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Labour Market Gatekeepers: The Role of Human Resource Management Professionals in Immigrant Labour Market Integration in Alberta, Canada.

by

Chene Royan Redwood

A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Despite new immigrants having higher educational attainment and an immigrant selection policy that admits “the best and the brightest,” one of Canada’s major social policy concerns is the continued deterioration of immigrants’ economic outcomes. This paradox is illustrated by data showing immigrants suffer from higher unemployment, earn less than similarly educated Canadian-born workers, face skill underutilization, and are relegated to the secondary labour market made up of low-wage, unstable jobs, lacking protections such as unemployment benefits. The underutilization of immigrant skills is economically disastrous; it costs the Canadian economy $50 billion yearly. While many studies discuss immigrants' poor labour market integration, offering explanations such as immigrant human capital factors or macroeconomic condition factors, few explore the role of meso-level organizational social actors who decide which immigrants are recruited, shortlisted, and ultimately hired. This dissertation seeks to fill this gap by exploring the role of Human Resource Management (HRM) professionals in immigrant labour market integration in Alberta. Using interviews and critical discourse analysis of HRM textbooks and course outlines, I examine HRM professional's decision-making policies, processes, considerations and constraints when evaluating immigrant applications for jobs. The study reveals that immigrants, particularly racialized immigrants, face barriers to employment in the primary labour market because of the professional and institutional logic of strategic human resource management (SHRM). SHRM promoted in HRM professional education recommends that HRM professionals prioritize business objectives over equal treatment, consideration, and fairness in hiring. SHRM enables unequal power relations between hiring managers (team supervisors) and HRM professionals, which enables cultural racism to go unchecked in hiring. SHRM justifies organizational discriminatory and social closure practices as well as enables the denial of immigrant claims for employment. This is based on the perception that immigrants pose administrative burdens and financial risks stemming from the misidentification of immigrants as temporary migrants and possessing

human capital and cultural deficiencies. Hiring decision-makers often do not rely on objective assessments like work sampling tests when making hiring decisions. Instead, when evaluating immigrant job applicants, they rely on racial cultural stereotypes and signals of White Canadian cultural competency as the basis for callbacks and selection.

Keywords

hiring, immigrants, cultural racism, inequality, decision-making, human resource management

PREFACE

This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Chene Royan Redwood. The analyses reported in Chapters 4- 6 were covered by Ethics Certificate number REB21-0874, issued by the University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board for the project “ Labour Market Gatekeepers: Hiring Managers & Skilled Immigrants in Alberta, Canada, a Mixed-Method Study” on January 13, 2022.

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DEDICATION

To my parents and grandparents, who taught me the importance of believing in oneself, especially in places and spaces where one is an anomaly.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Despite rising educational attainment among new immigrants (Hou et al., 2019) and an immigrant selection policy that admits "the best and the brightest" (Hussen, 2019), one of Canada's major social policy problems is the continued deterioration of immigrants' economic outcomes. This paradox is illustrated by data that shows immigrants[1] suffer from higher unemployment, earn less than similarly educated Canadian-born workers, face skill underutilization, and are relegated to the secondary labour market made up of low-wage, unstable jobs, lacking protections such as pensions, unemployment benefits, and health insurance (Reitz, 2013; Picot & Hou, 2024).

This trend affects immigrant integration and contributes to broader social inequalities, which raises the question of Canada's commitment to equality and social inclusion. Section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, enshrined in the Constitution of Canada, states that: "Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability" (Government of Canada, 2020). Meanwhile, the fundamental goal of Canada's multicultural policy is the creation of "an inclusive Canada by facilitating the integration of migrants and minorities into the existing system" (Fleras, 2018, p.317). Social inclusion refers to the "realization of full and equal participation in the economic, social, cultural and political dimensions of life" (Omidvar & Richmond, 2005, p.1). Social inclusion involves the basic notions of acceptance, belonging, and recognition. For immigrants, social inclusion would be represented by the realization of full and equal participation in the economic, social, cultural and political dimensions of life in Canada. Simply put, social inclusion for immigrants requires

[1] The term "immigrants" refers to people who are, or have ever been, landed immigrants or permanent residents—Statistics Canada definition. See Picot & Hou, 2024

dismantling barriers that lead to exclusion in all these domains of life. For recent immigrants and their families, poor labour market outcomes result in high rates of poverty, food and housing insecurity, and mental health issues (Block et al., 2019; Reitz, 2013; Ng & Zhang, 2020). As such, integrating immigrants within the labour market is a matter of social inclusion and justice.

Beyond the individual, the underutilization of immigrant skills is economically disastrous for Canada. In 2014, Reitz, Curtis and Elrick reported that the underutilization of immigrant skills cost the Canadian economy $11.3 billion yearly. Since then, losses have grown to $50 billion yearly (Agopsowicz & Billy-Ochien, 2019). Immigrant skill underutilization refers to the devaluation of immigrant human capital, which results in underemployment, poor wages, and a precarious work environment (Reitz, 2007). The Conference Board of Canada estimates that 524,000 new Canadians could earn $12.7 billion more and pay more taxes if their learning credentials were fully recognized (Alberta Advantage Immigration Strategy, 2024). Canada has historically considered immigration an integral part of its development; this is reflected in its immigration policy objectives that seek to foster a robust and viable economy in all regions of Canada, reunite families, and fulfill the country's international obligations and humanitarian tradition for refugees (Hussen, 2019; Reitz, 2007). The need for skilled immigrants is based on the view that they are the solution to Canada's labour market shortage, ageing population, and low fertility, which is necessary to overcome for the country to achieve economic and population growth (Hussen, 2018). Therefore, excluding immigrants from the labour market jeopardizes Canada's economic and demographic future.

There are numerous studies examining the various ways in which new immigrants, particularly newcomers and racialized immigrants, are subjected to negative stereotypes and bias and how such bias influences hiring decisions (Swithnsky & Swidinsky, 2002; Oreopoulos & Dechief, 2011; Reitz, 2013; Esses et al., 2014). Equally, these studies have emphasized various theories focused on immigrant individual-level factors or characteristics (e.g. human capital theory) or macro/national-level factors (e.g. scarce resource theory, macro-economic

conditions), leaving a gap in the meso-level understanding of the role of organizations (Oreopoulos, 2011; Shan, 2013; Elrick, 2016). Consequently, this study seeks to fill this gap by exploring the role of local policy actors involved in immigrant management, such as HRM professionals who act as extensions of the immigration apparatus. Given the role of HRM professionals in deciding which applicants are recruited, shortlisted, and ultimately hired, it is important to understand the policies, processes, considerations, and constraints involved in their decision-making. Using a multimethod qualitative approach (involving interviews and critical discourse analysis of HRM curriculum texts), I explored human resource management (HRM) professionals' role in the labour market integration of immigrants to Alberta, Canada. What factors have been deemed most important by HRM professionals for immigrants' employment eligibility in Alberta, Canada (i.e. language competency, skills, education, Canadian experience, etc.)? What tools, strategies, and processes do HRM professionals use to evaluate immigrants' credentials on the factors deemed most important for employment eligibility in Alberta, Canada? How do HRM professionals' views of immigrants determine hiring selection? What are the discourses on immigrants and the hiring of immigrants in HRM textbooks and course outlines? How are these discourses reflected in HRM professionals' representations of their evaluation and hiring processes for immigrant applicants?

Using interviews and critical discourse analysis of HRM curriculum texts, I examine immigrant applications for jobs as a specific instance of claims-making[2]. I argue that strategic human resource management (SHRM)[3], as promoted in HRM textbooks and courses, provides the professional and institutional logic that justifies the denial of immigrant claims for

[2] Claim-making is the individual or collective interactional act of asking for access to or a greater share of organizational resources (See Tomaskovic-Devey Donald & Avent-Holt Dustin, 2019)

[3] Strategic human resource management is the dominant professional, institutional logic of human resource management professionals that see their job functions or services supporting the sustainability and profitability of the firm as the most important priority (See Dessler & Chhinzer, 2017).

employment, social closure practices, and taste-based and statistical discrimination that cumulatively prevent racialized immigrant from employment in the primary labour market. I further argue that immigrants are not only excluded from employment because of their perceived human and cultural deficiency but because they are not recognized as permanent residents. This is particularly the case for racialized immigrants who are excluded from employment based on employer emphasis on Canadian experience, credentials, citizenship, and signals of White Canadian cultural competency.

Hiring typically involves three groups: HRM professionals, the hiring manager, and the hiring committee. HRM professionals refer to human resource management professionals such as internal or external recruiters, advisors, partners, and consultants involved in recruiting and selecting employees in Alberta. The hiring manager refers to the team or department supervisor recruiting and selecting employees in Alberta (Dessler & Chhinzer, 2017). The hiring committee refers to the panel of organizational members selecting employees in Alberta. Hiring professionals collectively refer to these three groups.

This study seeks to contribute to the existing literature examining the economic integration of immigrants in the Canadian labour market in three ways: (1) add to the scant literature examining the mediating role of HRM professionals in immigrant labour market integration, (2) describe the factors that have been deemed most important by HRM professionals for immigrants' employment eligibility in Alberta, Canada (i.e. language competency, skills, education and Canadian experience etc.) and (3) explain the human resources discourses, practises, and processes involved in evaluating the job applications and credentials of immigrants.

The study is significant given that Canada's immigration system is undergoing changes driven by a desire to improve the labour market outcomes of entering immigrants, reduce social exclusion and inequality, as well as an attempt to better respond to short-term regional labour market shortages (Houle & Yssaad, 2010; Reitz, 2013). Also, as immigration becomes the

primary source of the labour force and population growth in Canada, it is essential to understand better the factors that have led to the deterioration of immigrant labour market outcomes, the economic and social barriers newcomers face, and ways to improve immigrants' labour market integration. Thus, the research will have implications for settlement policy and enrich the sociological organizational literature on inequality, which tends to focus on the effect of gender and ethnicity rather than race and immigrant status. Also, Alberta is a useful case because it is among the Canadian provinces with the worst immigrant earnings gap, reflected in immigrants' hourly wages being significantly lower regardless of educational attainment (Agopsowicz & Billy-Ochien, 2019). Yet, Calgary, Alberta, is the fourth most common destination for immigrants to Canada. Like other provinces, Alberta has increased or allocated large sums of money to newcomer bridge programs to help with employment services (Calgary Local Immigration Partnership, 2019). This research has the potential to assist these organizations in helping immigrants in their job search and gaining quality jobs. Also, the research may support the Alberta government's Fairness for Newcomers Action Plan and Alberta Advantage Immigration Strategy (2024) as they seek to attract and improve immigrant outcomes. Lastly, as the need for skilled labour in Alberta continues to increase, it seems likely that not only will government and non-governmental agencies be interested in promoting the integration of immigrants into the workforce, but employers as well.

Preferences and Hierarchies: Immigrants in Canadian Labour History

White Labour Welcome and Preferred

Within the Canadian labour market, there has always existed a hierarchy of preferred immigrants and migrant labour that link race, ethnicity, labour, and immigration. Scholars have shown that within Canada's immigration policies, there is greater value and preference for White

labour at the expense of non-White[4] immigrants (Triadafilopoulos, 2013; Guo, 2015; Yu, 2018; Wiseman, 2018). Beginning with the Indian Act of 1876, which formally racialized Indigenous people as distinct from the rest of Canadian society, the period of 1910 - 1967 saw the explicit attempt by British and French colonial powers to construct Canada as a White settler colony or White Dominion (Abele & Stasiulis, 1989; Jakubowski, 1997; Thobani, 2007; Triadafilopoulos, 2012). This period of White Canada immigration policy, as Jakubowski (1997:10) describes, was "racist in orientation, assimilationist in objective." The British-controlled colonial power had two imperatives: a drive to create a country populated by Whites and the drive to meet the shifting demands of the labour market (Abele & Stasiulis, 1989). The eastern regions of the country were manufacturing zones, and the western were natural resource centers (Green & Green, 2004). Immigration was the great hope for fostering economic development and Western expansion. Consequently, as Abele & Stasiulis (1989) show, these imperatives converged to create an immigration policy actively supporting the recruitment of Whites from Great Britain, France, Germany, and the US as 'preferred' migrants. Later, Slavs, eastern, and southern Europeans would be added to this category despite their low status and position within the racial hierarchy of Whiteness. White migrants were actively recruited and recognized as citizens with access to land, state protections, better jobs, and higher wages (Hiller, 2009; Finkel et al., 2012; Triadafilopoulos,2012). However, non-White migrant labour from China, Japan, India, Africa, and the Caribbean was considered and viewed by the state as non-preferred and least desirable because of their perceived racial and cultural inferiority to Whites. This resulted in government policies limiting their entry, recruitment, and access to the Canadian labour market (Jakubowski,1997; Finkel et al., 2012). Nonetheless, the need for a large cheap labour force for

[4] Other than when noting a participant's own term of self-identification, I use "non-White" instead of racialized. This is done to mirror the study's finding that Whiteness (represented by multiple proxies) was both a credential and criteria against which "othered" immigrants are measured.

economic expansion led to non-White migrants having access to the Canadian labour market but primarily regulated to the secondary labour market, where they performed arduous and precarious labour. For example, between 1880 and 1885, 20,000 Chinese came to Canada to help build the Canadian Pacific Railroad (Guo & Wong, 2018). However, these immigrants were characterized as undesirable sojourners and their access to citizenship was limited to keep them outside the bounds of Canadian identity (Yu, 2018). Based on their visible racial and cultural differences and the perceived economic threat to White labour, Canadians began viewing Chinese immigration as an encroachment on their dominion and economic position (Walker, 1997; Yu, 2018). It was hoped that laws could regulate Chinese immigration in a manner that only allowed temporary residence to meet the economic need for cheap mass labourers. In 1882, the Canadian Prime Minister, John Macdonald, aptly described the dilemma:

> I believe that it is an alien race in every sense, that would not and could not be expected to assimilate with our Aryan population, and therefore, if the temporary necessity had been overcome and the railway constructed across the continent […] then it would be quite right to join to a reasonable extent in preventing the permanent settlement in this country of Mongolian, Chinese or Japanese immigrants […] At present it is simply a question of alternatives: either you must have this labour or you cannot have the railway. (MacDonald, 1882, as quoted in Walker,1997, p.58).

Here, we see that the economic need for cheap labour and attempts to keep Canada White was discussed as a trade-off, leading to strict citizenship rules that curtailed non-White migrant labourer access to citizenship. Whiteness was linked to civility, intelligence, and honesty. In contrast, non-White was considered the opposite and, therefore, unfit for entry and citizenship. MacDonald's commentary reflected broader parliamentary and employer racist sentiments that pointed to the inability of Asian and other non-White immigrants to assimilate into White European culture and a threat to White British and French Canada (Thobani, 2007; Henry, 2009). Also, Chinese, and other non-White labourers were blocked by White employers from doing non-manual jobs (Finkel et al., 2012; Yu, 2018). Once the railroads were complete and Chinese labour was no longer seen as necessary, colonial lawmakers quickly moved to restrict Chinese migration. The 1885 Chinese Immigration Act sought to decrease Chinese migration

and prevent Chinese labourers from bringing their families by placing a high head tax on Chinese entering the country (Jakubowski, 1997; Yu, 2018). Similar policies were enacted to limit the immigration of Japanese (i.e. Gentleman's Agreement) and Indians (i.e. Continuous Journey Stipulation of 1908); however, these policies were challenged by those seeking to enter Canada, and they failed to stem Asian immigration (Jakubowski,1997).

The Immigration Act of 1910 ushered in explicit racist policies via racial, national, and cultural inadmissibility categories, termed unsuitability factors (Green & Green, 2004). Non-White immigrants under Section 38(c) were explicitly denied entry, and the link between race and nationality was concretized:

> any nationality or race of immigrants of any specified class or occupation, by reason of any economic, industrial or other condition temporarily existing in Canada or because such immigrants are deemed unsuitable having regard to the climatic, industrial, social, educational, labour . . . or because such immigrants are deemed undesirable owing to their peculiar customs, habits, modes of life, methods of holding property and because of their probable inability to become readily assimilated or to assume the duties and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship within a reasonable time after their entry (Jakubowski,1997,p.10).

The Immigration Act of 1910 policy memorandum further explicitly stated racial and gendered employment preferences:

> To encourage immigration of farmers, farm labourers, and female domestic servants from the United States, the British Isles and certain Northern European countries, namely France, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Iceland…It is the policy of the Department to do all in its power to keep out of the country… those belonging to nationalities unlikely to assimilate and who consequently prevent the building up a united nation of people of similar customs and ideals (Finkel et al., 2012, p. 271)

Black immigrants were also seen as a challenge to the White national identity, and immigration laws were established to prevent people of African descent from entering and gaining permanent residence in Canada (Thobani, 2007; Calliste, 1994). Blacks were stigmatized as as "mentally, morally, physically, and socially inferior and a potential social problem in Canada" because the colonial government feared they could cause economic and race relations to worsen like in the United States (Calliste, 1994, p.133). Like other non-White immigrants, Blacks

encountered a split market economy where they were paid less than Whites for doing the same jobs yet completed the most dangerous and physically demanding tasks. Black immigrants were restricted from entering Canada despite being British subjects (Calliste, 1994; Walker, 1997). Caribbean migrants were stereotyped as lazy, backward, more criminally inclined, and less productive than Whites, and the Canadian government endeavoured to exclude them without drawing criticism from the British government (Calliste, 1994; Walker, 1997). Thus, Canadian immigration officials began applying the Continuous Journey Stipulation to migrants from the Caribbean, a measure that proved effective at limiting immigration (Jakubowski, 1997). At the same time, Caribbean women were still being considered as a viable domestic worker labour source. A pilot program precursor to the West Indian Domestic Scheme was launched in 1911, bringing 100 domestic workers from Guadeloupe to Québec (Calliste, 1994). These Caribbean women were paid less than White domestics for doing the same labour (Calliste, 1994). The domestic program was discontinued due to public concern that Black women were immoral and likely would become single parents and a public burden (Calliste,1994). Further, it was believed that allowing the entry of non-White races would inadvertently lead to chain migration and undermine the development of the country while it was still in its infancy (Walker, 1997). Climatic unsuitability was also a justification used for excluding Black immigrants. It was argued that the Canadian “climate is particularly suited to the White race” (Law Union of Ontario, as cited in Jakubowski, 1997, p.15). Consequently, a “racial/ethnic hierarchy in immigration policy emerged that judged potential migrants according to their distance from, and proximity to, ‘White British’ ideals” (Bakan & Stasiulis, 1997, p.33).

In Alberta, this period would see efforts made to expand the agricultural and mining economy but keep Alberta White with settlement and employment preferences given to White migrants from Britain, the US, France, Germany, and Northern and Western Europe (Hiller, 2009; Mooten, 2021). The failure of recruiting efforts led the colonial government to target predominantly peasant White farmers from Southern Europe and the Balkans, such as

Ukrainians, Russians, Scandinavians, Italians, Poles, and Hutterites – who previously were classified as ‘non-preferred’ (Finkel, 2012). Despite not being the White British ideal, due to their race, these White migrants and immigrants were viewed as biologically and culturally superior to non-White migrants, which meant they were assimilable and fit for Canadian citizenship (Jakubowski, 1997; Mooten, 2021). A major part of this recruitment drive was an incentive that awarded land/ homesteads to White immigrants and ownership after three years if they settled and worked on that farmland (Hiller, 2009). Wiseman (2018: 24) estimates that in 1911, White Americans outnumbered British immigrants: “Half of southern Alberta’s farmers were American born and Americans represented 22 percent of the province population”. Non-white immigrants such as Chinese Canadian Pacific Railway labourers were not granted this opportunity based on racist immigration rules and their temporary status that regarded them as expendable and returnable to their country once the need for their labour ended. They were also given the most dangerous construction jobs and were poorly paid based on racist employer practices (Jakubowski, 1997; Walker, 1997; Thobani, 2007; Finkel et al., 2012). Immigration agents actively persuaded black migrants from the USA who sought to establish homesteads not to come to Alberta based on unsuitability factors such as cold climate and racism (Finkel et al., 2012; Kelly, 2021). Alberta's local government and trading boards passed resolutions, and actively petitioned the federal government to ban Blacks from land ownership, citizenship, and entry into Canada (Jakubowski, 1997; Walker, 1997; Thobani, 2007; Kelly, 2021). Also, restrictions were placed on immigrants from China, Japan, India, and those of African descent from elsewhere (Hiller, 2009; Finkel et al., 2012). Non-White labourers faced institutional racial discrimination, a split labour market, unsafe working environments, and residential and occupational segregation with restrictions placed on access to land, employment, labour protections and citizenship (Finkel et al., 2012; Kelly, 2021). Further, non-White workers, such as Chinese, African Americans, and later people from the Caribbean, were regulated to the secondary labour market (as labourers and railway porters), blocked from joining labour unions

and forced to open small businesses to gain employment (Finkel et al., 2012; Wiseman, 2018). As Hiller (2009:46) describes, during this Old West period in Alberta, there were attempts to keep the population “exclusively European and Caucasian”.

Racial Labour Shifts: Immigration Point System

The 1960s ushered in a new era in Canadian immigration policy with the removal of race and country of origin as explicit considerations for selecting immigrants. As Jakubowski (1997:10) explains, in this period of “Canadian immigration, the term “race” has conveniently appeared and disappeared in law.” Some scholars credit the international human rights revolution after World War II and the American Civil Rights Movement for calling racially discriminatory laws into question and making objective assessments popular (Thobani, 2007; Winter & Madularea, 2018). Others argue that the Canadian economy could not survive since White European migrant labour significantly declined, and Canadian international standing would be in jeopardy if immigration laws continued to operate in an overtly discriminatory manner (Jakubowski, 1997; Finkel et al., 2012). Thus, the 1967 Canadian Immigration regulation introduced a point system emphasizing merit over an applicant's race and country of origin. Under the point system, admissibility was determined based on: “education and training; personal assessment; occupational demand; occupational skill; age; arranged employment; knowledge of English or French; relatives; and employment opportunities in the area of destination” (Jakubowski, 1997, p. 18). Potential immigrants needed at least 50 points to be considered admissible (Green & Green, 2004).

The point system attempted to remove racially discriminatory determinants by emphasizing skills and applying the immigration law universally. However, scholars argue that vestiges of racist institutional discriminatory laws are still evident in Canadian immigration policies. These policies still give preference to non-White countries through the list of criteria by which potential immigrants are assessed that emphasize assimilation, namely, fitness in language and the multiple immigration rules and programs that privilege migrants from

‘traditional’ White countries of origin, i.e. race (Henry, 2000; Triadafilopoulos, 2012; Wiseman, 2018). Winter and Madulerea (2018) argue that points allocated for already having relatives in Canada, knowledge of English or French, and personal assessment through family ties are reminiscent of past heritage and assimilation potential requirements. Also, until 1962 the Canadian government limited the ability of non-White immigrants to sponsor their relatives and maintained an “official but unpublicized policy of maintaining a preference for immigrants from Canada‘s traditional sources – that is, the United States and Europe” (Triadafilopoulos, 2013, p. 90). Exclusionary policies of the past meant that more European immigrants were present, so it follows that allotting points for having relatives already in Canada would favour some groups over others. Likewise, points for knowledge of English and French could unequally benefit immigrants from European countries, where these languages are more commonly taught and spoken. Additionally, the national preference system endured through recruitment efforts. The distribution of overseas immigration offices continued to be skewed towards European immigration (Green & Green, 2004; Triadafilopoulos, 2013), and recruitment expenditures are still concentrated in traditional preferential countries (Jakubowski, 1997). Nonetheless, an outcome of the point system was the increase in non-White immigrants, particularly from Asia.

The passing of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act of 1988 recognized the presence of non-Whites as part of Canada and their rights to full and equal participation in employment and other social resources (Guo & Wong, 2018). Yet their right to full and equal participation promised under multiculturalism was often criticized by populist political parties in the early 1990s, such as the Reform Party and the Quebecois, which described racial diversity and immigrants as cultural threats to tradition, national identity and unity (Thobani, 2007). Jakubowski (1997) and Henry (2000) argue that these concerns were about White Canadian's anxiety and worries over their eroding privileged access to labour and economic welfare. These multiculturalist detractors, backed by political parties, fanned anti-immigrant sentiments but without the use of overtly racist, socially unacceptable discourse. Instead, they raised questions

about the new immigrants' cultural deficiencies, language proficiency, ability to assimilate, and their abuse of and drain on Canada's welfare system (Thobani, 2007; Henry, 2000; Triadafilopoulos, 2013).

The point system further evolved in 2015 with the Express Entry Program Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS), which ranked immigrants based on their human capital such as “education, work experience, English or French language skills, age and adaptability (how well you’re likely to settle here)” (Immigration, 2024). The question of these majority non-White immigrants' ability to assimilate was reflected in the comprehensive ranking system’s continued emphasis on adaptability and the lack of clarity on how the federal government assesses this criterion (Henry, 2000; Triadafilopoulos, 2013; Mooten, 2021). Consequently, most immigrants are no longer White but high-skilled middle-class racialized immigrants from regions such as Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, the Middle East, and South America (Reitz, 2001; Triadafilopoulos, 2013; Elrick, 2022). Yet, despite being highly skilled, many racialized immigrants face discrimination within the labour market, which often results in high levels of unemployment and underemployment (Li & Li, 2013; Lightman & Gingrich, 2013). Racialized immigrants are mainly hired for jobs that are characterized as temporary, poorly paid, insecure, and with no benefits; this contributes to the racialization of poverty and negatively influences integration and well-being (Skuterud, 2010; Block & Galabuzi, 2011). For example, formalized temporary employment schemes such as the Live-in Caregiver Program and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program specifically target racialized migrants from developing countries. Scholars (Binford, 2002; Perry, 2012; Mooten, 2021) have observed that these programs are steeped in notions of racial inferiority and suitability that view racialized migrants from the Caribbean, Latin America, and Asia as best suited for these jobs. Yu (2018) notes that these programs have been constructed to serve the project of Canadian nation-building in much the same way that Chinese indentured labourers were both exploited for their physical labour and prohibited from citizenship. Even in instances where racialized immigrants are employed in

professions that are government-regulated and highly skilled, they fare worse than Whites (Block & Galabuzi,2011; Yssaad & Fields, 2018). Shan (2013) notes that despite Chinese immigrants' niche in engineering, they experience poor wages and temporary work without benefits. She notes a contradiction by employers—considered indispensable on the one hand because of their hard skills but less desirable because of their perceived lack of soft skills. Racialized workers and immigrants are still very much disproportionately represented in poorly paid, precarious, and service-level work as they were before the 1960s (Finkel et al., 2012; Block & Galabuzi, 2011). Hence, racism in immigration and employment was not eradicated in the 1960s. However, there was a shift towards emphasizing culture instead of biology as an alibi or grounds to justify domination and exclusion. A repeated question facing racialized immigrants and migrant workers by both the Canadian government and employers is whether they can assimilate, fit into White/ Western Canada, or share White /Western Canadian values (Henry, 2000; Creese & Wiebe, 2012; Triadafilopoulos, 2013; Mooten, 2021).

Culture is the new means of ranking preferred migrants, immigrants, and workers within Canada. Cultural racism involves the misrepresentation and devaluation of people's ways of being and living, including religious practices, values, family formation types, food consumed, and cultural and gender expression (Alcoff, 2023). White and other euphemisms of Whiteness—European, European values, French, Western and Canadian values—are all preferred and constructed as normative, and non-White culture and values are still understood and represented as primitive, backward, deficient, and a threat (Calliste, 1994; Triadafilopoulos, 2013; Wiseman, 2018). Consequently, non-White immigrants, migrants, and workers' cultures are perceived to be irreconcilable with Western Canadian values, which are then used to question their rights to entry, citizenship, employment, and equal treatment in hiring (Creese & Wiebe, 2012; Li & Li; 2013; Guo, 2015). Ultimately, culture deficiency is used as justification for immigrant exclusion and domination without the explicit mention of race (i.e. cultural racism) (Guo, 2015; Mooten, 2021). As Henry (2020) highlights, both the state, institutions, citizens, and

employers deny racism despite differential racial labour market outcomes and racist cultural stereotypes as the basis for explaining these outcomes and justifying excluding non-White immigrant labour. She argues that “common stereotypes of Blacks, Muslims, and other minoritized communities in the media reinforce images of “otherness,” and contribute to the notion that the cultures of certain ethno–racial communities are more deviant and dangerous to the Canadian identity” (Henry, 2020, p. 6). Similarly, Thobani (2007) and Mooten (2021) illustrate the historical continuity of racism and racial discrimination reflected in the current use of stereotypes within temporary migrant labour programs, which ascribe inherent and fixed traits, attributes, and characteristics to non-White races. For example, Mooten (2021) notes that these stereotypes are at work in labour market selection processes, with employers explicitly stating: “Black people are physically suited for farm work,” “Mexicans are compliant,” “Filipino women are nurturing,” or “newcomers don’t learn as fast” (Mooten, 2021, p.58). These cultural racist ideas are produced and reified by social institutions and organizations in justifying racial sorting within the labour market via ideal worker typologies. As such, stereotypes of Black people as physically suited for farm work and Mexicans as compliant are echoed by agricultural employers within the TFW Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) and used to justify Caribbean and Mexico selection without mentioning race or acknowledging the racial status of workers (McLaughlin, 2010). Filipino women are stereotyped as nurturing, which has been perpetuated by immigration caregiver programs, such as the previous Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP), and used by employers, as well as both the Canadian and Philippine governments (Parreñas, 2015). Finally, Canadian employers and immigrant refugee settlement agencies hold the stereotype that “newcomers don't learn as quickly” (Creese & Wiebe, 2012). They use this as a reason to deskill immigrants, sort them into survival jobs, and provide them with language proficiency classes. Hence, these social actors all play a role in producing and maintaining racial ideologies and hierarchies within the Canadian labour market.

These cultural racist stereotypes have material consequences for immigrants and shape the relationships and experiences of immigrants, particularly racialized immigrants, within the Canadian labour market. Hiller (2009) highlights the Alberta government's and employers' preference for internal migrants over international migrant programs and immigrants. In Alberta, he notes that despite increased racial diversity brought about by the skilled immigration program point system, successive Alberta provincial governments have launched population and labour recruitment programs that promote internal migration (Hiller, 2009). As a boom-and-bust economy reliant on oil and gas, it was particularly easy for Alberta governments to recruit internally to meet labour needs and population growth (Hiller, 2009). Most recently, we have seen the Alberta government experience an oil boom and subsequent labour shortages, resulting in the launch of the Alberta is Calling campaign, promising well-paid jobs, low taxes, and a $5000 refundable tax credit for skilled workers (Wilson, 2024). These internal mobility programs reflect the employer and Alberta government's racial and national preference for internal migrants who are more likely to be White and not foreign-born racialized immigrants. For example, Hiller (2009:73) reports that in 2001, “only 9.8 % of interprovincial migrants were foreign-born and 6.9 % were visible minorities”. Foster & Barneston (2017) note that Alberta was late to the adoption of temporary non-White labour, with the first wave of racialized agricultural labour being Mexican Mennonites. However, silent in these historiographies is that Albertan government recruitment efforts reflect the historical racial and cultural preference for White Canadian-born workers over non-White migrants and immigrants (Henry, 2020; Mooten, 2021). Finkel et al. (2012) note that even after the 1960s, racist cultural stereotypes and perceptions of non-White workers, such as immigrants from the Caribbean, as being destitute, led to strict provincial restrictions on their entry to Alberta. Here, the central preoccupation of the Albertan provincial government was that immigrants would only be allowed and welcomed if they could contribute by temporarily meeting labour shortages. Consequently, Caribbean teachers recruited to rural Northern Alberta during the 1960s to meet teacher shortages had to

meet higher benchmarks to prove specific skills and knowledge. Despite Caribbean teachers coming from former British colonies and being native English speakers, Alberta immigration and education authorities assumed their education was inferior to that of Canada and, as such, required them to take courses in English (Finkel et al., 2012).

Today, Alberta immigration authorities still believe in immigrant deficiency. They are only allowing entry to immigrants who can contribute through job creation. For example, Alberta Advantage Immigration Strategy (2024:10) reflected the provincial government's stance that they were not interested in immigrant labour but in their contribution to “create new jobs and growth.” Consequently, they created several immigration streams and provided loans to new immigrants focussed on entrepreneurship for “building businesses and creating new opportunities in urban and rural Alberta” (2024:7). The immigration streams included the Foreign Graduate Entrepreneur Stream, the Rural Renewal Stream, the Graduate Entrepreneur Stream, and the Rural Entrepreneur Stream (Alberta Advantage Immigration Strategy, 2024). The challenge with immigrants being pushed into entrepreneurship is the risks and burdens associated with starting new businesses. Business Development Bank of Canada (Bouchard, 2023:6) reports that “one-third of all new businesses fail within five years, and only one in two companies are still open after 10 years. That may explain why entrepreneurship has attracted fewer and fewer Canadians over the past 20 years”. Equally problematic is that entrepreneurial programs tend to favour high-net-worth individuals and require huge investments and immigration costs associated with language requirements, education from Alberta post-secondary institutions, education credential assessments, mandatory site visits, and proof of years of business. For example, Rural Entrepreneur Stream eligibility requirements include a “minimum net worth of $300,000 and a minimum investment of $100,000 from candidate’s own (and/or spouse/common-law partner) equity. Higher levels of investment will be awarded more points” (Rural Entrepreneur Stream – Eligibility, 2024).

Outside of these entrepreneurial immigration streams that offer migrants the opportunity for permanent residence, the provincial government's immigration programs are particularly tailored toward immigrants who can fill labour shortage professions such as information technology, healthcare, tourism & hospitality, and construction (Alberta Express Entry Stream, 2024). Foster & Barneston (2017) highlight that despite targeting historically marginalized groups and the use of the TFW, Albertan employers' recruitment and selection processes did not change construction from a predominantly White male occupation. Instead, non-White workers and immigrants remain "last hired, first fired" within the occupation and regulated to the secondary labour market doing precarious non-unionized construction jobs (Foster & Barneston, 2017: 47). They attribute this to a mismatch between current immigration emphasis on high-skilled immigrants and limited training opportunities, employer failure to recognize immigrant credentials, perception of immigrants as not having language and cultural proficiency, and employer preference for White workers. Another feature of the Canadian labour market and TFW is the racial sorting of labour through country-of-origin workforce programs and culturally racist stereotypes that link racial bodies and labour as ideal for some jobs and positions over others (Guo, 2015; Mooten, 2021). In Alberta, less than 10% of racialized immigrants hold senior management positions. In comparison, the rates are 21.5% in BC, 15.5% in Ontario, and 5.6% in Quebec (Intungane et al., 2024). Hence, within the conversation of Alberta employer hiring decision-making and immigrant labour market integration, it is essential to consider the historical and current preference for White and Canadian-born labour, cultural racism, provincial government support and preference for internal migrant labour, and the long-held question of non-White immigrants and migrants' ability to assimilate to White Western Canadian ideals.

Theoretical Framing

In this study, the three theories used for studying the role of HRM professionals in the immigrant integration into the labour market in Alberta, Canada, are Tomaskovic-Devey and

Avent-Holt's Relational Inequalities Theory (RIT), Victor Rays' Theory of Racialized Organizations (TRO) and Critical Discourse Analysis Theory (CDA). These theories all fall within Joan Acker's (2006) original conceptualization of inequality regimes within organizations. Acker (2006) defines inequality regimes as "as loosely interrelated practices, processes, actions, and meanings that result in and maintain class, gender, and racial inequalities within particular organizations" (Acker, 2006, p. 443). This in turn, leads to unequal distribution of valued resources, rewards, and positions within organizations and in the larger society. Organizational policies, practices, and culture are primarily responsible for directing actions and inactions that produce social inequality. The theories recognize the role of social categories and categorical distinctions in organizational functions such as hiring, which actively distribute resources, determine access, rewards, and punishment, and affect people's position within the organization and societal hierarchy.

Relational Inequalities Theory

Through RIT, Tomaskovic-Devey and Avent-Holt (2019) argue that to understand the processes that generate social inequalities and immigrant exclusion in the Canadian labour market, we need to focus on "the relations between people, positions and organizations" (2019:1). Here, they explain that social actors within organizations develop and enact hierarchies of power and status through categorical distinctions between roles, jobs, and people. People's job titles and roles within organizations impact their position, power, and interactions within an organization's hierarchy. Also, people's roles and job titles give them a greater claim over organizational resources such as pay, job responsibilities, and job protection. Social categorical distinctions of people based on race, skill (level and type), citizenship status, class, and gender are assigned value and then used as the basis for allocating respect and rewards and justifying exploitation and exclusion. Consequently, RIT raises several questions that are explored in the study: What does the categorical distinction "immigrant" mean, and how does it operate within hiring? What is the relationship between immigrants and organizational

hiring social actors (HRM professionals, hiring managers, and hiring panel)? How do other intersecting social categories and distinctions of immigrants, such as skill, race, class, gender, culture, and religion, shape immigrants' access to jobs and their evaluation during the hiring process? In what ways does the power imbalance between immigrants and organizational actors shape hiring outcomes? How do job applicants being positioned outside the organization during the hiring process affect claim-making? Given that this research is on immigrant labour market incorporation, this theory is primarily used to explore the categorical distinctions and relationships that dictate their labour market outcomes, such as interactions and relationships between immigrants and organizational hiring professionals, immigrants, and government; government policies and immigrants; licencing bodies and immigrants; as well as the discipline and profession of Human Resource Management (HRM) and immigrants.

Equally, RIT contributes to the study by explaining how HR professionals and other social actors and institutions in hiring generate immigrant exclusion and marginalization. Tomaskovic-Devey and Avent-Holt (2019) observe that societal and organizational processes of categorical distinctions assign people to ingroups and outgroups. They point out that the mechanisms of immigrant exclusion are exploitation, social closure, and claim-making. Exploitation involves a more powerful social actor or group appropriating organizational resources such as income, promotion, and jobs from categorically distinct and less powerful others. Also, exploiting less powerful groups is often justified based on their low-status categorical distinction. For example, immigrants have less claim to hiring than citizens. Social closure involves opportunity hoarding and gatekeeping mechanisms, where a more powerful social actor or group monopolizes and distributes organizational resources only to members of their ingroup that share similar habitus. These powerful social actors utilize categorical distinctions such as race, gender, age, citizenship, occupational status, professional memberships, etc., to impede categorically distinct outgroups from accessing jobs, income, promotions, and other organizational resources (Tomaskovic-Devey & Avent-Holt, 2019). Claim-

making involves social actors making discursive arguments as to why they are more deserving of organizational resources than others. Claim-making is political and relational because it requires social actors to make claims on a greater share of organizational resources and depends on another organizational social actor to accept or agree with the claim. Often, social actors within organizations only accept claims and reserve organizational resources such as jobs, promotions, and salary increase for their ingroup.

Within the literature on immigrant labour market outcomes, categorical distinctions such as immigrants vs. citizens, women vs. men, and racialized immigrants vs. White (i.e. Canadian) are salient. Social closure mechanisms by organizations such as accreditation/licensing boards and professional associations devalue immigrant credentials, thus blocking them from both membership and jobs in the primary market (Picot & Hou, 2018). Through immigration classes categorizing newcomers as permanent or temporary, the Canadian government dictates how immigrants enter the country and the occupations they can enter once here (Arat-Koc, 1999; Hou, Crossman, & Picot, 2020). Employers take advantage of these policies by devaluing and defining immigrant labour as low-skilled and only offering temporary work arrangements (Creese & Wiebe, 2012; Shan, 2013). In terms of claim-making, non-White immigrants and other protected designated groups' attempts at claims for greater protection are often denied or jeopardized by the failure of equal opportunity legislation (Agocs 2002). On the other hand, claims-making efforts based on citizenship put forth by protected occupation groups, associations, and licencing boards are reinforced by regulations that allow them to exclude others considered outgroups (Bauder, 2006; Reitz, Curtis, & Elrick, 2014).

RIT recognizes that history and local context shape categorical distinctions and social relations. This means immigrants' current experiences of exclusion, the organizational mechanisms used to exploit, and the social closure practises immigrants face are part of a long historical relationship. Enduring practices of exclusion, such as racist immigration laws and organizational segregation practices, cumulatively determine the social location of immigrants

and their treatment in hiring. Indeed, within the Canadian context, Thobani (2007:72) argues that “the questions surrounding the rights of Others is fundamentally a problem of race.” White settler colonialism led to violence against Indigenous peoples, slavery, and the exploitation of immigrant labour, shaping the incorporation of non-White racial groups into the Canadian nation. She shows that ideas of citizenship, nationhood, belonging, and who society deems deserving of protection are still based on racist historical arrangements. These discourses continue to form the basis for the unequal distribution of societal and organizational resources, promoting White supremacy at the expense of Indigenous and racialized immigrant groups. For example, she shows that even after the civil rights changes of the 60s, immigration policies did not address the informal racial categorical distinctions and relational arrangements that defined the nation as English and French, confined Indigenous peoples to reservations, and blocked non-White immigrants from jobs in the primary labour market. The crystallization of French and English as the official legally protected languages of Canada under the 1969 Official Languages Act, despite the presence of Indigenous and other racial groups, legally cemented and symbolically reflected their low status, further defining Canadian nationhood and citizenship as White (Thobani, 2007; Yu, 2018).

Equally, RIT points out that categorical distinctions are shaped by local hiring culture that connects to wider societal fields. Influenced by Bourdieu, RIT recognizes that immigrant incorporation and labour market outcomes are socially, culturally, and institutionally regulated, relational and connected to fields within and outside of the organization. Bourdieu (1997) describes fields as structured spaces of positions with associated relational expectations for behaviours. Fields provide the cultural resources necessary to construct and make sense of the course of action between people, positions, and organizations. Here, it is not only organizational social actors that dictate the experience of immigrants within the labour market but also other social actors such as licensing boards, government rules and regulations found in the accreditation regulatory field, employment law field, and immigration field, among others. Also,

workplace hiring practices are connected to the Human Resources Management (HRM) field that is called upon by social actors such as HRM professionals in their evaluation of immigrant job candidates. These fields that connect to organizational culture and workplace practises often include ideologies, rationales, and logic that normalize exploitation, social closure, and exclusion. Also, these fields generate goals, shape power relationships between people, and dictate the mode of thought and practice of organizational social actors such as HRM professional bodies, determining what action they should and should not take when hiring immigrants. In many ways, RIT enables the interrogation and analysis of the relational organizational practises, processes, policies, and ideologies that govern immigrant incorporation within the labour market.

Within the context of this study, RIT helps analyze the process of immigrant exclusion within hiring by exploring the social mechanisms of exploitation, social closure practices, and claim-making processes involved in hiring. Also, it views those involved in hiring through the lens of relational inequalities and as social actors within inequality regimes. Specifically, how do the HRM professionals, hiring managers, and panels' social categories and categorical distinctions of race, immigrant status as citizens, organizational decision-makers, Canadian-born, and Canadian-educated influence their decisions on immigrant candidates? Most importantly, how and in what ways do their social position and penchant for social closure practices that benefit their ingroup shape immigrants' labour market outcomes? In the study, I demonstrate how HRM professionals utilize multiple social closure practices and categorical distinctions to deny immigrants equal access to jobs. Moreover, RIT enables us to see how immigrants and their intersecting social categories and categorical distinctions, such as foreigners, racialized, and culturally distinct, are used to legitimate differential treatment in hiring and justify their exclusion.

Theory of Racialized Organizations

Victor Ray's (2019) TRO centers organizations as racial inequality regimes. Here, organizational foundation, hierarchies, practices, processes, actions, and meanings are influenced by race and racism that shape the allocation of resources, justification of rewards, exploitation, and exclusion. Consequently, social and organizational resources are distributed to groups based on their place within the racial social hierarchy. TRO shows that racial discrimination within organizations occurs through racial cognitive schemas that view and portray organizations as race-neutral while masking the unequal distribution of organizational resources. He defines racial schemas as " 'taken-for-granted' mental representations generating and legitimating inequality" (Ray 2019:31). The schemas are embedded within historical racist assumptions, relationships, and rules that benefit Whites at the expense of non-White racial groups; thus, providing other ostensibly non-racial reasons that justify racial discrimination and hierarchy within organizations. These cognitive racial schemas are enacted in several ways but with related effects. First, "racialized organizations enhance or diminish the agency of racial groups" (Ray 2019:27). Historical racism has led to occupational segregation, racial occupational niches, and racial organizational hierarchies. This has gone unacknowledged and denied in Canada, perpetuating the status quo of racial stratification and creating the assumption that everyone has equal access. Tangibly, this means differential access to jobs, treatment in salary negotiations, lack of control over work assignments, and limited opportunities for promotion (Frank 2011, Liu, 2019). Second, "racialized organizations legitimate the unequal distribution of resources" (Ray 2019:27). By assuming organizational race neutrality, White leadership, and privileged access to professional jobs as well as other internal organizational resources are justified as normal and fair. Third, "Whiteness is a credential" (Ray 2019:27). Whites' privileged access within society and organizations, coupled with the embodied capital of Whiteness, leads to a premium being placed on their output, credentials, skills, and work experience from White institutions; for White workers, competence is assumed (Alegria &

Banerjee, in press). For racial minorities lacking the support of the racial cognitive schemas which bestow this embodied capital, their skills, credentials, and contributions to the organization are devalued. This results in lower access to professional positions and promotions, even with the same institutional credentials (Guo, 2015; Alegria & Branch; 2015). Fourth, “the decoupling of formal rules from organizational practice is often racialized” (Ray, 2019, p. 27). The cognitive racial schemas support colour-blind views of the organization, fail to enforce equal opportunity laws, implement diversity initiatives, and enable individual racial bias via organizational rules and social closure mechanisms. Racial cognitive schemas shape the organizational distribution of resources but also impact the choices of decision-makers—who are largely White. Rules governing hiring, training, and promotion are differentially applied, with rigid adherence to rules when they disadvantage racial minorities and a loosening of those rules for Whites. As such, Ray (2019: 34) defines “racialized organizations as meso-level social structures that limit the personal agency and collective efficacy of subordinate racial groups while magnifying the agency of the dominant racial group.”

