and an App, SFI (Svenska i Finland) (Swedish in Finland) that could be downloaded from Google Play or the App Store.

diagnosed as special needs students due to disability or comparable reasons and thus required extra support. Study path 2 is targeted at migrants who completed primary schooling (6-9 years) and persons with vocational educations who have none or insufficient knowledge of the Latin alphabet. It too includes a shorter introductory prep-course of 10 weeks before moving on to language studies at A1 & A2 levels (30 study weeks.) and the B1.1 level (20 study weeks.). Study path 3 represents the standard SFI education for those adult migrants who have completed more than nine years of schooling, including those with post-secondary educations. Familiarity with the Latin alphabet and a capacity for independent studies are prerequisites. In the choice of path, the student's personal study plan is taken into consideration and path changes are possible if they are deemed to better support learning. Such decisions are made jointly by students and administrators in collaboration with AMS (Ålands landskapsregering, utbildningsbyrån 2017).

In addition to developing Swedish language proficiencies, each study path also includes a working life skills component in two periods of practice placements consisting of no less than 7 weeks. These work experience stints could be completed at several different workplaces. During my fieldwork, practice placements were arranged in cooperation with Kompassen, an information point and integration project financed by the city of Mariehamn. It employed a former SFI student who acted as a liaison between migrants and employers by interviewing SFI students in order to ascertain their placement wishes and then contacting labour market actors to organize suitable internships. This liaison also negotiated with working life tutors and visited placements but was uninvolved in evaluations while SFI staff were uninvolved in practice tutoring or supervision. This arrangement stands in sharp contrast to Arbis SFI and the specialized Work Volunteer Program at NorQuest College where staff tutors were integrally involved in securing, supervising and evaluating internships, which subsequently integrated the latter much more effectively within the program. Medis practice placement aims include allowing students to identify their own professional skills, familiarize themselves with Ålandic working culture, occupational health and safety regulations as well as employees' position rights and obligations within the labour market. However, the most important criterion entailed placements offering

opportunities for language practice. This imperative superseded student's wishes for a seamless fit between previous professional experience and a related internship and had been at the root of earlier disagreements about placement aims.

Medis SFI also included cultural and societal competence among its curricular objectives, something which it shared with this study's other case studies. The emphasis here lay in interpreting and comparing customs, values, norms and attitudes prevalent in the students' own culture with Ålandic culture. The focus thereby rested on students developing skills in intercultural interaction (Ålands landskapsregering, utbildningsbyrå 2017). A noticeable omission in the curriculum is the recognition of the reciprocal nature of intercultural learning and Medis' as well as the host society's own responsibilities in this mutual process.

With regards to my fieldwork at Medis, I had travelled to Åland in May of 2016 in order to visit the Civic Institute after having been in contact with its vice-rector and chief SFI planner. She had agreed to a preliminary interview during which we discussed my research plans and set the parameters for my fieldwork later that year. I was also fortunate to be able to interview two other senior teachers and gather first impressions. Upon returning in October, I organized introductory sessions with both staff and students and commenced with interviews and participant observations until December, returning in February of 2017 for dissemination discussions with all participants. Of the 14 in-depth staff interviews I conducted, two were with administrators or support staff, one with an integration coordinator from the Ålandic government while the rest comprised discussions with educators. The participating teachers were all white, raised on Åland and were, with one exception, female. A precarity similar to that at Arbis existed here as well with the majority of teachers being employed in part-time contracts which terminated at the end of every school year in April and were renewed upon its resumption in September. For most of the pedagogues, however, instructing in the SFI program was their only teaching responsibility. Many had simply "tumbled into" teaching migrants for a variety of reasons and none had specialized educational training in teaching Swedish as a foreign language. In fact, few had pedagogical qualifications, something which also characterized Arbis SFI staff.

Difficulties in staff recruitment were directly related to job precarity, its low-status and limited work-related benefits. At NorQuest LINC, by contrast, criteria for employment specified not only teacher education but also special TESOL (Teaching English as a Second or Other Language) certificates.

In 2016-17, Medis' student population numbered roughly 90 adult migrant learners studying in five separate groups including an accelerated and a slower A1 beginner's group. During my period of participant observation, I followed the daily routines of two student classes which studied at A2 and B1 language benchmark levels. In the A2 group, eight of the 24 students had Thai backgrounds and represented the largest ethnic group. Other countries of student origin included Romania, Russia, Latvia, and Syria. The class consisted of 21 female and 3 male students with varying educational and professional histories, Swedish language proficiencies and time spent on Åland. It included newly arrived refugees as well as those who had worked several years in the Ålandic labour market in low-pay, low-status jobs before applying for SFI. Many were in their twenties and early thirties and had started families on the island, although a small number was older, having followed their children abroad. The B1 group mirrored the multi-faceted constitution of the A2 class and numbered 18 students. Countries of origin included Russia, Germany, Serbia, Finland, Ethiopia, Thailand, and the Baltic states. In contrast though, most of these learners came from more professional backgrounds and had expectations of being able to access similar future employment on Åland. Another difference was that student ethnic origins were more evenly distributed without the large concentration of one ethnic group as in A2. An observable commonality which linked all three case studies seemed to be that despite introductory language assessments and language level tailored classes, a wide range of linguistic competencies, learning styles and learning histories characterized each group which gave rise to similar challenges. My participant observations at Medis SFI culminated in 6 group interviews with 25 students from both classes. Of those, 20 were females and 5 males. The majority had roots on Åland and sought to make the islands their home. There was also little of the life goal pragmatism regarding country of residence which characterized interviews with migrant students at Arbis whose ambitions for self-fulfillment were less circumscribed by national

boundaries. Thus, NorQuest LINC, Arbis SFI and Medis SFI could be said to incorporate compatible yet also incompatible elements which at once bound them together while distinguishing them. A common denominator, though, represented the motivation and dedication exhibited by staff and students involved in the program.

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research represents a multiple case study of integration educations for adult migrants enrolled in the national integration education programs of Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) in Finland and Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) in Canada. Describing how social inclusion is envisaged and practically implemented in these programs aiming to “integrate” adult migrant students into society, being cognizant of the multifarious linguistic, cultural and political environments in which they are embedded, represents the thesis’ main research focus. I look critically at the programs’ aims and foundational ideologies, implementations and how those who work and participate in the educations experience them. Anti-oppressive methodologies inform my research approach including my positionality as a researcher. The study rested upon the following exploratory research questions:

1. How is social inclusion conceived, contested and practically operationalized within LINC and SFI integration educations?
2. What are the experiences of social inclusion of those who work in implementing the integration education programs and those who participate in them?
3. What possibilities and limitations exist in incorporating principles of critical social inclusion into different educational, social & linguistic environments? How do these position migrant learners?

The research questions explore the myriad of ways in which inclusion is negotiated within and beyond school walls, as well the factors that work to inhibit or enable its realization. As such, they target personal, cultural and structural levels while endeavouring to foreground participants’ experiences and voices. It is this cornerstone of anti-oppressive research paradigms, namely the imperative to accurately reflect program

participant's experiences and maximize their engagement, that I sought to incorporate into my research design.

5.2 AIMS OF CRITICAL QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The social sciences ... should be used to improve quality of life ... for the oppressed, marginalized, stigmatized and ignored [...] and to bring about healing, reconciliation and restoration between the researcher and the researched. (Stanfield 2006, p.725)

According to Denzin and Giardina (2010), the central aims of critical qualitative research are to place the voices of oppressed groups at the center of the study, use the inquiry to reveal sites for change and activism, and target social policy and policy makers by formulating critiques. Additionally, critical research should affect change in the life of the researcher. This focus on “redressing social inequalities by giving precedence to the voices of the least advantaged groups in society” places qualitative inquiries in sharp contrast to more positivist understandings of the nature and aims (epistemology) of research (Mertens, Harris & Holmes 2009, p.89). As this focus also represents a central component of an anti-oppressive research design, it provides a seamless fit with my research objectives.

Qualitative research seeks a description of the particular, the specific, – the character of a phenomenon. It aims to understand, to describe, and through the synergetic interlocution between all research participants arrive at meaning, or meanings. This subjectivity can be likened to a *Bildungsreise*, or an educational journey which links self-reflection to creating shared understandings (Kvale 1996). In such an educational journey, “reality” is socially constructed by individuals through interaction. An objective reality, and therefore an all-encompassing truth, which can be described through the research process, does not exist. Instead, qualitative research seeks to determine how social narratives are constructed and how people perceive and make sense of their surroundings. Gadamer (2002, p.306f) describes the process of meaning production as a *Horizontverschmelzung*, or a melting together of horizons, where understanding is co-created among research participants. In the construction of social realities, the subjectivity of

language as a building tool and the role played by power in deciding which descriptions of “reality” become socially accepted, are central components of critical qualitative approaches.

Qualitative research methods employed by critical theorists are helpful in interrogating the epistemological assumptions of the researcher and critique dominant discourses on representations of “difference.” This necessitates modesty on the part those engaged in research collaborations.

We will still get part of the telling less than completely correct but that telling can advance the human right not to be invisible – not to be silenced, not to be stereotyped. Such modesty in our narration can affirm the human dignity of those whose lives we describe. (Denzin & Giardina 2010, p.121)

Therefore, it might be helpful to refer to the way qualitative researchers approach an understanding of the world as *perspectival* rather than subjective. A perspectival approach holds the advantage of being inclusive of differing perspectives, which include but are not limited to the researchers’ interpretations (Shkedi 2005). A perspectival approach also allows qualitative research to advance theory by providing “new information about a broad pattern that holds across many cases, or by analyzing the commonalities that exist across cases,” something which multiple case studies approaches aim for (Ragin 1994, p.84).

5.3 ANTI-OPPRESSIVE CRITICAL RESEARCH

One’s theoretical lens ought to guide the research methods and as such, methodology encompasses not only the mechanisms of research but how research does or should proceed. (Kovach 2005, p.29)

A theoretical lens which has helped me in conceptualizing and grounding my research design is that of anti-oppressive practice. It has allowed me to access new perspectives with which to understand the phenomena of social inclusion. Ultimately, it has refined my ability to describe what I see and served as a sounding board for reflection. Anti-oppressive research embodies a collaborative, participant-centred methodology in which responsibility and accountability of process and outcome are collectively

shared (Braidotti 2002, Brown & Strega 2005, Denzin & Giardina 2010, Yellow Bird et. al. 2013). Such an approach is methodologically and epistemologically distinctive as it focuses specifically on how principles of social justice, in shifting power to insiders, community building and working for change, are put into practice (Brown & Strega 2005). In essence, an anti-oppressive research lens compels us to reconceptualize research as partial and emancipatory. It is rooted in an analysis of power relations and a recognition of the systemic oppression of those othered in society. Reality here is both objective (real forces which circumscribe the lives of individuals) and subjective (the manner in which these forces are interpreted by individuals and groups and the experiences they engender).

5.3.1 CONSIDERATIONS IN ANTI-OPPRESSIVE RESEARCH

When engaged in research involving participants who routinely experience inequality and injustice in their lives, it becomes essential to interrogate those research approaches which do not place questions of voice, collaboration and ownership at the center of the inquiry. Persons who are socially excluded also remain so within the research context where they are treated as research objects – rarely as authors, co-owners or as legitimate voices of academically validated “truth” (Ife 2008). In addition, indigenous, decolonial, or anti-oppressive research approaches which posit alternative perspectives are often not well understood and remain more peripheral in research literature, though this is slowly changing. The research perspective espoused by these approaches represents an effort to reconnect the personal and political in the context of knowledge construction and supports critical oppositional discourses about the role and nature of research. In assessing anti-oppressive research, one should ask the following questions: Are research objectives manipulative or helpful to the community of participants? Is the methodology respectful to culture(s)? What are the collectivist ethical considerations? Am I creating space or taking space? Who can be a knower? (Kovach 2005, p.26).

Such considerations are especially important in practice-based professions where there is a great pressure to adopt “evidence-based” approaches. Client dissatisfaction with working methods that do not

represent their worldviews and experiences, as well as neo-liberal, managerialist agendas, have pushed these professions to become more accountable. However, such accountability has entrenched positivist notions of how knowledge should be created and assessed. What constitutes evidence is “understood securely within a positivist/Enlightenment, (White, heterosexual, patriarchal) framework” (Brown & Strega 2005, p.12). Therefore, if the ethical foundations of social work and education still rests upon a client/student-centered focus then these professions can derive tangible benefits from anti-oppressive research approaches. Because my study explores the experiences of those social educators and students who collaborate in exploring the tangibly social and cultural boundaries in the wake of migration streams, the choice of an AOP research design seemed fitting.

For my study, I chose qualitative methods, namely in-depth interviews, group interviews and participant observations to represent the views and experiences of participants as these methods facilitate sufficient immersion within the research environment and generate spaces for co-creating meaning. In interrogating the extent to which my research integrated anti-oppressive precepts, I will lean on two questions designed to guide the researcher: can participants see themselves in the study, and; does the analysis ring true to them (Potts & Brown 2005)? Assessing the level of active engagement by participants in the research including deciding about study parameters are some explicit ways of answering “yes” to both questions. In addressing the aforementioned questions, I will look at some of the central precepts of anti-oppressive research and discuss how my study reflected or failed to reflect these.

5.3.2 COLLABORATIVE RESEARCHER – PARTICIPANT RELATIONSHIPS

The first of these revolves around the nature of the relationship between the researcher and other participants in the study. Ife (2008, p.169) has called for an anti-oppressive focus which seeks to maximize participation through a *dialogical praxis* in which knowledge created in interaction between participant and researcher leads to shared action. Meaning is derived through interaction, it is collectively created and relational in nature. This

implies that the researcher respects the value of the relationship and authentically invests in the community affected by the study. It also entails a humility and flexibility about goals. Perhaps, most important is that an anti-oppressive approach necessitates a reframing of power relations. It involves a shift from vertical (knower-object) relations to more horizontal ones where the learner-expert paradigm is inverted with the researcher adopting the learner role. Experts are the participants who invite the researcher to share in their world, and their understanding of it.

Karen Potts and Leslie Brown (2005, p.263) signal the essential aim of this respect for culture(s) imperative and the researcher-as-learner role when they assert that “we don’t begin to collect data in a community until all the dogs know us.” With its emphasis on doing groundwork and building trust through developing relations with participants prior to commencing with the study, respect for culture(s) represents the first step in a process where responsibilities are ideally shared and aims negotiated. Although, I did not reach the level of cultural embeddedness prior to initiating the research implied in Potts and Brown’s quote, I did endeavour to build a foundation of trust with the partners from the outset. Contacts with gatekeepers for the integration educations including head administrators and teachers were established well in advance and preceded by detailed letters of introduction and consent. I was also fortunate enough to have a family member employed in NorQuest College’s LINC program who laid the groundwork for my visit to Canada and prior personal friendships with the integration coordinators and administrators at Arbis and Medis who vouched for me with their colleagues. All of these eased my fieldwork introductions and established me, if not as an insider but at least as a kindly predisposed visitor. In addition, I visited all three institutions several times in the months leading up to the fieldwork, including doing some introductory interviews with educational planners in the case of Arbis and Medis.

With migrant student groups, I did not meet similar levels of cultural embeddedness before initiating my fieldwork and this placed me at a distinct disadvantage when considering the respect for culture(s) imperative. I realized that given my role as a stranger, coupled with the limited time available for observations and group interviews, I had to

concentrate fully on building trust and rapport during the months of fieldwork. I hoped to mitigate this lack of prior familiarity by organizing introductory information sessions to present my research, talk about my own background and answer relevant questions. Student participation was also solicited by distributing formal letters of consent in language level appropriate English or Swedish where the voluntary nature of participation as well as issues of confidentiality and privacy were emphasized. Socializing with them during coffee or lunchbreaks and after school proved helpful, as did assisting on class assignments and rotating between different student groups. Additionally, the data collection process with students reflected a collaborative approach, even though the methods of collection were decided by the researcher. For example, interviews were not pre-structured and themes emerged serendipitously depending upon the varying constitutions of student groups. Giving voice and choice to participants dictated arrangements – a policy which also guided my interactions during the observation period where I participated as one of the group in all curricular as well as extra-curricular activities. Correspondingly, I developed relationships of genuine warmth and mutual respect with many students while there were others with whom I never managed to proceed beyond a neutral politeness. In some cases, varying degrees of language proficiency obfuscated this interaction although undeniable differences rooted in social position, gender and power hierarchies doubtlessly also played a part. For a more detailed discussion on these, refer to the ethical reflections later in the chapter.

With the teaching and support staff, however, given time and logistical constraints, the interview process became more researcher-centred. Interview guides were semi-structured though they allowed for flexibility and amendments given the particularities of individual interview situations. Transcripts were also made available to contributors for perusal prior to being finalized. Despite these efforts, similar open collaborations in shaping the process of data collection which characterized engagements with migrant students were limited. Additionally, some of the truly anti-oppressive potential in data analysis characterized by participant driven collaboration in data coding and in selecting final themes and results could not be realized in this study. However, other strategies were used to ensure that the analysis “rang true” to participants and reflected their experiences.

Dissemination presentations at a national seminar attended by Arbis participants and discussions of findings individually tailored to both students and staff at NorQuest and Medis were arranged during which the main results were interrogated. In the student sessions, it became clear that the results validated their experiences with many wondering how and when program changes would be implemented by administrators. The staff sessions also clarified findings and extended opportunities to critique those institutional procedures and practices that they experienced as disempowering.

5.3.3 SOCIAL CHANGE AGENDAS

The second central precept of anti-oppressive research states that the study should follow an inherent *social change agenda* in both process and outcome. A social change agenda dictates that meaning is created not only by contextualizing data but also by translating it into action, into our own life experiences and institutional practices; a process defined as *relational accountability* (Wilson 2013, p.319). Social change engenders a *research as praxis* where applied knowledge is transformative and emancipatory (Freire 1972). In adopting a social change agenda as part of the process of the study, my theoretical point of departure prepared the way. Its focus on social justice, participative parity, and the interrogation of power differences rooted in structural inequalities are all inherent components of anti-oppressive research practices (Kumashiro 2000).

Balra-Ulloa (2013, p.90) has stated that “social workers need to theorize how to give up power” and it is this exhortation which occupied much of my time in contemplating the research design. Especially the questions – Are research objectives manipulative or helpful to the community of participants? Am I creating space or taking space? – became helpful guides. They dictated that a sufficient degree of cultural embeddedness was necessary if the fieldwork could claim to be sensitive to community needs and involve participants as knowers and experts. I therefore, spent between 3-6 months in all of the partner institutions as well as periods prior and after the conclusion of the study. I also chose collaborative research methods to maximize participation and reduce power differences. Particularly the small group, co-constructed interview

Methodology

format adopted with migrant students proved beneficial. Students often remarked that no one had previously taken them so seriously in seeking to elicit their thoughts and experiences about the integration education programs, something which was also echoed in many of the in-depth staff interviews. However, relational accountability could have been fostered more in the data analysis process where participants were not involved except in a consulting role after the fact.

Concerning the social change objective embedded in research outcomes, dissemination seminars were arranged at partner institutions during which results were interrogated. Students could challenge staff and staff had an opportunity to critique the institutional structures which obstructed their work. During the seminars, I realized that for many students this was the first time they became aware that they could demand changes. Some approached me afterwards to ask, what happens now, when will things change? There was a recognition that such feedback sessions were generally lacking and that accountability procedures needed strengthening. I queried during each session if the analysis “rang true” to participants and reflected their experiences, and received affirmative responses. In each institution, concluding conversations with program deans or planners also took place in which development needs were discussed and assurances were made to utilize the findings for these ends. In fact, Medis embarked on a curriculum development process in 2017 for which I was invited as a consultant at an open seminar. Lastly, agreements for continued cooperation with NorQuest College and Arbis have been made, including participation in a joint project targeting the worklife inclusion of migrant students and further consultations. When referring to Russell Bishop’s principles for decolonizing research, it becomes apparent, however, that the study fell partially short of collaborative social change outcomes (Yellow Bird et.al. 2013, p.265). Migrant students and teachers could have been more integrally involved in disseminating research results thereby furthering principles of shared accountability and legitimacy. Their contributions to joint presentations both within and without the schools were lacking. It remains my ongoing challenge to implement the guiding principle that “anti-oppressive research is not a process to discover knowledge, but a political process to co-create and rediscover knowledge”

and to do this in such a way that participants can truly see themselves as part of the study (Potts & Brown 2005, p.262).

5.3.4 RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY

The last central precept of anti-oppressive research to be deliberated concerns the *positionality* of the researcher. Margaret Boushel (2000) argues that reflecting upon one's social and cultural positioning is crucial in anti-oppressive research because we develop an *experiential interdependence*, or the almost unconscious perpetuation of dominant roles given us by our status within powerful groups which must be interrogated. Researcher positionality refers to both an inward process and an interactive (outward) process relying upon a social network of exchanges and connections with the community (Braidotti 2002, Fook & Gardner 2007). Interrogating positionality is essential, as it highlights researcher role rather than obscuring it and acknowledges that our interpretations are partial and situated, thereby critiquing the assumed objectivity of the investigator. Through this deliberate effort, we “foster resistance to conformity, ethnocentric and egocentric values and class-based bias” (Mezirow 1991, p.360). In anti-oppressive research this entails a dialogical process where we, through ongoing reflection in collaboration with participants, discover our complicities and biases. Interrogating positionality goes beyond stating one's name or place of origin but reflects a more situational and fluid disclosure that changes with life experiences and temporality. However, this must not become a central focus in the study as it will essentially understate participants voices, thus failing to contribute to political change. The question then arises, how do we include or make space for self-disclosure without being construed as overbearing or self-indulgent (Dervin & Clark 2014)?

My intention by locating myself within the context of the research is to bring ownership and responsibility to the forefront. “When researchers own who or what they represent, they also reveal what they do not represent” (Absolon & Willett 2005, p.110). I also aim to juxtapose the inward process of reflection on the multiplicities of background, identity and personal experience with its outward impact upon the individuals and communities with whom I interacted in the course of the research. Being a

white, educated male from an Anglo-Saxon Western country, I belong, by virtue of my background, to a privileged group. Yet I also spent my childhood in the totalitarian regime of the former East Germany before emigrating to Canada with my parents in 1979 and spending my formative years there. As one of only two children in my school in Löbau, Saxony, who did not belong to the communist Young Pioneers, I became critically aware at an early age what a minority position constitutes and what detriments but also benefits one could derive therefrom. As a result of the ideological differences expressed by my family and the resulting political difficulties encountered when challenging the status quo, I came to experience the responses of an autocratic state apparatus oppressive of “difference.” This left an indelible impression upon me, as did my parents exhortations to be vigilantly critical of authorities as well as to stand up for those who could not do so for themselves. This social justice orientation coupled with structural critiques has never left me and perhaps goes some way in explaining my theoretical and methodological choices in this study.

I have also shared the *migrant imaginary* (Camacho 2008) during two separate occasions in my life: first as a child, crossing the Iron curtain to the West and later as an adult, moving as a foreign lecturer to Finland. Though each of these geographical shifts were qualitatively different, they shared many commonalities. One of these involved having to confront and mitigate the effects of being a member of a social, linguistic and cultural minority within majority society. As a child growing up in a Canada which conveyed its national identity through a multicultural narrative, this liminality, safe for initial communication hurdles, did not tangibly marginalize me. Indeed, research evidence suggests that compared with nearly all Western democracies, Canadian migrants demonstrate higher levels of social, political and economic integration and that official policies of multiculturalism are instrumental to this outcome (Bloemraad 2006, Adams 2007, Kymlicka 2010). Sometimes being told you belong and that “your culture” was already an integral part of the national culture(s) before you arrived helps immeasurably in feeling included. I also remember the fervent wish to be accepted, even if this meant temporarily “forgetting” one’s mother tongue and choosing to converse exclusively in English even with my own parents. This wish of belonging and the hope and positivity this embodied with reference to one’s new homeland was echoed over and

over again in my interviews with students. In fact, I have seldom encountered those migrants who represent the widespread “enclave stereotype” which promulgates that migrants do not wish to integrate. The corollary of such assumptions being that migrants must be cajoled, managed and “educated” to do so.

Immigrating a second time in being recruited as a lecturer and later program coordinator for an International Degree Program in Social Services in Finland, I re-visited a discernibly divergent minority position. Integrating in the country’s other official language, Swedish, positioned me as a “minority within a minority.” Being welcomed into the circumscribed yet comparatively tolerant circles of Swedish-speaking Finland and finding support and a sort of *Heimat* within its institutions also meant that I was constantly forced to re-position oneself to the majority. Given Finland’s cultural diversity which rests on the historical contributions of traditional and “new” minority groups as well as on a statutory bilingualism, it is surprising that this “difference” is often not invoked in discourses on national identity. On the contrary, “difference” is often posited as problematic in these discussions, which follow a monocultural, nationalist, essentialist script. In my Finnish workplace, where despite affirmations of internationalism, an assimilative institutional monoculture dominated, policies which marginalized and racialized international students and staff were routinely adopted. It was here that I was reminded of the power of structural discrimination and racism, and its incremental, debilitating effects upon those who deviate from the norm. However, it was also here that the need for solidarity among those on the margins fostering acts of resistance became a guiding principle for my work. Discovering anti-oppressive practice theories which espoused normative critiques founded upon social analyses of “difference” underpinned the building of supportive networks of resistance. The idea that if “difference” would represent the starting point for discussions on values and behavior, it could constitute a site for social transformation and inclusion instead of exclusion, permeates much of my thesis (Moosa-Mitha 2005).

Having since moved to the research collective CEREN (Centre for Research on Ethnic Relations and Nationalism) within the Swedish School of Social Sciences, I have been reaffirmed both in my theoretical

Methodology

foundation on critical social inclusion and the belief in the symbiotic and synergetic potential of multicultural working teams. Looking self-reflexively at locating myself within a minority context, I would describe my identities as diasporic or hybrid or better yet, “bordered.” Queer theorist, Gloria Anzaldúa (1998, p.712) defined bordered identity as “each world within its own peculiar and distinct inhabitants, not comfortable in anyone of them, none of them ‘home’, yet none of them ‘not home.’” I would nuance this by adding “fluctuatingly comfortable in many.”

In juxtaposing the inward reflections with their outward impact upon the research participants, I must preface that discussion by distinguishing my migrant experiences, despite similarities, from that of many of the students and some of the teachers, I encountered. By virtue of my positionality, my experiences differ markedly from those of visible and gendered minorities. My skin color gives me access to an exclusive club where I do not stick out and could hide if I chose not to confront the privilege invested me by my appearance. I am not forced to “live” my difference daily in the gaze of the majority. I am also conscious that my status as a male academic facilitated my being taken seriously and garnering respect, something which became obvious in some interviews with students. Having said this, my migrant background and the fact that I had seemingly overcome linguistic and social obstacles in integrating created an image of me in the eyes of many students of someone “who had made it.” This and the fact that I had resided for longer periods in both Edmonton and Helsingfors engendered feelings of positive regard which facilitated my interaction with them. It also placed me in the position of a cultural translator or cultural bridge. As a researcher, I inhabited a borderland with the ability to intersect different worlds and identities to create something new (Herising 2005). The fact that I too participated in an integration education program for a brief period upon arrival in Canada and worked for many years with international students who were struggling to locate themselves in foreign environments gave me an appreciation of their oft precarious life situations. In short, I was accepted as a semi-insider, non-allied with the institutional administrations, something which may have aided more critical voices to come to the fore.

When it came to my research with teaching staff, administrators and support personnel, my position as a fellow teacher and academic engaged in multicultural/intercultural education paralleled theirs and facilitated mutual regard. The fact that I had studied education at the University of Alberta in Edmonton and social work at universities in Gothenburg and Helsingfors also provided me with links to the staff at NorQuest and Arbis many of whom had comparable educational backgrounds. In addition, the groundwork laid by gatekeepers within these institutions who had been previous friends, acquaintances or family members facilitated introductions immeasurably. I was therefore not a blank page to many staff members when I arrived. The fact that I, like the majority of teaching and administrative staff, was white also allowed a more “seamless fit” because my ethnic and racial origin did not Other me within the teaching body. A circumstance which coincided with my fieldwork periods was that in all three partner institutions sweeping curricular and structural changes were taking place. This effectively left many teachers feeling marginalized, stressed and not listened to. Therefore, my discussions with them both in formal interview situations and informal chats during participant observations provided almost cathartic outlets for them to ruminate on the mission of the programs and formulate alternatives. Topics on student-centeredness, cultural negotiation, social partnerships and social change which were central in the interviews complemented thought processes that had already been initiated as a result of the institutional changes. It was serendipitous that I happened to be in the right place at the right time.

Lastly, in reflecting upon my complex interplay with people involved in the research, it is crucial to examine the role played by language(s) in shaping communication, involvement and participation. Prue Holmes (2017) argues that researchers must interrogate their language practices to ensure that study participants can speak for themselves in processes that involve flexible multilingualisms. In the spirit of inclusion, researchers are encouraged to emphasize the co-production of knowledge through multivocality allowing participants to ask questions in multiple languages and addressing them in vernaculars they understand. In this process, the researcher acts as a multilingual power broker in recognizing that by invoking certain languages others are (un)intentionally denied and seeking to expand language choice and forms of expression (Christians 2011). In

this regard, my fluency in both Swedish and English, the primary languages of the research contexts, as well as an acquaintance with several other languages, allowed me to draw on these personal flexible language skills to open up wider spaces for constructing meaning. Questions which I considered prior to engaging in case study inquiries were: What knowledge of the languages of the group(s) of people being investigated is required? and, How can I draw on my linguistic resources and intercultural experiences and knowledge to build trust with the researched and the researched communities? (Holmes, Fay, Andrews & Attia, 2013).

In answering these questions, I was also aware that my linguistic toolbox was woefully insufficient in engaging with the language polyglot of my migrant learners. Thus, I worked within these limitations and simply used those language resources available to me in ways which maximized multivocality and inclusiveness to expose the diverse linguistic and cultural realities of all those involved in the study. This was expressed, for example, in selecting group interviewing in order to allow students to support each other's language expression. In some interview groups, students who represented similar linguistic backgrounds translated questions or difficult terms for each other. They also engaged in small clarifying discussions in their own languages within the interview context to enhance collective understanding. As multilinguality, expressed in speaking several different languages interchangeably, has been my lived experience, the "Babylonian chaos" created in this vernacular jumble seemed quite normal and rather reassuring. Perhaps this is also a reason why I did not reflect so much on my personal language strategies while carrying out the field work, because embodied language multiplicity has been an integral part of my identity. A more conscious foregrounding of language plurality (Cannella & Lincoln 2011) is then continued in the linguistically intermixed and intermeshed style of the monograph. This was particularly important in order to accurately represent the colloquial forms of expression of migrant participants.

I now revisit the two questions designed to interrogate the extent to which my research integrated anti-oppressive precepts – namely, can participants see themselves in the study and does the analysis ring true to them? Concerted efforts were made in choosing collaborative research methods to maximize participation and accountability as well as reducing

power differences. In addition, my personal location as a researcher within an anti-oppressive, resistance-oriented research framework accentuated social change objectives in choosing and implementing the research design. However, a focus on shared ownership and collective responsibility did not suffuse all research phases, such as during data analysis and dissemination where a greater collaborative focus could have benefitted the study. Therefore, the questions posed by bell hooks (1994) regarding whose knowledge is constructed through our research projects, and if it serves as a means of oppression or resistance are as topical as ever. If researchers are truly to become “poetic activists” who aim towards generative theories, then a reflexivity constructed in dialogue with study environments and participants is essential if they strive to change aspects of the world (Gergen 2001b).

5.4 CASE STUDY

A few of us will find a case study [...] the finest work of our lifetime. Because it is an exercise in such depth, the study is an opportunity to see what others have not yet seen, to reflect the uniqueness of our own lives, to engage the best of our interpretive powers and to make, even by its integrity alone, an advocacy for those things we cherish. (Stake 1995, p.136)

The above quote encapsulates in vivid detail why I chose a case study approach as the most suitable means of answering my research questions. Case study research (CSR) allows for a visceral, physical immersion in distinctive research environments with the view of learning something new and emerging changed from one’s collaboration with other participants. Making sense of the unfamiliar through collective interpretation and advocating for the reconceptualization of integration educations as vehicles for mutual learning and reciprocal inclusion were “those things which I cherished.” I therefore felt that an approach which allowed for “an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular program or system in a real life context” would best suit me (Simons 2009, p.21). A multiple case study approach allowed for just this immersion as well as for triangulation in data collection and a way of allowing theory to inform the formation of new analytical frames.

Although a myriad of competing and often diffuse definitions of case studies exist, they have generally been characterized as “analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions or other systems which are studied holistically by one or more methods. The case that is the subject of the inquiry will be an instance of a class of phenomena that provides an analytical frame – an object – within which the study is conducted, and which the case illuminates and explicates” (Thomas 2013, p.594). This reference to a phenomenon of scientific interest that the researcher chooses to study within a bordered environment, aiming at developing theory drawn from the similarities or differences among cases, is another common aspect in definitions of case studies (see Stake 1995 & 2006, Gillham 2000, George & Bennett 2004, Cousin 2005, Gagnon 2010, Csiernik, Pierce & Birnbaum 2010, Carey 2012, Hetherington 2013).

Woodside (2010, p.1) sees the primary objective of case study research as attaining an “emic view of what’s happening and why I did what I did.” It thus becomes an exploration of one’s own and participants thinking processes, intentions, and contextual influences. However, as Wieviorka (1992, p.160) puts it: “It does not suffice to observe a social phenomenon, historical event, or set of behaviours in order to declare them to be ‘cases.’ If you want to talk about a ‘case,’ you also need the means of interpreting it or placing it within a context.”

By embedding the case within a discernably relevant context, the researcher’s primary purpose is to connect the empirical with the theoretical and, in their dialogical juxtaposition, to sharpen and refine theory as well as explicate the case. This interplay helps us to produce theoretically sound descriptions, reflect the meaning(s) invested in them by study participants, and place these within a larger societal context. The process of casing or “bordering” the empirical world makes it possible to connect it to theoretical ideas that are general, imprecise, and continually evolving (Ragin & Becker 1992). Practices which aid in holistically grounding and interpreting case studies include utilizing a multiplicity of data collection sites and perspectives (e.g. documents, observations, interviews), creating a case study database to display sufficient evidence, maintaining a chain of evidence, and striving to engage socially and discursively (Yin 2009, Woodhouse 2010).

5.4.1 CASE SELECTION

In lending context to the study, it thus becomes necessary to explore my choices guiding case selection and what questions I asked regarding the suitability of the case study approach. For help with the latter, I turned to Yves-Chantal Gagnon's (2010, p.16) list of evaluative questions for case study research: "Can the phenomenon of interest be studied outside its natural setting? Must the study focus on contemporary events? Is control or manipulation of subjects or events unnecessary? Does the phenomenon of interest enjoy an established theoretical base?" Because my study examines how integration education programs for migrant students are practically realized and how those who work and study in the programs experience them within their unique national, local and ideological positionalities, this could only be achieved within the schools' "natural setting." Furthermore, the study's aim is to focus on current critical contestations of inclusion practices played out in ongoing discourses within schools and beyond them. Control or manipulation of the research settings or its participants is therefore not only unnecessary but contrary to the anti-oppressive methodologies employed in the study. Lastly, the phenomenon of interest enjoys a rather substantial theory base in terms of previous research on integration education programs for migrants, however, the critical positioning on social inclusion in relation to such educations is less well explored. A case study approach, it has been argued, is an ideal choice in educational research as it highlights the local and contextual nature of complexity knowledge and is particularly valuable when the researcher exercises little control over events (Hetherington 2013, p.75).

5.4.2 TYPES OF CASE STUDY APPROACHES

I chose a multiple case study approach because it best coalesced with my theoretical framework. Multiple case studies are most useful for examining phenomena such as social inclusion that are liable to occur in a variety of contexts. They can serve to highlight recurring cross-case patterns or to reveal exceptions and oddities that challenge and inform theoretical constructs. The purpose of studying several cases is to provide rich descriptions of a phenomenon confined to specific social or institutional contexts and to reveal the subtext governing wider social behavior and

structural processes. The aim is to elucidate the specificity of each case while also highlighting and connecting their common elements (Gagnon 2010). A multiple case approach is especially relevant for my study because it focuses on descriptive exploratory questions, behavioural non-manipulation of participants, and the lack of clear boundaries between the phenomenon and context (Bassey 1999, Baxter & Jack 2008, Yin 2009). Its strength lies in the holistic exploration of the subtlety and complexity of the individual cases while extrapolating beyond them to reveal wider social “truths.” As such, it very much aligns itself with critical perspectives on social inclusion that emphasize the interconnectedness of personal, cultural and structural spheres.

In contrast to other more positivistic conceptions of case study research which are constrained by hypothesis driven constructs in which theoretical frames determine the way data is collected and analyzed, I approached multiple case study research from a more constructivist perspective which entailed that my methodological choices were “informed by theory but not guided by it” (Gagnon 2010, p.14). In this explorative way of working, the focus rested on understanding processes within and between cases instead of arriving at generalizations about how *all* such similar cases may proceed. Instead, a perspective characterized by an openness to possibilities for arriving at new knowledge, rethinking cases, and taking ideas in new directions predominated. This is also why I opted for a multiple instead of a comparative case study approach.²³ The latter seeks similarities and differences among cases based on a few specified attributes. This focus on pre-described variables or topics for comparisons can obscure the situationality and complexity of cases and deliver more simplistic rather than “thick descriptions” (Stake 2006, p.82). In multiple case studies there is an inherent recognition that confining cases to self-enclosed habitats is impossible as they leak into the world outside and vice versa. One must feel comfortable with the pervious boundaries one sets, or is forced to set, in order to foreground impermanent conclusions. “Paradox is the point of case studies, the ability to live with ambiguity and challenge and creatively encounter certainty and to eventually arrive at seeing anew” (Simons 1996,

²³ In making this clear distinction between multiple and comparative case studies, I am aware that these are conflated or used interchangeably in some case study theory texts (e.g. Yin 2009).

pp.237-8). Theory can never encapsulate a case or provide a sole explanatory or analytical structure for it. For me, it represents a sounding board or a mirror which nuances as much as it reflects.

5.4.3 CRITIQUES OF CASE STUDY APPROACHES

Given the slipperiness of defining the “case study” largely due to its manifold applications and descriptions of widely divergent processes, aims and environments, its suitability as a sufficiently reliable research methodology has been the subject of much debate and critique. Charges which have been levelled against it center on generalizability, representativeness and process vs. outcome orientations, to name a few. I will now turn to a discussion of some of these and suggest ways of avoiding *narrative fraud*²⁴ by referring to my own study (Cousin 2005).

One supposed shortcoming centers on the lack of generalizability from specific case studies in that they only allow for tentative conclusions given that the chosen cases may be too narrowly focused and therefore lack “claims making” potential. Conversely, researchers are also accused of overgeneralizing from specific cases which draw from a limited data base and thus forfeiting the trustworthiness of their studies. Robert Stake (1995) warns against overgeneralizing by urging researchers to adopt an “ethic of caution” in general claims making which, according to him, is not contradictory to an “ethic of interpretation.” He further argues that in the pursuit of generalizability one can easily become blinded to the atypical and distinct aspects of a case which may contribute to a deeper understanding of it. Others have argued that an excessive use of empirical data aimed at making generalizations will result in an overly complex theory obscuring general relationships and those that are particular to the specific case (Gagnon 2010). Therefore, it might be more helpful to reinterpret generalizability as a matter of the “fit” between aspects of a single studied case compared with conclusions derived from other cases (Schofield 1989, p.225). In my study, I have attempted to arrive at *naturalistic generalizations* (Stake 1995) or *fuzzy generalizations* (Bassey 1999) which focus on applying

²⁴ Narrative fraud refers to “overstating from flimsy evidence, ignoring local effects, and opportunistically cherry picking the data.” (Cousin 2005, p.426).

the findings from one study to another in order to enhance my and our understanding of both. Thus, the accumulation of data over time and in different case contexts allowed certain patterns to emerge, a process which will be alluded to in greater detail in the section discussing data analysis (see pp.109-119). At the end of the data collection phase, one builds up an archive of knowledge, or a *colligation of occurrences* (Abbott 1992), from which cross-case assertions can be made.

A second area of contention is the problem of representativeness, or a lack thereof, in case selection which is also closely connected to generalizability. There are those who assert that case selection should seek to be as directly representative of diverse populations as possible if one wishes to generalize. Others argue that research boundaries may be more fluid for some cases, resulting in certain topics being difficult to assess representatively. Consequently, one should not make claims about the applicability of one's findings to such populations except in contingent ways (George & Bennett 2004, pp.22-31). In choosing a multiple case study approach, my previously stated aim was to select such cases which would most likely enhance our understanding of practices and contestations of social inclusion within integration educations. Cases were selected as much for their atypicality as for their common elements and represent the experiences of participants circumscribed by time and space. Thus, they represent research partner views but cannot be said to be representative of *all* adult migrant students or staff at Arbis, Medis or NorQuest. However, propositional generalizations – research conclusions in the form of assertions (Stake 2006) – could be made by looking at where and how inclusion practices connected between cases, their nature, and the ideological and structural particularities guiding them.

A third concern is that researchers prioritize the process involved in casing, especially in data collection, above research outcomes, such as disseminating findings and working for the emancipatory benefits for participants. The charge is that the “social change outcomes” inherent in critical, participant-centered approaches become negligible beyond the completion of the study (Carey 2012). This is a very real quandary. On the one hand, the process of casing, especially given the socially peripheral position of many of my participants, requires a deep, reciprocal engagement

(without which there would likely be no emancipatory outcomes), yet it is precisely these outcomes which ought to represent the *raison d'être* of critical case study research. I have, therefore, treated these two components as mutually reinforcing rather than polar opposites where the focus on one obfuscates the attainment of the other. Given that achieving deep understanding in CSR usually involves the use of multiple research methods across multiple time periods, I have employed method triangulation as a way of adding complexity to the research process. The combination of interviews and observations embedded me more deeply within the everyday lives of my participants and within the school environments, while also lending findings added credibility during dissemination sessions with students and staff. Thus, an investment of time and complexity in process provided diverse evidence sources necessary for grounding social change objectives (Woodside 2010). This is also the reason why my engagement with staff and students at Arbis, Medis and NorQuest has continued beyond the completion of the initial study, with a view to entrenching and building upon lessons learned during the research (see p. 85).

Glynis Cousin (2005) suggests several other strategies for minimizing narrative fraud in case studies. Such strategies include interrogating the epistemological and theoretical positioning of the researcher to explain research choices and role taking. This is essential because the researcher becomes part of the emerging trajectory of the case by making decisions about study choices and interactions with participants which both constrain and enable the emergent possibilities for the case (Hetherington 2013). Detailed discussions on researcher reflexivity and role taking are elucidated in other parts of this chapter. The provision of sufficiently “thick” descriptions allowing the reader to share in the interpretation with the researcher, is another suggested strategy. It is here that the number and breadth of my in-depth qualitative interviews and months spent embedded in the case environments contribute to the emergence of a more complex, perspectival and “thick” account.

Charges of narrative fraud can also be mitigated by sharing the provisional analysis with stakeholders for their comments to acknowledge their ownership of the material, encourage rival explanations and sharpen emerging themes. The dissemination seminars (p.84) organized at the

conclusion of the three fieldwork periods served this purpose and, perhaps more than at any other time, challenged power hierarchies between students and staff as all had equal chances to be heard. They also crystallized the need for similarly empowering feedback sessions and repositioned students as active participants instead of passive recipients of integration measures. Another means of addressing fraudulent research claims is by maximizing the voices of participants (p.82) during all phases of the study, including the final report. With reference to “giving voice” within the monograph, I have endeavoured to include many richly descriptive quotes to demonstrate that my voice serves to co-create and co-represent their stories (Stronach & McLure 1997). Perhaps lastly, case study narratives are there to advance debate and to enrich understanding, much like a work of literature. The “truth” of the perspective(s) disseminated within the final report is one that must be contested in public discourse. Its trustworthiness is refined in a dialectic, which advances Stake’s view (1995, p.43) that “the function of research is not necessarily to map and conquer the world but to sophisticate the beholding of it.”

5.5 DATA COLLECTION

The main source material for this study was gathered between June 2015 and February 2017, during successive periods of fieldwork. From June to November 2015, I spent an extended research period within NorQuest College’s LINC program at both the Downtown and Westmount campuses. In 2016, I conducted fieldwork at the SFI integration education program at Arbis in Helsingfors lasting from February to June. Then in the autumn of the same year, I began my material collection at Medis in Mariehamn, Åland from October to December and continuing into February of 2017. I had already begun by conducting some preliminary staff interviews with Medis teachers in May of 2016.

In total, my fieldwork material consists of 52 in-depth interviews with teachers, administrators and support personnel, 20 small-group interviews with 87 adult migrant students studying in the three integration programs and 14 weeks of participant class observation. Staff interviews varied in length from 45-100 minutes. and were flexibly based on a semi-structured

interview guide (see appendix 2). Participants were recruited during initial information and discussion sessions which served to introduce my study, elicit questions, and discuss the ethical implications. These were further explained in letters of consent made available in both English and Swedish. The small group interviews with students studying in the integration educations varied in length from 35-90 minutes. Discussions with students were free-flowing with themes co-constructed between participants in keeping within a critical anti-oppressive research paradigm. Topics arising from student interviews ranged from views on program structure, teaching, studies and life, student agency, and cultural inclusion. Student groups were recruited in information sessions akin to those for staff with letters of consent tailored to specific language levels and made available in both Swedish and English. Lastly, the 14 weeks of participant class observation involving seven class groups of adult migrant students in the three integration education programs included sharing in all curricular in-class activities as well as extra-curricular endeavours involving visits, seminars and leisure time activities.

5.5.1 IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

In qualitative research, interviews comprise a basic mode of constituting knowledge. A good qualitative interview can be characterized by a number of key elements. It aims at detailed descriptions in order to truthfully describe the life world of the interviewee in all its complexity and thereby arrive at “meanings.” In-depth interviews combine the openness of scope in illuminating a variety of themes from interviewees’ realities with specific narrations of contexts from their life worlds to create a resonant whole (Kvale 1996). Qualitative in-depth interviews are generally semi-structured with a focus on certain topics to guide conversations and suggested questions to serve as conversational way markers. Interview questions should have both a thematic component, meaning that they demonstrate a relevance to the given research topic, and a dynamic element seeking to promote a co-constructed interaction between conversational partners. Thus, the research interview is no longer seen as a tool for mere information gathering. Rather, it is a space where interlocutors meet, converse and, through their conversations, “jointly construct meaning” (Shkedi 2005, p.62). Woodside (2010) points out that research methods

Methodology

attempting to chronicle thinking processes by using multiple interviews over several weeks, and interviewing diverse participants are not only useful, but critically essential if we really want to achieve deep understanding. Such an understanding, arrived at through the dialogical reciprocity between researcher and participant, is founded upon a horizontal exchange of ideas which in turn enables personal and social change (Mullaly 1997).

