



Immigrant Inclusion and Belonging through Work Narratives

The knowledge to compete

Ursula Moffitt, University of Potsdam

Luciara Nardon, Carleton University

Vivi (Hui) Zhang, Carleton University

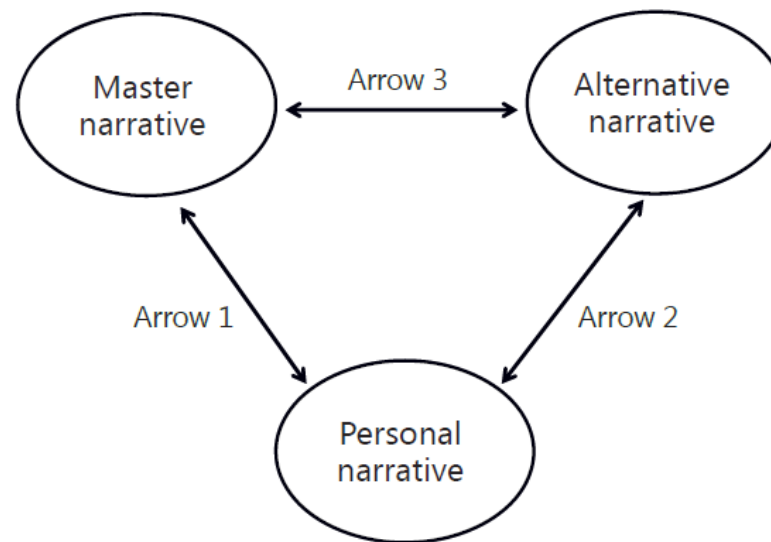


Background

- ✧ Canada and UK are traditional countries of immigration with civic orientations over ethno-cultural notions
 - Greater openness towards immigration
 - Embrace multiculturalism
- ✧ Increasing levels of migration raises questions on immigrant inclusion and belonging
 - Emphasis on the potential economic benefits of immigration
 - Emphasis on labor market participation as a marker of inclusion (Leong, 2014; Andreouli & Dashtipour, 2014)
 - However, significant barriers to employment exist (e.g., credential recognition; local experience, social networks)

Theoretical Framework

- ✧ Migration requires a re-construction of one's autobiography (Macías Gómez-Estern, 2013)
- ✧ A master narrative framework for understanding identity development (McLean & Syed, 2015)
 - Defined as culturally shared stories that guide thoughts, beliefs, values, and behaviors
 - Such identity negotiation is both personal and contextual, with societal norms and expectations playing a role in how individuals see themselves and situate their stories.



Research Question

✧ How do immigrants portray their migration experiences in public narratives?

Research Approach

- ✧ Public narratives collected from two online story archives – Passages Canada and *The Guardian*
 - Immigrants are given public voice (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014)
 - Allow for the non-obtrusive observation of immigrants' experiences without researcher influence (Weber, 1985)
 - Stories are granted social reality, allowing the individual to actively claim the identity being negotiated (Baumeister & Newman, 1994).

- ✧ Grounded theory approach to data analysis

Dataset

382

- Collected public narratives from Canada (282) and UK (100)

266

- Eliminated narratives written in French, individuals that migrated before adulthood, student migrants, object focused narratives, refugees and family migrants

116

- Final Dataset: adult economic migrants
 - 67 female, 44 male, 5 unidentified

Country of origin and destination

Region of Origin	UK	%	Canada	%	Total	%
Asia Pacific	2	6%	17	21%	19	16%
Europe and Central Asia	19	54%	14	17%	33	28%
Latin America and Caribbean	4	11%	21	26%	25	22%
Middle East and North Africa	0	0%	8	10%	8	7%
North America	3	9%	0	0%	3	3%
South Asia	6	17%	16	20%	22	19%
Sub-Saharan Africa	1	3%	5	6%	6	5%
Total	35	100%	81	100%	116	100%

Types of narrative

✦ Career success

- Focus on career
- 53 (46%)

I moved to Britain from Italy in April 2008, and my first job was for the Genetic Interest Group... Then I moved to NHS Protect, the organisation leading the fight against crime and corruption against the ...and stood as an MEP for Labour in 2014, helping my party achieve its best European result in London since 1974... And, in 2012, I received the best personal achievement in the Public Sector Awards for implementing new policies on NHS premises, in partnership with mental health charities... GUKF89ECA

Types of narrative

✦ Contributing

- Recognize importance of work, but list other markers of inclusion
- 31 (27%)

*I was lucky enough to find a well-paid job within two weeks of arrival, thanks to all the hard work and studying I did before. I had good experience, a good level of English, a good education and a desire to work hard. Within three months, I was able to bring my wife and daughter to London, and we started from scratch in this new country.
(GUKM82ECA)*

Types of narrative

✦ Persevering

- Recognize importance of work, list efforts made to achieve it
- 19 (16%)

February welcomed me to the new school of Saskatchewan Polytechnic. Later I passed my driver's test and in April I had a job. I am a volunteer. I give good advice about my professional experience. I am very happy and motivated for new achievements. I believe that things will only get better. (PCCF316ECA)

Types of narrative

✧ Struggling

- Discuss migration as an ongoing struggle due to barriers to employment beyond their control
- 3 (3%)

I was a qualified joiner, but I couldn't face the thought of working on building sites in the cold, so I worked at a textile plant. I wasted my time there, as they didn't promote black people or foreigners, and I could only do menial jobs. GUKM3LAC

Types of narrative

✧ Avoiding

- Downplays or ignores work and focus on alternate markers of inclusion
- 10 (9%)