In Canada, as Oreopoulos & Dechief (2011), Creese & Wiebe (2012), Guo (2015), and Yssaad & Fields (2018) highlight, the value of credentials and work experience is determined by the person holding them. Even when Whites and non-Whites workers have the same credentials and work experience, they are valued differently, leading to differential rates of return and occupational outcomes. Similarly, Li (2008) observes Canada's historical and present social construction of race promotes racial hierarchy with Whites at the top. He argues that there is a social and market value attached to Whiteness, which results in Whites having greater access to resources, opportunities, and better labour market outcomes than non-whites. He notes that the social hierarchy of race manifests within Canada’s view of which groups are socially desirable, or undesirable based on their country of origin. Today, despite the shift to a point-based immigration system that takes a human capital approach that rewards skills such as education, experience, and language ability, we see a continuation of historical patterns of racial

occupational segregation and racial discrimination. Hence, categorical distinctions such as race and immigration status are historical yet present in shaping the contemporary relationship and interactions between immigrants and organizational social actors.

Utilizing TRO in the analysis for this study centralizes the effects of race and racism within the organization. This analysis is largely absent from Canadian immigration discourses, which favour human capital and skill mismatch as explanations for immigrants' poor labour market outcomes. Also, TRO recharacterizes organizations within Alberta as racialized organizations—specifically, White racialized organizations, where White Canadians benefit from normative organizational policies and practices of social closure, exploitation, and claim-making processes. The notion of Canadian organizations and policies as fair and race-neutral is contradicted by differential immigrant outcomes between White and non-White immigrants within the Canadian labour market (Oreopoulos & Dechief, 2011; Creese & Wiebe, 2012; Yssaad & Fields, 2018; Liu, 2019; Gingrich et al., 2023). Also, the benefit of TRO is that it accounts for cultural racism that shapes immigrant access to social and material resources through organizational formation, hierarchy, and processes.

Critical Discourse Analysis

I employ critical discourse analysis as a theoretical framework and research methodology to examine how organizations generate and perpetuate inequality. Critical discourse analysis recognizes that text and talk within professions such as HRM shape and produce inequality regimes in organizations (Fairclough, 2005; Van Dijk, 2015). Organizational discourses embody and shape organizational practices, perceptions, interactions, and professional identity. Also, CDA recognizes the ideological function of organizational discourses manifested in stories and narratives that legitimize inequality, power imbalances, and the rule of powerful social actors (van Dijk, 2015). As a method, CDA offers various sites for exploring the role of organizational discourse, including rhetoric, tropes, conversation dialogues, narratives, and stories (Grant et al., 2004). These narratives and stories provide categorical distinctions,

ideas and instructions about objects and people that influence organizational social actors' attitudes, identities, and actions. Consequently, to locate and better understand social relations between immigrants and HRM professionals, examining the categorical distinctions of immigrants found in HRM textbooks and courses is necessary. By analyzing the narratives and stories of immigrants featured in these HRM texts, we can gain valuable insights into how HRM professionals perceive and interact with immigrants in the workplace. Through this analysis, we understand how the discourses in these courses and textbooks work to create and sustain the intersecting categorical distinctions of immigrants within organizational practices, processes, and claim-making. CDA helps to unearth how HRM professionals' exposure to these categorical distinctions, coupled with expert advice from authors and instructors, may influence HRM hiring practices and the evaluation of immigrant candidates.

Hiring Organizational Inequality Regimes Theoretical Framing

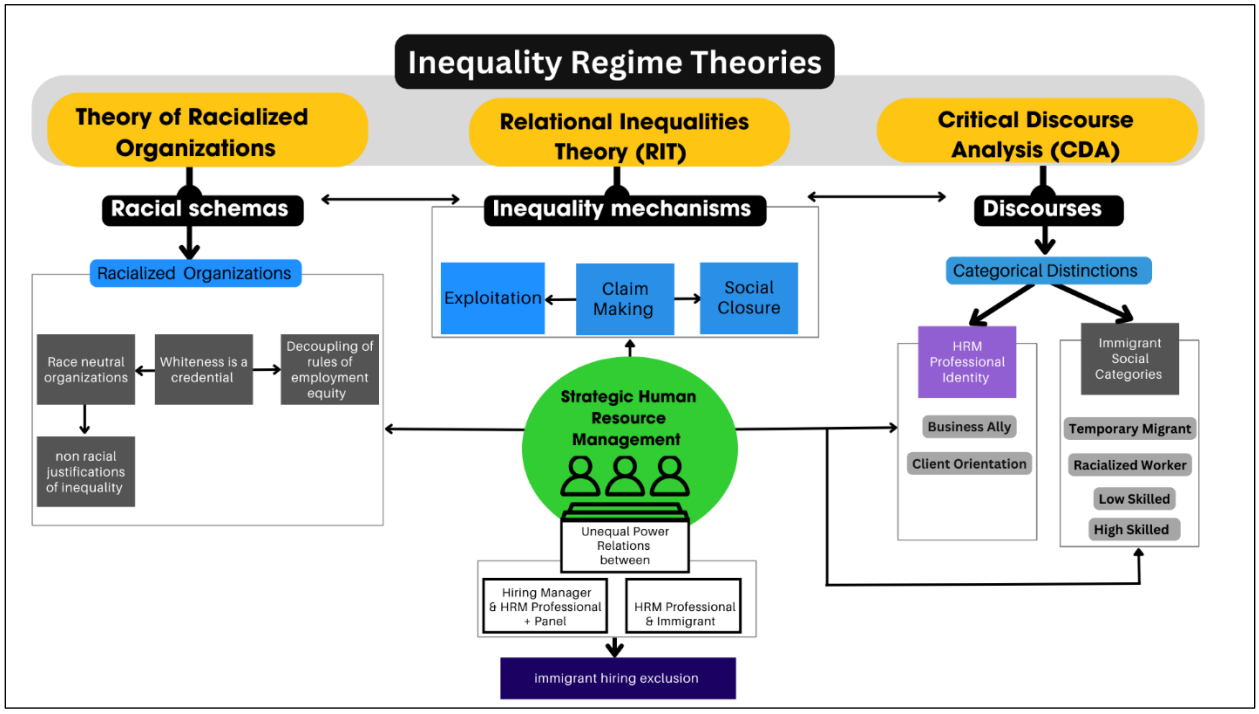


Figure 1. Hiring Organizational Inequality Regimes Theoretical Framing

In this study, I bridge these three theories to address inequality regimes within hiring. The theories emphasize power relations between social actors and the role of history, as well as

account for macro, meso, and micro-level structures in shaping social inequality and exclusion for low-status groups such as immigrants. TRO recognizes the role of race and racism via racial schemas. It highlights that all organizations are racialized organizations embedded with historical racist assumptions, attitudes, relationships, practices, and rules that benefit some racial groups over others. The study highlights that Alberta organizations are racialized organizations. They enhance or diminish the agency of racial groups, legitimate the unequal distribution of resources via views of organizations as discrimination-free, hold Whiteness as a credential and the basis for the distribution of organizational resources such as jobs, and decouple organizational practices from employment equity rules. RIT points out that the mechanisms of immigrant exclusion are exploitation, social closure, and claim-making. Claim-making is political and relational because claims must be legitimated by a powerful decision-making actor such as an HRM professional, hiring manager, and/or panel. In this study, immigrants' claims for employment in the primary labour market are often denied by hiring decision-makers because of racial schemas that are prevalent within organizational discourses, policies, and practices. CDA theorists argue that high-status groups such as citizens and White workers have more access and control over normative public discourses, allowing them to reject claims for organizational resources made by low-status groups such as non-White immigrants. Discourses create and utilize categorical distinctions that not only shape HRM professional identity within organizations but also categorize immigrants as temporary non-White migrant workers who are human capital and culturally deficient.

The dominant professional logic of HRM professionals is strategic human resource management (SHRM), which is deeply embedded with racial schemas and discourses. These elements intersect and affect immigrant claim-making by justifying racialized organizational policies and practices that lead to immigrant exclusion. SHRM argues that the primary role of HRM professionals is to support the sustainability and profitability of the firm. However, in doing so, it promotes unequal power relations between immigrants and HRM professionals by using

racial and cultural schemas and discourses to deny immigrants' claims for employment based on their hiring being a hindrance to business goals. SHRM in HRM professional education courses and textbooks promotes categorical distinctions of immigrants, such as non-White temporary migrants with low skills, to justify immigrants' exclusion from employment. SHRM promotes racialized organizations by holding Whiteness as a credential during the evaluation of immigrant applicants while denying that discrimination is a problem by providing non-racial economic justifications. Additionally, SHRM promotes unequal power relations between HRM professionals and the hiring manager (team/ department supervisor) by promoting a client-oriented and business-ally professional identity that sees the HRM professional as subservient to the hiring manager's demands and responsible only to business objectives. HRM professionals do not ensure that discriminatory policies, practices, and decision-making processes during recruitment and selection are limited. Equally, SHRM promotes the view of Alberta organizations as neutral and discrimination-free, leading to the decoupling of equity rules from hiring processes. HRM professionals provide administrative coverage and use non-racial justifications for discriminatory organizational practices, policies and decision-making processes in hiring. The justifications used by the HRM professionals interviewed are the same or similar to the human and cultural capital deficiency discourses propagated by the HRM textbook authors and course outlines.

As I bridge these inequality regime theories to analyze the evaluation and hiring processes of the HRM professionals interviewed, I argue that SHRM, as promoted in HRM textbooks and courses, provides the professional and institutional logic that justifies the denial of immigrant claims for employment, social closure practices, and taste-based and statistical discrimination that cumulatively prevent non-White immigrants from employment in the primary labour market. I further argue that immigrant labour market exclusion and discrimination stem not only from immigrants' perceived human and cultural deficiency but from hiring professionals' failure to recognize immigrants'—particularly racialized immigrants—permanent residency

status, which affords them the right to work and preference in hiring. Human resource management (HRM) professionals categorically define and treat immigrants as temporary foreign workers and international students with employment restrictions. This practice has severe negative consequences for immigrants during the hiring process, as their claim and privileged access to employment and legal protection is denied. Instead, having markers of foreignness, such as non-White English names, credentials, accents, and being racialized, triggers additional scrutiny and differential treatment. Immigrants are frequently excluded from job opportunities due to this perceived lack of legal employment eligibility and human and cultural capital deficiencies. These beliefs and conceptualizations of immigrant applicants stem from HRM textbook authors' and instructors' deficient immigrant discourses. HRM texts, government licensing rules, hiring norms, and the habitus of hiring professionals institutionalize cultural distinctions between Canadian-born workers and non-White immigrants in hiring. These processes and cultural distinctions protect Canadian-born workers by prioritizing citizenship, Whiteness, and ascribing privileges to Canadian work experience and credentials. It is crucial for organizational decision makers, such as HRM professionals, to understand and address these issues in their professional practice.

Immigrant employment is further hindered because HRM instructors and textbook authors do not provide information about how Canadian skilled immigration programs work, eligibility requirements, and that most immigrants are assessed for high human capital, language proficiency, and cultural adaptability before entering Canada. Consequently, HRM professionals cannot adequately evaluate or advise hiring managers and panels on immigrants' job applications, questions and concerns regarding immigrants' rights to work, language proficiency, human capital quality, Canadian work experience, and education equivalency. Instead, hiring professionals are taught to subscribe to strategic human resource management (SHRM) logic concerned with profit, productivity, efficiency, avoiding risks, and reducing administrative burdens. Immigrants, particularly racialized immigrants, are defined as having

and posing challenges to these business objectives, which makes them less employable. HRM professionals receive training on a hiring process and application assessment that only assumes and accommodates a Canadian citizen as a job candidate. However, a key message communicated to HRM professionals and students is that immigrants bear personal responsibility for their own employment outcomes and labour market integration.

SHRM logic enables hiring professionals to make economic and other non-race-based justifications for not hiring immigrants, particularly racialized immigrants. SHRM promotes power asymmetry in hiring decision-making and reinforces hiring managers' preferences for Canadian-born workers and workers with Canadian experience (i.e. work, credentials, and cultural values). Motivated by in-group bias, nativism, xenophobia, and racism, hiring managers and panels block opportunities for immigrants while being supported by HRM professionals. HRM professionals have the authority to intervene but do not because of financial incentives, Canadians' first orientation, adherence to SHRM professional and occupational ethos as strategic business partners, and loyalty to business welfare over human rights and employment equity considerations. Alberta's hiring practices do not account for immigrants and are tailored only to protect and privilege Canadian citizens, White workers, and workers with Canadian experience.

Chapter Layout

In this chapter, I began by situating poor immigrant labour market outcomes within a historical context and providing the theories used to analyze the study's findings. The theories of relational inequality, racialized organizations, and critical discourse analysis allow us to capture how immigrants' poor labour market outcomes are a function of the racial schemas, discourses and inequality mechanisms of exploitation, social closure, and claim-making (Tomaskovic-Devey & Avent-Holt, 2019). The chapter highlights that in Canada and Alberta, employers and the government make categorical distinctions between the types of people in the Canadian

labour market based on race, skill, immigration status, and country of origin. Current employer preferences for White workers in Alberta can be traced back to racist immigration and institutional practices that prefer and reward White labour at the expense of non-White labour. Also, the pervasiveness of cultural racism and social closure practices within hiring, evident in the requirement for Canadian experience, can be traced back to historical antecedents where the primary labour market was closed to non-White immigrants and migrants via racist and cultural justifications that assume that immigrants are deficient and constitute a threat. A continued feature of the Canadian labour market is the racial sorting of labour through country-of-origin and cultural racial schemas that link racial bodies and labour as ideal for some jobs and positions over others. Cultural racial schemas tie non-White immigrants to jobs in the secondary labour market and Whites to the primary labour market.

Chapter two reviews the literature on immigrant labour market outcomes and the role of organizational discourse in shaping professional practice, social relations, and generating social inequality. Also, the chapter examines theoretical and methodological considerations in shaping how study terms are operationalized and which research method is chosen. The chapter highlights that not all immigrants are excluded from jobs in the primary labour market. Whereas non-White immigrants face exclusion, White immigrants have similar experiences to Canadian-born workers in the labour market. Also, immigrant labour market integration and hiring decision outcomes are shaped by intersecting considerations of race, class, gender, skill, and immigration status. Lastly, there is a paucity of studies examining employer hiring decision-making processes, policies, and practices.

Chapter three outlines the study's research methodology, ethical considerations, and limitations. It highlights research as an iterative process requiring varied considerations resulting in multiple methodological decisions and analytical processes. Chapter four examines the organizational discourses on immigrants and the hiring of immigrants in HRM textbooks and course outlines. The chapter reveals that multiple HRM discourses are embedded with racial

schemas that support and promote social closure, immigrant exploitation, and exclusion from jobs in the primary labour market. The course outlines and textbooks reveal SHRM as the dominant professional logic governing the work of HRM professionals and their interaction with immigrant applicants. The key question and focus of these discourses is whether immigrant labour constitutes good SHRM. The critical point in the chapter is that HRM textbooks and course outline discourses help construct the identity of HRM professionals and the categorization of immigrants. The categorization of immigrants as only temporary low-skilled non-White migrants posing financial risks and administrative burdens is later repeated in the interviews as rationales for not hiring immigrants. Hence, it is argued that the discourses found in HRM texts construct the entry and treatment of immigrants within the Canadian labour market.

Chapter five analyzes interviews conducted with HRM professionals. The chapter demonstrates that, like HRM textbook authors, HRM professionals understood and categorically defined immigrants as only low-skilled temporary foreign workers with limited language proficiency and cultural competency. These categorical distinctions increase scrutiny, create barriers, and justify immigrant exclusion. SHRM logic is used as non-racial justifications for employers' social closure practices and the denial of immigrants' claims for employment. Unequal power relations between hiring managers and HRM professionals are explored as social interactions shaping the hiring process, evaluation criteria, and ethical and equity considerations.

In chapter six, I unpack HRM professionals' hiring norms as social closure practices, such as Canadian-born workers first, only Canadian resumes and cover letters, and the failure to use objective and reliable assessments in hiring. Building on Acker’s notion of gendered organizations and Ray’s notion of racialized organizations, I make the point that seemingly neutral organizational roles and practices are embedded with racism in Alberta, Canada (Acker, 2006; Ray, 2019). The typical recruitment, evaluation, and selection process assumes and

caters to citizens, White Canadian-born workers and White workers. In turn, this results in non-White workers having to prove additional requirements of White (Canadian) cultural competency and credentials beyond being able to do the job. In many ways, the hiring process and evaluation criteria reveal that Whiteness is a credential and requirement for employment in Alberta. In chapter seven, I summarize the study's findings, potential implications, and theoretical contributions. This research is timely given the current debates regarding the merits of immigration in solving Canada's labour and economic challenges. It is significant because it is one of few studies moving the discussion about immigrants' poor labour market outcomes in Canada away from assumed immigrant deficiency and toward considerations of the professional habitus and role of decision-makers, such as HRM professionals.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Employment is critical for the successful integration of immigrants. Canada markets itself as a welcoming nation, resulting in immigrants moving with the hope of a better life. Nevertheless, many immigrants, despite being highly skilled and selected based on their high human capital, are met with a labour market that pushes them into underemployment, poor wages, and poverty (Block & Galabuzi, 2011; Frank, 2011; Reitz et al., 2014; Liu, 2019). Consequently, it is not surprising that the success of recent immigrants to Canada in the labour market has become a key focus of research.

In their labour market research and reports, Statistics Canada defines immigrants based on their years in Canada under three headings— newcomers, recent immigrants, and established immigrants (Yssaad & Fields, 2018). Newcomers refer to landed immigrants in Canada who have been here for five years or less. Recent immigrants include landed immigrants in Canada for over 5 to 10 years. Established immigrants refer to landed immigrants who have been in Canada for more than ten years. As one would expect, labour market outcomes for these immigrants vary depending on the years in the host country (Lightman & Gingrich, 2012; Hussen, 2018; Hou, 2024). In discussing the labour market integration of immigrants, scholars have defined 'labour market integration' in multiple ways, from immigrants finding employment (Reitz, 2007) to immigrants having a stable job (Schmitt, 2012), to the quality of the employment opportunities and challenges that they face once employed (Li & Li, 2013; Lightman & Gingrich, 2012; Lu & Picot, 2017).

In Canada, the conversation about the labour market integration of immigrants is primarily centered on the poor labour market outcomes of immigrants and the barriers immigrants experience in gaining a job. The research shows that immigrants, particularly newcomers and racialized immigrants when compared to Canadian-born workers, suffer from earning differentials (Hou, 2024), higher poverty rates (TRIEC 2018; Lightman & Gingrich, 2018), and underemployment (Reitz et al., 2014; Liu, 2019). For instance, Lu and Picot (2017),

using the Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB) for 1993 to 2012, point out that the chronic low-income rate was 2.6 times higher among immigrants than the Canadian-born in 2000, 2.7 in 2010 and 3.3 times higher in 2012. Similarly, Agopsowicz and Billy-Ochieng (2019), in their data analysis from Statistics Canada, highlight that the gap in median earnings between Canadian-born and immigrants rose from 3.8% in 1986 to 10.3% in 2018. They observe that the wage gap between immigrants and Canadian-born workers exists across all occupations except the sciences, affects both immigrant women and men, and occurs across Canada. Statistics Canada (Hou et al., 2019, p. 5) reports that, despite immigrants being highly educated, "only about one-half of the growth in university-educated workers over these 15 years was matched with growth in jobs requiring a university education". Primarily, employers in Canada only hired immigrants in low- and medium-skilled jobs.

Statistics Canada (Yssaad & Fields, 2018), using the 2007-2016 Labour Force Survey (LFS), highlights that employment rates for immigrants are improving. For example, the unemployment rate among immigrants aged 25 to 54 declined to 6.4% in 2017. This marks the lowest rate recorded since the beginning of the LFS immigrant series in 2006. Also, the employment rate increased from 65% in 2006 to 70% in 2017 among core-aged recent immigrants (Yssaad & Fields, 2018). Since 2018, the immigrant employment rate gap has continued to improve. However, the earning gap between Canadians and immigrants has only narrowed for immigrants selected as part of two-step[5] immigration cohorts, such as temporary foreign workers and international students (Hou et al., 2020). Also, despite Canadian educational credentials, two-step immigrants remain predominantly employed in low-skilled occupations requiring a high school education or less (Hou, 2024). Even though one-step

[5] Two step immigrant refers to those who enter as temporary migrants and then transition to immigrants. See Hou, 2024.

immigrants[6] are selected for permanent residence based on their high educational attainment and relevant work experience, they still tend to experience underemployment and lack suitable job opportunities matching their qualifications and work experience (Hou et al., 2019; Hou, 2024). Despite improvements in employment rates and increases in earnings, immigrants, particularly recent immigrants and racialized immigrants, continue to face downward occupational mobility and earn significantly less than Canadian-born workers (Hou, 2024).

Besides class, there are also racial and gender dimensions to the poor labour market outcomes among immigrants. Non-White immigrants face differential treatment within the labour market, which includes increasing unemployment levels and lower earnings rates based on their skin colour (Li & Li, 2013; Guo, 2015; Lightman & Gingrich, 2018). Pendakur and Woodcock (2010) investigated earnings disparities across Canadian immigrants and ethnic groups within and across firms. They found that since the 1990s, earnings gaps have been larger for recent immigrants than non-recent immigrants and greater for non-White immigrants than White immigrants, despite the growth of the visible-minority population. Furthermore, non-White populations are predominantly hired for jobs that are characterized as temporary, poorly paid, insecure, and with no benefits; this contributes to the racialization of poverty and negatively influences integration and well-being (Block & Galabuzi, 2011; Hou & Bonikowska, 2018; Hou, 2024). Yssaad and Fields (2018) highlight that White immigrants have better labour market outcomes than non-White immigrants and share similar labour market experience as Canadian-born workers. Similarly, Gingrich, Banerjee, & Lightman (2023) find that White men—both White men immigrants and Canadian-born White men—are not disadvantaged within the Canadian labour market and face the least economic exclusion (i.e. labour market precarity, low wages, dependency on government subsidies, and low family income). Immigrants, particularly non-

[6] One step immigrant refers to a permanent resident who came directly from their home country. See Hou, 2024.

White immigrants, continue to experience underemployment as they are not employed in their previous occupations. Frank (2011), as well as Lightman and Gingrich (2018), demonstrate that non-White immigrants are blocked particularly from high-status occupations and high-skilled jobs. White Canadians—Canadian-born or immigrants—are afforded the best jobs and highest positions (Gingrich et al., 2023). This is the case despite non-White immigrants having higher educational attainment: "30 percent of white Canadian-born men and 32 percent of white Canadian-born women have a university degree or higher, for visible minority immigrant men and women, this proportion is 53 and 48 percent respectively" (Gingrich et al., 2023 p. 9). These reports highlight that race shapes immigrant access to material resources and labour market outcomes.

In terms of gender, immigrant women are more likely to face persistent challenges in becoming employed. Women immigrants have lower employment earnings and average entry employment compared to male principal applicants (Lightman & Gingrich, 2012; Elrick & Lightman, 2016; Hussen, 2018; Yssaad & Fields, 2018). Hou, Crossman, & Picot (2021) report that despite government changes in immigration selection, human capital weighting, emphasis on language proficiency, and improvement in skill utilization, little has changed in the employment rate gap between new immigrant women and Canadian-born women throughout the 2001to 2019 period. Non-White immigrant women experience the most significant disadvantage in the labour market and the most economic exclusion (Liu, 2019; Gingrich et al., 2023). Despite faring better than immigrant women, immigrant men experienced a widening gap in weekly earnings. They earned 20.1% less than their Canadian-born counterparts in 2000, increasing to 24.2% less in 2001 (Hou et al., 2021, p. 9). These findings challenge the notion that time in Canada, immigration status and low human capital are the root causes of differential labour market outcomes, rather than discrimination and related organizational exclusionary processes (Pendakur & Pendakur, 2002; Oreopoulos & Dechief, 2011; Wallace & Kay, 2012; Creese & Wiebe, 2012; Guo, 2015; Gingrich et al.,2023).

Theories Explaining Immigrant Experiences in the Canadian Labour Market

Several studies have offered various theories to explain the reasons for poor labour market outcomes among immigrants. From the perspective of the Canadian government and some researchers, the challenge immigrants face is best explained by Human Capital Theory (HCT). HCT assumes that the higher a person's skill, language proficiency, education, and work experience, the higher their productivity and income. Consequently, human capital theorists explain the employment obstacles experienced by immigrants as a lack of recognition of foreign credentials and experience, language and communication barriers, discrimination, and employers' requirement for "Canadian experience" (Sakamoto et al., 2010; Oreopoulos, 2011; Warman et al., 2015; Liu, 2019). Another critical aspect of HCT is that employers evaluate workers based on their abilities. This evaluation process includes assessing specific skills that are directly relevant to a particular job and, more generally, transferable skills. The fundamental idea behind HCT is that employers can accurately judge an applicant’s potential productivity, even though the assessment may not be perfect. As a result, any inequalities that may arise between different groups of workers are primarily due to mismatches between the skills or traits required by a job and those possessed by workers. Shan (2013) highlights that underemployment and unemployment are often explained based on the perception of immigrants lacking human capital skills, such as English proficiency and soft skills, such as friendliness. However, researchers have shown that the definition of merit is socially situated and systematically biased against subordinate groups (Bauder, 2005; Creese & Wiebe, 2012; Rivera, 2013; Guo, 2015). A major limitation of HCT is that because of its focus on education, training, and work experience, inequality is justified by individual achievements alone, and social actors’ practices such as the Canadian government, employers, and licensing bodies who are involved in sorting workers in the labour market are not accounted for or addressed. Another critique of HCT is that it assumes that there is a reward for human capital. Except in the case of Canada particularly, employers do not recognize non-White immigrants' high human capital

despite it already being validated by the federal government (Dietz et al., 2015). As such, the experience of non-White immigrants raises questions about the efficacy and limits of human capital theory.

Social Identity Theory (SIT) is another theory used to explain immigrants' poor labour market outcomes. SIT argues that discrimination and prejudice occur because of the tendency of people to classify themselves and others into various social categories such as national, organizational membership, religious affiliation, gender, and age cohort (Turner & Tajfel, 1986). Reitz and Breton (1994), using general social surveys, Gallup polls, census reports, and other data sources examined attitudes, government policies, discrimination levels, cultural retention, and the extent of the economic incorporation of racial minorities. They showed that while most Canadians deny harbouring racist views, they maintain a "social distance" from minorities — that is, they say they prefer not to interact with members of other racial groups in certain social situations. SIT plays out through the practice of discounting the credentials of immigrants. Dietz et al. (2015), using an attitudinal survey at a large Canadian university, examine the value of foreign-acquired credentials and the perception of Black applicants' credentials. The results showed that foreign-acquired credentials were devalued significantly and when an accredited body had not assessed the foreign credentials of the applicants. The credentials of Black applicants were viewed less favourably only when the evaluators had underlying racial biases. The study shows the role of prejudice and racism in hiring decisions. It also demonstrates that having a foreign credentials evaluation may lead to better employment outcomes for immigrants. A limitation of the study is that the participants were not employers but students playing the role of an employer. SIT emphasizes the discriminatory gatekeeping mechanisms of the government, employers, licencing and accreditation boards, and individuals, such as hiring managers, that are rooted in prejudice and social categorizations based on their out-group status. A major limitation of SIT is the tendency to boil down discrimination to implicit bias and

the framing of discrimination as a natural process. Also, there is a tendency to emphasize action on the part of the marginalized to solve their exclusion.

Relational Inequality Theory (RIT) contributes to understanding the role of social actors such as human resource (HR) professionals in generating social inequality. Through RIT, Tomaskovic-Devey and Avent-Holt (2019) provide useful conceptual tools for understanding and explaining the role that decision-makers such as HR professionals play in producing and reproducing social inequality within organizations and, by extension, the wider society. For disadvantaged groups such as immigrants, women, the elderly, and Indigenous peoples, RIT provides an explanation for why they are occupationally segregated into low-wage jobs and at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy in organizations. They explain that decision makers, such as HR professionals, promote social inequality through processes of categorical distinctions that assign applicants into in-groups and out-groups, reserving organizational resources for the in-groups to which they belong. They do this through the following procedures. First, is exploitation through the appropriation of out-groups' income and other resource. Second, social closure through hoarding opportunities and gatekeeping mechanisms that reserve organizational resources for their in-group. Third, decision-makers such as HR professionals deny subordinate group claims for greater resources (Tomaskovic-Devey and Avent-Holt 2019: 55). RIT is useful for this study because it centers the role of the organization and organizational social actors in producing social inequality. Also, RIT explains clearly the mechanisms of social inequality and marginalization that subordinate groups face while acknowledging history and structural factors, such as immigration policy.

Scarce Resource Theory (SRT), conversely, critiques Social Identity Theory and Relational Inequality Theory (RIT) for emphasizing discrimination and prejudice by highlighting that societal factors fuel anti-immigrant sentiments and practises. SRT holds that a society's negative attitudes toward immigrants and racial minorities are influenced by economic and demographic factors such as recessions, increases in unemployment rates, and rapid

population increases (Esses et al., 2001). Analyzing Canadian attitudinal surveys and polls between 1975 and 1995, Esses et al. (2001) showed that being unemployed fostered the belief that immigrants take jobs from Canadians. They also found that, for highly prejudiced individuals, attitudes toward the level of immigration (i.e. whether there are too many immigrants) depend on their perceptions of the ethnicity of immigrants, their level of economic security, and the perceived effects of immigration on Canadian-born employment such as depressed wages. The benefit of SRT is that it captures the local socioeconomic conditions at play within oil and boom provinces such as Alberta that impact feelings towards immigrants and economic cycles that correlate with immigrants' entrance, exit, and improvement within the labour force (Palmer, 1996; Esses et al. 2001). Cantano et al. (2016) concur that these economic conditions impact staffing decisions. During economic booms, there is a need to hire more workers, and skilled labour shortages occur. Economic slowdowns or recessions result in job cuts and hiring freezes with a greater supply of job applicants. Statistics Canada reports continually show that immigrants' employment outcomes improved because of labour shortages (Hou & Bonikowska,2018). A limitation of SRT is that it rationalizes immigrant labour market outcomes and discrimination as non-racial, non-gendered, and divorced from social actors.

The Theory of Racialized Organizations (TRO) argues that, contrary to management theorists, organizations are not race-neutral bureaucratic organizational structures (Ray, 2019). Instead, it argues that race shapes and mediates organizational processes, everyday practices, hierarchies, and foundations. Four tenets of this theory are relevant to the Canadian work environment: "Racialized organizations enhance or diminish the agency of racial groups; racialized organizations legitimate the unequal distribution of resources; whiteness is a credential, and the decoupling of formal rules from organizational practice is often racialized" (Ray 2019:26). The benefit of this theory is that it provides a structural theory of race and organizations that is critical to understanding immigrants position and experience in the Canadian labour market. Seeing the Canadian organizations and labour market as racial raises

questions about structure and agency. It is clear from empirical research that the Canadian labour market favours White Canadians and White immigrants and disadvantages non-White immigrants (Block & Galabuzi, 2011; Guo, 2015; Yssaad & Fields, 2018; Gingrich et al., 2023). The theory also refocuses attention away from the discourses around immigrants as non-racial labourers when, in fact, most immigrants coming to Canada and facing poor labour outcomes are non-White (Hou, 2024; Gingrich et al., 2023).

Human Resources Management Hiring Practices

After reviewing all the best-known and empirically supported prejudice and discrimination theories, Crandall and Eshleman (2003) created the Justification Suppression Model (JSM). Through JSM, they explain the processes that lead to the expression of prejudice and discrimination. Their model introduces three important concepts: prejudice, suppression, and justification. Prejudice is defined as “a negative evaluation of a social group or a negative evaluation of an individual that is significantly based on the individual's group membership”; suppression as “an externally or internally motivated attempt to reduce the expression or awareness of prejudice”; and justification as “any psychological or social process that can serve as an opportunity to express genuine prejudice without suffering external or internal sanction” (Crandall & Eshleman,2003:414,419,425). They suggest that people try to suppress their prejudices (racial, gender, ethnic, etc.) because they are restrained by the beliefs, values, and norms that view openly prejudicial behaviour as unacceptable. However, prejudice is expressed when there are a series of justifications (e.g., attributions, ideologies, stereotypes) that allow individuals to be prejudicial without internal or external punishment. As such, individuals who engage in racial or anti-immigrant discrimination stemming from internal prejudice look for non-racial or anti-immigrant explanations to 'justify' that their actions are based on something other than racism or anti-immigrant sentiment. Once prejudice can be disguised through justifications, prejudice is expressed, and the result is discrimination. The benefit of using JSM is that it

captures the nuance of prejudice, and the multiple ways individual acts of prejudice and discrimination are justified within everyday practises and socially acceptable norms. The implication of this model for research on the integration of immigrants is that it questions the narratives, such as immigrants' poor language skills and lack of organizational fitness as justifications for immigrants' exclusion and poor labour market outcomes. Also, it centers on the mediating role of organizational rules and processes in limiting and facilitating discrimination. The major challenge with this model is that it tends to emphasize individual implicit bias as the reason for discrimination rather than institutional practices and norms as facilitating discrimination.

Pierre Bourdieu's (1990; 1986) concepts of habitus, capital, and field offer useful insight into the poor labour market outcomes of immigrants in Canada. Bourdieu (1990:53) defines habitus as "the systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations." Habitus refers to socially acquired tendencies or dispositions that serve as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and history, which in turn shape an individual's worldview and actions (Bourdieu, 1993). Habitus involves the individual embodiment of social structures (such as race, class, and gender) and history. Importantly, habitus also recognizes group or class processes of distinction based on these social structures. Bourdieu argues that societal groups emerge from individuals having and sharing "the same objective conditions, identical or similar conditions of existence and conditionings" (Bourdieu 1990:59). As part of their group habitus, individuals have "internalized structures, common schemes of perception, conception and action, which are the precondition of all objectification and apperception" (Bourdieu 1990:60). Thus, both the individual and group have a set of dispositions that generate perceptions of the world and result in certain relational practices.

Habitus does not act alone but in concert with capital and within fields (Maton, 2014). Capital refers to "accumulated labour (in its materialized form or its 'incorporated,' embodied

form) which, when appropriated on a private, i.e., exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labour" (Bourdieu,1986:15). He further identifies four types of capital:

> "Economic capital, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the forms of property rights; as cultural capital, which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of educational qualifications; and as social capital, made up of social obligations ('connections'), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of a title of nobility" (Bourdieu,1986, p.16).

The fourth is symbolic capital, which is "unrecognized as capital and recognized as legitimate competence, as authority exerting an effect of (mis)recognition" (Bourdieu,1986, p.18). Consequently, some groups and individuals are viewed and ascribed inherent merit, worthiness, and legitimacy. Fields are "structured spaces of positions (or posts) whose properties depend on their position within these spaces, and which can be analyzed independently of the characteristics of their occupants (which are partly determined by them)" (Bourdieu 1993, p. 72). Consequently, field enables us to recognize the multiple spaces and relations in which we can identify institutions, agents, discourses, practices, actions, dominant and subordinate positions, and values.

Several scholars have taken a Bourdieuan approach in discussing hiring discrimination, immigrant labour market outcomes, employment strategies, and organizational fields. Bauder's (2005) research sheds light on the challenges faced by immigrants from South Asia and the former Yugoslavia in the labour market of Greater Vancouver. Through interviews with institutional administrators and employers, Bauder applied the concept of habitus to explore how labour market rules and employment situations affect immigrants. He asserts that employers' habitus produces institutionalized cultural distinction processes between Canadian-born workers and immigrants that ascribe privileges to Canadian work experience, education, and credentials, which simultaneously devalues immigrant human capital. He notes several processes hiring managers and employers use to create and maintain distinction, thus favouring individuals with

Canadian education, training, and experience. For example, Canadian professional organizations "through rigorous certifications—supported by federal and provincial legislation—enforce the reproduction of their members through the differential treatment of foreign and Canadian-educated workers" (Bauder, 2005, p. 702). Within this deferential treatment are ideas, systems, and practises that promote the devaluation of immigrant education, work experience, and skills, resulting in immigrants being regulated to the secondary labour market fraught with precarity. A major takeaway from Bauder (2005) is that Canadian labour market rules, agents (such as hiring professionals), and workplace conventions prevent immigrant groups from integrating within the labour market.

Similarly, Rivera (2012), using interviews and participant observation, takes a Bordieuan approach that accounts for relationships and interactions between people, positions, and organizations. She shows that the applicant's relationship to the hiring manager determines the outcome. The degree of social and cultural matching, as well as the affective labour of the applicant, determines hiring. This disadvantages applicants who do not share the same social and cultural capital as the hiring manager or other evaluators. Also, the study looks at the multiple sites of social closure and exclusion—i.e. schools, clubs—and other signals of cultural capital seen in resumes, cover letters, and interviews. For example, subordinated groups were significantly disadvantaged by the recruitment process and practise of selecting mostly from the elite alumni and campus clubs of the hiring managers. They also had to share the same cultural capital with other evaluators within the organization and the organization itself. Hence, it is critical to account for the categorical distinctions and forms of cultural and symbolic capital that make up hiring evaluation processes that determine hiring outcomes.

In their discussion of organizations, DiMaggio and Powell (1983) acknowledge the presence of fields. They describe organizational field as "organizations that, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life: key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies, and other organizations that produce similar services or products"

(DiMaggio & Powell,1983, p.148). They attribute the creation of homogenization among organizations to the process of isomorphism which refers to the "constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions" (DiMaggio & Powell,1983, p.149). They further identify three ways that isomorphism occurs, "1) coercive isomorphism that stems from political influence and the problem of legitimacy; 2) mimetic isomorphism resulting from standard responses to uncertainty; and 3) normative isomorphism, associated with professionalization" (DiMaggio & Powell,1983, p.150). Hence, organizations adopt policies and practices that are expected and acceptable in their field to gain legitimacy. Perhaps the most useful application of isomorphism is the recognition that the Canadian labour market and hiring by human resource professionals within Canada constitute organizational fields. These fields are influenced by government employment regulations, institutional practices such as certification, and common bodies of knowledge via professional boards and organizations. Consequently, analyzing the labour market outcomes of immigrants and the hiring practices of HR professionals requires examination of each field's set of discourses, ideas, and styles of language—for instance, the Canadian labour market field, the human resources field, and the Canadian immigration policy field. These not only determine seen and tangible outcomes such as the human resource management trend towards increasing professionalization as well as the Canadian immigration policy tendency to emphasize the distinctions between immigrant statuses (i.e. temporary migrants vs permanent residents vs citizens) but also determine which things are valued, what questions can be asked, and what ideas can be explored. For example, the question of immigrant labour market integration focuses on immigrants as deficient rather than questioning the efficacy of the host country's efforts and policies for immigrant integration. Also, these organizational fields have a habitus informed by specific past conditions, some of which are shared among and within organizations as well as with members. Therefore, values, ideas, and practices regarding

immigrant incorporation reinforce historical patterns rather than create fully new methods for incorporation.

Overall, the concepts of habitus, capital, and field are attempts to make sense of the relationship between social structures (institutions, discourses, fields, ideologies) and everyday practices (what people do and why they do it). Various forms of capital are accumulated, identified, and exchanged within the labour market, shaping employment outcomes. Also, the concepts are useful tools for understanding the unequal power relations at play within the labour market. Thus, within the Canadian labour market field, human resource management field, and hiring practices field, we see several distinctions being developed and maintained—a distinction between Whites and racialized immigrants, immigrant and Canadian-born workers, Canadian experience, and non-Canadian experience—which in turn produces immigrant social exclusion, social inequality, and labour market precarity.

Critical Discourse Analysis for Understanding HRM Practice

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), as a theory and method, is often used within Canada to explore and explain the exclusion of immigrants from the labour market. CDA examines how discourse both constitutes and shapes social practice. CDA understands discourses as including “productive activity; means of production; social relations; social identities; cultural values; consciousness; semiosis” (Fairclough, 2001, p.122). The two major preoccupations of CDA are power and social inequality. CDA scholars argue that elite social groups and institutions have greater social power and control through which they dominate subordinate groups (Gee, 2011). A central method of elite dominance is using discourse—text and talk—to justify their social abuses and as an instrument of power (Van Dijk, 2015). As Fairclough (2001, p.123) describes, "discourses are diverse representations of social life which are inherently positioned—differently positioned social actors ‘see’ and represent social life in different ways." Social inequality is produced, reproduced, and enacted via discourses that reinforce the power

and hegemony of elite groups. Elite groups and institutions not only control discourses but have control over the discourses of others. Van Dijk (2015) outlines that subordinated groups are confronted by a slew of discursive tactics that are often deployed to deny rights, position them as subordinate, and maintain inequality. These mechanisms include the use of stereotypes, prejudices, and other forms of disparaging discourse across the media as well as concealment of dominance. Subordinate groups' ability to resist is often limited by their lack of access to discursive resources such as the media, education, political parties, and science (Van Dijk, 1993). Consequently, elite groups such as Canadian businesses and citizens' considerations, views and interests are often represented and supported by laws, rules, norms, and everyday taken-for-granted opinions and actions.

Everyday discourses on immigrants, whether in HRM textbooks or course outlines, help shape and construct the entry of immigrants within the Canadian Labour market. Van Dijk's (1993) examination of dominant immigration discourse reveals several strategies utilized to justify racism and the exclusion of immigrants. These include newspapers focusing on the negative actions of minorities and immigrants, promotion of untrue facts via implications and presumptions, use of powerful metaphors, and abstract notions of immigrants that frame them as a threat and danger to the nation. Also, the use of nominalizations and passive sentence structures downplay and hide the violence of the dominant groups or in-groups. He concludes that when promoted by powerful speakers, these discourses influence listeners' knowledge, opinions, and actions. Van Dijk (1993) notes that the power of a national myth of tolerance in places such as Canada makes it harder for minority groups to challenge inequalities, take unified action, and gain credibility and support among a White dominant group.

Similarly, Strauss (2013) emphasizes the usefulness of CDA in capturing the various discourses that shape immigration policy and people's knowledge and actions in the United States (US). They find that in the US, there are a plethora of conventional immigration discourses that emphasize the economic impacts of immigrants, legality, sovereignty, and

national security, alongside alternative discourses that emphasize the humanity of immigrants and employer abuses. Conventional discourses use simplified schemas—metaphors, keywords, collocations, and rhetorical style—that are easily understood and readily deployed. For example, the use of stereotypical phrases of flow (words such as waves, floods, streams, and tides) applied to asylum seekers connects to the larger schema and metaphor of immigration as dangerous waters. Strauss (2013: 272) further notes that conventional immigration discourses also utilize rhetorical strategies that "use a rational style based on a pragmatic assessment of outcomes."

Guo and Shan (2013) find that CDA allows researchers to understand the relationship between discourse and social inequality. In their critical discourse analysis of government documents about the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) program geared toward recognizing immigrant credentials in Canada, they uncover that discourses centred on procedural fairness and managerialism tend to overlook the underlying processes of immigrant de-skilling and discrimination. Lack of consultation with immigrants in shaping the program empowered regulators and licensing bodies to frame the issue and further devalued immigrant skills.

CDA researchers primarily study how Canadian experience discourse shapes immigrants' outcomes in the labour market. Sakamoto et al. (2013), examining immigrant labour market exclusion, emphasize the diverse ways in which Canadian Experience discourse is employed to portray immigrants as deficient, deny immigrant discrimination, redirect blame from the system to immigrants, and shape the conventional perception of immigrant performance in the labour market. They point out that the Canadian Experience discourse is often used to reinforce the message that Canada is welcoming to immigrants while maintaining the privilege of the existing population and facilitating discrimination against racialized immigrants. Overall, Sakamoto et al. (2013) find that the discourses on immigration policy within print media tend to portray immigrants and immigration as problems. Bhuyan et al. (2017) conducted CDA of print

media and political discourse. They found multiple uses of the discourse of the Canadian Experience:

> a) taps into the affective identification with Canadian excellence and national pride, (b) identifies potential immigrants who are ready to be employed and thus contribute to Canada's economy and (c) regulates immigrants to align more precisely with neoliberal values, while (d) obscuring processes of racial discrimination that persist through employer-driven immigrant selection (Bhuyan et al,2017:59).