It has sometimes been argued that semi-structured formats are incompatible with in-depth interviewing and indeed much depends upon the degree of direction and influence the interview guide exercises over interactions. In my study, the guide consisted of large thematic areas with supportive questions; however, these served as interview frames rather than a sequential script which was slavishly adhered to. Teaching staff and support personnel were asked to creatively amend, challenge and “personalize” our dialogues, which in turn varied and flowed quite freely. In addition, the fact that each participant was interviewed at length, once at the start and once further into the fieldwork covering different topics in each round, allowed for an accumulation of thick descriptions (Kvale 1996). While initial interviews ranged around topics of self-reflexivity, participant agency and ways of “performing” inclusion in the schools, the second round focused on structural factors impacting partnerships and social change objectives. Thus, interviews moved from personalized introspections to larger social themes beyond the confines of the classroom or school borders.

In conducting my interviews, the venues, times and dates were chosen according to the wishes and needs of the interviewees. The locations were meeting rooms or classrooms, places of familiarity often connected to school and suiting the participants’ daily schedules. But, they could also include cafés, bars or, in one case, the home of a participant. Some participants sought the physical distance from the work environment these locations provided in order to stimulate reflection. In fact, interviews conducted in these locations were generally longer and more free ranging, touching upon a greater variety of topics. In hindsight, the trade-off between the richness of the material and the increased background noise impeding tape transcriptions seemed worthwhile. At the outset of the

interviews, discussion aims were generally reiterated, as well as how I aimed to ensure confidentiality, privacy and informed consent. All interviews were recorded after eliciting agreement from participants.

During the general information sessions which had introduced my fieldwork to staff, I also briefly outlined the main topics to be touched upon in the interviews, something which many appreciated because it prefaced their thinking and focused self-reflection. As I typically interviewed participants twice, I noticed that the rapport which developed over time contributed to what was shared, how much and how open the reflections were. For many, the interviews presented a chance to unburden themselves in times of rapid institutional changes. Therefore, interview transcripts were also made available to those who requested them, something which happened especially in cases where the interviewees feared that they may have been too frank or critical in some of their observations. In all such cases, being able to read the transcripts reassured them. No one asked to have portions of the text omitted. At the conclusion of interviews, a short time for debriefing was usually spent either talking informally or drinking coffee in order to ensure a positive atmosphere, allay concerns and address extraneous questions. It frequently happened that after the tape recorder was turned off, interviewees provided further relevant reflections some of which I then documented in observation logs.

5.5.2 GROUP INTERVIEWING

In selecting an appropriate method for reflecting the views of migrant students with regards to their experiences within integration educations, the policy of giving voice and choice to migrant students dictated arrangements. In addition, the question posed earlier by Baltra-Ulloa (2013) – am I creating space or taking space? – kept reintroducing itself. Asking participants from often vulnerable groups to engage in critical reflection and its related challenges necessitates creating a safe environment. This includes allowing them to preserve their own sense of dignity and integrity. Therefore, “treading the fine line between protecting the vulnerability, but allowing openness to change, is a constant and delicate balancing act” (Fook & Gardner 2007, p.189). Another deciding factor in selecting this interview format revolved around the nature of integration educations.

Methodology

Although institutional arrangements are experienced in a myriad of ways by individuals, they do not act on individuals alone but rather on groups of individuals. These groups (i.e. school classes), develop their own unique coping and supporting strategies. Thus, in choosing group interviews, I attempted to address the collective component of experience in integration educations as well as create opportunities for individual expressions. Linhorst (2002) has pointed to the relevance of group interviewing by highlighting its consciousness raising, anti-discriminatory and empowering potential. Group interviews are also suitable for interrogating sensitive topics where groups can provide a safer and more empowering environment than one-to-one interviews with someone less familiar. From a pragmatic point of view, given the time constraints dictated by the fieldwork periods, group interviews saved time and allowed for the collection of a rich variety of data.

Interview groups of migrant students typically comprised 3-6 persons and were partly pre-selected by the responsible class instructors at NorQuest while students at Arbis and Medis chose their own groups. Group constellations varied though ethnic affiliations sometimes played a part. This was especially noticeable when seeking language support. For example, at Medis, a group of Thai students chose to be interviewed together in order assist each other when encountering language difficulties. In these situations, it also helped to extend the option to students in Finland to speak either Swedish or English, the latter often being the preferred choice as most students' competence in English exceeded their current Swedish language proficiency. While administrators were not undividedly supportive of the choice of language, I argued for it from an anti-oppressive, student-centered perspective by placing student agency in a pivotal role. The fact that they were able to use their stronger language also improved the quality of the interaction and the subsequent data collected. In drawing on an ethic of researching multilingually, I opted to foreground language plurality and choice where possible. Such a choice exposes the diversity of realities of both the researcher and study participants (Cannella & Lincoln 2011).

The ease of collaboration was further enhanced by not insisting on a preselected set of questions to be answered. Instead, topics and

conversations were co-created allowing for optimal student agency in shaping the interview situation. In addition, the choice of interview venue was, wherever possible, decided by students. At NorQuest for example, we often sat in groups on the campus lawn while at Arbis, the cafeteria or the park served as alternative interview spaces. Establishing a climate conducive to critical reflection entailed exploring what respect and partnership meant in the context of the study and what the aim of the process is or should be. It also became apparent that my role as a researcher changed in a group interview situation from that of an interviewer to that of a moderator or facilitator. This meant that one focused more attention on promoting interest in the issues, displaying subtlety in maneuvering among and negotiating topics and allowing for the discussion focus to shift and flow naturally. Carey (2010, p.128) also emphasized the need for the researcher to focus on the needs of “those on the edges” in group interviews. In my student groups, these “edges” often consisted of migrant students whose more limited language skills prevented them from engaging as actively as some others in conversations. In such cases, I addressed individuals specifically in order to give them time and space to formulate thoughts. Otherwise, I tried to “get out of the way” of the organic flow of discussions by consciously limiting my direction and involvement with the result that some interviews ranged further afield than others, consumed more time and in many cases became arenas for reaffirmation and building solidarity.

It has been suggested that because of the inherent inconsistencies and ellipses in oral reports, verbal data must be supplemented with other methodologies in developing comprehensive interpretations in multiple case study approaches. These limitations can be mitigated, however, by combining interview data with data from extended periods of participant observation in cultural or institutional contexts (Woodside 2010). It must be said that without the months spent in classrooms with groups of migrant students, it would have been impossible for me to attain similar levels of familiarity and trust and consequently derive such in-depth critical reflections on their experiences within integration educations.

5.5.3 PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

Participant observation in qualitative research is particularly suited to multiple case study approaches which necessitate the researcher becoming integrally embedded in the quotidian everyday of the research environment. The use of participant observation is appropriate when a research problem concerns human meanings and interactions from an insider's perspective, when the research target is sufficiently limited in size and location to be studied as a case, and when one aims to develop theories or test existing ones (Jorgensen 1992, p.13). Participant observation allows us to share in the symbolic world people inhabit and to communicate its implicit meanings (Fielding 1996). Field studies, therefore, "usually give more valid knowledge than simply asking subjects about their behaviour" (Kvale 1996, p.104). Participant observation in this study involved the researcher engaging with a formal learning community long enough to observe how participants experience and make sense of the institutional environments of integration educations, how they interact to frame problems and opportunities, and creatively advance their personal agendas and learning goals (Woodside 2010). In practice, meaning in participant observation is created by the researcher shuttling back and forth in his imagination between a recall of the event and reflecting upon it at the time of writing. Correspondingly, it becomes a process of continuous evaluation and reflection (McCall & Simmons 1969). Much of the quality of the gathered descriptions depends upon the level of human interaction – the extent and depth of inter-relationships between all research participants. With this in mind, participant observation is ideally suited to achieving the type of embeddedness required to truly experience how the distinctive contexts of educational environments shape opportunities and place limitations upon its participants.

5.5.4 GAINING ACCESS

The initial step of gaining access to the case or object of study in participant observation usually requires negotiations with "gatekeepers", or key individuals, which subsequently grant the researcher entry to the field of study (Fine & Sandstrom 1988, Jorgensen 1992, Travers 2001, Woodside 2010). One can make a distinction between physical access and social access

in the process of gaining entry where the former entails permission to be present in the research environment and the latter refers to gaining the trust and acceptance of participants for them to collaborate in the study. Overt entry entails divulging as much information to prospective study participants as necessary in allowing them to make an informed decision regarding their participation in the proposed research (Hornsby-Smith 1996). Being as open as possible about the nature and aim of the study is usually easier and incorporates fewer ethical problems (Jorgensen 1992). In referring to the process of social and physical access, I did endeavour to build a foundation of trust with study participants and relevant gatekeepers from the outset by establishing contacts well in advance. My visits to the institutions in the months leading up to the commencement of fieldwork also eased access.

Gaining access to migrant student groups took place through introductory information sessions which were organized to present my research. Their participation was also solicited by distributing formal letters of consent in language-level-appropriate English or Swedish where the voluntary nature of participation as well as issues of confidentiality and privacy were highlighted. Attaining social access proved more seamless than first imagined, perhaps helped by the students' affiliation with me and my own migrant history. I also sought to build rapport through sharing in common activities, rooted in the belief that valid knowledge is produced only in collaboration and in joint action (Csiernik, Pierce & Birnbaum 2010). Being in their classrooms and on their excursions provided me with opportunities to "walk a mile in students' moccasins" and converse informally with them about their lives and hopes. This reciprocity allows one to develop a kind of cognitive empathy which, if it shapes our subsequent interactions and engagements with participants, goes a long way in securing social access.

A typical day of fieldwork usually began with casual conversations with students or the responsible classroom teacher over a cup of coffee or tea, or in helping them out with small practical tasks before the curricular program commenced. In so doing, I sought to re-establish positive relationships with participants whom I often met only twice a week because my observations included two or three class groups during the given

fieldwork period. Sometimes I would spend the morning session with one group and then move to another for the afternoon lectures. I was also asked to accompany specific groups on visits and extracurricular excursions, something which expanded my understanding of the programs' community embeddedness and social integration efforts.

In choosing the participants and learning environments to observe, three criteria guided my selection. The first was that students would be able to comprehend and speak the second language beyond a beginner's level to facilitate communication during classroom activities, extra-curricular activities and the subsequent group interviews. The second was to ensure that they had accumulated a certain amount of time and experience in the learning environments of the integration programs. This dictated a selection of groups studying at intermediate or advanced levels, these being CLB 3-5 in Canada and A2-B1 in Finland. Thirdly, the observations had to include curricular contents shared by the three of integration programs namely, language teaching, and the acquisition of cultural and work-life skills.

5.5.5 OBSERVATION PROCESS

In describing the daily practice of participant observation, portions of my daily observations were recorded in a field notebook I carried with me and which served as a tool for recalling important observations, feelings or reflections. Such notations typically included who was there, what was said, the time, and the physical circumstances of the setting. Detailed written descriptions on computer took place the afternoon or morning following every observation session, while my memory was still fresh, using the field notebook as a resource. Nigel Fielding (1996, p.162), for example, states that although the elaborated recording of observations may be slower and more time-consuming, it often yields better analytic themes. The goal of my initial observations in becoming familiar with the world of integration program insiders, was to describe the mundane – the physical situations, the institutions' layout, the number and composition of staff and students, etc. – in order to become conscious of the environment in which interactions took place. These, often unfocused reflections also sought to give a glimpse into the atmosphere of the schools and convey the general

climate of interpersonal relations. As an observer, one is often encouraged to be as detailed as possible in the first days or weeks in the research setting because one will never again, to the same degree, have this opportunity to view the place from an outsider's perspective (Jorgensen 1992).

In subsequent weeks, my observations began to focus more deeply on different themes, such as student participation and ownership of learning, power relations, as well as the structural factors shaping and circumscribing the interactions between teachers and migrant students. Some themes also arose from critical theories on inclusion and from previous observations of puzzling phenomena. Somewhat akin to a hermeneutic spiral, observations during each new week began to raise a number of new questions, which then helped to compose the focus queries for successive weeks. Over the course of the 14 weeks spent observing at NorQuest, Arbis and Medis, I compiled approximately 70 pages of text detailing reflections which served as a part of my raw data for analysis. It was interesting to note how during subsequent observations, I already developed a kind of precognition or cognitive readiness which, based on topics arising from previous interactions, shaped the way I “saw” succeeding ones. These were then subsumed in a kind of mental archive under specific categories or key words. Notably enough, the developing dialectic between data from participant observations that derived from in-depth interviews contributed to focusing both methods and supplementing the emerging picture of how inclusion was envisaged and practiced in integration educations.

5.5.6 RESEARCHER ROLE

A prerequisite, when considering which role a researcher ought to adopt within the fieldwork setting, is an openness to experiences illuminating both the researcher's own and participants' perspectives. This dialectical comparison is a crucial component of meaning creation (Denzin & Lincoln 2011, Silverman 2011). Essentially, “the role should be an ethical choice, an honest choice” (Stake 1995, p.103). Anti-oppressive research perspectives emphasize the importance of being a “culturally embedded practitioner” when discussing role taking. In my case, this entailed spending time in becoming part of the educational communities and learning through direct experience and sustained interaction (Yellow Bird et.al 2013). In so doing,

Methodology

I gained access to what people think, feel, and do from multiple perspectives. In addition, by experiencing the effects of the community upon myself, I understood these more clearly and could examine personal perceptions in relation to environmental effects. A rule of thumb I followed was to convey the humility and naiveté of a learner. This obliged participants to explain processes or phenomena to me, which were obvious to them (Fielding 1996, Gillham 2000). While providing essential data, this strategy also served to promote a process of reflection on the part of participants about assumed notions regarding the “naturalness” of routines or behaviours. With the young people, the role of researcher and fellow professional which had characterized my staff interactions seemed untenable as I did not wish to be perceived as another “teacher”, with the position of authority implied in that role, or as someone sent to “study” their interaction. Thus, I endeavoured to cultivate a role based on “explicit expressions of positive regard combined with both a relative lack of authority and a lack of sanctioning the behavior of those being studied” (Fine & Sandstrom 1988, p.17). In my case, this entailed respecting their life worlds and joining in their activities.

In the varying types of data collection chosen for this study, a methodological challenge for me was finding the right path between involvement, immersion and empathy on the one hand, and distance and critical thinking on the other. With this kind of embedded involvement, it became essential to reserve room for critical reflection. Taking the time to pause and think; to process what has gone before; was to be able to stand apart and reassemble what has been made known (Shkedi 2005, p.48).

6 DATA ANALYSIS

Interpretation will be based on revealing the social and political infrastructures and dimensions that shape various categories as if they were natural, immanent and essential. This kind of interpretation will point to the ideological (gendered, racialized or otherwise biased) base that underlies these definitions (Krumer-Nevo 2012, p.195).

The above quote represents a corollary to a discussion on data analysis which recognizes that this stage of the research phase is still largely the sole responsibility of the researcher(s) even in more critical PAR approaches. Despite this fact, Krumer-Nevo (2012) advocates the adoption of an *Othering-aware* approach when analyzing qualitative data. This entails checking one's own interpretations by juxtaposing them with existing normative meanings. In my study, I chose ways of interpreting data which mirrored the complexity with which social inclusion was contested by study participants and sought to holistically represent their views within and across the case study environments. Selecting the analytical approaches of inductive content analysis and multiple case study analysis coupled with disseminating discussions allowed for this contestation of hegemonic narratives on integration, culture and migrants.

6.1 INDUCTIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS

In its broadest sense, qualitative content analysis has been defined as a general term for a number of different strategies used to analyze text (Powers & Knapp 2006). More specifically, it is a means of representing the subjective interpretations inherent in data through the systematic classification process of coding in order to build relational categories and identify themes or patterns. In seeking to represent the descriptions of participants' experiences as closely aligned to the data as possible, I opted for less abstract or directive approaches. Thus, the collected data was analysed using inductive content analysis of transcribed interview material and observation logs. In contrast to abductive approaches which focus on

redescription and recontextualization (Tavory & Timmermans 2014) in looking for possible explanations for, or connections between, observed phenomena, inductive analyses aim to create mosaics of meaning founded on thick, holistic and multi-faceted descriptions. Questions of elucidation or prediction and hypothesizing, central in abduction, are peripheral in induction. Instead inductive analyses seek to reveal the fractured, incomplete and contradictory nature of a reality which often defies explanation.

By adopting open coding from grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin 1998) in generating categories and themes, I have attempted to steer away from some of the more prescriptive approaches to content analysis (see Mayring 2000b, Schreier 2012) which apply theory driven pre-constructed coding frames and statistical representations in working with data. Instead, I opted for data-driven, descriptive approaches to content analysis (see Hsieh & Shannon 2005, Vaismoradi et. al 2013) which are in the spirit of participant-centered, anti-oppressive research designs. Such approaches utilize open coding in conceptualising, defining and developing data categories and axial coding in comparing categories and building thematic descriptions. Meaning is thus allowed to emerge without the imposition of pre-existing concepts or analytical frameworks. Inductive content analysis so conceived can be used in developing a more general theory of what is going on, but do not depend on this theory (Flick 2014). This was especially useful in my case, where emerging themes were then juxtaposed with critical theories on social inclusion allowing new understandings to emerge from this dialectic (Roulston 2014).

6.2 TRANSCRIPTION

In describing the process of analysis, I will begin with the act of interview transcription. Folklorist Barbro Klein (1990) postulated that transcription is in itself an analytic act guided by clear conscious choices on the part of the researcher as to how text should convey meaning. In working with the 72 in-depth individual and group interviews which were conducted in either English or Swedish, or a mixture of both, I chose to focus on the descriptive content of the narratives rather than on the idiosyncratic

discursive strategies employed. Given that interviews were partly bilingual and contained specific terminology in referring to study programs and local circumstances, I felt it imperative to transcribe them all personally. Though time consuming, this allowed me to cognitively revisit interview settings, relive dialogues and recapture meanings which sometimes remained elusive. Emphasizing the communicative impact of participants' voices meant that interviews were transcribed word for word but pauses, or utterances such as "uh", which obfuscated communicability were omitted.

One could equally claim that just as the act of transcription is analytical so are the choices that guide the authoring of logs entries from participant observations (Jorgensen 1992). Here too, I concentrated my descriptions on the nature of interactions which illuminated social inclusion practices and the events which seemed to run contradictory to interview claims made about inclusive practices. Descriptions also focused on the mundane and quotidian characterizing interactions between participants and the environments they inhabited. Thus, notations rarely discussed frequencies of occurrences of specific actions, interactions or particular teaching strategies which, in more positivist observation schemes, serve a quantitative purpose.

6.3 PROCESS

In order to place the various periods of data analysis within a chronological context, I completed a preliminary analysis of the NorQuest material in September - October of 2015, immediately following the fieldwork as I had planned seminars with students and staff during which findings would be disseminated and discussed. In a similar vein, the subsequent fieldwork periods all included partial inductive content analysis of interview transcripts and observation logs in order to share initial findings with participants, thereby adhering to anti-oppressive principles. Thus, the Medis fieldwork was transcribed and preliminarily analyzed in early January of 2017 after fieldwork completion in early November of 2016, in preparation for sessions in February. It was only with the Arbis material, collected in the Spring of 2016, that the analysis was postponed until 2017 because tailored dissemination seminars could not be arranged before the

summer break, and many students did not return for the SFI B1&2 program continuation in the autumn of 2016. However, interview transcripts were completed in the summer of 2016 and a partial data analysis contributed to presentations in national seminars on Swedish-language integration of migrants which were attended by members of Arbis staff. For a comprehensive final analysis of all data, I turned to ATLAS.ti, a web-based qualitative analytical program, for help as the sheer volume of material necessitated gaining a comprehensive overview which aided the coding and structuring of data to form categories and encompassing themes.

6.4 INITIAL CODING

The tangible minutiae of inductive data analysis began with an immersion in interview recordings and repeated readings of interview transcripts and observation logs. Such readings create initial, fleeting and impermanent impressions but contextualize narratives before coding takes place. I used both emic and etic labels in coding depending upon how well they encapsulated portions of text. These were either inserted as written codes in the margins of data archive files or on coloured post-it notes in the preliminary analyses. Codes took the form of single words or short phrases and represented first impressions, thoughts, and initial analyses (Miles & Huberman 1994). As this process continued, labels emerged that encompassed more than one key thought, action or observation. This initiated the sorting of codes into related categories depending upon their contextual linkages and interrelations. These emerging categories were then used to organize and group codes into meaningful clusters or code families (Hetherington 2013). In teacher interviews, the semi-structured interview guide helped in the coding process as interviews followed a certain sequential rhythm. In the open, unstructured, co-created student group interviews, however, such a “rhythm” was more manifold requiring that one needed greater sensitivity to narrative flows in coding and grouping.

6.5 ORGANIZING CODES

Next followed the organizing phase, which in the preliminary data analysis of the single case studies, NorQuest and Medis, was done manually by collecting smaller sub-categories and reassembling them in separate word documents under larger code clusters/families which in turn were re-grouped until six or seven expansive case-specific themes emerged. This regrouping happened in an ongoing dialectic with original transcripts and observation logs to maintain the connections between “severed” text excerpts and their embeddedness within a narrative whole. The categories which emerged had to fulfill an internal function - they had to be relevant in relation to the data; and an external function - they had to be relational and relatable to the other categories. In contrast, themes represented broader, more abstract expressions of created meaning(s) in relation to the research questions extrapolated from categories (Vaismoradi et.al 2013). Themes could be defined as coherent integrations of disparate bits of data crystallized into meaningful points of connection between findings and research questions.

Upon completion of the preliminary case study analyses, I downloaded all data into ATLAS.ti and began by recoding all interview transcripts and observation logs derived from NorQuest, Medis and Arbis. The Arbis material which had not been coded in its entirety in the preliminary analysis was now also interpreted within a cross-case context. The inductive analysis process was similar to that followed in the preliminary analysis but, given the sheer volume of individual codes, code clusters and categories it became necessary to represent relations between them by creating network code diagrams within ATLAS.ti. These were an amalgamation of all cross-case data depicting visual representations of relations between individual codes, code clusters and code categories. This allowed me to identify and define coherent and distinctive themes. The specific analytical process of juxtaposing the data comprising the three distinct cases in ATLAS.ti will be described in greater detail in descriptions of multiple case study analysis (pp.115-117).

The synergy described during the data collection process, referring to the ongoing dialectic between observations and interviews wherein each

informed the other by interweaving description with interpretation, also suffused the process of inductive content analysis. The cognitive readiness to apply similar codes in describing related situations or phenomena increased during subsequent fieldwork. Returning to the original transcripts in order to double check meanings and codes proved a sound strategy of ensuring narrative integrity. Each successive round of data analysis added more pieces to the puzzle of how inclusion was envisaged and practiced while also focusing the point of inquiry. Data collection and analysis developed together in an *iterative process* (Hartley 1994, p.220), which engendered theoretical reflections grounded more firmly in empirical evidence.

6.6 MULTIPLE CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

In deciding upon a suitable method of case study analysis, one which encapsulated a constructivist approach both in relation to theory (guide vs. determinant) and meaning creation beyond the singular case, I opted for multiple case study analysis. The purpose of the Multiple Case Narrative is not to present each case narrative separately, but to “bring to light similar or distinct characteristics that have become apparent from comparisons between several case narratives” (Shkedi 2005, p.165). While comparative case study analyses also seek to elucidate commonalities, they do so on the basis of choosing few and distinct variables which are then “tested” in an analysis of cross-case data. This can conceal case atypicalities and complexities in delivering more simplistic rather than thick descriptions. Multiple case analyses, on the other hand, are more exploratory in nature. A generalization focus is replaced by a perspectival one which seeks to advance understanding by identifying common patterns or themes that transcend the boundaries of single cases and illuminate certain phenomena. This is also reflected in the structure of my findings where there are no separate chapters or sections devoted to the individual case narratives. Rather, themes derived from a multiple cross-case analysis are presented with empirical evidence drawn from the entire data archive. Thus, I chose a structure highlighting communicability and readability while avoiding the theme/findings overlaps common in approaches which present several single case analyses in juxtaposition.

6.6.1 THE MAPPING STAGE

In discussing the process of multiple case analysis with the ATLAS.ti software, the main goal of the initial recoding of all data documents was to establish the orientation and direction of the following stages of the analysis. As there are no specific rules of organizing the data during this mapping stage, one's individual research choices drive this process. My focus in analysis rested on direct interpretation or inductive sense-making of source narratives instead of on categorical aggregation where one seeks to map frequencies of occurrences of specific interactions, behaviours, spoken words or phrases, etc. in creating and interconnecting categories (Stake 1995, p.74). Thus, in my study the more than 1,500 single codes which emerged from a broad inductive content analysis of all data were grouped into code groups. The emphasis of the mapping stage rests on creating emerging code groups or categories (Pidgeon & Henwood 1996). In this grouping, although codes were taken from the entire data base in ATLAS.ti, a tag was made next to each element of data to indicate which case narrative it was taken from. It became obvious by looking at the initial categorizations emerging from an analysis of the NorQuest data, that these reflected almost intuitively on later cases, in an outcome described as *category congruence* (Shkedi 2005, p.101). For example, during my NorQuest fieldwork, I became increasingly aware of the specific structural factors both within the College and those from without which circumscribed curricular choices as well as interactions between students and staff and ultimately inclusion efforts. This recognition was reflected in the many codes referring to structural factors in various guises. Resultingly, these "structural spectacles" refracted impressions from fieldwork at Arbis and Medis and informed coding and code labels. Shkedi (Ibid) writes that such intuition can be fruitful providing researchers are critical and do not impose code labels in an effort to make the material fit them.

Having established initial tentative code clusters, my next step in mapping involved making links between them by specifying what relationship they have to each other. Code group/category labels then denote meaningful connections rather than simply labelling disparate topics. For example, the code cluster, *student attendance* in my study included formal procedural guidelines regulating the number of unexplained student absences as well as informal rules of enforcement depending on teachers'

differing interpretation of attendance regulations. However, student attendance also connected to the cluster of *term structures* where, for example, NorQuest's whole year term structure meant that in the summer term, female students especially had greater difficulties in attending because their children were on school holidays. In addition, the low level of social security benefits available to migrant students dictated that many were forced to work during studies and this sometimes conflicted with school attendance. Such associations linked *student attendance* to larger code groups including both *internal (school) structural factors* as well as *external (societal) structural factors*.

Some approaches to multiple case study analysis suggest creating data organizational diagrams in which code categories are managed by creating horizontal and vertical diagrams where the more overarching categories sit higher (Ryan & Bernard 2000). For my study, ATLAS.ti. included a component which allowed for the creation of code family diagrams facilitating the depiction of relationships between groups/categories and themes. The flexible nature of the code family program also allowed for a creative reordering and re-configuring of code groups and interlinkages in arriving at themes.

6.6.2 THE THEMING STAGE

The theming stage entails amalgamating larger data categories around core themes. It is here the researcher selects what s/he considers to be the most meaningful and central themes and elucidates their relationships to other categories while mentally juxtaposing them with the theoretical background. Ostensibly, theming in my study began rather early. Even during data collection and in the first stages of analysis, certain subjective truths embedded in the material started to present themselves. This fledgling cognitive readiness was honed and refined during the initial and mapping stages of subsequent fieldwork periods. It is, however, recommended to wait until the theming stage before making final choices. (Shkedi 2005). The code group family diagrams created as organizational tools in mapping served as the means for crystallizing final themes, entitled "network groups" in ATLAS.ti. Themes were often portrayed as interrelationship nexuses from which arms extended outwards to other

category clusters of varying proximities. Theme labels were also more abstract, oscillating as they were between the empirical and the theoretical. In making theme choices, the sheer frequency of particular codes or volume of particular associations did not necessarily dictate final theme selection. In fact, it was sometimes the atypical or marginal categories which encapsulated a particular poignancy in defining, describing and truly “naming” the phenomenon of social inclusion. The *Inclusion Within the Walls* theme diagram (see appendix 1) illustrating the code group family/category arrangements depicting social inclusion within the schools, explicates how this theme was structured. It is constituted of code group families describing *interpersonal factors* (eg. Critical Consciousness/Reflexivity and Cultural Negotiation), *curricular factors* (e.g. Critical citizenship, and Curricular Teaching/inclusion) and *institutional factors* (e.g. Structural Factors/teachers/students, Program Aims and Development Needs). However, the code group families are not exclusive as each also subsume code clusters that describe interpersonal, curricular as well as institutional factors. Separate code group families are identified by different colours, but they also include code clusters which are shared among several code group families or several themes. Thus, some code group families are composed of a multicolour selection of code clusters illustrating the categories’ interconnectedness and malleability.

Some considerations which helped me in theming were thinking about how themes linked up with research questions and how they reflected the bordered reality of single cases. For example, is the chosen theme one which holds true for all three case studies? Another consideration was that any identified theme(s) should bind a thesis together and provide focal points for dialectic and analysis. Therefore, themes which inherently unify a thesis help by avoiding the risk of separation between cases within analysis. Subsequently, it also becomes easier to explore the cross-case similarities and differences, thereby facilitating the process of arriving at fuzzy generalizations or cross-case assertions (Carey 2012). Before making a final selection then, I revisited the NorQuest, Arbis and Medis material separately and compared the associations the themes had with the data by asking, do they “hold true” when looking at the individual case? Ultimately, multiple case study analysis in my study yielded the following final themes: *Inclusion Within the Walls*, *Inclusion Beyond the Walls*, and *(Colour) Blind Spots*.

6.6.3 WRITE-UP CHOICES

Lastly, decisions had to be made regarding which written format for multiple case study analyses best enhances the theoretical and empirical communicability of the text in the final report. For me this represented a choice between the *category-focused-narrative* report or the *narrative-based theory* report (Shkedi 2005). In the former, data is displayed thematically and explained within the context of emerging empirical findings without embedding it within a theoretical dialogue. Such a structure has been deemed most useful for studies dealing with many case narratives as there may be no separate chapters or sections devoted to individual case narratives (Merriam & Simpson 1984). Instead, each chapter is devoted to a separate cross-case issue, or theme; these being organized according to the logic of findings within a researcher's narrative.

The narrative-based theory report too presents a holistic discussion of all cases without analyses being compartmentalized within single case studies. The crucial difference, however, is that theoretical reflections are interwoven with the narratives including many descriptive, first-hand quotes emanating from the empirical material. Thus, it represents a hybrid text capitalizing on the synergy between informants' voices and conceptual-theoretical language. Narrative-based theory reports generally include key concepts, bibliographic references, and quotations from relevant academic sources. In deciding between these two written formats, I reviewed my methodological and theoretical choices to ascertain which approach best reflected them. Reflective questions that facilitated this process were, "Which format best communicates contestations of social inclusion in integration educations? What is the best way of conveying connections between case narratives? and How can I give participants' voices the most impact?" Ultimately, I opted for the narrative-based theory approach. By allowing for a creative juxtapositioning of participants' quotations with explanatory theory, it holds the promise of being able to maximize the communicative impact of themes. It further amplifies the visceral immediacy of research results which may help in disseminating findings and coupling them to social change objectives. In addition, one *Leitmotif* in anti-oppressive research is the focus on ongoing dialectic – between researcher and participant, theory and data, and the individual and society. Narrative

based theory reports continue this conversation as a recurring theme throughout the monograph.

6.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Att analytisk förstå konsekvenserna av sin egen berättelse under insamling [...] i ett sammanhang där klass, "ras"/etnicitet, kön (och generation) är centrala principer för hierarkisk social organisering är ett helt annat vetenskapligt projekt än att hävda att ens sociala identitet förhindrar en att förstå vissa sociala fenomen och att närma sig vissa sociala grupper. (Lundqvist, Davies & Mulinari 2005, p.117)²⁵

For a researcher attempting to interrogate the ethical ramifications of one's study, what is demanded by the above quote goes far beyond a discussion of issues on informed consent, confidentiality, harm reduction or assurances of taking the ethical codes enshrined in various professional associations into account. Though these are doubtlessly important considerations, Lundqvist, Davies and Mulinari exhort us to dig deeper; to critique our own positionality by examining the power dynamics that underpin and shape our interactions with study participants. Therefore, the aim of this subchapter is to discuss the study's ethical considerations by interpreting these within multifarious negotiations of power between my positionality and my interrelations with participants. Such an approach also reflects the rootedness of anti-oppressive research within analyses of power relations in uncovering processes of othering.

Essentially, in a research approach which considers participants as active subjects who contribute their knowledge and life world interpretations, ethical concerns transcend rigid guidelines and rules. Instead, ethical negotiations need to be understood as fluid and ongoing (Bilger & van Liempt 2009). Indeed, research ethics are changeable. When researchers ask new questions, use new methods and work with new

²⁵ "To analytically understand the consequences of one's own story during collection ... in a context where class, "race" / ethnicity, gender (and generation) are central principles in hierarchical social organization is a completely different scientific project than to claim that one's social identity prevents one from understanding certain social phenomena or approaching certain social groups." (author's translation)

material, new ethical problems are actualized (Gustafsson, Hermerén & Petterson 2005).

Speaking broadly, it is essential that all parties ought to derive something of value from their research involvement and that this is achieved without the abuse of trust (Kvale 1996, Jorgensen 1992). However, we must critically assess the ways in which “participation”, for example, can be used to seduce and coax subjects into believing that they are included as equals while masking continued exploitative relations (Carey 2010, p.238). Margaret Boushel (2000) rightly argues that researcher reflexivity is crucial in interrogating the nature of these relations. In my study, the degree of cultural embeddedness, of experiencing the effects of the research environment upon myself, helped in examining my personal role, perceptions and power relations. The following discussion of ethics framed within a dialogue between researcher location and power dynamics is interspersed with illustrative quotes from my case study observation logs. In addition, issues of respecting the rights of cultural groups and social change, informed consent, harm reduction, and confidentiality are also elucidated here. However, in order to avoid overlap with debates discussed in sub-chapter, *Anti-oppressive critical research* (pp.78-91), I will mainly restrict myself to an exploration of circumstances where my researcher role and power position could not be seamlessly reconciled in interactions with participants; where it presented ethical dilemmas, whose solutions were always fraught and contested.

6.7.1 POWER DYNAMICS AND RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY

It is important to highlight that although my study illuminates inclusion practices in integration educations which represent the collective voices of students and staff, these two groups occupied vastly divergent positions in the institutions’ power hierarchies. Negotiating appropriate researcher roles and ways of equalizing power relations therefore differed greatly from case to case. My hybrid position as a migrant researcher, with cultural, family and geographical affiliations connecting me to each of my case environments, eased my ability to integrate with different communities. Yet, my position also circumscribed and set boundaries for my interactions.

6.7.2 POWER AND POSITIONALITY IN INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS

In chronicling the power dynamics with migrant students participating in the study, the diversity which existed within and between student groups in the three case studies must be underlined. While at NorQuest and Medis, groups mainly consisted of students from visible minority backgrounds, at Arbis the majority were white, Western and more highly educated. Cultivating my supportive, non-judgemental role in dealings with migrant students aided by my own migrant and professional background and my appreciation of their oft precarious life situations (see p.104) was generally beneficial. However, varying degrees of language proficiency obfuscated this interaction as did undeniable differences rooted in social position, gender, race and power hierarchies. The following excerpt illustrates one such case;

One student at my table writes nothing and seems to have difficulties either understanding the nature of the task or even the accompanying text. She sits quietly and though I offer to help, she does not ask and becomes quieter and more listless as the others work on. She seems sometimes embarrassed and I don't know if this has to do with me sitting at the table and witnessing her troubles or something else. (Observation log 26.7. 2015)

It is interesting that although I technically wielded no formal authoritative power in the classroom, I could not erase the obvious differences in status and influence owing to my position as a researcher, as well as the fact that being white endowed me with systemic entitlements unavailable to her. I was an insider, and by wearing my privilege on my face, I belonged. In addition, my (white) migrant “success story” may have been disadvantageous from the perspective of a black student who struggled to fit. In fact, this student also avoided me after the final exams in which she failed to progress to the next language level. In the group interview, she had related the difficulties of her personal and economic position and how she fought to participate in LINC but was forced to drop out periodically due to the economic demands of working full-time as a single mother. This, among other examples, forced me to reassess my own *migrant imaginary* such as my privileged position in being able to draw upon an extended support network consisting of family, a quality formative education, and the

advantage of not visibly sticking out from the majority in terms of my skin colour. Referring to the latter, in one of the group interviews, a white Russian student intimated that for “people like us” cultural differences in integrating were almost non-existent because our European roots were so culturally similar to those of the host country. Judging from externals, he identified me as a cultural ally, placing me in an “us” vs. “them” category – a dichotomy which I had been conscious to overcome in my efforts to facilitate social access with all migrant students. It became a poignant reminder of one’s tangible, visceral *location* signified by the body (Merleau-Ponty 1982). This also extended to my gender where being a male researcher in staff circles composed almost entirely of female teachers endowed me with definite advantages. For example, in interactions with certain students and student groups, being taken seriously and garnering respect proved easier.

Another case which illustrated contestations of power and its ethical ramifications concerned my location as an anti-oppressive researcher. It entails adopting a position of partiality and activism in furthering the position of socially disadvantaged groups. In most cases this did not bring me into direct conflict with staff or administrators but there were notable exceptions. One such exception concerned extending the option to students in SFI educations to speak either Swedish or English in our informal interactions in class and in subsequent interviews. Many students chose to express themselves in English as their present Swedish language proficiency was rudimentary and also perhaps as it often represented the *lingua franca* in their daily social interactions. However, at Medis SFI, administrators were not supportive of the language choice offered.

For instance, I am asked to speak ONLY Swedish with students and that although some of them speak better English, its usage should be avoided as this gives rise to possible discrimination of those students who do not speak the language (fair point). I point out, however, that for my group interviews, I would like to give students the option of choosing an interview language as a way of optimizing their skills and also a means by which I would obtain more detailed and in-depth narratives, their experiences being primary.... “Kristina” seemed to agree reluctantly. (Observation log, 10.10.2016)

The “language issue” was never satisfactorily resolved and although I advocated for student choice in reimagining power hierarchies, there was a clear message from the administration that language multiplicity in the classroom was undesirable. The punitive consequences of breaking the “rule” were often subtle, being dealt out in small admonitions, looks etc. but laden with guilt. Ganassin and Holmes (2013) advocate that in order to foreground the voices of all participants, especially vulnerable or marginalized groups, the researcher must ensure an ethical research praxis that is collaborative and multilingual. They argue that such inclusivity is crucial if research outcomes seriously seek to question societal, policy-based and structural practices that maintain dominant knowledges, languages and ideologies.

In another example, while the borderland I inhabited of being “between and betwixt” different groups of participants afforded me the ability to intersect different worlds and identities, it sometimes entailed ethical problems. On one occasion, when a black student had expressed criticisms on humanitarian grounds of Canada’s Anti-Terrorism Act of 2015 (also known as Bill C51) these had been curtly dismissed by his teacher causing him to feel ashamed and affronted. I experienced a real dilemma in how to respond given that the activism role propagated in anti-oppressive research contrasted sharply with role recommendations in methodology texts on participant observation which emphasized researcher “objectivity” and non-interference (Fine & Sandstrom 1988).

I converse with him afterwards asking him to elaborate his views and agree with him that there are certainly problematic elements in C51. He seems justified though I feel like I contradicted the teacher but simply couldn’t keep silent. Opportunities for opening this up for class discussion and dialogue have been lost. (Observation log 24.7.2015)

Situations in which I felt I had to choose ideological sides in contestations of power did not become easier with time but perhaps I was better able to justify why I did so as a quote from a similar case a year later illustrates:

I feel that that my views can be made known and that perhaps this is not a conflict of interest but rather a way of positioning myself, and defining my own

agency and critical, anti-oppressive research orientation. (Observation log, 7.4.2016)

It has been, and continues to be, an ongoing effort to reconcile a critical, social change-focused agenda given its inherent partiality and activism with the generally sanctioned role of the researcher as impartial and “neutral.” Nowhere did this conflict become more apparent as in my struggle to achieve *relational accountability* with study participants (Wilson 2013). The group interviews, for example, confirmed that many students had not been aware that they could demand changes.

Many remarked that this in their experience was the first time that they had been asked their opinions about the program as a whole... I sensed a relief when students felt they were truly being “asked” and that their opinions mattered. (Observation log 12.8.2015)

The wish, expressed by students at the conclusion of interviews, that my study would have concrete tangible outcomes which translated their lived experiences into action by reforming institutional practices is one which I struggle(d) to address. To questions of; “what happens now” and “when will things change”, I felt that my responses were insufficient, perhaps also because I had been remiss in considering what lay beyond the study’s horizon. Although findings were interrogated in dissemination seminars and concluding conversations with students, teachers and program deans where institutional procedures and structures were critiqued, I also felt conflicted in my own role and constrained by my liminal power position within the institutions in deciding how to push things further. As a result, I experienced a distinct sense of powerlessness in meeting student expectations. This pervasive feeling of insufficiency has been partly responsible for my reluctance in disengaging from the research settings and why my work with the schools has continued in joint project work.

6.7.3 POWER AND POSITIONALITY IN INTERACTIONS WITH STAFF

While the previous discussion centered around discourses touching upon power dynamics and researcher positioning in interactions with students, I

will now turn to similar negotiations in my interactions with staff. Here, my whiteness, a characteristic which I shared with the majority of staff, did not “other” me nor did my educational background. In fact, both served to make me more like rather than unlike them. However, there were other aspects inherent in my position and perceived power status which shaped staff expectations and raised ethical concerns.

One such issue pertained to how educators perceived the objectives of my study. If one could make an imprecise distinction, there were apparent differences between teaching/support staff and administrators in the reception of my study. Though this cannot be generalized to all, administrators were often more guarded in both informal discussions and interviews when talking about the programs. I frequently found myself having to work much harder in creating a positive, buoyant atmosphere in interviews with them to assuage doubts about the non-judgmental nature of the research. Correspondingly, these discussions were also less free flowing and yielded fewer critical insights. Terms such as *critical social inclusion* and *anti-oppression* seemed to raise red flags:

She also appeared rather hesitant about allowing me to observe her as she felt like I would be evaluating her level of “oppression” or “anti-oppression”[...] I was at pains to reassure her and emphasize that the experiences of both staff and students occupied the focal point of my research and that the theory would serve as a mirror rather than a blunt assessment tool. I hope that I made a difference but am still unsure. (Observation log, 10.10.2016)

An added complicating factor may have been that all three educational institutions were experiencing sweeping structural and curricular changes adding to feelings of vulnerability on the part of administrators. My presence may thus have been interpreted as just one more attempt to find fault in a situation where administrator resources, and rooms for maneuvering were already circumscribed.

One common element which defined my interactions with teachers as well as students related to my location as a semi-outsider within the institutional hierarchy. The latter entailed that students saw me as an advocate who could possibly affect program changes, while with teachers my location posited me as an emotional ally, one who could offer support

against what many perceived to be unresponsive and sometimes oppressive institutional cultures as the following quotes illustrate:

I continue with an interview with “R” which turns into a very frank and almost cathartic experience for him. He states many times that teachers do not have any opportunities to plan or discuss the program and no access to occupational therapists. He feels that the interview gave him an opportunity to offload. (Observation log, 18.10.2016)

She jokes with me after coffee that I have become somewhat of a garbage can allowing her to offload something which she is not alone in being in need of. I simply say that this, in part, is why I am here. (Observation log, 19.10.2016)

The admission, in the previous sentence, that a part of my researcher role included providing active emotional support aligns with participant-centered research approaches but also presented me with ethical challenges. Negotiating role components of immersion, empathy, critical distance and self-reflection was a recurring challenge. It was a process in which positionalities, role and power dynamics were consistently reconfigured. Being considered an ally proved beneficial in eliciting in-depth critical reflections in interviews with teachers to the extent that some asked to review transcripts for fear of having been too outspoken. However, it also raised the question if it was possible to be an ally to all. It was especially when divisions among the teaching staff were exposed during my embeddedness within the school environments that my allegiances were tested. Occasionally, I would be asked “indirectly” what I thought about certain staff or their teaching styles, as in the following example:

“Maren” stops me outside of the class and states that it must be difficult for me to just sit and keep quiet. It seems as if she is not satisfied with how the class was run and my suspicions about a certain level of discomfort with proceedings shared by her are confirmed. (Observation log, 7.4.2016)

In the above case, the criticism was well-founded as a colleague used her power in ways which patronized, frustrated and disempowered students during the course of a joint information session. Maren was also correct in her assessment that it had been difficult for me to “keep quiet” and had probably interpreted certain non-verbal clues. I deflected her question by answering that observing all manner of learning situations was essential for

me in order to build a complex understanding of how social inclusion is practiced on an everyday level, but this reply seemed disingenuous. Deep down, I felt that I had betrayed Maren's implicit trust in me as an ally because we had openly discussed the program and its developmental needs on many prior occasions. She had also confided that she often felt like being on the margins of the teaching community and I knew she needed support. Assuaging one's conscience with ethical mantras espousing researcher impartiality helped very little here.

It is on a question of personal empowerment, that I will conclude this section on power dynamics and researcher positionality. Choosing Swedish as my linguistic homeland in Finland had, essentially, always othered me except in Nordic networks. Therefore, I was unprepared when I was asked by both teachers and students at Arbis and Medis to help out during grammar exercises, language games and discussions:

I help out where I can and am glad to be utilized as a resource as this is the first time where my expertise in Swedish is being recognized as an asset to help other learners. (Observation log Arbis 9.3.2016)

This very personal example of inclusion attests to the reciprocal nature of exchanges in research whereby all parties are altered by the interaction. In being thus empowered, my view of myself and my agency changed over the course of my study. It also reveals the malleability of power relations, where a perceived deficit in one context can become a strength in another and how dependent such shifts are on the structural factors which can work to either facilitate or impede.

6.7.4 INFORMED CONSENT, HARM REDUCTION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

In the following section, I will briefly highlight how ethical issues relating to ensuring participants' informed consent and harm reduction, as well as the protection of confidentiality, were negotiated within the parameters of my study. Many of these have already been elucidated in discussions on anti-oppressive critical research (see pp.78-91) but will be briefly summarized here.

The concept of *informed consent* entails that the researcher has endeavoured to accurately inform participants of the nature of the research. It presupposes that the latter can only consent if they are fully cognizant of the nature of their requested involvement in the study, including time commitments, types of responsibilities, discussion topics, and some of the potential physical and emotional risks involved. Informed consent implies that participants are intellectually competent to understand the nature of the research, meaning that they have the intellectual capacity and psychological maturity necessary to reflect on their involvement in the study and that they are autonomous in making self-directed choices.

There is a danger in institutional settings, such as schools, that gatekeepers – teachers or administrators – determine student involvement in a study and thus jeopardize another key component of informed consent, namely voluntariness. In order to mitigate against research “on them” which objectifies and disempowers, coercion even with paternalistic “best intentions” must be deemed ethically indefensible. Moreover, participants must be made aware of their right to discontinue their involvement at any stage of the research, free from obligation and pressure to continue or inducements such as money or other rewards. Lastly, informed consent behooves the researcher to be as forthright as possible about the nature of their research, including their professional affiliations or academic standing, and the intended uses of their study (O'Leary 2004, pp.52-56)

With regards to researcher honesty in presenting study aims and potential outcomes, informed consent from prospective participants was solicited by sending letters of introduction as well as through introductory face-to-face discussions and workshops. A factor which facilitated introductions to staff was that contacts with specific gatekeepers in the integration educations including head administrators and teachers had been established in advance. With students, I hoped to address a lack of prior familiarity by insisting on open introductory sessions with every student group where issues of informed consent and confidentiality were emphasized. Particularly with migrant participants, I endeavoured to use language which corresponded to their level of comprehension in both letters of consent and in personal discussions. I also checked the appropriateness of the letters' language niveau with LINC and SFI teachers

prior to their distribution. These were then signed, returned and stored in case study files in order to add to the chain of evidence for ethical conduct in my research. In addition, at the outset of both individual and group interviews, discussion aims were generally reiterated, as well as assurances of confidentiality and the voluntary nature of participation including the right to discontinue. Prior to commencing with the fieldwork periods of participant observations, the right “not to be observed”, nor to be included in observation log entries was also explained to students (Bilger & Van Liempt 2009).