Now I live in Canada, I feel very happy because I stopped working or doing any job at the moment. I am a housewife now and a student. On Monday to Friday mornings, I study English at Collingwood Neighborhood House. With my teachers and classmates, we study English and it is so much fun. In my free time, I usually go to the community centre playing badminton and walking in the park with my husband. In the summer my family always plans a vacation to another place. PCCF167APAC

Data structure

1st order concepts

- More room for growth in host country
- Volunteer involvement
- Achievements
- Difficulties in finding a job
- Discrimination at the workplace
- Employment hardship
- Cultural adaptation
- Commitment to and/or perseverance at work

2nd order themes

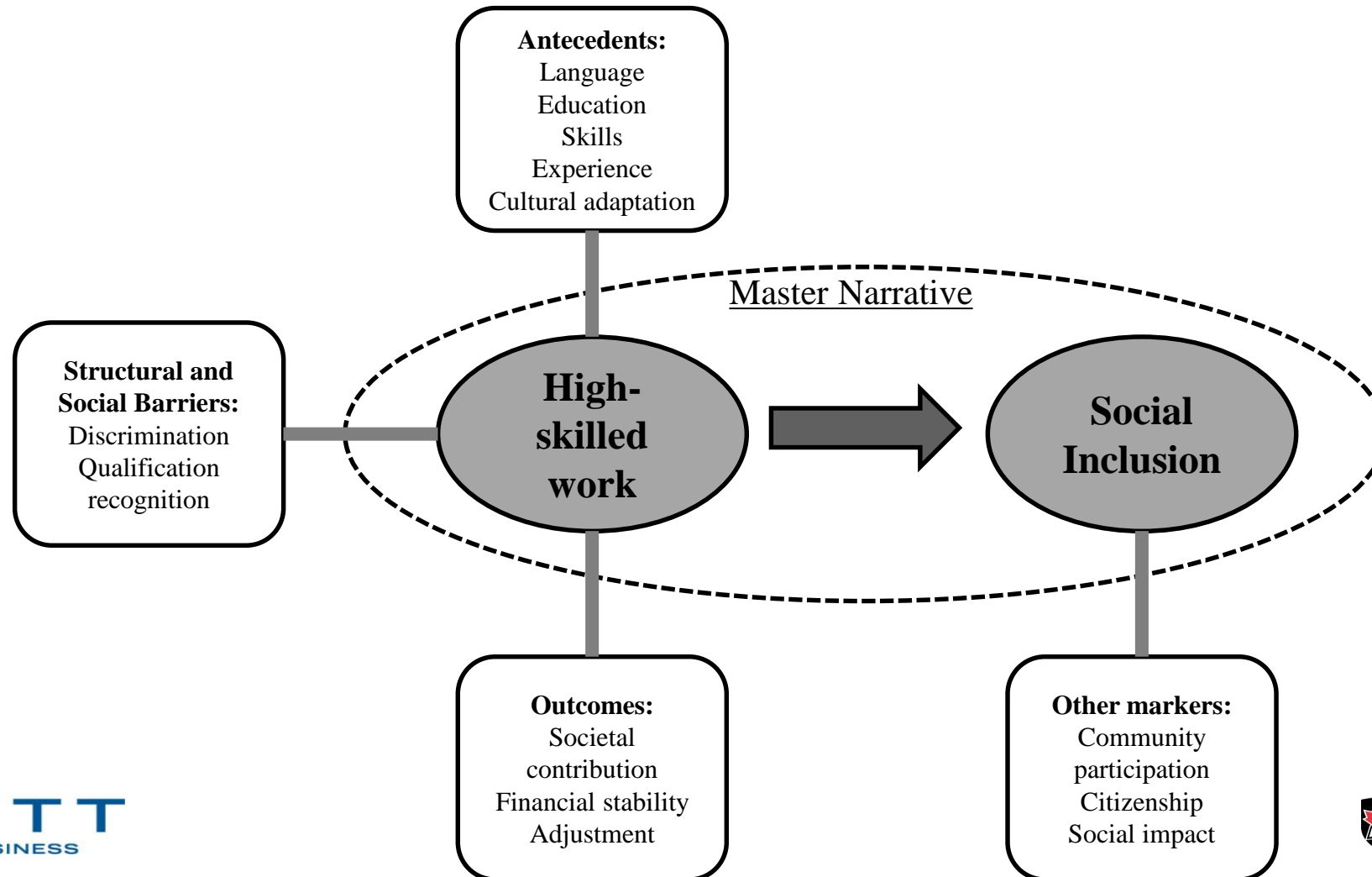
- Career success
- Contributing
- Persevering
- Struggling
- Avoiding

Aggregate dimensions

- Antecedents of work
- Outcomes of work
- Barriers to work
- Other markers of inclusion



Unpacking the master narrative of high-skilled work



A master narrative of high-skilled work

✧ High-skilled work as a key marker of inclusion

- Immigrants who met the expectations set by the master narrative constructed their migratory descriptions focusing on their successful employment trajectories, while those who faced barriers or took divergent paths employed alternative narratives.

✧ Negotiating identity and belonging

- Individuals unpack the master narrative of high-skilled work and select important components, such as the antecedents to work, expected work outcomes or barriers to labor participation, coupling these with their personal experiences of migration to craft alternative narratives that aim to negotiate a space in the national group.

Contributions

- ✧ Focus on the interplay between societal master narratives based on immigration and citizenship policy and individual narratives and its implications to inclusion and belonging
- ✧ Highlight the utility of autobiographical stories for the understanding of adjustment processes
- ✧ Highlight the importance of including immigrants' voices in the construction of a more inclusive society

Thank you!

Q&A