Similarly, Ku et al. (2019) point out that Canadian experience discourse is a mechanism used to cover racial and immigrant discrimination. They argue that the Canadian Experience discourse places the responsibility of immigrant labour market integration on immigrants themselves and "constructs their experiences of exclusion as non-racial" (Ku et al. 2019:191). A central point that these CDA scholar raise is that the Canadian Experience discourse constructs and categorizes immigrants as deficient without referring to their racial or social characteristics by instead arguing that immigrants have poor labour market outcomes because of their lack of human capital.

In their CDA of citizenship guides, Gulliver (2018) notes the prevalence of racial denial within the Canadian immigration discourse. Using Van Dijk's (1993) conceptual tool of the ideological square, they reveal that Canada practices positive group self-presentation and negative group presentation of immigrants:

> Emphasize positive things about Us.
> Emphasize negative things about Them.
> De-emphasize negative things about Us.
> De-emphasize positive things about Them (Gulliver, 2018: 72)

Gulliver (2018) notes that Canada routinely distances itself from past and present racism while implying that some newcomers may lack Canadians' multicultural perspective, tolerance, and commitment to gender equality while discounting the discrimination that immigrants face in Canada. Hence, examining the multiple uses of immigrant discourses and their deployment by social actors such as the government and employers is critical. Social actors often create and maintain these discourses to implement and defend policies and practices.

While CDA scholars favour examining media and political discourse over organizational discourse, they frequently highlight various instances where spoken and written language tends to cast immigrants in a broadly negative light, serving to justify their social exclusion within the Canadian labour market. Given this understanding, some scholars have used CDA to explore how HRM organizational discourses fit into larger discourses on immigrants, highlighting the role of discourse in shaping professional practice and sustaining and promoting unequal relationships between immigrants and employers. Zanoni and Janssens (2004) find grand discourse and rhetorical schemas in their CDA of HR managers' diversity discourse. They find that the diversity discourses used by HR managers were a creation of upper-level management and served various functions within the workplace, including promoting equality among employee groups but ignoring unequal power relations between employees and management. Lastly, diversity discourses mirrored grand management discourses, emphasizing the economic benefits of diversity and justifying diversity to meet organizational compliance goals.

Trofimovich et al. (2022) interviewed instructors and students in two Canadian university HR programs. They found no dedicated curricular focus or instructional materials addressing accent or language bias in workplace HR practices. Leitch and Palmer (2010) offer methodological advice for using CDA in organizational management discourse. They suggest that greater emphasis should be on analyzing text in context. Context refers to the production, distribution, and interpretation of texts and social practices, and it also involves considering the place, time, space, and practices in which text and talk operate. Within the context of immigrant labour market discourse, a focus on context would reveal the professional and societal ideological lens used to justify and reproduce underlying prejudices about subordinate groups such as immigrants. Collectively, these articles underscore the potential of CDA for understanding HRM organizational practices, emphasizing the close association between discourse, power, and knowledge, often working together to legitimize social inequality.

Human Resource Professionals and Immigrant Hiring

Although researchers frequently study the labour market outcomes of immigrants, there is less focus on the role of employers, especially human resource professionals. As aptly pointed out by Zikic (2015), despite skilled immigrants being a vital labour source in developed countries, management scholars have paid scant attention to understanding their value to organizations, human capital, and best practices for attracting and integrating immigrants within organizations. For instance, in their comprehensive human resource text, Dessler & Chhinzer (2017) only paid sparse attention to immigrants in Canada. They mainly reiterated the human capital issues that prevent immigrants from gaining jobs and framed the issues as an individual immigrant problem rather than advocating for changes to human resource practices within Canada. Nonetheless, they provide helpful conceptual definitions for understanding who constitutes an HR professional. They point out that within HRM, depending on the firm's size, hiring is done by an HR manager/recruiter, line (team/department) managers, and a hiring panel. All three groups have varied levels of authority and power within the hiring process. HR managers and recruiters have staff authority, which gives them the right to conduct recruitment, advise line managers, and ensure compliance. Line managers serve as hiring managers and have line authority, which gives them greater power and authority to select who can join their team. Hiring panels/committees are often employees of the company/team involved in selecting employees but do not have any authority or power in the final hiring decision (Dessler & Chhinzer, 2016).

Similarly, Greene (2010) and Martin (2010) concur that one of the developments in HRM is the view that people-management issues should not be the exclusive concern of the traditional personnel or HR manager. Consequently, HR functions have devolved with line (team and department) managers taking on more traditional HR roles, responsibilities, and activities. However, Martin (2010: 132) notes that in most organizations, HR activity is mostly shared between HR managers and line managers, with HR managers "mediating and facilitating the

line managers' control over their HR responsibilities." Greene (2010) also notes that despite the rhetoric of equality and diversity being central to HRM policy, practice does not always match up. She demonstrates this by referencing studies that show that despite years of anti-discrimination legislation and equality initiatives, not much has been done to improve the situation of women, racialized groups, LGBTQIA2+, young and older people. She attributes this reality to the continued practice in HRM of tending to assume the generic universal employee; inequality being embedded within HRM practices and structures; and HRM textbook's practice of relegating the discussions of diversity hiring typically to a chapter that focuses on managing diversity and legal issues in hiring.

Another issue is that the hiring practices of organizations are not evidence-based or best-practices. Risavy et al. (2021), conducting mixed-method research, found that Canadian information technology firms tend to rely on subjective methods for assessing and selecting job applicants instead of objective assessment tools. The study found that these IT firms mostly use analysis of resumes, cover letters, work samples tests, and social media profiles of applicants, along with other non-social-media information available on the internet. However, they use valid and reliable selection tools, such as assessment centres, emotional intelligence tests, integrity tests, and analysis of application forms, less often. This practice of relying on subjective methods can pose several challenges for job applicants and productivity because firms will not select the best candidate to perform the job effectively. This study is consistent with Mann et al.'s (2011) previous research that revealed a significant gap between theory and practice in Canadian companies. She found that Canadian firms did not implement evidenced-based HRM selection practices that research has shown to benefit workers and organizational productivity. Instead, most employers rely heavily on traditional interviews rather than reliable and valid assessments like job-related knowledge tests.

Rivera (2020) highlights that this is often the case as employers do not always act as utility maximizers, as is commonly assumed. Instead of solely focusing on productivity and

profit, they often base their hiring decisions on factors such as the applicant's likeability, affect, and shared group membership. She outlines three theoretical perspectives that inform employers' hiring decisions and are commonly discussed by researchers studying social inequality. Human capital theory claims that employers evaluate, and reward workers primarily based on assessments of workers' abilities. As such, employers do not hire immigrants because they do not possess the human capital required for the job. Signalling theory (ST) claims that employers make hiring decisions based on observable characteristics, such as proxies or signals of productivity found in resumes and assessed via interviews. Signal theory includes using social capital or networks as proxies of productivity and competency. Also, signal theory accounts for statistical discrimination and status-based assessments by employers, where group membership is used to estimate applicants' productivity and competency. Consequently, immigrants are not employed because they fail to signal or demonstrate the necessary competency for employment. At the opposite end of the theoretical spectrum is social closure theory (SCT). SCT argues that employers only select applicants who belong to their in-group for jobs based on group loyalty, prejudice and aversion. As such, immigrants' labour market outcomes can be explained by employer opportunity hoarding and workplace practices that close, deny, and restrict immigrant employment. Rivera (2020) concludes that a greater focus should be on how employers make hiring decisions in practice and how emotions mediate such processes.

Only three major Canadian studies have focused on the mediating role of HRM professionals in the labour market integration of immigrants. In his audit field experiment, Philip Oreopoulos (2011) sent recruiters in Toronto and Montreal over 13,000 resumes representing Express Entry stream immigrants from China, India, Pakistan, and Britain, as well as non-immigrants with and without English names. The resumes varied only in the information about the origins of applicants, with qualifications presented as identical. A follow-up interview was done with recruiters to understand their callback decisions. He found substantial discrimination

across a variety of occupations towards applicants with foreign experience or those with Indian, Pakistani, Chinese, and Greek names compared with English names. Also, "listing language fluency, multinational firm experience, education from highly selective schools, or extracurricular activities on resumes did not diminish discrimination. Recruiters justify this behaviour based on language skill concerns but fail to fully account for offsetting features when listed" (Oreopoulos, 2011:148). The study offers both theoretical and methodological approaches. Theoretically, Oreopoulos offers SIT/ implicit bias theory to explain why immigrants were not receiving callbacks from employers. Methodologically, by carrying out an audit field experiment, Oreopoulos moves beyond the conventional comparisons of immigrants and Canadian-born workers and reliance on government census or labour force survey data. Also, he complemented the audit with online interviews, asking recruiters to explain the discrimination he found in his results. A limitation of Oreopoulos' study is that its follow-up online interviews had a low response rate. Given that Oreopoulos convincingly shows that immigrants experience discrimination in the labour market, I will focus my research on the second, less-developed aspect of his study, which is to understand the practices and processes leading to or facilitating this discrimination.

Sakamoto, Chin, and Young (2010) dig deeper into the concept of the lack of "Canadian experience" used to explain unemployment among skilled immigrants. Using a variety of methods, including semi-structured interviews with skilled immigrants looking for employment, service providers and mentors, as well as HR personnel; arts-based focus groups with job-seeking skilled immigrants, their mentors and service providers; participant observation in job search workshops and bridging programs; and archival research they found that there was not a universal definition of "Canadian Experience." Although offering multiple methods for undertaking this research, the study framed the barrier issue as an immigrant responsibility rather than showing the need for changes in human resource management practices.

Jennifer Elrick (2016) offers an organizational perspective through in-depth interviews with 20 hiring managers at information and communication technology (ICT) companies in the Greater Toronto Area. She found organizational-level variation among firms in three key aspects of hiring that are relevant to discussions of immigrant skill utilization: definitions of 'skills,' notions of 'cultural fit,' and screening processes. She shows that although most ICT companies valued hard skills over soft skills, they did emphasize cultural fit. Screening processes varied among firms, but most relied on internal social networks for employees and a combination of open job postings and quick initial vetting through tests of technical skills and or analytical capabilities to screen applicants. The significance of the study is that it shows the importance of social and cultural capital, the influence of the sector, and the varied organizational practices and measures used to determine employability. A limitation of the study is that the sample size of the firms was too small to generalize. Elrick (2016) acknowledges that the study may have suffered from social desirability effects because hiring managers did not want to come across as racist.

From these studies, we learn that immigrants, particularly recent immigrants, racialized groups, and racialized women, fare worse in the labour market. Also, most studies on immigrant economic outcomes in the labour market utilized varied, sophisticated regression models and were correlational studies using labour market surveys and census data. Research involving employers and hiring managers utilized experimental methods such as resume audits, attitudinal surveys, and in-depth interviews. The literature shows the need to conduct more qualitative research that explores the actual hiring process, organizational context, and evaluation of competency-based on immigrant intersectional identities and human capital return.

In this study, "labour market integration" is defined as holding a stable job and involves the ability of immigrants to find a job that matches their credentials. Considering the recognition that the HRM hiring process has devolved to include line managers as hiring managers and hiring panels, I have decided to account for all three groups in the study using the collective

term of hiring professionals (Dessler & Chhinzer, 2016). HRM professionals refer to human resource practitioners such as internal or external recruiters, advisors, partners, and consultants involved in recruiting and selecting employees in Alberta. The hiring manager refers to the team or department supervisor recruiting and selecting employees in Alberta. The hiring committee refers to the panel of organizational members selecting employees in Alberta.

This study will fill three major gaps in the literature. First, it will focus on HRM professionals' roles as agents of inequality, particularly through hiring decisions that contribute to employment disparities by gender, race, and being an immigrant. Second, the study examines how HRM professionals make hiring decisions and the ideas, organizational context, and practices that inform their decision-making. The study will enable HRM professionals to share their considerations, processes, and factors for immigrant employability and, most importantly, explain the rationale behind everyday choices in selection and recruitment. Lastly, previous studies focused on Canada, primarily in Toronto, Ontario, and Vancouver, British Columbia. However, this study will focus on Alberta, an area with limited research on employer hiring practices and how they affect immigrant labour market integration within the context of a boom-and-bust economy and a growing immigrant population.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

This project was initially designed as a mixed-method study to address the methodological challenges in previous research on employers' role in immigrant labour market outcomes. The aim was to tackle issues such as representativeness, generalizability, and small samples. However, the reality of conducting research often presents unexpected roadblocks, epiphanies, constraints, and feedback, which significantly influence the researcher's methodological decisions and research outcomes.

I received ethics approval in January 2022 and embarked on a planned sequential embedded mixed-method design. This involved collecting qualitative data via an interview and quantitative data via a survey with embedded qualitative questions. In terms of sequencing and priority, the core method was quantitative (qual→ QUANT [qual]) (Creswell, 2013). In both instances, the qualitative input, design, and data were to play a supplementary role. The first qualitative phase of the study was supposed to explore the tools, strategies, and processes hiring managers use to evaluate newcomers' credentials. The interviews would glean the factors hiring professionals deem most important for newcomers' employment eligibility in Alberta, Canada (e.g., language competency, skills, education, Canadian experience, etc.) and their views on hiring immigrants. The plan was for the data collection method to be face-to-face semi-structured interviews of 30 hiring professionals in Alberta. In the second core quantitative phase, an online survey including open-ended questions was to be collected from HRM professional (N=6000) members of Chartered Professional in Human Resources (CPHR) Alberta to generalize and describe the tools, strategies, and processes human resource professionals use to evaluate newcomers' credentials; identify factors that they deemed most important for newcomers' employment eligibility in Alberta Canada (i.e. language competency, skills, education and Canadian experience etc); and test views on hiring immigrants.

The first phase—interview recruitment, was challenging because of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Government and university rules on masking and limiting contact led to my decision

to conduct the interviews online instead of face-to-face. Also, during this time, hiring professionals were also dealing with the fallout from supporting company remote workers and their personal responsibilities of childcare. CPHR Alberta assisted in recruiting participants by inviting their membership for optional participation in the interview via member monthly communication and as a standing link on their website's community partnerships research page. However, the recruiting was slow, and I did not gain 30 participants until July 2023.

The second phase—the survey, was equally challenging. Nonetheless, I worked on constructing the survey based on the initial 15 interviews I conducted and sent the survey in November 2022. Again, CPHR Alberta assisted in recruiting participants by inviting their membership for optional participation in the survey via member monthly communication and as a standing link on their website's community partnerships research page. After waiting a year and a half, I did not receive more than 16 participants. I met with my contact at CPHR and was informed that they were not surprised by the low response rate, and they recommended conducting a focus group for the research instead. The survey remains open for participation, but since then, I have only received 25 survey submissions. Only 13 of the survey submissions are fully completed. Nonetheless, I requested an ethics extension for the survey component of the study that ends in January 2025.

While further analyzing the interview data, I wondered where HRM professionals' ideas and discourses on recruitment, selection, and hiring immigrants came from and how they may shape immigrant hiring outcomes. During the interviews, I was particularly drawn to how HRM professionals understood their professional identity, organizational responsibilities, and managing power relations in undertaking hiring. This curiosity led me to the CPHR Alberta website; there, I came across a document listing the approved HRM courses as part of the credentialing and licencing process for HRM designation. In reviewing the document, I decided that I could incorporate the course outlines and textbooks of these courses as another data source, which would offer a window into how HRM professionals understood themselves as a

profession, hiring as a professional practice, and how this may shape or influence HRM professionals' practices for hiring immigrants. Also, examining textbooks and course outlines is useful, given that it accounts for the interplay between discourse, practice, and organizational structure. On one hand, the courses and textbooks provide students with a manual and professional identity as HRM professionals. They also provide scripts and how-to guides for completing HRM functions and make categorical distinctions in relation to people, groups, and organizations in completing these tasks. In many ways, the textbooks enable me to trace the professional logics, ideas, and recommendations to the everyday practices of assessing immigrant applicants. Given this consideration along with the time and funding constraints of being an international graduate student, I changed my mixed-method study to a multimethod qualitative study. I should note here that the focus of my research is not to prove that immigrants are discriminated against in the hiring process since that has already been established by audit studies in Canada and reflected in studies on occupational segregation and poor employment outcomes (Henry & Ginzbery, 1985; Oreopoulos, 2011; Creese & Wiebe, 2012; Elrick, 2016; Gingrich et al, 2023). The goal of my exploratory qualitative study was to understand the hiring professional worldview of hiring immigrants, the factors they deem important for immigrant employment, their views of immigrant applicants and, most importantly, unmask their hiring process and considerations when evaluating immigrant applicants, which is taken for granted as known and understood.

Multimethod Qualitative Study

The dissertation utilizes a multimethod qualitative approach, incorporating interviews and critical discourse analysis of HRM textbooks and course outlines. A multimethod qualitative approach provides a nuanced and insightful understanding of HRM professional training materials, HRM professionals' organizational hiring practices, policies, and evaluation of immigrant job applicants (Creswell, 2013; Mik-Meyer, 2020). Critical discourse analysis of the HRM textbooks and course outlines enabled me to understand the curriculums that reflect what

HRM professionals are taught about hiring immigrants, their orientation towards hiring immigrants, and the categorical distinctions of immigrants embedded within these texts. Further, the HRM textbooks and course outlines provided insight into what HRM professionals should be doing, considering, and thinking about when conducting recruitment and selection. Also, these qualitative data sources are often used to study professional groups and organizational processes in sociology and business management to identify variables that cannot be easily measured or captured by quantitative methods (Su, 2018; Rivera, 2012; Elrick, 2016; Cassell, 2018). Both qualitative data sources capture micro, meso, and macro dynamics, spanning the levels of individual (micro), organization (meso), and fields such as HRM professional practice, immigration, and employment laws (macro) that impact immigrant hiring outcomes. The interviews enabled me to examine how the discourses identified in HRM texts influence hiring professional perceptions and treatment of immigrants in hiring. Also, the interviews enabled me to gain HRM perspectives on the hiring process, methods of evaluating immigrant applicants, the multiple social actors and considerations. Overall, using multiple qualitative data sources enhanced the quality of the study (Cresswell, 2018; Mik-Meyer, 2020).

Data Source

I purposively selected CPHR Alberta to recruit research participants because it has over 6,300 HRM professional members and business leaders and is Canada's fourth-largest human resource organization (Bbeauchamp, 2024). Membership in CPHR Alberta includes HRM students, business professionals, leaders, and practicing and retired HRM professionals with varied levels of education, roles, and experiences and at varied stages of gaining their HRM professional designation. Consequently, as a professional association, CPHR Alberta members would be able to provide a diverse perspective as members work in various sectors, roles, and company sizes (Salmon, 2014). According to their website, CPHR Alberta, as a professional association, protects the public by prescribing professional and regulatory principles, rules and standards covering membership requirements, professional practice, mentorship, education,

certification programs and designations such as CPHR (Bbeauchamp, 2021). Also, CPHR Alberta would likely have members with recruitment and selection experience and who have served on hiring panels.

Additionally, CPHR Alberta, as a professional body, provides continuing education and has an accreditation program that assesses post-secondary programs. It also provides a list of prescribed accredited programs and courses in Alberta that meet the HRM professional National Exam Requirement (See Appendix D). Students and HRM professionals who take these courses are told they can meet the CPHR coursework requirement (CPHR Alberta, 2021) for HR designation. I chose this course list (See Appendix D) as the data source for course outlines because it is recommended and part of HRM professional education standards ensuring the homogeneity of HRM professionals' practice within the province.

Interviews

I conducted in-depth interviews to answer three of the research questions. These include: What factors have been deemed most important by HRM professionals for immigrants' employment eligibility in Alberta, Canada (i.e. language competency, skills, education, Canadian experience, etc.)? What tools, strategies, and processes do HRM professionals use to evaluate immigrants' credentials on the factors deemed most important for employment eligibility in Alberta, Canada? How do HRM professionals' views of immigrants determine hiring selection? In-depth semi-structured interviews were particularly suitable for this study, given their ability to explore dynamic organizational processes and reveal multiple, sometimes conflicting, attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions about hiring immigrants. It allowed for further probing that attends to the 'it depends' explanations, HRM professionals' evaluation criteria, and their considerations during hiring (Marvasti, 2004; Curry et al., 2009; Cresswell, 2013).

The interview guide (see Appendix A) was designed to explore demographic and organizational context (e.g. sector, firm size etc.), recruitment and selection practices, hiring constraints, policies such as DE&I, the hiring process, assessments, and considerations in

hiring immigrants. Also, the interview guide was designed to enable a review of whether there is a difference in how immigrants and ‘typical’ job applicants are assessed.

Questions in the interview guide address specific research questions. Take for example, the research question: What tools, strategies, and processes do HRM professionals use to evaluate immigrants’ credentials on the most important factors for employment eligibility in Alberta, Canada? This was mainly answered by asking: What happens when an immigrant submits a resume and cover letter? How do you go about assessing whether an immigrant is invited for an interview? What is most important when deciding whether the immigrant moves to the next stage of the hiring process or is hired? How do you go about verifying immigrant candidate experiences and credentials? Does it matter if their (immigrant) credentials and work experiences are from Canada? If so, why?

Similarly, the research question, "How do HRM professionals’ views of immigrants determine hiring selection? " is explored by asking: In your view and experience, why do you think employers may not hire immigrants? Do you think immigrants face challenges in getting hired? Why or why not? Does it matter if their credentials and work experiences are from Canada? If so, why? Lastly, the research question about the factors deemed most important by HRM professionals for immigrants’ employment eligibility is examined by asking HRM professionals the questions: What is most important when deciding whether the immigrant moves to the next stage of the hiring process or is hired? Does it matter if their credentials and work experiences are from Canada? If so, why? How do you go about assessing whether an immigrant is invited for an interview?

Beyond these direct questions, the nature of the interview was semi-structured and open-ended, allowing HRM professionals to share their perspectives and experiences beyond the direct question. Interview questions, such as “what happens when an immigrant submits a resume and cover letter”, lead to conversations about defining immigrants, processes and factors that are most important for hiring immigrants. These conversations led to discoveries

that I did not consider important or were not covered in the existing literature in Canada on the topic, such as the assessment of immigrant addresses when screening candidates. Also, some questions allowed me to understand the legal and policy contexts, such as:

> "Often you see this on job application/advertisement: We encourage all qualified applicants to apply, however preference will be given to Canadian citizens and permanent residents of Canada. Why is that included?"

Lastly, some open-ended questions led HRM professionals to discuss the nuances of their organizations, the multiple actors, competing interests, and considerations in their hiring process and decision-making.

Interview Data Collection and Sample Description

From 2022 to 2023, I conducted 31 in-depth interviews with HRM professionals via Zoom. As mentioned above, CPHR Alberta assisted in recruiting participants by inviting their membership for optional participation in the interview via member monthly communication and as a standing link on their website's community partnerships research page. The inclusion criteria for the interview were that participants had to be involved in recruiting and selecting employees and serve on a hiring committee/ panel (See Appendix F). I used a combination of strategies to determine whether I met saturation, such as counting code frequencies across interview transcripts and comparing the prevalence of codes, categories (i.e factors of immigrant employment eligibility—language proficiency, location, Canadian credentials, Canadian work experience), and themes among interview transcripts. Also, I analyzed the thematic codes (such as administrative burden, risk management, and financial management) across all the interview transcripts. I noted the various aspects of each theme and then reviewed each subsequent transcript for any new aspects, dimensions, or nuances, continuing this process until no new information was found. I should note that qualitative researchers lack consensus regarding the number of codes, categories, and themes that meet saturation (Creswell, 2013; Saldana, 2013; Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). Also, there is a lack of consensus regarding how much text should be applied to a code, category, and theme (Saldana, 2013; Young & Case, 2019; Hennink &

Kaiser, 2022). Consequently, I took a flexible approach to coding (ranging from sentences and paragraphs to sections), focused on concrete concepts, conceptual codes, and descriptive codes that capture the essential meaning of the texts.

Participants included HRM managers, HRM partners, HRM advisors, talent acquisition consultants, recruiters, and external recruitment consultants who screen resumes, conduct interviews, and assist hiring managers during the hiring process (see Appendix C). Interviews included basic demographic questions (self-identified) such as gender identity, race, and experience in hiring, as well as information on the company, such as its size, receipt of government contracts, and type (private, public, non-profit, etc.). Of the 31 study participants, 16 identified as White and 15 as racialized. Among the racialized participants, ten identified as Asian, four as Black, and one as Hispanic. In terms of gender, 21 participants identified as female and 10 as male. HR professionals represented various sectors: Oil & Gas (6), Postsecondary Institutions (5),
Information Technology (3), Government (3), Accounting (3), Utilities (2), Construction (2), Manufacturing (2), Services (2), Healthcare (1), Food Retail (1), and Non-profit (1). There were 26 internal HRM professionals and five external recruiters. HRM professionals were equally distributed among large firms (13) and medium-sized firms (13), with less participants working in small firms (5). The median years of hiring experience of participants was ten years. Interviews lasted 60 to 90 minutes and took place at a time of participants' choosing.

Interview Analysis

All interviews were transcribed verbatim, de-identified, and uploaded to the NVIVO software program for data analysis. Each transcript data was systematically coded and divided into codes, categories, and themes (Creswell, 2013; Saldana, 2013). Codes were developed using multiple strategies based on the content of what participants shared, interview questions, research questions, field notes, and theoretical concepts of Canadian immigration and hiring research. I created inclusion and exclusion criteria for codes and documented definitions as

memos. I went through four coding cycles. First, I read each transcript to get a sense of the whole interview. During this reading, I coded loosely, identifying major topics/categories of conversation within the transcript. Examples of these codes included demographics, screening job candidates, screening immigrants, recruitment strategies, recruitment channels, screening strategies, selecting candidates, selecting immigrants, views of immigrants, hiring actors, immigrant factors for selection, verifying job candidates, verifying immigrant candidates, hiring process, diversity and inclusion, organizational rules, 'typical hire', and immigrant submits an application. Everything in the transcript related to the topic was coded under the categories. For example, the 'hiring actors' category included codes such as HRM professional, hiring manager, and hiring panel. The 'recruitment channels' category had codes such as the company website, alumni, job boards, hiring manager, and personal networks.

In the second coding round, I focused on creating and refining codes and code definition inclusion and exclusion criteria. I created categories by reviewing similar or related codes. For instance, 'Canadian experience' was a major theme in interviews but was later split into categories, such as Canadian work experience, Canadian credentials, and Canadian culture signal. Some of these categories were split into subcategory codes. For example, Canadian cultural signals was split into Canadian volunteerism, participation in Canadian pastimes, Canadian application (i.e. Canadian formatting of resume and cover letter), Canadian accents, and Canadian values. In other instances, code categories such as "organizational rules" became a category with "diversity and inclusion" as a subcategory.

In the third coding round, I focused on my research questions and created process and values coding categories. These categories included 'views of immigrants', 'factors important for immigrant hiring', and 'HRM tools, strategies, and processes evaluation of immigrants.' At first, when I created the category 'views of immigrants', I only had subcategory codes that were positive and negative. Then, reviewing the data, I realized that the categories needed to be refined further based on the social actors involved in hiring. Consequently, I added hiring

managers, HRM professionals, and hiring panels as subcategory codes under positive and negative categories. The HRM tools, strategies, and processes for evaluation of immigrants' codes were broken up into subcategories 'tools for evaluating immigrants', 'strategies for evaluating immigrants', and 'processes of evaluating immigrant applicants' with their own codes. Also, I did process coding and wrote an analytical memo about the hiring process, which I continually updated, focusing on each stage, accounting for both immigrants and 'typical' job applicants (see Chapter 6). I kept track of the hiring process by creating categories of recruitment and selection processes with their subcategories. For example, recruitment had the following subcode categories: HRM planning, recruitment, screening, selection, and verification. To answer the question of "what factors have been deemed most important by HR professionals for immigrants' employment eligibility in Alberta, Canada (i.e. language competency, skills, education, Canadian experience, etc.)", I used frequency counts of code categories based on participants' mentions from two questions: 1. What is most important when deciding whether the immigrant moves to the next stage of the hiring process or is hired? 2. In your view and experience, why do employers may not want to hire immigrants? Table 1 below provides an example of a summary of frequency count analysis:

Code	Description	# of Participants	Q1: Frequency Count	# of Participants	Q2: Frequency Count
LEGELIG	Legal Eligibility to Work	27	61	30	65
LOC	Location of Immigrant Applicant	24	69	0	0
CANEXP	Canadian Experience	20	50	28	87
CREDCAN	Immigrant Credential Equivalent	16	39	28	80
LANG	English Language Proficiency	26	60	30	73

CULT	Cultural Fit	24	76	17	48
FAMCOP	Familiarity with Company	21	57	0	0
COMPFIT	Company Fit	26	74	24	65
AFFECT	Gut Feeling	21	63	0	0
BIAS	Discrimination	0	0	26	141
COST	Financial Cost	0	0	27	76
ADMINBUR	Administrative Burden	24	39	18	51

Table 1: Frequency Count Analysis of Research Question on HRM Consideration of Immigrant Moving to the Next Stage and Reasons Employers Do not Hire Immigrants

I also compared the frequency and context of mentions across different questions to see if certain factors consistently emerged as important in various contexts. For example, ‘administrative burden’ is defined as the time, effort, resources, and feelings of a task or relationship being onerous. The category had the following subcategories: the cost of time, evaluating immigrant credential burden, verifying immigration paperwork, discomfort from interaction, and immigrant sponsorship. Reviewing the transcripts and context of the codes, I noticed that administrative burden was particularly a concern for small firms because of a lack of financial resources to sponsor immigration. Nonetheless, it was a concern for all participants due to HRM professionals' view of immigrant applications requiring additional steps in assessing suitability for the role beyond matching the qualification to the job description. Also, administrative burden figured in employers not wanting to hire immigrants because of hiring managers' discomfort in working with racialized immigrants.

In the fourth coding round, I focused on thematic coding, which involved looking for patterns among categories, the prevalence and significance of practices or processes, and the relationship between coding categories (Morse, 2012; Saldana, 2013). Creating themes was an iterative process of recoding, collapsing categories, writing analytic memos, considering the study's theoretical framework, hiring theories, immigrant hiring literature, and assessing the analytic utility of certain codes and categories. Some of the major themes, such as administrative burden, financial cost, risk management, and their relationship stemmed from examining codes and categories and frequency counts of words used by participants (such as risk, ease, easy, and quick). For example, reviewing coding categories such as fear of lawsuits, Canadian licencing requirements, insurance coverage cost, and immigration compliance led to the development of the theme of risk management. At the same time, administrative burden and risk management are subcategory themes of immigrant financial costs.

Course Outlines and Textbook Analysis

I conducted a critical discourse analysis and content analysis of the course outline and textbook to answer the research question: How do organizational discourses on immigrants, as presented in prescribed HRM textbooks and course outlines, influence the perceptions and treatment of immigrants by HRM professionals in the Canadian labour market? What specific discourses, both latent and manifest, regarding immigrants and the hiring of immigrants are present in HRM textbooks and course outlines? Critical discourse analysis and content analysis are particularly well-suited for this type of inquiry because they focus on analyzing language use within texts (in this case, HRM textbooks and course outlines) to understand how specific discourses construct meanings, identities, relationships and social realities for immigrants applying for employment (Schreier, 2012; Cresswell, 2013). HRM textbooks and courses are the primary sources of HRM professional education, as they reflect the key information deemed important for HR practitioners, students, instructors, and researchers in the field (Fitzgerald &

Mills, 2012; Adams, 2010). The course outlines are important for HR professionals and students to communicate what they need to know and do as part of their professional practice. Both texts reflect institutional logic governing HRM as a profession, shaping HRM professionals' rules, values, beliefs, actions, and interactions within and outside of the organizations (Adams, 2020).

Course Outline and Data Collection and Sample Description

I used the CPHR Alberta-approved courses for educational institutions list as the source of my HRM course outlines and textbooks (see Appendix D). CPHR is one of Alberta's leading HRM professional associations, so the course outlines and textbooks used in those courses reflect professional standards. The total number of courses listed was 26 (see Appendix D). From that list, I checked the institutional websites to gain access to the HRM course outlines that contain information on the required textbooks. Despite my attempt to gain all 26 course outlines and required textbooks listed on the course outline, they were not publicly available or, in the case of the textbooks, not publicly available and in electronic form. I examined 18 three-credit course outlines and seven HRM textbooks used as required readings in those 18 courses. The course outlines were from nine universities, six polytechnics, and two community colleges in Alberta, ranging from 2017 to 2022 (two from 2022, five from 2021, four from 2020, six from 2019, and one from 2017). A total of 7 HRM textbooks were examined with specific attention to content that explicitly referenced immigrants and immigration. Two of the textbooks were used for multiple HRM courses in Alberta. Also, these textbooks are on the recommended list of textbooks that can be used to study for the CPHR National Knowledge Exam, which is required for an HRM designation.

I analyzed the textual data using Fairclough's (2001) and Gee's (2015) Critical Discourse Analysis frameworks. In analyzing discourse within texts, Fairclough (2001) suggests focusing on how discourse is used within a social practice and by social actors, how discourse shapes the representations of others and others' social practices, as well as the performances of

positions within social practices such as hiring. Gee (2011) similarly focuses on discourse models in highlighting the nature of relationships, asking what is significant in language and situated meanings, how discourses aid in building identities and activities, how discourses connect to wider societal discourses, and the ways discourse reflects ideological views on the distribution of social goods. Discourse models are " 'storylines', families of connected images, or (informal) 'theories' shared by people belonging to specific social or cultural groups. They exist within specific discourses or are shared across a number of them" (Gee, 2011:95). Both analytical frameworks require taking a linguistic and intertextual approach (Fairclough, 2001, 2005; Gee, 2011). The linguistic approach looks at the structure, semantics, features, style, grammar, and use of discourse, as well as the role of text in constructing teams, professions, and the work that occurs within organizations (Cooren, 2004). The intertextual approach looks at how text is connected to and draws on wider social discourses and conventional practices available to social actors in particular interactions and situations (Fairclough, 2001; 2005). I examined the course outlines and textbooks for distinctive discourse models, their characteristic textual expression, and intertextual references to larger Canadian immigrant discourses.

I also took a systematic approach to the discourses offered within the course outlines and textbooks by considering what's stated in the texts, key discourses, the research question, and Strauss's (2013) conventional discourse schemas. Strauss (2013) argues that conventional immigrant discourses fall into three categories with attendant rhetorical devices. The first category uses rhetoric such as "too many immigrants" and "foreigners take jobs" to highlight concerns regarding the economic impacts of immigrants. The second category uses rhetoric such as "illegal is wrong," "control of borders," and "need for immigration reform" to raise questions about immigrant legality as well as the sovereignty and security of the host nation. The third discursive category is around the impact of immigrants on culture and society, using rhetorical devices that highlight the country as "a nation of immigrants" and "the land of opportunity" (Strauss, 2013, p. 275). For the content analysis of the texts, I combined keyword

searches, frequency counts, and reading and coding of sections and paragraphs of the text to determine meaning. The content analysis was limited in its use of frequency counts and only as part of a broader qualitative interpretive analysis; the main goal is to answer my research question by exploring the discourses, meaning, patterns, and themes within the HRM textbooks and course outlines.

Course Outline Analysis Procedure

The 18-course outlines were uploaded into NVIVO for analysis. I began the analysis by reading the course outlines and making analytical memos to understand the document. The course outlines varied in detail, but all had a course description, learning objectives, and course schedule with topics covered. As I reviewed each course outline, I began building a coding frame that comprised the three main aspects of a course outline as categories: the course description, learning objectives, and course schedule. I reviewed each course outline and coded each section based on the categories, ‘course description,’ ‘learning objectives,’ and ‘course schedule.’ Based on reading the course descriptions, I then created subcategory codes. The subcategory codes reflected the main topics covered— ‘strategic importance of HRM’, ‘recruitment and selection’, ‘training and development’, ‘performance management’, ‘compensation and benefits’, ‘diversity management’, ‘current trends and issues’, ‘HRM theories and organizational behaviour’, and ‘legal and ethical considerations’. Some of these topics were further collapsed into a single subcategory. For example, when looking at the subcategory codes, I noticed that some were more related to HRM professionals' work. As such, recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, compensation and benefits were collapsed and re-coded as HRM Functions. I also counted the frequency with which these topics were mentioned or covered in the course descriptions to assess what is most important to HRM course instructors. I repeated the same steps for the learning objectives and course schedules. The learning objectives were salient for identifying the key topic areas and themes of

the course. The course schedule was helpful in assessing the priority of immigrant and immigrant-related topics and which topics are foundational versus more specialized.

Given that one of the research questions focuses on the manifest and latent discourse of immigrants in the texts (course outlines and textbooks), I focused on what is said about immigrants, topics related to immigrants, and, equally, what is not said about immigrants by looking at key topics, coverage of immigrant employment issues, the context of the immigrant and immigration discourses, and the priority of immigration and immigrants as is reflected in where they appear and if they appear in the texts. Specifically, to assess the manifest discourse on immigrants, I utilized NVIVO and reviewed each course outline, looking at the course outlines, topics, learning objectives explicitly stated about immigrants, and whether immigrants or conventional topics that discuss immigrants appeared in the course outline. Also, I did a keyword search for the word's immigrant, immigration, international migration, and words associated with immigrants, such as foreign, racialized, equity, diversity, and inclusion. I also counted the frequency of the topics covered in the course descriptions, learning objectives, and course schedules. To assess the importance of immigrants and the coverage of immigrants, I used three strategies: (1) a keyword search and counts of the words immigrants and immigration; (2) an examination of the mentions of immigrants and immigrant-related topics; and (3) an examination of the topics related to immigrants that appeared in the course schedule (e.g., HRM and legal legislation, diversity and inclusion, and global HRM). Here, the assumption is made that the earlier these topics appear on the course schedule reflects them as foundational and that their presence increases the possibility that immigrants may be covered in the course, given that instructors may not get to later topics in the semester.

I arrived at the latent discourses of immigrants in the course outlines by considering what is stated in the course outlines and by analyzing them through the theoretical framing of CDA. I read the course descriptions, learning objectives, and course schedule, noting if immigrant, immigration, and immigrant-related topics such as equity and diversity were

mentioned. CDA attends to power relations and who is prioritized in text as an indicator of status and privilege, so I did a keyword search of the other employment equity groups, such as women, Indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, visible minorities, and racialized persons. More importantly, the mentioned group reflects and indicates who is a priority in undertaking HRM functions and the profession. The analytical themes of the course outlines were generated by looking at and considering coding categories and their relationship to each other, relevance to the research question, reviewing analytical memos, and consideration of frequency counts. The themes that I ended up with reflected the professional and institutional logic of HRM as a profession in service of business.

Textbooks Analysis Procedure

Using a systematic approach, I explored the statements and arguments in the HRM textbooks regarding immigrants via manifest content analysis. In exploring the data, I centred the language and meanings in the texts. After looking at the course outlines, I searched online and through online libraries for electronic copies of the textbooks. All seven HRM textbooks were in electronic pdf format or available online, which enabled the search for key terms and the copying of paragraphs and sections of the text. I searched the HRM textbooks for keywords immigrant, immigration, international migration, global migration, international HRM and words and phrases associated with immigrants, such as foreign, country of origin, racialized, visible minorities, equity, diversity, diversity and inclusion. I created Word documents for each HRM textbook and copied the sections where immigrants and related words appeared. I took note of the chapters and sections where immigrants appeared (primary and secondary textbooks, case studies and exercises) and page numbers.

Given that the research focuses on immigrant hiring, I looked at the recruitment and selection section of the textbooks. I made copies of paragraphs and sections of textbook chapters focusing on the application and recruitment process, prescribed guidelines, who is involved, and which functions they perform during hiring. I then uploaded the HRM textbook

Word documents to NVIVO for further analysis. In my provisional coding, I created categories that reflected the textbook's structure, such as chapters, expert opinion boxes, and case study exercises. Reviewing each textbook document, I created subcategory codes for the chapters based on the HR functions and names of book chapters. For example, the subcategory codes were ‘recruitment’, ‘selection’, ‘equity and diversity’, ‘legal compliance’, ‘employee onboarding and training’, ‘employer relationships’, and ‘global HRM’. I created subcategory codes labelled ‘textbook author’ and ‘external expert’ for expert opinion boxes. I combined attribute and values coding in my first coding cycle (Saldana, 2013) by using Strauss’s (2013) conventional discourse schemas of the texts. This strategy yielded the following code categories: ‘too many immigrants’ and ‘foreigners take jobs’, ‘illegal is wrong,’ ‘control of borders’, and ‘need for immigration reform’. However, in adopting Strauss’s method, I found it was limited to the American context. Consequently, I decided to shift to a general CDA coding strategy using values coding (language, worldview, and perspective) and versus coding (relationship and presentation of groups as rivals), which focuses on how discourse authors promote positive group self-presentation of ingroups and negative group presentation of out groups such as immigrants (Van Dijk’s, 1993; Gulliver, 2018). Acknowledging that the presentation of groups can be mixed and reading paragraphs from the texts, I created the coding categories: ‘positive discourses of immigrants’, ‘negative discourses of immigrants’, and ‘mixed/neutral discourses of immigrants’. I then revisited Strauss’s codes, determined which similar or related codes were used, and grouped them into the new categories (positive, negative, and mixed discourses of immigrants). Also, given that CDA emphasizes the unequal power relationships between groups and people, I did process coding that focuses on the expert opinion of textbook authors and external expert opinion authors that prescribe action, inaction, and decision-making processes for HRM professionals and students. Lastly, in creating themes, I returned to my research questions to determine which codes related to the respective questions and what theoretical issues the data explored. Also, I looked for repetitive patterns among coding categories,

reviewed my analytical memos of the textbook chapters, and considered the theoretical framing of CDA, RIT, and TRO in considering discourse themes.

Positionality

Research is a social practice, and my positionality may have impacted interview responses and the analysis of my data sources (Cresswell, 2013; Saldana, 2013). I am a Black male presenting international graduate student with a non-Canadian accent. This may have primed participants to emphasize their commitment to diversity and downplay the unethical and any discriminatory practices they engaged in as part of hiring. Identifying as a racialized immigrant enabled some of the HRM professionals to freely express some of the discriminatory practices that they witnessed or engaged in as part of hiring. I am also an international graduate student at a predominantly White Canadian institution that is highly respected within Alberta and a student member of CPHR Alberta, which offers cultural and symbolic capital. HRM professionals were probably more willing to talk with me because of my membership and perceived partnership with the organization. Being a student at the University of Calgary and a member of CPHR Alberta and the fact that CPHR Alberta shared my recruitment flyer legitimized my status as an expert in hiring. In fact, some participants explicitly stated these as the reasons they were willing to participate. As such, participants assumed that I knew more than I did and often emphasized or signalled their adherence to best practices. I attempted to manage these considerations, constraints, and benefits as part of the study. Being aware that I am a Black male international student, I deliberately designed the interview guide to focus on the hiring process rather than their individual actions. I also deliberately conducted the interviews in my living room with a view of the gallery wall to signal privileged class status so they would see me as a professional rather than a poor graduate student. Also, I attempted to create a safe space by repeatedly mentioning throughout the process that there are no wrong and right answers and hiring is difficult. I often allowed them to share uninterrupted and made notes so that I could return to a previous opinion for them to clarify or expound upon. I also did

not rebut comments and ideas that conflicted with my personal beliefs or that I found to be offensive (xenophobic, nativist, and racist). At the same time, I am aware that my race, non-Canadian accent, and implied immigration status (based on my accent) may have affected the accuracy and completeness of reported perceptions, ease of sharing their views on hiring immigrants, and HRM professionals' hesitancy to confess their or their company's role in discrimination. This may also have contributed to them ascribing blame and discriminatory practices to hiring managers and panels instead. I also acknowledge that participants may have questioned my objectivity, given my race and immigrant status. Being a reflexive researcher requires identifying our assumptions and biases (Saldana, 2013). For this study, I recognize that it was my personal experiences of being deskilled and underemployed as a migrant in Canada that drove my interest in researching immigrant labour market integration. However, as described below, my dissertation was not geared towards proving racial discrimination but rather to understand and describe the practices of interpretation or assessments through which HRM professionals review immigrant applications and make hiring decisions.

Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations of the study included confidentiality and anonymity. I ensured participants' confidentiality and anonymity by using pseudonyms to protect participants' identities and de-identifying participants, other people, and organizations mentioned in interviews. Identifying information about individual participants, such as company name and names of any other people mentioned, were deleted or replaced with pseudonyms or general identifiers like the role of the person mentioned and company type/sector in the transcript and report. The interviews were also conducted through the University of Calgary's supported Zoom account. A password was provided to the participants to ensure their privacy.

Before the interview, participants were provided with a written copy of the consent form.

The interview session was scheduled once the participants provided their written consent. Before commencing the interview, participants were allowed to ask any questions and reminded of the information from the consent form. They were informed that they could choose not to answer any question they were uncomfortable answering and could discontinue participation in the interview at any point. They were also reminded of the ability to withdraw from the study or prohibit any of their responses from being used in the presentation or reporting until July 30, 2023. Interviews were audio-recorded on a separate device with the participant's consent. These audio recordings were saved on the researcher's private and password-protected computer and an encrypted recording device. Participants were reminded that the audio recordings would be deleted after they had been transcribed, with de-identified information replacing any direct identifying information (University of Waterloo Office of Research Ethics, 2015).