A shortcoming, from an anti-oppressive research perspective in this manner of ensuring informed consent is that shared responsibilities for all research stages and outcomes are not negotiated from the outset of the process. Even if the researcher seeks to ensure informed consent, it is still largely *ex post facto* and researcher-driven, with its inherent power imbalances. Seeking to ascertain what participants hope to derive from the ongoing research and how it may facilitate a betterment of current institutional arrangements and inclusion practices is important but, ideally participant needs and wishes ought to have dictated study parameters from the planning stages. One example of such a collaborative approach can be found in my group interviews with migrant students.

Lastly, with regards to disclosing my professional affiliations and academic standing, as well as the intended uses of my study, I endeavoured to represent these as honestly as possible during initial information sessions. Later it became obvious, however, that particularly migrant students had hoped for more concrete change-driven outcomes which could be “seen” in altered institutional arrangements. Explaining my study’s limitations not only exposed my own liminal power position but left me feeling as if I had failed them (see pp.124-127).

The ethical imperative of *doing no harm* in social science research generally encompasses emotional or psychological harm, rather than physical injury. This makes the protection against “harm” a conflictual, problematic area because risk factors may be difficult to identify and predict. Especially in case study research where all participants spend lengthy periods of time interacting within the study environment, research

may spark resentment, incite fear or anxiety, be perceived as embarrassing, or dredge up unpleasant memories or emotional pain (O’Leary 2004, p.53). Contrastingly, the degree of embeddedness of the researcher may also be beneficial in allowing for enough time and familiarity to address issues of harm prior to the conclusion of the study. In any case, causing harm, albeit unplanned and unintentional, can easily happen. Within anti-oppressive or more participant-centered research designs, the epistemology underlying methodology choice and implementation reinforces harm mitigation. What my study lacked in initial collaboration with participants in selecting and implementing research methods, I tried to redress within the course of case study fieldwork. For example, in opting for group- instead of individual interviews with migrant students, I sought to create a safer environment where the threshold for interrogating sensitive topics within supportive groups would arguably be lower than in one-to-one interviews.

Group interviews also address the shared components of experience in integration educations and facilitate collective consciousness raising with their inherent empowering potential thereby reducing harm (Linhorst 2002). However, in interviews with vulnerable groups, the researcher must be cognizant of the extra responsibility for mitigating harm this method of data collection entails. It is a very real possibility that the insensitive treatment of/by one individual here could harm the entire group of persons who already have previous experiences of disempowering treatment (Bilger & Van Liempt 2009). My own level of embeddedness within the schools (see pp.81, 89, 105-106), role choices (see pp.81, 104, 107, 122, 124-127) and socializing with students outside of class helped to sensitize me to their situations and to possible areas of harm. However, this does not suggest that my position and role were uniformly perceived of as unproblematic as the example with the black female student demonstrated (see pp.121-122).

With staff, the rapport which developed during participant observations and over the two in-depth rounds of interviews created a level of trust and security which the openness of their reflections attests to. For many, the interviews provided a cathartic safe zone in times of institutional upheaval (see pp.89 & 126). Areas of potential harm, actualized in some teachers’ concerns about having been too frank or critical in some of their observations, were alleviated by making transcripts available to them for

perusal. The other area of potential harm encapsulated in administrator' insecurities in light of what they perceived the aims of the study to be, was more difficult to resolve. Despite repeated assurances and explanations of the exploratory, inclusive aims underpinning the research, some administrators remained guarded (see p.125). Lastly, the aims of debriefing sessions as well as dissemination seminars during which students and staff interrogated the study's main results were to alleviate issues of concern. Ideally, they also contributed to an atmosphere of open dialogue which I hoped served as a foundation for the whole study.

Another ethical obligation intricately interconnected with assurances of harm avoidance is that of *ensuring confidentiality*. Stated simply, it involves protecting the identity of those, apart from the researcher, participating in the study. Initially, confidentiality entails safeguarding information obtained in collaborative cooperation with other participants and the secure storage, management and negotiated access to information. In addition, the publication of research findings must proceed in a manner which preserves the integrity and anonymity of participants. Confidentiality also involves trust building and communicating research integrity, both of which are central components of anti-oppressive critical research. In my study, this hinged on my ability to be self-reflexive about my own role and position as well as to create an inclusive dialogue about the nature of the study in letters of consent, informal conversations and during information seminars.

Within critical research approaches, the protection of an individual's identity and integrity is realized if participants have opportunities to control what type of information is disseminated about them, how it is collected, by whom and the nature and disclosure of this information (Bilger & Van Liempt 2009). This presupposes levels of participation and partnership and a radical inversion of the knower-learner paradigm not consistently realized in my study (see pp.85 & 91). Although, I chose collaborative research methods which involved participants in co-creating group interviews and offered them choices of interview language and location, (see pp.82, 101-104, 131) their "ownership" of the process in other areas was limited. Participants were not involved in the selection of methods, nor in decisions concerning who collects the data and how it was analyzed. While dissemination seminars and the returning of interview transcripts gave

participants some control over presentation and content, they were not involved in the subsequent dissemination of findings, except in an advisory capacity. Some reasons for this included the logistical and time constraints circumscribing the field work periods in the three case studies.

Regarding the identifiability of information; the names of the participating educational institutions are disclosed, while the identities of interviewees were protected by assigning pseudonyms and by the non-disclosure of identifying background information. In my presentation of preliminary findings in each of the schools, I also used some quotes from one of the other field studies in illustrating main themes, in order to prevent certain passages from being able to be identified by participants. This further highlighted how many themes transected and transcended the local contexts of integration educations.

Another integral component of confidentially alluded to earlier, is case study data storage. There must be considered strategies for storing, accessing and managing research materials in order to avoid conflicts which jeopardize trust among participants and consequently the trustworthiness of the research (Drugge 2016, p.209). Especially when working with vulnerable participants such as migrant students, data access by whom and for what purposes was a recurring question. In information sessions and prior to interviews, I therefore, reiterated that aside from me and my thesis supervisors, no one would be granted access to the raw data which included identifying information. I also devised a data management plan which ensured that during and after the project, all data would be secured in a locked storage at the Swedish School of Social Science and saved on secure University servers with each file protected by a password. In addition, raw research data, such as interviews and collected participant observation logs would conditionally be deposited – after negotiations with study participants – within the Finnish Social Science Data Archive. Such data will exclude identifying information.

Lastly, one must consider how the publication of research findings preserves the integrity of participants. Given that publications serve multiple purposes from engendering public discussion, exposing one's research to the scientific scrutiny of peers, providing a springboard for

others to further develop ideas and contributing to social change, they must meet a number of quality assurance requirements regarding confidentiality (Gustafsson, Hermerén & Petterson 2005). The latter is especially crucial here, because research reports are generally the least participant-collaborative elements of a study. How those who generously donated their time and expertise in co-creating the research are identified and represented remains the sole responsibility of the researcher and thus generates a unique burden of proof. In part, the in-depth and open nature of interviews and subsequent dissemination sessions, helped clarify how participants ought and wished to be portrayed. It also helped to discuss issues of representation with colleagues at CEREN sharing similar backgrounds in critical, anti-racist and decolonial research. Their insights after reading and critiquing portions of text on ethical issues and methodology, were invaluable. However, I am still insecure and uncertain as to how my participants will perceive their portrayal in my publications, understand my findings and effectively evaluate the study's impact in effecting a betterment of their condition. It remains my fervent hope that the atmosphere of goodwill and reciprocal learning which characterized the fieldwork will be preserved within its written re-productions, reinterpretations and community debates.

In considering the ethical ramifications of my research, I also took into account the ethical codes enshrined by various professional associations within the social sciences (i.e. ISA 2001, TENK 2009, IFSW 2017). Before receiving permission to commence with my NorQuest College fieldwork, I had to submit a thorough ethical application to the RDC (Red Deer College) Research Ethics Board in which all relevant issues especially risk factors and protection from harm as well as data management were subjected to stringent scrutiny. At the study's conclusion, RDC also required a reflective account of the researcher's own assessment of having met pertinent ethical guidelines for research with human subjects. Both the application and justifications were deemed to be sufficient.

7 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

In presenting my empirical findings, I have chosen a *narrative-based theory approach* which prioritizes the ongoing dialectic between theory and data. I have therefore elected to interweave theoretical perspectives, placed at the end of each section, with the narratives to capitalize on the synergy between participants' voices and conceptual language. The resulting conversation between data and theory revolves around competing interpretations of social inclusion within integration educations and the *inlusectionalities* these create. With the term *inlusectionalities*, I have coined a concept denoting the intersections of inclusion and exclusion through which the liminal spaces, that position migrant students as between and betwixt belonging and othering, come into view.

Narratives explore these inlusectionalities by highlighting the interplay of personal, cultural and structural factors in “colouring” inclusion efforts within LINC and SFI. Though the distinctions between these factors are pervious and porous, it is in their interplay that the nature of what is meant by “inclusion”, or “integration” is revealed. In seeking to foreground my participants' voices, I leaned on two particular questions in deciding the narrative flow of the empirical findings: Can participants see themselves in the study, and; How can I maximize the impact of their voices? As such, I opted to include a wide selection of primary quotes in their original language in the text as a way of centering and informing my reflections. The empirical findings thus shuttle back and forth between representations of first-hand accounts and theoretical interpretations of the different guises' inclusion takes in integration programs. I hope that by examining the fluid inter-relations between exclusion and inclusion and how these subsequently reframe understandings within the settings of integration educations, my narrative choice communicates the immediacy of research results and goes some way to coupling them to social change objectives.

The three constituent themes discussed in these chapters are presented by moving from the practical, institutional manifestations of inclusion to more of an exploration as to where and how these efforts intersect to create

liminal spaces. Therefore, the first theme (1), *Inclusion Within the Walls*, examines the interpersonal, curricular and institutional arrangements through which inclusion is negotiated within the schools while theme two, (2) *Inclusion Beyond the Walls*, extends such negotiations to the society in which they are embedded. The final theme, (3) *(Colour) Blind Spots*, shifts the focus from the more observable and tangible to those discourses or conversations which in their taken-for-grantedness seem to be “absent.” They are rarely critically interrogated, yet by permeating program delivery, they evolve into institutional policy.

7.1 INCLUSION WITHIN THE WALLS

Med inklusion kunde man göra hur mycket som helst mera men det är på så olika områden, hela Arbis som byggnad och utrymme och space och sen i planering och marknadsföring. Och sen just i klassen och arbetsmetoderna där med hurdana grupparbeten, uppgifter man har. Jag vet inte helt praktiskt vad man gör i klassen, till exempel hurdana ämnen man diskuterar och hurdana frågor man ställer? (Arbis SFI tutor/integration coordinator)²⁶

The above quote neatly encapsulates the width and breadth of interpersonal, curricular and organizational changes required if one aims at an inclusion of migrant students which conceptualizes their participation in ways that go well beyond the superficial displays of celebration multiculturalism and its exoticism of otherness. The integration coordinator cited is apprehensive of the transformational impact posed by such a critical implementation of social inclusion and recognizes that this would involve asking other questions of aims, methods and program contents. Similar apprehensions coupled with sincere efforts to “do the right thing” by students were commonplace in discussions with staff, as was an ambivalence regarding just how much cultural accommodation was healthy in order to avoid the Scylla and Charybdis of cultural relativism vs. enforced assimilation. *Inclusion within the Walls* discusses the oft challenging,

²⁶ “With inclusion, you could do so much more on so many different levels, the whole of Arbis as a building and space and then in planning and marketing, how could we include? And then in the class with the working methods, the kinds of group work and tasks you have. I do not practically know what one does in class, for example, what topics one discusses and what questions one asks?” (author’s translation)

fragmented and contradictory nature of efforts “to include” as well as the creativity and frustrations experienced by participants in integration educations in this process.

7.1.1 CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND CHANGE AGENCY

Within understandings of Transformation Inclusion and Transposition Inclusion, critical consciousness – whereby participants interrogate their unique identities and contradictory positionalities as a precursor to social action – serves as an essential pillar in uncovering complicities (Fook & Gardener 2007). In the study, it became obvious that personal reflexivity among teaching and support staff was a central and recurring theme in interviews. It served as a way to explain their value foundations in negotiating cultural differences, lent a sense of continuity to their own narratives and justified their view of, and approach to otherness. With few exceptions, staff communicated an eagerness and positivity in “testing” their own preconceptions within the social laboratory of the classroom alongside commitments to learn and adapt. Sentiments like; ”Jag tycker att folk från andra länder är en friskt fläkt. De är en injektionsspruta,”²⁷ were commonplace as were commitments to confronting personal stereotypes and prejudices as encapsulated in the following quote by a NorQuest LINC teacher; “Inside my head I just have to knock it down and think don’t be silly you can’t judge everybody like that because they come from an African culture.” However, there was also a recognition that such personal interrogations of the effects of one’s own cultural baggage on encounters with racialized others could not take place within the personal vacuum of private ruminations on “cultural difference,” but that these had to be articulated in dialogue and interaction. The importance of continually unearthing one’s unexamined attitudes and values is elegantly expressed by an Arbis SFI teacher who reflects upon efforts to broaden her own social horizons in escaping the oft circumscribing confines of the Finland-Swedish community:

²⁷ “I think that people from other countries are a breath of fresh air. They are a positive injection.” (author’s translation)

Att man hela tiden blir påmind om den här "boxen." Sen går man också in i sig själv. Jag vet att vissa av mina idéer kan vara väldigt fyrkantiga och inskränkta och har medvetet gått in för att integrera mig själv i sammanhang där jag träffar fiffiga, trevliga [andra][...] Det har jag gjort mycket medvetet för att komma ut från ankdammen. (Arbis SFI teacher)²⁸

Striving for this dialectic was further expressed as an eternal curiosity, an openness and a way exposing oneself to different ways of thinking and acting which included a quest for knowledge and a familiarity with current research in the field. In examining the expressions of critical consciousness of minority staff, when compared with those of teachers and administrators from majority backgrounds, I saw a more nuanced picture emerge. Staff with personal migration experiences involving integration struggles characterized by discrimination or racism found that this enhanced their understanding of, and competence in dealing with the multifarious life situations of students. Those sharing similar cultural backgrounds as their students also spoke of a cultural affinity and of their role as bridge builders in translating between, across and among cultures. In addition, there was the keen awareness of their minority status given that they represented an insignificant percentage compared to majority staff in all three case study institutions. Some recognized the danger of being marketed as one who "represents all immigrants" and sometimes described their position as that of a "mascot", something from which they were at pains to distance themselves. Their own minority position also acted as a catalyst that sensitized them to efforts by majority groups to define, manage and speak for them and their students. As one tutor explained:

Vändpunkten för mig var när jag [...] insåg att jag själv tillhör en minoritet. Jag själv har en känsla att det är fel när andra definierar min minoritetskap. Jag vill också ha en röst i den här frågan och jag upplever att man är ändå lite outsider. (Arbis SFI tutor)²⁹

²⁸ "That you are constantly reminded of this "box." Then you also turn inwards. I know that some of my ideas can be very unimaginative and restrictive and have deliberately gone to integrate myself in contexts where I meet clever, nice [others] [...] I have done this very consciously to escape the [Finland-Swedish] duck pond." (author's translation)

²⁹ "The turning point for me was when I [...] realized that I myself belong to a minority. I personally have a feeling that it is wrong when others define my minority status. I also want to have a voice on this issue, and I feel that one is always a bit of an outsider..." (author's translation)

Such reflections touch upon issues of power and privilege though these were less frequently “named” in describing the unique positionalities of staff. Some commented that a reciprocal learning approach in which teachers make themselves vulnerable as co-learners allows for greater empathy in understanding the more vulnerable position of students and in finding “spaces for reducing some of that power”, as one educator phrased it. Reflections on power also resurfaced in discussing the conflictual role of teachers as agents of either care or control. Given that student participation in LINC or SFI programs was financed by various state agencies including national employment offices, the latter demanded rigorous attendance strictures which instructors were enjoined on enforcing. This placed teachers in the unenviable position of gatekeepers, a position many found uncomfortable, as this educator explains:

Har du tänkt på det att du är nog för dem hela tiden en Kelaspion? [...] hur ska jag klagöra för dem att jag inte är det, för på sätt och vis så är jag det. När jag handleder dem är jag i kontakt härifrån till Arbetskraftsbyrån. Om de inte gör vad de ska göra är jag skyldig att rapportera, så jag är en Kelaspion.”
(Arbis SFI teacher)³⁰

It is not surprising, then, that staff members spoke at length about not taking student trust for granted and working consistently to prove that one ought to earn the trust invested. For many this also meant that they were willing, and in some cases forced, to expand their educational roles to support their students’ welfare beyond the purely academic, as one instructor put it:

Vet ni, så här är det ju, vi är lärare och pedagoger men vi ska också vara socialarbetare, familjerådgivare, präster och mamma, pappa, alla de här.
(Medis SFI teacher)³¹

³⁰ “Have you thought about that for them you are always a Kela [social insurance office] spy? How can I make it clear to them that I am not, though in some way I am. When I supervise them, I am in contact with the employment office. If they do not do what they are supposed to do, I am obliged to report, so I am a Kela spy.” (author’s translation)

³¹ “You know, this is how it is, we are teachers and educators, but we should also be social workers, family counselors, priests and moms, dads, all of these.” (author’s translation)

Given the unique position of staff in migrant integration programs as perhaps the first and most frequent point of contact with majority society for many students, this expanded role entailed far greater extra-pedagogical responsibilities for individual educators. It transformed teacher-student relations into something for which their monetary compensation and training were simply inadequate.

When it came to social action as an extension of critical consciousness, however, one could observe a distinct disconnect. For many educators, efforts at interrogating their own subjectivities were prefaced by statements that the aim of such efforts was in some way to smooth the path of intercultural meetings and allow teachers to understand themselves better while overcoming “cultural differences” in their daily interactions with migrant students. Thus, periods of teaching abroad, travels, community engagement and personal migration backgrounds were all listed as shortcuts in developing one’s cultural competence. However, they were rarely seen as conduits to a greater awareness of the institutional and structural factors shaping the lives of students and staff, nor as a means by which these could be jointly challenged. Reflexivity was largely apolitical and interpersonal. In fact, many educators were at pains to point out that they sought to limit their public political engagement on pressing social problems even if they realized that these circumscribed the lives of migrants and as a corollary, their own lives. Reasons for this reluctance varied, ranging from time scarcities and family commitments to disinterest. However, a number of instructors at Arbis and Medis also cited fear of the possible societal repercussions that their participation might engender given the abrasive social climate which typifies Finnish migration debates:

Man kan säga att jag egentligen borde ha ett ansvar för att försöka motverka diskriminering utanför institutet men frågan är hur jag kan göra det utan att vara synlig [...] Vill jag vara så offentlig? Läget nu är faktiskt ganska hårt och man vill kanske vara lite försiktig hur man kommer ut och vilka uttalanden man vill göra offentligt för att inte bli attackerad. Man tänker vilka

Empirical Findings

inverknningar det kan ha på sitt jobb. Jag är försiktig med det för tillfället.
(Arbis SFI teacher)³²

Such concerns about personal security were not voiced by staff at NorQuest and one could hypothesize that this is in some way connected with more positive and permissive Canadian social attitudes towards migrants and their inclusion.

Interestingly, migrant students often displayed more agency in challenging discrimination and racializing attitudes than their instructors despite their more vulnerable position. Newspaper campaigns and blogs to change attitudes, social activism in joint solidaristic efforts with other migrants, and personal challenges of arbitrary decisions by civil servants were compelling examples of their political emancipation. Such activities were applauded by educators, as illustrated by the following interview excerpt from an integration coordinator at Arbis who recognized the personal initiative of students who challenged civil servants for the right to be able to integrate in Swedish:

De som jag känner till har först själva tagit reda på att [programmet]existerar sen har de gått till TE-byrån och sagt, jag vill på det här och då har de fått integrationsstödet för det. Så på det sättet har det, och det tycker jag är jätte fascinerande, krävt en helt annan initiativförmåga och handlingskraft att hitta hit. De är liksom på ett helt annat sätt färdiga att göra allt själv och har kapacitet för det jämfört med vad jag är van vid från förr. (Arbis integration coordinator)³³

³² “One can say that I really should have a responsibility to try to counteract discrimination outside the Institute, but the question is how can I do it without being visible [...] Do I want to be so public? The situation is actually pretty hard and maybe you want to be a little careful how you go public and what statements you want to make in order not to be attacked. You think of your job and what impact it can have. I’m careful about that at the moment.” (author’s translation)

³³ “Those who I know have first found out that [the program] exists then they have gone to the employment office and said, I want this and have received the integration support for it. So, in that way, it has, and I think that is really fascinating, demanded a completely different initiative and effort to get here. They are, in an entirely other way, ready to do everything themselves and have the capacity for that compared to what I was used to in the past.” (author’s translation)

However, this admiration of student resourcefulness rarely translated into a joint agency among teachers which would have them standing alongside their pupils as equal partners in opposing social inequalities.

How do we interpret these negotiations of *critical consciousness and change agency* when they are juxtaposed with competing understandings of social inclusion? For one, a *Leitmotif* in teacher narratives was the recognition of the dialectical responsibility inherent in the process of inclusion entailing reciprocal efforts undertaken by them as representatives of dominant society. The commitment to turn the majority gaze inwards (Hage 2000) which lay at the heart of most educators' self-reflexive strivings communicates some of the ideals inherent in Transposition Inclusion. Teachers recognized that they would need to interrogate their own cognitive readiness for inclusion and that such a responsibility could not only be placed at the door of migrant learners. The findings reflect that there was a general willingness among staff to incur risk and become vulnerable to "difference", which reflects Brown and Strega's (2005) borderland perspective, even if this was restricted to the realm of the personal and interpersonal.

In addition, teachers were cognizant of the fact that critical consciousness could not be achieved in social isolation and had to be tested in participation with the Other. Thus, negotiating critical consciousness was seen as a continuous process. However, as Sakamoto and Pitner (2005) point out, critical consciousness should also serve as a yardstick against which individual and collective efforts are to be constantly measured and recalibrated. It is this striving for collective agency towards change that personal reflexivity is supposed to engender, yet these efforts seem to fall short. The directive of "power together" (Tew 2006), illustrating the cooperative endeavours between staff and students to transform power relations, is thus lacking in this conceptualization of change agency. One also ponders in reading interview transcripts and observation logs whether the aim of reflexivity became too synonymous with "cultural sensitivity" and developing appropriate interpersonal skills in meeting cultural difference. By deemphasizing the central values underpinning professional and institutional power structures and personalizing or "culturalizing" them

instead, self-reflexivity practices failed to connect the import of “power together” with struggles toward joint political agency.

In a similar vein, critical consciousness narratives also lacked reflections on Whiteness and instructors’ positionalities as members of dominant ethnic and racial groups. In fact, the invisibility of whiteness (Ahmed 2012, Goldberg 2015) stood in stark contrast to the frequent mentions of other markers of identity such as gender, age, class and education as factors influencing the formation of personal and cultural values and beliefs. The few mentions of “privilege” such dominant positions conferred upon members of a predominantly white staff in all three institutions were thus limited to comparisons of student vulnerabilities with staff insiders’ more secure status within society. They did not interrogate the built-in power hierarchies that membership in the white majority entailed and the taken-for-granted privileges this bestowed (Mullaly 2010, DiAngelo 2018). It remains open to debate if this reflexive blind spot, obscuring one’s individual culpability in the maintenance of racial hierarchies also stood in the way of a joint agency involving students and staff in addressing social inequalities.

7.1.2 INCLUSION IN PROGRAM AIMS AND CURRICULAR CONTENTS

There was a general consensus in the curricular documents of NorQuest College LINC, Medis SFI, and Arbis SFI that the educations sought to facilitate migrant students’ acquisition of linguistic, cultural and employment competences in a dialectic with the surrounding community and society (Helsingfors Arbis integrationsgrupp 2012, Lefebvre 2014, Medis, Medborgarinstitutet 2018). However, the weight accorded to all of these components varied and interview data provided a much more fragmented and conflicted picture of the central aims and curricular contents of programs than what was alluded to in official documents and marketing materials. The most foundational conflict of these related to the dynamic tension between educating for language proficiency versus other “integrational” modules seeking to enhance student civic engagement or labour market familiarization. In largely grammar book-based curricular programs, where the rhythm of learning followed a chapter by chapter

progression through a second language acquisition text replete with grammar exercises and readings, teachers sometimes questioned if the term “integration education program” was at all appropriate in describing what migrant students were engaged in, as the following SFI teacher intimates:

Men det är ingen här som kallar det för integrationsprogram. Det är bara en SFI kurs, kurs i svenska. Ingen har pratat just om integrationssyften med mig utan att du har den här kursen och här har du boken. (Medis SFI teacher)³⁴

Given that program titles such as SFI, *Swedish for Immigrants* and LINC, *Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada* accentuate the language learning component, perhaps teacher confusion is somewhat understandable. Other instructors questioned if a hidden curriculum founded upon a specific ideological vision of society steered implementations, as one NorQuest LINC administrator suggested, “there is this big narrative of the happy multicultural society, so I think that is one of the goals, to promote that top-down version of multiculturalism.” In this “top-down” portrayal, the negative, divisive and contentious elements are obscured behind the shiny façade of an integration ideal. For some, a neo-liberal employment focus competed with the “softer” program objectives of helping migrants feel at home or becoming participatory citizens:

Is the intent to give people just enough English so that they can get into employment but not enough that they can get into higher paid, more professional training programs. What is the intent? Is it to serve the student or only fill a niche place in the economy. (NorQuest LINC teacher)

This query of intentions is important. If economic priorities were allowed to become the drivers of program goals, many instructors argued that the rights-based, citizenship orientation where migrant students’ individual circumstances and life goals gave shape to inclusion efforts would be compromised.

Another point on which opinions of educational aims diverged regarded the amount of individual tailoring to migrant student learning and

³⁴ “Well, yes, but no one here calls it an integration program. It is only an SFI course, a course in Swedish. No one has talked about particular integration objectives with me only that you have this course and here’s the book.” (author’s translation)

Empirical Findings

career goals programs should foster. These were sometimes contrasted with more normative civic integrationist objectives enjoined on all learners. Students, especially those with extensive professional and educational backgrounds, advocated an individual approach, as this Arbis student explained:

These integration programs should be tailor-made according to our abilities. I know it is difficult. I know it takes time and effort and money to do this, but it will make this more effective. We will integrate faster in Finland if everything is oriented to us and our abilities. (Arbis SFI A2 student)

This customized learning approach was also favoured by certain instructors as an empowering pedagogy that built on previous competences, upon what students already know instead of what they have yet to learn about their host societies – also described as the “nu ska VI lära DIG”³⁵ position, as one teacher aptly put it. In programs where there was greater flexibility in curriculum planning and implementation, (i.e. those which were less tied to particular instructional texts or rigid curricula, or those that could access a wide support staff and cooperated closely with civic actors), this seemed to work better.

As we move on to a discussion of curricular contents and deliverables, the student needs and individual- tailoring emphasis as an example of inclusive program aims provides a convenient segue. In the three case studies, “student-centeredness” was interpreted on a continuum ranging from traditional paternalist approaches where defining student welfare was the prerogative of staff and administrators to more cooperative endeavours in which teaching methods and curricular contents were negotiated between staff and students. Sometimes, as indicative of inclusions, these approaches existed simultaneously in the same program or even in the same course. One example of these double gestures of inclusion and exclusion was the Portfolio Based Learning Assessment (PBLA) foundation for curriculum development at NorQuest College’s LINC. Its ideal of bottom-up curricular development in cooperation with students

³⁵ “Now WE will teach YOU.” (author’s translation)

and compilations of individual student portfolios jointly assessed by students and teacher tutors is empowering, as one student observed:

They ask us at the beginning, what is the more important information for you, like Canada's historical information or about employment or about the market, news, politics, the law or what you want to know. This is pretty good.
(NorQuest LINC CLB 6 Student)

While PBLA's curricular malleability was lauded by some instructors and administrators, the cognitive shift from teacher-driven to student-driven focus this process required of educators was experienced as a challenge by many. They also asserted that they received very little support in curriculum planning and benchmarking learning materials that they often created themselves. Staff subsequently found themselves underqualified, under-resourced and ultimately excluded in negotiations on a radical curriculum shift that they perceived as imposed top-down. This frustration is succinctly encapsulated in the reflections of a senior LINC teacher:

I mean when PBLA started one of things we were told was that we must only use benchmarked material. It is like the story of when my father came from Ireland and he thought the roads were paved with gold, but the roads weren't paved with gold, they were not even paved and actually he had to pave them. This is our story. We found out that the materials were not benchmarked and guess what we have to make them and benchmark them. And we are getting better at it, but we aren't trained assessors. (NorQuest LINC teacher)

An unfortunate by-product of a PBLA's inclusionary aims was that at the practical level it actually created divisions among staff. Because the responsibility for creating teaching materials now fell upon the shoulders of individual teachers, many were reluctant to share these with colleagues for fear of students at other CLB levels coming into their classes having already used the same exercises. In addition, those instructors teaching at lower CLB levels found that a PBLA approach was simply unworkable in classes where differences in student abilities (encompassing illiterate learners to those who had educational experience but simply lacked language proficiencies) were profound. Such teachers felt ignored, yet powerless to affect changes unless they unilaterally abandoned PBLA strictures.

Another way by which curricula sought to facilitate migrant students' inclusion within their new communities was to place the acquisition of "real life skills" at the center of curricular development. As one Medis SFI teacher expressed, "inte kan man bara avhandla språket som något separat från omvärlden."³⁶ Bottom-up approaches such as implemented within NorQuest LINC had an advantage in this regard, because they allowed for larger blocks of time to be devoted to topics such as employment, health, schooling and legal statutes than the Finnish SFI educations which, being book-bound as well as utilizing teaching materials developed in Sweden, offered less wiggle room, as this Medis observation log entry attests to:

There is no continuity, and this is something which is common to observations that although real life topics such as health and education are raised, they are primarily a backdrop to language exercises and are not interrogated in depth nor linked to the everyday lives of students. Grammar dictates content not vice-versa and the text is not "a resource" for integration learning but rather "the source." With the curriculum generally being book-bound, wider explorations are not possible. (Medis SFI Observation log 27.10.2016)

This was also keenly expressed by students who felt disempowered by the monotony of the singular language-grammar focus in curricula:

I think it is frustrating. You sit there and listen to svenska, svenska, svenska and svenska and svenska and after that more svenska, there is nothing new [...] They said, "Finland is the best school in the world" but I cannot see it when I'm here at Medis. (Medis SFI B1 student)

One way of mitigating this shortcoming in the case of Arbis SFI was to add other classes, entitled "Culture" and "Career" to supplement grammar text omissions or shortcomings in these areas and provide a greater Finland-Swedish focus. However, classes were not always well-attended because students perceived these as peripheral to language studies, which perhaps also alludes to the difficulty of reconciling the broader integrationist aim of the program with a book-bound learning pedagogy. Among a majority of staff, even those working in more grammar-based programs, there was a recognition of the value of a "real life focus" in

³⁶ "You cannot simply engage with language as something separate from the outside world." (author's translation)

educational objectives, especially from a student perspective. As one Medis teacher observed:

Men egentligen mår dom flesta, eller nästan alla, bättre av att ta den vägen att öva praktisk, inte? Börja där, inte som nu när man går först till boken och skriver robotaktiga övningar. (Medis SFI teacher)³⁷

In bringing our discussion of the curricular manifestations of a student-centered approach to a close, I will look at how these acknowledged and addressed different learning styles and how they incorporated migrant students' own expertise into course work. A crucial point of departure for efforts at including learners with varied backgrounds and experiences was that of recognizing “difference” and co-constructing educational experiences as one teacher explained:

It is a mistake to treat all students as if they are all the same. People have different needs, they have different learning styles, they have different needs for support. We are all equal, but we are not all the same! (NorQuest LINC teacher)

As a result, all programs to a greater or lesser extent sought to offer a varied array of learning methodologies. These included an emphasis on dialogue, discussion, peer teaching or “flipping” (as it was labelled at NorQuest LINC), “skill splitting” (where reading, writing, listening and speaking were taught in separate modules), individual or small group tutoring, and asynchronous components such as independent web-based learning. Larger and better resourced programs such as NorQuest also offered full and part-time LINC courses during daytime and evenings as well as throughout the year. One important ingredient in all of these varied pedagogies was, as one LINC teacher put it, creating a supportive, “safe environment in which mistakes are welcomed and placing the emphasis on incremental progress instead of perfection.” However, while teaching strategies attested to a recognition of difference, learning materials were more limited in reflecting student cultural diversity as well as integrating global contributions and remained largely Western-biased. This fact was

³⁷ “But really, most or almost everyone feels better by learning through practice, right? Start there, not as now when you first go to the book and write robotic exercises.” (author’s translation)

Empirical Findings

rarely raised as problematic from an inclusion perspective in interviews, though select teachers devised creative ways of addressing this issue by utilizing student-created material in their classes:

One way you can have a more world perspective is if you have student-created instructional materials, then it is their stories, their realities represented in your reading, writing speaking and listening tasks. That is a different way of thinking for some teachers [...] it is a different kind of work and it is not for a curriculum that says that in Week One and Week Two we are doing this. Students are creating that material and you can't anticipate ten weeks ahead so if you are tied to having to make a syllabus ahead of time, you can't do that.
(NorQuest LINC teacher/administrator)

As suggested above, this “world perspective” becomes more difficult to establish in integration educations with rigid curricular formulations such as those where weekly “progress” was defined as a chapter-by-chapter progression through a grammar text. In reality, all three integration education programs struggled with how to identify and integrate student experiences and competences into the day-to-day learning which took place in the classroom. There were notable exceptions, however, such as this LINC exercise where students, in demonstrating presentation skills were asked to introduce a hobby or talent of personal significance and peer teach their classmates. In the weeks leading up to the presentation day, I had become acquainted with a Jamaican student with learning challenges but whose language skills were exceptional. He always seemed somewhat misplaced in the company of more rudimentary language learners and rarely contributed to class discussions. His presentation, however, served as a revelation during which “Bembe” related his boyhood hobby of kite-building at which he was proficient to the degree that he turned it into a small money-making venture, kite-flying being hugely popular among Jamaican youths. In his presentation, *“Bembe relates anecdotes from his own childhood and shows videos and pictures while he fashions a wonderfully intricate kite in front of the class”* (NorQuest LINC observation log 30.7.2015). This task seemed to transform this perpetually shy fellow as he invested himself in the narrative and literally grew in stature as a result of the appreciate comments from his classmates and teachers. Given the professed emphasis on acknowledging different learning styles, it was incongruous how few

opportunities of learning language through physical activities existed in the three programs. As one teacher observed,

Like, you could have a language class where you take apart a bicycle and then the language and directions come from that. You could do a lot of language around a physical activity and I don't think we do that at all. (NorQuest LINC teacher)

In linking *program aims and curricular manifestations* with theoretical reflections on their inclusive or exclusive nature, certain patterns began to emerge. Findings indicate that educational aims and contents in all three case studies suffered from a fragmented positioning which reflected an ambivalence about what one should prioritize in integrating migrant students. The admission by the Medis SFI teacher – “men det är ingen här som kallar det för integrationsprogram”³⁸ – goes to the heart of a problematic where host country language acquisition represented the predominant indicator of “integration.” In so doing, the all-encompassing language focus marginalized the programs’ broader civic inclusion and settlement goals. This was especially noticeable in educations where grammar texts dictated curricula at the expense of a pedagogical focus on reciprocal learning. Citizenship aims and “real life skill” applications became “add-ons”, a fact not lost on students, particularly in the SFI programs. In essence, this attests to a “we know what’s best for migrants” integrationist mindset in which language competence is largely portrayed as synonymous with social inclusion (De Roo, Braeye & De Moor 2016). As such, it departs from more holistic, participationist principles embedded in the conceptualizations of Participation Inclusion and Transformation Inclusion.

This conflictual picture of program aims is reiterated in the dynamic tension between stated and hidden curricular objectives as validated in staff and student interviews. The sanitized, idyllic picture painted in top-down versions of multiculturalism to which some NorQuest LINC staff alluded also resonated with the apolitical, non-conflictual incarnations of Finnish SFI programs. Cervatiuc and Ricento’s (2012) research findings asserting that positively blinkered program objectives obfuscate critical thinking on

³⁸ “Well, yes, but no one here calls it an integration program.” (authors’s translation)

social issues related to student lives and encourage societal adaption, are important reminders here. The same can be said for veiled economic-driven narratives which prioritize fitting “them” into “our” labour markets at the expense of other pedagogical aims fostering social citizenship (Webb 2017, Carlson & Jacobson 2019). In these hegemonic tales, there is a danger that migrants’ prior work skills and qualifications are devalued (Gibb 2015, Slade 2015, Guo 2015). At their most “benign”, both stated and hidden narratives describing educational objectives reflect Rainer Bauböck’s (2008) “celebration multiculturalism” which simplifies critical inclusion’s complexity and replaces it with a colourblind diversity. Here, the lived reality of racial discrimination affecting many migrant students remains unaddressed by program aims and contents, perhaps because it challenges predominant conceptions of “equality” and racism’s “pastness” characteristic of Western liberal democracies (Tittley 2019).

Inclusionarities also came into view in negotiations about how much individual tailoring program objectives could and should accommodate. While curricular inclusion was evident in some provisions made for different learning styles and student life situations as exemplified by the different incarnations of LINC within NorQuest College, truly integrating migrant student expertise into the rhythm of day-to-day learning was a challenge faced by all three programs. Even PBLA’s cooperative potential is enmeshed in the inclusion-exclusion nexus, as Desyatova’s (2018), Drew and Mudzingwa’s (2018) and Fox’s (2014) research findings demonstrate. By under-resourcing and sidelining teachers in their implementation and placing instructors and administrators in the position of gatekeepers, “learning portfolios” simply served as a repository for assessments belying their inclusive potential and consequently failed both educators and migrant students. Western-biased learning materials and book-bound curricula also testify to the difficulties of tailoring learning to individuals and building upon students’ own competences in meeting their needs. The discursive discrimination (Boréus 2006) inherent in the clear imbalance between nationally-focused and globally-focused curricular materials highlighting cultural diversity and migrant experiences was a reality in all three programs. This imbalance demonstrated the conceptual difficulties in moving from an integrationist to an inclusive framework as envisioned by Transformation Inclusion’s ideals of egalitarianism in reciprocal learning

(Stewart 2000). Thus, by and large, discourses on program aims and curricula still manifested the strong undercurrent of an integrationist normative narrative encapsulated in the mindset, “after all, aren’t we supposed to teach them how to live here” (Eriksen 2015)?

7.1.3 CULTURAL ACCOMMODATION PRACTICES

But sometimes I get the feeling here with multiculturalism that it has gone overboard where we have no right to say that this is a norm here. I am talking about where something is actually “good,” and it seems that the attitude is always relative, very relative where our way is not better. But how can you say that for everything? How can everything be absolutely relative? (NorQuest LINC teacher)

The above quote of a senior instructor revisits the tensions between integrationist and inclusive approaches explored in the previous sections on critical consciousness and program aims. It reflects the ambivalence and insecurities experienced by many teachers and administrators in accommodating cultural differences within their institutional contexts. In deciding what forms inclusion should take in the quotidian practices shaping classrooms and campuses, NorQuest LINC staff faced the additional challenge of integrating official doctrines on multiculturalism into an integration program aimed at educating migrants in Canadian language and culture. These doctrines imply a degree of reciprocity not similarly emphasized in Finnish national integration policies. However, the degree of relativism which should guide the accommodation of student needs was something which was actively debated and contested by participants in all programs.

In general, there was a genuine willingness to extend a kind of ownership to migrant students in matters concerning their education and to involve them in consultations. However, questions remained as to how this was best achieved and what concrete outcomes their involvement would have in affecting institutional changes. One principle which positively informed cultural negotiations for some staff was that of reciprocal learning as expressed in the following terms:

Empirical Findings

I think you need to recognize that you are the learner as well in the situation, that teaching is a two-way thing. I am not teaching you, but we are teaching each other. I think you have to become the student and the learner. It is a co-created environment. (NorQuest LINC Teacher/administrator)

The “co-created environment” referred to by the administrator implies one where responsibilities and outcomes are mutually shared but which, according to many participants, must also be predicated upon a radical educational process targeting teachers and support staff, as well as “native” students. The role played by migrant learners in this process is inestimable, as one NorQuest LINC teacher reasoned: “our students influence the people who work and attend here who aren’t immigrants more than we probably influence them on their own levels of inclusion.” The principle of building upon students’ previous expertise and competences in reciprocal learning also entailed a sea change in teacher roles that necessitated reframing student-teacher relations:

Jag tycker att det är helt grunden för vuxenutbildning överhuvudtaget att man tar med människor för att de redan har så mycket kunskaper. Att man som lärare tar mera den facilitator-rollen och får fram den dynamiken som kunskapsutbyte. (Arbis SFI tutor)³⁹

The revolutionary implication of this interpretation of reciprocal learning as a possible foundation for LINC and SFI represented an inclusionary extreme which was not, however, unequivocally shared by all study participants. As a matter of fact, questions posed to migrant students that addressed reciprocity and cultural mutuality in learning were frequently met with confusion or a lack of understanding; “I don’t understand why we should bring our culture here. I think it is not really right if we came here we have to accept this culture” (NorQuest LINC CLB 5 student). The assimilationist import of the previous statement can perhaps only be understood by contextualizing discourses on cultural reciprocity within particular programs. In this regard, some educations seemed to suffer from “institutional oversights”, where the lack of mutuality in learning could

³⁹ “I think it is absolutely the basis for adult education in general to involve people because they already have so much knowledge. That one as a teacher takes more of a facilitator role and creates this dynamic as an exchange of knowledge and expertise.” (author’s translation)

partly be traced back to deficiencies in administrative awareness or educational emphasis. The following observation log entry reflects this:

Also, the question about how much of their culture or previous knowledge and experience is reflected in the curriculum or practical implementation of the program seems confusing and I am guessing that perhaps the possibility of this has not been explored enough by Medis or teachers, never mind the students. If integration is equated with Swedish language acquisition, then students' confusion with the questions focusing on the two-way street nature of integration programs is justified. (Medis SFI Observation Log 2.11.2016)

In turning to the day-to-day negotiations of cultural diversity, Arbis, Medis and NorQuest recognized, to varying degrees, that these could not be simply be confined to the classroom environment but had to be made “visible” in the administrative routines governing institutional life and in the tangible, functional design of buildings, meeting spaces and facilities. Cogent examples of the latter material transformations include the installation of foot washing stations in select washrooms and designating prayer rooms for religious observances at NorQuest College, the allocation of a separate space for a student kitchen complete with cooking facilities and microwaves at Medis SFI and the reorganization of a classroom as a part-time daycare space at Arbis SFI. Such accommodations sought to address the religious, social and economic needs and life situations of migrant learners. Administrative procedures were also subject to change, though these were generally critically contested and adopted on a case-by-case basis as one administrator explained her reasoning for an exam scheduling change:

So, we always have this end of term testing and it just so happened that this was right at the end of Ramadan, at Eid, and it was becoming a really big issue and when you have that many students saying we can't test because this is our one big special day? I really pushed to change the date. I know we were opening up a can of worms [but] I still feel that that was the right call to make in that situation and I know there were people who felt, well no, they have come HERE [...] It is an ongoing learning thing for both sides. It is a settlement thing for students, but it is also an education thing for the rest of us. (NorQuest LINC administrator)

Empirical Findings

The quote reflects that there were widely differing opinions among staff ranging from cultural conformity to inclusion that had to be negotiated in making this rather controversial decision. It further acknowledges the potential “risks” perceived in exposing oneself to demands for changes from other religious or cultural groups, as implied in the phrase “opening up a can of worms.” This risk and the fear of a valueless cultural relativism and the resulting loss of control is a recurring theme in many narratives describing the “performance” of cultural negotiation. This was particularly evident where these negotiations did not correspond to how staff thought they should proceed, as the following teacher interview quote demonstrates:

Det som jag verkligen inte kan tåla med de här invandrarelever, det är inte ovanligt att läraren får en känsla att de är krävande på ett kanske lite felaktigt sätt, på ett sätt som man inte är här. (Arbis SFI teacher)⁴⁰

The harshness of the wording “inte kan tåla”⁴¹ attests to the frustrations experienced by some instructors when taken-for-granted “rules” of conduct were seemingly transgressed by migrant learners. It often happened, though, that these outbursts were followed by more reflective statements in which staff revealed their own insecurities and sought help in resolving charged situations. However, it was not uncommon for staff to portray students as “unreasonable” or too “demanding” in the manner they presented and arbitrated their appeals. This tendency was either traced back to migrants’ cultural backgrounds or to their inability in correctly reading and interpreting dominant cultural codes. Yet, many teacher narratives also attested to the recognition that inclusion demanded compromise, even structural changes and that this benefitted students’ own settlement processes as well as the development of intercultural competences among staff. With reference to the latter, NorQuest College instituted an official policy of intercultural training enjoined on 85% of staff and administrators by 2017 under the auspices of their own Intercultural Education center⁴².

⁴⁰ “What I really can’t stand with these immigrant students, it is not uncommon for the teacher to have a feeling that they are demanding in slightly the wrong way, in a way that one is not here.” (author’s translation)

⁴¹ “can’t stand” (author’s translation)

⁴² In 2017, the Intercultural Education Center was discontinued, though some of its activities were integrated into other College initiatives.

All three case study programs also organized extra-curricular activities and events ranging from class potluck dinners to varied cultural celebrations. Though these often depended upon the initiative of individual teachers and students, they did represent institutional efforts to facilitate migrant experiences of belonging and affirmation. Some participants questioned, however, if these efforts were rather more indicative of a celebration multiculturalism, one that exoticizes the cultural and serves as a superficial substitute for “real” and more meaningful changes:

I think we have the window dressings of it. Ok let's have a bannock and tea, but I don't know how deep it goes beyond that superficial, "let's eat some food and sing some songs." I don't know how it affects when we are sitting in a meeting and deciding our academic calendar. Are we making it easy for people of all different faiths in timetabling? Are we looking at timetabling in a practical way to support people with children? [...] I am not sure that when everybody gets together at that higher level how much of that is really considered. (NorQuest LINC teacher/administrator)

The point made above is an important one as it addresses the manner in which structural inclusion was integrated into institutional decision-making processes. Often “accommodations”, as described by participants in my fieldwork, were issue-specific, reactive and not embedded in planning processes from the beginning. Nor was there a framework of established procedures in LINC or SFI within which such decisions were contested. As a result, cultural negotiations and outcomes suffered from a built-in inconsistency, varying from case to case and marked by a kind of arbitrariness whose foundation seemed inscrutable and impenetrable to students. One such example, was the case of Elena and Andrei, a husband and wife at opposite extremes of the language competence continuum. Elena, being the much more proficient speaker, translated all learning for Andrei and helped him diligently with in-class assignments and homework. The couple sat together daily and conversed in their mother tongue to ease Andrei's comprehension. Classroom teachers interpreted this as giving Andrei an unfair advantage while simultaneously stunting his independent learning and thus decided to separate the two. This decision was roundly criticized by the couple and a meeting to resolve the issue escalated to the point of shouting and accusations of discrimination. However, the teachers' decision was irrevocable causing Elena to state dryly, “well, we survived 45

years of communism, we can survive 8 months of Medis” (Medis SFI Observation log 12.10.2016).