Regarding the textbooks and course outlines, all these documents were either publicly available or within the public domain, resulting in ethics approval not being required (Drisko & Maschi, 2015). Nonetheless, to protect the confidentiality of the course instructors, only the course titles and universities where the courses took place were listed. Textbook authors' names, however, are listed, and excerpts from the books are used in the dissertation. In coding, analyzing the data, and even choosing the quotations to include in the dissertation as examples, I tried to be cautious about which aspect of the quotations would be included and not included so as not to change the text's or participants' original meaning. Consequently, I attempted to provide the context of the quotation by including the names of the textbook chapters and sections, the sequence of the instructions and the background of the HR professional participants, such as their sector or industry. I did not delete anything that was contradictory or inflammatory. Instead, I included them to highlight the contradictions in the discourses and worldviews of HRM professionals and HRM textbook authors and instructors regarding immigrants and immigrant hiring.

Challenges and Limitations

CPHR Alberta assisted in recruiting participants by inviting their membership for optional participation in the interview via member monthly communication and as a standing link on their website's community partnerships research page. In the recruiting email, participants were informed that their participation in the study was completely voluntary and that no CPHR membership benefits were tied to their involvement, so they did not face any undue influence. Also, to alleviate any privacy concerns, participants were informed that although the recruitment information was coming through the CPHR list serve, no one at CPHR would know if they chose to participate, and no one at CPHR would ever have access to their raw data. Nonetheless, despite the support from CPHR, I experienced difficulties recruiting participants owing to the pandemic, which led to HRM professionals moving from the office and balancing childcare responsibilities. Consequently, I asked CPHR to share the flier on their LinkedIn page, which improved participation.

Another challenge of the interviews was reducing social desirability bias. Given the sensitive nature of the information being asked, participants were possibly hesitant to answer questions honestly and openly based on the perceived risks of lawsuits, fear of disclosure, and the goal of providing socially acceptable answers. Also, HRM professionals were uncomfortable and kept apologizing when using racial identifiers such as White, Black, Indian, and Asian for immigrants, their colleagues, and employers. As such, several strategies were used to mitigate social desirability bias. The interviews were conducted in a private setting via Zoom, and only audio was recorded. Participants were reminded before, at the start of, and throughout the interview that there were no right or wrong answers. Also, I engaged in small talk, and displays of respect to make them feel at ease and reminded them when hesitating to use racial identifiers that it was okay to use these identifiers or share non-socially acceptable viewpoints (Bergen & Labonté, 2020). I also reminded them that to maintain anonymity, pseudonyms would be used for participants, as well as any other identifying information such as company name, supervisor

name, etc. (Heaton, 2022). The decision to focus on the hiring process was to reduce HRM professionals' feeling like the interview was an audit of their company or an evaluation of their performance. Also, given that the interview was focused on understanding the HRM hiring process and how HRM professionals evaluated immigrant applications, I took a comparative approach, where the first set of questions focussed on the recruitment and selection process for general candidates and then later in the interview, I asked the same set of questions except about immigrants. For example, at the beginning of the interview, I asked HRM professionals to tell me, “What happens when an applicant applies for a job”? And then, later, I asked instead, “What happens when an immigrant applies for a job”? I also framed questions as about overarching or general organizational/company practices and values or as referring to others’ practices rather than about the individual participant. For example, I asked, “In your view or experience, why are employers or HRM professionals hesitant to hire immigrants?”. Lastly, I kept questions about their personal demographic information for the end of the interview. I noticed that these strategies did help to make the participants more comfortable and willing to share.

A challenge of completing a CDA and content analysis of the textbook and course outlines was gaining access to the texts, considering the multiple strategies of doing a CDA (Gee, 2011; Fairclough, 2001; Van Dijk, 2013, 2015; Banerjee et. al.2024) and content analysis, as well as keeping track of multiple coding definitions and changes (Schreier, 2012; Creswell, 2013; Saldana, 2013). Regarding the survey, on reflection, I realized the title of the project and the framing of HRM professionals as gatekeepers may have led to decreased participation. Originally, when designing the project, the word gatekeepers did not have the political charge and negative tone that it currently carries—as is reflected in its frequent use in popular news media.

A limitation of the study is its lack of generalizability due to the data sources being solely referred from CPHR Alberta. Not every HRM professional in Alberta had an equal chance of

participating, and not every HRM textbook and course outline used within Alberta was examined. Also, the findings are limited to the specific context of Alberta and may not be generalizable to other provinces. Nonetheless, it was helpful to recruit from CPHR Alberta and examine the course material of their approved HRM courses, given that they are Alberta's largest HRM professional and credential body. By recruiting from CPHR Alberta, I gained HRM professionals involved in recruitment and selection and who served on hiring committees. Participants had relevant expertise, experience, and knowledge in HRM recruitment and selection across various industries and company sizes. CPHR Alberta provided research participants who served as internal and external HRM professionals who provided other considerations, such as repeat business and client orientation, which is not addressed in hiring literature as a consideration in hiring. By interviewing HRM professionals, I understand how hiring panels evaluate immigrant job candidates. A limitation, however, was that the interview participants did not include any hiring managers (i.e. team managers and supervisors), although they were invited to participate. Consequently, the reporting on the hiring process and the role of hiring managers is second-hand. Further research is needed on hiring managers and other members of hiring panels.

Equally, although I gained a complete list of courses on the CPHR Alberta-approved course list, I could not access all courses identified for inclusion in the required format. Also, the course outlines and textbooks were based on the CPHR Alberta-approved list of HRM courses. Not all HRM courses and textbooks used in Alberta are on that list. Nonetheless, the study’s strength is that I analyzed CPHR Alberta professional-prescribed HRM courses (textbooks and courses) through which HRM professionals learn the discipline and profession of HRM. Also, using the prescribed course list from CPHR Alberta, I analyzed courses recognized as accredited, relevant, and authoritative for professional educational standards. Also, the course outlines and textbooks provided insights into the profession of HRM and the body of knowledge that HRM professionals, business professionals, and students hoping to work in HRM are

exposed to in Alberta. Most importantly, using the CPHR Alberta course outlines and textbooks enabled me to answer the research question: What are the discourses on immigrants and the hiring of immigrants in HRM textbooks and course outlines?

A critique of qualitative research and critical discourse analysis is subjectivity and objectivity, which stems from claims that qualitative data and CDA are the only research methods that allow for interpretivist data analysis (Creswell, 2013; Saldana, 2013). The benefit of using CDA as a method is that it attends to the role of discourse within organizational processes, providing categorical distinctions, ideas and instructions about objects and people that influence organizational social actors' attitudes, identities, and actions (Grant et al., 2004). Also, CDA centers on unequal power relations and inequality regimes, which are features of organizations (Acker, 2006; Tamaskovic-Devy & Avent-Holt; Ray, 2019; Banerjee et. al., 2024). I attempted to improve the study's rigour by conducting multiple cycles of coding, having analytical memos, and grounding my analysis and interpretation within the larger research on immigrant labour market and employer screening theories. I provided quotations and citations to support my analysis and conclusions. Also, I talked with my supervisor, members of my supervisory committee, and a colleague regarding my theoretical conceptual framing, coding process, and some of the coding categories, relationships and contradictions in my data to make sense of the findings.

CHAPTER 4: MANAGING IMMIGRANT LABOUR MARKET INCLUSION: CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS ACROSS HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT TEXTS

Human resource management (HRM) professionals' decisions significantly impact immigrants' lives as they decide who gets recruited, shortlisted, and hired. These decisions shape immigrants' economic outcomes and play a pivotal role in shaping broader social inequalities. Therefore, it is paramount to understand how their training influences HRM organizational and professional practice. The attitudes, behaviours, and perceptions that underpin the human resource management (HRM) profession are influenced by the discursive practices they are exposed to in courses and textbooks (Grant et al., 2004). In his discussion of fields, Bourdieu (1993) reminds us that individuals, organizations, practices (including the use of language), and objects are located within fields of relationships to other individuals, organizations, practices, and objects, meaning, their behaviour can only be understood by reference to those fields. Critical discourse analysis scholars note that texts are manifestations of discourse. Both spoken and written language affect social reality and organizational practice (Fairclough, 2005; Van Dijk, 2015). For HRM professionals, introductory HRM courses and textbooks are prescribed and required to gain HRM certification and designation. In this way, HRM introductory textbooks and course outlines serve as important sites of analysis for understanding HR professionals' discursive practices and attitudes toward immigrants.

The chapter employs inequality regime theories (RIT, TRO, and CDA) in analyzing HRM course outlines and textbooks to investigate the stated and unstated ideological assumptions underpinning what is being taught and implied about hiring immigrants. While the chapter primarily utilizes a CDA analytical frame to identify and analyze the immigrant discourses in the HRM course outlines and textbooks, it also injects RIT and TRO constructs. I identify the immigrant discourses and discuss the role of these discourses in creating HRM professional identity and the categorical distinction of immigrants as workers. I also discuss how the categorical distinction of immigrants affects what Tomaskovic-Devey and Avent-Holt (2019) call

“claim-making” for jobs in the primary labour market. These discourses connect and reflect racial schemas at work within the organization, shaping how immigrants, particularly non-White immigrants, are understood and evaluated within hiring as well as labour market outcomes. I pay attention to omitted immigrant discourses, the rhetorical and textual form of the discourses, and intertextual references to other fields of immigrant discourses.

The chapter finds that while some course outlines touch on potential topics related to immigrants, such as diversity management—explicit attention to immigrants, their challenges, and workplace inclusion strategies are generally lacking across the course outlines. Nonetheless, immigrants surface within the HRM textbook discourses on the business case for diversity, legal risk, and global labour management. While acknowledging the benefits of immigrants within diversity management, HRM textbooks predominantly depict and define immigrants as bearing human and cultural deficiencies that pose high financial and legal risks. Consequently, the HRM textbooks and course outlines regard diversity and inclusion—specifically immigrant labour—as HRM challenges and strategic business risks. These categorical distinctions of immigrants are used to justify the social closure, exploitation, and exclusion they experience within the Canadian labour market. The course outlines and textbooks promote HRM's professional identity as that of a client service worker, consultant, and business ally committed to prioritizing the profitability and sustainability of the business that underpins strategic human resource management (SHRM). Also, the chapter reveals that multiple HRM discourses are embedded with racial schemas that support and promote social closure, immigrant exploitation, and exclusion from jobs in the primary labour market. The main argument is that immigrant labour market exclusion can be traced back to HRM texts’ construction of immigrants as low-priority cultural and human capital-deficient foreign workers who pose economic threats and challenges to HRM and business. The chapter concludes with implications for immigrant labour market integration, organizational diversity initiatives, and HRM professional practice.

Professions such as HRM have discursive practices that reflect social relations, power, beliefs, and values that connect to a wider society (Leitch & Palmer, 2010). The power of authors of HRM textbooks and course instructors lies in their engagement in knowledge production. HRM textbook authors and instructors are key supporters of the HR profession through their production of knowledge and advice on HR tasks such as recruiting, selecting, training, and compensation. Also, HR textbook authors and instructors are often the major conduits through which HR professionals learn the jargon of HR, theories, professional practice, strategies, and the Canadian HR landscape (Graham & Wears, 2008). Consequently, in taking HRM courses as part of their entry into the profession or their attempt to get an HR certification, students and professionals learn disciplinary language, perspectives, and approaches. They also learn from the courses how to treat the people, organizations, and groups that HR professionals encounter in the workplace (Guo & Ariss, 2015).

Instructors and professors of HRM also have persuasive power. Students and professionals often rely upon their expertise via credentials and industry experience in continuing education classes on what to do when dealing with specific HR tasks such as hiring (Gee, 2011; Parodi, 2014; Trofimovich et al., 2023). They also have social power through the authority bestowed on them by the institution where they work and their control of the social context of the classroom (Fornaciari & Lund Dean, 2014). They set the topics discussed, learning goals, knowledge, opinions, attitudes, and ideologies, and often make recommendations on the practice of HR through classroom activities such as discussions and case studies. As such, the course outline produced by the instructors is a form of scholarly discourse, particularly by framing which HRM topics and issues are the most important considerations for practitioners. Fornaciari and Lund-Dean (2014) note that course outlines provide the instructor with a usually non-negotiable structure to control what happens in each course: content dictates the “what,” policies dictate the “how,” and assignment deadlines dictate the “when.” As CDA theorist Van Dijk (2015) notes, by controlling the discourse in the

classroom, these instructors also shape the consequent actions of the students once outside of the classroom. Hence, authors of HRM textbooks and instructors can influence their readers' and students' attitudes and actions toward immigrants.

The Course Outlines

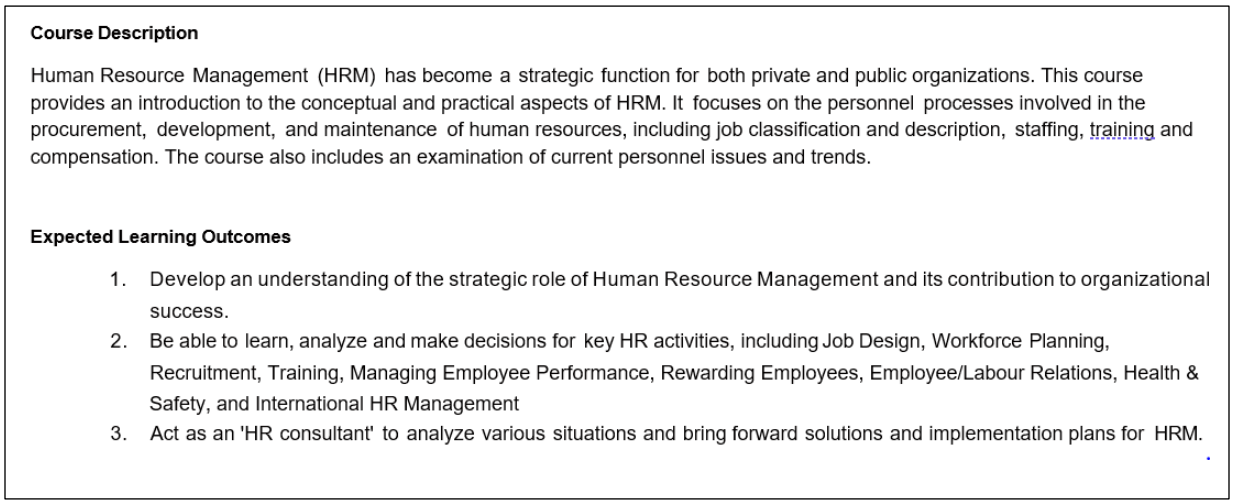
I examined 18 three-credit undergraduate course outlines. The course outlines were from nine universities, six polytechnics, and two community colleges in Alberta from 2017 to 2022 (two from 2022, five from 2021, four from 2020, six from 2019, and one from 2017). The course outlines were gleaned from the CPHR Alberta compiled list of pre-approved post-secondary courses meeting the requirements for CPHR Canada designation licence (see Appendix A). All the course outlines reflect that HRM courses are offered within business management programs. Also, based on the type of post-secondary institution (polytechnic, college, or university), HRM courses are geared toward a wide range of audiences—students, supervisors, and business owners. The course outlines reflect an overall emphasis on HRM as part of business strategy and the role of HR as a strategic business partner. The four major discourses communicated to learners are: HRM is a strategic business resource, HRM is a professional practice, HRM provides business functions, and HRM attends to diversity management and its legal compliance. However, scant regard is paid to immigrants and immigration within most HRM course outlines.

Findings

HRM: A Strategic Business Resource

A consistent theme across all the course outlines is the recognition of HRM as a strategic resource crucial for organizational success. This idea reflects a shift in HRM to strategic human resource management (SHRM). SHRM requires HR professionals to have a strategic perspective, role, and value to organizations. SHRM requires HR professionals to think strategically, viewing HRM as a business resource and workers as human capital (Schwind et

al., 2019). Hence, HR professionals are expected to ensure that HRM practices anticipate, align with, and contribute to the organization's overarching strategies. As shown in Ambrose University's BUS 330 HRM course outline below (see Figure 2), HRM is framed as a "strategic function for both private and public organizations." The course description uses terminology such as "strategic function," "procurement," "development," and "maintenance of human resources", which imply a business-oriented and managerial discourse perspective. The term "HR consultant" in the learning outcomes reinforces the idea of HR professionals as experts



Course Description

Human Resource Management (HRM) has become a strategic function for both private and public organizations. This course provides an introduction to the conceptual and practical aspects of HRM. It focuses on the personnel processes involved in the procurement, development, and maintenance of human resources, including job classification and description, staffing, training and compensation. The course also includes an examination of current personnel issues and trends.

Expected Learning Outcomes

1. Develop an understanding of the strategic role of Human Resource Management and its contribution to organizational success.
2. Be able to learn, analyze and make decisions for key HR activities, including Job Design, Workforce Planning, Recruitment, Training, Managing Employee Performance, Rewarding Employees, Employee/Labour Relations, Health & Safety, and International HR Management
3. Act as an 'HR consultant' to analyze various situations and bring forward solutions and implementation plans for HRM.

Figure 2. Ambrose University, BUS 330: Human Resource Management

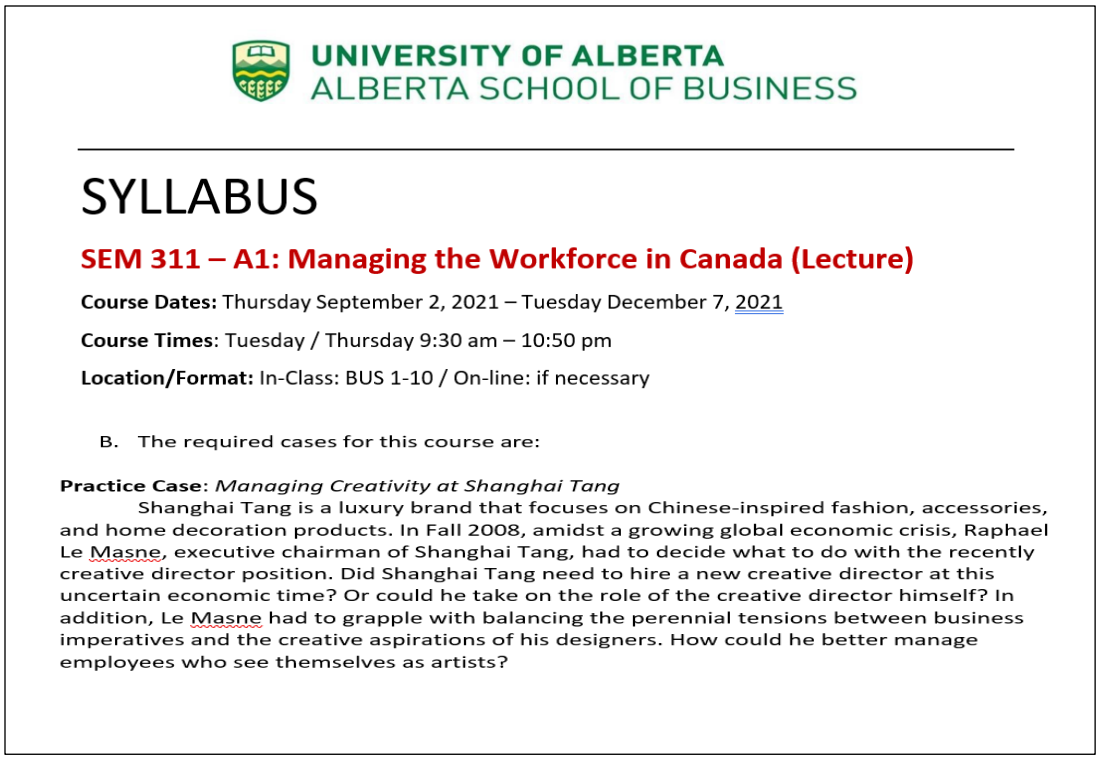
with specialized knowledge, skills, and experience to help organizations solve problems, make improvements, or achieve specific goals. This language implies a certain level of authority and influence, connecting to the wider discourse and professional identity of HR as a "strategic business partner" involved in strategy formulation, implementation, and decision-making. Traditionally, the role of HR was understood as supportive of worker welfare. While these descriptions still position HR in its traditional role of hiring and other core HR functions, they also represent a shift toward thinking of HR support as in service of business goals rather than workers. Thus, HR functions such as "personnel processes" exemplify a traditional yet new ideological dimension that focuses on the worker as an active resource in support of the organization's broader goals. Also, the course outline promotes the idea that students and HR

professionals should take on the identity of “consultants” capable of analyzing business issues and providing solutions. As such, students should understand that HR professionals are critical in supporting strategic initiatives that contribute to the competitive advantage and sustainability of the business. This framing aligns with contemporary attempts by the HRM profession to position HR as a business discipline, having a more strategic role and, therefore, elevated within the management occupational hierarchy (Gill, 2018).

HRM: A Professional Practice

Analysis of the course outline descriptions reveals that introductory HRM courses are tailored toward introducing students to the concepts, theory, and practice of HRM and the opportunities and challenges they may face as practitioners. HRM has a strong orientation toward HRM as a business profession and expects HR professionals to have business acumen. In this context, there is a preference for using case studies, simulations, and other experiential training exercises as teaching tools for assessments. This approach helps students gain practical knowledge and skills as HR specialists and managers to apply in organizational practice. For example, at the University of Alberta, SEM 311 HRM course is taught in the business school, and case studies are used as a key pedagogical tool for assessments (see Figure 3). The case studies allow HR students to gain and practice problem-solving skills and decision-making in real-world scenarios (Warhurst & Black, 2021). The course outlines cover various HRM topics, including personnel processes, staffing, training and development, compensation, legal considerations, and organizational design. This coverage reflects the traditional emphasis of HRM on managing people and the shift to SHRM. Overall, the course outlines reinforce the orientation of HRM as a business course, speaking the language of

business, solving business challenges, and delivering value to the organization (Warhurst & Black, 2021).



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
ALBERTA SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

SYLLABUS

SEM 311 – A1: Managing the Workforce in Canada (Lecture)

Course Dates: Thursday September 2, 2021 – Tuesday December 7, 2021

Course Times: Tuesday / Thursday 9:30 am – 10:50 pm

Location/Format: In-Class: BUS 1-10 / On-line: if necessary

B. The required cases for this course are:

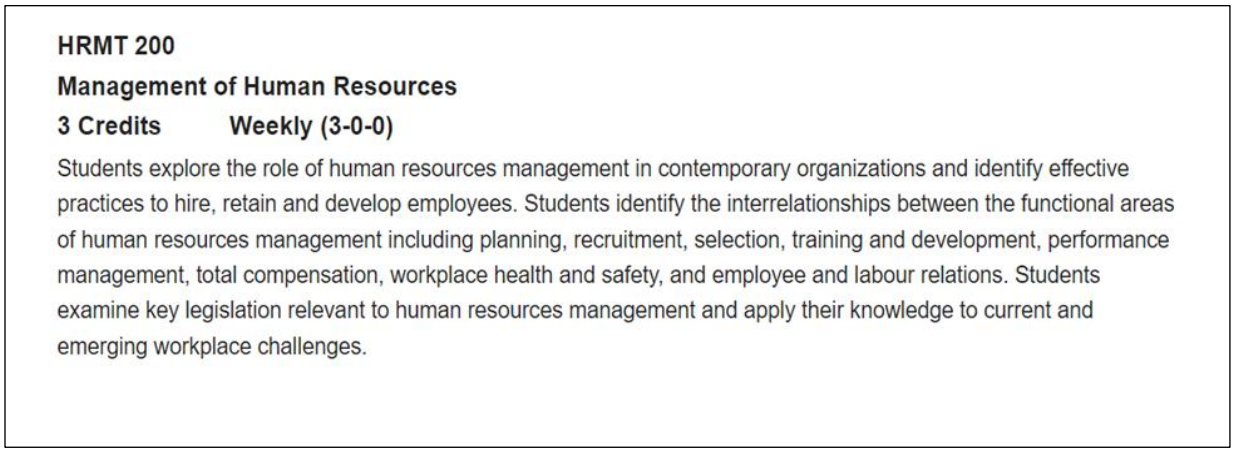
Practice Case: *Managing Creativity at Shanghai Tang*
Shanghai Tang is a luxury brand that focuses on Chinese-inspired fashion, accessories, and home decoration products. In Fall 2008, amidst a growing global economic crisis, Raphael Le Masne, executive chairman of Shanghai Tang, had to decide what to do with the recently creative director position. Did Shanghai Tang need to hire a new creative director at this uncertain economic time? Or could he take on the role of the creative director himself? In addition, Le Masne had to grapple with balancing the perennial tensions between business imperatives and the creative aspirations of his designers. How could he better manage employees who see themselves as artists?

Figure 3. University of Alberta, SEM 311 – A1: Managing the Workforce in Canada

Core HRM Functions

The functions of the HR department and its professionals are emphasized in the course outlines. As highlighted in MacEwan University's HRMT 220 course (see Figure 4), there is a focus on HR role, practices and policies in key "functional areas of human resources management including planning, recruitment, selection, training and development, performance management, total compensation, workplace health and safety, and employee and labour relations." This focus represents the HRM instructor's attempt to prepare students as generalists with skills in various HR divisions and tasks. Including various functional areas suggests an ideological perspective that views HRM as a multifaceted professional practice where HR functions are connected yet allow for specialization in a specific function. HRM is also

recognized as operating within a legal, regulatory environment, requiring students to “examine key legislation relevant to human resources management” to protect business interests. Overall, the course outlines generally highlight an increase in the expectation of HR professionals to not only manage talent but also have business acumen and knowledge of laws in related HRM functional areas.



HRMT 200

Management of Human Resources

3 Credits Weekly (3-0-0)

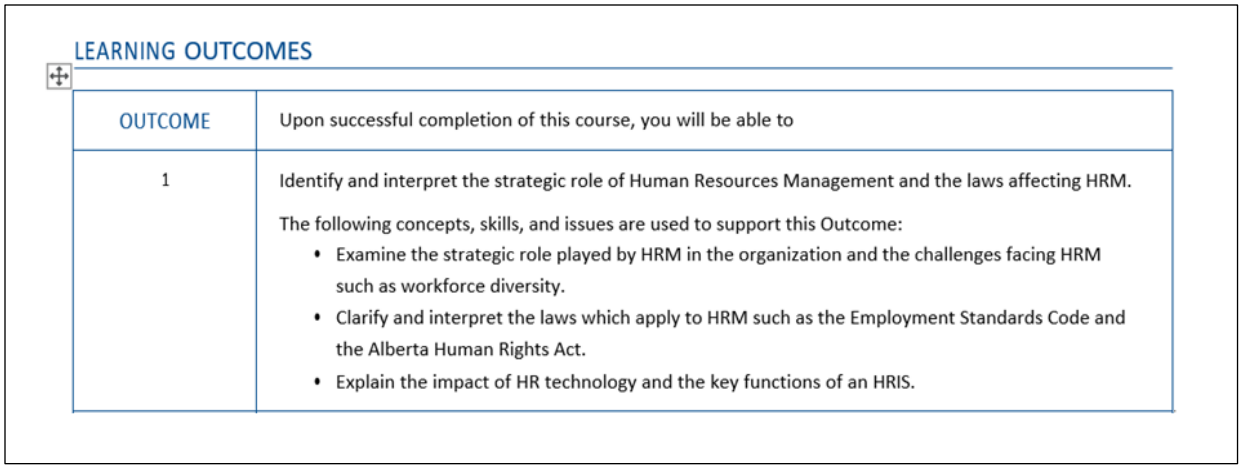
Students explore the role of human resources management in contemporary organizations and identify effective practices to hire, retain and develop employees. Students identify the interrelationships between the functional areas of human resources management including planning, recruitment, selection, training and development, performance management, total compensation, workplace health and safety, and employee and labour relations. Students examine key legislation relevant to human resources management and apply their knowledge to current and emerging workplace challenges.

Figure 4. MacEwan University, HRMT 220: Management of Human Resources

HRM as Diversity Management

More than half of the course outlines (10 out of 18) explicitly included diversity and inclusion as a topic. Three separate examples of diversity discourses are highlighted in the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, HRMT 2226 (see Figure 5), and Red Deer College, HRM 505 (see Figure 6) course outlines: diversity management, diversity as a legal equity requirement, and diversity as a challenge for HRM. Diversity management discourse focuses on leveraging a diverse workforce for organizational competitive advantage. The discourse of diversity as a legal equity requirement is focused on laws governing pay and human rights legislation for designated groups (women, Indigenous people, people with disabilities, and visible minorities). The discourse of diversity as a challenge for HRM is focused on the notion that the inclusion of diverse workers within the Canadian workforce as something “new,” which therefore poses challenges for HRM in implementing a strategy for competitive advantage. This includes viewing the requirements to accommodate the different needs of a diverse workforce

as a challenge. These three discourses reflect the wider societal discourse of equity, diversity



LEARNING OUTCOMES

OUTCOME	Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to
1	Identify and interpret the strategic role of Human Resources Management and the laws affecting HRM. The following concepts, skills, and issues are used to support this Outcome: • Examine the strategic role played by HRM in the organization and the challenges facing HRM such as workforce diversity. • Clarify and interpret the laws which apply to HRM such as the Employment Standards Code and the Alberta Human Rights Act. • Explain the impact of HR technology and the key functions of an HRIS.

Figure 5. Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, HRMT2226: Introduction to Human Resource

and inclusion as a benefit, strategy, and challenge. The course outlines demonstrate that HRM is still primarily concerned with diversity within a legal framework, where the concern is compliance with employment equity legislation by increasing the representation of disadvantaged groups at work and preventing employer discrimination.

Another feature of the HRM course outlines is that diversity is covered early in the course schedule. This serves as a professionalizing tool by reminding students that HRM exists and works within a larger legal framework. For example, in the Red Deer College HRM 505 course outline (see Figure 6), the topic of diversity is discussed in the second week of class. This marks recruitment and selection as major features of the HRM role and compliance as a major function. Moreover, discussing diversity within a legal framework signals that the goal is only to meet the minimum compliance requirements. It also discursively frames diversity as a challenge and legal risk.

Week 2 (Jan. 14 – 19, 2019)	• Legal Requirements and Managing Diversity • Recruitment • Selection	• Discussion Post 1: Maple Leaf Shoes Case study • Quiz: Week 2

Figure 6.Red Deer College HRM 505: Introduction to Human Resource Management

Most course outlines prioritize gender diversity by explicitly focusing on issues such as gender discrimination in pay and promotions. For example, Athabasca University's Human Resource Management 386 reflects this priority in its course objectives: "Identify common forms of gender-based discrimination in HRM practices and propose remedies." Incorporating diversity management in HRM course outlines reflects an increasing focus on ensuring that HR professionals are equipped to manage diverse workers and foster inclusion, primarily based on legal requirements.

Absence of Immigrants

While some courses touch on potential topics related to immigrants (e.g., diversity and inclusion, workplace health and safety), explicit attention to immigrants, their challenges, and workplace inclusion strategies is generally lacking across the course outlines. The absence of immigrants from course outlines may reflect instructors' focus only on employment equity designated groups (women, Indigenous people, people with disabilities, and visible minorities). Only one-course outline, the Concordia University of Edmonton HRM 220, explicitly references immigrants (see Figure 7). Moreover, when immigrants were mentioned, their involvement within the workplace was framed as a "challenge."

Course learning outcomes:

For the successful student, course outcomes include, but are not limited to, the ability to:

1. Identify and interpret the strategic role of Human Resources Management and the laws affecting HRM.
   The following concepts, skills, and issues are used to support this Outcome:
   a. Examine the strategic role played by HRM in the organization and the challenges facing HRM such as workforce diversity with particular reference to indigenous peoples and new immigrants.
   b. Clarify and interpret the laws which apply to HRM such as the Employment Standards Code and the Alberta Human Rights Act.
   c. Explain the impact of HR technology and the key functions of an HRIS.

Figure 7.Concordia University of Edmonton, HRM 220C: Introduction to Human Resource

Equally interesting to note in HRM 220C learning objectives is the pairing of new immigrants with Indigenous peoples. This reflects the orientation of HRM and HR professional perspectives of these groups as particularly difficult or challenging to incorporate within the Canadian workplace. Integrating immigrant-specific considerations could enhance the relevance and inclusivity of these HRM courses. These results point to a lack of immigration-related focus in HRM courses.

HRM Textbooks

A total of 7 HRM textbooks were examined with specific attention to content that explicitly referenced immigrants and immigration. Two of the textbooks or earlier versions were used for multiple HR courses in Alberta—Schwind et al. (2019) Canadian Human Resource Management: A Strategic Approach (Twelfth Edition.) and Belcourt et al. (2019) Managing Human Resources (9th Canadian Edition). Also, these textbooks are on the recommended list of textbooks that can be used to study for the CPHR National Knowledge Exam, which is required for an HR designation. The authors target a wide audience interested in HRM, including traditional undergraduate students, instructors, and working professionals (supervisory/managerial staff, HR staff). In many ways, targeting these groups points to the

varied purposes of HRM textbooks. For the student, it is an opportunity to learn the concepts, knowledge, skills, and abilities that underpin HRM. For instructors, the textbook is useful for concisely summarizing the HRM topics and provides a structure for preparing lectures and exams. For HRM professionals, the HRM textbooks represent a body of knowledge and standard manual recommending ways of doing HR functions, ways of being an HR professional, and the ideological orientation of an HRM professional. Luzon (1999) has highlighted that introductory textbooks are organized to include two different genres reflecting different levels of text. The primary genre is the textbook chapters, which are the most important and provide the essential information for the course. The secondary genre consists of metatexts such as preface, table of contents, and textboxes that provide additional examples or supplementary information. All the HRM textbooks reviewed included both primary and secondary genres. HRM textbooks shared a similar feature of including secondary genre text boxes to provide additional information such as examples of how organizations perform HR functions, business cases showing the adoption of HR practice, reflective questions, expert viewpoints on an HR topic, and summary at the end. Discussion of immigrants primarily appears in secondary genre textboxes such as expert opinion boxes, case study text boxes, and statistics on HR. Immigrants are mostly discussed and mentioned in chapters covering three topics: introductory chapters on globalization, strategic HRM, diversity, and equity employment law, and reappear in the last chapter on international HRM. Another feature of the HRM textbooks is the constant interaction between the author and readers. In addition to general content information, the authors interject with their opinions and advice, sometimes even evaluating aspects of the content. As such, in addition to providing the information necessary to do the HR tasks, the authors also offer what they deem to be real-world application advice and tips based on their expertise. In this way, the authors construct the HR profession and influence the social actions of their readers. For this reason, it is equally important to examine HRM introductory textbooks' immigrant discourses, immigrant categorical distinctions, and advice on how to view and treat

immigrants in the Canadian labour market. The HRM introductory textbooks show several competing and paradoxical discourses regarding immigrants.

Findings

Immigrants as Economic Benefit but HR Challenge Discourse

HRM textbook authors frame the increasing number of immigrants to Canada as largely positive because of economic benefits but posing challenges because of the need to accommodate new workers. For example, Belcourt et al. (2019, pp.19, 20) describe the financial benefits of immigrants in solving labour shortages and maintaining Canadian business competitiveness:

> How a shortage of immigrant labour could undercut competitiveness is not lost on Canadian businesses that need talent on both ends of the spectrum (low-level jobs as well as those requiring high levels of education). To *accommodate* [emphasis added] the shift in demographics, demand, and labour trends, these businesses know it is absolutely vital to increase their *efforts to recruit and train* [emphasis added] a more diverse workforce. They realize that immigrants are not only critical to their very survival but also add to their strength and allow them to better attract and serve a larger customer base.

Here, several messages connect HRM discourse on immigrants to the wider Canadian government discourses on immigration as well as the equity and diversity inclusion discourses on the positive business impacts of diversity. For instance, the text echoes the government of Canada's belief that immigrants are needed for economic growth and to solve labour shortages due to an aging population and, therefore, have a positive economic impact. The text also connects to the wider discourse on the benefits of diversity. We learn that immigrants not only solve labour shortages but are used to attract new customers and expand into new markets. The authors also respond to anti-immigrant discourses that see immigrant labour as only low-skilled and businesses as taking advantage of cheap immigrant labour by highlighting immigrants as “critical to their survival” and that some immigrants possess high levels of education. They also consider the interdependent economic relationship between immigrants

and businesses, where businesses depend on immigrants to meet their labour needs and attract a larger customer base. Nonetheless, despite immigrants being recognized as an "absolutely vital" labour source, the authors convey the idea that businesses have difficulty accommodating a diverse workforce such as immigrants. They also see diverse workers, such as immigrants, as financially costly because they need further training.

In a later edition of the HRM text, Belcourt et al. (2020, p.19) further link diversity with immigration and characterize immigration as posing difficulties for HRM with the section heading “The Diversity/Immigration Challenge.” The authors first make the point that diversity creates challenges for HRM professionals because they must meet and accommodate different workers' needs and expectations:

> To accommodate shifts such as these, find qualified talent, and broaden their customer bases, businesses know it is absolutely vital to *increase their efforts to recruit and train a more diverse workforce* [emphasis added]. And with a *more diverse workforce* come *more diverse expectations on the part of employees for their employers to meet* [emphasis added] (Belcourt et al., 2020, p.19).

They then go on to cite the demographic realities of increasing non-White immigrants in Canada:

> For the first time, Africa, with 13.4 percent of the new immigrants, ranked as second as the main continental source of immigrants, ahead of Europe, but far behind Asia (61.8 percent). The Philippines, India, China, Iran, Pakistan, Syria, and South Korea are the top country of births of recent immigrants. Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal remain the top place of residence of new immigrants. Minorities in Canada are increasing in numbers relative to the population; more than one-fifth (22.3 percent) or 7.7 million Canadians identify themselves as members of a *visible minority* [emphasis added], as defined by the Employment Equity Act. (Belcourt et al., 2020, p. 20)

Here, the authors acknowledge that immigration is not a new phenomenon but highlight the changes in immigrant source countries. These changes bring immigrants who are categorically distinct “visible minorities,” triggering the need to consider and comply with the Employment Equity Act, and thus requiring changes in business HRM practices. By discussing the demographic changes after positioning diversity as an HRM problem, the authors indicate that the challenge is not just incorporating immigrants but specifically integrating visible minority

immigrants with perceived expectations, needs, and legal protection. The HRM textbook implicitly points out that the Canadian workplace has traditionally not been an inclusive place for non- White immigrants and other diversity groups, which necessitates organizations HRM to make changes. Hence, the HRM textbook authors highlight immigrant status distinctions based on the country of origin and the race of immigrant workers as an economic opportunity but a financial and administrative burden.

Immigrants in the Business Case for Diversity Discourse

A divergent discourse to that of immigrants as a challenge is the discourse framing diversity as SHRM and immigrants as a source of diversity. Most textbooks discuss the economic benefits of diversity and cite the potential of immigrants to be part of the broader strategic efforts of businesses to be more competitive. For example, Dessler & Chhinzer (2017, p. 413) describe the multiple benefits of immigrant labour:

> Canadian employers note that hiring immigrants increases the *employer's language skills, generation of new ideas, and enhances the company's reputation* [emphasis added]. Research has found that diverse groups make higher-quality decisions, generate more creative ideas, use more creative problem-solving techniques, and have the potential for higher rates of productivity.

Consequently, the HRM textbook authors recommend that immigrants be included in the HRM strategic plan. For instance, Belcourt et al. (2019, p.115) describe immigrants as an "organizational resource":

> The second business fundamental is that employees who are members of the designated groups represent an *organizational resource* that facilitates the understanding and linkages to these markets by helping various departments to understand the lifestyles, consumption needs and wants, purchasing preferences, media utilization habits, and brand loyalty of these groups [emphasis added]. For example, Phoenix Geophysics Ltd, based in Toronto, credits its newest biggest market (Africa) for its geophysical instruments to its Eritrean-born employee, who speaks five languages. For reasons such as this, one in five businesses has hired an immigrant to help diversify its global client base. Business is *increasingly international, and employees who speak other languages and understand other cultures are a valuable resource* [emphasis added].

Schwind et al. (2019, p.131) describe diversity as a strategic and competitive advantage:

> Globalization and changing domestic markets (because of demographic changes, immigration, etc.) mean that a firm's customers are no longer a homogeneous group of persons. For Canada, this is particularly important since our biggest trading partner, the United States, itself is undergoing rapid transformation in its population, resulting in greater workforce diversity. Further, many of the growing export markets for Canadian firms are located in Asia, Latin America, and Africa. It is imperative that we understand the needs of a diverse population and respond effectively and in a timely fashion to maintain our competitive advantage.

In both texts above, immigrants are presented positively as having multiple skills, knowledge, and perspectives that contribute to the success of businesses. Also, the text presents immigrants with language and cross-cultural competency as ideal or preferred immigrant workers. Here, immigrants are categorically defined as "skilled" and " resourceful," which is rhetorically used to justify their claim for inclusion as workers. The citing of research evidence on the benefits of diversity for businesses and the example of Phoenix Geophysics Ltd suggests that immigrants can play a crucial role in expanding businesses locally and internationally. Also, the authors argue that attention to diversity, and by extension the employment of non-White labour, is strategically advantageous and necessary given that Canada's markets are no longer "homogenous" (i.e. White) but "are located in Asia and Latin America and Africa" (i.e. non-White countries) (Schwind et al., 2019, p. 131).

Nonetheless, HRM textbook authors caution HRM professionals to consider the challenges of realizing these benefits. For example, in their HRM texts, Schwind et al. (2016, p. 22), categorically define immigrants as having low human capital and being economically costly:

> In 1971, Canada became the first country to declare multiculturalism as a state policy. By 2006, the Canadian population was made up of over 200 ethnic origins. The coexistence of numerous national, racial, and ethnic groups, each with its unique cultural and social background, makes Canadian society a cultural mosaic. Economic immigrants have often acted as engines of economic growth in this country, while *shifts in the country of origin of immigrants have added to the cultural diversity and richness of this country* [emphasis added] (Schwind et al., 2016, p. 22).

> For the practising manager, this cultural diversity simultaneously brings additional opportunities and challenges. Often, it is the human resource department's responsibility to *maximize the beneficial outcomes and minimize the challenges posed by a diverse workforce* [emphasis added] (Schwind et al., 2016, p. 22).

> Section: Training & Development

> Training is an important part of an organization's long-range strategy. Examples of the new requirements for survival include the following:
>
> Many immigrants come to Canada annually, mostly from Asian countries. This makes it essential that organizations understand the *specific training needs* of these new arrivals, and that Canadian managers learn to *work with colleagues who hold different cultural values* [emphasis added] (Schwind et al., 2016, p. 22).

The texts above exemplify a rhetorical strategy prevalent within HRM texts, stating the positive contributions of immigration and immigrants, then shifting to emphasize the problems posed by immigrants. The first paragraph celebrates Canada's multiculturalism. It portrays and values immigrants' contributions to Canada's economic growth and cultural diversity in a positive light via phrases such as "engines of economic growth" and "cultural diversity and richness." Also, the paragraph acknowledges the role of the government in changing the “racial, national and ethnic” makeup of workers within Canada via the state's adoption of multiculturalism. By differentiating between mostly European (i.e. White) immigrants of the past and culturally different “new” immigrants (i.e. non-White), the first paragraph rhetorically frames these “new” immigrants as a challenge. This, in turn, reinforces the mythmaking discourses at work in Canada today that frame Canada as a White settler nation and “new” immigrants as only bringing cultural differences to a nation that was otherwise homogenous (Gulliver, 2018). This is then followed by a discussion of the training that is required because of these visible cultural differences, signaling to readers—students and HR professionals—that hiring a non-White immigrant requires greater effort, additional costs and considerations. It also communicates that the value of these workers is not based on their human capital, but on the cultural diversity they bring to the workplace and country. Hence, within the business case for diversity discourse, HRM authors support the inclusion of immigrants as workers, particularly for companies that want to sell products to specific cultural communities, expand overseas, and work in non-White country markets. The business case for diversity discourse as strategic HRM directs businesses to include diverse workers, such as immigrants, for financial and economic benefits. At the

same time, the authors of the HRM textbook emphasize the administrative burden and financial cost of hiring immigrants.

Immigrant Employment Legal Risk Discourse

Another discourse rooted in SHRM and prevalent in HRM textbooks is the view of immigrants as posing legal and compliance risks. In their HRM textbook, Peacock et al. (2020) cite the case of Starbucks to refer to the reputational risk associated with diversity as "an example of how failing to prepare employees to appropriately deal with diversity can be detrimental to a company" (2020, p. 22). It is also common in the HRM textbooks to use this discourse to link immigrants with the larger visible minority population. This link operates with the assumption that since the demographic shift in origin countries, all immigrants are visible minorities. The discourse that emerges from this link is that their visible minority status offers legal protection, which enables them to make claims for organizational resources such as jobs and job protection under employment equity legislation and the Canadian Charter.

Dessler & Chhinzer (2017) note the role of the Employment Equity Act in creating social categories and distinctions based on race, country of origin, and immigrant status:

> According to the federal Employment Equity Act, a visible minority is defined as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour." Often the terms "visible minority" and "immigrant" are used interchangeably, but these two terms are actually distinct. An immigrant represents a person who was not born in Canada, but resides in Canada for the purpose of settlement. In the 2011 Canadian census, there were almost 6.2 million immigrants in the Canadian population. There were almost 6.8 million persons who self-identified as visible minorities, with the largest representation among South Asians and Chinese, followed by persons who self-identified as black, Filipino, and Latin American (Dessler & Chhinzer, 2017. p. 45).

Although they acknowledge that not all immigrants are visible minorities, they otherwise affirm the connection between these groups and the potential legal risk posed by claims made through the Employment Equity Act. Helen (2014) and Belcourt et al. (2019) highlight the risk and cost associated with a failure to comply with employment equity legislation:

> Cost – Diversity is almost inevitable in the present-day organization. If diversity is not handled properly, it can result in *significant cost in terms of money, time and other*

> *resources* [emphasis added]. For example, discrimination lawsuits can occur. There can be substantial differences between organizations that integrate the diverse workforce well and those that do not. (Helen, 2014, p. 214)

> A more diverse and multicultural workforce has made it increasingly important for managers to know and comply with numerous laws related to equity and diversity. Managers and HR professionals are expected to manage employees in ways that comply with and respect the laws and regulations of Canada. It is important to know that managers (and employees) cannot do whatever they want at work without suffering consequences. The consequences range *from criminal charges, costly and time-consuming litigation, negative publicity for the organization, and a decrease in organizational morale and commitment* [emphasis added]. Therefore, following the laws and regulations is just good business, as you will see in the discussion of equity and diversity (Belcourt et al., 2019, p. 89)

Based on these paragraphs, a reader can be expected to understand diversity as a risky business. Beyond business costs and reputational loss, the HRM textbook authors point to criminal charges due to mishandled diversity. The long list of things that could go wrong communicates to HRM professionals that legal risk is inherent in a diverse workforce because non-compliance could result in dire consequences for employees, managers, and the wider organization. HRM textbook authors orient readers to strict adherence to employment equity laws to avoid financial losses. Equally communicated is the expectation of HR professionals and managers to know the legal requirements governing employment equity and understand that HRM exists within a legal framework.

Additionally, HRM textbook authors tend to remind readers through case study commentaries that immigrants pose the legal risks of discrimination lawsuits and compliance fines. For example, Schwind et al. (2019, p.176) share multiple stories that frame immigrants as more likely to seek legal redress:

> As we saw in Chapter 2, the results of job analysis help an organization to identify job duties, specifications, and performance standards. A mismatch between these and the selection criteria will not only result in poor hires but will also expose the organization to possible lawsuits from *job applicants who believe that they have been discriminated against* [emphasis added].

> Gian Singha was an *immigrant from India* [emphasis added] who was fluent in four languages, including English; held postgraduate degrees, including a Ph.D. from Germany in environmental science; and was a co-author of two books and numerous research papers. He applied for a mid-level position as a regulatory officer with the Land

> and Water Board of the Mackenzie Valley. He scored among the highest of the 12 applicants the Board chose to interview. Yet, to his shock a few days later, he was told that his application had been rejected because he was overqualified. The Board felt that he would become bored with the job's routine nature and would quit prematurely. Mr. Singha *complained to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal*, and, in a *groundbreaking decision*, the Tribunal ruled that the Board's action discriminated against Mr. Singha and visible minority immigrants in general. Mr. Singha was *awarded damages* and, more significantly, the Board was ordered to cease using any hiring policies that would automatically disqualify *visible minority immigrants on the grounds that they are overqualified* [emphasis added].
>
> Today, the employer is required to show that the tools used for selecting employees are reliable and valid. "Feelings" or myths, as in the above case, are not valid arguments. This means that performance-based job descriptions and valid selection tools are necessary in the context of selection.

Here, the decision by Schwind et al. (2019) to include the words "who believe" suggests that some job applicants are prone to making discrimination claims during the hiring process, which may not be true. Gian Singha's story as an example reinforces the idea that immigrants are one such group, willing to take legal action and pose a high risk of lawsuits. They then warn that HR professionals must approach HR tasks such as selection, recruitment, grievance, and dismissal procedures when dealing with immigrants, particularly visible minorities. In a subsequent section, titled "Handling Grievance", the authors again use a non-White immigrant as an example:

> Shahab Makholi, an *immigrant from Iran*, was hired as a welder by a Mississauga company that manufactures fire doors. Makholi injured his hand at work and had to have a splint put on it [...] Makholi was dismissed, *which he ultimately grieved.* The arbitrator, in reinstating Makholi, noted that Makholi could not read or write English, the company did not make a substantial effort to explain the importance of the dismissal documentation, no union representative was present at the termination meeting although the agreement required that the union be notified of any layoffs, and Makholi was instructed not to tell the union what had happened. (Schwind et al 2019, p.177)

Other textbooks also use cases of non-White immigrants filing grievances and discrimination complaints as examples. In doing so, they reinforce and emphasize the idea of visible minority immigrants as a litigious group, thus posing a risk for HRM professionals and, ultimately, the businesses they serve. Also, Schwind et al. (2019) suggest that visible minority immigrants' claim for fairness in hiring and employment is normally protected and guaranteed via the

"Canadian Human Rights Tribunal" and "the arbitrator" even when the decision not to hire or dismissal is reasonable. This is achieved by including details such as "Singha's fluent in four languages… postgraduate degrees, including a PhD" and "Makholi could not read or write English." This also highlights the administrative burden of hiring visible minority immigrant workers, given the need to create selection tools and provide documentation that could later be used as evidence that the selection and dismissal of workers are not arbitrary. Consequently, the HRM textbook authors emphasize the need for legal competency and compliance as a requirement for HRM professionals and managers brought about by non-White workers in the Canadian workplace.

Labour Market Integration as Immigrant Responsibility Discourse

All HRM textbooks, particularly in the Equity and Diversity chapters, acknowledge and cite research studies that demonstrate immigrants face labour market discrimination. Peacock et al. (2020, p.56) asserts:

> Systemic barriers that have a negative employment impact on visible minorities can include culturally biased aptitude tests, lack of recognition of foreign credentials, and excessive levels of language requirements.

Nonetheless, HRM textbook authors tend to favour human capital and supply-side explanations that focus on immigrants' skills and cultural deficiencies. For example, Dessler & Chhinzer (2017, pp. 414-416), in the last chapter of their text citing Statistics Canada, highlight "immigrants' lack of Canadian experience, poor transferability of foreign education or training, and lack of literacy skills" to explain their poor labour market outcomes. They further note:

> Chapter 17: Managing Human Resources in a Global Business
> Section: Managing Global Workers within Canada
>
> A survey by Statistics Canada found that 70 percent of newcomers said they had encountered problems or barriers in the job-finding process.
>
> Barrier 1: Lack of Canadian Experience
> Work experience helps individuals develop skills in communication, work patterns, and teamwork that are recognized and valued by organizations. It can help people identify career paths and requirements of desired positions […]

> *Understandably*, [emphasis added] most employers look for familiar references when assessing candidates, such as experiences and companies that they recognize on resumes or during interviews. Often immigrants *feel* [emphasis added] like they are in a Catch-22 situation where they cannot secure a job without the proven Canadian experience, and they cannot acquire the Canadian experience without securing a job […]
>
> Options to help overcome challenges associated with the lack of Canadian experience and devaluation of foreign experience include the following:
>
> 1. Educate employers, recruiters, and hiring managers to develop skills needed to recognize and effectively interpret skills from different countries […]
>
> *At the same time* [emphasis added], immigrants to Canada have *a responsibility* toward learning about Canadian workplace norms and customs and presenting their experiences or qualifications *to Canadian recruiters in a clear and effective way.* There must also be an *awareness of Canadian laws* and *regulations* [emphasis added] (Dessler & Chhinzer, 2017, pp. 414-416).

Here, Dessler and Chhinzer (2017) acknowledge immigrants' challenges and suggest ways employers can improve their evaluation of immigrant applicants. However, they still deploy the immigrant deficiency discourse and low human capital discourse. They blame immigrants by claiming they lack the human capital or know-how to signal to Canadian employers that they have the required knowledge, skills, and experience. Also, they seem to support social closure practices by HRM professionals in selecting based on referrals from familiar companies, as seen in their defence of such practices through the use of the word "understandably" and the phrase “at the same time." The word “understandable” conveys that it is reasonable, logical, and justifiable for employers to seek familiar references when evaluating candidates. This implies that this preference for familiarity is a common and expected practice when assessing candidates for employment. Also, the phrase "at the same time" is used to deny culpability by employers and HRM professionals for not selecting immigrants. They point out that immigrants are equally responsible for the problems or barriers to finding employment. Yes, employers need to recognize and effectively interpret immigrant skills, but it is the immigrant's “responsibility” to communicate or signal their competency and awareness of Canadian laws and regulations.

Other HRM textbook authors downplay immigrant labour market discrimination by citing "second-generation immigrants" as examples of the problem improving or being solved. Belcourt et al. (2019, p.93) make the argument that:

> Those who had been educated outside Canada received callbacks 8 percent of the time and those who had no Canadian work experience only 5 percent of the time, confirming that Canadian work experience is very important to employers. Whereas immigrants had unemployment rates of 11.5 percent in 2006 (compared to 4.9 percent for the Canadian-born population), *second-generation immigrants* [emphasis added] of Chinese and Indian origin have statistically above-average incomes and educations. A new online tool, Roadmap, from the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council, will help employers hire, integrate, and retain skilled immigrants.

The authors recognize the challenges immigrants face in the Canadian labour market, including higher unemployment rates than the Canadian-born population. However, they make a categorical distinction between immigrants and second-generation immigrants and reflect wider government and Canadian immigration discourse that states time since migration impacts and shapes immigrant outcomes. Consequently, immigrant children, particularly Asian children, have achieved economic success and integration into Canadian society. The authors also point out that Canadian work experience is highly valued by employers, with a higher callback rate for individuals who have prior Canadian work experience. Therefore, having previous work experience in Canada and time since migration can significantly improve one's chances of securing employment. The HRM textbook's authors imply that immigrant labour discrimination is temporary and partly the immigrants' responsibility due to their lack of Canadian work experience, poor language proficiency, and poor transferability of education credentials and training.

Immigrants as an Economic Threat Discourse

An equally present discourse in the HRM textbooks is that of immigrants as economic threats and drains on resources rather than a benefit. Despite these views appearing largely in secondary textboxes rather than expressed by the authors in the primary text, they are nonetheless presented as evidence-based commentaries. Dessler & Chhinzer (2017, p. xviii)

explain that expert recommendations and advice should be followed because they "offer insight into relevant and current industry perspectives on issues and how they may affect the Canadian workplace." For example, Belcourt et al. (2019, p. 46) include expert commentary on the HR professional failure to think strategically about labour supply:

> David Foot, a famous Canadian economist and demographer at the University of Toronto, says that HR professionals are often ill-equipped to contribute to their organization's strategy. He contends that HR people are experienced in dealing with micro issues but often lack the big-picture or macro perspective that is necessary to deal with corporate or strategic issues…
>
> "Let me give you another example of reactionary micro thinking," says Foot. "Low unemployment rates traditionally result in demands from business for higher immigration levels to ease labour shortages. But this traditional HR response will become *increasingly inappropriate in the new millennium because more immigrants will only compete with the children of boomers* who will be entering the labour force. A proactionary macro-thinking HR person will, therefore, be able to advise the CEO that this is likely to be a short-term, not a long-term, labour shortage and to *think internally rather than externally for new workers* [emphasis added] (Belcourt et al, 2019, p. 46)

Here, Foot criticizes the "traditional HR response" and the discourse of immigrants as an economic benefit and solution to labour shortages. Foot also considers the relationship between immigration policies, labour market dynamics, the competition for jobs, and the responsibility of HR professionals within this fraught context. His views connect to wider societal anti-immigrant discourse by presenting immigrants as competitors for jobs that the children of Canadians will soon need. In this context, he advises that HRM professionals are responsible for enacting social closure policies by limiting immigrants' access to employment. His advice to "think internally rather than externally for new workers" suggests two things. First, he recommends looking internally at existing workers within the company and looking within Canada to hire instead of hiring immigrants or foreign workers. This line of argument also conflates immigrants with foreign workers. Second, Foot uses socially produced categories of immigrants and Canadians who are "children of boomers" to generate status distinctions. He argues that "children of boomers" have a greater claim to jobs based on citizenship status and should be preferred in employment based on concerns about social tensions due to competition. In this

way, immigrants are presented as threats to Canadian-born workers as well as social cohesion. Foot's commentary draws attention to the unequal power relation between HR professionals and immigrants by showing that they have power as labour market gatekeepers to prevent immigrants from being employed.

HRM textbook authors recommend to HR professionals and supervisors that immigrants should be viewed as a last resort to fill labour shortages. For example, Peacock (2020:24) advises:

> To deal with these shortages, an employer can do a number of things—for example, provide more mentoring for millennials, ensure that the management style in the organization is suitable for both tech-savvy and other workers, and make better use of the skills that immigrants bring.

In support of viewing immigrants as a last resort solution to labour shortages, HRM textbook authors point to the costs and bureaucratic delays:

> With the growing labour shortages in Canada, many employers are looking abroad to secure skilled, hard-to find employees. Indeed, Canada has been recruiting a large number of skilled workers from other countries. Figure 5-9 shows the origins of 148,181 economic immigrants who entered the country in 2013. With an aging domestic workforce and a predicted shortage of technical and highly skilled employees, foreign nationals may become an important source of our workforce.
>
> *Foreign workers*, especially those *from developing countries*, may be less expensive (at least initially) [emphasis added]. Relocation expenses may have to be paid in some instances, however, which can significantly add to the total cost. Firms hiring from abroad will need to *train new recruits to adapt to local and organizational culture*. The process of getting employment visas may also *be time-consuming* [emphasis added] (Schwind et al 2019:166-167)

Despite most textbook authors acknowledging that immigrants are increasingly needed to fill Canadian labour shortages, Schwind et al. (2019) immediately decried foreign workers' expensive and lengthy hiring process. This conflation of immigrants and foreign workers is discussed below. However, it is important to note that by presenting immigrants as foreign workers, authors can point to the economic cost of immigration fees and administrative burden as reasons for not hiring immigrants. Appearing in textbooks, points like these communicate to HR professionals and supervisors not to consider hiring immigrants as part of SHRM based on

the economic cost and bureaucratic challenges—making hiring immigrants the opposite of a strategic business decision.

Defining Immigrant Discourse

As mentioned above, HR textbook authors conflate and define immigrants as foreign workers. Within HRM texts, foreign workers are defined as a solution to labour shortages; there are other characteristics they are linked to, such as mostly coming from developing countries, holding temporary residence status, lacking human capital skills such as language proficiency, and being expensive to hire. Only one of the HRM texts explicitly defines immigrants: "An immigrant represents a person who was not born in Canada but resides in Canada for *the purpose of settlement"* [emphasis added] (Dessler & Chhinzer, 2017, p. 45). The other textbooks instead take it for granted that readers understand the distinction between a migrant worker who enters Canada temporarily and an immigrant who enters Canada with permanent residence status. This failure to provide a clear definition of immigrant, coupled with multiple examples that conflate the mostly high-skilled economic immigrants who have the right to work with low-skilled temporary migrant workers, perpetuates the view of immigrants as skill-deficient and challenging hires. For instance, the commentary from Schwind et al. (2019, pp. 166-167) above begins by discussing "economic immigrants" as becoming "an important source of our workforce" then goes on to conflate them with "foreign workers…from developing countries" whose entry into the workforce would require "relocation expenses". This conflation signals to readers that immigrants are not already in Canada with the right to work and may thus require additional funds and time for relocation, training, and visa processing.

Furthermore, HRM textbook authors employ a series of omissions that categorically define and present immigrants as mostly culturally distinct, non-White, low-skilled, foreign workers who lack English proficiency. For instance, as part of a student job analysis exercise, Schwind et al. (2016:59) gave the following example: "Suppose you were assigned to write the job descriptions for a shirt factory in British Columbia employing *mostly Filipino immigrants who*

speak little English [emphasis added]. What methods would you use to collect job analysis data?". The example connects to the wider discourse and cultural racist stereotypes of immigrants as having low human capital and only good enough to work in factories. Also, the example generalizes the experience of Filipino immigrants as only low-skilled immigrants who work in factories because of their lack of English proficiency. The assignment required for the assessment implies that HRM professionals would have trouble recruiting and employing these workers. In instances where immigrants are categorically defined as highly skilled immigrants, they are presented as difficult, litigious, and posing legal risks, such as Schwind's (2016:176) selection case study example of Gian Singha the over-qualified immigrant from India. This creates another catch-22 for immigrants beyond that of Canadian experience—when immigrants are high-skilled, they are seen as threats based on competition or potential litigation, but when immigrants are low-skilled, they are viewed as burdens based on additional training requirements.

Recruitment and Selection Discourse: Immigrant Invisibility

Immigrants and conversations about immigration are notably absent in the recruitment and selection chapters of HRM texts. HRM textbook authors view applicants' productivity, competency, and human capital strategic value as most important in hiring. For example, HRM authors describe the importance of recruitment and selection in meeting the strategic objectives of organizations:

> Recruiting is a two-way street: It is a matching process between firms with jobs and individuals seeking jobs. The organization is trying to *entice highly qualified people* to consider working for it [emphasis added] (Schwind et al., 2019, p. 144).

> The selection begins when a *pool of applicants* has submitted their resumes or completed application forms as a result of the recruiting process. The selection process has *important strategic significance*. More and more managers have realized that the quality of the company's human resources is often the single most important factor in determining whether the firm is going to survive and be successful in reaching the objectives specified in its strategic plan. Those individuals selected will be implementing strategic decisions and in some cases, creating strategic plans. Thus, successful *candidates must fit the strategic direction of the organization* [emphasis added] (Dessler & Chhinzer, 2017, p. 153).

Here, HR authors reflect human capital theory (HCT) by viewing recruiting as an investment in human capital necessary for achieving the organization's productivity and strategic goals. Recruitment is viewed as a matching process that emphasizes the importance of aligning the skills and qualifications of individuals with the job requirements. It reflects the idea of human capital theory that effective recruitment involves finding candidates whose abilities match the organization's needs.

The HRM author's recruitment and selection process assumes a generic universal employee. For example, HRM textbook authors note:

> Employers use many different pieces of information to try to determine whether an *applicant* will be successful on the job. The initial pieces of information for screening *candidates* include cover letters, résumés, applications, and social media [emphasis added] (Belcourt et al, 2019, p. 212)

> After identifying the pool of potential *candidates* for the job, the next step is to ensure the *most suitable person* is selected. Many selection methods are available and involve the collection and analysis of biographical data, tests, or interviews [emphasis added] (Lam, 2014, p. 109)

HRM authors consistently mirror institutional, professional norms around fairness, which is evident through the repetitive use of terms like "applicant" and "candidate" .This is supposed to cast the hiring process as fair and objective by implying that the same screening and selection methods are applied to all candidates, regardless of their background, experiences, or career aspirations. This suggests a one-size-fits-all approach to recruitment and selection, where all candidates are evaluated based on a standardized set of criteria and processes (Greene, 2010). Consequently, HRM textbook authors promote the reviewing and evaluating of “standard” documents such as resumes and cover letters. Here, they share that the information candidates provide through cover letters, resumes, applications, and social media is only relevant for evaluating their competency for the job. Employers believe these documents and online profiles contain valuable insights into candidates' qualifications, experiences, and professional demeanour. The authors assume that employers make hiring decisions objectively based on the

information gathered and the results of selection methods. Employers aim to select “the most suitable person” for the job regardless of personal biases or preferences.

The HRM authors emphasize the importance of systematic approaches and the focus on candidates' abilities, motivations, and affect in hiring:

> Making hiring decisions is not a scientific process, so it cannot be structured to achieve perfect results. However, a systematic hiring process increases the possibility of acquiring staff committed to the vision and business plans. Selection is the process of choosing from the pool of *applicants and hiring individuals who are best able to fulfill the requirements* of the job [emphasis added]. Those responsible for making selection decisions should have adequate information about the jobs to be filled, and as much relevant information as possible about the applicants themselves, in order to be able to predict the candidate’s job performance (Peacock: 2020, p.115)

> Fundamentally, an employer is interested in *what an applicant can do and will do* **.** Evaluating candidates on the basis of the information you have assembled should focus on these two factors, as Figure 6.7 shows. The “can do” factors include a candidate’s knowledge and skills, as well as the aptitude (the potential) for acquiring new knowledge and skills. The “will do” factors include the *candidate’s motivation, interests, and other personality characteristics*. Both factors are essential to successful performance on the job. The employee who has the ability (can do) but is not motivated to use it (will not do) is little better than the employee who lacks the necessary ability.
> (Belcourt et al, 2019, p.234)

The first paragraph acknowledges that hiring decisions are not scientific and cannot guarantee perfect results. However, it emphasizes the importance of implementing a systematic hiring process that improves the chances of high-quality and productive employees. Both texts embody the assumption of human capital theory, asserting that employers make hiring and selection decisions based on competency and productivity considerations, specifically focusing on "what an applicant can do and will do.” As HRM authors suggest, these two essential factors for evaluating candidates are the best predictors of job performance. They also stress the importance of having adequate information about the job requirements and applicants in the selection process.

Discussion

The HRM introductory course outlines and textbooks show that immigrants are not a priority. HRM instructors and textbook authors emphasize learning key HRM function areas, related legislation, constructing HRM as a business profession, and, most importantly, understanding that HRM has strategic value for organizations. While the HRM instructors focus on topics related to immigrants (e.g., workforce diversity, workplace health and safety), explicit attention to immigrants, their challenges, and workplace inclusion strategies are generally lacking across the course outlines. Most course outlines focus on diversity management of employment equity designated groups, particularly women. Similarly, the authors of the HRM textbook emphasize a strategic human resource management approach (SHRM), which links workforce management to organizational strategy. Here, the central focus is the role of HRM in meeting strategic organizational goals and human capital theory that advocates increasing workers with high human capital for competitive advantage. Given this orientation, it is not surprising that the central preoccupation of HRM textbook authors is whether immigrants constitute a viable labour force for SHRM and whether, as workers, they possess the desired human capital.

HRM textbooks have competing immigrant discourses communicated to students, business managers, and HRM professionals. These include recognizing immigrants' vital role in driving business competitiveness, immigrants as part of HRM strategy for meeting labour shortages, finding new markets, and enhancing business reputation branding. However, HRM students and professionals are told that immigrant labour might not be the best SHRM because of the financial cost, administrative challenges and burdens, such as threats to team and societal cohesion, additional training, and immigration processing fees. Beyond integration and adaptation issues, these discourses present immigrant labour as posing legal and compliance risks because immigrants are litigious and protected by employment equity and human rights legislation based on their visible minority status. These discourses communicate to HRM

professionals that they should not hire or accept, particularly non-White immigrants, claims for employment. The categorical distinction of non-White immigrants as specifically posing challenges is echoed in chapter examples that highlight non-White immigrants as new, coming from China, Iran, and the Philippines, and all having language proficiency issues, not abiding by or requiring further training. These excerpts draw on racial schemas, such as racial cultural stereotypes that are not rooted in actual reality. In all the HRM textbooks, a key immigrant discourse promoted is that diversity and inclusion initiatives should only be pursued if a company is a global firm, wants to improve its reputation as a diversity employer, or falls under the federal employment equity legislation. Lastly, immigrants face employment barriers but are expected to take responsibility for their labour market integration. What is clear is that the primary lens through which immigrants are discussed in HRM texts is economic—their value or cost to Canadian businesses and their role in SHRM efforts.

These discourses have profound implications for immigrants and HRM hiring practice. CDA and RIT remind us that discourse is a sociopolitical practice that involves categorical distinctions, claim-making, exploitation, social closure, and justifications of social abuses. The business case for diversity discourse and immigrant workers as part of SHRM's business competitive advantage enables and justifies immigrant exploitation. Both discourses recommend to HRM students and professionals that immigrant workers should only be pursued and engaged if they economically benefit the organization. For example, authors recommend that immigrant labour and employment should only be granted if firms market or sell products and services to local immigrant communities and sending countries. Also, they urge HRM professionals to leverage immigrant talents, such as language skills, ideas, and business reputation, from diversity recognition awards and government funding programs. This orientation reinforces the idea of immigrants, particularly non-White immigrants, as exploitable labour (Parreñas, 2015). At the same time, they tacitly communicate several business conditions and requirements that need to be met before considering immigrants for hire. Further, the HRM

textbook authors acknowledge and discuss labour market challenges in employment, such as poor transferability of foreign education and lack of Canadian experience. They frame these barriers as challenges immigrants must overcome rather than consequences of employer decision-making processes. Also, they ignore the time penalty for gaining Canadian experience and that addressing foreign education and skill recognition via gaining Canadian credentials is costly to immigrants (Lightman & Good Gingrich, 2018; Hou et al., 2020).

HRM textbook discourse promotes and justifies employer social closure practices by reinforcing and defining immigrants as human capital and culturally deficient, requiring redress and expense by employers. Immigrants' claim for employment is denied mainly because of HRM categorical distinctions that define and present immigrants as culturally distinct, non-White, low-skilled, foreign workers who lack English proficiency and understanding of Canadian workplace norms. Immigrants already have low status within the Canadian labour market but are further linked to other low-status social categories and distinctions. Skill, race, and country of origin are used within HRM textbooks to assign value and competency and determine whether immigrants should be employed or considered as solutions for labour shortages (Guo, 2015). These discourses frame both low-skilled and high-skilled immigrants as legal risks, decreasing their likelihood of being considered for employment. On the one hand, low-skilled immigrants are seen as lacking human capital and requiring additional training, specifically language skills. On the other hand, high-skilled immigrants are framed as overqualified for available positions. In both cases, immigrant racial status is seen as creating a risk of litigation. The result is immigrants being framed as challenging to the hiring process and raising concerns about their true value in SHRM. Immigrant claims for consideration for employment are denied based on expert commentaries that promote anti-immigrant sentiments and restrictive HRM policies regarding immigrant based on the perception of immigrants as economic and cultural threats.

Similarly, claims for consideration for immigrant employment are also denied due to the HRM textbooks' conflation of immigrants with foreign workers. Immigrants, understood as foreign workers, are seen as not having the right to work based on their temporary immigrant status or requirements that the employer aid in relocation. By associating immigrants with temporary foreign workers, HRM textbook authors justify their exclusion based on potential administrative and time costs.

HRM instructors and textbook authors employ rhetorical strategies that briefly acknowledge the positive contributions and benefits of immigrants to Canada, then quickly shift to emphasizing the challenges, risks, and costs of having visible minority immigrants in the workplace. Moreover, HRM discourses involve a series of omissions and silences that promote and justify immigrant labour market exclusion. As Hunckin (2019) suggests, omission can be a tool for silencing marginalized groups' voices or perspectives. When specific groups such as immigrants are consistently omitted from HRM courses and textbook discourses, their experiences, knowledge, and viewpoints are marginalized or erased, reinforcing power imbalances. For instance, some HRM textbook authors present Filipino workers as low-skilled foreign workers with poor language proficiency despite the reality that most Filipino immigrants work in health care and social assistance in Canada, which requires good communication skills (Government of Canada, Statistics Canada, 2021).

The omission of information about immigrants allows for the selective representation of immigrant human capital, also suppressing solutions to tackle discrimination. While HRM discourses talk about the benefits of immigrants for companies, immigrants are omitted from the recruitment and selection sections of the HRM textbooks. Instead, what is promoted is a recruitment and selection process that maintains the status quo, which does not account for immigrants and presents the hiring process as race neutral. The prescribed hiring process and documents in HRM texts only assume and accommodate a White Canadian-born worker as an ideal job candidate. The HRM textbooks do not equip students with the knowledge necessary

for evaluation when confronted with a resume, including foreign credentials and work experiences. The HRM textbooks do not discuss the documents that can be incorporated into the hiring process, such as English language proficiency and credentials assessment certificates that most immigrants would have because of the Canadian immigration point system (Reitz et al., 2014). These documents could be useful to alleviate the concerns of competency regarding language and credentials. Instead, textbooks instruct HR professionals and students on a hiring process that only includes evaluating “standard” documents and tools such as resumes and cover letters without acknowledging that immigrant applicants have additional documents that could help recognize their credentials, language ability, and work experiences. For immigrants, the standard recommended documents of cover letters, resumes, and applications are often not enough to get hired, given the employer's racial and cultural matching, subjectivity, and discretion involved in the hiring process. Also, HRM textbook authors’ default recommendation is that HRM professionals collaborate with settlement agencies and nonprofits to recruit or help understand immigrant credentials despite these organizations' limited success in reducing immigrant labour market discrimination (Creese & Wiebe, 2012). HRM textbooks discuss immigrant labour market exclusion as a result of immigrant human capital deficiency without acknowledging other social actors, such as licensing and accreditation boards, which engage in social closure practices and facilitate employer discrimination (Shan 2013; Reitz et al., 2014).

Another omission from the HRM texts is the lack of information on the Express Entry program administered by the federal and provincial governments. Readers of the HRM textbooks are not told that the Canadian government has already assessed immigrants for their human capital, transferability of their skills, and their ability to integrate into Canada successfully. They are told that immigrants, particularly racialized immigrants, are a recent Canadian demographic occurrence rather than a long-held labour source by Canadian businesses. There is an acknowledgement of the changing demographic from White to

predominantly non-White immigrants, but race and racism are not discussed as part of the immigrant labour market experience (Li & Li, 2013; Guo, 2015). Furthermore, there is an implicit assumption that all immigrants are visible minorities, obscuring the fact that White immigrants are more often integrated and enjoy similar labour market outcomes as Canadian-born workers, (Gingrich et al.,2023). There is no acknowledgement or discussion of why White immigrants have better labour market outcomes than visible minority immigrants (Yssaad & Fields, 2018). Rather, multiple instances of silence and omissions render immigrants as new, and not enough discussion of what this all means for HRM hiring practises and policies beyond the business case for diversity discourse. Consequently, the HRM student, professional, or manager is left with HRM versions of larger societal discourses on immigrants: immigrants are new arrivals or temporary foreign workers, they are potential labour resources, they are non-White, good for diversity, and can be part of the HRM strategic efforts to improve your company's competitiveness. However, there is a double-speak within HRM texts that talks about immigrants as low-skilled, expensive, economic threats and legal risks, making hiring immigrants complicated and unlikely. It is not surprising that research studies on employers' hiring decisions found that employers often cited language proficiency concerns and the nebulous cultural fit concern for not hiring immigrants despite “immigrants listing language fluency, multinational firm experience, education from highly selective schools, or extracurricular activities on resumes” (Oreopoulos, 2011, p. 148). The source of these rationalizations and justifications of immigrant labour market exclusion and discrimination can be traced to HRM courses and textbooks that promote and maintain hegemonic power structures that exclude immigrant workers.

This chapter has shown several competing and paradoxical discourses regarding immigrants within HRM courses and introductory textbooks that connect to the wider Canadian debate about whether immigration is a benefit or disadvantage. While discourses recognize immigrants' potential role in driving and enhancing business competitiveness, they are

predominantly described as culturally and human capital-deficient foreign workers. These discourses all work to deny immigrant claims to employment and a preference within hiring because they posit all non-White immigrants as temporary migrants rather than workers with the right to permanently work and reside in Canada. In turn, these categorical distinctions are reflected in hiring professional's evaluation of immigrants and used to justify employer social closure practices, exploitation, and denial of the immigrant claims for employment. The HRM instructor's course outlines do not prioritize or pay explicit attention to immigrants, their challenges, and strategies for inclusion in the workplace. HRM textbook authors promote and ignore HRM professionals' social closure practices as part of SHRM based on the human capital rationalizations that present immigrants as lacking human capital and failing to signal the competence desired by employers. Consequently, HRM textbook authors and instructors should re-examine the immigrant discourses or the lack of attention paid to immigrants within the field of HRM and SHRM. Also, there is a need for explicit consideration of immigration-related content, particularly Express Entry requirements, ensuring that HR professionals understand the frameworks and practices surrounding the employment of immigrants and the potential challenges this demographic faces.

CHAPTER 5: LABOUR MARKET GATEKEEPERS: HIRING PROFESSIONALS DEFINING AND EXCLUDING IMMIGRANTS

Hiring professionals play a crucial role as gatekeepers in the labour market, determining who gains access to employment opportunities. These include human resource management (HRM) professionals (i.e. HR recruiters, advisors, consultants, and managers as well as external recruiters), hiring managers (line or team supervisors), and hiring panels. Using interviews with HRM professionals, the chapter focuses on the factors deemed most important by HRM professionals for immigrants' employment eligibility in Alberta as well as the tools, strategies, and processes that HRM professionals use to evaluate immigrants' credentials. Lastly, I analyze how HRM professionals' views of immigrants determine hiring selection. The chapter begins with a short explanation of the hiring context, specifically focusing on hiring considerations for immigrants. It utilizes RIT and TRO as theoretical frames for analyzing the categorical distinctions of immigrants reflected in HRM professionals' discussion of hiring and evaluating immigrant job applicants. It discusses Alberta organizations as racialized organizations and specifically hiring considerations as embedded with racial schemas. Also, I discuss how SHRM enables unequal power relationships between hiring managers and HRM professionals, leading to the decoupling of employment equity rules and cultural racism during the hiring evaluation process. Bringing together the CDA findings from the previous chapter with the analysis of the interview data, the chapter discusses HRM professionals' discourses and views on hiring immigrants. It shows that there is varied resistance and conflicting professional ethos to SHRM business objectives and equity. Lastly, as a part of racialized organizations, the chapter discusses the place, the limits, and initiatives for equity, diversity, and inclusion programs in Alberta.

The chapter shows that, like the HRM textbook authors, most HR professionals define and assess immigrants as temporary migrants without the right to work. This seemingly benign act is important because this means that immigrants' permanent resident status is not

recognized, and their right to work and preference for hiring are not acknowledged. So, the lack of immigrants, particularly non-Whites immigrants, permanent residency status limits their job opportunities and claims for jobs. Like the HRM textbook authors, HRM professionals utilize discourses that justify immigrant exclusion from employment and the denial of non-White immigrants' claims for employment. As Ray (2019) points out, these justifications are often disguised as non-racial, i.e., discussed as economic considerations of avoiding training costs, legal risks, and the administrative burden of immigrants. However, they have racist effects in affecting the employment outcomes of immigrants. The chapter finds that the categorization of immigrants as only temporary low-skilled non-White migrants posing financial risks and administrative burdens is later repeated by HRM professionals, hiring managers and employers as justification for not hiring immigrants. The chapter reveals multiple power asymmetries between immigrants and hiring professionals and HRM professionals and hiring managers, leading to immigrant being excluded during hiring. Immigrants are frequently excluded from job opportunities due to their perceived temporary migrant status and social and cultural capital, often reinforced by stringent Canadian experience requirements. These requirements are further entrenched by government licensing regulations, prevailing hiring norms, and the habitus of hiring managers, culminating in institutionalized hiring processes that prioritize Canadian-born workers and workers with Canadian experience. Also, strategic human resource management (SHRM) logic justifies immigrant exclusion and discrimination based on the HRM professional drive to meet organizational objectives such as increased profits, efficiency, productivity, and reduced costs and risks. This SHRM approach reinforces hiring norms and prioritizes the hiring manager's preferences for White Canadian-born workers, White workers, citizens, and workers with Canadian work experience, credentials, and licences.

The Hiring Context

Hiring is done within a legal environment comprising federal and provincial regulations that govern the hiring process. Human rights legislation such as the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Alberta Human Rights Act make it illegal to discriminate during the hiring process (Alberta Human Rights Commission, 2021). Human rights legislation prohibits discrimination in employment unless it is based on a bona fide occupational requirement[7]. An important feature of human rights legislation is the requirement for reasonable accommodation. Employers have a duty to accommodate employees and job applicants to the point of undue hardship so that an individual or group has equal opportunity in employment. Therefore, the employer's duty to "accommodate employees or job candidates begins when first advertising a job and ends when the employee requiring accommodation leaves the job." (Alberta Human Rights Commission, 2021). The failure to accommodate is a violation of human rights legislation.

Within Canada, government labour and employment laws have been designed to privilege the protection of Canadian citizens and permanent residents in hiring. Until 2021, federal regulations governing public servants, such as the Public Service Employment Act, prioritized and gave first preference to Canadian citizens ahead of permanent resident workers in hiring (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2021). Likewise, federal immigration programs, such as the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP), require employers to demonstrate that they have made efforts to hire Canadians and permanent residents before hiring foreign workers (Foster & Barnetson ,2017; Government of Canada, 2024). Government-funded job training and employment assistance programs, including immigrant employment assistance

[7] Bona fide occupational requirement is "a justifiable reason for discrimination based on business necessity such as the abilities and qualifications required for an applicant to perform a job effectively and safely". See Dessler & Chhinzer, 2016, p. 33 and Alberta Human Rights Commission, Jobs, 2021.

programs, are specifically designed to support Canadian citizens and permanent residents in finding employment. However, outside of the federal government and employers who receive government contracts, employers have maintained a hierarchy in hiring where priority is given to Canadian citizens ahead of permanent residents through preferences for Canadian credentials and work experience that one can only accrue based on citizenship or residing in Canada for a longer length of time. Likewise, provincial regulatory bodies that govern occupations and trades have prioritized Canadian citizens with trade and licence requirements that are easier for Canadian citizens and established permanent residents to meet (Reitz et al., 2014; Fairness for Newcomers Office, 2024).

Equally important is the organizational structure within which hiring takes place. Organizational structures profoundly shape hiring culture, recruitment and selection policies, processes, and the job applicants' experience. A key element in shaping organizational logic and structures is SHRM, which is concerned with leveraging human capital and aligning HR functions, practices, and hiring strategies to meet the organization's goals (Lepak & Shaw, 2008). One of SHRM's main goals is for HR professionals to see themselves as strategic business partners and advisors focused on addressing business challenges and implementing policies that utilize human capital to achieve cost-effective, consistent job performance and productivity (Gill, 2018). In the context of hiring, SHRM is concerned with profitability, productivity, efficiency, cost reduction, and risk avoidance. HR professionals are expected to understand and support these financial objectives by being business partners, advisors, and supporters of hiring managers and hiring panels (Martin, 2010). Consequently, SHRM promotes decentralization in hiring and focuses on meeting the demands and requests of internal clients such as hiring managers. As Dessler and Chhinzer (2017) point out, within companies, depending on the firm size, hiring is done by hiring managers and HR professionals with varied levels of authority. The hiring manager has line authority over hiring, giving them the right to make hiring decisions such as shortlisting and selecting job candidates and issuing orders to

HR professionals, employees, and other managers on the hiring panel. On the other hand, HR professionals have staff authority, which gives them the right to advise and make recommendations to the hiring manager and panel. Consequently, hiring managers have greater power over HR professionals and hiring panels during the hiring process (Dessler & Chhinzer, 2017). Also, based on this relationship, SHRM promotes the view that HR professionals see hiring managers and the panels as internal clients and customers whose primary purpose in hiring is to serve. This relationship is more pronounced for external HR professionals at staffing and recruiting firms given that they provide talent consultant services to firms for a fee and are therefore interested in repeat business.

Lastly, Alberta's hiring cultural norms support a Canada-first orientation that believes citizens and then permanent residents should have first preference and priority in employment (Foster & Barneston, 2015). A common practice among Canadian organizations is that job posts often state that preference is given to Canadian citizens and permanent residents of Canada when hiring (Johnston, 2019). Consequently, Canadian credentials, licences, work experience, and cultural conventions are preferred, required, and encouraged in recruitment and selection. Also, Alberta, as a province, has demonstrated its preference for citizens via successive internal migrant labour programs such as Alberta is Calling (Hiller, 2009). Many employers still show a preference for White workers and have lingering doubts about the human capital competency and the ability of racialized immigrants and migrants to adapt to the ideals and values of White Western Canadian society (Guo, 2015; Foster & Barneston, 2017; Intungane et al.,2024).

Findings

Hiring Professionals Define Immigrants as Temporary Migrants

For most HR professionals (28), immigrants are largely viewed, defined, categorized, and assessed primarily as non-permanent residents or temporary migrants[8], such as international students and foreign workers. For example, when asked during the interview how they define immigrant and what happens when an immigrant applies for a job, HR professionals gave the following answers:

> In our company, how we define an immigrant is basically someone that wasn't born and raised in Canada. Maybe they have their experience from overseas (Kwame, HR Manager, Information Technology (IT)
>
> I define immigrants, yeah. Okay, I'll attempt to define it from my perspective. So, it's obviously someone that's coming to Canada from another country, they don't have Canadian citizenship or PR [permanent resident] yet. I assume that they are motivated to come to Canada for well, any number of reasons. It could be greater job opportunities, they want better opportunities for their family. Maybe there is strife where they are, and they must leave? I guess they, many of them may be coming with little English, like command of the English language, but that's not necessarily true (Sarah, HR Partner, Postsecondary Institution).
>
> Yeah, so that happens, often, actually, especially people on visas. When they're transitioning from a student visa to a work visa. That happens often. And it's pretty seamless process, right? And in terms of that level, umm they…they get the position here after their schooling. We give them the employment contract, and then they issue that work visa, and they work here. Super seamless. We actually have three students, three accounting students that are on those work visas (Abigail, HR Manager, Accounting).

These responses reveal a tendency among HR professionals to only think of immigrants as non-permanent residents or temporary migrants. As such, for HR professionals, being an immigrant means being on temporary visas, being an economic migrant, having foreign credentials and work experience, and not having the right to work, which citizens and permanent residents enjoy. Also, this categorial distinction of immigrants reflects the HRM textbook authors' definition and framing of immigrants as only foreign workers. This perspective

[8] Non-permanent resident or temporary migrant refers to a person from another country with a usual place of residence in Canada and who has a work or study permit or who has claimed refugee status (asylum claimant, protected person and related groups. See Government of Canada, Statistics Canada, 2018

and definition of immigrants as temporary migrants shape the factors hiring professionals deem most important for their employment eligibility in Alberta, Canada.

Key Factors Shaping Employment Eligibility for Immigrants

Are Immigrants Legally Eligible to Work in Canada?

Given that immigrants are categorically defined as temporary migrants, HR managers and recruiters (27) raised concerns about eligibility to work when assessing immigrant applicants or applicants perceived as immigrants. When asked why Canadian employers may not want to hire immigrants, Sue, an HR manager, pointed to the question of their eligibility to work:

> Um, maybe for legal reasons. And by legal I just mean like paperwork. Like, are they legal to work in Canada? Do they have visas? Yeah, it would just be the administrative cost, I would say, would be probably one of the things. (Sue, HR Manager, IT).

Other HR professionals shared this concern about immigrant eligibility, especially at the applicant screening stage. This question is among the first considerations when deciding immigrant eligibility for employment before even assessing their qualifications for the position. For example, Kwame an HR manager shares that the question of an immigrant's permanent residency status is a secondary criterion to their legal ability to work:

> Honestly, in my world right now as working in tech, I am almost unable to pay attention to you if they're an immigrant. The first thing we always look out for is, are they a Canadian resident? So, do they live in Canada? Are they eligible to work in the US or Canada? What's their background? What's their experience? What kind of company have they worked in? (Kwame, HR Manager, IT)

Here, we see an example of the conflation of immigrants with temporary workers who may not be eligible for employment. Sue states that applicants who are immigrants often lack employment eligibility, which poses an administrative burden for HRM professionals and legal risks for companies. Also, Kwame raises the residency requirement as an important screening tool for immigrants, reflecting that immigrants must meet employment eligibility and residency requirements. This is an extra step in the assessment process that likely does not occur if the

applicant is not perceived as an immigrant—meaning anyone with foreign credentials and/or work experience must undergo an additional assessment. Kwame also illustrates HRM's commitment to colorblindness in hiring by claiming that immigrant status does not matter, “unable to pay attention if they are immigrant.” While this dedication illustrates an attempt at fairness via equal treatment, this approach ignores that immigrant status matters in hiring and that immigrants do face challenges in getting hired in Canada.

In line with HRM textbook discourses, HRM professionals often voice and justify work employment eligibility concerns as risks and costs of hiring immigrants. Fatima, a senior HR manager, emphasized the uncertainty of investing in candidates who may not secure the necessary visa or residency status, stating, "The concern is that what if the visa doesn't go through? What if they don't get their residency? We're gonna put all this time and effort and training and money into this person, and then they're gonna leave us." She underscored the unpredictability and cost of the process, including bureaucratic delays and potential paperwork complications, noting, "So it’s the risk there, I think they're trying to avoid." These perceived uncertainties, prompt organizations to exercise caution when hiring immigrant applicants to mitigate potential setbacks. Similarly, Tom a recruiter, states that despite employers generally holding a favourable view of immigrants, they have concerns about the potential financial risks and costs of hiring immigrants:

> So, the quick, the quick steady rule is that hiring immigrants is good, but we don't want to have to pay to support them, and to, to get their sponsorship and their work permits in there, all of that stuff. So, if the candidate is full-fledged able to work, great! If they're needing additional sponsorships, and hence costs and that kind of stuff. Unless they're in an incredibly high demand, niche position, the company generally doesn't want to entertain (Tom, Recruiter, Oil & Gas)

Tom describes that immigrants applicants are assessed based on the financial costs and risks associated with their foreign worker status, including the long time to hire, relocation costs, and immigration sponsorship fees. Discussions with HR professionals thus reveal that immigrants are disadvantaged from the earliest stages of the hiring process. For these HR professionals

and employers, one of the major concerns in hiring immigrants is whether the immigrant candidate is legally entitled to work in Canada without requiring sponsorship. The main argument, since immigrants may not be legally entitled to work, they pose legal risks and financial costs. This question of the immigrant's legal eligibility to work is driven largely by HR professionals and hiring managers' definition and orientation toward immigrants as only temporary foreign workers and not permanent residents.