In short, inclusionary efforts only extended to cultural accommodation, of responding to diversity by seeing how one could tweak institutional routines to adapt to it. While this is not insignificant, it falls short of the reciprocity in shared learning and student participation envisioned by some staff. As one instructor explains:

Men sen finns det där andra, att skapa delaktigheten. Det är att gå ett steg längre. Det är en sak att fundera på sitt bemötande och sen hur huset kan ta in det i själva vardagen så att det verkligen ska synas. (Arbis SFI teacher)⁴³

As this discussion on *cultural accommodation practices* illustrates, how these are negotiated within SFI and LINC is highly complex, including a wide spectrum of assimilationist, integrationist as well as inclusive elements. This can perhaps be attributed to the ad hoc nature with which they were often planned and operationalized and the conflicting values that were at play. As the quote on the fear of cultural relativism that introduced this section aptly underlines, the “spirit of compromise” that was seen as a prerequisite for negotiations was simultaneously shackled by concerns about relinquishing control if one gives in too much. When does cultural accommodation become the slippery slope of relativism? Such “white worries” represent echoes of Hage’s (2000) concept of “governmental belonging” where dominant groups maintain a privileged position in cultural negotiations of inclusion. The struggle for control in setting the parameters for cultural accommodation in the integration educations meant that certain expressions were deemed desirable and “good” while others were assumed to be undesirable and “bad.” The “good” were generally non-conflictual where allowances for cultural expression favoured multicultural celebrations (e.g. ethnic pot-lucks) sanctioned by institutions, while the “bad” typified conflict-based exercises of critical citizenship, as demonstrated by the example of Elena and Andrei, that were unsanctioned and confounded control (Lentin & Tittley 2011). This represents the Janus

⁴³“But then there the other matter, to create participation and co-ownership. This is going one step further. It is one thing to think about how one meets otherness and then how the institution can incorporate this into its everyday life so that it really becomes visible.” (author’s translation)

face of inclusions where some inherent expressions of migrant cultural diversity are judged as beneficial to inclusion while others become an obstacle or a hindrance, with dominant groups serving arbiters in deciding which are which. As such, the observation by the NorQuest administrator of the risks involved in opening up the “can of worms” of negotiation is apt, as these risks apply not only to the staff and the school but also to the migrant learners who participate in such negotiations.

The cultural accommodationist approach to managing diversity in LINC and SFI integration programs can generally be subsumed under the theoretical umbrella of Participation Inclusion. It is still largely an integration on the majority’s terms where allowances made could also be taken away and levels of migrant participation and self-determination depended largely on the boundaries set by staff and administrators (Kumashiro 2001). Though there is the recognition of the institutions’ pivotal role in such efforts, there is a lack of agreement about what is required in order to achieve inclusion’s egalitarian ideals. While many outcomes of cultural negotiations could not simply be dismissed as “window dressing”, they did not fully embrace the transformative implications of a foundation built on reciprocal learning. The “institutional oversight” of failing to acknowledge or engage with more democratic notions of reciprocity was also passed on to students, for whom interview questions on mutually empowering, co-created learning seemed confusing. In fact, sometimes top-down hierarchies in cultural negotiations were justified by asserting that students from more traditional learning cultures expected this and could not, or did not, want to be involved more. Though, some migrants may indeed have been schooled in strict educational hierarchies that dissuaded co-ownership of learning, here their “immigrant condition” was essentialized as static. It acts as a permanent explanation for their lack of engagement and blamed for deficits in the autonomy of migrant students (Hertzberg 2015). As such, negotiations fall short of Transformation Inclusion’s parity of participation with its reflexive nature of democratic justice in both process and outcome (Hick & Thomas 2009).

On a positive note, there were institutional accommodations, such as designated prayer rooms, that did alter the physical and procedural environs of the schools in seeking to grapple with migrant learner diversity. In so

doing, they reflect some of the social change agency at cultural and structural levels advocated by anti-oppressive practices (Mullaly 2010). They also attest to an openness in validating students' "differential needs" (Hick, Fook & Pozzuto et. al 2005). As a testament to the wide spectrum of efforts at cultural negotiation and their complexity, NorQuest College's official policy of intercultural staff training and its establishment of an Intercultural Education center correspond to the spirit of redirecting the majority gaze inwards. These initiatives subject white dominant groups to integration's scrutiny by placing reciprocal demands on them, a characteristic of Transposition Inclusion's ideological core (Schinkel 2018).

7.1.4 TEACHING "CULTURE"

The field of teaching "culture" represents another conceptual battleground where competing understandings of inclusion among staff and students reconstruct teaching as well as classroom interactions. Questions such as, What culture do we teach? How? and Why? permeate these discussions and in their resolution, the nuances of integrationist vs. critical participationist approaches are revealed. In asking how one teaches culture, one must also explain what one means by "culture." Is this understanding rooted in essentialist or anti-essentialist discourses? This is crucial, as both learner and educator roles and agency are interpreted radically differently within these positions. The practical operationalizations of integration program aims are perhaps nowhere more clearly delineated than in conceptions of how culture is envisioned and taught, as the following quote by an SFI tutor recognizes:

Nu kommer vi egentligen in i den diskussion av vad är sen "finländskt." Vad är det du ska lära ut? Kulturdiskussionen med att kulturen förändras hela tiden just i kontakt med andra och att komma ihåg det också i våra klass- och handledningssituationer. Det är i dialog med den andre som vi skapar en gemensam finländsk kultur. (Arbis SFI tutor)⁴⁴

⁴⁴ "Now we truly get into the discussion of what then is "Finnish." What is it you are supposed to teach? Discussions of culture in which culture is changing all the time specifically in contact with others and to remember this also in our classroom and tutoring situations. It is in dialogue with the Other that we create a common Finnish culture." (author's translation)

In describing culture as fluid and co-created, as this tutor does, there is a recognition that “it” only becomes visible in dialogue with the “Other” which, in turn, emphasizes the shared responsibilities of all integration program participants in bringing “it” into view. In such a vision, cultural knowledge is not transmitted unilaterally from insiders to outsiders. Correspondingly, this perspective complicates the question of what you are supposed to teach. From interviews and participant observations it became clear that the “what” in teaching culture was a cause of some concern among teachers. The topic awakened insecurities from participants in all three programs, although for slightly different reasons. At NorQuest LINC, educators often struggled with how to reconcile the ideal of Canada’s cultural mosaic – allowing for a myriad of cultural “belongings” to be subsumed under a definition of “Canadian,” – with the aims of teaching a coherent culture. The seeming elusiveness of Canadian identity muddled more “straightforward” cultural narratives. At Arbis SFI, this same ambivalence could be traced back to the program’s singular position as representing integration into a Swedish linguistic national minority embedded within the predominantly Finnish social and cultural environment of Helsingfors. Most of Arbis SFI’s teaching staff were members of the Finland-Swedish ethnic minority with their own experiences of discrimination which nuanced perspectives and practices of teaching “Finnish culture.” For some teachers, fixed, essentialist cultural narratives were therefore regarded with both fear and suspicion, as communicated in this quote:

Det här med tvärsäkra kulturer, vet du alla har pratat ett språk och levt i en kultur hela livet, det känns jobbigt, skrämmande. Jag har väldigt svårt att se det. Hur kan man leva så? I de här eleverna känner jag igen mig. (Arbis SFI teacher)⁴⁵

It was notable that the corresponding cultural affinity this educator expresses with migrant students’ minority status and cultural plurality also translated itself into a much more multilingual, reciprocal teaching style.

⁴⁵ “This with clear cut cultures, you know where everyone speaks one language and lives in one culture throughout their lives, it feels arduous, problematic, scary. I can't see it. How can you live that way? In these students, I recognize myself.” (author’s translation)

Empirical Findings

Another aspect which confounded teaching a monoculture at Medis and Arbis SFI was the fact that curricular texts stemmed from Sweden and discussed Swedish culture instead of Finland-Swedish or Finnish culture. Where such texts comprised the majority of learning resources, Swedish culture was consistently juxtaposed with local Finland-Swedish or Ålandic variations. As a result, approaches to cultural transmission also differed and depended upon if one assessed this cultural elusiveness and diversity as a resource and a strength, or as something to be bemoaned.

At NorQuest LINC, one commonly adopted strategy in seeking to reconcile the contradictions of teaching an easily definable culture with the realities of the latter's multifariousness is explained in the following way by a teaching staff member:

I think most teachers in teaching Canada and culture and so on would draw the distinction of this is how we do it in Canada, but also recognizing: I'm not saying that this is the best way.

While this acknowledgement demonstrates an awareness of the multiplicity of contested values, beliefs and ways of life, it implicitly acknowledges the existence of something that can be defined as "Canadian culture." One question this approach raises is if the cultural diversity of migrant students is included within such a definition? Other teachers, being wary of overgeneralizations, would refer to manifestations of local culture. One LINC administrator explained that she talked about what was "usual in Alberta, and I say Alberta because it is different in different parts of Canada."

Within the SFI programs, specifically at Arbis, their minority position problematized homogenous nationalist dialogues and their cultural, and in the case of Medis, geographical periphery generated other competing perspectives. Sometimes these perspectives, as in the quote of the NorQuest administrator above, emphasized the "local", the "Swedish Spaces" (*svenska rum*) within Helsingfors or the singularity of life on the Åland Islands. In addition, the presence of learning materials from Sweden and a conscious effort of some educators to present an anti-essentialist, striated portrait of "Finland" unbalanced linear cultural transmissions. One illustrative example was a lecture by a Finnish researcher entitled, "The

myth of Finnish homogeneity” organized as part of the “culture” class at Arbis SFI:

By highlighting the migration streams in Finland’s national formation as well discussing the presence of the many national minorities from the 1500’s-present day Finland, [the lecture] shines a pluralist spotlight on Fennomanian nationalism which has characterized Finnish identity construction. By using historical facts as a way of problematizing current discussions advocating narrow nationalist conceptions of “Finnishness” [he presents] a country that is also a collection of different ethnic and cultural groups. (Arbis SFI Observation log 15.3.2016)

This willingness to question taken-for-granted assumptions and cultural stereotypes proved a germane point of departure for subjective cultural analyses as one LINC administrator mentioned when recalling a discussion with other staff about the custom of some migrant students preferring not to shake hands, a practice that some posited as alien to Canadian cultural norms:

But then we had a woman teacher there in her late 50’s and she said that it is so cultural. She grew up here in Canada but would never shake hands with another woman. Even when meeting someone she has to remind herself that it is okay because that is just not part of her upbringing. So, we got into this discussion of well, what is Canadian? And it is very hard because things are always changing, and I think we have to be open to that. (NorQuest LINC administrator)

However, while there was a recognition among many staff members of the slipperiness in teaching “culture” as well as a readiness to subject their teaching and curricular contents to scrutiny, the reciprocal nature of cultural learning remained largely unexplored. Discussions revolved more around how to convey an inclusive, multi-faceted narrative of “our” culture rather than what one can learn from “them” about co-constructing the way we live together. Expressions of reciprocity followed a celebration multiculturalist script, as this NorQuest LINC student observes,

We learn only about Canadian culture but sometimes they have some cultural days where we can show our culture and bring some foods and dress up in cultural dress. (NorQuest LINC CLB5 student)

This “script” also included topics of cross-cultural learning that were sanctioned and those that were deemed taboo by teachers. Taboo topics varied and seemed subject to the same arbitrariness as policies of cultural negotiation. Their designation as “taboo” was at the discretion of individual teachers. Some avoided very controversial topics altogether while others exercised tight control over how these would be defined and discussed, as explained by this LINC educator: “we encourage people to talk about their culture, not religion too much, I allow a little bit, but I control it.” For this teacher, as well as others, religion was designated as a controversial topic necessitating control *von oben*. Conversely, homosexuality – also often subsumed under the “taboo” label – was brought up frequently by the same lecturer with the justification that “they need to be aware of it” because “some African students particularly are very closed-minded about it.” It is characteristic of this discussion that the power of defining taboo topics and engaging with them resides solely with staff. Migrant student comfort or discomfort are more peripheral to considerations.

Thus, while the insecurities generated by teaching “culture” sometimes gave rise to critical narratives contesting homogenous perspectives, they could also result in a normative protectionism where professed mantras of openness and tolerance reached their limit. As such, positionings in cultural learning in this study oscillate between civic integrationism and inclusion, depending to a great extent on the decisions of individual teachers about where on this continuum they would land. Teaching “culture” in LINC and SFI proved contentious, supporting Thomson and Derwing’s (2014) conclusion that where a cultural essence is difficult to articulate, as in the case of Canadian culture’s multiculturalist mantra, educators feel conflicted and require support. Some authors therefore question if teaching culture as a disassociated classroom topic is even possible or if direct observation through cultural immersion in society are better ways to achieve this (Fleming 2003). It is also a matter of speculation if SFI’s minority status allowed its staff to inhabit a “borderland perspective” (Brown and Strega 2005) more easily in teaching a transgressive view of culture. The findings do substantiate that Arbis staff, who themselves belonged to the Finland-Swedish ethnic minority and who taught in a more politically contested and thus vulnerable SFI program, presented a more conflictual and multi-faceted cultural portrait of Finland.

Critical theories of social inclusion maintain that if students own cultural backgrounds are portrayed as distinct from, instead of a part of present society, then they inevitably become cultural add-ons (Goldberg 1994). In this regard, LINC programs reflecting the Canadian multicultural mosaic narrative of national identity seem to offer hypothetical advantages for including migrant student diversity in teaching culture. Interestingly enough, though, in practice few major differences in the approach to, or challenges faced in cultural instruction existed between NorQuest LINC and Arbis SFI. Given the freedom of individual teachers and their own personal backgrounds and motivations in shaping cultural learning, similarly critical or uncritical approaches could be discerned. At Medis SFI, however, teaching “culture” seemed less contentious or conflicted. Though constituting a minority education program nationally, locally, on the monolingually Swedish, semi-autonomous Ålandic islands, it was a part of majority society. The tangible linguistic and ethnic borderland in which Arbis SFI operated was not as discernable at Medis, where teaching “culture” represented more of a taken-for-grantedness, interrupted only briefly by juxtapositionings with portrayals of Swedish culture in textbooks. Additionally, differences in teaching approaches to “culture” were also affected by a myriad of other factors such as institutional cultures and staff composition, to name but a few, thereby reflecting the intricate interplay between personal, cultural and structural factors (Thompson 2006).

Modes of teaching “culture” in all three case studies when compared with principles of anti-oppressive education, underemphasize the disruptive potential of reciprocal learning where common sense views of culture are disarticulated and reassembled in new ways that result from unlearning (Kumashiro 2001). Transformation Inclusion envisions the creation of more forums for dialogue where students and staff could interrogate concepts of “Canadian” or “Finnish” as well as the curricular materials in which these concepts are given substance through words and images. Such institutionally embedded forums would also be invaluable in fostering resistance to conformity and ethnocentric biases and make room for ad hoc cultural exchanges where learning about ourselves and others is unplanned and intangible (Fook & Gardner 2007).

Despite the anti-essentialist endeavours of select SFI and LINC staff to interrogate myopic portrayals of nation, teaching “culture” to a large extent still encapsulated implicit aims of cultivating secular liberal citizens, as the example of taboo topics demonstrates (Tebble 2006). These aims are rooted in very real power asymmetries and justified within a pervasive integrationist rhetoric (Riitaoja & Dervin 2014). The simple omission of inclusive teaching of migrant student cultures communicates this rather effectively, as this LINC CLB5 student intimates: “They do not ask us [about] our culture. It is not important for them and not important for us to use it here because it is not of benefit here.” What is of benefit, however, materializes by this omission. Power asymmetries are also manifested in how taboo topics are addressed. The parameters in which their discussion takes place is entirely subject to the degree of teacher tolerance. Tolerance is performed within the specific limits or boundaries set by educators and is thus unilateral. Given that tolerance is frequently held up as the cornerstone for social interaction among program participants at LINC and SFI it also extends the “right” to members of staff to act intolerantly when these boundaries were transgressed, such as when students profess divergent, illiberal views (Hage 2000).

7.1.5 CRITICAL CITIZENSHIP

The previous discussions on cultural accommodation practices and teaching “culture” represent snapshots of how such discourses serve to shape and reify inclusion within integration educations. They also serve as a poignant reminder that these internal contestations also have undeniable external ramifications. They circumscribe how both students and staff understand integration and inclusion not only by what is subsumed under these definitions but also by what is left out of them, as the omission of teaching migrant student cultures, in the previous section, illustrates. What is included or excluded in turn frames interactions with wider society. The debate on a critical citizenship focus in LINC or SFI illuminates this:

I think this whole issue of “Canadian society”, what is Canadian society? We don’t ever problematize or look critically at that in a LINC context. It is all, multiculturalism is so wonderful and never mind that we are all settlers in this country. We are an occupier’s land. (NorQuest LINC teacher/administrator)

The above quote avows the need for more critical dialogue on perceived “cultural facts.” It problematizes dominant discourses on national identity which de-emphasize the history of colonial oppression in the process of Canadian nation-building. The hegemonic multicultural narrative’s disingenuousness spackles over such negative elements, according to this educator. The quote also implicitly challenges teachers to expose these historical gaps, to fill in the silences in interrogating the power relations which underpin them. It demands highlighting marginal voices and thus, essentially, integration’s fraught multidimensionality.

It became clear from the findings that a critical citizenship orientation based on negotiations of power in the positioning of migrant-subjects, and cultural critiques including human rights-based dialogues was generally not prioritized in educational aims or implementations. As one Arbis SFI teacher put it: “Eftersom vi lär ut språk går vi inte in för såna filosofiska frågor.”⁴⁶ Even though other participants defined critical dialogues as more than simply “philosophical questions”, it is interesting that language teaching here is portrayed as separate from, or irreconcilable with, critical citizenship objectives. This marginalization of critical citizenship was reiterated in another context. Several teachers referred to the limited language competences of LINC students at lower CLB levels as insurmountable obstacles to teaching and learning based on critical perspectives. However, not all educators shared the perception that a critical citizenship foundation would be incompatible with program aims or too “difficult” to implement, as this Arbis integration coordinator explains,

Jag upplever att i integration är du också kritisk och ett samhället där ingen är kritisk utvecklas ju aldrig. Jag upplever att det där kritiska är lätt att ta med i undervisningen. Det är bara att diskutera ett tema, olika aspekter av det. (Arbis SFI program planner)⁴⁷

⁴⁶ “Because we teach language, we do not go in for such philosophical questions.” (author’s translation)

⁴⁷ “I feel that in integration you are also critical and a society where no one is critical never develops. I find that the critical is easy to include in teaching. It’s just to discuss a topic, different aspects of it.” (author’s translation)

Empirical Findings

Here, the ease of introducing topics of discussion from competing points of view and contesting them in an open classroom forum are seen as natural components of social criticism, of society. The assertion that it should therefore be integral to the integration educations was also shared by many students as this Arbis SFI pupil asserts,

It doesn't matter that this is mostly a language course and that the problem is the [text]book. That [citizen rights] stuff is vital to people who are unfamiliar with the Finnish system. Coming out of an integration course you should know your rights! (Arbis SFI A2 student)

The need for a rights-based citizenship approach was particularly championed by support staff, such as employment counselors and social workers, as instrumental in preparing migrant students for social realities in their lives which intersected with issues of domestic violence, occupational rights, poverty and racial discrimination. When it came to questions of how to embed critical citizenship learning within LINC and SFI programs, several participants declared that this necessitated a mental shift among staff. Instead of defining migrant students by their “deficits” in language, cultural familiarity, and social standing, one should begin to think of them as capable, prospective citizens from whom host countries derive benefits, “not only from their experienced labour but also from their past educational experience and their life experience,” as one LINC teacher stated. This recognition is crucial for by shackling migrants within their perceived vulnerabilities, opportunities for exploring shared acts of resistance could be lost. Another natural segue for introducing critical perspectives on racism and racialization, for example, was suggested by a LINC teacher who used lessons from Canadian history as a springboard:

I think a useful place to start would be to look at indigenous culture and ways of indigenous learning and our own history of colonialism. If we started there and had that sense of awareness even in our own Canadian context then I think that would be a good place for broadening understanding. (NorQuest LINC teacher/administrator)

Using decolonial methodologies as a way of “broadening understanding” of oppression and social exclusion, in this teacher’s estimation, is not only directed at migrant students but at all participants in

the programs. This process of conscientization, in the case of staff, mirrors the “mind-shift” alluded to earlier when looking at how educators see the “Other.” For LINC students, such an approach would also tie into their well-documented interest in indigenous peoples.

In general, though, it seemed worrying that curricular topics that developed a social critique of the host society or explored integration’s disintegrating fallout were lacking in the educations. As these programs professed to be gateways to citizenship and a preparation for students to actively participate in all realms of social, political and economic life, one wondered what types of migrant citizens they envisioned? One obstacle which presented itself, besides the perceived value neutrality of second language acquisition and the predominance of civic integrationist aims, was a noticeable defensiveness among staff when students turned a critical eye on their hosts. The following excerpt from the NorQuest LINC observation log illustrates just such a case, where students question if a piece of Canadian anti-terror legislation meets social justice requirements, claiming that it may actually be discriminatory:

Two African students express their critique of Canada’s controversial Bill C51 which would allow the government to deport non-Canadian residents even those with long-term residence status upon the commission of “terrorism-related” crimes. The students argue that this makes a qualitative distinction between migrants (those with and without Canadian citizenship) and could even divide families as children upon being born in Canada automatically receive citizenship and may be separated from their families. The students point to human rights violation arguments and public statements which have been issued in opposition to this law. “Elna”, however, becomes very defensive in asserting that this is a good thing as the law is meant to deter terrorism and she fully agrees with it. I observe that one student is visibly agitated but decides to keep quiet while the other sheepishly agrees with the teacher. (NorQuest LINC observation log 24.7.2015)

In another instance, a student questioned the high price tag for citizenship imposed on migrants and wondered why Anglo-Saxons can come to his country and receive citizenship for free. The teacher’s reply – “that is because no one wants to emigrate to your country” – though meant in jest, seems inappropriate and this was noticeable by the student’s hurt

reaction. A similar defensiveness surfaced when female circumcision and traditional childcare and gender roles were debated, with educators seeking to safeguard “national values.” Thus, instead of opening these critiques up for dialogue, teachers imposed their unequivocal opinions, and this silenced most constructive discussions. In addition, power hierarchies were amplified because teaching staff from majority backgrounds were also cultural insiders, thus lending their “opinions” an almost pontifical authority. One final barrier to critical citizenship orientations within the case study programs could be traced back to the learning materials themselves. As one Arbis SFI teacher notes,

Det finns inte tillräckligt bra undervisningsmaterial och det materialet som finns saknar ibland helt det där kritiska tänkandet. Det blir en motsättning mot allt som jag har lärt mig av utbildning (Arbis SFI teacher)⁴⁸

The last sentence above, in which the educator describes the absence of critical thinking in SFI curricular materials as antithetical to the aims of education s/he was inculcated with, is particularly thought-provoking. In this inherent contradiction, s/he suggests that perhaps objectives for integration educations diverge from those which are perceived as foundational (i.e. critical thinking) for other forms of learning. It begs the question once again: what types of citizens or citizenship do these programs wish to promote?

In comparing *critical citizenship* approaches in teaching with discourses on social inclusion, it becomes apparent that the ideal of “good citizen” within SFI and LINC is widely interpreted within a civic integrationist framework. Findings demonstrated that this was understood as language proficiency, host country knowledge and the acceptance of a liberal values canon (De Roo, Braeye & De Moor 2016, Carlson 2002). Given that a critical citizenship focus requires the uncoupling of ideas of citizenship from specific national, cultural and religious identities in order to challenge hegemonic, privileged narratives, it appears that this perspective is not sufficiently embedded at NorQuest, Medis or Arbis, despite transgressive

⁴⁸ “There is not enough good teaching material and the material that is available sometimes lacks that critical thinking completely. This represents a contradiction to everything that I have learned about education.” (author’s translation)

efforts by critical educators and students (Mohanty & Tandon 2006). In determining what consequences this “omission” has, one needs to ask what picture of society is communicated to students in this uncritical beholding. Thomas Hylland Eriksen’s (2015) queries – *to what*, and *how* one is seeking to integrate migrants – are informative here. If, in presenting the host society, social critiques are rarely interrogated or even acknowledged, this omission by cultural “insiders” shapes those on the “outside” (Castel 2008). The lack of social agency and critical engagement such omissions endorse is unfortunately something for which migrants are later chastised with reference to low voting rates, for example (Goldberg 1994). In the unconflicted interpretations of citizenship within integration educations, opportunities for a social justice-based, recognitive pedagogy (Guo 2015) rooted in migrant experiences remain unrealized. They fall equally short of producing what Kumashiro (2000) refers to as “disruptive knowledge,” one which impels educators and migrant learners to interrogate privilege and illuminates the wider societal processes sanctioning othering.

An interesting insight into the absence of social criticism in curricula revolved around the prevalent view that language teaching was functional, rote and value neutral, making it incompatible with critical citizenship objectives. The “philosophical questions,” critical citizenship perspectives inevitably evoke were simply seen as peripheral. Such views stand in sharp contrast to a reframing of literacy practices as inherently political. Given that literacy embodies conceptions of nation and social arrangements and reflects pervasive power hierarchies within communities and institutions, it cannot be divorced from politics and, correspondingly, from partiality and inequality (Morgan & Ramanathan 2005). In fact, by deeming migrant learners at lower language competence levels as incapable of grasping the complexities of critical citizenship, one draws a decidedly political conclusion. It recalls the paternalist justifications of “progressive inclusion” in extending citizenship rights only if certain criteria are met, along the lines of “if they learn the language then...” (Farahat 2009). This brings to mind an example of a class election role play replete with candidates, election speeches and voting, one educator teaching at lower language levels related. By choosing this anecdote, s/he sought to illustrate that critical citizenship could be taught to migrant learners despite their linguistic limitations.

In turning to the oft knee-jerk defensiveness of some staff when migrant learners enacted the spirit of critical citizenship by critiquing majority society, I became aware that even more progressive understandings of two-way integration or Participation Inclusion reached their limit here. Such reactions betray an assimilationist discourse mired in a domopolitics where migrants are to be “re-socialized” by historically empowered actors, a re-education intended to be unilateral (Walters 2004). Even those educators who avoided rather than actively quashing social critiques in order to maintain classroom harmony made political choices. Antithetically, by not wishing to “rock the boat”, hegemonic knowledge was reinforced. Kumashiro (2001) postulates that perhaps one reason teachers resist critical pedagogical practices is precisely because they force their gaze inwards, as Transposition Inclusion proposes. They tangle and convolute the uncomplicated, idealized depictions of nation and belonging. In truncating “good citizenship” by removing the critical, not only is a general sense of self-deception among staff reinforced, but a certain archetype of “citizen” also comes into view (Wilson & Beresford 2000).

Once again, negotiations on societal critiques and critical citizenship practices reveal the presence of widely contradictory responses by program participants. These range from decolonial approaches, which situate current social injustices in conflicted colonial histories, to assimilationist endeavours presenting a “coherent” national narrative impervious to critiques by those disqualified from holding such views. As such, the liminal spaces of inclusion which open up for migrant students, and their shifting, impermanent nature are revealed in how citizenship is defined and performed (Fangen, Johannsen & Hammaren 2012, Eliassi 2013). The examples in this section illustrate that certain migrant dispositions and expressions of critical agency, especially if they unsettle Western values, are still interpreted as problematic (Popkewitz 2009). The degree they seem to “interfere” with pedagogical practices, however, varies depending on the attitudes of individual instructors and program implementations. They do, nonetheless, challenge the “right” of staff to decide what being “not too excluded, but not too included either” practically means.

7.1.6 INSTITUTIONAL IMPACTS

In examining how inclusion within school walls has been “performed”, the distinctly dialectical relationship between interpersonal, cultural and structural factors in giving shape to such “performances” has been revealed. This same interdependence shapes administrative measures and institutional structures in enactments of social inclusion. In the following discussion, I examine how program structures impact migrant students and staff, as well as how institutional procedures circumscribe teacher-administration relations and affect support needs.

Just as program structures and proceedings varied greatly between NorQuest LINC, Arbis SFI and Medis SFI so did their impacts upon participants. For instance, the Finland-Swedish educations lay dormant between June and September due to curtailed term structures and resource restrictions which created a long gap before students could move onto second-year courses. Conversely, NorQuest’s year-round structure complicated day care arrangements for migrant parents enrolled in summer terms during their children’s school holidays. Notwithstanding, a number of mutual structural challenges could also be discerned. I will discuss several in greater detail such as the time demands of studies, challenges for “foundation students”, lack of effective feedback mechanisms, and the impact of administrative procedures on staff.

Regarding the duration of studies, a common complaint, expressed by migrant students with professional backgrounds, was that they experienced the programs’ time demands as disempowering, which the following quote by a LINC student expresses:

Most of the students when they come here have education, except in English. When you come here you think, “good future” because you finish your high school or University. When I came here, I started in LINC3 and it is ok to get more English, but it is a long way and I am starting to lose my future. You lose your future, and your hope! (NorQuest LINC CLB 6 student)

This sentiment was especially keenly felt by students in programs like NorQuest where practice placements or internships were not typically a part of regular LINC courses. However, the sense of being “in limbo” was also echoed by SFI participants who, despite engaging in periods of

employment practice, could not always be placed in workplaces which corresponded to their previous expertise. Time demands also referred to the numbers of hours spent at school each day. Medis SFI represented the extreme example among the three case studies in this regard, with migrants being obliged to spend more than six hours a day in class, something which one Medis instructor described as “korvstoppning”⁴⁹. Given the fact that the curriculum was largely prescribed by grammar texts, the days were often experienced as exhausting and rather monotonous by participants, as this teacher observes:

Jag har skrivit att man kan inte ha samma elever sitter här sju timmar per dag, fem dagar i veckan och bara ha svenska. De är för långa dagar! Det är inte pedagogiskt eller psykologiskt bra! (Medis SFI teacher)⁵⁰

Although there was broad agreement among migrants and educators concerning the pedagogical and psychological shortcomings of “korvstoppning,” opinions diverged as to who was to blame for this state of affairs. Medis blamed AMS, (Åland Labour Market and Study Service Authority) whose labour market support financed student participation, for a paternalism rooted in suspicion and racial stereotypes that stigmatized and infantilized migrants. The direct consequence of this were control mechanisms such as attendance strictures which placed teachers in the position of gatekeepers or “KELA spies” (p.138).

The treatment of “foundation students”, denoting those with lower language competences or those with learning or literacy challenges, is another interesting example of staff attitudes conspiring with administrative structures to exclude while simultaneously seeking to include migrant students. It became clear in all three case studies that these students presented a “hindrance” to educations for different reasons. Literacy instructional materials in all programs were evaluated as either incompatible for teaching migrant students or insufficient. Therefore, educators were often forced to imaginatively create curricular contents with whatever was close at hand. Many staff members also admitted that they lacked the

⁴⁹ “cramming” (lit. “sausage stuffing”) (author’s translation)

⁵⁰ “I have written that you cannot have the same students sitting here seven hours a day, five days a week and only learning Swedish. They're too long days! It is not pedagogically or psychologically beneficial!” (author’s translation)

pedagogical training required for working with literacy students and received little institutional support, as one Medis SFI teacher complained; “Det finns ingen handledning med analfabeter eller kunskap överhuvudtaget.”⁵¹ There also seemed to be rather entrenched stereotypes regarding these students among staff which contributed to their marginalization. In describing the differences between “normal” and literacy learners, the following quote encapsulates some of these preconceived notions:

Huge difference! Literacy people are kind of like the street people. It is surprising how well they can function, how street savvy they are, but when it comes to academics, they have a very narrow-minded view on learning. They don't have an imagination. They can't think outside of the box so for many of them it is black or white, there is no grey. Those with little or no [education] are really stuck in a box than those with more education and sometimes religion also plays a huge part in that box thinking. (NorQuest LINC teacher)

Such descriptions of “literacy people” were commonplace and sutured to other observations like, “they overestimate their abilities”, are “less able to think critically”, and “don’t really see education as an essential part of their lives.” It is interesting that religion was also cited as a contributing factor to the value fundamentalism exemplified by “box thinking”, implying that aside from educational deficiencies, cultural factors were also seen as complicit in disabling foundation learners.

In responding to these learning challenges, both NorQuest LINC and Medis SFI created special classes which separated foundation students from those with more years of education in order to serve them more effectively. However, some educators feared that if the stereotypes reifying literacy students remained uninterrogated, they could become embedded in curricular goals and implementations. As one LINC teacher speculates,

I think there is maybe not the greatest understanding for why some students do not have literacy. It is easier to stereotype them as rural peasants or whatever and if somebody is put in that literacy stream how do we perceive them as a learner and how do we as institutions and organizations see their potential for

⁵¹ “There is no tutoring of illiterate learners or any knowledge about how to serve them at all.” (author’s translation)

Empirical Findings

further learning and how are they supported? Are we streaming those literacy students to say that the best you are ever going to do is our home care worker program? (NorQuest teacher/administrator)

Important questions are raised in this quote about the aims of streaming and whether these, despite their “inclusive” intentions, circumscribe migrant students’ educational horizons in a way similar to how some staff attitudes delimit foundation students’ learning potential. These perceived limitations then become self-fulfilling. Other teachers felt that by focusing exclusively on language competence and academic achievement, one devalues the “wealth of other knowledge and wisdom” that these students possess. For literacy learners or those unfamiliar with the Latin alphabet, the pressure to move up, imposed by program structures, could have negative unintended consequences. The case of “Yusuf” and “Tarek” – who, after spending a term in the literacy group, were told to move to the Swedish A1 beginner’s level, to the frustration of their former teacher who condemned this as discrimination – illustrates this fact:

De satt och förstod ingenting. Det är en katastrof att man utsätter vuxna människor som dessutom är kvotflyktingar med trauma bakom sig som kommer till ett nytt ställe, en ny kultur och så sätter man dem här i tio veckor och de fattar ingenting. Slutsats: Jag är dum i huvudet. ”Tarek” sade att jag är för gammal och han kan inte lär sig så här snabbt. Nej, det var ju inte han som det var fel på, han kan säkert lär sig men de var på fel nivå. (Medis SFI teacher)⁵²

By contrast, NorQuest’s “unlimited LINC” policy, which extended students’ opportunities to study in the program until citizenship was attained regardless of time taken and “level failures”, mitigated against this enforced fast-tracking.

Another poignant example of the malleability, or lack thereof, of institutional structures relates to the manner in which student feedback was

⁵² “They sat and understood nothing. It is a disaster that you expose adult people who are also quota refugees with trauma behind them and come to a new place, to a new culture and then you put them here for ten weeks and they understand nothing. Conclusion: I’m dumb in the head. ‘Tarek’ said I’m too old and that he can’t learn this fast. No, he wasn’t to blame, he can surely learn but they were at the wrong level.” (author’s translation)

viewed, gathered and acted upon in effecting organizational change. Whether informally, in teacher-student discussions, or formally, as part of written course and program evaluations, SFI and LINC educations collected feedback from students during the course of their education. It was a puzzling conundrum, then, that students on many occasions during my fieldwork in both Finland and Canada, expressed that this was the first time that someone had actually asked them how they experienced their studies and that they valued such opportunities. Thus, there appeared to be a disconnect between feedback mechanisms and their utility in the minds of migrants. This may be explained by students preferring the more personal, face-to-face group discussion format employed in my fieldwork to the mechanical nature of Likert scale-based evaluations usually utilized in SFI and LINC. But as one NorQuest LINC CLB6 student explained there were other reasons as well: “We give feedback, but we don’t know what happens to it. We don’t get feedback. Maybe next term students will find out.” These sentiments reverberated across all three programs and indicate the general absence of a feedback loop, of established procedures regulating what actually happens with feedback, how it is handled, evaluated and disseminated as well as what role students play in this loop. Their role goes to voice and participation. As one Medis SFI B1 student shrewdly quipped, participation must be predicated upon administrations being truly willing to “take feedback” and act upon it. In this act, student agency remained a blind spot, as one administrator admits:

I guess what we have never done is any follow-up to measure if they think that they affected change or very much loop around that they maybe heard or saw the change. (NorQuest LINC administrator)

Student disempowerment also extended to procedures dealing with their concerns and complaints, which lacked coherence and clarity in the same ad hoc manner as those governing cultural negotiations. In responding to my question as to whom students can turn to when they have issues or problems, a NorQuest LINC student replied,

You ask who we can see? We don’t know who we can see. People have problems, but they just quit, they just go, nothing they can do. They don’t know where to go to take that problem and sometimes they fear if they take it up there can be big problems. (NorQuest LINC CLB6 student)

Empirical Findings

The “solution” of simply leaving school was not uncommon and applied to a variety of dissatisfactions with staff and program contents, or simply the inability to maintain the oft conflictual balance between life and studies. The other point raised in the above quote of the fear of causing problems was also frequently voiced. Students felt torn between a genuine fondness for individual teachers, their gratitude of securing a study place and their valid grievances regarding certain aspects of the educations, so they opted for silence:

When the leader of the school sometimes comes to ask us, how's school, how's class, how's teacher, if you discuss with us, we keep silent. (NorQuest LINC CLB5 student)

The situation at Arbis SFI, perhaps due to its more limited size, lower student-teacher ratios and the close interaction between individual study tutors and migrant learners, was an exception to the rule. Staff efforts to reduce power hierarchies by involving migrant learners in change endeavours and by engaging external consultants meant that feedback was more tangible; it had a purpose in feeding change. In addition, the routines in addressing student complaints were more transparent and the thresholds lower. In fact, there were other notable attempts made in the integration educations to “student-center” institutional structures. At NorQuest LINC, for example, strong institutional support for experimentation in program delivery to identify best practices in serving migrant learners, as well as implementing an immigrant strategy as educational policy, attest to an openness for change informed by feedback and the desire to meet student needs. As this administrator clarifies:

This will actually be the first year where [we] will be leading a new immigrant strategy. Lots of post-secondaries [...] don't target immigrants particularly, they just have them in their programs. This will be building on our strengths [...] it will be a fairly comprehensive approach as to what services we offer, what aren't we offering, what partnerships do we have? How are students seen in here and what do students want? (NorQuest LINC administrator)

We now turn to how institutional program structures were seen to impact and circumscribe relations between staff and administrations. In describing these relations, staff frequently referred to a gap in

understanding as to what is truly required from an institution in supporting integration educations and their participants, as teachers from NorQuest LINC and Arbis SFI explain:

When our administrators come and give speeches, they talk to our students as if they are educated Canadians and maybe five percent understand what they are talking about. Know your audience; come into our classrooms! They don't really get it. They don't understand our needs. (NorQuest LINC teacher)

Men en annan sak är ett strukturellt problem som vi har. Vi är anställda som om vi skulle undervisa svenskspråkiga människor som har levt i det här samhället hur länge som helst och det har inte gått fram till ledningen när jag säger hur mycket mera [SFI] kräver. (Arbis SFI teacher)⁵³

A common thread in the views expressed by the two instructors above is the perception that school administrations treat integration programs as just another education among the many others they offer learners and that an insight as to their inherent singularity is missing. Some likened this gap in understanding between those in charge and rank-and-file staff to the phenomenon of two groups speaking a different language or talking past one another. This was noticeable in administrators' descriptions of relations with staff, where they often lauded how egalitarian and democratic these relations and the institutions themselves were; however, such impressions were often not reciprocated by staff. As a Medis SFI teacher observes, "Jag har alltid upplevt Medis som väldigt, väldigt hierarkiskt."⁵⁴

This theme of institutional hierarchies was generally much more pronounced in interviews with staff and students and given an added dimension in the SFI educations at Arbis and Medis where the majority of teaching staff were part-time. This created an additional hierarchical stratum between teachers with permanent full-time contracts, including the corresponding benefits these entailed, and teachers who were only paid according to hours taught and became unemployed in the summer. As a

⁵³ "But another thing is a structural problem we have. We are employed as if we are to teach Swedish-speaking people who have lived all their lives in this society and management does not get it when I say how much more [SFI] requires." (author's translation)

⁵⁴ "I have always experienced Medis as extremely, extremely hierarchical." (author's translation)

result, part-time teachers' participation in meetings was typically unpaid, as were other extracurricular tasks, which meant that they were often "left out of the loop" when program changes were planned. As one Medis staffer alleges, "Alltså, vi har absolut ingen insyn. Det är noll information och jag vet av erfarenhet att det är känsligt att fråga."⁵⁵ The precariousness of their position both within and without the institution is aptly described below:

Timlärarna här är ganska ensamma, det tycker jag. De har ganska tungt när de får lön för exakt det när de står i klassen. Då blir det inte att de sitter här efteråt och pratar med kollegerna [...] Jag upplever nog att alla är inte ens medvetna om läroplanen och vad den säger. (Arbis SFI teacher)⁵⁶

Given teaching workloads, which hovered around 30-35 hours per week, the charge of teachers' "curricular unfamiliarity" in SFI is perhaps not unfounded and goes some way to explaining the predilection for book-bound lesson planning in light of limitations in time and financial compensation for lesson preparation and participating in meetings. The lack of collective curricular planning also meant that teachers did not have sufficient insight into each other's teaching practices. This transparency deficit impeded curricular coherence and joint strategizing and may further elucidate the central role played by language grammar texts in steering learning, because these presented a common norm or guideline. In Medis SFI's case, the added lack of a teacher common room, forcing instructors to congregate in the courtyard to confer, had many wishing that they had "lite mera tid att bolla."⁵⁷ It is also emblematic of the fracturing effects of institutional hierarchies. Employment precarity had other marginalizing side effects, as this instructor caustically remarks:

Arbetskontrakten tar slut så här och du har aldrig nåt löfte om nyanställning. Du startar från "scratch" varje år. Du har inga garantier för hur många timmar du får. Har du inte varit trevlig nog? Har du fått klagomål för att du

⁵⁵ "So, we have absolutely no transparency. It is zero information and I know from experience that it is sensitive to ask." (author's translation)

⁵⁶ "Part-time teachers here are quite isolated, I think. It is difficult for them when they get paid only for when they are in class. Then it does not happen that they sit here afterwards and talk with their colleagues [...]. I suspect that not everyone is even aware of the curriculum and what it says." (authors translation)

⁵⁷ "a bit more time to bounce ideas around" (author's translation)

verkar trött eller gammal, eller ful, "whatever," så då får du färre timmar.
(Arbis SFI teacher)⁵⁸

The predicament of being in limbo, of the inconsequentiality of seniority, of financial insecurity and of being at the whim of policy makers and program administrators regarding employment conditions is far more palpable in part-time teachers' narratives. They expressed a pervasive sense of powerlessness, producing resignation which was only mitigated by the educators' intrinsic commitment to the work as well as by their freedom to create, given the absence of administrative monitoring of individual teaching. The two-tiered teacher hierarchy also had an unintended potentiating effect, as this full-time Arbis SFI staffer relates: "man känner sig liksom skuldmedveten för sin lön och tänker inte att klaga när andra har fruktansvärt dåliga löner."⁵⁹ Thus, personal guilt and the manner in which it inhibited agency obfuscated collegial solidarity in demanding better working conditions and wages.

The fact that this precariousness in employment was more characteristic of SFI educations than NorQuest LINC was partly, though not solely, attributable to resources. Broadly speaking, it also heralded a precarity in other areas, such as staff access to professional development education as well as institutional support mechanisms for migrant learners. While NorQuest LINC students had access to a staff nurse, social worker and employment counselors, as well as to the College's counseling services, such safeguards were not available at Medis and Arbis, though the need was great. As a Medis teacher admits,

Vi har nog ingen psykolog, psykiatriker eller kurator här. Om det blir grava svårigheter med dom då måste vi ta kontakt med någon annan instans. Vi har

⁵⁸ "The employment contract ends just like that and you never have any promise of continued employment. You start from scratch every year. You have no guarantees for how many hours you get. Haven't you been nice enough? If you've gotten complaints because you seem tired or old, or ugly, "whatever", so then you get fewer hours." (author's translation)

⁵⁹ "one feels guilty about one's salary and does not think to complain when others have such terribly poor wages." (author's translation)

Empirical Findings

faktiskt inga verktyg för det. Vi är ganska ensamma med det. Jag vet att det nog har varit några svåra fall. (Medis SFI teacher)⁶⁰

The frustration and helplessness alluded to in the above quote – from seeing that students don’t feel well to being unable to do something about it – were frequently voiced by members of staff. The absence of auxiliary support mechanisms buttresses the earlier claim of a Medis teacher that educators were, in essence, forced to become counselors, social workers and even “parents.”

In tracing the *institutional impacts* which give shape to *inclusion within the walls* for students and staff at NorQuest, Arbis and Medis, the findings identify a number of impediments. The shared challenges posed by study structures, feedback mechanisms and the situation of foundation learners and part-time staff, despite their idiosyncratic interpretations within the institutional hierarchies, also revealed certain important similarities in how inclusion is “managed.” A striking example is the effort to integrate foundation or literacy students. There was a general recognition in all programs that these students’ special needs were unable to be met by mainstream LINC or SFI curricula and course structures. However, questions then arose as to how one addresses such students’ “departure from the norm”? Line Hilt’s (2015) study exploring the inclusion-exclusion nexus in targeting Norwegian migrants provides some valuable insights here. She argues that “migrant student lack” in host language competence or reading and writing skills, as well as their “handicap” in speaking a foreign language, were the drivers prompting redoubled efforts at inclusion through separated classes etc. Consequentially, these ameliorative efforts, despite their best intentions, also resulted in excluding migrant learners in order to include them. It became obvious, that the perception of foundation students “lacking something” became a prism through which they were seen by teachers and through which they saw themselves. I recall asking a NorQuest teacher if literacy students studying at lower levels are aware of the fact that they have been streamed into “special classes” even

⁶⁰ “We certainly have no psychologist, psychiatrist or guidance counselor here. If there are serious difficulties with them then we have to contact another authority. We actually have no tools for this. We are pretty alone with it. I know that there have been some difficult cases.” (author’s translation)

though this is not advertised. Her answer was interesting. She replied that after a few weeks, students had approached her and asked why there are only black students in their class while the rest of the LINC classes were mixed. Inclusion efforts thus had the unfortunate by-product of racializing students, given that those who fit the foundation learner profile frequently came from countries in the North and East of Africa.

It also became clear that teachers' descriptions of "literacy people" illustrated cognitive "feed-forward" mechanisms whereby assumptions of what they expect to see strongly influences what they actually encounter in the classroom (Cooper & Maidment 2002). Students' perceived inability to "think outside the box" and value fundamentalism were also attributed to cultural factors such as religion instead of solely to educational deficiencies. The implication is that the latter are much more difficult to overcome and may serve to derail migrant learners' hopes for advancing CLB levels and fulfilling personal career goals. Positing foreign religions as stumbling blocks to Western integration, as something delimiting and primitive, is a recurring theme in Riitaoja and Dervin's (2014) research. Beneath the inclusion veneer, stereotypes and prejudices obfuscate the egalitarian foundations of critical inclusion as espoused by Transformation Inclusion. There is a danger that by conflating literacy with religion and culture, one replicates the raced work of cultural hierarchies (Stoler 2016, p.137). This risk is encapsulated in the reflection, "Are we streaming those literacy students to say that the best you are ever going to do is our home care worker program?" The statement recognizes the possible exclusionary outcomes of creating special literacy classes if underlying personal and institutional stereotypes are not interrogated. Unexamined, they go hand-in-glove with a civic integrationism whose neo-liberal interpretation consists of training migrants to fill the domestic skills gap (Gibb 2008, Guo 2015, Webb 2017, Carlson & Jacobson 2019).

In examining institutional responses to migrant learners at the other end of the spectrum, namely professional students, here too programs struggled to meet needs. Student demands for more voice, input and labour market participation illustrate that the limits of student-centeredness became stretched when demands were made which challenged the status quo – described as "teaching to the middle" by a NorQuest staffer. Some

Empirical Findings

programs responded to this challenge by supplementing curricula, updating feedback mechanisms, developing more cohesive interfaces with employers in public and private sectors and/or employing support staff, while others had difficulties reconciling these efforts with what they perceived to be primarily language acquisition goals. Institutional responses to the demands of professional students reveal once more how administrations interpret the *raison d'être* of integration educations.

One point became obvious. As student “differences” deviated from the institutional norm, they gave rise to conflicting responses. Some of these were characterized by an increasing paternalism bent on controlling and managing this difference. Cogent examples are program structures employing a “one size fits all model” consisting of long study days and curricular inflexibility, strict attendance requirements as well as insufficient or ineffective feedback mechanisms. These effectively marginalized migrant learners while obliging staff to act as gatekeepers and controllers. The case of Medis SFI’s daily timetable and attendance strictures which endured despite student and staff objections, confirms this. The aforementioned structural constraints seem rooted in suspicion, migrant stereotypes, and appear principally aimed at placating “white worries.” Thus, they reaffirm entitlements invested in majorities to be arbiters of “good” and “bad” diversity at the expense of facilitating students’ inclusion into Ålandic society (Lentin & Titley 2011). From Transformation and Transposition inclusion perspectives, such measures should therefore be understood as mechanisms of exclusion rather than inclusion (Carrera & Atger 2011). However, “difference” also elicited structural responses that attest to an openness for change and a participatory approach in the spirit of Transformation Inclusion (Hick & Thomas 2009). Included among these are NorQuest LINC’s immigrant strategy and LINC program experimentation and tailoring to address the diversity of students’ life situations. In addition, the wider range of student support staff demonstrate an institutional responsibility for realizing integration’s multiple goals beyond those of language acquisition (Grant 2007). Arbis’ low student feedback threshold and individually tailored tutor-learner approach work in a similar way to entrench flexibility and a sensitivity to critique within institutional structures.

Nevertheless, the findings show that from a structural perspective all three programs may benefit from the creation of what Shibao Guo (2015) refers to as “spaces for transformative learning” in which the contributions of involved stakeholders are shared and integrated in reimagining administrative procedures. This would entail actively and jointly interrogating existing institutional power structures and hierarchies (MacDonald et. al 2003). At present, many students and staff indicated that their institutions suffered from a colour-blindness with regards to the singular needs of LINC and SFI programs. This, according to participants, expressed itself in administrations treating integration educations as similar programs to many others, with the resultant marginalizing effects on migrants and staff. A colourblind approach also allowed institutional power hierarchies to remain unchallenged, which the absence of the “feedback loop”, including enshrined procedures and statutory responsibilities aptly illustrates (Sue 2006). Its absence was most profoundly felt by those on the margins, namely migrant learners. As Tew (2006) argues, existing power hierarchies are then also internalized, exemplified by students “disappearing” from class, or opting for silence when confronted by administrators. For part-time staff, power hierarchies became tangible in the precariousness of their position as employees. It conferred upon them much of the daily responsibilities for running the educations without the contractual power to change them. Their disenfranchisement from decisions-making, low wages, arbitrary employment status and limited opportunities for professional development placed them in a subordinate position, something of which they were keenly aware. As such, these findings connect with similar conclusions reached in studies by Haque and Cray (2017) and Desyatova (2018). This discussion on institutional impacts reveals that whether organizational arrangements respond to staff and student “difference” with a normative paternalism or a more dialogical participationism, all of these integrative strategies are fiercely contested (Terhart & von Dewitz 2018).

7.2 INCLUSION BEYOND THE WALLS

The bank manager and his staff who worked with our students for a week said, “we learned more from doing this than the students did because they had a

Empirical Findings

much better sense of what kind of language we need to use when speaking to certain clients.” I think students can have an impact by participating in the community, learning in the community [...] they can shape the community a little bit. (NorQuest LINC teacher/administrator)

The above quote describing results from a community outreach initiative between LINC students and a local bank succinctly encapsulates the quality of reciprocity envisioned when striving for migrant student inclusion beyond the walls. In this description, inclusion becomes mutually transformative, leaving all parties changed and enriched. It also subverts traditional points of departure which often proceed from migrant students’ perceived deficiencies and inadequacies (Hertzberg 2015). Migrants are thus defined by what they “lack” in hard and soft skills. From the outset, this shifts power balances radically in the majority’s favour and skews interactions with society to ones where majorities teach, and migrants comply and adapt. The quote, however, seems to suggest, almost unexpectedly, that building on students’ existing competences can yield more participatory results, even social changes. It also reflects a recognition, shared by both staff and students within SFI and LINC, of the “dual perspective” (Dalrymple & Burke 1997) required when planning and operationalizing integration programs. This means acknowledging the reality of migrants’ embeddedness in society as well as the unattainability of proclaimed goals of student social inclusion if these are only restricted to efforts within school walls.

Theme two, *Inclusion beyond the walls*, therefore explores the nature of educational efforts which seek to facilitate migrant students’ integration within wider society. It examines curricular and extracurricular components preparing learners for cooperation with organizations representing the public, private and third sectors, details the nature and extent of external partnerships, and interrogates the structural obstacles to student’s social inclusion within their respective communities. It is with respect to the structural barriers which circumscribe migrant lives that endeavours to extend inclusion beyond school walls raise a number of pertinent questions. Firstly, does a recognition of these structural obstacles have an impact on program implementation? and, secondly, do programs include a political

mandate in challenging and collectively addressing such barriers? (Adams, Dominelli & Payne 2002).

7.2.1 LOOKING INWARDS WHILE LOOKING BEYOND

There was a shared recognition at Arbis, Medis and NorQuest College, that inclusion of its migrant learners necessitated that SFI and LINC programs engage in a dialectic with society. Though the extent of this interaction varied depending upon program aims, structures and resources, all programs included curricular and extracurricular components that were designed to prepare students for interactions with “the world outside.” In fact, a recurring theme in conversations with students was their curiosity about the host society and their wish for more engagement with it. Such wishes ranged from extending “real life” language practices and increasing their participation in various workplace traineeships to opening up the curriculum process for more input from without. As one LINC student expressed, “We need some people especially Canadian people to develop this course and talk together.” There were also suggestions among migrant learners that if integration educations neglected “real life” connections, this would impede students’ acculturation because their individual life situations after class often dictated that they focus primarily on family.

Among teachers and administrators, rationales for preparing students to engage with the surrounding community went beyond social inclusion to include more personal and political motivations. The political objective was particularly noticeable in discussions with some Arbis SFI staff who recognized the challenges of integrating a minority (migrant students) within a minority (Finland-Swedes) while embedded in a majority environment dominated by Finnish language and culture. In these narratives, there were more mentions of the need for a public education mandate, for lobbying and advocacy work, and a recognition of the frustrations of Swedish being marginalized in Finland’s integration planning. As this Arbis integration coordinator laments,

Det är ett tvåspråkigt land då måste man också utveckla integrationspolitiken enligt den tvåspråkigheten [...] Om vi är tvåspråkiga då kan det inte vara att vi bara integrerar systematiskt in i en enda språkgrupp och bara ha på pappret

Empirical Findings

att det är tvåspråkigt. Det irriterar mig fruktansvärt! (Arbis SFI integration coordinator/tutor)⁶¹

Therefore, at Arbis, creating a wide range of networks with Finland-Swedish organizations and enterprises also became part of a survival strategy for both staff and students. On an intriguing personal note there was a reciprocal effect of “reaching out to community” for many teachers. Instead of solely encouraging migrant learners to connect with society, several spoke of being more willing to make personal connections with immigrants in the quotidian practices of everyday life as a result of their involvement in LINC or SFI. As this NorQuest staffer explains,

I think it has changed how I interact. I find now that I tend to look for the new immigrants [...] I tend to listen more to what they are saying and to speak more slowly and clearly to help them try to convey whatever message they are trying to get across. I find that I am more sensitive to those kinds of situations now than I was before. (NorQuest LINC teacher)

Supporting the personal motivations of students and staff for inclusion beyond the walls were curricular components that bridged language and settlement training with practical applications in society. One of these were study visits. However, their success and utility depended upon a number of factors ranging from how they were structured, how such learning was integrated into the theoretical studies within schools and how prepared both students and external actors were for such interactions. Regarding structure and curricular connections, the findings illustrate that what transpired on visits was largely at the whim of external organizations and not necessarily synced with present learning tasks or adapted to student language competence levels as this Arbis SFI student relates about a visit to Hufvudstadsbladet, Swedish-Finland’s largest daily:

Anytime somebody comes to talk to us in Swedish, the Swedish that they use is at a level that we don’t have and as much as it is fine to push yourself,[...] BUT it is again a feeling of [visits] just being thrown together in that you have

⁶¹ “It is a bilingual country so one must also develop integration policy according to this bilingualism [...] If we are bilingual then it can't be that we only systematically integrate into one single language group while simply referring to bilingualism on paper. This annoys me terribly!” (author’s translation)

speakers who don't really know how to speak to people who are at our language level. So, they talk to us as if we are native Swedish-speaking Finns.
(Arbis SFI A2 student)

In this case, the visit's promise of societal immersion with its empowering potential was lost and had the adverse, disempowering effect of illustrating to students just how far they still had to go in order to "belong." However, visits, when planned in close cooperation between teachers and hosts could also become truly valuable experiences as the following observation log excerpt illustrates:

Next, we depart for the visit to the Cultural History Museum of Åland and are greeted by the curator who has, as is told the class, prepared a tailor-made presentation for SFI students. She does speak slowly, checks for understanding and takes the group through the art collection. Upon completing the tour, students are asked to choose two paintings and write a short text describing: 1) which painting expresses something of their former life and why? and 2) which canvas mirrors their new life and why? The level of preparedness is evident both in the assignment and in the written examples from other migrant students' work our host reads out to illustrate the assignment's point. (Medis SFI Observation log 25.10.2016)

By connecting the abstraction of an art exhibition directly with the lived experiences of students, using level appropriate language and linking learning to relevant curricular topics, the museum curator ensured that the visit succeeded in merging the world outside with the world of the integration classroom. Its poignancy and meaning for migrants became even more apparent when they presented their assignments with personal reflections to the group the following day. Despite their lauded importance, visits and their arrangement occupied a rather precarious position within institutional curricular arrangements. They were generally the brainchild of individual teachers who drew upon their personal networks in organizing them. The engagement of these "eldsjälar"⁶² operating in a curricular grey zone was crucial in driving inclusion beyond the walls, which consisted not only of visits but other extra-curricular exchanges. However, teachers were not paid extra for spending what was essentially their free time and energy

⁶² "committed visionaries"

in creating these links, something which especially affected part-time instructors. Thus, when an instructor left or found the task of teaching and arranging too time-consuming, such opportunities disappeared with them.

We now turn to another practical element integrated into the study syllabi of both SFI programs as a means of facilitating migrant students' inclusion: namely, work internships. Varying periods of labour market practice at different language competence levels were afforded to all SFI pupils. In contrast, at NorQuest College, obligatory work placement periods for participating students were not an integral part of LINC and in fact, only the Work Volunteer Program offered such opportunities within third sector associations during my fieldwork.⁶³ The allocation of placements ordinarily followed negotiations between study tutors and migrant learners in which students' previous competences, backgrounds and wishes were to serve as points of departure for establishing contacts with suitable labour market actors. In practice, however, this was complicated by conflicting practice aims and the "availability" of appropriate placements. Such availability depended upon the willingness of labour market actors to provide internships to students, something which was noticeably affected by prevalent social climates.

As far as practice aims were concerned, these oscillated between those advocating opportunities for language practice and those seeking to tailor placements as closely as possible to the professional backgrounds of students. This unclarity as to whether the primary aim of internships was to allow students to improve their language skills or serve as a training ground for their professional futures led to misunderstandings not only between students and staff but also between staff and external stakeholders, as the case of Medis illustrates. At Medis, SFI was conceived entirely as a labour-market training scheme only available to unemployed migrants and coordinated by Åland's Labour Market and Study Service Authority. AMS envisioned placements to function as springboards into working life, an aim not always embraced in like manner by teachers:

⁶³ In 2018-19 additional courses with work practice components have been added, yet they still comprise but a fraction of all LINC courses available to students.

Hon på AMS har sagt till mig vad hon säger till dem, försök få praktik där du kan sen få jobb. Och studenterna har uppfattat det så att nej jag vill inte ha praktik där för där vill jag inte jobba. Och jag har försökt att förklara att på praktiken ska du få upp din svenska på en så hög nivå som möjligt. (Medis SFI teacher)⁶⁴

In recognition of the difficulties that migrants would experience in attempting to organize their own practice placements, both Arbis and Medis undertook the process of finding internships and matching students with them. Arbis, in particular, adopted a personal tailoring approach of matching students' wishes and previous experiences with appropriate job placements. This was arrived at in an egalitarian dialectic between migrant and placement tutors, the latter playing a pivotal role as student advocates, as this instructor explains:

Vi har alltid funderat på vad människorna har för kompetens och att praktikplatsen skulle motsvara kompetensen plus språk, så det var utgångsläget. Vi har inte sagt till dem att ni får söka helt själva men vi har försökt att luska fram dem, här skulle du kunna ha en möjlighet eller här skulle finnas någonting som intresserar och så har vi "sålt" dem. [Till arbetsgivare:] "Här har vi en spännande person som har det här möjligheterna" – och jag har presenterat dem som sådana som har fantastiska möjligheter och det har varit jättefint. (Arbis SFI teacher)⁶⁵

The personal engagement of tutors who marketed students to employers and corresponded with labour market gatekeepers was crucial in "uncovering" many internships which would otherwise have been beyond students' reach. Migrants with professional backgrounds were simply

⁶⁴ "She at AMS told me what she is saying to them, try to find an internship where you can then get a job. And students have understood it in the way that, no I do not want to have an internship there because I do not want to work there. And I have tried to explain that in practice you should improve your Swedish to as high a level as possible." (author's translation)

⁶⁵ "We have always thought about what competences people possess and that internships should reflect these competences plus language, so that was the starting point. We have not told students, you have to find placements yourselves, but we have tried to "discover" them, as in here you could have an opportunity or there would be something that might interest you and we have "convinced" them. [To employers we have said] here we have an exciting person who has these skills and I have presented them as those who have fantastic opportunities and it has been great." (author's translation)

Empirical Findings

grateful for any placement opportunities within their fields as this Arbis SFI B1 student relates, “at least put me in a hospital where I can see and not forget my knowledge.” At NorQuest, such tailoring was delimited by the stipulation within the Work Volunteer course that only volunteer organizations could serve as placement settings due to fears of student exploitation. As a result, most professional students were precluded from securing work practices within their fields of expertise as this LINC teacher admits: “It is good that they have a volunteer position on their resumé but often it is not even in an area that they are interested in.”

The implementation of practice periods and their integration within the educations also exposed several gaps. Whether these were due to difficulties in entrenching this type of learning within largely book-based curricula, or the time frames within which internships were offered (many of these were situated at the end of term in SFI), students spoke of a lack of preparedness and supervision. Preparatory sessions for placements were critiqued for being quite late, fragmented and short on detailing student rights within occupational settings. Learning tasks beyond encouragements to speak the host language and maintain a practice diary were experienced as diffuse and supervision on placement on the part of the employer and the institution seemed insufficient. As this Arbis student relates,

There was no specific supervision for integration. They treat you like the rest of the interns. There is not a big difference, but of course if they see that you cannot speak the language properly, they are going to switch to English. But there is no supervision inside the place and there is no supervision from Arbis.
(Arbis SFI A2 student)

Another finding attested to by some learners in all three integration educations was that internships failed to meet the programs’ most important practice criterion, namely providing opportunities for language training. This was due to the fact, that students were simply too busy working and not interacting as this Medis student states:

När vi hade praktik var det inte så mycket språk, vi bara jobbar, jobbar, jobbar. Jag frågade min vän på [kulturhuset]Alandica, hon sade att ingen pratar med dem hela dagen. (Medis SFI B1 student)⁶⁶

Moreover, opportunities for speaking were not extended to trainees:

We have so much work to do, we have no time to practice listening and speaking. Most of the time I could listen to others, but I had no chance to speak. (NorQuest LINC CLB6 student)

Given that the language practice imperative generally superseded students' wishes for a seamless fit between previous professional experience and related internships, with the exception of Arbis SFI, it begs the question if and how the suitability of existing work-life contacts was assessed. At their best, placements could connect, empower and provide both migrants and employers with opportunities for mutual learning. In an observation log excerpt from the 25.6. 2016, Arbis student, "Mahdi," commented that one of the most gratifying experiences during practice was that people took interest in him as a person and elicited his input from the start. He further added that this appreciation of his skills coupled with meaningful personal engagements further enhanced his own self-confidence and self-worth. He was treated like an expert, was consulted, was considered important. It was a valuable lesson, quite apart from the language practice, that these things mattered most to him. At their worst, though, placements could compound feelings of social exclusion, "difference" and isolation as this former surgeon now relegated to the position of an orderly in an elderly care home describes:

You know that I am a doctor and a surgeon. In the home where I did the practice there were two pills to be given to a resident. When I tried simply to give them to a resident one of the staff said no. No, you are not allowed to give them. I'm just helping. It is only two pills, but I was not allowed. (Arbis SFI A2 student)

⁶⁶ "When we were in practice it was not so much language, we just work, work, work. I asked my friend at the Culture & Congress Center Alandica, she said that no one talks to them all day." (author's translation)

Empirical Findings

The potentiating effects of exclusion, as described above, are then easily exacerbated by inadequate supervision regimes as well as by the fact that experiences and expertise accumulated at work practice had only tenuous connections to other language learning and seemed to occur in curricular isolation. One Medis SFI B1 student reflected upon the importance of personal career goals as stepping stones towards integration futures, by stating that, “vi måste ha ett mål men de måste hjälpa oss till målet.”⁶⁷ Here, Arbis SFI’s student-tailored model seemed most promising as it was predicated upon sharing power and decision-making with migrant learners.

One last component which integration education programs featured in preparing students for interaction with the world outside were the extracurricular supports they provided. In general, staff and administrators recognized that safeguards buttressing curricular initiatives needed to be in place to ease students’ transition from school to society. Some of these were of a “one-off” nature such as job fairs, or guest lectures from migrant professionals, while others were more permanently entrenched within institutional structures. At NorQuest LINC, these were subsumed under the umbrella of “student support services” which aside from providing study and psycho-social help also included employment counselors and social workers with wide contact networks in the community. As this LINC instructor explains,

Our employment counselor “Ron” will help them with their resumés. If we hear about jobs, there is a job board out there and then they can ask “Ron” to help them write a covering letter. He can also do practice interviews with them. We have a job fair twice a year at NorQuest. The career fair is from the University of Alberta where they look at degrees of professionals and trades people but at NorQuest our job fair is for working at places like Safeways & McDonalds and employers come and interview people on the spot and sometimes hire on the spot. (NorQuest LINC teacher)

LINC social workers arranged food and clothing drives in order to supplement Alberta’s comparatively low social benefits which left many migrant learners impoverished. They also formed discussions groups such

⁶⁷ “We have to have a goal, but they have to help us in reaching that goal.” (author’s translation)

as “Girl Talk” in which students’ social and personal issues could be explored in a safe environment. Arbis engaged an integration coordinator who liaised with authorities while also providing personal study and placement tutoring for students. They further offered an SFX (Swedish for professionals) education for nursing aides designed for SFI graduates. In addition, both Medis and Arbis cooperated quite closely with third sector actors such as “Kompassen”⁶⁸ in Mariehamn, and “Luckan”⁶⁹ in Helsingfors, who organized employment workshops and were instrumental in connecting students with practice placements.

In *Looking inwards while looking beyond*, a point of departure in preparing students for the dialectic between school and the outside world was the awareness among staff that pursuing the “full” inclusion of migrant learners without the institution’s corresponding societal engagement was fruitless. Particularly in the case of Arbis, where the program’s minority position placed it in a distinct liminal space, this often-conflictual dialogue with majority society reinforced the need to entrench SFI within Finland-Swedish organizations and workplaces. As such, this awareness connects with Kumashiro’s (2000) fourth approach to anti-oppressive education, entitled *education that changes students and society*, which is predicated upon reciprocal, transformative exchanges between the Other and majority communities. It further supports the findings of previous studies on integration educations which promote migrant students’ social and professional networking possibilities in efforts to strengthen their societal involvement (Grant 2007, Thomson & Derwing 2004, Morgan 2002). However, the findings also demonstrate that these curricular constructs aiming to bridge the school-society divide, generate their own unique inclusions and exclusions.

A poignant example of the exclusionary outcomes of purportedly inclusionary measures is the manner in which many visits to external associations were arranged. Where these interactions failed to interface with students’ lived experiences and where the level of language used exceeded their understanding, such visits actually accentuated migrant pupils’ abjection from the social body instead of including learners within it

⁶⁸ The Information Office for Immigrants on the Åland Islands

⁶⁹ The Finland-Swedish Information and Cultural Centre

(Popkewitz 2009). In addition, when the parameters for visits were unilaterally determined by host associations without an in-depth understanding of learners' needs, these opportunities disintegrated into one-way exercises of cultural consumption that passivated and silenced students. In contrast, the visit to the Cultural History Museum of Åland corresponded to what Ennser-Kananen and Pettitt (2017) refer to as the inherent "bi-directionality" which ought to be the aim of such social interactions. By proceeding from migrant students' life situations and language skills, it lays the foundation for reciprocal learning in much the same manner as the community outreach scheme between LINC students and the local bank, which was alluded to in at the beginning of the chapter. Hage's (2000) liminal spaces where migrants are typically situated in many of these societal exchanges became, in these specific examples at least, shared spaces where minorities and majorities truly "met."

The modus operandi of work internships also operated within the same shifting zone of inclusion and exclusion that characterized visits (Eriksen 2015). In programs where language practice was identified as the overriding practice imperative, the potential for reciprocal learning as envisioned in Transformation Inclusion narratives became delimited. Instead labour market training followed an integrationist script in which learning was unilateral with migrants being held responsible for demonstrating language proficiency and occupational readiness without complementary objectives for change being enjoined on placement providers (De Roo, Braeye & DeMoor 2016). The rationale, "sen när du är bättre på svenska kan du söka de jobb du vill ha,"⁷⁰ as expressed by one Medis SFI instructor, encapsulates the justifications for "language practice-focused" internships. As such, they resemble Participation Inclusion's progressive inclusion. Here migrants are "included" in society through a gradual extension of rights, represented in this case by employment rights, once they have attained certain markers of belonging such as language proficiency (Farahat 2009). For professional students, however, this language-first criterion often had the coincidental effect of excluding them from practicing within their previous careers and maintaining their work-life competences. Moreover, it also deprived them

⁷⁰ "then when you are better in Swedish, you can apply for the jobs you want." (author's translation)

of opportunities to demonstrate previous professional skills while being defined by “the lack” and thus the prospect of mutually developing workplaces. By comparison, programs whose practice aims were founded upon working from migrants’ strengths and interests in organizing professionally equivalent internships, valorized student diversity (Kivisto 2015). Perhaps best illustrated by Arbis SFI’s personally-tailored practice approach, such strivings approximate Transformation Inclusion’s participationist essence.

It is in finding this balance between language acquisition and professional skill development with the aim of “funneling” migrants into society, where the interactive and mutable components of Transformation Inclusion are revealed. In this model, internship goals and objectives are continually personalized and reimagined in the dialogue between student, tutor and practice supervisor. As such, it addresses critiques raised in a number of studies (Ennser-Kananen & Pettitt 2017, Webb 2017, Gibb 2015, Sandwall 2013) that migrants’ multiple subjectivities are often not taken into consideration in “pragmatic” curricular discourses around labour market participation. There is a danger, if one replaces student-centered negotiations with a number of prescribed skills and standards migrants are to “perform” in occupational settings, one imposes whose knowledge is to be adopted and performed (Gibb 2015). Evidence from NorQuest LINC’s new labour market initiatives suggests that this was precisely what was happening under mounting governmental and administrative pressures to find employment for LINC learners. If internships become more prescriptive and remain uncoupled from supervision regimes and connections to curricular themes, the risk for migrant exploitation and exclusion grows (Slade 2015). Some of this could already be discerned in traineeships which lacked host language or professional skills practice or failed to spell out the reciprocal nature of such exchanges (Sandwall 2013).

Lastly, in looking at the extra-curricular help which programs offered to ease migrant students’ societal transition, it became apparent that those with an extensive the web of institutional supports extended learner options. As both Warriner’s (2007) and Sandwall’s (2013) studies note, simply completing an integration course that is primarily language acquisition focused, provided students with few possibilities for long-term

social advancement, economic stability, or educational opportunity. As this Medis SFI B1 student stated, "Alla tror att kanske efter skolan hittar jag ett bra jobb. Jag har praktik men efter du slutar händer ingenting. De hjälper inte. Ja, vi har ingen aning vad vi ska göra efter skolan."⁷¹ This keen awareness that offering language training and a few short unconnected practice placements are insufficient institutional measures for inclusion beyond the walls was only partially shared by administrators and staff. The Medis student's assertion that "they don't help" is a clear indictment of the lack of additional supports. One is left wondering if this correlates with how important the settlement or societal component is judged to be by educational planners and staff *in looking within to look beyond*. While realities of unequal resource distributions among the integration programs undoubtedly play a part, institutional mindsets as to the *raison d'être* of these educations are also of crucial importance in designing those bridges that are to ease migrants' transitions into the world outside.

7.2.2 BUILDING SOCIETAL PARTNERSHIPS

In this section, I explore those institutional endeavours which are directed *beyond the walls* in building partnerships with stakeholders in the public, private and third sectors as well as the perceived effects of prevailing social climates upon such efforts. The need to foster meaningful community partnerships was recognized by SFI and LINC staff members, yet what integral role these stakeholders should play in (re)forming the educations was largely unclear. Ideological positions as to the value of community networks ranged from an understanding of their importance in supporting student settlement to ensuring the survival of the integration program itself by mooring it within the extant community, as the case of Arbis SFI illustrates. However, there was one principle, expressed by a senior LINC administrator characterizing outreach efforts, which set an ambitious prerequisite for such contacts:

The foundational principle for the last eight years, is that we will only work with you through a two-pronged approach, so the Canadian moves this way

⁷¹ "Everyone thinks that maybe after school I'll find a good job. I have a practice placement but after you finish nothing happens. They don't help. Yes, we have no idea what to do after school." (author's translation)

and the immigrant moves that way, and somewhere you meet whether you are pulling one along or the other way. So, all the work we do with companies, if they are not willing to have their managers come to the intercultural sessions and the educational piece we are not willing to come in. We have never put the responsibility or the accountability on the immigrant alone in any of the work we do outside. (NorQuest LINC administrator)

This recognition of inclusion's distinctly transformational essence incorporates a social change agenda as part of NorQuest's mandate. When one adds this to the College's immigrant strategy predicated upon a "win-win" relationship with associations seeking to address mutual needs, then a normative pattern for such exchanges emerges. A similar unequivocal "mission statement" for societal interaction cannot be discerned in either of the SFI case studies. At NorQuest, partnership-building also followed a more strategic path consisting of the establishment of planning teams whose primary aim was the development of external networks to link up with curricular initiatives. While much of the daily contact net of visits still depended upon the personal networks of specific "eldsjälar", larger labour-market integration schemes that included tailored courses, internships or job fairs were organized by planners who assisted responsible staff. At both Arbis and Medis, the formation of external partnerships depended more on the personal contacts of individual teachers, and tutors. This often involved a great deal of serendipity while also personalizing such networks which lent them an impermanence. As one Arbis SFI planner commented, "Det där med att leva från hand i mun det gillar jag inte. Vi har helt för lite kontaktnät."⁷² It further demanded that instructors were obligated to individually maintain such relationships meaning that they frequently attended functions arranged by cooperating associations in their free time, lest such contacts lapsed. In addition, the personalized nature of these networks obstructed acquiring a comprehensive overview of partnerships in order to identify gaps. However, this was not only a problem for SFI educations. Gaps existed in the social outreach efforts of all three case studies. While there was evidence of fruitful connections with other educational institutions, and some public and third sector associations there

⁷² "The thing about living from hand to mouth, I don't like. We have a far too limited contact network." (author's translation)

Empirical Findings

were lapses where links with cultural or religious organizations were concerned, as one administrator confided:

One of our proposals was to build an international education career centre but some of the feedback was that we hadn't demonstrated things like partnerships with the ethno-cultural organizations. (NorQuest LINC administrator)

In the above case, the gap in such partnerships was assessed as a serious deficit in securing financing where the lack of internationalization was cited as decisive. A social worker related that because cultural or religious organizations were entirely volunteer-driven without paid administrative staff, permanent cooperations seemed more difficult to establish. However, efforts were often not even directed along these avenues for a variety of reasons, including administrative blind spots. They also extended to cases where employment prerogatives steered which external contacts were deemed to be most conducive to migrant students' labour market integration. What is more, third sector or ethno-cultural organizations were not involved in drafting tendering bids, curriculum planning or assessment processes. As an administrator explained,

For particular reasons, we don't actually have a strategy to build other types of relationships and get that feedback as to how we could improve our programs. We really should have those types of advisory councils with our immigrant associations across Alberta. (NorQuest LINC administrator)

As a result, SFI and LINC programs only had a selected picture of those institutions both statutory and non-statutory, which interacted with migrants and constituted a meaningful part of their daily lives. Some instructors, for example, wished that they could have access to a list of agencies serving migrants, including contact details which could be made available both to staff and students.

Another area where network gaps could be detected was in links with other educational providers. As one Arbis SFI planner observed, "Nu tycker jag att samarbetet med alla våra svenska skolor och alla yrkesskolor

som Praktikum och Arcada kunde göras tätare ändå från grunden.”⁷³ In the case of LINC, this lack of connections was largely due to competition between similar programs for students and financing, as well as to College priorities which emphasized retaining migrant students in its own vocational courses, a fact that curtailed student-centered tutoring. As a staffer explains,

I couldn't tell you if some other program is a better fit because I don't really know what is happening at other schools. And of course, we want our classes to be full and we want our students to come here and go on to our other programs but if a different program would serve a student better? (NorQuest LINC teacher/administrator)

Here, as in the other examples above, network gaps are not only due to administrative oversights or resource deficiencies but also to structural choices; choices which in some cases delimited student inclusion. Within SFI, a certain insular regionalism also contributed to the sparse patchwork of contacts with other domestic integration education programs, as one Arbis coordinator bemoans,

Jag har alltid upplevt att det är svårt att samarbeta mellan olika regioner i Svenskfinland. Österbotten och Nyland, där finns inte, dels på grund av avståndet, men sen är det också att de upplever, inte har vi någonting att ge varandra. Sen vill alla lyfta fram sin egen grej och när alla ska hämta fram sitt så går det inte att samarbeta. Jag menar, det är ju helt hopplöst. (Arbis SFI program planner)⁷⁴

Although the patchwork quilt of cooperation has been tightened in recent years, during the time of my fieldwork, staff from both Arbis and Medis had prioritized looking to Sweden to find inspiration and best inclusion practices in favour of other parts of Finland.

⁷³ “Now I think that cooperation with all of our Swedish schools and all vocational schools like Praktikum and Arcada could be even closer from the ground up.” (author’s translation)

⁷⁴ “I have always felt that it is difficult to cooperate between different regions in Swedish-speaking Finland. In Ostrobothnia and Nyland, it [cooperation] doesn’t exist, partly because of the distance, but then it is also that they think we have nothing to give each other. Everyone wants to highlight their own thing and when everyone presents their own stuff, it is not possible to cooperate. I mean, it’s totally hopeless.” (author’s translation)

Empirical Findings

One contributing reason confounding efforts to create social partnerships, however, could not be laid at the doorstep of respective integration educations, but rather concerned how such overtures were received by the host society. I am, hereby, referring to the social climate in which such exchanges took place, gave shape to them and determined their outcomes. I will begin by exploring the discourse relating to migrants' inclusion in the "cultures of associations" of majority society. In the "spirit of integration", migrant learners were frequently encouraged by teachers to participate in local organizations or sports clubs in order to become truly embedded within their communities. The fact that few students joined was interpreted by some staff both in Canada and Finland as evidence of their disinterest in the majority or even of their refusal to integrate. As this teacher argues,

If they're not willing to go curling or bowling or join a team [...] I said that they are taking the chance of alienating their children because their children go to mixed cultural schools. If they are absolutely rigid about only sticking to those of their own culture, it is going to impact their lives later on. (NorQuest LINC teacher)

In this quote, the purported "unwillingness" to participate is not only perceived to have negative personal repercussions but also to stymie the integration of the children of migrant parents. This educator then admitted that s/he is not comfortable talking about such things in class because s/he does not wish to be seen to encourage them "to forget their own culture." In speaking with students about their complicated life situations where many attempted the near impossible juggling act of daytime schooling, family commitments and part-time (read, night-time) work, allegations of their unintegrability seem misplaced. In addition to time scarcities, many migrants were simply foreign to the "association culture" which exists in Scandinavia and Canada, being used to other forms of social interaction. Moreover, participants also spoke of the ambivalence or disinclination of certain associations to recruit migrant newcomers:

Vill du verkligen ha inkludering måste du vara beredd för att du kanske förändras, att resultatet blir någonting annat. Det är inte alla. Ja, jag tror

jättemycket på det inifrån ut perspektivet och vissa vill inte ha nya medlemmar krasst. (Integration coordinator)⁷⁵

The salient point which the integration coordinator makes is that inclusion demands reciprocal change which in turn generates vulnerabilities and fears within association cultures of losing something of their essence if the door is thrown wide open. Some teachers suggested that alternate ways of reaching and interacting with newcomers should be explored instead of chastising them for failing to join.

In building societal partnerships, the social climate, or how this was experienced by program participants, also had a tremendous impact on such efforts. It could galvanize social activism and solidarity in support for refugees and migrants, especially after 2015, or contribute to othering or racializing them further. The positive outcomes of the “border crisis” on attitudes in parts of Swedish-speaking Finland translated itself into a greater openness in providing internships for migrant students, as described by this Arbis tutor:

Det har varit otroligt positivt nu medan jag har jobbat på Arbis. När det har sedan våren 2015 varit så mycket tal om asylsökande och hela flyktingkrisen i Europa, det gör att människor vill hjälpa. Och tiderna har blivit mognare för att de finlandssvenska arbetsgivarna, YLE, folktinget, osv. har varit så positivt inställda. Man märker att människor vill bidra men tidigare på finska sidan när jag har sökt och har gjort det mycket att söka praktikplatser och det har varit svårt. (Arbis SFI tutor)⁷⁶

The tutor, in describing this social sanguinity, draws an interesting distinction between attitudes among Finland-Swedish employers and those of the Finnish majority where s/he had earlier worked as a migrant

⁷⁵ “If you truly want inclusion, you must be prepared that you may change, that the result will be something else. Not everyone is that. Yes, I believe in the ‘from within outward’ perspective and some frankly do not want new members.” (author’s translation)

⁷⁶ “It has been incredibly positive now while I have been working at Arbis. When there has been so much talk about asylum seekers and the whole refugee crisis in Europe since the spring of 2015, this has resulted in people wanting to help. And the times are ripe for Finland-Swedish employers, YLE public service, the Swedish Assembly of Finland, etc. to be so positively predispositioned. You notice that people want to contribute but before on the Finnish side when I have recruited and done a lot to find internships, this has been difficult.” (author’s translation)

Empirical Findings

coordinator in a similar capacity. Whether this perceived attitudinal difference stems from one minority group empathizing with the plight of another or whether it was shaped by other factors is unclear, yet similar observations characterized the narratives of many Arbis staff and students. At NorQuest, the simple fact that the visible constitution of the world outside of the classroom was ethnically and racially diverse engendered a certain affinity with it among migrant students. In addition, the dominant national narrative of the “Canadian cultural mosaic” which permeated LINC curricula as well as public spaces, contributed to a feeling among many students that their “otherness” included rather than excluded them, that their difference was encompassed by definitions of national belonging. As this student asserts:

Canada is a newcomer's country. It is not Canadian, it is a newcomer's country so when we go to volunteer at YMCA childcare, there were Indians, Filipinos, French so we understand other people's cultures. When I study in the LINC program, I understand and know a lot (about) other countries. Our classroom is a whole map of the world. (NorQuest LINC CLB 6 student)

Accordingly, the diversity of the classroom mirrored that of the rest of society which also extended notions as to what type of cultural knowledge and competences inclusion necessitates. When the student claims that “it is not Canadian” s/he refers to conceptions of “nation” which go beyond the simple binaries of “Anglo-Saxon = Canadian.” What did not necessarily follow was if the reality of Canada as a “newcomer’s country” had trickled down into the institutional structures of dominant society. As this LINC teacher remarks:

I think people look at immigrants and they kind of get it, but I don't think they really, really get it; really understand the circumstances that others go through. Some of the departments like the registration office where they are meeting Canadian students and immigrants are just not very tolerant. (NorQuest LINC teacher)

An important point to be made here is that although social climates with reference to migrants are often portrayed as objective, quantifiable phenomena, measured in attitude surveys and inclusion indexes, they are rarely uniform. Study participants’ narratives describe them as fractured and

conflictual, bound within particular “spaces of place” with sometimes negligible impacts on institutional structures and policies, as alluded to in the above quote. They are also closely intertwined with the individual subjectivities and experiences of participants. For instance, one could infer from the case of Arbis SFI in Helsingfors that social climates within the Finland-Swedish community were generally perceived to be more charitable by migrant learners in facilitating their social connections beyond the school. However, the case of Medis SFI on Åland nuances this impression. Because Medis was located within the small-town capital, Mariehamn, in a dominantly Swedish-speaking milieu, I had expected that this would ease migrant learners’ social integration and lower the threshold for making external contacts. Yet a large number of student as well as staff narratives contradicted these expectations, as this next conversation between three SFI B1 students illustrates:

[Dida:] Åland really needs to have people from other countries to come here and work but they are so afraid of foreign people, they don't want to meet. Include us! More like, here is John from some country and look at him, he's exactly like all of you. He has two kids in daycare and goes there every day. [Arabella:] So that we don't feel like aliens. [Mario:] I used to call Ålanders, "Åliens." (Medis SFI B1 students)

In discussions with migrants at Medis, I often noticed that topics of insularity and xenophobia would surface when they described endeavours to forge links with majority society. In looking at what distinguishes the cases of Medis from Arbis, it is important to highlight the uniquely different environments in which both educations were embedded. Arbis SFI’s minority status necessitated that one reached out and created networks with other Finland-Swedish stakeholders as imperative not only for the viability of the program but arguably for the continued vitality of the Swedish-speaking minority in the metropolitan area. At Medis SFI, this “survival impetus” was absent. Here, Swedish constituted the language of the majority. The geographical situation of the Åland Islands as being distant from the mainland, largely rural, and sparsely-populated as well as their relatively recent transition from an emigration to an immigration destination may also play a role in how social partnerships with migrant newcomers were appraised. One practical illustration of perceived

differences in social climate related to how these were seen to impact arranging internships. As a Medis support staffer relates:

Det funkalar nästan inte. Jag har försökt många gånger att ordna plats på banken eller – jag vill inte säga företagsnamn här och bryta tystnadsplikten – men de tar aldrig en praktikant från Medis. Jag vet inte om de inte orkar ordna en plats eller om det krävs helt enkelt en högre språknivå? De mest aktiva, mest positiva praktikplatser är väl skolor och dagisar och det tackar jag väldigt mycket för. Men det är en besvikelse. Hur ska man börja om man inte får praktikplats? De är utbildade redan och de har jobbat i hemlandet och någon gång måste man börja. Hur ska man komma in på arbetsmarknaden?
(Medis SFI support staffer)⁷⁷

Given that organization of internships entailed this staffer's primary job, s/he had an extensive knowledge of which societal actors eased cooperation and which placed obstacles in the way of such cooperation. One common denominator in all three case studies in this regard was that organizations in the public or social welfare and third sectors welcomed migrant learners to a far greater extent than enterprises within the private sector. An important difference that cannot be underestimated, however, regardless of the myriad of social environments and subjectivities characterizing social climates was the taken-for-grantedness of social diversity with which most LINC students and staff referred to life in Canada. The fact that the ethnic constitution of the LINC classroom corresponded visibly to the cultural diversity outside of it, narrowed, at least on the surface, the majority – minority divide. Plurality in most occupations and areas of social life was "normal." This gave building societal partnerships on behalf of migrant students a momentous push forward. When one contrasts this with the environments within which both SFI educations were embedded, where narratives of belonging were imprinted with myths of homogeneity and the social insularity these reproduce, one

⁷⁷ "It almost never works. I have tried many times to arrange a placement at the bank or – I do not want to say company's name here and break confidentiality – but they never take a trainee from Medis. I do not know if they cannot arrange a place or if it simply requires a higher language competence? The most active, most positive internships are well schools and kindergartens and I thank them very much for that. But that's the disappointment. How to start if you do not get an internship? They are already educated and have worked in their home country. You have to start somewhere. How are they going to break into the labour market?" (author's translation)

can appreciate that in reaching out on behalf of migrants, SFI staff had a much more difficult task.

In *Building societal partnerships*, a complex meshwork of exchanges between the schools and their surrounding socio-cultural communities emerges. The dialectic between “in school” and “beyond school” is permeated by the seeming intangibility of prevailing social climates, which in their multiplicities both enabled and disabled this interaction. Theories of critical social inclusion emphasize interrogating the points of departure on which such partnerships are built (Shera 2003, Hick & Thomas 2009). Insofar as these set the tone for how such efforts are conceived, who participates or is invited to participate and what outcomes are aimed at, looking at the ideological parameters guiding societal engagements becomes crucial. In this respect, NorQuest LINC’s “foundational principle” of public education as a prerequisite for cooperation with external organizations embodies a distinctly political positioning reminiscent of Thompson’s (2006) call for collective political agency. It goes a step further than the participationist aims encapsulated in liberal integration discourses by highlighting the unequal structures within which participation takes place as well as demanding “assurances” of reciprocity (Leung 2008). At NorQuest, these assurances constituted agreements by the management and staff of partner enterprises of agreeing to participate in intercultural education sessions. Reflective of the aims of Transposition Inclusion, LINC’s partnership criteria compel dominant groups to “appear on the integration monitor” (Schinkel 2018, p.4). Although, one can rightly question as to how this foundational principle was implemented on the ground (i.e. what reciprocal learning was achieved and how?), evidence from other institutional measures, which included a new indigenous as well as an immigrant strategy, suggests that the “hands-on” changes undertaken by NorQuest indicate an inclusion praxis (Freire 1972). As such, it inverts the old axiom of knowledge leading to transformation by arguing that institutional transformation leads to knowledge (Ahmed 2012).

By contrast, in the SFI programs at Arbis and Medis, bilateral “demands” for change were not preconditions for building partnerships with external actors. Part of this can be attributed to the latter’s more limited access to services, resources and social partners as well as to a less

diverse cultural milieu. However, it also seemed that while social transformation goals were well-anchored within the top of the administrative hierarchy at NorQuest, this was less the case in the Finland-Swedish educations. Thus, societal partnerships in SFI became inevitably more personalized, unstable and less strategic. They prioritized Participation Inclusion's aspirations in which migrants share in mainstream public life (Martikainen, Valtonen & Wahlbeck 2012) without striving for more egalitarian interpretations of inclusion.

In exploring the nature and extent of partnership networks, it was notable that despite differences in institutional as well as socio-cultural environments, links with ethno-cultural and religious associations were largely non-existent in both SFI and LINC. Such organizations were also uninvolved in curriculum planning or assessment. It is open to speculation if migrant associations were not viewed to be relevant, or sufficiently integrated into majority society to serve as models for "good" inclusion, or if their exclusion was merely an oversight (Fortier 2010). In any case, their oversight may also be traced back to more foundational differences in how integration or inclusion are interpreted. For example, if the social cohesion imperative of a kind of domopolitics dominates integration efforts, then networks with migrant associations may actually be seen to muddy such efforts (Lentin & Titley 2011).

A fitting case in point illustrating institutional struggles in building community partnerships, is Dalhousie University's Maritime School of Social Work's program realignment according to anti-oppressive principles (MacDonald et. al 2003). Here relations with ethno-cultural associations and their participation in learning and assessments were judged to be of central importance given that such actors possess unique expertise in working with migrant groups. According to planners, the virtual absence of ethno-cultural associations in current educational practice was "reflective of tokenism and embedded in institutional discrimination" (Ibid, p.470). In seeking to extend community partnerships and community ownership of the program, the Maritime School evaluated what outreach initiatives were currently in place, where gaps existed and if outreach efforts were supported by culturally accessible services. It concluded that if lasting changes are to occur then community stakeholders must be involved from

the beginning in all stages of curriculum and outreach planning by foregrounding their voices and knowledge (Ibid, p.486). In allowing migrants to change and define the parameters for social interaction, power balances have to be renegotiated (Tew 2006). The question then arises, are the current institutional hierarchies at Arbis, Medis and NorQuest are flexible enough to accommodate this renegotiation? A general observation as far as aims of community ownership of SFI and LINC were concerned was that the roles societal stakeholders should play in program planning, delivery and evaluation remained largely unclear. Especially in curricula which prioritized language acquisition as “performed” by studying grammar-fixated textbooks, the added value associations could offer in reconceptualizing these seemed negligible. Thus, while there was unanimous agreement among participants in all three case studies about the need for societal partnerships; whose needs actually dictated the terms of such cooperations, and what permanent gains stakeholder associations derived from them, may require reconsideration.

Another ingredient in building community contacts that, interestingly enough, surfaced primarily in staff narratives was that migrant students should be encouraged to join majority associations such as sports clubs, sewing circles, or selected charities. Such wishes encapsulate integrationist ideals wherein migrants fulfill their social responsibilities by participating in public life with members of the host society (Reinsch 2001, Kymlicka 2010). However, given that few migrants heeded these calls to join organizations, one is left wondering if migrants shared the interpretation of their educators that such memberships were indeed, “inclusive” (Hage 2000). As Kritnet (2011) pointed out, migrant students could also interpret admonitions to join as just another part of the behavioural code imposed upon them before they are deemed to belong as equals. If the suitability of “association culture” for migrant inclusion is left unexamined then what is understood by “inclusion” still takes place on the terms and conditions set by dominant society. If migrants alone are to be judged by how they adapt to specific definitions of good diversity, then this practice fundamentally undermines integration’s “two-way street” discourse. The hollowness of this discourse is further underlined by the ambivalence or reluctance of some cultural and third sector organizations to recruit migrant newcomers.