Is the Immigrant in Alberta or Canada?

Another factor in selecting immigrants is whether they are already in Canada or have a Canadian address. Most HR professionals (30) shared that immigrant job candidates were automatically disqualified from the hiring process if they were not living in Canada. For example, Sean, a HR generalist, shared that location is a priority in evaluating job candidates:

> Okay. So usually I have like some set really high-level criteria, they need to be in a broadband location, they need to be within Canada. We get…because I post across Canada and remote, we get lots of applications from like, Africa, I get lots from Brazil, Morocco these things because it's also for French-speaking jobs and they like lean towards that. So, screening out the ones that obviously can't go to the job (Interview, Sean, HR Generalist, D&I Consultancy Agency)

Location is an early screening criterion for employers who require proximity to the job site, even for remote work. In these cases, a person's address on an application or resume shows that they are not present in Canada and thus not eligible for the position. In other cases, however, foreign credentials or work experience are used as proxies for immigrant status. We can see this in Recruitment Consultant Connor's discussion on screening immigrant resumes:

> The biggest thing that comes up with the resumes of people that have been, you know, a foreign trained or whatever the case might be. The biggest issue is whether or not they are in Canada or not. Is this a question of somebody who is physically in Canada, is this somebody physically in Calgary looking for a job, maybe somewhere else in Canada. They are in Toronto and looking to move to Calgary and something like this. Or is this a case of somebody literally in their home country or in a third country and they are looking to immigrate. And they are wanting you to help with their immigration status and stuff like this. Most companies don't want to get involve in something like this because it, the pathway takes too long. It's a lot of paperwork, most companies just don't have the time on that side (Connor, Recruitment Consultant, Staffing Agency).

In Connor's assessment, foreign credentials or work experience indicate a potential issue around location and trigger additional scrutiny around eligibility to work. This additional screening step is important because it often eliminates immigrant candidates because of the assumption that they will need sponsorship. As Connor further points out, HR professionals and employers avoid hiring immigrants because of the administrative burden and financial costs associated with immigration sponsorship and relocation.

Does the immigrant have Canadian experience?

Beyond the screening requirements like location and work authorization, a consistent factor at play in immigrant hiring within the Canadian labour market is the necessity for the Canadian experience. "Canadian experience" is described by HR professionals as the professional and cultural experience gained while working or studying in Canada. Most HR professionals (24) and hiring managers require Canadian experience. This criterion is assessed differently, using proxies to meet the requirements of the Canadian experience. For example, Paul, HR director at a non-profit, shared that having Canadian experience is part of the screening process, "well, we just look at the criteria. So, as an example, if I see somebody with international experience, they have to have some Canadian experience to work here". In this way, Paul assesses for Canadian experience by looking at the location of an applicant's work experience. The requirement of Canadian experience is often conveyed to HR professionals when shortlisting job candidates. Isabelle, an external recruiter, explained that hiring managers often prioritize candidates with Canadian experience when selecting candidates for interviews. She elaborated, "Sometimes they call into question the decision-making [to include immigrant candidates] . 'Okay, I don't know, it can be any type of filter that they use. Like the companies that they work, were mostly abroad, but there's no actual Canadian experience." In this way, Canadian experience is not listed as a requirement in job advertisements but is used in assessing candidates.

The Canadian experience requirement is also reflected in job postings that require Canadian certifications and credentials. The presence of these Canadian licences or certifications is also viewed by hiring professionals as increasing the likelihood of being selected for a callback and interview. For example, Tom and Connor shared that Canadian education credentials and professional licences are viewed favourably by hiring managers:

> If they have a Canadian Master's engineering degree. In almost all cases, they're eligible to apply for APEGA. That so APEGA [Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Alberta], so their master's degree combined with their undergrad from some foreign education or foreign institution will at least provide them with the educational component. Then you take it a step further, and then the APEGA assesses their experience, and they might be an EIT [Engineer in Training] or a P.Eng.[Professional Engineer]. Companies I've worked for are generally more accepting of that because they know it's just a matter of time before they get that P.Eng. (Tom, Recruiter, Oil & Gas).

> When we see that APEGA logo, and that this person is an engineer. It's so much easier and so much faster (Connor, Recruitment Consultant, Staffing Agency).

In this way, APEGA, P.Eng., and other licensing serve as signals to employers that a candidate has Canadian experience without making that an explicit requirement.

Another proxy for Canadian experience is Canadian educational credentials. Tom describes how Canadian education is assessed in relation to licensing,

> So, as you probably are aware, as well is that, there are a lot of foreign engineers who will take their master's degree in Canada. And the cool thing with that is, that if they have an undergrad from somewhere else, and they do their masters in Canada, that usually then meets the APEGA requirements. And taking your masters is almost the same time as jumping through all the other APEGA hoops, you know. All those other courses and things that you have to do. So, for the most part, again, depending on the position. But if they can't easily assess on their resume for me that they are eligible for a Canadian P. Eng. I will likely, assume that they're not, and push them aside (Tom, Recruiter, Oil & Gas)

Here, Tom explains that employers are more likely to hire candidates with Canadian education because it will be easier for them to become licensed. They are more likely to have had direct experience in the Canadian market through internships. As such, Canadian education and licenses are proxies for Canadian experience, and immigrants who do not meet this requirement are often excluded from consideration.

The Canadian experience requirement is essential in regulated occupations, client-facing positions, and senior-level industry roles. In these fields, Canadian experience (understood as a given when licensed) is necessary for understanding industry standards, rules, and laws in the Canadian context. Due to the SHRM orientation, HR professionals and hiring managers adhere to these requirements to remain legally compliant and reduce liability. A food and beverage recruiter, Sophia emphasizes the necessity of occupational requirements, stating, “So, if this is a professional occupation, right, then professional licensing could matter. So, for instance, if you're hiring for a financial director, and they do not have like the CPA license. It may affect our liability in the future”. For Sophia, compliance with the licensing requirement is more a matter of preventing financial costs from lawsuits than a bona fide job requirement for the role.

For hiring professionals licensing ensures knowledge of industry standards and the specific local Canadian context. Kwame, an HR manager, underscores the importance of Canadian experience in understanding local laws and policies. He explains:

> "In HR... are some laws, there are some policies, there are some HR or hiring guidelines, or do's and don'ts of hiring that you should know as an HR personnel that you need to have a Canadian experience to know. So say, for example, if you've worked in Nigeria, or you've worked in the UK, their hiring process is totally different from our hiring process in Canada. So if you do not have a Canadian experience, it's gonna be very difficult for you to jump and hit the ground running.” (Kwame, HR Manager, IT)

Here Kwame, like many other HR professionals interviewed, expresses doubt about the extent to which an immigrant candidate can be familiar with industry standards without having had Canadian work experience. HR professionals and hiring managers often harbour concerns that immigrant candidates may lack a comprehensive understanding of Canadian work culture and conditions in Canada. There is a perception that practices in other countries differ significantly from those in Canada, raising doubts about the relevance and applicability of foreign work experience. Alia, a talent acquisition consultant, shared that construction hiring managers have these concerns:

> I truly honestly feel that they [hiring managers] have that fear in them about, you know, they [immigrants] don't really know the work culture, they don't really…the reason I have heard from my hiring managers is, the construction works really differently back in Asian countries or in a Middle East country, the weather conditions are different, the materials are different. You know, they use pure concrete, here we have wooden, we have other materials involved, so they do not have a knowledge about them. This is the reason I hear from them (Alia, Talent Acquisition Consultant, Government).

Alia explains that hiring managers believe the only way to learn about Canadian standards, rules, and conditions is through Canadian experience.

Employers also consider Canadian experience as fulfilling a cultural requirement. Beyond the requirement that immigrants have Canadian credentials and work experience, they must also demonstrate Canadian values. Often, the decision to hire an immigrant is determined based on the extent to which an immigrant displays commitment to Canadian norms and values. Sophia, a recruiter, explains that immigrant job candidates are penalized during interviews based on not demonstrating expected Canadian interpersonal skills, stating:

> While I guess the culture here is for people to be chatty, and you know, chatty and breezy and have a sense of humor, right? In some cultures, this is not seen as being professional. Right? And so automatically when you're interviewing, and a person is, you know, having a very sad face, and you may just, you know. Like maybe the hiring manager may say something funny and they don't even respond. They just kind of wonder, if this person is just not a friendly person. And well, sometimes it doesn't matter. All the times, like, they would tell me, “oh, I have a team, and they really need someone that is going to be able to manage, you know, like relationships diplomatically, someone who is friendly, you know, with someone who's going to be talking with clients”. So, we need them to be able to communicate very well. And so, in those kinds of roles, if you're very flat, in the interview, it kind of automatically puts that kind of, you know, “oh, I don't think this person is excited for this role”. I don't think this person is really motivated to, you know, be in this position (Interview with Sophia, Recruiter, Food & Beverage)

HR professionals reported that hiring managers believe some immigrants or foreign candidates lack the embodied Canadian cultural capital, such as friendliness, which they would have gained with Canadian experience.

Nonetheless, some HRM professionals (8) point out that Canadian experience requirements—whether it be licence, education, or culture—for jobs may be over-emphasized in the hiring process. They argue that hiring managers need to focus on assessing if the Canadian

experience (licence or credential) job requirement is a bona fide occupational requirement. Also, hiring managers should verify that the candidates can perform the job duties and, if necessary, offer additional training. Taylor and Alia share the following insights:

> So, I understand and I agree, yes, there are differences. However, I feel as though the differences are a lot more trivial than maybe the credence is given. I think that a lot of organizations think they're very unique and this isn't just in hiring. But, you know, they look at somebody who comes from oil and gas and they are in construction. They're like, “Oh, we're way different organizations, so you need…” No, you're not! You are a company at the end of the day, because this is business. People can learn a lot quicker if you give them the understanding that skills are transferable (Taylor, External Senior Recruiter at Global Staffing Agency)

> But again, I believe and my, you know, argument with them is always that these are the things that they can be trained about. They have that knowledge about construction, it is just that they need to be trained upon working under different conditions, that's all (Alia, Talent Acquisition Consultant, Government).

Despite their misgivings, these HR professionals admit acquiescing to hiring managers’ requests for candidates with Canadian experience. This is the case because HR professionals recognize hiring managers' line authority, as they are the ones the applicant will report to and are responsible for hiring decisions. In sum, HR professionals and hiring managers use proxies for Canadian experience and often eliminate immigrant candidates with foreign credentials and work experience.

Are Immigrant Credentials Equivalent to Canadian Credentials?

Another influential factor in immigrants' eligibility for employment is that HR professionals (23) and hiring managers question immigrants' educational quality and equivalency to Canada. Here, the standard view by HRM professionals and hiring managers is that immigrants' foreign credentials may not be the same quality as Canadian credentials. For example, Winnie and Sam share that HR professionals and hiring managers hold this belief and have difficulty assessing foreign credentials in the hiring process.

> If you're coming from another country, maybe their educational, whatever, university degrees, or professional associations, requirements that they have there might not be as equivalent here. So maybe they have to do upgrading. Or maybe it's just a lot of extra

> work to basically kind of be considered at the same equivalent level (Interview with Winnie, HR Advisor, Post Secondary).
>
> Because I'm not fully equipped to necessarily answer the area of education that is relative to the post-secondary of Canada, for example or another country. So, level of standards that would be acceptable here would not be acceptable anywhere else, or vice versa. So, another country will have standards that are subpar and therefore not be able to be transferable here. (Sam, Recruiter, Postsecondary)

These HRM professionals take the inferiority of foreign credentials as a given. Also, employers' cost, efficiency, and productivity concerns are reflected here. HRM professionals find it costs less and is easier to evaluate Canadian workers and candidates with Canadian credentials. Also, the perception of these credentials as inferior means that if hired these candidates would not be as productive without additional training. Consequently, HR professionals and hiring managers are less willing to consider immigrants. For example, Horace shared that Canadian hiring managers are less willing to hire immigrants because they are unaware of how to assess foreign credentials and are risk averse. He states:

> It's an internal science that I have in my mind that I can't explain. I go into the matrix. So, the way I determine if a foreign…I don't even like calling them foreign. They're people with experience, that's all they are. Right? They're just people with experience that. The truth is, they're people with experience it's just that most hiring managers within the Canadian system don't understand their background. Right? [...]You know, and it's, it's…I guess, it really boils down to education (Horace, External Senior Recruiter Consultant, Staffing Agencies, Construction)

Do Immigrants lack Language Proficiency?

English language proficiency is equally important in determining immigrant employment eligibility. In answering why employers may not want to hire immigrants, most HRM professionals (31) shared that HRM professionals and hiring managers perceive immigrants as lacking English proficiency, which prevents them from being selected. For example, Courtney shared that this view is widespread among hiring managers:

> There's often an assumption in the organization that immigrants have language barriers, that they won't be able to communicate well with, you know, patients or other staff members. That's simply not true, in my experience (Courtney, Talent Acquisition Advisor, Government).

This assumption alone puts immigrant applicants at a disadvantage unless they can prove this proficiency, with hiring managers seeing Canadian experience or educational credentials as the best proof.

HRM professionals and hiring managers often emphasize that English proficiency and effective communication skills are required for most jobs, especially for customer service jobs requiring frequent client engagement. For instance, Melissa shared that for job candidates in the home care industry, English proficiency is critical for selection:

> Language of course is an obvious one. And yes, I have at times had to rule out candidates that I've spoken to on the phone because their English just wasn't strong enough. And especially when you're dealing in the home care industry, you're dealing with elderly people who struggle with hearing, so you need to have pretty comprehensive English or good English skills in order to communicate with them (Melissa, HR Manager, Healthcare)

Even in industries like Melissa's, English language proficiency is not assessed using measures already taken by the government during the immigration process, such as the English language exams required for immigrants. Instead, HR professionals and hiring managers engage in over-the-phone assessments using their own standards for proficiency.

Additionally, HRM professionals and hiring managers assess English proficiency in different ways, using other factors as proxies for immigrant status as well as language proficiency. Unlike the English language proficiency exams, these processes are more subjective and based on cultural norms rather than strict language proficiency. For example, HR professionals and hiring managers assess for immigrant English proficiency by evaluating resumes for errors, assessing accents on phone calls, and determining the ability to have a conversation on the phone. Courtney reveals that immigrants face bias in the hiring process because, during the resume review, a job candidate's name may reflect immigrant status or foreignness, which leads to an assumption that they lack English proficiency.

> Where I've seen it is in the screening phase. There are assumptions made based on names, whether they're foreign or not. And those assumptions then extend to well, if they're foreign, then they probably have language barriers and maybe they…and

> managers will list like excellent communication skills in their job posting, and then assume that they can use that as a way to screen when it's irrelevant. But yeah, that's where I've seen it in the past, is assumptions based on names and backgrounds (Courtney, Talent Acquisition Advisor, Government)

The assumption made based on names triggers heightened scrutiny of an applicant's resume, which is categorized as foreign and requires additional assessment for credential equivalency and language proficiency. These assumptions, often based on names alone, tap into a larger narrative of immigrants as being low-skilled, culturally deficient, and lacking communication skills, thus marking them as ineligible for employment. Similarly, Jessica highlights that while HR professionals and hiring managers are willing to overlook errors on Canadian job candidate resumes, errors on immigrants' resumes are judged more harshly. Instead of being treated as a minor infraction, resume errors are indicators of English language and productivity deficiencies.

> And so, a lot of people like connect English skills, whether that's verbal or written, to intelligence. And so you know, if somebody…So for example, even if you don't have like a local-sounding name (in quotations), and then you have a resume that maybe has some spelling errors or something in it, a lot of people will pull that out. I don't think that it's actually a representation of like, it could be like neurodivergent or English as a second language. So, I don't see that as an issue. But I think…I know a lot of people that actually would, "oh, there's a spelling error on this so they don't have attention to detail" (Jessica, Talent Director, Global Consulting).

Importantly, Jessica highlights that the connection of a name that reviewers use to mark an applicant as a foreign or immigrant with errors on the resume raises questions of ability and intelligence.

Beyond lacking English proficiency, Liz explains how accents are used as a proxy for intelligence. HR professionals and hiring managers resort to storytelling and stereotypes to confirm that immigrants lack English proficiency:

> There's also this thing where people have very, like, strict ideas about how people should be able to communicate. Yeah, I think we hire, we hold immigrants to really high levels of, in terms of what we expect for communication. Like, you know, like, I don't know if it's, people can't deal with an accent or what, but that's a barrier for sure. And we project onto it. What it means, if you have an accent, then it might mean, you can't communicate well, maybe you can't think as well, right? I'm just, this is too much (Liz, Recruiter, Postsecondary).

Liz further explains that Canadian employers set a higher bar for immigrant candidates. This means that a job candidate deemed an immigrant is assessed for English proficiency and the ability to speak with a Canadian rather than a foreign accent. In summary, immigrants displaying English language proficiency are integral to selection. It is clear that most hiring professionals unfairly screen out immigrants based on perceived language deficiencies, which may not accurately reflect an immigrant's abilities or suitability for the position.

Is the Immigrant Job Candidate a Cultural Fit?

The selection of immigrants for jobs is often contingent upon their perceived cultural fit. As defined by hiring professionals in the study, cultural fit encompasses various elements, including adherence to Canadian workplace conventions, alignment with Canadian values, and embodiment of the attitudes and values of the team and company. According to Sam, a recruiter, hiring managers view the ability of immigrants to exhibit and subscribe to Canadian cultural norms and values as necessary and indicative of their suitability for jobs. Sam highlights the way cultural fit factors into hiring decisions:

> So oftentimes, the work that it takes to, I'm gonna use a terrible word, which I hate using this word, “assimilate”. If they're not able to assimilate easily, or they haven't already been accustomed to the North American culture or Western culture, they're going to have difficulties. And hiring managers will not have the time and the resources, generally speaking, to then either train or have patience for, or educate, or coach, or mentor. They prefer candidates who are already at that…at that stage (Sam, Recruiter, Postsecondary)

Sam's reluctance to deploy the term "assimilate" underscores the sensitivity surrounding the expectation for immigrants to adapt swiftly to the dominant Canadian cultural norms. Instead, he relies on SHRM logic to justify the demand for assimilation. He couches this demand as more about efficiency, productivity, and cost concerns related to employers needing to provide additional training and support to bring a person within the cultural fit. Tom echoes similar sentiments, emphasizing the importance of immigrants aligning with the values and social norms prevalent within the Canadian workplace. Tom raises an important aspect of cultural fit

concerning alignment with team values and social norms.

> Fit in with the similar values of the team and you know, even the social norms, right? And so, there's another potential barrier to hiring immigrants is, unfortunately, it's easy to fall into a stereotype. You know, a stereotype, but you're scared that these folks may not understand those social norms (Tom, Recruiter, Oil & Gas)

He acknowledges that stereotypes heavily influence hiring decisions, where immigrants' perceived cultural differences make them incompatible with teams and the Canadian work environment. Again, we can see the deployment of language such as "scared" that signals immigrants as posing a security threat and risk.

Interviews with HRM professionals revealed that immigrant cultural fitness is determined during the hiring process in three ways. One is through the resume review, where immigrants having Canadian work and educational experience increase the likelihood of being selected for an interview. For instance, Maria indicates that Canadian work experience is used to determine immigrant cultural fitness:

> And I'll be honest, I don't know. I mean, me, myself as an immigrant, I had that experience. Like, when I arrived here in 2013 I have a lot of like, interview, interviews, because you know, I have a very, I'm gonna say, a very good resume. I have good experience. But when they find out that I do not have the Canadian experience, I'm not going to considered immediately on that call. I'm done. I'm not going to get called, they are going to let me know that, "we're looking for somebody who has Canadian experience". So one of the things that I've heard and learned over the years is that because they're looking for culture fit. So, as I tried to understand what this culture means, until now, I still don't understand it. But one of the things that was explained to me is that, how we do work in our origin countries, is different from how they work. So that's one of the reasons why cultural fit is very important (Maria, HR Generalist, Manufacturing).

The inclusion of Canadian experience on a resume serves as a tangible indicator of an immigrant's ability to integrate into the local workforce seamlessly. Other indicators of cultural fit on the resume Tom says, include personal details about your hobbies and volunteer activities that shows connection to a Canadian community:

> Well, I mean, in a conversation, it's easier, but on a resume, it's a little bit more challenging, right? It could be in a cover letter, it could be all sorts of things. You know, in terms of this is, where it's, there's sometimes a balance of having, throwing some personal things in your resume, to help, help that right? Whether, you know, relocated

> with the whole family, because the spouse got a job in the area. You love the outdoors, you love the mountains, you want to be, you know. You know, different kids or whoever or going to different schools. I mean, there's a few different ways of. Or if I look at, I mean, this is tough, but I look at the resume, and I see Calgary, Calgary, Calgary, Calgary, like it's embedded in the resume right there. They're volunteering in Calgary, they're doing…they go to school, they're taking courses, like whatever it might be. It's, it's, it's not kind of fly-by-night kind of thing (Tom, Recruiter, Oil & Gas).

Here, Tom highlights the value of personal narratives in an immigrant showcasing cultural and social compatibility. He emphasizes the importance of including Canadian work experience, personal anecdotes of family, and social capital signals such as engagement with community activities in Alberta. This goes beyond showing suitability for the position to demonstrating a commitment to integrating into Canadian cultural norms and values. Another way of signalling the intention and willingness to assimilate is through changing your name. For instance, Sheila shared that immigrants needed to show signs that they assimilated to increase their employability:

> They might be…Like, for example, I'll give you an example. For example, my name is actually [omitted], right? But I kind of make it easier. Like, when I put in my name I put [omitted]. So, I've found and I've heard people who say, “Oh, that's so accommodating”. It helps because sometimes people are worried about pronouncing your name the wrong way. So just seeing that somebody put something like that shows, okay, this person's quite diverse, they're trying to make things a little bit much easier. Or even putting pronunciation, let's say I don't want to put [omitted] I just want to stay have the [omitted]. But, in LinkedIn, for example, you have where people actually call their name. People find…Honestly, it shouldn't be an issue, because there are way harder names with Americans or Canadians, but it just shows that you have been diverse because whether we like it or not—and that’s always what I tell people—we are coming to somewhere new. Even though we have notion we are all supposed to be treated okay. We’re always supposed to be treated right. But you should also show you’re integrated (Sheila, HR Advisor, Government).

Despite acknowledging that this should not be a requirement for immigrants, Sheila supports whitening resumes as a signal of assimilation, based on the idea that this strategy increases racialized immigrants' likelihood of a callback and securing employment.

Two, cultural fitness is determined via the phone screen in which immigrant candidates are assessed based on the ease of the conversation with the hiring professional and displays of attempts to assimilate into Canadian culture. Sean, an HR generalist at a diversity and inclusion

staffing consultancy firm, explained:

> I also would like to say like, experience Canada. Go and do stuff. So, if you're fresh to Toronto, go try some Toronto things. Go in CN Tower, go look at the harbor, whatever, right? So that way, when we are talking, you're like, “Oh, hey, have you ever been to this road or been to this shop?”, you’re like “Oh, yeah. I've seen that.” And kind of you've got, you know, some local experience. Cause a lot of people... And that's a good kind of way to gap that barrier is, I'm excited to talk about the thing I know about, regardless of who it’s with. So, if immigrant comes to Calgary, and we're like, “Hey, did you hear about the stampede?” They're like, “Oh, yeah, I've been in stampede”. So, you know, you're comfortable, excited about talking about your city and that somebody knew. So you've got some kind of shared ground. And that's an easy gateway that they both are experiencing Canadian stuff. But it also gives them that kind of door to feel, you know, like, I'm Canadian, or I've seen the Canadian things that I can talk about them with you. I think that's a cool way to get that. Yeah, there's always like, if you can take some small programs that add some technical things. Some stuff, it's simple as that, you know, I've got this one, you know, two-month course on computer sciences, and they're like, “well, that's great. We'll hire you because of that”, not because you have a PhD in India. Right? So, you know, that's all it takes for them to close their eyes and think it's all okay. It's all good (Sean, HR Generalist, D& I Consultancy Staffing Agency).

Sean is describing cultural matching, which requires candidates to prove Canadian integration so that the job evaluator recognizes shared group membership. He also indicates that foreign credentials may not matter as much in hiring as cultural fit. A short program or work experience in Canada goes a long way over advanced foreign credentials.

Third, candidates are assessed for Canadian cultural values during the interview. This is done largely through cultural behavioural questions that test immigrants' commitment to Canadian values. Both Liz and Abigail highlight how immigrants' cultural values are often deemed incompatible with Canadian values. Interview answers are used to gauge immigrant candidates' commitment to Canadian values and team culture. Liz underscores the significance of individualism in Canadian work culture, stating:

> There's always cultural differences too, right? Like we are an individualistic culture and so when people interview, we want to hear a lot of “I” statements. We want to hear, you know, so if you come from a more kind of collective culture, that's gonna hurt you in the interview, right? If you, like come from, if you come from a culture where people are more humble, that's gonna hurt you in the interview (Liz, Recruiter, Postsecondary).

Similarly, Abigail points out that assessing immigrants’ cultural compatibility often occurs within

hiring panels. She observes a predisposition by hiring committee members to select candidates who align with stereotypical notions of Canadian social norms, such as participation in sports or familial responsibilities. She provides an example of the considerations of one hiring committee member, who normally assesses for cultural fit:

> What he normally shares? I think of an example even. I think this sounds bad, but I'm gonna say it anyway. I think he's looking for people that have the same or want the same experiences in the office. And I'm just like, alright, do they like sports outside? Do they have kids and a family to take care of? Like, there's almost a little bit of bias that happens here. There's a few exceptions…but does Joe (applicant) do everything that everyone else does? But yeah. That's usually what he brings to the table. Okay. Are they going to be on the hockey team for Liz (team member)? Or are they going to be, you know, umm celebrating with us at a football game? Those types of things in the office together? Yeah. (Abigail, HR Manager, Accounting)

These considerations, normally shared during hiring committee debriefings, go beyond assessments of respect and productivity to valuations based on the extent to which an immigrant applicant meets or practices Canadian cultural norms and values.

The cultural fitness assessment of immigrants in the hiring often reveals that the immigrants that hiring professionals view as not culturally and socially fit are from the majority non-White countries and regions—China, Africa and the Middle East. Racialized immigrant job candidates are frequently deemed incompatible based on assumed or perceived cultural factors such as religious differences, views on sexuality, political ideologies, difficulties in pronunciation of names, and accents. Alia's observations shed light on hiring managers' perceptions of differences between racialized immigrant cultural values and Canadian ones concerning gender inclusivity. She asserts:

> Often…I'll be very honest, often it happens in our Asian countries. You know, the different types of genders are not really accepted in our Asian countries that I come from, such as Bangladesh and India. Transgenders and…they are not really accepted in the society the way they're accepted here in Canada. So, we need to make sure that they understand the difference between the work cultures within Asian countries and Canada. And what they have to understand is everyone is acceptable here and they need to coordinate and work with everyone (Alia, Talent Acquisition Consultant, Government).

Here, Alia assumes that there is no diversity of views on gender issues in either the Asian countries she references or Canada. She makes the argument that Canadian society is gender-inclusive and other societies, specifically Asian ones, are not.

Other HRM professionals highlight how immigrants' religious identities trigger greater scrutiny from HRM professionals and hiring managers, particularly Muslim men. Sanjay illustrates this, stating:

> Normally there is an initial interview with a recruiter at a prescreening, and then hiring manager and myself, and then we are done; that's the normal process. But when you have someone and they go, “oh, you know, I don't know, I'm not sure. You know, he comes from this country, or he comes from here, you know, why don't we get a perspective?” Like for example, I tell you, you have someone with a Muslim name, they will bring a female in for an interview to see how he interacts with a female because the perception is a man cannot take feedback from a woman if you're Muslim. I don’t know where it comes from. And that's why most Muslims in organizations don't get promoted because they think that they manage females differently than males (Sanjay, Senior HR Manager, Utilities).

Here again, we see the role of names in marking applicants as an immigrant, racialized, and religious “other.” This sets immigrants as distinct non-citizens and outside Canadian norms and values, thus triggering heightened scrutiny over cultural fit.

Moreover, an external recruitment consultant, Connor further reveals and justifies the employer's preference for applicants with Canadian credentials and credentials from White countries based on concern over shared cultural values. He shares an example of an immigrant with a political science degree struggling to adapt his “communist-based socialist perspective” to the Canadian context. Connor explains:

> You know, so you go somewhere in Africa, somewhere in Asia and you go to school. You are gonna get that base sort of stuff. The problem is the additional 2, 3, 4 years, what you are getting is very much, very specific political science methodology, thoughts, feeling, and stuff like this that comes from a particular country, from a particular region right? So, for example, the guy we were having some issues with had this one particular interview. He had been taught more of communist-based socialism type of system and he was having a very tough time thinking outside of that. So, during the interview, he couldn’t explain, he couldn’t give us any other answer that didn’t revolve around umm collectivism and working together and doing things like that. And I’m like, you do

> recognize that is not how it works here? (Connor, Recruitment Consultant, Staffing Agency)

In this explanation, Connor reveals two barriers to hiring immigrants. First, HR professionals and hiring managers question the transferability of education and skills across countries. Second, they question cultural fit based on the perception that education from certain countries instills specific cultural values and norms antithetical to Canadian ones. Fatima, senior talent manager further highlights that hiring managers prefer to select Canadians and those with Canadian experience for employment:

> Because it's comfortable. Right? If you already understand the Canadian way of doing things, then I don't have to teach you. I don't have to exert extra effort. It's comfortable. You and I will be able to relate. It doesn't put them in a place of discomfort (Fatima, Senior Talent, Manager, Oil & Gas)

Once again, HR professionals echo employers' concerns about administrative burdens such as training and immigrants' lack of interpersonal skills as reasons for not hiring immigrants.

Beyond assessing how well a job applicant will fit within a team, the cultural fitness assessment becomes an important indicator of personal and company risk and costs. For example, Winne and Sean illustrate:

> It was probably a lot more difficult for immigrants than for Canadians to find jobs, just because of all the extra steps, sometimes even like getting employers to buy-in to say, “Oh, they're not Canadian, I don't want to go through all of the extra work that would have to be done to hire them, versus I can hire this other person” (Winnie, HR Advisor, Postsecondary).

> I mean, broadly, convenience, they don't want to take the time to do something different, learn something different, verify a thing from a different country. They just, they don't want to go through that rigmarole. Especially if they have a pool that contains a Canadian, close, and I don't have to do shit. He lives down the street, you know, give him the job. There you go. Versus, “Okay, I have to learn how to communicate with this person”, you know. Maybe their communication style is different, maybe the way they deal with hierarchy is different. I don't have to learn that if it's a White Canadian, right? (Sean, HR Generalist, D&I Consultancy).

Using SHRM logic of efficiency and productivity, these HR professionals expressed immigrants’ lack of cultural fit and administrative burden as reasons why employers do not hire immigrants. Also, hiring managers avoid hiring racialized immigrants because they are unwilling to risk

discomfort in having to pronounce foreign names and risk being corrected in conversations as well as responding to other cultural differences, which they deem makes management difficult. In this way, cultural fit and racial-cultural fit become a requirement for immigrant employment rather than a preference. Furthermore, eliminating immigrant candidates based on this during hiring means less training costs for companies and personal discomfort for managers. Immigrant candidates can only satisfy these employment expectations and requirements by reducing discomfort in hiring professionals and proving and signalling Canadian cultural and human capital competencies such as Canadian values, credentials, accents, soft skills, and work experience.

Conflict & Degrees of Support for Immigrant Hiring

In the interviews, more than half of HR professionals (17) shared their commitment to diversity, equality, and fairness in hiring. HR professionals, particularly racialized HR professionals and HR professionals with immigrant parents, participated or volunteered at local immigrant and refugee-serving organizations. Almost half of HR professionals (15) shared that they support immigrant hiring and advocate for immigrant applicants at their firms despite resistance from hiring managers. HR professionals shared the following examples:

> I'm really trying to break the barriers on [pause] is to support newcomers [immigrants] coming into the organization (Courtney, Talent Acquisition Advisor, Government).

> I've spoken with hiring leaders that have said, “Well, their experiences are International, right? I need somebody with Canadian experience, who has worked in these facilities”, yada, yada, yada, right? So, then you go to challenge, “Okay, well, you know, they've worked at this company for this international company, where the facilities are this, right? And having that conversation, and having, you know, the leaders come back and say, “Well, yes, however, I do need somebody with Canadian experience”, and that has happened. Right? I would say more. So now. It's, you know, the role of HR to coach those leaders on you know, looking and thinking, you know, from a, again, that diversity hat of okay. “Yes, you need somebody who's had experience, but why does it matter? Right? And having those difficult conversations (Michelle, Talent Acquisition Advisor, Oil & Gas).

> And truly, this is one of the most biggest challenge that I face while shortlisting my candidates. Often, my hiring managers come back to me saying that we prefer a candidate who has, you know [pause] they do not mention clearly Canadian experience, but they do mention [pause] However, my main goal is at least to give a chance through

> the interview process, not just screening them [immigrants] out, you know, on the basis of not having a Canadian experience. My major goal is to land them at least an interview; let's give them a chance and see what they have to say or what they have to present.
>
> I try to publish my job ads through different immigrant services organizations, different organizations like Immigrant Services Calgary, Edmonton Mennonite. I like to reach them, I like to let them know that I highly encourage, you know, fresh immigrants and new immigrants to apply, please post them on your social media profiles, please post this job on your job boards (Alia, Talent Acquisition Consultant, Government).

Here, we see that some HR professionals actively support hiring immigrants by sharing job opportunities with immigrant-serving organizations, recommending immigrant candidates to hiring managers for interview, and advocating for the recognition of immigrant skills and competencies they bring to the workforce.

Additionally, external HR recruiters and consultants shared that they, too, actively sought to advocate for immigrants by shortlisting them as candidates, offering advice on meeting the Canadian experience requirement, and asking their clients if they are willing to consider immigrant job candidates. External HR professionals shared the following examples:

> I don't screen them [immigrants] out. I screen them in. And every recruiter is different. So, like I screen them in because I understand that they have the capacity to do the job. I do make recommendations to them. I say to them, “Hey, you know, take this course it's a two month course cost about $150. It will help”. Sorry, it will assist the project manager [hiring manager] in determining your fit to the company (Horace, Senior Recruiter Consultant, Staffing Agency).
>
> Um, I feel like I'm very fortunate to work with my organization. I've had the pleasure of working with a lot of immigrants who are newer to Canada and kind of starting their career search. And to be honest, I'm very proud of where we work, because we have that ability to advocate, which is, again, something that is very near and dear to my heart. So, we will often as a talent partner to organizations like I mean, we can ask that question, “Are you open to, to working with newer people to Canada? Would you be willing to help mentor them to help them grow and gain Canadian experience?” And if they say yes, which we always hope that they will (Taylor, External Senior Recruiter at Global Staffing Agency).

In these examples, HR professionals identify their role and that of hiring managers in shaping the immigrant labour market. HR professionals have power, given their ability to screen and recommend job applicants to the hiring manager and leverage their advisory expertise for

immigrant applicants. At the same time, HR professionals recognize that not every HR professional supports hiring immigrants and believes immigrants have high human capital. They also recognize that their influence may be limited, given that the hiring manager decides who is invited for an interview and ultimately hired.

HR Role Strategic Business Partner or Diversity Champion?

Additionally, there is a major debate among HR professionals regarding their primary role within organizations. There are varied degrees of commitment to whether HR professionals should subscribe to SHRM's repositioning of the profession as an HR business partner or Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) champion. Even HR professionals (17) who state their commitment to fairness and immigrants getting hired subscribed to the view of SHRM that the primary responsibility of HR is to the organization and not addressing equity, diversity, and inclusion workplace challenges. For example, Maria shared the following perspective when discussing HR's role in diversity programs:

> It's my understanding, is that, DE&I it's not an HR initiative, it should not be an HR initiative. Because the HR role is [about] the sustainability of the organization, we are, we exist for the employers. For the business, we are business partners. Right?...
>
> Yea. I think a lot of HR professionals go into HR with the thinking that, "oh, I'm going to be here to help people". If that's your goal, you should have been a social service social worker, right? But if your goal, but if you are in HR. HR is the management of people, it is the management of resources….
>
> So, so how are you going to be diverse? How are you going to be inclusive? See, that's why I'm saying that is the initiative of the DE&I. Because HR is the one managing the culture, or the processes of hiring, the processes of terminating, the employment law compliance, or, because we want to ensure that the business is doing the right [thing]. We are compliant with the laws and our clients, which includes external clients; that's our job. We want to make sure our people are happy so that they can be productive all the time. DE&I will require us not to do some of that stuff. So what are we? Are we a social justice warrior? Are we business partners? (Maria, HR Generalist, Manufacturing).

Here, Maria illustrates the professional HR identity advanced in HRM textbooks, which prescribe the role of HR as an active strategic business partner, advisor, and business ally whose obligation is only to meet business objectives of productivity, profit, sustainability, and risk management. Human rights and employment legislation are important but should only be

upheld to comply with the requirements of business customers, employment human rights legislation, and to protect the business from potential lawsuits. Consequently, she claims that while DE&I are social and workplace issues, it is not the responsibility of HR professionals to solve them. Also, she sees DE&I and SHRM's business profitability, productivity, and sustainability objectives as contradictory and conflicting. Other HR professionals (17), such as Michelle, however, disagreed and suggested taking a balanced approach:

> How would I respond to that view? I think, while yes, HRs role is to support the business and achieving their business goals and whatnot. I also think that they have to also be mindful of, you know, where we're at in the world. Right. Like, I think, you know, it's, it's, you'll, you'll see, the world's changed so much in terms of, you know, a lot of things and diversity, you know, is at the forefront. You know, and I think what, while it's our role as HR professionals to support the business, I still also think it's our role as HR folks to provide leaders with, you know, the food for thought, and also the information that they may not have. Right? Or maybe they have it, but they're kind of like, “Oh, whatever”. Right? That doesn't, it doesn't affect me, because I'm in small town, rural Alberta, right? Whereas I don't need to hire a diverse candidate, or you know what I mean, so. Yeah. But, yeah, it's always going to be, I think, one of those coaching moments that you'll have for, for leaders (Michelle, Talent Acquisition, Oil & Gas)

Here, Michelle agrees that HR's primary role is meeting and supporting business goals; however, she counters that in response to DE&I changing the business landscape, HR professionals' roles must change and become part of change management by initiating difficult conversations with leaders who may not deem DE&I necessary or relevant.

Nonetheless, even among racialized HR professionals who are immigrants, they point out the difficulty in straddling SHRM professional fealty to the business and their personal ethical convictions and support for fairness in hiring. Some make the point that often, as part of SHRM objectives, they must be unethical and support discriminatory acts by colleagues, hiring managers, hiring panels and leaders within their organization. For example, when asked what is one question I should have asked, Sanjay shared the following commentary:

> Yeah, one question is, you know,[name removed], I don't see a lot of racialized [race type removed] male in HR professional. Right? And how do you deal with your career in HR?

> Yeah, it's one of the things, [pause] is, usually, usually I kill my moral values each day, just to survive. Because the shit I go through with these people, it's not something I really. [pause] There is, if you look at it, HR is there to protect the companies, not the employees. It never happens, right? Everything in Canada happens. So, I tell you, the companies that I worked [names of the companies removed]. All these companies, basically, is when you're in HR, and I tell you something to do, you do. Well, I tell you what, I'll never forget it, this scenario, when I was at a large global food manufacturing company [name removed]. The Chief Operating Officer comes knocking on my door and says, “Hey, when I come in the morning, I want this person to be fired”. At this point, he [employee] was one of the top salespeople for meat. And I looked at him, and I said, “ Do you have any idea what you're trying to do?” He said, “I don't care.” I said, “Well, it's going to cost you a lot of money.” He goes, “Where do I sign”? Okay. And I said to him, “Why do you want him to get fired?”. He said, “My wife is good-looking”. I said, “That's not a reason to fire someone”. And his response was, “Well, your job is to do what I tell you to do and protect the company.” So, “What money should be paid? You tell me the amount, I sign”. So that's my moral values; it gets killed as a person. And when people discriminate and all that, right? (Sanjay, Senior HR Manager, Utilities).

HR Professionals vs Organizations' Commitment to Diversity

Most HR professionals (17) shared that despite their personal commitment to DE&I within organizations, it was not a priority. Over half of HR professionals (16) shared that their organizations had formal diversity policies. At these firms, most DE&I policies emphasize diversity statements, implicit bias training, affinity group formation, and diversity training workshops. Employment programs for equity groups were pronounced at oil and gas companies (4), large higher educational institutions (4), and information and technology (IT) firms (3). Higher educational institutions and oil and gas firms were motivated by leaders, shareholders, internal clients, societal events, and federal government mandates that required employment equity standards. HR professionals at IT firms shared that they responded to clients' needs, market adoption of DE&I, and industry standards. Oil and gas firms (4) were motivated to pursue DE&I because of stakeholder advocacy, federal government contracts and legal employment equity mandates. These firms also had varied degrees of priority in equity employment groups. Most groups favoured women, Indigenous groups, and people with disabilities, particularly the neurodivergent, respectively. IT had formal and informal employment programs for women, and oil and gas firms prioritized women and Indigenous groups because

of disparity in employment. Still, some oil and gas firms (4) had Indigenous employment programs because they were on Indigenous land and were required to hire as part of resource agreements. Only higher educational institutions prioritized all equity groups through multiple programs and implemented strategies for recruitment. None of the HR professional organizations had designated employment programs that catered to immigrants. The other HR professionals (14) expressed reservations regarding DE&I programs based on the view that it is not necessary (3), in conflict with principles of fairness (10), or a combination of both perspectives (1). Interestingly, these HR professionals worked in organizations that did not have DE&I programs or companies that only started to consider having DE&I programs. Also noteworthy, HR professionals working at government institutions shared that the provincial government has DE&I statements, internal hiring resources, implicit bias training, and affinity groups but does not have equity employment programs or employment programs for immigrants. Consequently, HR professionals at government institutions must take the initiative to reach out to immigrant-serving organizations:

> Yes, we do have policies and training related to diversity and inclusion held on a regular basis. And apart from that, you know, I try to publish my job ads through different Immigrant services organizations…There are various Indigenous and Aboriginal job boards as well. So, I like to post them through those websites as well. I try to source each and every, all the ways possible to reach the right candidates (Alia, Talent Acquisition Consultant, Government).

HR Professionals Lack Knowledge of Immigrant Programs & Use Credential

Most HR professionals (27) lack knowledge of Canadian immigration programs administered through the Express Entry system that prioritizes skilled-based immigration. Only four (4) HR professionals were familiar with the Express Entry[9] program despite the program

[9] Express Entry is an online system that manages immigration applications from skilled workers. Express Entry uses the Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS) point system, which grants permanent residency based on high human capital via language proficiency, credential assessments and foreign work experience quality among others. See Miller, 2023

accounting for more than half (58.4 %) of immigrant workers (Miller, 2023). HR professionals tended to be more knowledgeable of immigration in relation to temporary foreign worker programs. This might be the case because HRM textbooks introduce them to the challenges of hiring foreign workers. Conversely, their lack of knowledge about the Express Entry point system and programs may be due to the lack of information in HRM textbooks. Another explanation provided by HR professionals is that knowledge of immigration and the Express Entry programs is not a function of HR job roles. Larger firms have HR mobility departments and teams that specialize in hiring temporary foreign workers and international talent mobility (Dessler & Chhinzer, 2016). For example, Sarah, at a large post-secondary institution, when asked how familiar are you with Express Entry immigration programs confessed:

> I'm not familiar with that at all. Yeah, that would be our HR immigration team. I don't know the answer to that. That, that would have to come from our immigration colleagues. And, and I will be honest, I've been told more than once that like, essentially, like we generalists are not equipped or allowed to respond to immigration related questions, because we don't want to give incorrect answers or advice to people who are enquiring of us. And in fact, we're actually not allowed to respond to any immigration related questions. And I understand why, it is a very complex area and it's a very important area to advise on, because, because people need to get accurate information. They're making big life decisions based on immigration status and such. Right. So, I am not the one to respond to any of those kinds of questions (Sarah, HR Partner, Postsecondary Institution).

Similarly, most HR professionals (27) and hiring managers do not use language proficiency and credential assessments and lack familiarity with the Alberta government credential assessment service, the International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS)[10]. Only four (4) out of the 31 HR professionals interviewed were familiar with IQAS, and only those (3) working at the provincial government utilize IQAS or ask job applicants to submit language and educational credential assessments if they are foreign-trained. Most HR professionals (27)

[10] IQAS completes assessments and issues certificates that "compare educational credentials from other countries to educational standards in Canada" See IQAS Assessment for Employment, Education or Licensure, 2024.

interviewed do not use IQAS or ask immigrant job candidates to upload language and credential assessments as part of the job application process.

HR professionals explain that they did not use or request credentials assessments because of privacy concerns, because industry standards do not require it, or because of the use of licensing and regulatory bodies certifications instead; overall, it is not part of the standard Canadian hiring norms. Instead, they rely on hiring managers to assess job candidates' knowledge and credentials and use regulatory bodies and industry-standard certifications. For example, Kwame and Lindsey offered the following perspective:

> Yeah, because of the industry we are aware in. I am aware of in certain industries, say for example, if you have to work for the government or certain kind of industries or maybe sensitive based on safety or some kind of things, they have to use WES [World Education Services] and IQAS to verify or verify your credentials (Kwame, HR Manager, Information Technology (IT).