Such rhetoric, however, is not restricted to the institutional cultures of associations but has its origins in prevailing social climates wherein immigration debates are interminable and unfulfilling. As previously stated, social climates do not have an essentialist immutability or uniformity but consist of shifting poles of identification and spatial variations as the case of Arbis SFI's Finland-Swedish societal network within the Helsingfors municipality demonstrates. Whereas Finnish national discourses both before and after 2015 were characterized by an *Abwebrnationalismus* (Osterhammel 2009) through which migrants were “othered” and racialized, both Arbis’ staff and students experienced Finland-Swedish social and media attitudes in the Helsingfors metropolitan area to be more inclusive. This in turn facilitated Arbis’ efforts to build societal partnerships and reflects the potentiating effects of structural and cultural levels in anti-oppressive theory upon the sphere of interpersonal or group relations (Dalrymple & Burke 1997). Studies by Helander (2015) and Creutz and Helander (2012) attribute the structural discrimination faced by migrant students in choosing Swedish as their integration language to a national monoculture in the Finnish-dominated capital area. From my findings, one could also argue, that such a majority monoculture with its requisite marginalization of diversity hindered the efforts by Medis planners in integrating SFI more effectively within the surrounding community. The frequent mentions by SFI participants of “Medis as a bubble”, where students were secure yet cut off from Ålandic society, stand in stark contrast to governmental curricular goals prioritizing the role of social actors in being involved in program delivery (Ålands landskapsregering, utbildningsbyrå 2017). Against this backdrop, national integration aims of *kotoutominen* or *att bli hemmastadd* (p.19) are very clearly enacted within an environment where the parameters regulating societal partnerships are set by privileged majorities and subject to their levels of tolerance (Salo & Sarin 2010).

7.2.3 STRUCTURAL BARRIERS TO INCLUSION BEYOND THE WALLS

It is these parameters regulating *inclusion beyond the walls* in the form of wider social pressures and governmental policies affecting integration educations that are the focus of the last part of this section. Specifically, I will examine

how participants perceive and negotiate the structural obstacles created by such forces. Because these circumscribe inclusion practices and the lives of staff and students in various ways, one returns to the question posed in the chapter's introduction namely, do programs need a distinctly "political" mandate in challenging and collectively addressing such barriers? It became apparent from discussions with LINC and SFI participants that there was an intersectionality in mechanisms of social exclusion some of which had societal origins. These interfaced with program deliveries and shaped students' lives. There was a general awareness by staffers that the structural obstacles impeding student inclusion as well as their physical and psychological welfare could not be ignored nor overcome by simply focusing on ameliorative strategies within the schools. However, opinions diverged when it came to the nature and extent of their so-called social responsibilities. Particularly, where social injustices experienced by migrants demanded more robust political positionings, LINC and SFI, all of which were publicly funded, had few coherent or collective responses.

In outlining some of the structural barriers to student inclusion, I will begin by elucidating how state policies and statutes such as those governing social assistance payments, the recognition of foreign qualifications, and family reunification statutes were experienced by students and how they practically affected their participation in integration programs. Regarding social assistance payments and immigration and settlement supports, these were often described as inadequate by both students and staff. In fact, many questioned the actual aim of such economic assistances as they placed students in untenable positions. As this social worker remarks,

I think in terms of them getting the resettlement money, I think it's great but when you look at it it's not much. If you are going to give money, GIVE MONEY or don't give at all. It doesn't add up to me. They don't want to give too much so people aren't too comfortable on income support but sometimes I just wish, I mean there was a mom in here, she has three children and gets \$1450 a month but her rent is \$1440 and then I ask where do you get more money from? So, she told me that she uses the child tax benefit for other things, but you still need to buy food and children need to eat, so what do you do?
(NorQuest LINC support staffer)

Empirical Findings

Migrant students enrolled in daytime integration educations faced a number of challenges. In order to make ends meet, those who were able, gained employment in low-wage work as cleaners or dishwashers at nighttime which often clashed with family commitments.

Incidentally, this was also the case for Medis students where SFI was primarily envisioned to be a labour market training scheme to which access was restricted to migrants receiving unemployment support. Here, prospective students who were previously employed were forced to quit in order to participate in SFI but were then compelled to take jobs on the side to cover financial deficits. Another complicating factor was that a number of students were expected to send remittances home. This reinforced their vulnerability as well as their desperation in accepting almost any paid work, even if this severely impacted their abilities to complete studies. One such impact is aptly described by a LINC support staffer: “I come in early some mornings and behind the stage in the common area a lot of them sleep. They come straight from work to school and are sleeping behind there.” For some migrants, the only alternative, given the meagre levels of social assistance, was quitting the program periodically in order to make money to live and then reapplying when they had saved up sufficient funds. As this student relates,

Another thing about the government, for a single person to attend LINC is very difficult because you have to have money to pay rent and there is no money to pay rent. It is very difficult! You have problems completing homework and you have to quit school to work a full-time job. After one year, you come back to school and use the money you made for it, then you quit school again. We don't get help from government. I work Saturdays and Sundays and make \$700 but paying rent is more expensive. I pay \$845. No money to eat. I pay power, phone – so you see it is not easy to attend LINC. (NorQuest LINC CLB4 student)

The poverty trap, described above, in which students found themselves also raised questions as to the aims of immigration policies on a macro-level. As one highly-educated LINC student mused, “maybe the government just wants to provide labour work for immigrants. They do not want immigrants to progress to higher level occupations.” Migrant learners reasoned that the low-wage, low status employment they were forced to take became a self-perpetuating cycle, as these students argue:

[Mali:] Många Thai personer som bor fem, tio år (här) de bara jobbar och städar. De frågar varför men bara jobbar på färjorna och städar. [Vanida:] Jag tänker samma som Mali, varför alla Thai personer bara städar? Jag bodde i Thailand och hade Spa och Massage, jättefint, pedikyr jättefint, men jag kom till Åland och de vill att jag städar. Nej, jag är mycket fin kvinna i Thailand, jag kan inte städa på toalett (skratt). (Medis SFI A2 students)⁷⁸

A structural obstacle that links up with the labour market segregation implied in the previous quote, related to policies for recognizing foreign diploma and qualifications. It directly affected the inclusion efforts of integration programs and particularly the lives of students with professional backgrounds. Many student and staff narratives on this topic reflected a pervasive sense of powerlessness and injustice. They decry not only the lack of transparency and understanding on the part of responsible authorities but also the sheer arbitrariness of processes in which migrants are at the mercy of institutional bureaucracies. As one staff member relates,

One of the students I had last year is from Egypt. She has a PhD in nutrition. She was an instructor at the university and also working at a hospital in Egypt and wanted to become a member of the College of Dieticians of Alberta. We called them to find out what she would need, and they replied that they won't acknowledge any degree unless it is from the University of Alberta. That shocked me! So, she would have to go and get her bachelor's degree all over again. She was crying, and I felt so bad. That bothers me. (NorQuest LINC support staffer)

An added complication in the case of Canada was that different provincial governments and employment associations had varying and sometimes contradictory rules and interpretations in recognizing foreign qualifications. This meant that migrants who had their credentials recognized in one province would need to initiate the whole process again when moving to another, resulting in, as one instructor put it, a “disconnect with people thinking they come in with the right qualifications.” In daily practice this “disconnect” affected teacher-student relations by highlighting

⁷⁸ [Mali:] “Many Thai people who live here five, ten years, they only work and clean. They ask why but only work on the ferries and clean. [Vanida:] I think the same as Mali, why all Thai people just clean? I lived in Thailand and had a Spa and Massage, very nice, pedicures very nice but I came to Åland and they want me to clean. No, I'm a very dignified woman in Thailand, I can't clean toilets” (laughter). (author's translation)

Empirical Findings

the marginalization of professional students within standard implementations of LINC or SFI. Many participants lamented the waste of talents, potential and futures as well as the real human costs of this type of structural discrimination as this instructor tearfully related:

I once had a Neurosurgeon and they wouldn't recognize his education and were going to send him back to (school) for ten years. One of the hardest moments in my life was when I bumped into that student pushing carts at Walmart. He looked away and walked away and I thought that he hadn't heard me, so I yelled at him and he turned around. He had tears in his eyes and he told me he was so ashamed for me to see him collecting carts at Walmart as he was a surgeon. For me, I felt so helpless! That is the hardest moment for me because he was a lovely man and he had two children and he told me that he was walking away from his profession to retrain as something else because he had to support his family. (NorQuest LINC teacher)

The recurrent sense of helplessness and sadness communicated in these words links both staff and student narratives on this topic. For some teachers this was expressed in a frustration which took the form of personal statements of solidarity with students and political critiques, as this quote illustrates:

I don't support the Canadian government. I support the students and say you know what, the Canadian government sucks! I agree with them because for me it is ridiculous that they just make this blanket statement that you have to have "this" education and they won't give them a test or won't try to help them. They just say this is the law and you meet the requirements or else and I have talked with Government people and said you need to evaluate their background rather than only looking where the qualifications come from. (NorQuest LINC teacher)

However, there were also those staffers who called on migrant learners to "be realistic." Such "realism" frequently entailed exhortations to retrain, move on, or simply just accept that they won't be able to jump into the same profession they practiced in their home countries. Sometimes this referred especially to students who received their educations or training from non-Western institutions. Though not overt, suspicions about the latter's professional standing were often expressed in jokes, for example, about African students calling themselves doctors after having worn white

lab coats in hospital settings or by pointing to the inferiority of foreign practitioners' language skills.

Lastly, I will briefly explore one structural barrier which had a debilitating psychological impact on students' abilities to devote themselves to studies and concretely plan their future lives. I am referring here to the effects of immigration policies and more specifically, the statutes regulating family reunification. Many migrant students were in the process of applying for family members to join them in their newly adopted homelands, yet this road proved cumbersome, emotionally exhausting and beset with bureaucratic cul de sacs in both Finland and Canada. As a staff member or a researcher for that matter, it was not easy to fully appreciate the "baggage" that migrants brought with them into the learning environment, though one occasionally received glimpses as the case of Medis student, "Nizar" illustrates. "Nizar" is Syrian and had emigrated to Åland with his wife and daughter as quota refugees from a UNHCR camp in Jordan. He was usually jovial and positive, however one afternoon he returned to class and seemed extremely troubled. As we had built a close rapport over the course of my fieldwork, I gently inquired about this the following day:

During the lunch break, I have a chance to ask "Nizar" if something was bothering him yesterday and he nods. He is worried about his mother who is stranded in Aleppo and he is seriously concerned for her safety. He tells me that he is planning to fly to Lebanon in December to see if he can meet her providing that she is able to leave the beleaguered city. He realizes it is very dangerous but feels that her remaining in Aleppo is even more so. I am given another glimpse into the forces which affect the lives of refugee students and which also impact their learning etc. (Medis SFI Observation log 2.11.2016)

The psychological toll of being separated from loved ones and struggling with intractable immigration authorities accentuated feelings of being between and betwixt the old and the new homeland. It further had tangible impacts on student learning, as this instructor relates:

Oh, depression, lack of ability to concentrate on school. I'll see students with the heads in their hands and I'll ask, "Are you ok?" and get "No teacher." At break they'll tell me [about it], so it really impacts them. Some have not seen their kids or their husbands or wives in six or seven years and they are still

Empirical Findings

together. They still want to see them, but it is hung up by immigration problems. (NorQuest LINC teacher)

Another teacher addresses the injustice of separating families as a serious structural constraint to migrants in being able to devote themselves to studies. S/he points to the near impossibility of keeping the personal from seeping into the minutiae of daily learning tasks:

A government thing that is often a concern for students is getting their families over. I know lots of students whose children and young children are still in Africa. Trying to help them emigrate from there is just heartbreaking. I don't know how a mother can concentrate on school when you have a five-year old in Africa. I don't know how you do that. If you are going to be allowed to immigrate here and live here, you should be allowed to bring your children. (NorQuest LINC teacher)

In fact, when queried about structural obstacles to student learning which are situated beyond school walls, immigration laws regulating family reunification featured most prominently in the narratives of LINC and SFI participants. As one Arbis teacher sagely put it, "gör inte familjeåterförening svårare, det betalar sig alltid säkert att vi får ett nätverk av människor som förstår dem."⁷⁹ Moreover, the constantly shifting ground of immigration policies and regulations added to insecurities affecting programs and students, as one administrator comments:

You could probably say that there is a new immigration law change every month to some degree and it is a very shifting environment. There are the psychological aspects and there are so many ways this affects students and on what the emphasis is in the classroom and instruction. (NorQuest LINC teacher/administrator)

We now turn to the relationship between governmental bodies and policies and how they influence the structures and delivery of LINC and SFI programs. Here too, the inclusion-exclusion nexus could be observed. A relevant example of this concerns the relationship between program funders and the providers of integration educations. The nature of funding

⁷⁹ "do not make family reunification more difficult, it always benefits us to draw on a network of people who understand them." (author's translation)

requirements and funding levels set unequivocal parameters for what integration educations prioritized and what they could effectively offer students. Generally, programs were funded on a three to five-year cycle, at the conclusion of which a new round of financial applications commenced. A consequence of these short-term frameworks was their inflexibility in adapting to changing circumstances during the contractual period, as explained by this teacher/administrator:

Certainly, precarious funding in terms of three-year funding models greatly complicates it. Within a three-year model, you have a contract and X amount of money has to be used for this and X amount must be used for that. It is very specific and it's very set. If conditions change and you need more classes, it doesn't necessarily lend itself to flexibility. (NorQuest LINC teacher/administrator)

Funding for all three programs was characterized by this type of precarity whose effects were more acutely felt by the SFI educations in the study which received financing from municipalities or regional governments. As one Arbis administrator explains, “på nationell nivå, Arbis har ju det problemet att vi har inte fått så mycket medel som finns för integration och då handlar det om effektivitetskraven.”⁸⁰ These “efficiency requirements” were part and parcel of an ever-present critique of Arbis SFI by Finnish authorities who questioned the viability of a minority language integration program. It also represented one of the reasons why petitions to launch an integration program in Swedish in Helsingfors had earlier fallen on deaf administrative ears.

An integration coordinator in Marichamn echoed the situation of financial austerity that also circumscribed Medis activities, “Nu är hela landskapet sparbetiget. Allt ska sparas, tjugo miljoner på fyra år, eller någonting helt sjukt, som är mycket pengar för Åland och alla sitter på alla cent.”⁸¹ A direct consequence for Medis was that in open tendering

⁸⁰ “At a national level, Arbis has the problem that we have not received as much funding available for integration and then it is about the efficiency requirements.” (author’s translation)

⁸¹ “Now the whole government is cutting back. Everything must be rationed, twenty million in four years or something completely crazy which is a lot of money for Åland and everyone is sitting on their money.” (author’s translation)

processes for SFI, which included actors from the private sector, administrators emphasized cost-effectiveness in order to submit a bid as low as possible to remain competitive. Concrete outcomes included a continued overreliance on part-time, underpaid teachers, long, rigidly structured days and far less time for other pedagogical approaches involving visits or field trips, particularly those which fell outside the frame of language acquisition. Administrators and staff bemoaned this fact but expressed a powerlessness in changing educational policies which were set by the government's "utbildningsbyrå"⁸². However, according to some staff, one additional outcome of the mindset of financial restraint was that Medis adopted a policy of pre-emptive strictness for fear of being accused of "coddling" their SFI students both financially and pedagogically:

Men frågar du så säger [ledningen] att AMS och Landsskapsregeringen har bestämt. Jag tror att det är kanske också en liten rädsla här på Medis att vi ska göra någonting fel och att det skulle kunna vara för fritt och så har man valt att bli strikt. (Arbis SFI teacher)⁸³

The fear of perceiving the program as "too permissive" alluded to by the SFI teacher, may also have contributed to the attendance strictures, exhausting daily timetables and the "korvstopning" members of staff and migrant learners had complained of earlier.

Austerity measures meant that certain program features which would have greatly eased student' lives and increased their program participation were simply beyond consideration. These included complementary in-house daycare arrangements and employing a diverse range of support staff. The frustration with how austerity politics directly affected integration education programs was palpable among students as well:

⁸² Department for Education

⁸³ "But if you ask, [the leadership] says that AMS and the Regional Government have decided. I think it is perhaps also due to a lingering fear here at Medis that we could do something wrong and that it could be too permissive and so one has chosen to be strict." (author's translation)

There are people who are already educated, have their lives here and they are ready to work for it, so why the hell are they cutting the money and resources for integrating these people. (Medis SFI B1 student)

Thus, while state funding enabled integration programs to “include” migrant students, the funding often came with strings attached that simultaneously seemed to choke off and restrain inclusion efforts. As one NorQuest administrator commented, “it is fantastic to offer them free language classes but without other supports, so students can do well, then it is only going halfway.” The quote also exposes an ideological rift between state authorities and those on the ground participating in integration educations. Such a rift was often expressed in phrases like, “they don’t get it”, “they don’t know and “they don’t care.” As this Medis teacher summarizes, in commenting on staff dealings with politicians and representatives from the employment office:

Jag tror att när man tänker på AMS och politikerna, de vet inte. De frågar aldrig. De frågar inte lärarnas åsikter och kommer inte hit. (Medis SFI teacher)⁸⁴

This at times conflictual relationship is aptly illustrated in the discourse between federal funders CIC (IRCC)⁸⁵ and NorQuest staff. Though more generously resourced, LINC was financed almost entirely by CIC and many teachers experienced the sheer power imbalance in ways similar to this instructor:

I get the feeling from feedback we get from management that our relationship with CIC is sort of like that of a beggar [...] They have the total power and we’re told, “No, this is what it is, CIC disagreed.” And I’ve asked at meetings, “Do they know?” Did you tell them that we are really unhappy? and the answer is really unclear to me. They don’t seem to listen to us or maybe our management doesn’t present that to them. (NorQuest LINC teacher)

The feeling of not being heard, listened to, or valued is a common theme connecting staff narratives despite the different national environments in

⁸⁴ “I think when one thinks of AMS and the politicians; They don't know. They never ask. They do not ask teachers' views and do not come here.” (author’s translation)

⁸⁵ The Federal Department, Canadian Immigration and Citizenship (CIC) was renamed Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) in 2016

Empirical Findings

which SFI and LINC were embedded. In the case of LINC, dialogues with authorities were even more complicated by overlapping bureaucratic demands from NorQuest College, in which LINC was one program among many, and the competing aims of federal and provincial integration measures resulting in an “mismatch of policies,” according to this administrator:

The Human Services Ministry, their biggest directive is around economic impact and so they want to get everybody into employment through the fastest, quickest route. Life-long learning and the fastest, quickest route just do not intersect at any point. (NorQuest LINC administrator)

Here the economic imperatives of provincial immigration policy which translated into fast-tracking migrant employment, are seen to compromise LINC’s other pedagogical and settlement objectives. The implication of the quote is that there are no “inclusion short-cuts,” or at least none that can be addressed by “simple solutions” such as migrants’ participation in the labour market. At Arbis, this policy mismatch exposed a qualitatively more adversarial dimension in which state and municipal actors were often perceived as conspiring to place obstacles in the way of Swedish-language integration for migrant newcomers. A student summarizes the experiences of many SFI participants at Arbis and their struggles with authorities in accessing the minority program:

Aside from the lack of material on integration [in Swedish], there at times seems to be a concerted effort in Finland not to provide information in Swedish at all. So, integration in terms of entering the system is severely limited. (Arbis SFI A2 student)

While Arbis students also attested to the obstreperous attitudes and verbal confrontations with civil servants and other public sector employees on the road to being “given permission” to integrate in Swedish, the structural barriers alluded to in the above quote are much more subtle. In failing to provide information of the Swedish alternative, authorities simply committed the “sin of omission” which, according to an Arbis’ integration coordinator, had the knock-on effect of strengthening their claims that interest in integrating in Swedish was weak among migrants and that such information was therefore unnecessary.

By examining the tangible effects of *structural barriers to inclusion beyond the walls* that result from the interaction between integration education programs and governmental policies, inclusions inherent in this interaction are revealed once more. Policies interface with program deliveries and shape participants' lives. This confirms Terhart and von Dewitz (2018) conclusions that analyses of educational practices involving migrants are incomplete without interrogating the structural parameters imposed on them from without. As the section on *structural barriers to student inclusion* demonstrates, overlapping categories of difference whether they represent migrants' legal status, social or economic class, racial or ethnic origin and gender also have a potentiating effect on levels of exclusion (Sisneros et. al 2008, Sallah 2014). The way these categories of difference "intersect" manifests itself in discussions on social assistance, the recognition of foreign qualifications and family reunification (Humphries 2004).

Low social assistance levels, forcing students to seek part-time employment, when coupled with a lack of daycare provision at school, for example, affected the ability of single migrant mothers to juggle education and life. In fact, social assistance provision perfectly encapsulates the complex, muddled core of inclusions where migrants enter and exit many contexts of inclusion-exclusion over time (Fangen, Johannsen & Hammaren 2012). Given the inadequacy of government financial assistance in meeting the needs of migrant students, especially those with families, a measure intended to "include" generated several exclusionary outcomes. Firstly, it compromised the ability of the most economically vulnerable students to participate in SFI or LINC unless they procured additional sources of income. Moreover, the jobs migrants could access which did not interfere with daytime studies were shift work at night, which in turn compromised students' abilities to learn, attested to by teacher observations of lack of concentration or sleeping at school. Secondly, the forms of employment migrants were pushed into were often precarious in nature, "McJobs" with low-wages, low status, and low levels of labour protection (Coupland 1991). One could therefore argue that an unforeseen outcome of the limited social protection afforded to students is that it may contribute to creating a migrant economic underclass, which perpetuates itself even after integration educations have run their course, something that the

conversation of the group of Thai SFI Medis pupils underlines (p.211). While NorQuest LINC did provide students with a variety of non-daytime options involving part-time and evening studies, a recent study by Braun and Clément on trends in public funding immigration and refugee settlement in Canada between 2011-2017 concluded that in provincial comparisons, Alberta underfunds settlement and has among the lowest per capita funding for temporary residents (Halifax 21st National Metropolis conference presentation 2019). Therefore, one of the dangers of insufficient welfare state funding and resources for migrant participation in society is that it results in their more permanent disenfranchisement, which may then be inherited by the second and third generation (Martikainen, Valtonen & Wahlbeck 2012). In response to the economic hardships faced by many migrant students, one LINC teacher/administrator expressed her hopes for an “ideal world” where those on social assistance would have a degree of funding “that would allow them a little bit more dignity, so they wouldn’t have to go to the food bank and make every single decision based on every last dime.”

The statutes regulating the recognition of foreign qualifications provide another salient example of the potentiating effects of structural obstacles imposed from without. The sense of social injustice and the resultant feelings of powerlessness were shared by students with professional backgrounds and many members of staff, the latter being forced to position themselves politically in response to the troubled life situations of their pupils. The very real consequences that such regulations had on migrant lives, aptly captured in the narrative about the former neurosurgeon (p.212), also exposed cracks in integration curricula that were overly positive and uncritical. Shibao Guo (2009) argues that prevailing attitudes towards difference lie at the root of the “difficulties” in recognizing migrants’ educational qualifications and professional experiences. He posits that “difference” is still often equated with “deficiency”, which renders the knowledge and expertise of migrant professionals, particularly those from non-Western countries, inferior, and hence invalid. In so doing, “expertise” becomes racialized. One may wonder if the push towards retraining and “career flexibility” recommended to migrant professionals also reflects deficiency discourses, if being “realistic” in evaluating employment futures is interpreted differently for non-Western learners.

Guo, goes on to suggest that professional standards have been used as a pretext to limit competition and maintain existing power relations. This claim is supported by Krahn et al. (2000) who equate professional associations with labour market shelters. By exercising binding control over the recognition of foreign credentials, they restrict competition for well-paying jobs to ensure their lucrative nature. As such, they allow for the “opportunity hoarding” of privileged social groups and a way of keeping undesirables out (Tilly 1998). The structural barrier that accreditation of expertise signified, undermines the professional standing of students while simultaneously placing them in the liminal position of requiring tailored integration programs. At present, they are only granted access to standard integration educations that generally do not meet their specific career needs. In addition, the liberal narratives of western democratic structures being based on principles of fairness and non-discrimination – which were an integral part of both LINC and SFI – were undermined because the injustices experienced by migrant students raised the question, fair for whom? When one couples this fact with the programs’ underdeveloped critical citizenship foundation, there were few sanctioned opportunities for teachers and students to interrogate privilege and wider social issues in creating “disruptive knowledge” (Kumashiro 2000). Thus, external structural barriers interfaced with internal ones to smother the discourse on inequalities. Consequently, participants expressed a numbing powerlessness as they experienced the fallout of policies that seemed beyond their reach.

The discussion on *structural barriers to student inclusion* concluded with the incapacitating repercussions of state procedures governing family reunification for migrant learners. The severity with which these were interpreted, coupled with the inscrutability of state machinations had profound effects on the psychological health and pedagogical aptitude of migrants, as reflected in participant narratives. For staff, besides evoking helplessness and frustration, such barriers meant being viscerally reminded of the multiple subjectivities of their students as parents, spouses, or survivors of conflicts, subjectivities that spilled over into the classroom. Bragg and Wong’s (2016) research on shifting Canadian immigration policies highlighted the profound human costs of limiting family reunification while pointing out that these costs are disproportionately

borne by migrant women. A related comparative study of EU countries authorized by the European Commission, found that family reunification restrictions have in many cases actually impeded integration (Strik, de Hart & Nissen 2013). Ironically then, a measure originally conceived of as a benchmark for inclusion is actually found to exacerbate the social exclusion and isolation of migrant newcomers. In so doing, it exposes a disconnect between espoused commitments to democratic principles such as social justice and the persistence of racializing thoughts and behaviours, according to Henry, Tator, Mattis, and Rees (2006). They have referred to the coexistence of these two conflicting ideological currents as *democratic racism*. Democratic racism, they argue, prevents governments from fully embracing “difference” or real social transformation aiming to ameliorate migrants’ vulnerable life situations because such measures are perceived to be a threat to liberal democracies. The foregoing discussion on structural barriers to student inclusion underlines a central tenet in Tara Gibb’s (2008) research: namely, that policymakers need to confront the sociohistorical structures and policies that “normalize” learners’ social, economic and educational deficits, if they seek to facilitate migrant inclusion.

In turning to the *structural barriers to program delivery* which examined the role played by state actors in funding and setting parameters for program deliveries, it became obvious that while this role stretched to embrace the spirit of Participation Inclusion in recognizing governments’ pivotal role in inclusion efforts, its core was civic integrationist. Although state financing enabled integration programs to “include” migrant students, the austerity measures, effectiveness criteria and inflexible funding structures simultaneously disabled the transformative focus of more egalitarian conceptions of inclusion (Askonas & Stewart 2000). When one considers the precarity in financing, especially within both of the SFI case studies, the question arises, what is meant by “program effectiveness” and whose vision of integration actually dictates what these educations are able to deliver? It seemed from discussions with staff and students at Medis and Arbis that they experienced this governmental vision to be rooted in poorly camouflaged suspicions of migrant learners that were expressed in efforts to “reassert” control in order to prevent possible abuses of program privileges. At Arbis, this suspicion extended to the very nature of minority integration in the Swedish language itself. In order to “head these

presumptions off at the pass”, all programs, to some degree, became self-policing as charges levelled by the Medis staffer implied (p.216). Attendance strictures, and the unbending reporting of absences even when sicknotes were produced (e.g. NorQuest LINC) represent salient examples of this.

This pre-emptive strictness became self-fulfilling and delimiting even in cases where it may not have been necessary. For example, AMS criteria for funding Medis SFI demanded an eight-hour workday from migrants which had been interpreted by school administrators as students having to be in school for entirety of that time. However, as one teacher explained, ”man kunde ju säga att vi är fem timmar i skolan och sen är det tre timmar där elever gör läxor eller repeterar själva.”⁸⁶ One is reminded of Christian Joppke’s (2009) charge that inclusion efforts interpreted within the light of civic integrationism are essentially aimed at migrant compliance. Whether or not these measures actually include becomes secondary to the projected image of compulsion and compliance. Indeed, one could argue that some of the funding parameters’ austerity requirements, which encouraged low tendering offers replete with their pedagogical deficits and program self-policing, did more to placate “white worries” than further the inclusion of migrant learners. As an indicator of what one envisions when employing terms like “integration” and “inclusion”, it is also important to keep Thomas Hylland Eriksen’s (2015) question of “how” in mind. How is inclusion practiced? In integrationist strivings, the limits imposed on such practices are often justified in paternalistic terms set by state authorities from which the voices of other actors, such as the schools themselves, are excluded. In the example of the SFI case studies, this fiscal paternalism did not even seem to be legitimated by claiming to “know what’s best for immigrants” but simply reflected the will and needs of majorities. The result was that certain “extra” elements such as daycare arrangements or monies for the further education of staff, to name but a few, were simply omitted from tendering offers. Meanwhile, the wage and resource shortages dogging programs remained unaddressed (Haque & Cray 2007).

Another characteristic that participant narratives describing structural barriers to program delivery shared, was the vastly unequal power

⁸⁶ “You could say that we are in school for five hours followed by three hours where students do homework or practice independently.” (author’s translation)

arrangements in which exchanges with state authorities took place. The resigned comment by the LINC instructor in describing NorQuest's position in the dialectic with federal funders as "that of a beggar" speaks volumes here. However, this power imbalance also revealed deeper rifts between political decision makers and school administrators and staff about the goals and aims of integration educations. The "integration quick fix" mindset among some authorities characterized by simplistic solutions like cramming language or "getting migrants jobs" "did not intersect at any point" (p.218) with the programs' more life-long learning objectives. As Doris Warriner's (2007) study concluded, educational policies too blinkered by neoliberal aims have the adverse effect of truncating the time students need to learn, participate and develop social networks. In the case of Arbis' interaction with municipal and state powers, this "rift" called the entire existence of SFI into question. With Finnish authorities questioning the viability of the minority program, relations became more adversarial according to student and staff narratives. The state was seen as complicit in discriminating against migrants by withholding or failing to provide information on the Swedish path to integration or by simply refusing to conform to the letter of the law in allowing student to choose. From a Transformation Inclusion perspective, knowledge and conversely participation, are power. Where authorities withhold this, they circumscribe the capacity of migrants to participate equally in the institutions of society and in determining of their own life chances (Askonas & Stewart 2000). This illiberal treatment, which paradoxically also contravenes the Finnish Integration Act, could, according to Helander (2015), be traced back to Swedish language's increasing marginalization within the Helsingfors municipality. Therefore, by demanding to be included in Swedish, migrant students challenged the integration parameters set by authorities and ultimately the unequal power structures in which these were embedded. Authority pushback forced students to take adopt decidedly political positions for their agency. For example, several involved their native spouses and partners in meetings with civil servants to "educate" the latter about migrant rights. This demonstrates the type of "organic integration" referred to by Hage (2000), which is largely unsanctioned by the state and uses critical citizenship practices as a way of challenging dominant views of belonging (Beauzamy & Féron 2012, Carlson 2002).

I would now like to return to the two questions, I posed at the outset of the chapter. Firstly, does a recognition by program participants of the structural barriers to inclusion imposed from without have an impact on program implementation? Secondly, do programs include a political mandate in challenging and collectively addressing such structural obstacles? In answering the first query, I would argue there was a recognition of the pervasive effects of structural hindrances upon both student inclusion and program delivery; but with respect to the *structural barriers to student inclusion* posed by low social welfare benefits, legal statutes obstructing foreign expertise accreditation and family reunification, they had only a limited impact on how programs were planned and implemented. However, the hiring of support staff such as social workers, study counselors and psychologists by NorQuest College, as well as their provision of non-daytime LINC in recognition of the employment realities of students, do attest to an appreciation of migrant subjectivities and an attempt to ameliorate the fallout of structural discrimination. With reference to the *structural barriers to program delivery*, such as funding precarity and austerity requirements, these had a tangible influence on determining program contents and operationalizations, as well as an intangible influence illustrated by institutional self-policing and pre-emptive stringencies.

The answer to the second question, alluding to the presence of a “political” mandate within LINC and SFI as a collective response to state or regional policies that were identified as detrimental to learning and inclusion within the programs, is also fraught with contradictions. While many teachers and administrators individually expressed a solidarity with their students’ quixotic struggles against governmental bureaucracies, coherent or collective responses involving migrants themselves and other public actors were conspicuous by their absence. In considering why this was the case, a number of possible explanations presented themselves. A great deal hinged upon how well entrenched political agency (Adams, Dominelli & Payne 2002) was within the top of administrative hierarchies, as these set the tone for political positionings down the line. It is interesting that none of the interviewees, including administrators, referred to any institutionally organized campaigns to address the social and economic injustices that constrained the daily lives of many migrant learners. Food and clothing drives to alleviate student poverty, for example,

had their origin with “eldsjälar” such as teachers or social workers but were not institutionally initiated. Leaving the political mandate at the door of individual teachers, however, had drawbacks. For one, the precarity of part-time instructors dictated that social activism on behalf of, or in cooperation with, migrant students could only happen during their free time and would be unpaid. It also raised questions as to how far the social responsibility of individual teachers should extend. As this Medis SFI teacher inquires, “inte kan lärare ensam börjar agitera för någonting. Det är inte vårt ansvar. Vi är ändå lärare. Man kan inte sätta hur mycket som helst uppgifter på lärare.”⁸⁷ This educator rightly questions how far the role of teachers could or should be stretched, and in her/his mind it does not encompass lone social activism. Here, prevailing social climates also affected how staff evaluated the level of risk in sticking their “critical necks” out. Citing the strongly polarized social climate after the 2015 “border crisis” (Trilling 2018), for example, a number of Arbis and Medis instructors expressed fears of societal repercussions if they publicly challenged what they described as draconian immigration policies.

One can also speculate whether the fact that all integration education programs were beholden to the state and the public purse for their funding somewhat dampened their fervour for social activism and levelling policy critiques. NorQuest LINC’s “foundational principle”, requiring assurances of reciprocity from social partners as prerequisites for cooperation, comes perhaps closest to taking a distinctly political stance. On a deeper level, there may even be reasons for the lack of social activism which pertain to the very aims and implementations of the integration educations themselves. I am hereby referring to institutional barriers which potentiate the effect of external structural barriers in obfuscating political mandates. One of the factors that facilitated a politics of apoliticality (Dorji 2018) could be attributed to the very nature of LINC and SFI curricula themselves. Given that these were not developed around critical citizenship foundations, they extended limited sanctioned opportunities for teachers and students to collectively challenge social injustices and push back against structural constraints (Baines 2007, Dominelli 2002). In addition, the virtual

⁸⁷ “Teachers alone cannot begin to agitate for anything. It is not our responsibility. We are still teachers. You cannot overburden teachers with tasks.” (author’s translation)

absence of ethno-cultural associations in educational practice and the diffuse roles played by other societal stakeholders in program delivery restricted links to possible allies in drafting collective responses. This implies that ways in which societal partnerships were envisaged and built may be complicit in restricting access to channels for joint political agency. By foregrounding “program co-ownership” with third-sector, ethnic or community associations, staff and migrant learners could create networks of solidarity in engaging in wider cultural and societal critiques. Such collective responses can then be entrenched systemically, their viability being independent of the input of individual teachers or administrators. As such, the powerlessness that many participants experienced in confronting marginalizing state policies might be transformed into mutual ways of acting and reacting.

7.3 (COLOUR) BLIND SPOTS

Maybe the first response when a student comes up and those issues of race and discrimination happen, we tend to say that that is just one individual who does that, or “No No No, we all live in a multicultural society, we all have to get along”, or “We have to stop seeing difference.” We kind of got to those standard responses rather than saying, oh, tell me more. So sometimes those bigger conversations could happen, but I think they get stopped. (NorQuest LINC teacher/administrator)

As a concluding theme, *(Colour) Blind Spots* deals precisely with those “bigger conversations” that “get stopped,” and those that perhaps never really start at all. They always recede into institutional backgrounds, seemingly invisible, but pervading every aspect of inclusion within and beyond the walls. They are ubiquitous despite their “invisibility” in imposing themselves on inclusion efforts at personal, cultural and structural levels. In this theme, I seek to bring these conversations into the light for it is precisely in their “absence” that their true power lies. These narratives of namelessness give form to institutional inclusion in the taken-for-grantedness of their assumptions, which provide them with a *carte blanche* from interrogation and critical analysis. I will restrict my focus to three such nameless narratives: *Racism’s “Pastness,” White Social Frame* and *Language Implicitness*. These three subthemes are linked not only by their invisibility

but also by the fact that their naming would require a radical repositioning of SFI and LINC whereby “common sense” views of culture, learning and integration are disrupted and reimaged (Kumashiro 2001). Turning the majority gaze inwards constitutes a necessary point of departure for all three narratives and this may explain their neglect. They challenge *white equilibrium* (DiAngelo 2018), yet without investigating these “bigger conversations”, an incomplete picture of migrant inclusion in integration programs emerges.

7.3.1 RACISM’S “PASTNESS”

Given that cultural plurality and its multifarious negotiations in social life constituted the lived reality of program participants, it was surprising that topics such as discrimination or racism were, according to both staff and students, rarely broached and virtually absent in curricular materials. As the quote by the LINC instructor introducing this theme intimates, there are a number of justifications for relegating these issues to the margins. Some revolve around the incompatibility of narratives of racialization and oppression with those of “multiculturalism” and the “tolerant liberal egalitarianism” of Western democracies, while others are rooted in a colour blindness whereby difference is not seen. Raising the racist spectre, therefore, harkens back to an uncomfortable racial past which has “been overcome” and which renders such conversations obsolete, as the following interview excerpt illustrates:

Otherwise in the city, diversity training is seen as passé. It is something like, gosh man, we have already done that. We shouldn't be talking about this [...] because that training should already be part of the job. The office deals a lot with immigrant clients, but they are generally just nice to everybody. (Arbis SFI teacher)

Here assumptions of racism’s “pastness” are implied in the belief that diversity competences have already been acquired and that the resulting “niceness” of office staff in cross-cultural exchanges is ample testament to this fact.

Further strategies, both conscious and subconscious, which served to make racism invisible included silence, denial, avoidance, argumentation and other kinds of pushback. In the following quote by a NorQuest LINC teacher, a number of these “defense mechanisms” become apparent:

One student, when I taught the engineers in a really high-level professional bridging program, said, “You know what I don’t like about Canadians? Every time they hear my accent they ask, where are you from and that just bugs me!” I said, but you know it is just natural. If you are going to take that attitude – I may be preaching a bit – it is your choice to be annoyed with that, but most Canadians are simply friendly and curious. We have people from all over the world here and they are just wondering where you are from. You have an accent so obviously you weren’t raised here. If you get annoyed by it, you are going to be pretty unhappy and plus you are going to alienate people when someone is just trying to be friendly to you. It wasn’t discrimination, it just bothered him but when I think about it, he did feel that it was discrimination.
(NorQuest LINC teacher)

While attributing the “naturalness” of the responses of “good” Canadians to their inherent curiosity as a way of explaining a cultural misunderstanding and assuaging the student’s feelings of exclusion, the instructor, simultaneously, and likely inadvertently, denies the racial discrimination inferred and invalidates the student’s experiences. The argumentation also reproaches the student for his own feelings in “choosing” to interpret this as discrimination and suggests that he does injury not only to himself but also to the benign majority by “taking that attitude.” It thus results in shifting the blame from “victimizer” to “victim” and effectively silences a further exploration of the student’s experience. Staff responses to accounts of racist or racializing treatment by students often betrayed an insecurity characterized by failing to engage, “explaining away,” or by pointing to the subjectivity of experience. As in this LINC teacher’s comments, “I think that there is a lot perception involved as well [...] “Oh, I didn’t get offered that job because of *This*”, when in reality you didn’t get offered the job because you weren’t the best candidate.” Here, *this* is not even “named”, yet its namelessness speaks volumes. Another technique for skirting the issue of racism was to equate the experiences of migrant students, specifically those representing visible minorities, with

one's own or those of other "white" migrant groups. As this Medis teacher's claims,

Det är så onödigt att gå omkring och sura över diskriminering, eller att Ålänningar vill inte bli bekanta. Det är inte alls så! Det är lika svårt om du är en vanlig Österbottning och pratar svenska så mycket som helst som flyttar hit. Inte får den heller vänner övernatt. (Medis SFI teacher)⁸⁸

In referring to a universality of migrant experience, one in which colour is removed, this instructor effectively obscures racially motivated explanations for behaviour. As a result, the colour-blind perception trumps the "coloured." This is also attested to in the next example, taken from a participant observation log entry during fieldwork at NorQuest College, in which a LINC student related a story about being racially discriminated against by a social service worker. The instructor who had actually posed an open question to the class, asking if students had ever experienced racism in Canada, responded thus:

He adds that he too, as a Canadian, had been treated badly when as an unemployed father he had sought help and hypothesizes that this is perhaps not an incidence of ethnic discrimination but rather a symptom of a public service agency treating all users like numbers. (NorQuest observation log 5.10.2015)

While this is a salient point, it neglects to interrogate the teacher's own vastly different social positioning as a member of the white majority and conflates the deeply personal experience of the student with a generally poor social service provision mentality. This response essentially truncated a discussion about possible racist motives and disqualified this experience from being called racial discrimination regardless of motive.

When it was not actively denied, talk of racism was often avoided even when there was a recognition of racism's pervasive presence in society. Teachers frequently justified this by "erring on the side of positivity" in not

⁸⁸ "It is so unnecessary to go around and sulk about discrimination or that Ålanders do not want to have contact. It's not like that at all! It is equally difficult if you are a normal *Österbottning* (person from Swedish-speaking region of Ostrobothnia in Finland) who speaks Swedish and moves here. Nor does s/he make friends overnight." (author's translation)

exploring the negative aspects of integration as a way of helping students to “forget about them and focus on the inclusion thing”, as one LINC instructor put it. Others wished to protect students from the harsh realities of a racist society by not wishing to destroy their hope, as one Medis SFI educator explained: ”mässar man för mycket att arbetsgivare kan vara rasistiska eller att det är jättesvårt att få jobb utan att kunna jättebra svenska så tar du också ner deras hopp.”⁸⁹ Commonly, whenever the topic of race was broached, it evinced a perceptible discomfort among staff, a discomfort that engendered avoidance. Whether or not teachers were always conscious of this, students from visible minority backgrounds certainly were. As this LINC learner states,

That one, [racism] is not easy because some teachers don't like that [...] They don't say, no stop that, but you see in the faces, you see it in their faces that they don't like it. (NorQuest LINC CLB5 student)

The student observation that the non-verbal language of staff in response to such topics was unequivocally discouraging was also shared in a linguistically mixed discussion between a group of Medis students:

[Zala:] Det känns så tabu som the big elephant in the room ibland. Even if that conversation starts in the class, I feel like the teacher wouldn't want to talk about it even though we want to talk about it. It feels like nobody wants to address it because somebody might feel offended. It's like a taboo but they should give us a chance to talk about it and we can learn from one another. [Justina:] Och det finns rasism på Åland. [Zala:] Jättemycket! [Justina:] Jag har upplevt det många gånger. (Medis SFI B1 student group)⁹⁰

The perception among migrants that “racism” was taboo, sensitive and apt to cause umbrage, (ergo its avoidance) was widespread. Given this climate, it is understandable that despite many instructors’ verbal

⁸⁹ “If you drone on that employers can be racist or that it is very difficult to get a job without having excellent Swedish, you also deflate their hope.” (author’s translation)

⁹⁰ [Zala:] “It feels like the big elephant in the room sometimes. Even if that conversation starts in class, I feel like the teacher wouldn't want to talk about it even though we want to talk about it. It feels like nobody wants to address it because somebody might feel offended. It's like a taboo but they should give us a chance to talk about it and we can learn from one another. [Justina:] And there is racism on Åland. [Zala:] Very much! [Justina:] I have experienced it many times.” (author’s translation)

Empirical Findings

assurances that they had no problems in discussing such topics “if students bring them up,” few raised them in class in light of the social and personal costs involved. For if migrants wished to debate racism, the selection of quotes in this section illustrates, there was no guarantee that such discussions would take place. For example, even when the curriculum offered seemingly tailored opportunities to explore these issues, they were frequently missed, as the next Medis observation log entry demonstrates:

Next, we watch news in “easy Swedish” from SVT1, something not available in Finland. In the news, two stories dominate; one describing the war in Syria and the other relating an arson attack on a migrant reception center. Students are asked if they have understood and further if they have any questions, but there are none. “Hilde” does well to select problematic words in the news stories, writes them on the blackboard and discusses their meanings, but that is all. Once again, especially in light of the arson attack, there is a perfect opportunity to add issues of racism and discrimination to the daily instructional agenda, but this too is an opportunity missed. (Medis Observation log 18.10. 2016)

The fact that race, racialization and discrimination were peripheral to program aims and implementations did not mean that they had no tangible repercussions for migrant student participants in SFI and LINC. Institutional “silences” were reproduced and reified in student silences, as one NorQuest LINC instructor observed when asked about learners’ experiences with racism: “often students say nothing and just go on with their lives.” However, where “going on with their lives” meant that certain pivotal realities of life were rendered invisible in educations designed to help students integrate, such silences could indeed be oppressive.

In stark contrast to curricular and discursive silences, participant interviews were replete with the noise of dialogues and reflections on racism. Its absence in teaching only masked its presence as a circumscribing force in participants’ lives. As one LINC student relates,

I was putting my son, “Mahid”, on the school bus and the bus driver always said, “Hello monkey!” to my son. I listened the first day and I didn’t understand what she said so I didn’t say anything, then the next day she said it again. I just stood up and said, “Excuse me, what did you call him? Do you know his name?” She say, of course I know his name. Then why didn’t you call

his name? He has a name! Then one small boy who was sitting there said, "Yeah, his name is Mahid." So, the next day I wrote a note to his school and told them that I didn't like the bus driver because she is calling my son "monkey." The next day they changed the bus driver [...] I was shocked you know. I still remember how my body went hard the second day, oh! (NorQuest LINC CLB6 student)

Of interest in the above example, is that the offending subject – the bus driver – was simply removed or absented from view. If other measures were taken, they were not communicated to the student nor was follow-up contact established. Racism here could clearly be contained within a corporeal body and by removing it, one had removed racism. However, while a number of narratives spoke of similar personal attacks perpetrated by individuals, in others, racism was conceived of in more cultural and structural terms, as the following observation of a Medis student illustrates:

After the big exam for the passport, it doesn't change anything because for them WE are integrating here [...] They like what they do and don't think about what you can do. If you are coming from another land you get jobs like "städare"⁹¹, "smutsiga job"⁹². You can learn, have a passport and do what you want but you will never be an Ålandic person and they are not hiding that. (Medis SFI A2 student)

The racism described here, as astutely pointed out by the student, is carried out by a dominant ethnic group that sets boundaries for belonging which supersede those granted to one by virtue of holding a passport. S/he describes it as structural in nature thus restricting opportunities through group closure and responsible for creating an ethnic underclass. This description of racism's tangible effects upon migrant lives spreads culpability, making it more difficult to dismiss racial discrimination as the actions of an aberrant, irrational few. It implicates dominant "white" society which, exempting a few, included the majority of the teaching staff in the three programs. In this regard, the minority teaching staff at Arbis presented an interesting case in point. Many of their narratives recounted personal as well as collective experiences of discrimination on the basis of their ethnic origin, experiences as one Arbis staffer observed, "vi lever ju

⁹¹ "Cleaner"

⁹² "Dirty jobs"

med det hela tiden.”⁹³ While this maltreatment was often cited to explain why Swedish-speaking Finns were “mera välvilligt inställda”⁹⁴ to the situation of migrant students, it did not necessarily translate into racism being more openly discussed in the program. As one instructor elucidated, ”jag är ju också ett offer här och behöver inte ta den diskussionen.”⁹⁵ Victimization here recuses the victim from engaging in racism discussions. In other teacher accounts, personal experiences of racism engendered a cautiousness in discussing the topic, stemming perhaps from a distinct awareness of one’s more vulnerable societal position in relation to the majority. This perceived vulnerability, when applied to SFI, was compounded by the recognition that integrating migrant students as “minorities within a minority” may lead to them being “ännu mera diskriminerade om de ber om svenska” as one instructor stated, “för att det finns en fientlig atmosfär mot svenskan.”⁹⁶ The genuine desire of Arbis staff to shield students from this “double discrimination” could explain why, despite personal experiences of othering, racism’s manifestations remained underemphasized in teaching.

However, the silences which surrounded race were not compact or uniform; they were poignantly interrupted by those who deemed the inclusion of such discourses in integration educations as vital. “I think you have to [discuss racism] and I think that our students are dealing with it every day,” as one NorQuest LINC instructor stresses. Those staffers who did engage with these topics, recognized that migrants would, in all likelihood, be confronted with racism’s reality in their everyday lives and that sanctioned discussion forums within LINC and SFI represented essential components in students’ social inclusion. The following quote reflects this need and espouses the beneficial consequences of starting the “bigger conversations” and “naming” taboo yet pervasive social phenomena:

⁹³ “We live with it all the time.” (author’s translation)

⁹⁴ “more sympathetic”

⁹⁵ “I am also a victim here and don’t have to engage in this discussion” (author’s translation)

⁹⁶ “even more discriminated if they ask for Swedish, because there is a hostile atmosphere against Swedish. (author’s translation)

Det har varit så jättemycket på nyheterna om Sannfinländarna, om rasism och politik och där tänkte jag, nej vi måste ge mera tid åt det, att diskutera. Det var på en grundnivå, men sen när vi diskuterade om deras upplevelser av vardagsrasism i Finland, det uppskattades väldigt mycket [...] att man visade att det är viktigt var faktiskt en bra upplevelse att få tillsammans gå igenom. De tänkte också på sina barn och den där oron om familjen. Det tycker jag också att det kunde vara mera i undervisningen. (Arbis SFI integration coordinator/tutor)⁹⁷

The integration coordinator raises several important points in recounting the experience of addressing racism in class. S/he argues that the prevalence of racism in media, its saturation of virtual and public spaces, made it imperative that its role was not ignored or diminished. In addition, the fact that s/he, as a member of dominant society, shouldered the responsibility of raising the issue instead of dumping its interrogation off onto migrant learners was clearly appreciated and created opportunities for reciprocal learning. It also signalled that the classroom was a forum for all, not only the positively charged migrant experiences. By blinking or marginalizing the uncomfortable or negative experiences, programs set normative parameters. Opening racism up for discussion demonstrated that its consequences reached far beyond the personal realities of individual students. It infiltrated and impacted family life and, by extension, society at large. As such, the classroom forum became an important arena for mutual recognition and a cathartic outlet. The fact that such discussions fulfilled an emotional need in students to unburden and disencumber themselves of “integration stress” is echoed in another quote of a LINC instructor:

When people say “I hate Canada,” I don’t get defensive because I think they need to get it out and I want to make this a safe place so whatever you think and whatever you feel you can say it because maybe out there in your real

⁹⁷ “There has been so much in the news about the “True Finns”, about racism and politics and therefore I thought, no we must devote more time to it, to discuss. It was on a basic level, but when we discussed about their experiences of everyday racism in Finland, it was very much appreciated [...] that one showed that this is important was actually a good experience to share together. They also thought about their children and their worries about family. I also think that there could be more of this in teaching.” (author’s translation)

Empirical Findings

world you can't say it. I think for them it is kind of good. Sometimes, depending on the issues it is almost like a therapy session.

There is an explicit recognition in these lines that integration is experienced as a conflictual process whose complexity is diminished if topics like racism or social exclusion are considered taboo, for as the teacher suggests, out in their real worlds, students may also have no opportunities for vocalizing their frustrations. In striving to create a “safe”, non-judgmental space within the classroom, an incentive for expressing those thoughts and feelings that run counter to the positivity of dominant integration narratives is given.

Racism's "Pastness" explores the first nameless narrative which, despite its virtual absence in daily discourse or curricular materials within the integration educations, remained omnipresent as the “big elephant in the room,” revisiting Zala’s description. Its invisibility or “pastness,” (Ahmed 2012) communicates that “we are beyond race [...] or that we are “over” race and is how racism is reproduced; it is how racism is *looked over*” (Ibid, pp.182-3). By unlinking institutional aims and pedagogical practice from interrogations of race, a number of current postracialist discourses come into view. Racism’s omission, according to Gavan Titley (2019, p.2), implies that the schismatic “idea of race” no longer matters and that the history of racism as violence has been largely transcended. Another aspect which serves to buttress this belief is that racism is often simplistically defined as intentional acts of racial discrimination committed by evil, immoral individuals. Therefore, well-intentioned staff and multicultural institutions can be recused from responsibility, because they are ostensibly not part of the problem (Goldberg 2015).

These descriptions of racism as an aberration – the domain of a lunatic fringe – something which enlightened multicultural societies have left behind, differ intrinsically from David Roediger’s (2008, pp.xi-xii) formulation of racism as politics. He describes it as a mode of structuring social relations where “race defines the social category into which peoples are sorted, producing and justifying their very different opportunities with regard to wealth and poverty, confinement and freedom, citizenship and alienation.” Here racism becomes distinctly structural and permeates all aspects of migrant student’s lives in its embeddedness in the mundane

practices and institutions of the everyday, including schools. However, such understandings seemed incompatible with the integration education's focus on the positives of celebration multiculturalism and liberal tolerance, something which Ahmed (2010, p.156) refers to as their *Happiness duty* – “the institutional duty of keeping it light, not mentioning racism.” The consequences of “keeping it light” in absencing racism are that opportunities of identifying racial discrimination, its causes and implications, are eroded to the detriment of both staff and students. In addition, it obscures the enduring historicity of racialization, “while sanctioning and fashioning modes of racist expression that activate their racial underpinnings precisely because it is now difficult, if not impossible, to recall them” Goldberg (2015, p.88). It is this “racial amnesia” that the curricular and discursive silences on race facilitate. From the point of view of inclusion, the silences also act to prevent Transposition Inclusion's majority gaze from being turned inwards. They protect white staff from acquiring the insights, language and practical tools required for confronting racism.

A constituting factor of the silence on race in supporting postracialist positions within LINC and SFI is a colour blindness in which “difference is not seen,” “diversity training is passé” and where harmonizing relations in the classroom predominated. As Robin DiAngelo (2018, p.41) argues, “if we pretend not to notice race, there can be no racism. If you pretend that color is invisible, immaterial, unimportant, then how will you see racism?” Colour blindness is evident in the examples where teachers interpret migrant racist experiences from their own personal positionalities of “white neutrality” and where the subjectivities of student perceptions are implicated when charges of racial discrimination are levelled at majorities. Interestingly, while students' experiential subjectivities are readily pointed out, the same scrutiny is not always extended to teachers' own viewpoints in such examples, viewpoints that were rarely admitted to being culturally or racially situated. The corollary of colour blindness is that it silences discourses on race. By invalidating migrant experiences and by “individualizing difference”, the varying perceptions of individuals are pitted against one another with the consequence of migrants having to deal with racism's fallout on their own (Brown & Strega 2005, Sue 2006, Mullaly

2010). Therefore, structural factors, even present within schools, which underpin racializing practices are obscured.

The imposed silence on race, engendered by colour blindness, also gave rise to a variety of defense mechanisms that conspired to obscure racism or diffuse its import when it was actually “named.” These ranged from deflection, avoidance, denial and defensiveness to a well-intentioned desire to protect students from social ills. The resulting “defensive teaching” (Parker 2016) has been attributed to educators’ feelings of discomfort or inadequacy in debating conflictual issues such as racism in open classroom forums (Kumashiro 2002, Bickmore 2008b). For white staff, this process was complicated by the fact that such discourses challenged white equilibrium, or “the cocoon of racial comfort, centrality, [...] and obliviousness, all rooted in an identity of being good white people free of racism” (DiAngelo 2018, p.112). Because white educators are generally unused to, or untrained in addressing such challenges, they unsettle and produce a precariousness in conversations about race, which in turn triggers defensive teaching. The defense mechanisms serve to reinstate the entitlement of not being racially examined and thus repel such challenges. Consequently, they become strategies of social exclusion by labelling certain migrant life experiences as “unsuitable” and removing White majorities and institutions from being examined as objects of integration (Schinkel 2018). Instead of harmonizing relations, silences on race distort them and antithetically reinforce racial hegemonies. In so doing, they contribute to the liminal positioning of migrant students in LINC and SFI by implying that “inclusion” concerns only selected aspects of students’ lives while experiences which problematize the programs’ “Happiness duty” are marginalized in curricular materials and classroom discourse.

To illustrate the inclusionary effects of defensive mechanisms that absent racism, I return to the example of the engineering student whose racial discrimination charge was dismissed by the instructor as a case of the student’s unfamiliarity with Canadian cultural codes. It reminded me of a quote by Sara Ahmed (2012, p.177) that validates the student’s experience and invites discussion instead of explaining it away:

Or we could think of the question typically asked of strangers, “where are you from?” as if to say, or more accurately, which is to say, “you are not from

here.” When we are being asked questions, we are being held up, we become questionable. It is a way of making you into a stranger, of not being at home in a category that gives residence to others.”

Notably, both teacher and student arguments lay claim to the inclusive narrative of Canadian multiculturalism, a narrative where everyone regardless of national or cultural origin is sewn into the diversity quilt of Canadian national identity. The instructor alludes to the “niceness of Canadians” as a guarantor for belonging in the multicultural mosaic, while the student seems to question this premise by asking, if this is true, why is my belonging continually being questioned? Why am I being made into a stranger?

Although student as well as teacher narratives attested to the existence of racism as a lived reality for many participants, the silences on race were occasionally interrupted and “disturbed” by selected educators and migrants in all programs. This reflects the assertion of many anti-racist theorists in education that one must interrogate racism in order to challenge – rather than protect – it (see Sefa Dei 1996, Kumashiro 2002, Matias et.al 2014, Guo 2015, Rajan-Rankin 2015, Zembylas 2018 and Winkler 2018, among others). In these interruptions, there was the recognition that the silences on racism inside institutions contrasted sharply with the daily noise of racism in media and public discourse. This *debatability of racism* (Titley 2019), in which a myriad of disparate voices contest what constitutes racism, is essential not only because it illustrates the latter’s changeability and malleability, but also because it exposes whose definition counts and whose voices predominate. In breaking the silence barrier, educators and migrants demonstrated a willfulness in bringing up race; they took a risk! “To speak about racism is to labour over sore points” (Ahmed 2012, p.171). Therefore, those who unmask these sore points run the risk of being accused of creating rather than describing the problem, of “going on about it,” as if racism’s interrogation is what “keeps it going.” The fact that a number of educators described this as their responsibility also connects with theories of anti-oppressive practice and egalitarian interpretations of Transformation Inclusion which implicate majority society, namely those who exercise the power to include and exclude, as primarily obligated in

dismantling racializing structures (Shera 2003, Mullaly 2010, Back & Sinha 2012).

In adopting this distinctly political stance, these staffers distinguished themselves from those colleagues who also recognized racism's societal perniciousness but chose to shield migrant learners from this reality by "focusing on the inclusion thing" instead. By removing possibilities for conflictual dialogues, teachers also removed opportunities for joint agency and reciprocal learning about the effects of race and racialization (Davies 2004b, Cummins 2009, Norton & Toohey 2011). Replacing such fracturing discussions – testing white equilibrium – with diffuse admonitions for tolerance and respect, resulted in staff inadvertently maintaining the status quo and thereby impeding migrant inclusion. As Robin Di Angelo (2018, p.253) points out, "Niceness will not get racism off the table. It keeps it there." It must also be remembered that while such interruptive dialogues are necessary steps on the road to recognition and social change, they are not inherently performative in unmasking racism but require the corollary of personal and institutional actions.

7.3.2 WHITE SOCIAL FRAME⁹⁸

If racism represented a "nameless narrative," dialogues on white social framing and entitlement were perhaps even more invisible. Although the vast majority of staff and administrators in the integration programs were from white, Western backgrounds and constituted a visible *colour line* (Du Bois 1903) when juxtaposed with the migrant student body, this dynamic and its effects on how inclusion was conceived were rarely explored. Its taken-for-grantedness became "institutional background", which meant that the assumptions which were papered over in this background remained hidden. This granted them a free pass from interrogation and critical analysis. When whiteness was alluded to, however, similar kinds of defense mechanisms as in dialogues on racism were deployed. The privilege with

⁹⁸ The concept of the "white social frame" (Feagin 2013) refers to the circulation of messages/texts (movies, books, etc.) that reinforce the superior position of whites and serves as a racial frame in interpreting social situations. White social framing is continually added to from one generation to the next, re-inscribing it even further.

which the norm of institutional whiteness invested white staff eluded discussion, except in a few cases. As this quote by an Arbis teacher suggests:

Man kanske har en oförskämt självsäkerhet när man är vit och medelklass och möjligen också det man tycker ska vara norm för andra. (Arbis SFI teacher)⁹⁹

The almost “audacious self-confidence” this lecturer refers to by virtue of being white and middle class, extends beyond observable characteristics of colour and speaks about whiteness – including its practices, values, attitudes etc. – as normative. Seeing that the operationalization of this norm and the white social frame on which it rests were rarely openly verbalized, it communicated itself in other ways. Sometimes it was conflated with culture and appeared in the manner in which teacher narratives juxtaposed the autochthonous with the allochthonous, as in this excerpt from an interview with an Arbis SFI teacher in which s/he reflects on the disinclination of some migrant learners to explore the Nordic outdoors: “Det är ju någonting att den Nordiska människan är mångsidigare och det borde vi förmedla i alla fall, och går ut och trampar i skogen.”¹⁰⁰ Here the refusal of some students to join nature walks is not only interpreted as lamentable but is taken as a broader indication of other “limitations.” The lecturer follows this up by stating that it should be part and parcel of the role of teachers to convey the greater adaptability and versatility of the Nordic human to migrants. At other times, white social framing was expressed in a seeming inability to reflect upon what differences in privileges and positionalities “being white” and part of the majority entailed. In the following quote, an educator relates her own thoughts about a conversation s/he overheard between migrant students and some Finland-Swedish pensioners who had volunteered to act as SFI study mentors at Arbis:

Man är pensionär, man är ute och reser, man äter gott – så vill man HJÄLPA de här flyktingarna. Ibland tänker jag, hur kan dom förmå sig att sätta sig in i deras [migranternas] liv om de bara informerar om sina lyxresor, gastronomi! Du kommer från Afrika eller något sånt krisdrabbad land. Förstår de på allvar

⁹⁹ “One has perhaps an audacious self-confidence when one is white and middle class and possibly also in that which one thinks should be a norm for others.” (author’s translation)

¹⁰⁰ “There is something that the Nordic person is more versatile, and we should at least convey that, and go out and wander in the forest.” (author’s translation)

att fråga vad eleverna äter där, be dom att ge av sitt kunnande? (Arbis SFI teacher)¹⁰¹

When *White entitlement*¹⁰² is insulated by colour blindness, as alluded to in the quote above, its reality all but disappears and makes the kind of critical self-reflection sought by the Arbis teacher much more difficult. Its invisibility is built upon the absence of colour as a collective social organizer. “Att sätta sig in i”¹⁰³ students’ lives is made nearly impossible if the collective, normative element of colour in determining social standing and life chances is concealed. This was also the subtext when white staff drew upon their own experiences of migrating or being marginalized in order to explain the social exclusion of migrant learners. Where colour is absented, experiences become individualized and those of white people, unencumbered by “racial baggage”, tend to be portrayed as “universal experiences.” As such, this serves as an explanation why some white staff have felt it unnecessary to participate in further education courses exploring teaching in diverse classrooms, as the next quote illustrates:

Vi har haft frivilliga tillfällen här att gå [kurser i interkulturell kommunikation]. Jag har inte gått för att jag har alltid fnyst åt det där ”att jag skulle inte kunna umgås med människor” [skratta]. Jag tycker inte att [...] man måste gå på kurs för att kunna prata med dem? (Arbis SFI teacher)¹⁰⁴

The implication here is that “communication is universal”, “we are all the same”, and “I don’t treat people differently.” Being enjoined to participate in courses designed to interrogate these assumptions contradicts white

¹⁰¹ “You are a pensioner, you are out traveling, you eat well, you want to HELP these refugees. Sometimes I think, how can they identify with [migrants’] lives if they only inform about their own luxury trips, gastronomy! You come from Africa or some such crisis-ridden country. Do they seriously understand to inquire what they eat there, ask students to share their knowledge?” (author’s translation)

¹⁰² White entitlement is a claim – both conscious and unconscious – that that presumes white people’s ownership and power based on social/political/economic contracts. It creates a world in which “the status quo of differential racial entitlement is normatively legitimate, not to be investigated further.” (adapted from Mills 1997, p.40)

¹⁰³ “identifying with or becoming part of” (author’s translation)

¹⁰⁴ “We have had opportunities to participate in [courses in intercultural communication]. I have not gone because I always scoffed at that, “that I would not be able to interact with people” [laughs]. I don’t think that [...] you have to take a course to talk to them.” (author’s translation)

social framing on which these premises are based and thus meets with resistance. There is perhaps nothing that encapsulates white privilege more succinctly than when one's own experiences become universal, as in the above quote. When white experiences are subsumed under "just human", they inhibit identification with all those with specific traits and characteristics that seem to cling to "colour." Humanity here provides the *carte blanche* from critical analysis.

White social framing, however, was not only restricted to the personal responses of individual educators; it also resurfaced in curricular materials aimed at migrant learners. One such example was the Finnish bilingual, web-based integration platform and language learning tool, *Kotisuomessa.fi*. It includes both grammar tasks as well as listening- and reading- comprehension exercises in exploring topics such as food, health, jobs, the environment, and Finnish history. As this program was used in working with SFI students at Medis during my fieldwork, I had the opportunity to become acquainted with it:

I begin by exploring Kotisuomessa.fi. I notice, however that the program is very white with nary a non-typically "Finnish experience" in the curriculum. The family Lindholm we follow is white, nuclear, with two pets, living in a detached house. Father drives a bus and mother works as a nurse. It is a sanitized picture and far removed from the different realities of Finnish residents. (Medis Observation Log 28.10.2016)

In *Kotisuomessa.fi* everyday practices and cultural norms are embedded in and interpreted from within a position of normative whiteness so compact – evidenced by topics including summer cottage life, preparations for baptism, Christian confirmation, and Christmas – that even short descriptions of national minorities such as The Sami and The Roma serve almost as an afterthought, or an add-on. As white social framing reifies a kind of white superiority, which antithetically denies the role of skin colour, it frequently takes its expression by affirming the hegemony of selected cultural practices. When this cultural normativity was occasionally challenged by migrants, some instructors defended it by claiming that such practices are based on their enduring historicity. The following interview excerpt illustrates an example of LINC students challenging the normative role of the Christian calendar in excluding the

recognition of other religious holidays, and the response this elicits from their teacher:

Culturally, we don't make allowances, for example when it was Eid and my students were like, we're not coming to school because it's Id, I said that you will be marked absent. "What, but it's Id!" In the Canadian workforce you have to take a day's holiday and that is effectively what you are doing here. It is your choice not to come to school. "It's not a choice, it's my religion." In Canada, it's a choice. I had one student say, "what about Christmas Day?" and I said this is a Christian country and Christmas Day has been a holiday for a long time. Although we are tolerant of other religions this is basically a Christian country. (NorQuest LINC teacher)

In this teacher-student conversation, a number of taken-for-granted assumptions embedded within the white social frame are revealed. The students' request for reciprocity in officially recognizing other than Christian statutory holidays lays claim to the promise of an egalitarian diversity as enshrined in the happy narratives of Canadian multiculturalism. The instructor counters these assertions by affirming the inherent hierarchy of such a diversity in stating "that this is basically a Christian country [...] although we are tolerant of other religions." The tolerance referred to here is certainly dependent upon approval from the majority and thereby one-directional. In addition, the students' rebuttal that "religion is not a choice" – implying its intricate enmeshment in all aspects of their lives – stands in contradiction to the separation of the secular and the religious in Western democracies and is thus dismissed as "un-Canadian." This strategy effectively "othered" competing arguments, reaffirmed white social framing, and put a lid on further discussion, and parenthetically, on opportunities for shared critical reflection.

The following case in point of staff diversity illustrates both the invisibility and elusiveness of whiteness in integration program discourses, as well as the defense mechanisms at work when whiteness was invoked. Although the colour line denoting the imbalance between white and non-white staff in both LINC and SFI was indisputable – Arbis and Medis employing not a single non-white SFI teacher – in discussions with most white educators, staff diversity, or the lack thereof, was not cited as an obfuscating factor to inclusion. As stated earlier, whiteness receded into

institutional backgrounds, remaining largely incognito unless aimed at those who were “othered” by it. It is therefore notable that the statement below, expressing surprise in describing the colour homogeneity of instructors, originated from a research participant representing a visible minority background:

I see that diversity in the student population but not really in the staff [laughter]. You know what, it's very white – I mean VERY WHITE, whoah! I think there is only like 2% aboriginal staff, 3% Black, 5% Asian, and everybody else is just white and I feel like that is not diverse. (NorQuest LINC staffer)

The same member of staff then goes on to develop his/her argument by saying, “I believe that in every institution the staff’s cultural or ethnic background should reflect the student population.” This observation raises crucial questions as to the inherent responsibilities of institutions to reflect the demographics of their clientele at all levels of the organization when committed to furthering inclusion. It also implies that white colour homogeneity or lack of diversity act as an obstacle to student inclusion. As this represented one of the few times where whiteness was actually “named” in interviews, I included the above quote in dissemination sessions with LINC employees at the conclusion of my fieldwork and interestingly enough, “lack of staff diversity” was the research finding which received the most pushback. Essentially, arguments to refute claims of white entitlement, and possibly even institutional discrimination, the lack of diversity invited, could be summarized by the following quote of an administrator:

We try to hire the best candidate with the strongest qualifications as possible regardless of anything else, whether they are male or female, ethnicity and what not. (NorQuest LINC administrator)

In “hiring the best” where “the best” just happen to be white instructors, the institution asserts its impartiality by leaning upon the transparency of its hiring procedures and the meritocracy in criteria regulating staffing. However, in querying staff about their employment histories, it became apparent that most had not answered open recruitment calls but had heard about possible openings indirectly from friends or colleagues, or had simply

“tumbled into” SFI or LINC by chance or assignment. As the majority started out as part-time or casual instructors, the regulations for their employment differed as this administrator explains:

It depends on what kind of position is being offered. If it is casual, where most of our instructors start, we can send out feelers and “Tracy” especially has connections to other program managers, and she will contact them and ask, do you have someone who is looking for work this term? We can do that for casual positions. (NorQuest LINC administrator)

For non-white staff looking to get their foot in the door, this recruitment strategy complicates matters because they must either already be employed in an affiliated program or possess extensive social and professional networks among the white majority. In addition, if the staff composition in other programs is similarly racially and ethnically homogenous, the “feelers” might never actually extend to candidates from minority backgrounds. Related observations describing the outcomes of these “through the grapevine” recruitment strategies were also expressed by some SFI instructors. This is underlined by the observation of a Medis teacher, that “etniskt blir det ju väldigt vitt som man säger,”¹⁰⁵ or an Arbis instructor who commented on the very recent open recruitment of part-time staff:

Jag hörde att det nu var första gången på typ trettio år att de hade öppenlagt en arbetsannons om att vi söker timplärare. Och allmänt i vårt samhället, jag läste en forskningsgrej att 80% av alla arbeten går under bordet genom nätverk så inte är det så konstigt, men för Arbis är det verkligen [...] Man har inte behövt sätta en annons eftersom det har gått från mun till mun genom kompisar [...]” (Arbis SFI teacher)¹⁰⁶

By filling positions “under the table” after their unofficial promotion in internal networks, the white social frame becomes further institutionalized. Other explanations for the lack of staff diversity were that program

¹⁰⁵ “ethnically it becomes very white, as one says” (author’s translation)

¹⁰⁶ “I heard that now for the first time in like thirty years, they had published a job advertisement that we were looking for part-time teachers. And generally, in our society, I read a research study that 80% of all jobs go under the table through networks so it is not strange, but for Arbis it is really [...] One has not had to place an ad because it has gone by word of mouth through friends...” (author’s translation)

managers “favoured native speakers” and that educators from non-white backgrounds “simply don’t apply for these jobs.” As the above quotes indicate, there were structural reasons that account for the lack of non-white applicants but there may also be other explanations alluded to by a LINC teacher who tried to overcome the hesitancy of an East-Indian educator in applying to NorQuest:

I was talking to somebody on the weekend who works at the downtown campus in the library and is Pakistani. She has just been certified as a teacher and I told her to apply for a job here and she was feeling insecure. She wears a hijab and I told her that half of the student population here are Muslim, so we need at least one Muslim in the mix, but she was hesitant about it and I don’t know but I tried to convince. I think she would make a great addition to the team of instructors here. (NorQuest LINC teacher)

Despite assurances that the newly certified educator would make a great addition to LINC’s Westmount campus, the LINC staffer’s invitation encounters hesitancy. Conveying to the potential applicant that because a large number of migrant students are also Muslim, they would “need at least one Muslim in the mix,” this hesitancy is perhaps not surprising. Though well-meaning, the LINC teacher has already typecast her as the “Muslim teacher” and thus inadvertently tokenized her by focusing first and foremost on her religious affiliation rather than her professional expertise as justification for her employment. The staffer also communicates that she would be the only Muslim teacher, indicating that she would face the pressure of being the only staffer wearing a hijab. The natural insecurities of a newly graduated teacher are thus compounded by shouldering the weight of “wearing her religious belief” in a white, secular institution.

This raises the question about what types of challenges, if any, minority staff already employed in the homogenously white-staffed programs faced. At Medis this was a non-issue due to the absence of non-white instructors in SFI. Arbis was in a similar situation, although here staff with migrant backgrounds were employed as part-time teachers in other educational programs outside SFI. Although the City of Helsingfors espouses a diversity policy that stipulates 10% of municipal employees should come from minority backgrounds, Arbis “har ännu inte kommit till en sän

nivå,”¹⁰⁷ as one staffer intimated. At NorQuest LINC, despite their modest numbers, teachers from visible minority backgrounds were represented and yet their position was described as qualitatively different by a LINC teacher liaison whose work entailed conversing with staff and presenting their viewpoints to management. Some of this difference was related to how “language,” and “language competency” were perceived within programs, perceptions supported by white social framing. The particularities of this “framing” are hinted at as partly responsible for some of the challenges faced by minority staff:

I think teachers who are from visible minority backgrounds or who are perceived as English learners themselves find a lot of challenges. I think they are judged more critically by their students and maybe, I don't know, by their colleagues. From student feedback there is a lot of “I want a Canadian Teacher,” and by Canadian teacher they mean a white, native English speaker even though somebody could be from India and be a native English speaker.
(NorQuest LINC teacher liaison)

The above quote provides an eloquent answer to the question of why, especially in integration educations espousing multicultural and inclusive ideals, the staff “should reflect the student population.” If instructors who are often viewed as the primary representatives of the host nation predominantly represent a certain ethnic, linguistic, or “racial” background, then it is not surprising that those who deviate from this norm are going to be viewed as atypical or un-Canadian/un-Finnish. The statement perceptively reveals how white social framing is perpetuated and disseminated to students in spite of its absence in institutional discourse. Where “white” is conflated with “native speaker,” migrant learners make the logical deductions as to who is included and excluded by this definition.

The *white social frame* attempts to foreground another background narrative, namely that which reinforces the dominance of whiteness as the interpretive racial frame in structuring inclusion efforts within LINC and SFI. It, even more than *racism's pastness* which was rather actively and consciously absented, truly disappeared within the organizational policies, curricular materials and social contexts of the institutions by its sheer

¹⁰⁷ “has not yet reached that level” (author's translation)

matter-of-factness. In turn, the white social frame conferred a degree of privilege borne of entitlement upon those who were able to disappear within it. As Ahmed (2012, p.181) argues, “perhaps lightness and buoyancy are the effects of privilege – the affective worlds inhabited by those whose bodies don’t weigh them down or hold them up.”

Those whose colour did not “weigh them down” belonged in these affective as well as structural worlds. The ubiquitous and simultaneously insulating aspect of white social framing is that it constituted everyday life within the schools. For the homogenously white staff, belonging in white institutions was simply so natural that it did not have to be thought about. Ole Elgström (2000, p.485) therefore observes that White entitlement and privilege need to “fight their way into institutional thinking” lest they recede into organizational background. In “becoming background”, white privilege comes into view through those institutional practices that have become automatic. The “how we do things here” does not need to be explained; it creates an ease and familiarity in simply being understood (Ahmed 2012).

As the empirical discussion preceding these reflections illustrates, whiteness typically only surfaced when it came up against practices, understandings or bodies that were not and could not be embraced by it. Then, that which was “othered” by it cast a light upon it. Consequently, illuminations of white social framing were only infrequently thrown into sharp relief, which added to its discursive elusiveness. However, it does barge into the picture in the quote on the “Nordic person’s greater versatility,” with its normative implications, and in the colour blindness encapsulated by the statement mocking the educational value of diversity educations. Both, either intentionally or inferentially, lay claim to a “humanity” rooted in the white social frame. In the former example, this humanity is inherently superior, while in the latter it is universal. Thus, whiteness remains unseen, becomes reified and reproduced as the unmarked mark of the human (Dyer 1997). The example of the *kotisuomessa.fi* web-based language integration program aptly illustrates what happens when “white” is adopted as an uncontested norm in denoting “Finnishness” and what this communicates to migrant learners about the impossibility of inclusion. Richard Dyer (1997) asserts that whites must be

seen to be white – rather than simply human – with the subjectivities and cultural hierarchies this exposes. And yet the power of whiteness inheres in the fact that those bodies, in this case referring to the teaching and administrative staff, are not seen as white bodies. They are just seen as bodies, individual bodies unbound by racial socialization (DiAngelo 2018). The reality that, much akin to discourses on racism, white social framing often surfaced only when challenged by the Other, is underlined by the interview excerpts on adherences to the Judeo-Christian calendar, and those pointing out the lack of staff diversity. In the former, the statement, “this is basically a Christian country [...] although we are tolerant of other religions,” privileges “we” as white governing subjects while positioning migrant learners as passive objects. “Those in a dominated position do not tolerate, they just endure” (Hage 2000, p.88). Tolerance here entails an acceptance that simultaneously sets limits unilaterally and positions the other within specific boundaries. Allowing white social framing to disappear within institutional practice, as in the above examples, situates civic integrationism as natural and obstructs the more critical conceptions of social inclusion.

The (non)dialogue on staff homogeneity which is thrust into public debate by the LINC minority staff member’s quote, “You know what, it’s very white – I mean VERY WHITE, whoah!” serves as a cogent example of whiteness being invisible only to those not othered by it. It also reveals white social framing as not only restricted to the individual or the personal but embedded in cultural and structural levels within institutions. In “naming” a lack of diversity, the staffer essentially names White entitlement. This fact undermines the myth of “sameness” encapsulated in affirmations of equality and tolerance serving as foundational pillars of the education, “even as their actions reflect the primacy of whiteness” (hooks 1992, p.167). In challenging this lack of diversity, the staffer “comes up against the wall” of the institution:

To those who do not come up against it, the wall does not appear – the institution is lived and experienced as being open, committed and diverse [...] When you don’t quite inhabit the norms, or aim to transform them, you notice them as you come up against them. (Ahmed 2012, p.174)

The institutional whiteness implicated here is not accidental but is reproduced through decisions made over time which shape institutional spaces. These create the idea of an institution that allows some bodies to move with ease within that space and to inhabit that space as home. Such bodies inhabit more space. Ahmed (2012, p.33) postulates that although institutions might not have an intrinsic “white” character, they are given character partly by “being given a face.” The question as to what message is communicated by this face in being turned towards migrant learners, remains largely unaddressed in discussions on student inclusion in LINC and SFI. The demand that staff compositions should approximate that of the student population is relevant in this context. If only whites are seen to speak or to define the parameters of discussions on integration or inclusion, this reaffirms their entitled position (Leonardo 2009). The ability to determine which narratives are authorized and which are suppressed is the concrete expression of a privilege founded upon an entrenched sense of “governmental belonging.” Karl Kitching (2011, p.172) argues that pedagogically and politically, it is essential to include forms of knowledge, experience and resilience of racialized groups “within historically and contemporarily limited structures of opportunity.” These are forms that white institutions simply cannot access or reproduce. Without the attendant structural changes required to interrogate institutional privilege and white social framing – aided by the recruitment of racially different staff – white institutions cannot refute their own whiteness, nor can they overcome it (Leonardo 2009, Jeyasingham 2012).

This was a realization shared by program developers at Dalhousie University’s Maritime College in aiming to realign their social work education with anti-oppressive principles. In promoting staff diversity to “include” all program participants, notably students from minority backgrounds, they created a designated hiring policy targeting non-white educators as part of larger diversity schemes. They also introduced support mechanisms to assist minority faculty in undertaking further studies as well as addressing institutional barriers to employment (MacDonald et.al 2003). In rebutting the meritocracy argument of “we hire the best,” there is a recognition in The Maritime School’s AOP realignment of the colour blindness that underpins such justifications. Meritocracy justifications overlook that individuals or groups with histories of racialization and

marginalization often do not have the same educational opportunities, resources or access to social networks (Malik 1996). In the documented “through the grapevine” hiring practices at LINC and SFI, whiteness is inadvertently reaffirmed as a position of structural advantage in which narratives of individualism and meritocracy justify one’s own position and that of racially different others. Statements such as “we hire the best” or “they just don’t apply” mask the subjectivities upon which this structural advantage is built and allow well-intentioned people to maintain a positive self-image (DiAngelo 2018).

It is interesting that even when the lack of staff diversity was acknowledged, as in the “we need at least one Muslim in the mix” quote by the LINC teacher, this illuminates some of the inclusion/exclusion facing minority educators as well as the accompanying liminal spaces reserved for them. It emphasizes what “we” – namely white staff – value. Hage (2000, p.139) contends that arguments such as; “we appreciate ‘diversity,’ or ‘we value ethnic contributions’, create a gulf between the ‘we’ and that which is appreciated and valued.” In so doing, they preclude the egalitarianism and horizontal power hierarchies of Transformation Inclusion. The liminal position accorded to minority teachers, is that they are welcomed on certain conditions, in the above case by being “diverse/Muslim” and allowing institutions to celebrate their diversity. The expectation is that they return this hospitality by integrating into a common institutional culture (Ahmed 2012). While the LINC instructor recognizes the limitations of white staff homogeneity in connecting with Muslim students and demonstrates agency in wishing to recruit at least one Muslim staffer, the hesitancy with which these overtures are met is quite natural. Puwar (2004) addresses how non-white bodies can feel out of place within those spaces in which white bodies are the *somatic norms*. This is confirmed by a study of second- and third-generation South Asian Muslim women’s views about wearing a head scarf in white spaces. They speak about feelings of causing offence by veiling in being exposed to the white Western gaze (Penketh 2013). In the case of the Muslim educator who was being recruited, she would, by “adding colour to the white face of the institution, confirm the whiteness of that face” (Ahmed 2012, p.151). This spells out the fractured, tangled positions of non-white staff in white institutions, as the “I want a Canadian teacher” quote so vividly elucidates. It confirms that as subjects-in-discourse, white

and minority teachers are differentially situated, the latter being racialized and marked as immigrants or non-native speakers (Morgan & Ramanathan 2005). Their otherness from the norm – the norm of those who are “native” and seen to belong – is effectively communicated to students without whiteness ever having to be explicitly mentioned.

One aspect that the above examples of white social framing also demonstrate is that adding “difference” to a learning environment does not necessarily have to result in changing teaching and institutional practices. Kumashiro (2001) postulates that perhaps white institutions gravitate to methodologies of teaching and learning that seem to affirm that that which is perceived as normal or commonsensical in society is the way things really are and are supposed to be. The alternative of seeing themselves as white, entitled and their perceptions of normalcy as “coloured” and maintained through the othering of narratives in which they are complicit, can be troubling. Therefore, in interrogating the white social frame, a *double turn* (Ahmed 2004, p.59) is required:

To turn towards whiteness is to turn towards and away from those bodies who have been afforded agency and mobility by such privilege. In other words, the task for white subjects would be to stay implicated in what they critique, but in turning towards their role and responsibility [...] to turn away from themselves, and towards others.

Firstly, the double turn entails naming and thus “turning towards” white entitlement as that which enables yet simultaneously obscures whiteness in the integration educations. Secondly, recognition and naming must be supported by an ongoing performativity of measures aimed at addressing entitlement and transgressing white social framing at the personal level of critical reflection, in curricular implementation and in transforming organizational structures and procedures (Kitching 2011). “Staying implicated” means that the process of change is continuous and never complete lest institutions deem mere recognition sufficient and equate it with “having dealt with” and “being over” white social framing. Lastly, changing the white social frame requires “turning towards others”, such as racialized minorities, and working with them in deconstructing white entitlement. As the empirical examples from the three case study educations demonstrate, even though white social framing represented a

(Colour) Blind Spot, it tangibly shaped and circumscribed efforts at social inclusion of both migrant students and staff by becoming institutional background.

7.3.3 LANGUAGE IMPLICITNESS

It might seem ironic to claim that *Language Implicitness* constitutes a nameless narrative given that the *raison d'être* of LINC and SFI revolves around just that, language – a fact even confirmed by program titles. Quite rightly, curricular and pedagogical discourses are replete with references to language acquisition, language competence, language learning benchmarks and language skills.¹⁰⁸ However, these discourses stop short of interrogating the underlying assumptions upon which views of language competence and language hierarchies are based and how these can serve to include or “other” migrant learners in the process of language learning. How inclusive interpretations of the role of language(s) in learning are speaks volumes about how inclusion is viewed and what types of spaces this opens up for migrant learners. In exploring these inclusions, the absence of *Language Implicitness* from discourse reveals similar essentialist and normative subtexts that were also at the root of discussions on racism and white social framing being diminished in LINC and SFI. These subtexts reveal what lies beneath, – what is implied – when speaking of the role of language and language perfection. When is one’s mastery of the host language considered “good enough” to be considered “included”? How is “perfection” defined, and who defines it?

An observable trend when these questions were addressed – often indirectly – was that it juxtaposed two very different positions. The first more essentialist standpoint stressed the universal norms of grammatical and phonological accuracy, while the second differentialist approach advocated a multitudinous interpretation of “competence” that rested upon a plurality of norms. The essentialist position strove for a sameness of norms defined by the few, while the differentialist perspective was predicated upon norm diversity involving the voices of the many. An example of this type of differentialism as a foundation for “language

¹⁰⁸ reading, writing, speaking, and listening

perfection” is encapsulated by this LINC student’s pluralist view of language learning within the program:

When you study in multicultural groups you improve your skills especially in language [...] and it is good that it is not the same pronunciation and here you catch all [types of] pronunciations. And I think Canada is multicultural and you have to know the [different] pronunciations. (LINC CLB 5 student)

In laying claim to the anti-essentialist substance contained within official narratives on Canadian multiculturalism, the student emphasizes the value of learning different pronunciations and dialects as a necessary prerequisite for social inclusion. Here, the universality of competence norms is questioned.

However, this astute acknowledgement of the vicissitudes of multi-linguistic landscapes, while problematizing the striving for “perfection” in language learning, was not without its detractors. Comments from both teachers and students within the programs attest to the existence of essentialist norms buttressing views defining host language perfection. The following quote, in which a teacher seeks to dissuade parents from practicing English with their children to prevent them from adopting “wrong” ways of speaking, illustrates such views:

A lot of students think; I should be speaking English at home to practice with my children. Well I say, all you’re going to be teaching them is to speak bad English [laughs]. One of them said, “Yeah well I get my kids to teach me English.” I said, “Well that’s not good because you are still not using perfect English with them. They are going to get perfect English from their Canadian playmates and classmates. If you are going to come in with your broken English, you are going to disturb how they learn English.” (NorQuest LINC teacher)

“Perfect English” in this context is associated with being “Canadian”, which disqualifies and stigmatizes migrant students whose English is described as “bad” and “broken.” Practicing such English at home “disturbs” the perfect English their children are learning from Canadian playmates and is thus discouraged. In equating language perfection with being Canadian, the quote not only communicates something significant about what language competence norms are, but also who is entitled to set

Empirical Findings

them. Although, these universalist sentiments were not unequivocally shared by other staff, the crux of this message was noticed by students nonetheless. As this LINC learner states:

They take teachers with Canadian accents and this is good when you want to learn English it is important that you have to hear the “right” English, how it is supposed to be, because sometimes immigrants came here who were teachers back home and knew English perfectly, but they have terrible accents. This is bad for students when they learn the accents. This is good at Westmount campus because all teachers are without accents and this is really clear.
(NorQuest LINC CLB6 student)

The concept of the “right” language referred to in this excerpt is expanded to include not only those who know the language “perfectly well,” but also those who are unencumbered by accents. The migrant student therefore commends hiring policies at LINC because NorQuest employs “accent-free” educators, “free” being equated with “Canadian.” White social framing in staff recruitment and language perfection complement and mutually support each other in creating inclusions and exclusions in this example. Language perfection becomes the intersection that positions migrant students in liminal spaces between belonging and othering.

However, there were also educators who were conscious of the dangers of subsuming “perfection” within linguistically and culturally essentialist norms. In the following quote, an Arbis tutor reflects upon the previously alluded to exclusionary effects of striving for language perfection that are, often inadvertently, sutured to the cultural norms of the majority:

Arbis har som ett av sina viktigaste syften ”att fortsätta och upprätthålla den goda svenskan” [skratt]. Jag kommer inte ihåg hur det är formulerad men det här med den finlandssvenska kulturen och sen språket på nåt sätt som ”rent och pure.” Alltså jag förstår det men samtidigt exkluderar det också. Om man har en idealtanke om hur ”ren” svenskan ska vara, det kan alltid vara farligt

fast man vet orsaken till varför man vill sträva efter det. Det är jätteparadoxalt. (Arbis SFI tutor)¹⁰⁹

The tutor points to the paradoxical position of fostering language purity – for the Finland-Swedish minority the maintenance of a vibrant, living Swedish is deemed indispensable for survival – and the possible exclusionary effects such an emphasis also brings in its wake. Given that all SFI teachers at Arbis were white and from Finland-Swedish backgrounds, it is more than a tenuous link that language purity then becomes affiliated with that particular ethnic or culturally dominant group. Another lecturer from Medis SFI echoed the idea that solely employing native speakers for their language perfection can also have its drawbacks. As the latter may not have an appreciation of the process of acquiring Swedish as a second-language, they may therefore be estranged from the specific learning challenges that face their students, whereas teachers who themselves identify as second language learners might be more competent in addressing these challenges. The teacher joked wryly, ”det har jag reflekterat mycket över nu, finns perfektion eller bara grader av perfektionism?”¹¹⁰ The subjectivity of perfection referred to as perfectionism by this staffer is laughingly echoed by a LINC instructor and native speaker in reflecting on his/her own teaching experience abroad: “a family member of one of my students came to visit and asked her parents, where is your child learning this horrible English? They said, oh, she has a Canadian teacher. Well that explains it!” Other teachers and students critiqued another guise of perfectionism, namely a predominating grammar focus at the expense of spoken language practice. Grammar correctness, they argued, stunted expression and created students afraid to verbalize the second language lest their speech betrayed “grammatical flaws.” Grammatical perfection thus acted as a hindrance to competence, as this Medis SFI instructor remarks, “Det blir ingenting! Därför att man har hållit på för mycket med

¹⁰⁹ “Arbis has as one of its most important aims “to foster and maintain proper Swedish” [laughter]. I do not remember how it is formulated but this with Finnish-Swedish culture and then language as in some way being “clean and pure.” Now, I understand it but at the same time it excludes as well. If you have an ideal conception of how “pure” Swedish should be, it can always be dangerous even though you understand the reason why one strives for it. It's really paradoxical.” (author's translation)

¹¹⁰ “I have reflected a lot on that now, whether perfection exists or if there are just degrees of perfectionism.” (author's translation)

grammatiken och alla har blivit medvetna om att 'det blir fel nu' när de ska prata."¹¹¹

Language Implicitness, in addition to uncovering the essentialist assumptions supporting views on language competence vis-a-vis "perfection," also found its expression in the language hierarchies of the classroom and how these either included or othered migrant learners. It became clear from participant observations and to a lesser degree from interviews that there were differences in the way language pluralities were managed, and in the pre-eminence accorded to the host language in classroom interactions. These differences could vary from teacher to teacher but also depended upon the policies and guidelines set by program administrators. For instance, at Medis, administrative policy mandated that only Swedish was to be used in SFI teaching and classroom interactions. While this was more or less strictly interpreted by individual educators, they were aware of its import, as were Medis students, illustrated by the following observation log entry:

Next, we have a listening comprehension piece called "friluftsdag"¹¹² and again students are admonished not use their own language to discuss the text. I am surprised when even my neighbour admonishes "Jamila" not to speak Arabic with "Nizar" in clarifying some meaning. (Medis Observation log 13.10.2016)

This strictness, which also served as an underlying reason for the inflammatory nature of the case of Elena and Andrei (see pp.155-157), consciously censored "foreign" language use as disruptive to Swedish language acquisition and made other students complicit in its enforcement. In part, it was adopted as a way of mitigating the spread of English as a *lingua franca* within the classroom and an attempt at creating a level playing field for all language learners, something which the next log entry reflects upon:

¹¹¹ "It will come to nothing! Because they have been too preoccupied with grammar and everyone has become aware that 'it will be wrong now' when they talk." (author's translation)

¹¹² "Field day"

Students in “Erna’s” class use English more than in “Tove’s” in communicating with each other and for many, English is far stronger than Swedish. This again raises the issue of the place of English in facilitating understanding. The argument against its use is that it discriminates against those who do not speak English and thus in having a Swedish-only policy one affirms a policy of equality [...] The question is if equality, here interpreted as sameness, could also be maintained through differential, individualized treatment? (Medis Observation log 19.10.2016)

The question raised above asks if the policy’s well-meaning paternalism of not wishing to discriminate, discriminates nonetheless because it excludes other languages and subsequently forms of expression of migrant learners. In interpreting sameness as equality, it entrenches language hierarchies and moves away from differential student-centered pedagogies. While Medis policy consciously excluded other vernaculars in host language acquisition, there were ways in which this also happened subconsciously, as demonstrated by the case of French-speaking migrant students within LINC. Many of these were native French speakers who had originally immigrated to Quebec but subsequently moved to Alberta in search of employment. They had enrolled in LINC to help them gain the necessary English competence. It was interesting then, that although Edmonton had a thriving francophone community with a sustaining infrastructure including daycare facilities, cultural centers, businesses and several French faculties within the University of Alberta, work internships within these francophone institutions were not on offer for LINC students. The program’s singular English language focus revealed a blind spot in inadvertently blinkering bilingual solutions:

One student added that she would be happy if the range of practice placement choices would also include “French placements” as she would like to work in that language in future. (NorQuest LINC Observation log 14.8.2015)

By contrast, language hierarchies and the consequent roles languages were assigned in the classroom could also be reimagined and deconstructed. Instead of viewing “foreign” vocabularies as hindrances, there were individual teachers within all programs who built upon migrant students’ native languages, using them as resources and cognitive scaffolds in supporting second language acquisition. Some utilized their own

multilingualism in order to create “bridges of meaning.” In the following example, this Medis teacher – in contravention of policy – exercises his/her own linguistic diversity in transforming the classroom into a multilingual space:

Ibland kommer sådana ord som de inte hittar i sina ordböcker och då brukar jag säga vad det heter på engelska, tyska och på finska om jag vet. Nu har jag en flicka från Estland och om jag säger det på finska då förstår hon och en rumän som har bott i Tyskland kan ha hjälp av tysk grammatik, då stöder jag honom. Engelska förstås, det har ju många läst och så brukar jag också använda klassiskt latin. För rumänerna, är det ju ett dotterspråk, och nu har jag också en flicka som talar portugisiska. Om jag säger det på latin blir alla de jättegglada för då förstår de och det är nästan som att jag översatte det till deras språk. Man planterar små ord och uttryck och jag är alltid ärligt med att jag kan inte översätta till alla era språk. Det kräver ändå inte så stor ansträngning. Det tar lite tid av lektionen men det tycker jag att det ska få göra. Jag har haft sådana som kunde spanska, brasilianare som pratade portugisiska och nästan alltid när man kan hänvisa till latin så då trillar polletten. Det är jätteroligt fast jag inte kan, eller har läst deras språk. Jag ser inget fel i varför jag skulle inte göra det. (Medis SFI teacher)¹¹³

As this teacher points out, the effort involved in this type plurilingual teaching is minimal and the time allotted worthwhile because it allows for reciprocal recognition and facilitates the ease of language acquisition. I observed similar experiments by instructors at Arbis and NorQuest whereby making references to students’ native vernaculars served as aids in

¹¹³ “Sometimes there are words that they don't find in their dictionaries and then I usually say what it means in English, German and in Finnish, if I know. Now I have a girl from Estonia and if I say it in Finnish then she understands and a Romanian who has lived in Germany may find German grammar helpful, then I support him. English of course, many have studied it and so I also use classical Latin. For Romanians, it's a daughter language, and now I also have a girl who speaks Portuguese. If I say it in Latin, all of them are very happy because then they understand and it's almost like I translated it into their own language. You plant small words and phrases and I am always honest that I cannot translate into all of your languages. It does not, however, require so much effort. It takes a little time from the lesson, but I think it should do. I have had those who knew Spanish, Brazilians who spoke Portuguese and almost always when you can refer to Latin, the penny drops. It is great fun even though I do not speak or have read their language. I see nothing wrong in why I shouldn't do it.” (author's translation)

language learning with the classroom becoming more of a polyglot of tongues rather than simply host language acquisition.