> No, because we don't always…we don't always list credentials as a must have. I mean, they could be at a technical level, they could be at an engineering level, they could be at a hands-on learning level. For us, for what we do, it's more about being able to have that conversation with the hiring manager and they assess how well they demonstrate their knowledge (Lindsey, Talent Acquisition, Oil & Gas).

For external HR professionals, it is both not an industry standard and up to their client to decide if the credential assessments are part of the hiring process:

> No. We don't. You know, sometimes, but pretty rare. Again, we, at our company, again I can't speak on our entire organization, right? We have many people who work here. But again, we are, because we're a third party and we are intermediaries, between a client and an individual. We do our best to adhere to their current hiring standards and practices. So, if they require that we may ask them and encourage the candidates to have that ready. If the client doesn't require it, then why make people go through all that extra work? Right? It's job-specific, more than anything. But we don't often require that, No. (Taylor, External Senior Recruiter at Global Staffing Agency).

Finally, most HR professionals (28) view uploading credential assessments as the responsibility of the immigrant job candidate, even if unprompted during the application process. The decision not to use the provincial assessment services is based on the belief that immigrant candidates are responsible for submitting and the associated cost of the service. For example, Tom, a recruiter, shared, "I had way back in the day, the company would pay for the IQAS process, but

after that, it's just like, no! It's more about if the candidate can't prove it. Why are we paying for it?".

Discussion

The Canadian government distinguishes between temporary and permanent migrants in their legal and policy definitions of immigrants. The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) defines immigrants as permanent residents: "Permanent resident means a person who has acquired permanent resident status and has not subsequently lost that status under section 46" (Government of Canada, 2023). Also, immigrants, because of their permanent resident status, "have the right to live, work or study anywhere in Canada and get protection under Canadian law and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom" (Government of Canada, 2023). Temporary migrants are defined as foreign nationals and do not have permanent residency status: "Foreign national means a person who is not a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident and includes a stateless person" (Government of Canada, 2023). Recognizing the barriers to employment based on immigrant status, the federal government amended the Public Service Employment Act to give citizens and immigrants (permanent residents) equal consideration for government jobs (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2021). The Alberta provincial government similarly recognizes immigrants' right to work:

> A landed immigrant is a person who has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Canadian citizens by birth and non-permanent residents (persons from another country who live in Canada and have a work or study permit or are claiming refugee status, as well as family members living here with them) are not landed immigrants (Government of Alberta, 2023, p.4).

In these legal and policy definitions, there is a clear categorical distinction between immigrants having the right to live and work permanently and non-permanent residents/ temporary migrants (temporary foreign workers and international students) without those rights. Hiring professionals generally do not recognize immigrants as permanent residents (PR). Most HRM professionals categorically define immigrants as temporary foreign workers and international students without

the right to work. This seemingly benign act has severe negative consequences for immigrants within the hiring process, as their claim and privileged access to employment and legal protection is denied. Instead, having markers of immigrant and temporary migrant status, such as foreign names, credentials, accents, and being racialized, triggers additional scrutiny. Immigrants perceived temporary migrant status raises questions about their legal employment eligibility, residency, language proficiency, relevant and equivalent work experience, and credentials for Canada. HRM professionals refer to the administrative burden, trust deficiency, financial costs, and risks associated with their foreign worker status, including the long time to hire, relocation costs, and immigration sponsorship fees as the main justifications for not hiring immigrants. Ironically, immigrants do not pose these legal risks, financial costs, and administrative burdens because of their permanent residency status. Employers do not have to worry about long wait times for work permits, paying immigration sponsorship fees, or whether immigrants have a work permit or visa because immigrants have permanent residency status. Immigrants, like citizens, do not require a work permit or visa to work in Canada (Government of Canada, 2023). Also, concerns about the immigrants not being in Canada are emphasized because their residency requirements under section A28 of the IRPA require them to be physically present in Canada (Legislative Services Branch, 2023). Nonetheless, the study highlights that immigrants and temporary migrants often have the same employment eligibility criteria and are evaluated as having the same risks, administrative burden, and employer cost considerations for employment.

Equally, the HRM professionals in my sample reveal that immigrant job candidates must meet a higher bar for employment than Canadian-born workers. Beyond demonstrating competency, immigrants have a long list of proofs, such as legal employment eligibility, residency requirements, Canadian credentials, language proficiency, cultural matching, and cultural fitness, which become requirements for employment. These considerations quickly become acts of social closure on the part of hiring professionals. The primary issue with these

requirements is that they go against human rights and employment equity laws that promote equal treatment and consideration in hiring. Also, job requirements such as Canadian work experience, soft skills, and cultural values are not bona fide occupational requirements. Other provinces, such as Ontario, have issued policy documents that state that the Canadian experience requirement is discriminatory (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2013). Moreover, most immigrants already meet these requirements because the federal government's skilled-based immigration programs under Express Entry have assessed them as adaptable, most likely to settle well in Canada, and have high human capital, which qualifies them for permanent residency status (Government of Canada, Eligibility, 2024).

Additionally, the findings show that immigrants are disadvantaged from the earliest stages of the hiring process. Hiring professionals are not knowledgeable about immigration programs under Express Entry despite immigrants admitted under these programs being a major labour source for employers (Miller, 2023). Given their advisory role in hiring, HR professionals' lack of knowledge hinders immigrants' employment. Their lack of understanding of the Express Entry programs means they are unaware that most immigrants are assessed for high human capital and language proficiency. Also, this means that HR professionals cannot guide hiring professionals and panels who may raise questions and concerns regarding immigrants' rights to work, language proficiency, and Canadian education equivalency. Also, the standard hiring norms and policies, especially within primary labour markets, do not account for immigrant workers. Hiring professionals, particularly hiring managers, require Canadian experience, credentials, and licences even when not required for jobs. They do not know about and use government immigrant credential assessments and language proficiency documents, even when HR professionals know they exist. As a result, immigrants may not be evaluated fairly and often do not make it to an interview where they would be allowed to explain.

Skilled-based immigration programs have increased the racialized population of Canada (Miller, 2023). At the same time, Canada is predominantly a White country where Whites are

often in leadership and decision-making positions due to settler colonialism and systematic racism within immigration and other social institutions. White hegemony is reflected in population racial and ethnic shares, religious shares, citizen shares, business leadership racial gaps, educational population shares, and parliamentary racial gaps (Longpré-Verret & Richards, 2021; Statistics Canada, 2022; Opare-Addo, 2024). Consequently, most social institutions and businesses within Canada and Alberta would be classified by Ray (2019) as racialized organizations where social and organizational resources are distributed to racial groups based on their place within the social hierarchy. In the case of Canada, employment is one such social field where organizational resources go disproportionately to privileged groups, i.e., White, citizens, and males (Gingrich et al., 2023). Other scholars have shown, and the government has acknowledged, that immigrants, particularly racialized immigrants, face discrimination and exclusion in the Canadian labour market (Oreopoulos, 2011; Lightman & Good Gingrich, 2018; Miller, 2023).

In this study, employers, via their hiring gatekeepers, continue to devalue and not recognize immigrants', particularly racialized immigrants', human capital. Hiring professionals, particularly hiring managers, continue to emphasize immigrants perceived human, social, and cultural deficiencies. The reasons for not hiring immigrants and the examples referenced by HR professionals highlight that hiring professionals think of racialized immigrants as mainly posing administrative burdens and legal and financial risks. Three mechanisms within Alberta's HRM hiring norms promote racial worker preferences and hierarchy in hiring: the Canadian experience requirement, emphasis on soft skills and cultural fitness, and the adoption of strategic human resource management (SHRM). The Canadian experience requirement promotes strict adherence to Canadian work experience, cultural values, and credentials for employment eligibility. This practice further entrenches and grants preferential labour market access to citizens who are predominantly White. Racialized immigrants, especially newcomers, would be less likely to meet the Canadian experience requirement because of their international

education and work experience. Hiring professionals' focus on cultural fit often promotes cultural racism, where racial schemas or taken-for-granted hiring norms and practices are based on White Canadian culture, reinforcing racial biases (Guo, 2015; Ray, 2019; Henry 2000). It is not only enough to be cordial, but racialized immigrants must also demonstrate like-mindedness with evaluators and social and cultural capital by participating in White Canadian hobbies and interests. HRM professionals, even DE&I and immigrant supporters, promote racial hierarchies by encouraging racialized immigrants to pursue strategies of resume whitening by gaining and listing White credentials, education, licencing, names, work experience, and volunteering (Kang et al., 2016). However, this may be ineffective since hiring managers find racialized immigrants to be administrative burdens based on the discomfort that they experience from interacting with and managing racialized workers. As such, hiring managers and HR professionals would rather not select or employ racialized immigrants. DE&I programs may not be as beneficial to immigrants based on employment equity legislation not covering immigrants as a designated group. Also, employers tend to prioritize some equity-designated groups over others, programs mainly focus on internal workers, and there is a lack of employment programs for immigrants and racial groups (Alegria & Branch, 2015). In many ways, the study reveals that citizenship and Whiteness (social and cultural capital) are credentials and requirements for employment in Alberta, Canada.

Finally, hiring professionals subscribe to SHRM logic concerned with profit, productivity, efficiency, avoiding risks, and reducing costs and administrative burdens. Immigrants, particularly racialized immigrants, are perceived as having and embodying these risks, costs, burdens, and challenges. SHRM logic enables hiring professionals to make non-racial claims and justifications for not hiring immigrants, particularly racialized immigrants. SHRM decentralizes hiring decision-making that reinforces hiring managers' authority to select and decide on job candidates. Some hiring managers motivated by xenophobia, racism, nativism, power, and in-group bias block opportunities for immigrants while being supported by HR

professionals. HR professionals' adherence to SHRM professional and occupational ethos as business allies and loyalty to business welfare is used to shift blame and justify the abdication of their responsibility to human rights compliance and ethical accountability to equal opportunity in hiring. The examples above show that HR professionals have the agency to promote fairness in hiring based on their role as advisors but often do not, primarily because of professional and occupational loyalty to SHRM. Further, SHRM promotes colorblindness where normative hiring rules such as Canadian experience requirements, only Canadian resumes and cover letters, and cultural fitness tests are not recognized as discriminatory or privileging citizens over immigrants. All these embedded SHRM logics, practices, doxas, and structures in hiring systematically deny immigrants employment opportunities.

CHAPTER 6: THE HIRING PROCESS

Introduction

> Chene: What normally happens when an immigrant submits a resume and a cover letter?
>
> Tyler: Same process. There's no, there's no distinction between immigrants versus non-immigrants. There's no distinction in our process. Everyone is treated the same. We look at each and every resume, because to your point, yeah, immigration, there's, there's a large number of immigrants, many of them are very, very highly skilled (Tyler, Recruiter, Utilities)

While Human resource (HR) professionals vociferously claim that there is no difference in the hiring process for immigrant and Canadian-born job candidates, a review of the hiring process reveals the contrary. Throughout the hiring process, immigrants are differentially treated and closed out of jobs because, as highlighted in the previous chapter, their immigration human capital assessment documents are not used, and the Canadian experience requirement reinforces their perceived lack of social and cultural capital. Government licensing rules, hiring norms, and the habitus of hiring professionals institutionalize cultural distinctions between Canadian-born workers and immigrants in hiring. Using interviews with HR professionals, this chapter takes readers through the typical hiring process to illuminate the multiple hurdles and social closure practices immigrants encounter in seeking employment. The chapter attends to Tomaskovic-Devey and Avent-Holt's (2019) theoretical construct of social closure practices within organizations involving opportunity hoarding and gatekeeping mechanisms, where a more powerful social actor monopolizes and distributes organizational resources only to members of their ingroup. Building on Acker's notion of gendered organizations and Ray's notion of racialized organizations, I make the point that seemingly neutral organizational roles and practices involved in hiring are embedded with racism in Alberta, Canada (Acker, 2006; Ray, 2019). The typical hiring process and evaluation process caters to citizens, White Canadian-born workers, White immigrants, and workers with White Canadian experience (i.e. credentials, cultural values, pastimes, work experience). Leaving non-White immigrants with

foreign experience or with non-White Canadian experience (culture and credentials) having to prove and signal additional requirements beyond being able to do the job. In many ways, the hiring process and evaluation criteria reveal that Whiteness is a credential and requirement for employment in Alberta. The chapter then concludes by discussing the implications for immigrant job applicants, particularly non-White immigrant job applicants.

The Hiring Process

Recruitment

The interviews with HR professionals unveil a typical hiring process consisting of two distinct phases: recruitment and selection. Across these phases, Canadian-born workers are consistently privileged and protected. The recruitment process normally begins with a hiring manager (team/ department supervisor) recognizing a hiring need. The hiring manager then engages in consultations and approvals involving senior management and the HR recruitment team. Once approval is granted for hiring someone, a job description is posted by the recruiter or HR manager to an Applicant Tracking System (ATS). The ATS then advertises the job to multiple job sites, including company websites and online job websites such as LinkedIn and Indeed. For most organizations in this study, the hiring process is managed under a decentralized structure. This means that hiring managers have the authority to select and shortlist candidates. This structure gives them independence to conduct their recruitment processes, which involves searching for potential candidates, evaluating applications, and making hiring decisions that align with the goals and requirements of their department. Consequently, hiring managers' preferences, such as job candidates who are citizens and candidates with Canadian experience, take precedence. In most cases, HR professionals share a list of candidates with the hiring manager (a client) to decide whom to shortlist.

At the outset of the hiring process, HR professionals are informed of hiring managers' preferences for candidates with Canadian experience or specific Canadian licenses and

educational requirements outlined in job descriptions. HR professionals shared that hiring managers are cognizant that the lack of Canadian experience is not a bona fide occupational requirement. Still, the Canadian experience requirement is reflected in job advertisements listing Canadian credentials and licenses for roles where these licenses are unnecessary. Isabelle explains how the licencing requirement by hiring managers is used as a proxy for Canadian experience, signalling that they are only interested in candidates with Canadian experience and shaping who a recruiter presents to the hiring manager. She states:

> Like they, usually they have the EIT [Engineer in Training], or if they have their P.Eng [Professional Engineer] is because they already have some Canadian experience, right? So, if the client is asking for a P.Eng, even though like, I don't know, there is an amazing candidate; 20 years of experience, like an engineer, but they are not P.Eng, then I can't. I can't present the candidate because, I mean, it's basically like, they're asking me for someone with a background in finance, and I present someone with a background in human resources, like something like that. Right. So, if they're saying is P.Eng because it's a Canadian certification, yeah. And like, you know, they won't consider like, new immigrants or expats (Isabelle, Recruiter, Staffing Agency, Oil & Gas).

Here, we can see that the requirement for a Professional Engineer, which can only be attained with four years of work experience in Canada, really meets the requirement that a candidate has Canadian experience (APEGA, 2023). Similarly, Alia confirms hiring managers' preference for Canadian-born workers over workers with permanent residence:

> Often my hiring managers come back to me saying that we prefer a candidate who has, you know…they do not mention clearly Canadian experience, but they do mention that they have experience from so and so company and I know that that company has been working in so and so project, so this candidate has a lot of knowledge so I want to go with this candidate, and not this candidate, because I'm not sure about this company or whatsoever reason (Alia, Talent Acquisition Consultant, Government).

In this way, hiring managers use familiarity with Canadian companies as the basis for selection, weeding out immigrants with foreign work experience.

Additionally, the authority of the hiring manager is facilitated by HR professionals' client service orientation, where they understand and view their role as only supporters and facilitators of the hiring manager's wishes. Consequently, hiring managers' requests for only Canadians and job candidates with Canadian experience are fulfilled and justified by SHRM logic. Alia

highlights the need to prioritize hiring managers and cites the cost of training as a reason for excluding immigrants:

> To be honest, as a recruiter point of view, for me, it does matter for me, because I know that my clients will be happy to have such a candidate who has some Canadian experience. And, you know, they are very competent enough already, they have that knowledge already about the market, about the work culture, that they did not have to make that extra effort to train them, to make them learn new things. So, I always think that, that can always be an extra advantage (Alia, Talent Acquisition Consultant, Government).

This perspective demonstrates that Alia views hiring managers as internal clients, and it is her duty to provide and respond to their needs, simultaneously making them happy by providing productive workers and reducing financial costs. Also, HR professionals recruiting candidates with Canadian experience reduce employment financial costs and are understood as improving the quality of hire as relevant competence, industry knowledge, and cultural fit are guaranteed. In this way, Canadian experience is equated with competence, industry knowledge, and cultural fit.

External HR professionals similarly hold this client support view based on profit incentives tied to successful hires. Decentralized hiring practices with financial incentives and recruiters' customer service orientation make it unlikely for them to challenge hiring managers' biased preferences, even when they violate anti-discrimination laws, as Fiona explains:

> Some hiring managers have these biases. They're very clearly bias, right? And then do all recruiters figure out a way to overcome them? I don't think so. Because we don't have policies or supports in place to often do that. And often people have this customer service mindset. Like in recruitment, people think hiring managers are their customers, right, because I'm lucky, I'm in corporate. My salary is not dependent on the amount of people I place. Right? Whereas there are recruiters in the agency world. They're paid by hire, right? So, let's say if I put myself in their shoes, and I get paid to make a hire, and my hiring manager is clearly biased. And let's say he wants to hire men or women or people without families or somebody who speaks a particular language. Like, what is, like their clear biases, right, that are protected grounds in Canada and in the US? Then what is empowering me to not do that? The easiest thing is okay, they ask for it, I give it to them. Right? (Fiona, Senior Recruiter, Manufacturing)

Indeed, considerations of human rights and discrimination are often secondary to SHRM logic. Tom illustrates this conflict between the SHRM imperative of efficiency and the human rights imperative of fairness in the hiring process:

> And I think, I guess maybe the other possibility is just kind of thinking about it a little bit more, in terms of the discretion. You have someone like me who's been in, in doing this for a very long time. And I would consider myself an HR professional, right? I…I legitimately care about these human rights issues and do my part to try to mitigate it. There's a lot of people in recruitment who aren't. It's one of those weird HR areas. It's HR, but not HR. Well, there's a lot of people that just want to find the right candidate the quickest, right? (Tom, Recruiter, Oil & Gas)

Here, the conflict is palpable in Tom's response. He acknowledged that the discretionary nature of the hiring process leaves room for bias, subjective decision-making, and discrimination. Still, he understands HR professionals' responsibility to prevent discrimination as limited by the SHRM objectives of profits and efficiency via reducing time to hire and lowering recruitment costs.

HR professionals choose the recruitment channels based on the role type (junior or senior), skill level (low or high), regulated versus non-regulated occupation, union versus non-unionized, firm size, and sector hiring norms. Regardless of the type, level, and worker arrangement, HR professionals' recruiting norms for job candidates favour Canadian-born workers over immigrants. For junior admin roles, HR professionals prefer sourcing candidates directly from Canadian universities and through college fairs or college job boards. Abigail, a HR manager, points out that for junior roles, it is preferable to hire job candidates who have Canadian education and with whom a personal connection has been established. She states:

> 80% of our hires come from face-to-face student recruitment campus interactions. So, we've met them, we've connected with them somehow, before they apply. And then, I'll fit [screen] yeah. The other 20% probably come from recruiters. No, no, I'll say 15% come from recruiters. And then that other 5% it's just luck of the draw. We posted on Indeed and we get excellent candidates. Yeah, I would say that's kind of the percentages (Abigail, HR Manager, Accounting).

The choice of where to source candidates directly impacts who is later selected for the role. In this case, Abigail's choice of recruiting mostly from Canadian schools, rather than Indeed

(where she admits to having found excellent candidates) reflects a preference for hiring Canadians first and those with Canadian experience. Also, Abigail alludes to the financial rewards for companies, such as brand reputation, talent pipeline, reduced recruitment and time-to-hire costs since job candidates are already vetted.

Additionally, Liz a recruiter at a postsecondary institution, further elaborates on the rationale for recruiting from local colleges and universities for junior roles and admin jobs, stating:

> So even if we think about, okay, non-academic, and we have this thing about, we want people to have Canadian work experience. So, you have someone who's younger, they did an internship program and their degree, like this thing, it all compounds, right? (Liz, Recruiter, Post Secondary)

Indeed, it does compound against immigrants who are less likely to benefit from hiring professionals' preference for recruiting directly from universities and colleges. Also, many immigrants would have already attained college degrees and tend to look for jobs on company and private websites, such as Indeed (Monteiro, 2022).

Recruitment practices for senior roles also often disadvantage immigrants. HR professionals and hiring managers tend to draw from sources prioritizing Canadian-born workers and job candidates with Canadian experience and credentials, such as regulatory bodies, personal networks, and competing Canadian firms. Alia, a government talent acquisition consultant, illustrates this trend, stating:

> Most of my hires are, I would say that I find most of them with PVS construction, unit profiles. So, I'll find them from specific companies, specific companies like PCL Construction, sometimes from Shell. And when I look for fresh graduates, they're mostly from University of Alberta or University of Calgary. And some of them are also from NATE, Northern Institute of Technology (Alia, Talent Acquisition Consultant, Government).

Selecting from this limited pool means that immigrants may be disadvantaged if they have not worked at these companies or invested in re-education at Canadian institutions. This strategy is

often driven by the insistence of hiring managers and the practice of recruiters to replicate the existing workforce and boost employee engagement. Alia explains:

> It is often seen that, you know, the existing employees of our company they have their background from these specific companies and these specific institutions, and we have a very good rapport and already a very good experience with them. They also recommend us to source candidates from these places. So, this is one of the primary reasons (Interview with Alia, Talent Acquisition Consultant, Government).

Hiring manager authority in the hiring process thus impacts recruitment sourcing and, subsequently, those selected for hire. Also, for technical or specialized roles HR professionals tend to start with their personal networks to recruit job candidates. For instance, Abigail illustrates the reliance on personal and company networks as part of SHRM. She states,

> I have a pretty large network on kind of LinkedIn and through my previous profession, so just reaching out to, you know, colleagues that, “Hey, I'm looking for someone with this specialty, specifically in the tax industry”… So, we have 12 partners at our organization and they make a lot of industry contacts out there. So, sometimes we get referrals in through that way. So yeah, takes some networking, networking events to campus that just posted, to see what we get recruiters. Trying to think of everything else that we do strategically (Abigail, HR Manager, Accounting).

Recruiting based on networks is also a form of cultural matching, which disadvantages immigrants who are not part of these networks and may not even be aware of events open to the public. Additionally, these networks and partnerships do not include immigrant resettlement agencies or community organizations where many immigrants seek employment support.

Firm Size & Recruitment Practices

Smaller firms rely on company websites, Indeed, employee referrals and social media postings. While large firms use their company website, LinkedIn, personal networks, and external recruiters. Regardless of the firm size, immigrants face challenges when selected due to reliance on referrals and recruitment from a specific recruiting pool. Small firms, including local non-profits, religious institutions, and oil and gas firms in small towns, often rely heavily on internal referrals and prioritize hiring local candidates. When asked where they find most hires, Fiona, a senior recruiter in manufacturing, said:

> Internal Referral. 80, 82% come from referrals. Yeah, because that's how we get local people. Umm, so one of our sites is 150 years old. So, we have generations of, like generational families, were there. Yeah. It's a small town and there's not a lot of employers, right? There are like three or four manufacturing sites. And so, we have a lot of people whose grandfather worked there, their father worked there, and then like, third-degree, fourth-degree generation people work there (Fiona, Senior Recruiter, Manufacturing).

Sourcing hires from internal referrals reproduces the same workforce and leaves little room for hiring candidates outside these personal networks, disadvantaging immigrants who may not belong to these traditional families.

Larger firms also tend to promote internally, rely on internal referrals, and utilize external recruiters, which privileges Canadian workers and job candidates with Canadian experience. Sophia illustrates that large firms driven by SHRM's logic of increasing team morale and reducing recruitment cost often lead to existing Canadian workers being employed or promoted. Sophia states that:

> Internal candidates are the only people who can fill a role, especially because a very niche role, which is very specific. There are times when the external experience is not trusted. And so, if they do have a candidate internally, who has that maybe industry-related knowledge, they would, of course, be the preferred candidate, because one, they are already in the organization, they encourage growth. And two, they already have that experience, so it's an easier transition for them (Interview with Sophia, Recruiter, Food & Beverage).

Large firms frequently rely on external HR professionals to identify and recruit candidates for challenging-to-fill positions that require technical expertise or senior management experience. However, as Horace points out, these external recruiters also source candidates through personal networks and prefer candidates from competing companies with Canadian experience. normally source job candidates from competing local Canadian companies. He confesses,

> The truth about headhunting is that you pull candidates from other employers, that's what you do. We have what we call active candidates. Active candidates are the one that's searching for work. Passive candidates are the ones that's working and you may offer them an opportunity in terms of career growth or greater financial incentive. And they will make a decision about where they want to transition their career. For the most part, as a headhunter, a lot of the people that I deal with are sort of passive (Horace, Senior Recruiter Consultant, Staffing Agency).

This hiring practice would not benefit immigrants, especially newcomers, since they are often deskilled and more likely to work in service sector jobs rather than within these companies, despite having the requisite technical skills and experience (Majerski, 2019). Only three of the thirty- one HR professionals interviewed shared that they recruit from or partner with local immigrant-serving organizations and resettlement agencies.

Industry Norms Shape Recruitment Strategies

Industry hiring norms and rules often hinder immigrants from being selected for employment. In the academic sector, hiring practices are intricately shaped by various factors such as union considerations, faculty guidelines, and federal government policies, all of which prioritize Canadian born workers. Liz, a recruiter at a post-secondary institution, sheds light on these dynamics. She first pointed out that immigrants are more likely to be hired for faculty or academic positions rather than administrative or management positions. She explains this stating:

> Managers are supposed to screen based on the competencies and the requirements in the job profile. The limitation at our university is that we don't really have recruiters, it's kind of self-service. We focus on high-priority or roles that would be important to the President, let's put it that way. And so, you know, like, if the more entry-level and mid-level, we are hoping that people are following best practices but we don't know that. Well, I think the candidate's experience can be vastly different. And I think the selection criteria, could be anything. Honestly, like, just trying to be honest. Yeah. So, so that's a gap. Right (Interview with Liz, Recruiter, Postsecondary).

The likelihood of immigrants being considered for these non-academic roles is based on the decentralized nature of hiring. There is a lack of oversight of hiring manager practices when sourcing candidates for entry-level or management positions, leaving room for less objective assessments that privilege Canadian applicants. Liz further explains why immigrants are less likely to be selected for entry-level and mid-level jobs, "It's not the cost factor; we would handle that for the candidate. It's at the federal government. So, the federal government... in order to have a successful Labor Market Impact Assessment, we have to prove there are no qualified Canadians for this job." Besides reinforcing that HR professionals do not view immigrants as

permanent residents with the right to work in Canada, barring immigrants from these entry-level and management positions limits their long-term employment prospects. Even if HR professionals recognize that immigrants have the right to work, there is a citizenship requirement as illustrated in Liz's comment. Research shows that once a person starts in precarious employment, such as service work, they will likely remain in that type of work (Creese & Wiebe, 2012; Goldring & Landolt, 2013).

Immigrant Niches

Both information technology (IT) and healthcare are normally described as immigrant niches (Shan,2013). The interviews reveal this is the case because hiring practices rely less on Canadian work experience and credentials. Instead, as Kwame, an HR IT recruiter, explains:

> Most of the credentials are internationally recognized. So, if you are getting, say for example, PMI or PMP certification, it's the same thing. It's global, so it's the same kind of credential. When it comes to Python as well. If you're getting it through AWS or a certain kind of platforms, it's going to be standard or global (Interview with Kwame, HR Recruiter, IT).

Nonetheless, immigrants may face challenges in getting hired because of the tendency of IT firms to hire internally and recruit from companies that are competitors and that they are familiar with, such as the Big Five (i.e. Google, Amazon, Apple, Meta, and Microsoft) (Elrick, 2016). Even with globally recognized credentials, immigrants might not be selected because of the Canadian work experience, and educational credential requirements. Connor explains:

> Some of that stuff like designations are a little bit, you know. Uhmm they are helpful if they are combined with other things. But if they are not combined with other things. I mean they are some people who get a PMP [Project Management Professional certification] and go well that is good enough, right? It's like well, no, not enough without the experience, right? Not without the education, right? It is sort of a stand-alone (Connor, Recruitment Consultant, Staffing Agency).

Companies hiring for low-level healthcare roles are also more open to hiring immigrants and largely utilize recruitment websites that immigrants use such as Indeed. These healthcare jobs are low-level jobs that offer low wages, limited hours, and lack social protections, making them less desirable for Canadians (Thomas & Lightman, 2022). Nonetheless, immigrants may

face challenges getting these jobs because they must be registered with the Alberta HCA (Health Care Aides) directory. Melissa, a healthcare HR manager, shares that the standard practice is to check for registration with the HCA:

> But we as a company have chosen not to make that a dealbreaker—so they don't have to be on the HCA directory for us to hire them because we're private homecare company, we have that leeway (Melissa, HR Manager, Healthcare) .

For senior healthcare roles, immigrants are less likely to be employed due to recruitment through specific hospitals in other provinces, licensing boards, and universities. Courtney, Talent Acquisition Advisor at a healthcare government entity, observes,

> In rural Alberta I find there's a lot less understanding of the value of foreign credentials. Whereas in urban areas, it seems to be much better understood that there is value in foreign credentials, and that those skills and experiences are transferable. So, for example, you know, an internationally educated nurse, they have nursing experience, and they might have, you know, acute care experience, emergency experience. Doesn't matter, so long as they can be credentialed through the Alberta regulatory nursing body (Courtney, Talent Acquisition Advisor, Healthcare).

Large healthcare government networks emphasize certifications and pay attention to whether job candidates meet the regulatory standards or can be easily verified on the provincial licencing website. Also, immigrants may face challenges in getting hired in rural healthcare centers because of the practice of devaluing immigrant credentials and work experience.

Another immigrant niche which shares similar characteristics with healthcare is construction. Construction employers are often more open to hiring immigrants for lower-level non-union jobs than medium to higher-level jobs (Foster & Barnetson, 2017). This is largely the case because of unions' membership requirements, Canadian licensing requirements, and racial bias institutionalized by hiring managers that promote Canadian workers, especially for higher-level jobs. Horace, an external recruiter, explains the resistance of hiring managers to immigrants from non-White countries:

> So, you'll find that if you leave places like China, or Africa, or the Middle East, and you go to the United States, way easier time. Right? Foreign credentials in the United States, the hiring manager willing to have a conversation with you. In Canada there is more of a resistance to that…But construction in itself is a very…pardon my language, but it's a

> very White industry in Canada. And you find that sometimes upper management have a lot of biases, you know. And they've been in the industry for 30, 40 years, that that's all they know, they're not going to change. No matter how many policy changes that we recommend, the truth is, they're making the decision. Right? They're the one that's saying, "Hey, I want to hire this person". HR can contribute as much as it wants to, in terms of all the trainings in the world; however, the person that is sitting in a chair [hiring manager] that is managing those people [employees] gets to make that decision, not HR (Horace, Senior Recruitment Consultant, Staffing Agency).

Horace recognizes that, as an HR professional, he is limited by the preferences and demands of hiring managers within a decentralized hiring process that grants hiring managers more authority. He also highlights the limited efficacy of HR professional advisory in diminishing the discriminatory behaviour.

Selection

The selection process normally involves pre-screening, interview, and verification. Pre-screening involves an initial review of resumes/applications to filter candidates before they move on to a phone interview and then in-person/video interviews. Employers often use applicant tracking systems to manage and screen resumes/applications. In the pre-screening phase, HR professionals and hiring managers look for indicators that the candidate is a potential fit based on their resume. Factors considered in pre-screening include relevant qualifications, skills, and experience. Pre-screening may involve phone/video screening calls with candidates further to assess qualifications, communication skills, and company fit. Typically, HR professionals or external recruiters, using ATS, take the first step in examining job candidates and making recommendations to the hiring manager, who then decides which candidates are selected for a pre-screen and interview.

Immigrants are disadvantaged in the screening process because of the emphasis placed on Canadian work experience and credentials. The pre-screening questions included in the ATS reflect the job requirements and hiring managers' preferences for Canadian workers and Canadian experience. As such, most interviewees reported that pre-screen questions ask about eligibility to work in Canada, residency status, required Canadian education and licences, ask

for 5 -7 years of Canadian industry experience, salary expectations, and motivations for applying. Answers to pre-screening questions often shape whether a candidate is selected for a phone interview. Fatima, senior talent manager at an oil and gas firm, listed the following questions as part of the pre-screening process:

> So, if we needed a designation or type of like, you know, if you needed your ticket, so if you needed to be a journeyman, or you need a certain number of years of experience in a certain skill set, those were critical. For us, we didn't sponsor, so are you a Canadian resident that's able to work? That was a standard question. So, it would really depend on what its [job role is] like, do you have your P.Eng.[Professional Engineer], do you have your CPA [Chartered Professional Accountant] etc, etc.? (Fatima, Senior Manager for People & Talent, Oil & Gas).

Immigrants would be less likely to have these designations and credentials, especially given that most of these designations and licences require Canadian work experience in the specific field, Canadian education, or an assessment that foreign work experience and credentials are equivalent. Also, these regulatory designations and tradespersons tickets require knowledge-based exams. It is well documented that these regulatory processes take a long time for immigrants to complete, ranging from four to ten years, depending on the field (Reitz et al.,2014). Yet, these Canadian credentials are emphasized in the earliest stages of the selection process, even if not required for the role. As Courtney decries,

> In my experience, I would say, you know, generally speaking, Alberta is very credentialist. I don't know if you've seen that in other places, but I've worked in the public sector for the better part of a decade. And I find everyone is very focused on the credentials, like do they have a degree, do they have, you know, XYZ, you know, certification from a regulatory body. Because if they don't, they're probably not as competent. So, a lot of the time my conversations are “Well, what actually do you need the person to do? (Courtney, Talent Acquisition Advisor, Government)

Here, Courtney explains that hiring managers equate Canadian credentials with competence rather than ascertaining or assessing whether a candidate possesses the skills required to do the job. More importantly, she demonstrates that within Alberta, hiring norms greatly emphasize Canadian education and experience as proxies for competence and selecting candidates during

screening. Immigrants with foreign credentials and work experience are less likely to be considered because of this Canadian credential and education requirement.

In the pre-screening process, HR professionals and hiring managers still manually review applicant resumes rather than cover letters, largely because of the SHRM goals of efficiency. As Kim, an HR advisor at an oil and gas firm, explains,

> It's very rare that we'll take a look at a cover letter or ask for a cover letter for that matter. And it just has to do with the nature of the volumes of applications, right? And then as for the resume itself, I find that if based on the criteria of the posting, and the requirements. If you can make it easier in a resume for me to catch that in the first five to 10 seconds. It is more likely that I will move you forward with a recommendation (Interview with Kim, HR Advisor, Oil & Gas).

The concern with efficiency and ease of assessment results in the use of ATS. Even in cases where ATS is not used, manual review of resumes involves a quick glance for familiar company names, tenure, and location of work experience. This practice may disadvantage immigrants, for whom a cover letter may explain more clearly the relevance and transferability of their skills and experience.

In deciding whether a job candidate should be shortlisted for a phone interview, HR professionals and hiring managers employ a variety of methods based on individual preferences. The common deciding factors for shortlisting are often based on familiarity with the job titles, company name, license designation, pattern of tenure (length of employer commitment), and scale of the project experience. Within these deciding factors, the common thread is an assessment of Canadian experience. HR professionals and hiring managers select candidates based on Canadian standards and norms; therefore, job titles have to be similar or equivalent to those in Canada, company names have to be familiar, license designation has to be approved by Canadian regulators, and pattern of tenure (length of employer commitment) and scale of the project experience is valued more if from a Canadian company.

Immigrants with markers indicating that they are racialized in addition to being immigrants such as long names and degrees and/or work experience from majority non-White

countries are often penalized in the hiring process because hiring professionals deem these symbolic and cultural markers indicating a lack of English proficiency, knowledge, cultural values, and Canadian work experience. For example, Sanjay, a senior HR manager at a utility firm, shares how immigrants are disadvantaged in this way during the resume review process. He states,

> Yea, truthfully. And I'm using the word truthful. Yeah. It depends on who, which recruiter gets that, applicant's number. Okay, so we have two White girls, a Black girl, and an Indian girl. And you could see it. If it [the resume] goes to a White girl, they cannot pronounce the name of some of them. They don't want to even bring it up. So, it will be all White resumes. If it goes to a Black person, or any of us, it will be a mixed match, because they look at what is needed (Sanjay, Senior HR Manager, Utilities).

He further goes on to share how racial and immigrant status markers are devalued by hiring professionals and hiring managers, stating that:

> It doesn't matter Muslim any, any long names that people see, okay, this guy is immigrant. And you know what, and we cannot even pronounce the guy's name if he joins our team, how can we call him? All these things, stupid things people think. And that's what immigrants faced with; that's one aspect. The second is yeah, you know, can they really understand our culture? Can they really work within the team? All that right? (Sanjay, Senior HR Manager, Utilities).

In the resume review stage of the process, immigrant applicants are thus excluded based on not fitting within the HR professionals and hiring manager's conception of a normalized Canadian job candidate. Racialized immigrant men may be privileged in the early stages of the hiring process but face difficulty because of additional cultural tests for embodied Canadian cultural capital. For the HR professionals and hiring managers, these racial and immigrant markers indicate incompatibility with the Canadian workplace.

Similarly, Tom, a recruiter at an oil and gas firm, confirms that hiring managers care more about Canadian industry experience than regulatory licenses. As such, to be shortlisted immigrants have the dual burden of proving on their resumes that they have Canadian regulatory credentials and Canadian work experience. They are further tested by the hiring

professional and hiring manager on their Canadian education and industry experience. Tom states:

> If their credentials are not from Canada, or their work experience is not from Canada. It's…they have to be able to prove on their resume that they have that understanding, right? So, for instance, you have an engineer, will happen to use the environment engineer. Sure, they might be registered with APEGA [Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Alberta]. They meet all the criteria. They're looking for work in Canada, but they've never worked with any Canadian governments, any Canadian regulation, they have no idea what the environmental directives are. They, you know, all of that is new to them. Right? And so, it's one thing if they have never worked in it, but if I start quizzing him, and asking him, "Okay, well, what's directive 57? What's directive 61? What's, you know, what are some of those bigger directives that we come across?". If they have no idea what I'm talking about? That's a huge learning curve, for something that we sort of need them to know, day one. That's a huge learning curve, for something that we sort of need them to know, day one. And so, it's just another layer of risk**.** Another assessment, that we have to, we have to look for. And if we're getting a lot of resumes. The unfortunate part is it's easier just go with the easier ones. And save those other ones for round two (Tom, Recruiter, Oil & Gas).

Even when a candidate has the required license, being categorized as an immigrant raises questions of knowledge and industry-specific experience. The decision to exclude these immigrants is justified by SHRM hiring rationales of reducing cost and risk—doing what they assume will be easiest. Also, in saying this, Tom illustrates that most HR professionals lack full knowledge of the regulatory process because for an engineer to have the APEGA designation, it would mean they have met the accredited forty-eight (48) months of professional-level engineering experience, passed the National Professional Practice Knowledge Exam, passed the good character and reputation test, and graduated from a university program that is accredited by the Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board (APEGA, 2023).

Another barrier immigrants face in the screening process is educational and credential assessments. Most HR professionals and hiring managers do not have credential assessments as part of their formalized hiring process or verification process. Despite HR professionals sharing how useful these assessments are in clarifying concerns regarding Canadian equivalence, credential assessment verifications are not conducted until the decision is made to hire an immigrant. Only a small number of HR professionals request that candidates with foreign

credentials and work experience provide credential assessments. Instead, they rely on immigrants having prior knowledge to submit the language and credential assessment documents. The only exception to the rule is that Alberta government agencies recommend that candidates with foreign credentials and work experience submit language and credential assessments as part of their hiring process. On the other hand, non-governmental employers may penalize immigrants for not including these documents. For example, Tom shared:

> We'll ask them if they have their IQAS paperwork done. There's a, there's another agency that does a similar thing. So, if they don't, you know, I may, if it looks like on their resume, they have everything and that might be missing. I'll ask them, I'll ask them. Have they have it? Do they have that paperwork? Most candidates will actually submit it with their application if they think it's, if it's required. If they don't have it, I might assume that they don't. If they, I might pick up the phone and call them and ask them. But generally, it's a kind of a matter of, I assume they, if they don't put it in their application, then I assume they might not have it (Tom, Recruiter, Oil & Gas).

Despite not requiring this documentation or even prompting immigrants to include it during the application process, not submitting it leads to an assumption that you lack the assessment and removes you from consideration. Other interviews with HR professionals similarly revealed a general lack of knowledge about the requirements for immigration. Namely, the educational and credential assessment, language proficiency exam, and skilled work experience requirements that are a large part of the Express Entry immigration process. Contrary to the goals, design, and operation of Canadian immigration policy, interviews with HR professionals and hiring managers reveal the erroneous assumption that most immigrants possess low human capital (Lau & Hou, 2019).

The Pre-Screen Interview

If an immigrant candidate is lucky enough to pass the resume screen and be deemed a match, a preliminary screening interview (phone or video) is done to assess the candidate further. The screening interview involves assessing a candidate’s communication skills, ability to articulate their experience, cultural fit (soft skills, attitude, energy level, friendliness), salary expectations, availability, and technical skills through targeted questions. Throughout the pre-

screen interview, immigrants are disadvantaged because of the continued primacy placed on Canadian work experience, workplace conventions, credentials, cultural norms and values, and company fit. Also, HR professionals and hiring managers engage in cultural matching where candidates are chosen based on cultural similarities with the HR professional and hiring manager evaluator as well as the existing team, which often reflects Canadian workplace values and conventions (Rivera, 2012). These phone and video interviews are not only testing for technical and communication skills but also for Canadian workplace communication, values, and conventions. Consequently, phone and video interviewing is discriminatory for immigrants mostly because hiring professionals and managers have a negative association with accents (Hideg et al., 2023). As Liz, a postsecondary recruiter, explains, hiring professionals and hiring managers believe that “if you have an accent, then it might mean you can't communicate well, maybe you can’t think as well, right?”.

Also, the pre-screen interviews normally assess how well the candidate fits (affect, attitude, personality) and aligns with the company and team culture. HR professionals explain that their decision to choose or recommend job candidates to hiring managers is based on affective hiring–how easy and comfortable it is to talk with the job candidate and whether the job candidate would work well with the existing team. As Emily, an HR manager, explains, likeability and comfort may increase the likelihood of selection even for overqualified candidates:

> Somebody who's friendly. If we find that there's somebody who's applied for, you know, a forklift position, but their career objective is to become an engineer, then we know that it's not a right fit for them with in terms of the position. But you know, if they're really friendly and willing to work well with others. Like, it's just a feeling that you get when you talk to somebody over the phone (Emily, HR Manager, Construction).

Often in this area, immigrants are less likely to pass the test because HR professionals and hiring managers select candidates based on demonstration of Canadian cultural norms of communication, values, and interpersonal skills. Here, SHRM values of efficiency, coupled with racism and xenophobia, lead to immigrants not being selected for a second-stage interview

because hiring managers and panels avoid or risk discomfort through interaction. As Liz explains, HR professionals and hiring managers tend not to recommend or shortlist immigrants:

> I think managers are afraid of hiring immigrants. Most of time, managers want people that will be easy to manage, almost more than being qualified. We want people that are easy to manage so there's a little bit of a fear and they…in…we kind of hide behind this idea of fit. And about when they're not sure what this person might be like in the workplace. So, so, we fear that right? Yeah, that's probably the primary things (Liz, Recruiter, Postsecondary).

The Interview

There are varied company approaches to the involvement of HR professionals and hiring committee members at the interview stage of the hiring process. In most organizations, the seniority of the role shapes what is most important in the selection process and the involvement of HR professionals and hiring committee members. At the interview stage for junior and admin roles, greater emphasis is placed on skills such as communication and customer service as well as attitude, aptitude and interpersonal skills. Interviewees also reported that HR professionals provide less oversight in hiring for admin and junior roles as the interview is normally done only with the hiring manager. On the other hand, for senior and technical roles, greater emphasis is placed on leadership experience, work experience, industry experience, licensing, and technical experience. Also, senior and technical roles often involve greater oversight and participation by HR professionals as well as hiring committees. Despite the general considerations of the candidate's technical experience, at the second stage interview, the primary assessment is for cultural fit. If an immigrant makes it to the interview stage of the hiring process, normally, they have Canadian experience and/or credentials or have specialized technical skills. Unlike other job candidates, immigrants at the second-stage interview are faced with further barriers as both HR professionals and hiring managers continue to practice cultural matching, and knowledge-based assessments and place greater emphasis on Canadian work experience and credentials as a way of assessing fit.