This differentialist approach involving the voices of the many, is predicated upon a pragmatism in language learning where views on language and its utility are negotiated instead of being based on the normative subtexts of majorities. This pragmatism was of special significance in the case of the minority language program at Arbis. The fact that migrant students, in choosing Swedish as their integration language, had to overcome sometimes pervasive structural discrimination meant that they enacted their political agency based on conflicting perceptions from those of the majority as to what the role of language in furthering integration could or should be. Justifications for their choices positioned them far beyond the bordered nationalism of traditional integration regimes. As this integration coordinator explains,

Jag tycker att det är helt korkat att inte utnyttja det faktumet att jättemånga, speciellt av våra Arbis studeranden ser ju Skandinavien som en enda stor grej. Det är inte bara Finland och det tycker jag är fiffigt och vettigt och det är så vi ska se det. Jag tycker också att det argument jag har fått höra, att varför ska jag läsa finska när det är bara fem miljoner som kan finska, jag har ju mycket mera nytta av svenska, det tycker jag är ett argument som är värt att beakta. (Arbis integration coordinator)¹¹⁴

This quote expresses sentiments embedded in many migrant student narratives on the question of “why Swedish?” In choosing the language, they felt that their opportunities for realizing professional aspirations and gaining employment are exponentially increased as Swedish provides the key to the entire Scandinavian labour market. The coordinator asserts that this is something SFI should take into account and build on. Swedish is hereby posited as the gateway to a particular type of Nordic pluralism which places language competence in a larger context than the more limited Finnish one. This larger context extends spaces of belonging that transcend

¹¹⁴ “I think it is utterly stupid not to take advantage of the fact that many, especially our Arbis students see Scandinavia as one single area. It’s not just Finland, and that I think is smart and sensible. That’s how we should see it. I also think that the argument I’ve heard, why should I read Finnish when only five million can speak Finnish, I have much more benefit from Swedish, I think is an argument worth considering.” (author’s translation)

national borders. It thereby calls into question the normative subtext of integration language learning as a vehicle for inculcating particular forms of national and cultural affiliation. Student pragmatism in claiming that language choices should first and foremost support their personal life projects debunks this. It also challenges the “preordained” antecedence of majorities in deciding the parameters for language integration:

Det är kanske lite vagt som syfte att integreras på svenska men vanliga människor tänker ju inte på NATIONEN, nu är jag i Finland! [...] För de har flyttat till Helsingfors och deras liv finns på olika håll i Europa och överallt. De har inte köpt Finland som projekt! På finskt håll har jag ibland den här känslan att de verkligen säljer Finland som ett projekt. (Arbis SFI teacher)¹¹⁵

The quote acknowledges that SFI students did not choose Swedish as an integration language in order to “buy into the national project,” a recognition of which is also claimed to distinguish SFI from Finnish integration programs. In fact, for many migrants, the choice of minority language was also a political act in opposition to the assimilationist subtext demanding integration in the majority language:

Yeah, they ignore me when I try to speak Swedish. YOU MUST LEARN FINNISH! You need to learn Finnish everybody says, and I don't want to learn Finnish after this. It is oppressive. (Arbis SFI A2 student)

Swedish, for SFI students, became a “way out,” an avenue of exerting their individuality and choice, of safeguarding their agency and self from perceived assimilationist pressures. The emotional engagement and import when they related their reasons for choosing to be integrated as a “minority within a minority” were clear and unambiguous. Here Swedish language learning stood in opposition to majority definitions of the “right” integration language, “right” in this case referring not to language perfection but simply language choice.

¹¹⁵ “It may be a bit of a vague explanation for integrating in Swedish but ordinary people do not think about the NATION, now I am in Finland! [...] Because they have moved to Helsingfors and their lives are found in different parts of Europe and everywhere. They have not bought Finland as a project! On the Finnish side, I sometimes have this feeling that they are really selling Finland as a project.” (author’s translation)

In juxtaposing the subtexts of *Language's Implicitness* – denoting the hidden assumptions underlying views of language competence, language hierarchies and language pragmatism/utility – with theoretical reflections, I will employ Morgan and Ramanathan's (2005) universalist vs. differentialist dichotomy. It helps in verbalizing such nameless narratives, thus denaturalizing dominant cultural codes which shape the inclusion and/or exclusion of migrant learners in the act of language learning. The universalist position in describing language competence, for example, was characterized by views on “perfection” that were aptly illustrated by the LINC teacher's admonitions to students to refrain from practicing their “bad” English at home and the subsequent quote by the LINC student in which the “right English” was equated with a “dialect or accent-free English.” In suturing the “right” language competence to “perfection,” they also suggested the latter is the sole domain of the native speaker. In so doing, they betray who is empowered and privileged by cultural and racial heritage to set language norms, inasmuch as even dialects or accents disqualify others from being able to call themselves competent (Matias et.al 2014, Valluvan 2017) In universalist positionings, white social framing as evident in staff recruitment and composition becomes a natural accompaniment to perfectionist views on language competence. The inclusionality this reveals is that adult migrant students are included in the national body by being invited to learn the national language, yet simultaneously excluded by implying that they may never learn it well enough to truly belong.

Antithetically, the differentialist position on language competence is encapsulated by the LINC student's quote in which s/he identifies dialectical learning as an important inclusion marker and by the Medis and NorQuest teachers' statements comparing “objective” norms for perfection to a kind of subjective perfectionism. In advocating a view of competence that is expansive enough to include the voices, dialects and accents of the many, linguistic differences are made visible. The *audible visibility* through language in this particular case has positive connotations; it becomes inclusive (Toivanen 2014 & Guðjónsdóttir 2014). As Ryuko Kubota (2001) argues, when non-standard varieties of a second language are permitted in the classroom, when they become a natural component of discourse and teaching, then the confidence of language learners is

bolstered and preconceived notions around perfection are challenged. The quotes, “grader av perfektionism”¹¹⁶ and “She has a Canadian teacher, well that explains it!” reflect ideas which link up with Morgan and Ramanathan’s (2005, p.161) proposition of reconceiving English language instruction is a practice where English is viewed as plural (“Englishes”) with diverse and local ways in which it is entrenched, learned, expressed and appropriated. Such a view not only opens up the possibility of conceiving of English, or other languages, as syncretic – creating space for local vernacular codes – but also as languages that bind “diverse periphery and centre communities together” and remold them.

When exploring language hierarchies within SFI and LINC, the universalist vs. differentialist dichotomy also becomes apparent. In elucidating the universalist approach, the “Swedish only policy” of Medis serves as a cogent example. Adopted to mitigate against the spread of English as the *lingua franca* of the integration classroom, and to obviate the formation of ethnic language enclaves its intended aim was anti-discriminatory. However, as pointed out earlier it also had the knock-on effect of excluding other forms of expression of migrant learners. In equating sameness with equality, it reinforced existing stratified language hierarchies. By absenting other languages from the practice of second language acquisition, a license to discriminate was being granted by one’s commitment to work against discrimination (Holmes 2017). Mari Toivanen (2014, p.192) has coined the phrase, *visual lexica of belonging* to denote the role language plays in socially constructing our visual and auditory fields in implying individuals’ (non)belonging and social membership. She argues that what is visible and invisible in these language categorizations communicates what is included – what belongs – and what is excluded. The “Swedish only policy” in rendering other languages “unofficially” invisible in classroom discourse circumscribes such inclusion in a very particular way. In addition, the policy also preempts the kind of “organic integration” envisaged by Hage (2000) in which migrants, by using foreign languages, shape the parameters of host language acquisition. As these parameters are largely unsanctioned, they challenge dominant views on belonging. Thus, the policy may also reflect majority fears of losing control of integration by

¹¹⁶ “degrees of perfectionism”

questioning who decides how the latter will be implemented (Beauzamy & Féron 2012).

The differentialist position, in problematizing language hierarchies' essentialism, is aptly characterized by pedagogies that make use of the language polyglot of the classroom. Foreign vocabularies and language competences are herein viewed as building blocks or frameworks, not only for individualizing or student-centering migrant learners' second language acquisition, but also for mutual recognition (Ganassin & Holmes 2013, Guo 2015). From a Transformation Inclusion perspective, such an approach expands narratives of belonging in recognizing migrants' previous skills and ultimately the value of learning from pre-immigration lives (Kivisto 2015). At the same time, the type of plurilingual teaching demonstrated by the Medis instructor in making use of his/her own multilingualism critically interrogates the assumptions grounding language hierarchies in classroom discourse. It challenges why only certain linguistic expressions should become "audibly visible" (Toivanen 2014).

While the universalist vs. differentialist contestations underlying language "perfection" and language hierarchies reveals something about the taken-for-grantedness inherent in views on how language acquisition should proceed in the classroom, the pragmatism of Arbis SFI students asked more fundamental questions: Can migrants choose their integration language? Can *they* define its usefulness independent of the normative auspices of the majority? In the cases of Medis SFI and NorQuest LINC, language choice – given that these were situated in regions that offered programs exclusively in the majority language, – was simply a "given." There were no options. Therefore, in asking these questions, migrant learners in Helsingfors forced some of the normative assumptions about the role and utility of language in integration to the surface and "came up against the walls" of governmental bureaucracies (Ahmed 2012). The universalist position in this case reflected a paternalism in which majorities position themselves as the sole arbiters in deciding what language would benefit migrants most. The obstreperous attitudes and actions of civil servants witnessed by Arbis learners illustrate the typical responses when this governmental belonging is challenged. Such responses indict a domopolitics oscillating between civic integrationism and assimilationism

where language is conflated with culture in selling the national project (Lentin & Tittle 2011). As Michael Billig (1995) argues in *Banal Nationalism*, the ordinary, perfunctory words of languages are often replete with images of the nation that are always near the surface of contemporary life. In adopting more expansive affiliations with a Nordic pluralism, migrant students pushed back against this bordered nationalism, a nationalism which also straightjacketed Finland-Swedish teachers. The “we know what’s best for migrants” integrationist mindset of authorities, of which Arbis SFI students ran afoul, dictated that instruction in the majority language was taken to be self-evident (De Roo, Braeye & De Moor 2016).

The Nordic pluralism embraced by many Arbis students demonstrates the differentialist position on language pragmatism. It wrests the right of defining the “usefulness” of host language learning out of the hands of entitled majorities and repositions migrant learners at the hub of such decision-making. Language preferences for Arbis students became expressions of personal life choices, as well as forms of resistance to assimilation. As Mari Toivanen writes, (2013, p.33) “Language choices are always embedded in socio-political and cultural contexts and entangled with questions of power and identity.” Therefore, their consideration challenges authorities to be sensitive to the ways in which they legitimize dominant-language regimes while marginalizing or ignoring indigenous and minority languages (May 2011). The dangers of a normative monolingualism is that migrant minorities remain muted, misrepresented and misunderstood. By orchestrating political agency through active, critical engagement, students showed that language is never neutral in debates and struggles over social futures (Belcher 2009). Incidentally, in challenging all that was implied in the paternalist narratives of majorities by selecting the “wrong” language, migrant learners enacted the kind of critical citizenship underpinning implementations of Transformation Inclusion that was not sufficiently embedded in any of the integration educations (Mohanty & Tandon 2006). By acting on the social worlds in which they were embedded purposively through language, students foregrounded the complex micro-operations of power and discourse which are at play in positioning “migrant-objects” (Belcher 2009). Moreover, by strategically performing their racialized categories as “migrant students,” they simultaneously succeeded in expanding and contesting these categories

(Wimmer 2008). In using the liminal position of the migrant-object to their strategic advantage, students influenced their own public in/visibility in becoming empowered subjects (Guðjónsdóttir 2014). Migrant learners consciously adopted the “borderland identity” of a minority within a minority in Finland as a pragmatic strategy of being included in a larger, Scandinavian entity than that prescribed by “the national.” The inclusions revealed in this positioning recognize their personal multi-national, multiplicitous realities which imply that inclusion could not and should not be constricted by, and defined only within, national boundaries.

8 CONCLUSIONS

We try så mycket to integrate and give of ourselves to the community to be THIS [a part of Ålandic society]. Ibland säger jag till min man, "Min kultur försvinner." My culture is so down right now because I have to make a double effort for integration. Jag pratar svenska och måste gå hem och lyssna på nyheterna på svenska. När jag gör någonting är det med den här kulturen. För att integreras måste jag göra det två times. So that's why sometimes we have to take down our cultures. Mine, for example, is disappearing especially since I am the only one on Åland from _____. Sometimes I feel like it is just disappearing inside and it sounds so scary. I have, and love my own identity but our cultural identity, we have to suppress it to take on this culture. (Medis SFI B1student)¹¹⁷

This poignant statement by "Zala," a migrant student from a visible minority background, reflecting her thoughts on integration within and beyond SFI, encapsulates many of the central debates which this thesis has touched upon. It describes the outcomes of colour-blind interpretations of social inclusion within integration regimes whereby diminishing migrant life experiences and competences results in suppressions of identity – of self. Instead of expounding the reciprocal gains of cultural diversity in which new and old seamlessly coalesce – as Zala's language shifts eloquently attest to – it speaks of living with a sense of profound loss as an integration outcome. In so doing, it problematizes civic integrationism's masked assimilation where in order to be considered the "right kind of minority" one does not assert one's difference. In fact, the student's words echo those of Sara Ahmed in *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* (2012, p.156) that "the pressure not to assert your culture is lived as a

¹¹⁷ "We try so much to integrate and give of ourselves to the community to become THIS [a part of Ålandic society]. Sometimes I tell my husband, 'My culture is disappearing.' My culture is so down right now because I have to make a double effort for integration. I speak Swedish and have to go home and listen to the news in Swedish. When I do something, it is with this culture. To be integrated, I have to do it twice. So that's why sometimes we have to take down our cultures. Mine, for example, is disappearing especially since I am the only one on Åland from _____. Sometimes I feel like it's just disappearing inside and it sounds so scary. I have, and love my own identity but our cultural identity, we have to suppress it to take on this culture." (author's translation)

demand to pass and integrate.” The excerpt also unequivocally illustrates the sense of being “in limbo” that characterize the lives of many adult migrants in LINC and SFI. Their liminal positioning as migrant learners in integration educations – waiting in the present for their lives to restart, – place them in a specific category that perpetually (re)configures the relationship between inclusion and exclusion. Individual student destinies are shaped by the terms of inclusion that in turn set the parameters of possibility (Back & Sinha 2012).

8.1 RETRACING INCLUSION OUTCOMES

“Zala’s” quote also serves as a fitting introduction to retracing our steps to the research questions which grounded and gave form to this study. In its plurilinguality, and its emotional entanglement, it provides important insights into: 1) how social inclusion was conceived, contested and practiced, 2) how participants experienced social inclusion within programs and, 3) which factors enabled and delimited its introduction into different educational, social and linguistic environments. The quote further hints at the complexity with which inclusion was “performed,” negotiated and lived by participants in the case studies, as well as the liminal positionings it gave rise to in the wake of inclusion outcomes. By asserting that “to take on this culture,” migrant learners are forced to suppress their own culture, “Zala” alludes to the implicit nature of inclusion as a kind of governance. It represents a process of bringing those who have been named as “strangers” into the nation, as well as turning these strangers into subjects, who in being included are induced to consent to the terms of inclusion (Ahmed 2012). In the following discussion, I revisit the first two research questions by reflecting upon inclusion outcomes encapsulated in the three main themes, while subsection 8.2 discusses research question three, namely inclusion’s enabling and delimiting factors bridging the contrasting case study environments.

Inclusion within the Walls, by examining the institutional practices which reified social inclusion within LINC and SFI, introduced inclusion outcomes that were to characterize subsequent themes. *Cultural Accommodation Practices and Teaching “Culture,”* for example, demonstrated whose voices carried

Conclusions

more weight in the way inclusion was practiced and how these power hierarchies defined migrant learners' liminality. A palatable "spirit of goodwill and compromise" on the part of staff and administrators consistently competed with issues of power and control. This entailed that negotiations on the more egalitarian conceptions of inclusion, reimagined in Transformation Inclusion, often stranded on the shore of fears – of cultural relativism – as expressed in the LINC educator's words, "sometimes I get the feeling here with multiculturalism that it has gone overboard where we have no right to say that this is a norm here." More to the point, negotiations were shaped by worries about forfeiting governmental belonging should the "can of worms" of Transformation Inclusion be opened up. This was especially noticeable in cases such as Andrei and Elena's, where divergent expressions of migrant critical agency challenging existing power structures were personalized or "culturalized," and thus explained by pointing to certain migrant cultural "deficiencies." Therefore, the disruptive potential of reciprocal learning, as espoused by Kevin Kumashiro (2001), which is predicated upon power sharing and exploring mutual vulnerabilities, remained underutilized within the integration programs. It is also worth examining if the prevalent apoliticized language focus engendered a learning culture that precluded critical expressions of joint agency involving students and staff in addressing social inequalities.

Inclusion beyond the walls, exploring the dialectic between integration educations and wider society, was prefaced by the shared awareness among program contributors that pursuing the "full" participation of migrant learners necessitated robust societal engagements. In practice and migrant experience, however, the nature of this engagement subsumed its own inclusions. In some areas, such as the arrangement of visits and civic internships, the schools could influence the parameters of inclusion and exclusion by demanding reciprocal organizational changes as the foundation for such endeavours. These had the potential of transforming the roles of migrant learners from passive cultural consumers to active co-creators. In other areas, such as prevalent social climates, external funding requirements or governmental policies disadvantaging migrant students (e.g. low social assistance levels, and family reunification statutes), the educations' change agency was much more limited. These structural factors

resulted not only in migrant students' more permanent disenfranchisement, but they also circumscribed the lives and agency of part-time teachers. Austerity measures, effectiveness criteria and inflexible funding structures disabled the participationist focus of more egalitarian conceptions of inclusion (Askonas & Stewart 2000). A related observation common to all programs was that the reciprocal role societal stakeholders should play in (re)forming the educations remained largely unclear. Simply put, institutional participation with public organizations and employers was in great demand but the conceptual and practical changes this demanded from all involved parties were not addressed in detail. The revolutionary import, were such a process initiated, would include the risk that the outcomes of inclusion resemble something completely unexpected. It is this risk of transforming into something new, of sharing power and abdicating control, that current efforts to build societal partnerships would need to embrace more fully if *Inclusion beyond the walls* were to encapsulate the ideals of Transformation Inclusion.

In the theme, *(Colour) Blind Spots*, a common denominator linking *Racism's "Pastness"*, *White Social Framing* and *Language Implicitness*, is that their naming required the majority gaze to be turned inwards in line with the ideals subsumed under the rhetorical construct of Transposition Inclusion. Generally, topics of race, whiteness and language hegemonies only surfaced when they intersected practices, understandings or bodies that could not be embraced by these taken-for-granted assumptions. However, by generally failing to engage in their discussion, clear messages were nonetheless communicated to migrant learners, as the debates about the "right" language illustrate, while staff missed opportunities for joint agency and reciprocal learning. Omission also betrayed who was entitled, and privileged by cultural and racial heritage, to set the norms for how inclusion is "performed." Diffuse exhortations for tolerance and respect, as substitutes for or pre-emptions of interrogations of racism and white privilege, simply maintained the status quo. The inlusional outcomes of *(Colour) Blind Spots* were that they either circumscribed or invalidated migrant experiences while subordinating them within an institutionally white social frame. The discursive silences, however, were not absolute as the "disruptive" examples of staff and students contesting race, whiteness and language's implicitness demonstrated. By *naming* racism as "the big

elephant in the room,” migrants and teachers jointly challenged whose definition counts and whose voices predominate in racism debates (Tittle 2019). By *naming* whiteness in referring to the white face of institutions, cogent questions were raised as to whether staff compositions ought to reflect the racial composition of the student body and whether white colour homogeneity impeded migrant inclusion. By *naming* language hegemonies, the right of adjudicating over language choices and their utility as the domain of entitled majorities was resisted by migrant learners whose personal life choices and critical citizenship practices took center stage in decision-making. What these discursive disruptions have in common is that they challenge the essentialist, culturalist normativity underpinning and legitimizing the silences. Embedding issues of race more centrally in curricula, retooling staffing criteria to address white social framing, promoting plurilingualism in language acquisition, and reimagining inclusion as transcending national boundaries by recognizing migrants’ transnational realities, are some examples of how this can be done.

The findings showed, in mirroring the complexity implied by “Zala’s” quote, that the manner in which inclusion was conceived within the educations was far from uniform or straightforward. Its negotiations revealed the presence of widely contradictory and conflicted responses. Moreover, it was often unrehearsed and issue bound. The conclusions also demonstrate that how inclusion was framed oscillated between civic integrationism’s essentialism which seeks to inculcate a “coherent” national narrative, and Transformation Inclusion’s more “incoherent” egalitarian interpretations, all of which played out within areas of tension (Terhart & von Dewitz 2018).

8.2 FACTORS INFLUENCING MIGRANT SOCIAL INCLUSION

It is with reference to how inclusion “played out” that certain enabling or disabling factors emerged in answer to the third research question, as well as the effects these had on positioning migrant learners. Where on the

essentialist vs. anti-essentialist continuum inclusion efforts landed depended upon the complex interplay of personal, cultural and structural determinants which served to either obstruct or facilitate Transformation and Transposition Inclusion's more critical interpretations.

As a way of framing the discussion, I will briefly comment on the singularities of the national contexts within these integration educations were embedded that inscribed the potential of entrenching critical social inclusion. Before beginning my research, I had expected that NorQuest LINC would serve as an emulative model when it came to how "inclusion should be done." I imagined that Canada's long experience with immigration and integration policies, favourably based upon a multiculturalist foundation, would signal that one had come further along "inclusion road" than the Finnish SFI educations, given their relatively recent inception and limited engagements with immigration. It was therefore surprising, that although distinct differences in program formulations and inclusion practices existed, these were less pronounced and certainly less qualitative than I had expected. Granted, NorQuest had access to a resource base both in terms of staff and educational possibilities that Medis and Arbis simply lacked. This lent the program a certain stature and academic standing engendering a sense of permanence and security not similarly afforded to the SFI programs. Perhaps the most distinguishing difference, however, was the general societal preparedness for inclusion predicated upon cultural diversity being a "lived" social reality in Canada. This generated a cognitive and structural readiness for working pragmatically with questions of migrant education and employment but without the self-fulfilling unfulfillment of migration debates characterizing Finnish social and political discourses where such issues are culturalized as "immigrant" instead of "societal" problems (Hage 2000).

In the quotidian interactions within classrooms or schools, however, implementations of social inclusion in LINC and SFI shared many similarities. The same spirit of teacher commitment, of "wanting to do right by" migrant students, alternated with demands to demonstrate governmental belonging. The predominant language focus structured around grammar and oral exercises lent a common rhythm to days spent in integration classrooms. Similar discourses on race and white social framing

Conclusions

were absent. Myths about Canada's egalitarian multiculturalism as the essentialist narrative were one reason these issues were prevented from surfacing, while in Finland such essentialisms were rooted in myths of national and/or cultural homogeneity. However, straightforward cultural transmissions were equally conflicted in both educational contexts. In LINC, the ideal of Canada's cultural mosaic and the subsequent elusiveness of Canadian identity frustrated efforts of teaching a coherent culture. In SFI, the minority position of the programs, both linguistically and ethnically, within the national context and their Pan-Scandinavian attachments muddled self-evident cultural narratives. Nevertheless, despite the seeming adoption of more fluid and multifarious perspectives on national culture, it is notable that this did not translate into curricula or pedagogical practices embodying a critical citizenship foundation. In fact, all three programs espoused liberal values as national values, these serving as boundary mechanisms in "excluding to include" migrant learners. This may help to explain why similarities in conceptualizing and implementing social inclusion outweighed ideological or other differences. Perhaps the nature of civic integrationism as interpreted within the liberal framework of Western nation states, where "good" migrant citizens are reified by demonstrating language proficiency, filling economic niches and accepting said canon of liberal values, speaks for the similitude in inclusion aims and practices in LINC and SFI. Critical social inclusion, by contrast, requires uncoupling ideas of citizenship from specific national, cultural or religious identities in order to challenge hegemonic narratives. This presupposes that incorporating principles of critical social inclusion into different educational, social and linguistic environments must simultaneously transcend such environments in much the same way as liberal values have done. In light of this, the factors outlined below which preclude or promote social inclusion in the integration educations may also be extrapolated to other contexts, thus transcending the singularities and circumscriptions of their school environments.

The first factor addresses contradictions that were already embedded within the aims and the titles of integration education programs, as encapsulated by the admission of the Medis SFI teacher, "det är ingen här

som kallar det för integrationsprogram.”¹¹⁸ Programs in which integration was myopically equated with host country language acquisition often lost sight of the breadth and depth – the “real life” focus – that broader civic inclusion demanded. This was particularly noticeable in educations where language textbooks dictated curricular parameters. The prevalent view embedded in these instructional materials was that language teaching was rote and value neutral, a view contested in *Language Implicitness*. When this was sutured to a discursive discrimination (Boréus 2006) corroborated by the clear imbalance between nationally-focused vs. globally-focused curricular materials highlighting cultural diversity and migrants’ own experiences, the import of Transformation Inclusion’s focus on reciprocal, or bi-directional learning was easily missed (Ennser-Kananen & Pettitt 2017). In contrast, where mandates of integration educations expanded to give equal weight to inclusion in “real life,” exemplified by student-tailored work-life internships, extensive institutional supports including social workers and employment counselors, as well as broad networks with community stakeholders, such a focus could be realized. All three programs would benefit from the creation of more of these types of “spaces for transformative learning” in which the contributions of educational stakeholders are shared in reimagining curricular aims and contents as well as institutional procedures (Guo 2015).

However, such egalitarian strivings intersected with the second factor, namely that of prevailing power and racial hierarchies aptly subsumed under Hage’s (2000) concept of “governmental belonging”. The pivotal question articulated here was: Who is empowered to preside over the shape of inclusion within LINC or SFI? In answering this query, issues of control, voice and “white worries” were actively debated in the findings. Transformation Inclusion’s “parity of participation” ideal challenged the traditional roles of teachers and administrators as the sole arbiters in distinguishing “good” from “bad” inclusion. Where governmental belonging was justified within an integrationist normative narrative (as in, aren’t we supposed to teach them how to live here?) with the corollary refusal to relinquish control, inclusionarities materialized that positioned migrant students as “not too excluded, but not too included either”

¹¹⁸ “no one here calls it an integration program.” (authors’ translation)

Conclusions

(Popkewitz 2009). Hegemonic narratives could be rooted in monocultural but also multicultural essentialisms. In either case, they reinforced existing power hierarchies. By and large, inclusion within the educations still took place on the terms set by majorities, where allowances made could also be rescinded and degrees of migrant participation and self-determination operated within the boundaries set by staff, administrators and other public authorities. The parity of participation ideal became a useful benchmark in demonstrating how certain program incarnations obstructed the move from an integrationist to an inclusive framework (Hick & Thomas 2009). However, there were also a myriad of examples in the findings where “common sense” views of culture, learning and integration were disarticulated to challenge the racial normativity of governmental belonging. These are exemplified by Arbis’ tutor-student partnerships in personalizing learning, the physical transformation of SFI and LINC learning spaces to reflect cultural and religious diversity, NorQuest’s immigrant strategy, and other co-created teaching and learning pedagogies. Such disruptions simultaneously attested to an openness on personal and structural levels to create horizontal power hierarchies in validating students’ “differential needs” and foregrounding their voices (Hick, Fook & Pozzuto et. al 2005).

Perhaps best elucidated by the theme (*Colour*) *Blind spots*, a third factor influencing where inclusion efforts were positioned concerned the willingness of staff, administrators and other stakeholders to turn the majority gaze inwards, personally, culturally and structurally. It became apparent in this theme as well as in discussions on *Teaching “Culture,” Critical Citizenship* and *Cultural Accommodation Practices* that some of the triggers for an introspection in line with Transposition Inclusion, namely discussions of race and racism as well as white social framing, were largely avoided. Those students or teachers who named “all that was not said” incurred risks. Censures were expressed in defensive teaching and othering. As a result, certain migrant life experiences were absented as unsuitable, and white staff and institutions were recused from being examined (Schinkel 2018). Instead of addressing these “elephants in the room,” program mandates lauded imprecise affirmations of tolerance and respect in seeking to harmonize relations, thus reaffirming the institutions’ “Happiness duty”. This, antithetically, reinforced racial and cultural hegemonies. By

consciously or subconsciously diverting the majority gaze, the assumptions grounding it became institutional background and eluded critical analysis. Despite their general namelessness, the discursive and curricular silences were, at times, noisily interrupted by staff and students in both SFI and LINC. In becoming audibly visible, they forced the gaze to be turned towards white majorities' complicities and entitlements, as the discussion on staff diversity (pp.245-247) illustrates.

A fourth factor, situated largely beyond the auspices and control of individual integration educations, concerns the prevailing social and political climates, in which the schools were embedded. This dialectic between school and society, integral to critical perspectives on social inclusion, was shaped by tangible components such as legislation regulating the accreditation of foreign qualifications, social assistance levels and family reunification, as well as intangibles including how migrant students but also teachers experienced their belonging in the towns and communities in which they lived. Such intangibles are reflected in the statement by the Medis student, "You can learn, have a passport and do what you want, but you will never be an Ålandic person and they are not hiding that," which indicts the xenophobia of majority society (p.233). It is here, in the perceived sense of belonging, that an important difference between NorQuest LINC and the two Finland-Swedish SFI educations could be observed, independent of the variations in social environments and subjectivities. I refer to the taken-for-grantedness of racial and ethnic diversity with which most LINC students and staff referred to life in Canada. As students affirmed, the fact that the constitution of the LINC classroom visibly mirrored the cultural diversity outside of it, supported, at least superficially, feelings of attachment and belonging. Plurality in most occupations and areas of social life was "normal." When one juxtaposes this situation with the social environments within which both SFI educations were embedded, where criteria for belonging were more visibly and audibly imprinted with myths of homogeneity and the social insularity these reproduce, it places not only student narratives but also teacher accounts about othering and exclusion within a more intelligible context. Having said this, when it came to the tangible structural impacts of governmental policies and statutes, including funding criteria and levels with the corresponding occupational precarity for part-time staff, many

Conclusions

similarities across programs emerged. Austerity measures, effectiveness criteria and inflexible funding structures were a recurring reality in both SFI and LINC. Indeed, one could argue that austerity priorities precipitating low tendering did more to placate majority worries than further the inclusion of migrant learners or support a committed teaching staff. In addition, student experiences with family reunification procedures, professional accreditation strictures and social assistance compensations underlined that policymakers in both Finland and Canada need to confront the sociohistorical structures and policies that normalize migrants' social, economic and educational deficits. It appeared from these examples that governmental policies embraced a civic integrationist narrative aimed more at migrant compliance than inclusion and thereby accentuated migrant students' abjection from the social body (Popkewitz 2009).

As a prelude to the last factor, I will return to the quote of an integration coordinator: "vill du verkliigen ha inkludering måste du vara beredd [...] att resultatet blir någonting annat."¹¹⁹ Such transformative inclusion demands a distinctly political positioning reminiscent of Thompson's (2006) call for collective political agency. It requires program participants to jointly reimagine structures within and beyond institutions in a clear performativity of measures in the hope that this leads to shared knowledge and social change (Kitching 2011). Yet this contention that social inclusion necessitates robust expressions of political agency was interpreted and "performed" within the education programs. A general observation derived from the findings was that implementations of LINC and SFI were characterized by a politics of apoliticality (Dorji 2018). One reason for this was rooted in the very nature of integration education aims and curricula. Because these were typically not developed around critical citizenship foundations but instead emphasized more apolitical incarnations of language and cultural learning, they extended limited sanctioned opportunities for teachers and students to collectively challenge social and structural injustices. With few exceptions, such as a collaborative letter writing campaign of Medis staff and students in addressing racism in local media, dialogues deemed politically sensitive were sidestepped. How well-

¹¹⁹ "If you truly want inclusion, you must be prepared [...] that the result will be something else." (author's translation)

entrenched political agency was within the top of administrative hierarchies was also indicative of future change because this set the tone for political positionings down the line. In addition, the liminal position of ethno-cultural associations and migrant learners themselves in shaping educational practice and challenging discrimination impeded collective agency. This begs the question whether the ways in which societal partnerships were envisaged could be complicit in restricting access to channels for joint political agency. At present, political agency often depended upon the individual struggles of migrant learners. A cogent example of this was the pragmatism of Arbis SFI students in opposing the state's language nationalism by suggesting that inclusion should not be constricted by, and defined only within, national boundaries. Language preferences for Arbis students became expressions of personal life choices as well as forms of political agency that tangled patriotic narratives "selling the national project."

8.3 STUDY CONTRIBUTIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study contributes both cogent theoretical perspectives and practical foundations to discourses and methodologies on the social inclusion of adult migrants not only within the fields of education and critical social work but also beyond them in contexts where societies engage with or seek to "manage" the migrant Other. One such contribution lies in the benefit of the theoretical framework, created as a rhetorical device to capture and understand the competing conceptions of social inclusion. By arranging these conceptions under the headings of *Participation Inclusion*, *Transformation Inclusion* and *Transposition Inclusion* and in juxtaposing them with *Integration*, this framework throws their similarities and dissimilarities into sharper relief. Though concept boundaries appear more distinct than their quotidian realities, they do allow one to pin down what is meant by the slippery rubrics of inclusion and integration in distinguishing how they are understood and practiced. The promise of this framework is that it can be extrapolated to function as an analytical tool that transcends the cosmetic meaning of labels by examining the substance rather than the form of social inclusion. This is important because changing labels from "integration" to

Conclusions

“inclusion,” for example, can be employed as a type of “overing” without substantially reconstructing the continuum of positions that connects migrants and majorities.

It is precisely this focus on content and process which brings me to another of the thesis’ contributions, namely the concept of *Inclusectionalities*. Inclusectionalities illuminate the intersections of belonging and non-belonging produced by inclusion processes that migrant learners enter and exit during their educational journeys. It affirms that all measures intended to “include” have the capacity for generating exclusionary outcomes. These measures and their inclusectionalities emanate from the dialectic between the visible and the invisible, between observable manifestations of social inclusion and the unobservable or hidden personal and institutional positionalities and structural parameters upon which they are founded. How students are positioned depends greatly on who is empowered to determine the shape of inclusion within LINC or SFI. Who serves as an arbiter over which expressions of migrant diversity are judged as beneficial or as obstacles to inclusion is an important component here. In *Inclusectionalities*, this protean interdependency of inclusion and exclusion serves as the point of departure. These two poles are not envisioned as mutually exclusive but represent a continuum. A related theoretical contribution in seeking to move adult migrant inclusion in integration educations “forward” is the use of the intersectional lens of anti-oppressive practice which grounds my research methodology and informs institutional processes of social inclusion. With its focus on structural and social transformation based on social justice principles and horizontal power symmetries, it constitutes a perspective which is not commonly integrated within social work or educational practice in Nordic countries. Consequently, the thesis fills the significant gap in studies employing structural analyses of educational curricula and practices which interrogate the societal and institutional norms that “colour” what is taught and how.

A key discursive and cognitive transposition is the study’s contention that if critical perspectives of social inclusion are to become a lived reality for *all* program participants, then majorities must be subjected to the “integration spotlight.” This contention demands answers to some rather awkward questions such as, “How well integrated into a modern, global

reality of cultural hybridity are teachers and administrators?” and “How culturally diverse are curricula, stakeholder networks and staff compositions?” In this sense, the process of “social becoming” endeavoured by integration education programs applies to all. In order for this formulation of inclusion to become entrenched majorities must relinquish control of unilaterally defining education aims, means, and outcomes. Transposition inclusion necessitates opening up spaces for shared learning and adopting a critical citizenship orientation within LINC and SFI that supports joint political agency in challenging injustices and affecting social transformation.

Lastly, the thesis complements and expands on the currently limited research base exploring migrant integration in Swedish in Finland. It fills a void inasmuch as no previous research has examined the nature and implementation of Swedish language integration programs in an international comparison. Practically speaking, disseminating the study’s findings has already had tangible effects on curricular developments taking place in the three integration educations, as attested to by supplementary work undertaken with NorQuest College, Arbis and Medis.

It is with reference to some of the factors determining the path of inclusion efforts elucidated earlier that ideas for further research can be constructed. For example, the role of structural factors, and by that I refer to legislation, funding requirements, tendering processes and relationships with external stakeholders, could be further explored in seeing how they determine program aims and implementations. In short, how do external strictures define and delimit the parameters and operational spaces of individual programs? A second area would be to examine how citizenship ideals are defined and operationalized within programs? Critical interpretations of citizenship and belonging necessitate a greater political and rights-based emphasis than is the case at present. It would also be enriching to explore some of the more transgressive, disruptive components of anti-racist and anti-oppressive pedagogies. How are these represented and what preconditions must exist for them to take root? This applies equally to avenues for political agency. An additional field for further research concerns the manifestations and outcomes of reciprocal learning as an expression of Transformation Inclusion within integration

Conclusions

education programs, as well as what prerequisites enable their realization. Lastly, it is fascinating to speculate on what would happen to the aims and realizations of integration educations if they were more consciously founded on inclusion ideals encapsulated by Transposition Inclusion. From my point of view, this is perhaps most significant because it delves deeper into topics of race and racism, white social framing and language hierarchies touched upon in *(Colour) Blind spots*. What would happen if you turned up the volume on these discursive and curricular silences?

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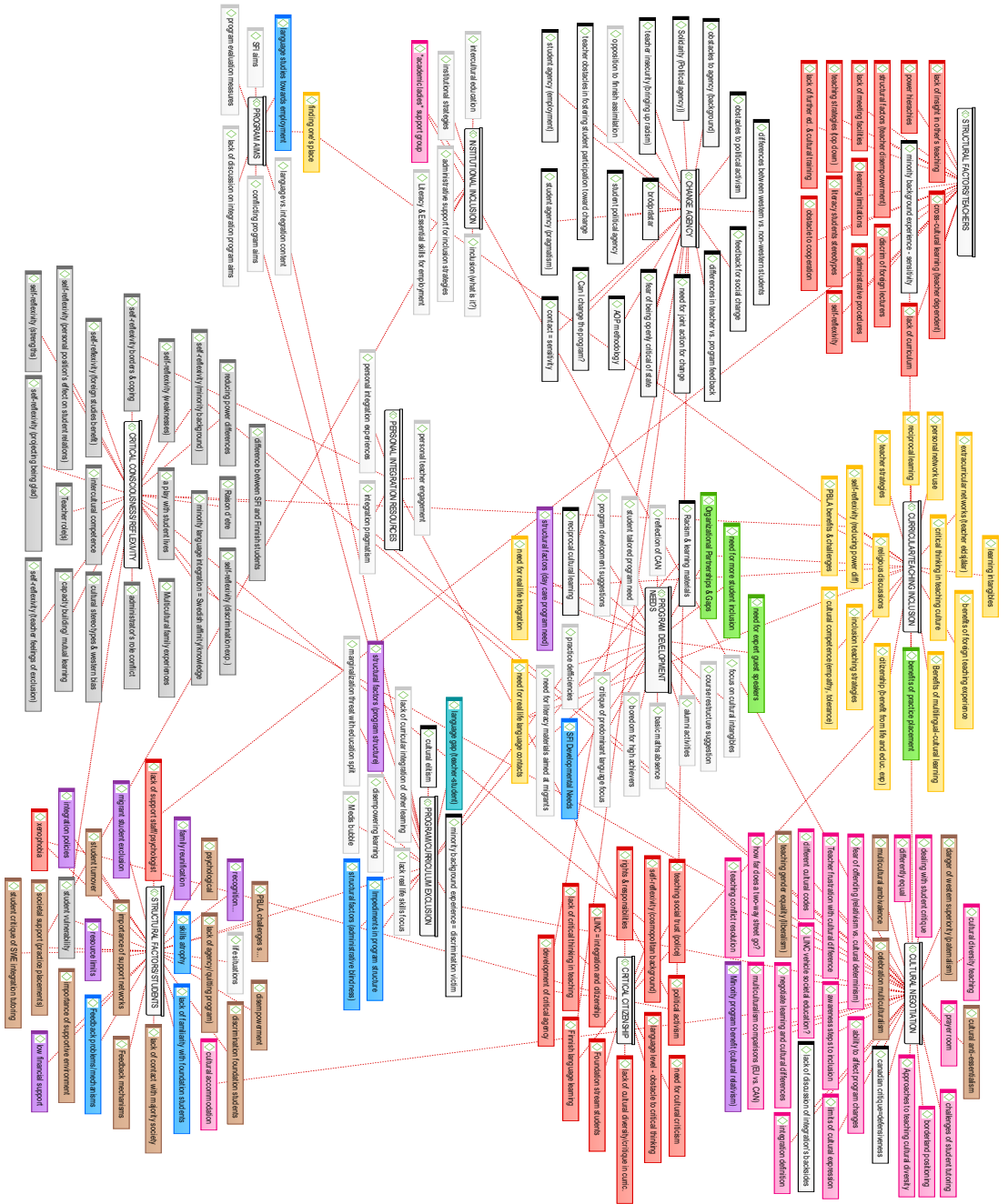
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INCLUSION WITHIN THE WALLS



APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR ADMINISTRATORS & TEACHERS IN INTEGRATION EDUCATION

BACKGROUND

- Can you tell me your name? Age?
- Can you tell me a little bit about your background? (personal history, education)
- Can you tell me about the background (aims & structure) of the integration program?

SELF-REFLEXIVITY

- How do you see your role in the integration program?
- What in your opinion is necessary to work with cultural diversity?
- What are some of your strengths in working cross-culturally? What are some things you would like to develop?
- *How do you feel that your own position in society/personal history affects your interaction with culturally diverse students?*

POWER DYNAMICS

Worker Level:

- What opportunities do you have for affecting changes in the integration program? What changes would you like to see?
- How are faculty and support staff prepared or trained to interact with/teach diverse student groups?
- What is your view on the balance between preparing students to fit into mainstream Finnish/Canadian society while at the same time supporting their own identity, critical thinking?
- Do you sometimes feel powerless in your role as a teacher/administrator? What do you do? Where do you go for support?

Student Level:

- How are students' own needs and experiences reflected in integration curricula?
- What do you do to encourage their feelings of competence and social inclusion?

- *Are topics of racism and discrimination a part of the education? If so, how are they discussed?*
- *What allowances are made for individual differences in e.g. religion, diet, or cultural expression?*
- *How are different learning styles supported in the implementation of the program? in assessment measures?*

- In what ways are students supported in establishing social and/or professional networks?
- What opportunities do students have in affecting changes in the integration program?

PARTNERSHIP & STRUCTURAL FACTORS

- What is the institutional make-up of the teaching and administrative staff?
- How are students and staff recruited for the program?
- What are the administrative commitments for supporting diversity & multiculturalism and how are they seen in daily practice?

- *How do the learning resources (library, texts, computer programs) reflect the diversity of students?*
- *Whose knowledge is reflected in the knowledge base of the program and whose is excluded?*
- *What are your thoughts on positions of privilege and power within the program (i.e. Teacher vs. student, member of dominant society vs. non-dominant group member)*

- What are the existing opportunities for professional cooperation within the institution? How could these be developed?
- Are there policies or practices that actually support institutional discrimination?

Other institutions:

- What contacts do you have with other agencies or organizations? What is the nature of these contacts?
- *In what circumstances are other institutions/representatives involved in decision- making program or program reviews?*
- Who are you not reaching that you would like to?
- What procedures and practices are in place for creating positive relations between school and field placements?

INEQUALITIES & SOCIAL CHANGE

- Are there certain state regulations or laws, which make your work difficult? If so, how do you deal with that?
- Do you feel there are there inequalities in the institution between staff or between staff and students, which should be addressed?
- (Describe one incident which is symbolic about what you value or would like to change in your work)