In the second stage of the interview, immigrants face a new round of cultural fitness tests that favour Canadian-born workers. Maria, an HR Generalist, notes the contradictions in what hiring managers require and how they choose:

> It could be fit within the organization, it can be fit with the team, it can be fit with the manager. So those are the specific things, everybody will tell you that, “Oh, I'm looking for qualification”, blah, blah, blah. Some managers will literally say okay, “I like her”. They will after the interview, “I like her”, whether this person is qualified versus the other person, it's the feeling that I am going to be comfortable. Or if I'm the hiring manager, and then I have a staff who's probably my best worker, I will base my decision on whether my best staff would accept this new hire. Right? (Maria, HR Generalist, Manufacturing).

This shows that hiring managers' fitness measures promote non-objective assessments that favour racial and cultural matching based on likeability, comfort, and similarity with the team. Additionally, during the interviews, HR professionals and hiring managers often raise questions about whether immigrants have relevant Canadian industry experience or degrees equal to Canadian job candidates. Tyler, a recruiter with a large utilities firm, says:

> I think they may view it as a risk or risk? I think I think it comes down to risk insofar as they don't may not necessarily understand the environment that the immigrant may have come from in terms of well, are the safety standards, the same that they had to adhere to or not? Are the standards of quality the same or not? Are the standards and the cultural expectations of communication? Are they less or high like you can picture some areas might have, might have very different cultural expectations on the role of women, for example, or LGBTQ, minority groups. So, it may be it may not be articulated as such, but they may view the individual as more risk. Yes, this individual can maybe they have a degree from from China is that to the degree as high quality as it is in Canada, they may have an unconscious perception of that background of lesser quality without knowing (Tyler, Recruiter, Utilities).

This exemplifies the greater competency burden that immigrants often must bear and overcome through the interview.

Moreover, hiring managers' racial and cultural biases against immigrants are left unchecked because of SHRM hiring logics that promote hiring managers having greater autonomy and authority in the hiring process. The availability of standard templates for screening and interviewing candidates is quite widespread, particularly for larger organizations. These include the use of standardized templates or guides like job descriptions, pre-screening

questions, interview guides with prescribed questions, and evaluation sheets to assess candidates. The templates are encouraged and aimed at trying to create consistency and reduce bias in the hiring process. However, most HR professionals lament that the templates are not always followed uniformly by hiring professionals. Selection decisions are often made without the use of any formal assessment component or rating system. Even among government agencies, where there are interview guides and assessment sheets, Courtney shares that hiring managers do not always use or correctly utilize the available assessment templates. She notes:

> Some people print them off and highlight what matters to them. And then it's not always aligned with what they've actually put in the posting. Or they're making assumptions and not following a specific template criteria. But those tools do exist and we recommend that managers use them. There's also a tool that actually has the formulas built in, so it will automatically tell you based on what you check yes or no if they are qualified for the position. Do managers use it? Not always. (Courtney, Talent Acquisition Advisor, Government)

Consequently, hiring managers and committees decide what to utilize, and for the most part, they employ assumptions, cultural behavioural questions, and tactics that reinforce racial and cultural stereotypes that justify immigrants not being hired. Racialized immigrants are particularly tested with more interview rounds that reduce the likelihood of them being hired. For example, Sanjay, a Senior HR Manager illustrates:

> Yeah, I give you the broad perspective of what I have seen of how we reject someone, and how we agree on someone. So usually, when we have an immigrant come in, the person was going to go through more interviews than a White person would. Okay, that's usually what will happen. So, a White person may go through two interviews, a Brown or Black person four interviews, which means a White person is first to get recruited. I would do an interview and the hiring manager will do an interview then it will go to the next level, the hiring manager's boss wants to interview the person. Okay, and then from there, we might bring someone from a different department (Sanjay, Senior, HR Manager, Utilities).

Verification

The final stage in the hiring process is verification. HR professionals emphasize the importance of thorough verification processes to ensure the legitimacy of candidates'

qualifications and to mitigate against the risks associated with hiring. Consequently, they make job offers contingent upon the completion of background checks as well as verification of credentials and work experience. This is also, in effect, a test of cultural fit by way of verifying alignment with company values such as honesty. Most organizations complete employment verification and reference checks through phone calls and/or email surveys with previous employers. The number of references required varies; most of the HR professionals interviewed ask for two to three references, including the current or most recent supervisor if possible.

The depth of reference checks depends on the risk level of the role. More rigorous checks are done for senior and technical roles. For junior roles, transcripts and references are typically requested. For professional and regulated roles, employers often rely on certifications and checks with professional organizations such as APEGA (Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Alberta), CPA (Chartered Professional Accountants), Project Management Professional (PMP) or law society websites to verify the qualifications of job candidates. For tradespersons, verification typically involves checking job candidates' tickets with relevant boards or authorities, such as apprenticeship boards, or requiring them to present their tickets to employers. For academic positions, credentials are verified by contacting the educational institutions directly or through the transcripts submitted by job candidates. Small and medium firms tend to rely on referees and not use third-party companies because they are expensive. As such, they rely on phone calling or emailing referees and the use of social media sites such as LinkedIn.

Most medium and large firms utilize third-party companies and tools for employment verification and criminal record checks. Small firms rely on reference letters and phone calls with previous managers and employers. For immigrant applicants, referee letters, police background checks, and credit checks that employers normally request are often delayed due to coming from overseas. Most HRM professionals shared that this can be challenging for

immigrant job candidates. For example, Paul a HR Director highlights specifically the challenge of police record verification for international candidates:

> The biggest part that we find maybe a challenge with that for verification is the police information check. Because we do our police checks based on the RCMP database. Well, that's only people who live in Canada, right? So, if you have somebody coming from out of country into Canada, that's much harder to be able to kind of quantify. So, it depends on the role that they're doing that we may have to have a look at that (Paul, HR Director, Non-profit)

The difficulty and delay in the verification process may disadvantage immigrants, not only at the offer stage but in earlier stages, as the anticipation of later verification challenges casts immigrants as difficult and risky hires. If an immigrant is fortunate enough to have overcome the higher standards and barriers in the early stages of the hiring process, the verification stage may present another challenge. For example, Sanjay a Senior HR Manager illustrates that if an immigrant is selected by a hiring committee, some hiring managers take greater steps beyond previous employer or manager references:

> References, that's one. But they're also sneaky, some hiring managers, they will go to the industry, and ask the clients and customers behind the scenes. And that, I have seen some guy hiring manager come in and say, "you know, I talk to that client, and he doesn't think he's a good fit for you guys and stuff". I said, "so that's his opinion", right? Yeah. So, I said to the hiring manager, "I'm sure some other people have bad experiences with you here". So, if you're applying for jobs, and they call us if they say that well, how would you feel? (Sanjay, Senior HR Manager, Utilities)

Most hiring managers view immigrants as high risk, so further scrutiny is employed even in the verification process, lessening the likelihood of an immigrant being hired.

Additionally, SHRM's logic of reducing risk in the hiring process often leads to greater obstacles for immigrants throughout the hiring process. Even within immigrant niches such as IT, immigrants face barriers. Kwame reflects the Canadian employer's view and concern of immigrants as risky job candidates, adding steps to the verification process. He states:

> Yeah. So, I think for some companies not wanting to hire immigrants, there are different things. So, they feel like—when it comes to tech—some immigrants have gotten to a level where they are falsifying their identity or falsifying how much experience they have in tech. So, I've seen situations where you see an immigrant's resume, I wouldn't want to call what nationality, but there's a certain nationality that has been notorious for like,

> falsifying having tech experience. And when they get the job, they outsource it. So, when those names come up, some companies could say, maybe I could skip this for now or maybe I just want to verify more that this is authentic, that they actually have this experience they say they have (Kwame, HR Manager, IT).

Despite being grounded in legitimate concerns, the apprehension ignores that most jobs have probation periods for this reason. Also, Canadian human rights legislation prohibits discrimination based on country of origin. The added round of vetting makes it less likely that an immigrant, especially from India, will be considered for employment or hired. Also, it is not until the end of the hiring process, when a job offer has been made, that HRM professionals and hiring managers seek to verify or assess credentials and work experience, but by this time, many immigrant candidates would have been eliminated from consideration based on the unwillingness to assess their credentials.

Discussion

Hiring professionals enact a series of social closures throughout the hiring process that reduce the likelihood of immigrant employment. Recruitment and selection practices reflect hiring professionals' preferences and requirements for citizenship, Canadian work experience, and cultural fit for employment. Hiring managers, backed by SHRM legitimating authority, exclude immigrants for employment considerations at the job advertisement phase by determining and creating criteria citizens can easily meet through proxies of Canadian experience, such as Canadian licences and credentials. HRM professionals motivated by SHRM client service and business partner orientation, financial incentives, and ingroup loyalty only select Canadian-born workers or workers with Canadian experience. In line with other Canadian studies, my study confirms that recruitment practices emphasize social and cultural capital as a requirement for employment (Bauder, 2005; Elrick, 2016). Hiring professionals and hiring managers intentionally promote hiring citizens over immigrants by selecting applicants from Canadian companies, local educational institutions, personal networks, and internal referrals. Immigrants are less likely to be hired as membership in these social and cultural

networks is required to access jobs. In many ways, making jobs accessible only through social networks reinforces the exclusion of immigrants, given that social networks require invitation and membership by a mediating individual or organization. Immigrants, despite having the right to work, often lack membership in these networks that must be recognized and validated by HRM professionals and hiring managers in the screening process. This HRM professional and hiring manager recruitment decision and practice may explain why temporary migrants, such as international students, with Canadian credentials, education, and work experience have better employment outcomes than newcomer immigrants (Hou & Picot, 2024). Further, this study raises questions about normative advice for social networking as the best approach for employment, given that access to these networks for immigrants is often not automatic, requires an invitation, is often costly, and requires validations of deservingness for entry.

Additionally, immigrants face further barriers to employment at the interview stage, where assessment of cultural and social capital is emphasized. Immigrants, particularly racialized immigrants, are not selected for jobs because the method of assessing language proficiency is only through phone and video interviews. These tools, even with closed captions, often penalize immigrants with accents, and acquired knowledge on the candidate's race, gender, and class background information provides opportunities for discrimination (Roulin et al., 2023). Affective hiring and racial-cultural matching by hiring managers and panels further reduce immigrants' chances of employment, given that they must prove both human capital competency and Canadian cultural capital. The interviews reveal that immigrant job candidates have multiple cultural and social assessment tests beyond job advertisement qualifications and bona fide occupational requirements. The HRM professional's and hiring managers' attitudes and behaviour reflect and mirror the Canadian government's view of foreign workers as a last resort for employment and job sourcing (Employment & Social Development Canada, 2024). Immigrants are disadvantaged in the verification phase of employment because of the reliance on normative standards documents that only account for Canadian-born job candidates. There

is a lack of use and incorporation of immigrant human capital documents such as credential and language assessments in hiring. This could alleviate hiring professional concerns, especially in the screening phase, where immigrants will likely be eliminated despite supposed privileged access to jobs based on permanent residency. The hiring process creates doubt about the benefits of permanent residency without Canadian experience (i.e. work experience, credentials, and social and cultural capital). The hiring process reveals that immigrants are categorically defined as foreign workers and stripped of their permanent residency status rights and privileges as the recruitment and selection process continues. At each stage of the hiring process, HRM professionals and hiring managers emphasize different White Canadian cultural and social capitals via Canadian experience requirement, which lessen the likelihood of immigrant employment.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

This study began from the knowledge that immigrant skill underutilization costs the Canadian economy billions annually. While conducting the interviews with human resource management (HRM) professionals, it struck me that there is a tension between the dictates of strategic human resource management (SHRM) and HRM professional's understanding of fairness in hiring. This tension became apparent as they each discussed a hiring process they understood as fair and objective while using professional logics and discourses based on the premise of immigrant deficiency. The study reveals that the practices of interpretation and assessments through which HRM professionals review resumes and make hiring decisions rely on these professional logics and organizational discourses, which are embedded with cultural racial schemas. Meanwhile, the consequences for immigrants are dire, with highly qualified and strictly vetted immigrants relegated to a secondary labour market where most remain for the remainder of their working lives.

In this dissertation, I examined the role of HRM professionals in the labour market integration of immigrants in Alberta, Canada. Critical discourse analysis of HRM professional educational texts and analysis of interviews with HRM professionals shows that the employment claims of immigrants—particularly non-White immigrants—are often denied based on their lack of recognition as permanent residents and their low social status based on race and citizenship. The lack of recognition of these applicants as permanent residents and their resulting low status in the applicant pool can be traced to HRM professional texts and curricula, which categorically define immigrants as low-skilled, culturally deficient, foreign workers without the right to work. Strategic human resource management (SHRM) is the hegemonic professional and organizational logic that promotes efficiency, productivity, and risk management as paramount and, most importantly, justifies hiring professionals' taste-based and statistical discrimination in hiring. Interviews reveal that HRM professionals rely on racial cultural matching instead of evidence-based assessments for evaluating job candidates. Connecting these threads, I

demonstrate that the SHRM practices promoted in HRM textbooks and courses provide the professional and institutional logic that justifies the denial of immigrant claims for employment during applicant evaluation.

Summary of Findings

The study shows that the most important factors for HRM professionals when evaluating immigrant applicants are whether the applicant has legal employment eligibility and whether they have Canadian cultural competency. Factors such as the applicant's address when applying, their name, and foreign credentials are used to determine whether a person is a permanent resident and thus eligible to work. Additionally, HRM professionals make cultural capital competency considerations using factors such as English language proficiency, signals of subscribing to Canadian values, immigrant credential equivalence with Canadian credentials, and Canadian work experience. However, for non-White immigrants, their Canadian address does not overcome the perception of perpetual foreignness that their names and foreign credentials signal. The interviews highlight that immigrants, particularly non-White immigrants, are often perceived as not having permanent residency status. The consequence of this perception is that these applicants are seen as requiring heightened scrutiny or removed from the applicant pool early in the process to avoid the additional administrative burden of evaluating their employment eligibility and suitability for the job.

The study echoes previous research showing that hiring professionals do not use evidence based objective assessment for evaluating job candidates but instead rely on cultural matching via behavioural interviews and proxies of shared ingroup membership as tools for evaluating immigrant applicants (Rivera, 2012; Elrick, 2016; Risavy et al., 2021). The interviews reveal that despite the option and availability of objective assessment tools (work sample tests), most hiring professionals turn to unreliable proxies of competency and productivity when reviewing immigrant applications. These proxies include names, addresses, volunteerism, accents, and Canadian credentials. The study builds on current literature by highlighting racial

cultural matching as a primary tool within screening and selection processes. An immigrant's race and ability to signal White Canadian cultural values are the key criteria through which hiring professionals evaluate immigrant applicants.

Interviews with HRM professionals reveal that hiring managers are responsible for deciding which applicant is ultimately hired. However, HRM professionals play a critical role by recommending the candidates for consideration. Therefore, HRM professional views of immigrant applicants are an important determining factor in whether an immigrant is selected for hire. Despite expressing mostly positive perceptions of immigrants and willingness to hire immigrants, the study finds that HRM professionals also demonstrate varied degrees of racist and nativistic views of immigrants as deficient. In the hiring process, these views devalue immigrant foreign credentials and justify taste-based preferences for Canadian-born workers and White workers for employment.

A critical insight and analysis gained from theories of organizational regime inequality is that institutional practices are not neutral routines relying on objective criteria. HRM professionals ascribe to the institutional logic of neutrality and impersonality, and therefore proclaim not to have a different hiring process for immigrants. However, my analysis shows that the methods of evaluation for immigrants are far from neutral or discrimination blind but rather obscure and entrench racial and citizenship hierarchies in hiring. The study shows that once an HRM professional perceives an applicant as an immigrant, they adjust the hiring process, adding stages, requirements, and criteria. The source of this professional understanding and practice can be traced to HRM texts. These professional education manuals contain multiple discourses that reify immigrant human and cultural deficiency, deny the permanent residency rights of immigrants, and advocate for only cautious consideration of immigrants because they pose financial risks and costs. Important immigration documents, such as language and credential assessments that could address hiring professional concerns for immigrants, are not part of the hiring evaluation process until the last verification stage. The result is that

immigrants, particularly non-White immigrants, are often denied the opportunity to demonstrate why they are the best candidate for the job before even getting to that stage.

The study finds the presence of multiple institutional and professional logics that govern HRM professionals and their hiring processes within Alberta. These institutional logics –beliefs, ideas, values and discourses make up 'the rules of game' of hiring, shaping whether immigrants are considered for employment and ultimately hired (Bourdieu,1993; Adams, 2010). While the professional logic of EDI promotes seeking fairness and ethics in hiring, this logic conflicts with SHRM and human capital theory (HCT) logics, the primary logics through which HRM professionals carry out their functions in the hiring process. HRM professionals who subscribe to EDI sometimes resist SHRM logic by recommending immigrant applicants. However, even those who subscribe to EDI often acquiesce to hiring managers' preferences for White workers and citizens based on their authority over the ultimate hiring decision. SHRM logic promotes a client centered approach to hiring based on the dictates of increasing profits, efficiency, and productivity while reducing costs and risks. Human capital theory equally promotes market considerations of human capital competency that emphasize productivity and point to the quality of immigrant credentials and Canadian equivalency as explanations for why immigrants are often not selected. Both these logics cast HRM professionals in a more supportive advisory role subject to the authority of hiring managers. Hiring professionals respond and subscribe to varying degrees of these institutional logics which determines immigrant hiring chances. Both professional logics are evident in the discourses of HRM texts and are drawn upon by the HRM professionals interviewed in explaining their evaluation and hiring processes. Most importantly, these logics help justify hiring professionals' taste-based and statistical discrimination in hiring.

While I did not directly measure or ask HRM professionals where their understanding of immigrants and the process of evaluating immigrants came from, after conducting the discourse analysis of the HRM course outlines and textbooks I reviewed the interview data to see whether the definitions of immigrants and the categorical distinctions for sorting immigrants were the

same. Analysis of the interview data revealed that, like the HRM textbook authors, most of the HR professionals interviewed defined and assessed immigrants as temporary migrants without the right to work. Relatedly, the textbook promotion of a professional identity based on SHRM ideals is reflected in the interview data showing the HRM professionals interviewed understand their professional identity as SHRM business allies and utilize the same SHRM discourses of immigrants as cultural and human capital deficient. They also draw on the economic rationales evident in the HRM textbooks that identify immigrants as posing financial and legal risks as well as administrative burdens. Further research is required to know whether HRM professionals would identify their HRM professional training via these courses as the source of these conceptualizations and processes for evaluating immigrant applicants.

Research Contributions

This study bridges the gap between our understanding of Canadian immigration policy as one that successfully attracts immigrants with high human capital and the varied experiences of immigrants in the Canadian labour market. The study is significant because it explores this issue from the perspective of those making the hiring decisions. Research in Canada has focused a great deal of attention on what immigrants do in employment and the impact of their human, social, and cultural capital on their labour market experiences (Bauder, 2005; Skuterud, 2010; Lu & Picot, 2017). In contrast, we know less about employers' decision-making processes in shaping immigrant employment outcomes and patterns of employment discrimination in Canada. This study shifts the focus to employer hiring representatives, particularly HRM professionals and hiring managers, building on the notion that they serve as labour market gatekeepers and are involved in sorting people and groups into jobs and occupations. Via recruitment and selection processes, hiring professionals in Alberta promote immigrant exclusion from jobs in primary labour markets, shape the sectors and industries in which immigrants are employed, and most importantly, how long it takes to integrate into the labour market. Due to these social closure practices, having legal eligibility to work is not enough.

Relatedly, much of the research on immigrant employment outcomes utilizes quantitative methods such as audits, experiments, labour market surveys, and sophisticated regression models that identify the results but do not adequately provide explanations for these observations. In fact, after Oreopoulos' landmark study on this topic in Canada in 2009, he was "left with the question of why" (Oreopoulos and Dechief 2011 p. 24, emphasis in original). As such, a follow-up complementary qualitative study was conducted with nine interviews of recruiters and managers involved in hiring decisions (Oreopoulos and Dechief 2011). This study expands upon that quest for understanding the reasons and processes behind some immigrants' poor labour market outcomes. Significantly, other qualitative studies that have been conducted on this issue are based on the experiences and perspectives of immigrants, who can only speculate about why they were not hired. By focusing on immigrants, many of these studies reinforce the taken-for-granted assumption of immigrant human capital and cultural deficiency. Furthermore, few query the differential outcomes based on race. On the other hand, the analysis in this study centers HRM professionals' assessment of immigrant applicants, seeking to understand whether immigrant deficiency is in fact a taken-for-granted assumption in hiring and examining the role of race. The study is also significant because of its analysis of HRM as a profession within the organizational structure, exploring how these logics and discourses impact processes of evaluation and selection. Furthermore, studies of HRM textbooks tend to focus on the impact of these logics on the profession, professional identity, professional relations, and internal organizational relations. Instead, this study looks at the profession in relation to immigrants through its analysis of what HRM professionals are being taught and not taught about immigrants.

The study also makes a unique theoretical contribution by arguing that cultural racism, embedded in SHRM professional logics, discourses, and practices, is a major factor in reinforcing the differential labour market outcomes of White and non-White immigrants. The professional logics, discourses, and practices of HRM professionals are the mechanisms

through which this cultural racism operates in hiring. While other Canadian studies discuss cultural fit as connected to race and ethnicity, they do not explicitly acknowledge that race is a determining factor of belonging in Canada, impacting who is understood as qualified, eligible, and suitable to work. Since the study conceptualizes education and credentials from Canadian institutions as well as Canadian experience and licenses as proxies for Whiteness, this may help explain why White immigrants and two-step migrants, such as international students, fare better on the labour market than non-White immigrants with foreign credentials. Additionally, race serves as a proxy for Canadian citizenship. In the Canadian brand of racism, Whiteness is one of the defining characteristics of Canadian citizenship. Without being viewed as citizens or permanent residents, non-White immigrant applicants are unable to make the claim or access the legal preference in hiring.

An equally important theoretical contribution of the study is that it pushes us revisit existing immigrant labour market theoretical explanations of immigrants' poor labour market outcomes. It bridges, extends, and centers inequality regime theories by showing that the organizational structure of immigrant hiring is a racialized regime of inequality in Alberta, Canada (Acker, 2006; Ray, 2019; Banerjee, 2022). Other studies theorize the poor labour market outcomes of immigrants primarily using human capital theory and social identity theory. As such, they mostly account for immigrant human capital quality, the lack of tools for determining immigrant Canadian equivalency, and individual discriminatory practices. In response to the human capital theory (HCT) explanation, the study shows that immigrant labour market outcomes are shaped not only by immigrants' perceived human capital competency or failure to signal competency but also by meso-level organizational structures. In conducting an analysis that views hiring as part of organizational inequality regimes, I account for meso-level and interactional dynamics. Notably, the unequal power relations, professional institutional logics, and discourses shaping individual experiences. This is especially important in the Canadian context, where TRO and RIT are not often used in analysis of the particular social

phenomenon of immigrant labour market integration. I also contribute to TRO theorization by including a discursive approach. TRO theory discusses racial schemas but does not adequately address the role of discourses in producing, reproducing, and utilizing these schemas. Additionally, while RIT focuses on claim-making among workers within organizations, I contribute to the development of this theory by expanding its reach to claim-making actors outside of the organization—i.e. immigrants applying for inclusion within the organization. Social identity theory explains immigrants' poor labour market outcomes as primarily a function of implicit bias and in-group bias. However, by discussing hiring as a claim-making process involving an investment in Whiteness through preferences for certain credentials and experiences, the study helps illustrate that the social closure practices of those involved in hiring are more active than is suggested by SIT theorists promoting implicit bias trainings as an antidote.

Lastly, I make the original argument that immigrant labour market exclusion and discrimination stem from hiring professionals' failure to recognize their—particularly racialized immigrants—permanent residency status, which affords them the right to work and preference in hiring. Hence, the lack of recognition of non-White immigrant rights and privileges as permanent residents has as much to do with immigrant labour market outcomes as do skills mismatch and the lack of recognition of immigrant skills.

Future Research and Policy Implications

Future research into this topic would benefit from larger sample sizes that could account for sector-level variation and firm size. This would allow researchers to explore the extent to which larger firms are more receptive to immigrant applicants, which other researchers have hypothesized might be the case (Banerjee, Reitz, and Oreopoulos 2018). A larger study may also capture more organizational actors involved in the hiring process. Specifically, future research should include the considerations, practices, and processes of hiring managers, who HRM professionals identify as the primary decision makers. This would also be interesting

research since this study and others point out that HRM professionals are not technical experts and thus might have different selection criteria and evaluation processes (Elrick, 2016). Most participants in the study did not utilize applicant tracking systems (ATS) to select applicants. However, they are often used as part of the job requisition process, which requires hiring managers to use an ATS system to write job descriptions and duties long before they are advertised. Future research into ATS usage could help clarify if, when, why, and how they are used in the hiring process, especially by hiring managers. This research into the practices of hiring managers should also include an investigation of their job ad and job description creation processes. In keeping with this study's conceptualization of HRM professionals as labour market gatekeepers, future research should explore the logics, discourses, practices, and processes of other labour market gatekeepers shaping migrant and immigrant labour market integration. For example, resettlement agency workers and volunteers often provide employment and career advice to new immigrants, facilitating their deskilling and occupational niching. University administrators such as career advisors and faculty supervisors play a similar role for international students, so future research should explore their advice and job support, as well as immigration administrative management, which is part of their roles. Community-based associations and immigrant networks should also be examined as labour market gatekeepers.

In terms of policy, the study raises questions regarding the value of permanent residency for immigrants, particularly non-White immigrants. Citizenship and prior Canadian experience are prioritized for employment eligibility in Alberta. Even in sectors considered immigrant niches, this citizenship and Canadian experience (cultural and social capital) requirement for recruitment and selection pushes immigrants into the secondary labour market. Cultural racism is a feature of immigrant employment experiences in Alberta. More needs to be done by employers, HRM textbook authors, and professionals to reevaluate the normative hiring practices that take a universalistic and colourblind approach that serves to reproduce social exclusion and inequality for immigrants and other groups. Hiring professionals need to

implement evidence-based HRM strategies that are valid and reliable. Reliance on behavioural interviews, hiring managers' expertise, and the general lack of oversight and decoupling of employment equity by HRM professionals create legal risks and affect productivity. Also, human rights legislation and equity policies need to shift from focusing only on employees to also focusing on applicants. Additionally, the complaints-based process should be revamped to include whistle-blower reporting by hiring professionals rather than only addressing complaints by victims of discrimination. Also, there needs to be greater monitoring or guidance related to employment advertisement, interviews, and diversity hiring. The federal government should provide a self-directed online micro-credential focused on improving hiring professionals' understanding of immigration programs and processes under Express Entry. Particularly information on eligibility requirements, using credential and language assessment documents in hiring, and how the Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS) point system ensures high-skilled workers. Equally, HRM professional bodies should provide fact sheets on hiring immigrants and inform their members that the federal and provincial government already assess immigrants for their human and cultural capital proficiency, relevant work experience and credential equivalence. Also, HRM textbook authors and professionals should depart from a discriminatory neutral understanding of organizations and recognize that organizations' policies and practices are embedded with inequality regimes. HRM textbook authors should explicitly define the difference between immigrants and temporary migrants, revisit SHRM logic and its power relations, provide information on the Express Entry program and incorporate express entry documents within the hiring process and stages. Immigrants’ employment opportunities stand a greater chance of improving if these documents become part of the standard hiring process and if textbooks and courses also incorporate these in their discussion of the hiring process. Lastly, employers should also have internal anonymous whistle-blower programs so that HRM professionals and other organizational members can report unethical and discriminatory practices without fear of repercussion.

The government of Alberta has increased or allocated significant funding to newcomer bridge programs. Greater attention must be placed on immigrant skill utilization by supporting non-profits' efforts to integrate immigrant newcomers into the primary labour market. Not fully utilizing immigrants' skills puts Alberta's competitiveness and productivity at risk, especially in an increasingly knowledge-based economy where traditional industries such as oil and gas continue to see an intensification in technology use and less need for workers. Immigrant-serving organizations must pay greater attention to the quality of employment partnerships, as HRM professionals and hiring professionals use their personal and social networks to source employees. This study is timely, given the current debates regarding economic productivity, social inequality, poverty, the over-use of temporary migrant programs, and labour shortages. As Canadians weigh these concerns, more serious consideration should be paid to one of the country’s largest existing untapped resources: immigrants.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Questions

Demographic questions.

1. If you don't mind me asking, what is your gender identity?
2. How do you identify racially?
3. What sector do you work in?
4. Would you classify your company as large, medium, or small?
5. Is your company private, nonprofit or government funded?
6. Does your company receive government contracts?
7. What is your primary role?
8. How long have you been working in hiring?
9. How often do you serve on hiring panels/ committees?
10. When was your last hiring decision?

Practice

11. Could you walk me through how you go about recruiting?
12. What are the channels that you use to recruit (internet job boards, corporate websites)?
13. Where do most of your hires come from (college recruiting, company networks, job boards etc)?
14. What are the tools that you use for recruitment?
15. Do you use any Applicant tracking software?
16. What do you look for in an employee? (Expectations)
17. Which is most important in selection: educational credential, work experience, or skills?

Selection

18. What happens when someone submits a resume and cover letter?
19. How do you go about assessing whether they are invited for an interview?
20. What is most important when deciding whether the person moves to the next stage of the hiring process?
21. How do you go about verifying candidates' experiences and credentials (pre-hiring screening and background checks)?

Immigrant

22. What happens when an immigrant submits a resume and cover letter?
    How do you define immigrants?
23. How do you go about assessing whether an immigrant is invited for an interview?
24. What is most important when deciding whether the immigrant moves to the next stage of the hiring process or is hired?

25. How do you go about verifying immigrant candidate experiences and credentials (pre-hiring screening and background checks)?
26. Does it matter if their credentials and work experiences are from Canada? If so, why?
27. Often you see this on job application/ advertisement: *We encourage all qualified applicants to apply, however preference will be given to Canadian citizens and permanent residents of Canada.* Why is that included?

Constraints /Obstacles

28. What are some of the obstacles that you encounter when hiring candidates?
29. Are there any legal obstacles when hiring candidates?
30. Do you think that immigrants face any challenges in getting hired? Why or why not?
31. In your view and experience, why do think employers may not hire immigrants?

Diversity, Inclusion and Equity

32. Does your company have diversity, equity, and inclusion programs or training?
33. Does your company have recruitment or hiring programs for designated groups (women, disabled, Indigenous and visible minorities)?
34. Do you think bias and discrimination is an issue in your organization?
35. Have your ever had a complaint made against you concerning discrimination?

APPENDIX B: HRM COURSES, EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION and HRM TEXTBOOKS

Courses	Educational Institution	Textbook
BUS330: Human Resource Management	Ambrose University	Stewart, E. B., Belcourt, M., Peacock, M., Bohlander, G. W., & Snell, S. A. (2016). Essentials of Managing Human Resources, Canadian Edition. Nelson Education.
HRMT-502: Human Resource Management	Athabasca University	Lam Helen. (2014) Essentials of Strategic Human Resource Management & Organizational Behaviour. Nelson College Indigenous; 2 Edition*
HRMT 386: Introduction to Human Resource Management	Athabasca University	Belcourt, M., Singh, P., Snell, S., Morris, S., & Bohlander, G. (2019). Managing human resources (9th Canadian Ed.). Toronto, ON: Nelson*
HRESS2201: Introduction to Human Resources	Bow Valley College	Peacock, M, Stewart, E,B. & Belcourt, M. 2020. Understanding Human Resources Management: A Canadian Perspective. Nelson Cengage. Toronto
HRES9201:Human Resources Management	Bow Valley College	Belcourt, M. & McBey, K.J.,.2016. Strategic Human Resources Planning (sixth ed). Nelson Canada. Toronto, Canada.
HRM 220C: Introduction to Human Resource Management	Concordia University of Edmonton	Steen, S. L, Noe, R. A, Hollenbeck, J.R, Gehart, B, & Wright, P. M. (2019). Human Resource Management, 5th ed. McGraw Hill
HRM 505: Intro to Human Resource Management	Red Deer Polytechnic	Schwind, H., Uggerslev, K., Wagar, T., Fassina, N. and Bulmash J. (2016). Canadian Human Resource Management (11th ed.). Ryerson Canada Higher Ed.
HRMT200:Management of Human Resources	MacEwan University	Peacock, M, Stewart, E,B. & Belcourt, M. 2020. Understanding Human Resources Management: A Canadian Perspective. Nelson Cengage. Toronto *
HRMT2226: Introduction to Human Resources	Northern Alberta Institute of Technology	Schwind, H.F., Uggerslev, K., Wagar, T.H., & Fassina, N. (2019). Canadian Human Resource Management. A Strategic Approach. Twelfth Edition, Toronto: McGraw-Hill Education.*
HRMT3410: Human Resource Management		Schwind, H.F., Uggerslev, K., Wagar, T.H., & Fassina, N. (2019). Canadian Human Resource Management.

	Northern Alberta Institute of Technology	A Strategic Approach. Twelfth Edition, Toronto: McGraw-Hill Education.*
BUSD 1009: Human Resource Management	Norquest College	Belcourt, M., Singh, P., Snell, S.A., and Morris, S.S. (2020). *M*anaging Human Resources (9th Canadian ed.). Toronto, ON: Nelson Education Ltd. *
CMPT 3040: Human Resource Management	*The* Southern Alberta Institute of Technology *(*SAIT*)*	Schwind, H.F., Uggerslev, K., Wagar, T.H., & Fassina, N. (2019). Canadian Human Resource Management. A Strategic Approach. Twelfth Edition, Toronto: McGraw-Hill Education.*
HRMT 2320 - Human Resource Management	*The* Southern Alberta Institute of Technology *(*SAIT*)*	Peacock, M, Stewart, E,B. & Belcourt, M. 2020. Understanding Human Resources Management: A Canadian Perspective. Nelson Cengage. Toronto*
MNGT 4040 - Human Resource Management	*The* Southern Alberta Institute of Technology *(*SAIT*)*	Schwind, H., Uggerslev, K., Wagar, T., Fassina, N. and Bulmash J. (2016). Canadian Human Resource Management (11th ed.). Ryerson Canada Higher Ed. ISBN: 9781259258077.
SEM 311 – A1: Managing the Workforce in Canada	University of Alberta	Schwind, H.F., Uggerslev, K., Wagar, T.H., & Fassina, N. (2019). Canadian Human Resource Management. A Strategic Approach. Twelfth Edition, Toronto: McGraw-Hill Education.*
BMC 165-158: Human Resources Management 2022	University of Calgary	Human Resource Management. (2016). Open Educational Resource. https://open.lib.umn.edu/humanresourcemanagement/
BMC 165-153: Human Resources Management 2019	University of Calgary	Dessler, G. & Chhinzer, N. (2017). Human Resources Management (Thirteenth Edition); Pearson Canada Inc.*
XADM 10014 Human Resource Information Management (HRIM)	Mount Royal University	Belcourt, M., Bohlander, G. W., Snell, S., Singh, P., & Morris, S. (2017). Managing Human Resources (Eighth Canadian edition.). Nelson Education.

*****HRM textbooks used for the study

APPENDIX C: RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Name	Titles	Sectors	Company Size	Years in Hiring	Race	Gender
Abigail	HR Manager	Accounting	Small	11	White	Female
Alia	Talent Acquisition Consultant	Government	Large	8	Asian	Female
Connor	External Recruiter	Accounting	Medium	25	White	Male
Courtney	Talent Acquisition Advisor	Government	Large	8	White	Female
Emily	HR Manager	Construction	Medium	17	Asian	Female
Fatima	Senior HR Manager	Oil & Gas	Medium	10	Asian	Female
Fiona	Senior Recruiter	Manufacturing	Large	13	Asian	Female
Horace	External Recruiter	Construction	Medium	6	Black	Male
Isabelle	External Recruiter	Oil & Gas	Medium	1	Hispanic	Female
Jessica	Talent Director	Services- Global Consulting	Small	8	White	Female
Kim	HR Advisor	Oil & Gas	Medium	3	Asian	Female
Kwame	HR Manager	IT	Medium	10	Black	Male
Liam	External Recruiter	IT	Small	6	White	Male
Lindsey	Talent Acquisition Consultant	Oil & Gas	Medium	25	White	Female
Liz	Recruiter	PostSecondary	Large	14	White	Female
Maria	HR Generalist	Manufacturing	Small	8	Asian	Female
Melissa	HR Manager	Healthcare	Small	3	Asian	Female
Michelle	Talent Acquisition	Oil & Gas	Medium	15	Asian	Female
Pattie	Recruiter	PostSecondary	Medium	10	White	Female
Paul	HR Director	Non-profit	Large	20	White	Male
Sam	Recruiter	PostSecondary	Large	10	White	Male
Sarah	HR Partner	PostSecondary	Large	10	White	Female
Sanjay	Senior HR Manager	Utilities	Medium	18	Asian	Male
Sean	HR Generalist	Services- D&I Consultant Agency	Medium	2	White	Male
Sheila	HR Advisor	Government	Large	10	Black	Female
Sophia	Recruiter	Food Retail	Large	5	Black	Female
Sue	HR Manager	IT	Medium	7	White	Female
Taylor	External Senior Recruiter	Accounting	Large	10	White	Female
Tom	Recruiter	Oil & Gas	Large	20	White	Male
Tyler	Recruiter	Utilities	Large	8	White	Male

Winnie	HR Advisor	Postsecondary	Large	2	Asian	Female

APPENDIX D: CPHR ALBERTA PREAPPROVED COST LIST: ALBERTA POST SECONDARIES

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT		
Post-Secondary Institution	**Course Code**	**Course Name**
Ambrose University	BUS 330	Human Resources Management
Athabasca University	HRMT 386	Introduction to Human Resource Management
Athabasca University	HRMT 502	Human Resources Management
Bow Valley College (BVC)	HRES2201	Introduction to Human Resources
Bow Valley College (BVC)	HRES9201	Human Resources Management
Concordia University of Edmonton	HRM 220A	Introduction to Human Resources Management
MacEwan University	HRMT 200	Managing Human Resources
Mount Royal University (MRU)	XADM 10014	Human Resources Information Management (HRIM)
Mount Royal University (MRU)	HRES 2170	Introduction to Human Resources
Mount Royal University (MRU)	XMGD 20020	Human Resource Basics
NorQuest College	BUSD 1009	Human Resource Management I
NorQuest College	BUSD 2011	Human Resource Management II
Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT)	HRMT3410	Human Resource Management
Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT)	HRMT2226	Introduction to Human Resources
Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT)	EVMT720	Human Resource Management
Red Deer College (RDC)	HRM 505	Introduction to Human Resources Management
Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT)	MNGT 4040	Human Resource Management
Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT)	HRMT 2320	Human Resource Management
Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT)	HRMT 320	Human Resource Management
Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT)	CPMT 3040	Human Resource Management
Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT)	HRMT 401	Applied Human Resources
University of Alberta (U of A)	EXMGT 5596	Human Resources Foundations
University of Alberta (U of A)	EXMGT 5601	Advanced Human Resources Management
University of Alberta (U of A)	SMO 311	HRM: Managing the Workforce in Canada
University of Calgary (U of C)	BMC 165	Human Resources Management
University of Lethbridge (U of L)	MGT 3050	Introduction to Human Resources Management

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

Name of Researcher, Faculty, Department, Telephone & Email:
Chene Redwood, Department of Sociology, 587-830-6503, chene.redwood@ucalgary.ca

Supervisor:

Dr. Matt Patterson, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts, (403) 220-5037, matt.patterson@ucalgary.ca

Title of Project:

Labour Market Gatekeepers: Hiring Managers & Skilled Immigrants in Alberta, Canada, a Mixed-Method Study

Sponsor:

The Killam Trusts

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study (REB21-0874).

Participation is completely voluntary, and confidentiality will be protected to the extent that the law allows. There will be complete anonymity in the reporting and presentation of the data, results, and findings.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to understand the role that hiring managers are playing in the labour market integration of skilled immigrants to Canada. I seek to understand the general practice, policies, and considerations within organizations with respect to recruitment and selection of skilled immigrants in Alberta. What tools, strategies and processes do hire managers use to evaluate newcomers' credentials on the factors that have been deemed most important for employment eligibility in Canada? What factors have been deemed most important by hiring managers for newcomers' employment eligibility in Canada (i.e. language competency, skills, education and Canadian experience etc.) ? To do so, I am conducting interviews with hiring mangers in Alberta, Canada.

What Will I Be Asked To Do?

You will be asked to talk about your experiences as a hiring manager in Alberta. You will be asked questions about recruitment, assessment, and selection practices, how you evaluate the credentials of skilled immigrants, recruiting and assessing internationally trained workers and general experiences of hiring. The interview will be conducted online and should take about an hour. You may find some of the topics difficult to discuss, however information on where to find support will be provided if requested.

In order to focus on our discussion, I would like to audio record the interview. This would ensure that I am not concentrating on writing and not fully listening to what you are saying. Recording the interview would also help in maintaining the accuracy of information you are providing.

You do not have to participate in this study; your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time. You do not have to answer all of the questions, feel free to say that you do not wish to provide an answer for any question. If at any time during the interview you no longer wish to participate, tell me immediately and we will not continue. After the interview is completed, if you no longer want your interview to be included in the study contact me and any information you have provided will be deleted and/or destroyed.

What Type of Personal Information Will Be Collected?

No personal identifying information will be collected in this study, and all participants shall remain anonymous. You may choose or be assigned a pseudonym (false name) to sign the consent form.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to provide your city, gender, race, firm size, sector and occupation (no specifics on your employer will be asked).

If you agree to be audiotaped, my supervisor and I will be the only people with access to your data and the audio recording will never be used in the reporting or presentation of the data, results, and findings.

Please indicate if you are willing to be audio-taped and if I may quote you using your pseudonym. You may choose yes or no. If you choose no for either or both options, you are still able to participate in the study.

I grant permission to be audio-taped: Yes: ___ No: ___

I prefer to choose my own pseudonym: Yes: ___ No: ___

The pseudonym I choose for myself is: _____

You may quote me and use my pseudonym: Yes: ___ No: ___

Are there Risks or Benefits if I Participate?

The benefit to participating in this study is helping to create a better understanding of the practices, processes, and challenges of integrating skilled immigrants within the Canadian labour market. The findings of the study has the potential to improve employers' recruitment and hiring practices of skilled immigrants as well as help human resource professionals support diversity and inclusion initiatives within organizations. Also, the information from the study has the potential to improve the federal, provincial, and territorial supports and services for employers hiring and retaining skilled immigrants.

To avoid potential reputational risk, the identities of the participants will be kept confidential in any publicly available publications that result from this research. Participants may encounter discomfort when discussing hiring and immigrants. Your participation in the research is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. You do not have to answer all the questions, feel free to say that you do not wish to provide an answer for any question. Also, there are support options through Alberta Health Services that are available to Alberta residents, such as free counselling services.

What Happens to the Information I Provide?

A transcript will be made by me, Chene Redwood, of your recorded interview. This transcript will not contain any information that links the interview with you. Your name and the names of any people you mention will be deleted or replaced with pseudonyms in the transcript.

My supervisor and I will be the only people with access to the information you provide. You will remain completely anonymous and confidentiality will be protected to the extent that the law allows.

Participants are free to withdraw until June 30th, 2022, after data collection. If you withdraw from the study all information provided will be deleted and/or destroyed

No one except my supervisor and I will be allowed to hear the interview tape or view the notes taken during the interview. Only pseudonyms will be used in note-taking. Only group information will be summarized for any presentation or publication of results. Any notes or audio recordings taken are kept on a password-protected hard drive only accessible by my supervisor and me. The anonymous data will be stored for five years on a password-protected hard drive disk, at which time, it will be permanently erased.

Would you like to receive a summary of the study's results? Yes: ___ No: ___

If yes, please contact me by phone at (587)830 6503 or e-mail at chene.redwood@ucalgary.ca.

This study has been approved by the University of Calgary's Conjoint Faculty Research Ethics Board (REB21-0874).

Signatures

Your signature on this form indicates that 1) you understand to your satisfaction the information provided to you about your participation in this research project, and 2) you agree to participate in the research project.

In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from this research project at any time. You should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Participant's Name: (please print) _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Name: (please print) _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Questions/Concerns

If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact:

Chene Redwood, Department of Sociology/ Faculty of Arts
(587)830-6503, chene.redwood@ucalgary.ca and
Dr. Matt Patterson , Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts
(403)220-5037. matt.patterson@ucalgary.ca

If you have any concerns about the way you've been treated as a participant, please contact the Research Ethics Analyst, Research Services Office, University of Calgary at 403.220.6289 or 403.220.8640; email cfreb@ucalgary.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. The investigator has kept a copy of the consent form.

APPENDIX F: RECRUITMENT FLYER

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Participate in a study on hiring

All interviews are completely confidential.

What is the study about?

This study seeks to understand the hiring practices, policies, and considerations within organizations when evaluating skilled immigrant job candidates in Alberta, Canada.

You can participate if:

- You are/have been involved in recruiting and selecting employees.
- You have served on a hiring committee.

Why participate?

- Help improve employers' recruitment, assessment and selection processes of skilled immigrants.
- Share recommendations and strategies that may improve the labour market integration of skilled immigrants.

CONTACT

Chene Redwood Ph.D. (c)
Department of Sociology
chene.redwood@ucalgary.ca
587-830-6503

Principal Investigator: Dr. Matt Patterson
matt.patterson@ucalgary.ca

SIGN UP

SCAN ME

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this study (REB21-0874).