

A TALENT MANAGEMENT FUTURE FOR ECONOMIC IMMIGRATION IN CANADA: BUILDING  
ON BEST PRACTICE DIVERSITY/INCLUSION AND INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE  
TRAINING

by

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ABSTRACT

One of the key questions regarding the integration of economic immigrants into Canadian labour markets is the role that employers will play, especially given the forthcoming changes that will formalize Expressions of Interest (EOI) as intrinsic to the selection process. Immigrants are not a social or financial burden, but as is proven through self-reported hiring practices and projections of many industry-leading employers, a hugely important investment that adds layers of value to workforces in Canada. This enthusiasm to hire foreign-trained professionals is not matched by an enthusiasm to fund the development of their skills, particularly 'soft' skills such as cultural competency and teamwork, in a context that is alien to them. To explore the potential for expanding programs that optimize the performance of multicultural workplaces, address regional labour shortages with targeted immigration, and accelerate the role of talent management in the profile of human resources departments, this study is a demonstration of potential in Canada for a much more integrated, cross-sector, solution-focused economic immigration strategy.

Key Words: Diversity and Inclusion, Talent Management, Economic Immigration, Skills Training, Intercultural Competence

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## **Introduction**

The labour market performance of Canadian newcomers is a major issue, both for researchers and policy makers. At the Metropolis Conference 2014 Corinne Prince St-Amand, Director General of Integration at Citizenship and Immigration Canada, claimed that the issue of engaging employers is the number one immigration issue in Canada today. To address underemployment and the conundrum of skills mismatches, there is work to be done in closing the divide between what employers need and what they believe immigrants have to offer. This paper is intended as a contribution to that goal.

To address the employer issue, it is important for policy to reflect the interests and demands of the private sector in relation to labour, crucially, on the terms of the private sector itself. Employers need to understand that immigrants have the skills that will contribute to their bottom line on verifiable and, where possible, standardized terms. Programs already exist that offer diversity and inclusion (D&I) strategies, intercultural competency (ICC) training, and occupation-specific skills training for workers new to the Canadian labour market. It is important to demonstrate consensus between policy makers in government and employers that these options are valuable. It is useful to examine how organizations might measure the effectiveness of such programming, and how they evaluate the results, for the purpose of understanding different motivations and goals across sectors and how they may be approached. Key terms to this analysis are worth clarifying; skills and skills development are investments to be measured by the value they add to a given organization, talent is an asset of human capital that employers must recruit

and retain, and diversity in the workplace is a sound business policy not only the 'right thing to do'.

I hypothesize that goals of policy makers and employers as they develop strategies around immigration are separate but overlapping in that they all operate on a value chain that is centered on talent. ICC training and development is a missing piece that can strengthen both interest groups and unify them on the basis of a national standard.

### **Research Questions**

This paper focuses on the following questions: Is ICC considered in the talent management value chain in the Canadian private sector? How are Diversity and Inclusion Strategies used to pursue the goals of businesses in Canada? The underemployment of immigrants in Canada must be addressed by engaging with the needs of employers who are not connecting with immigrant workers, from the point of policy and programming. By assessing the way ICC and D&I Strategies are understood in the private sector as connected to economic success, a comparative analysis to immigration policies in the public sector can be used as a forecasting tool for the labour market outcomes of skilled immigrants. Put in that language, policy makers will have a tool to engage with employers on the issue of immigrant labour, and support the development of the types of programs that employers consider impactful. The purpose of this research is to contribute to the connection between immigration policy makers and employers by demonstrating and communicating the economic value of ICC and D&I Strategies, and recommend a Canadian standard for Intercultural Competency in the workplace. The following thesis guides this analysis; Canadian immigration is talent focused, with a strategy that emphasizes recruitment but

deemphasizes management, and existing D&I strategies and ICC programming can address that gap with accelerated investment from all stakeholders.

## **Conceptual Framework**

### **Theoretical Perspective**

This research will be based both on established theoretical positions as well as practiced institutional knowledge from areas such as business and workplace skills training, settlement, and Canadian Language Benchmark training. Building on the political economy theories of Reich and Thurow, Courchene (2001) proposed the following mission statement for Canada,

“Design a sustainable, socially inclusive and internationally competitive infrastructure that ensures equal opportunity for all Canadians to develop, to enhance, and to employ in Canada their skills and human capital, thereby enabling them to become full citizens in the information-era Canadian and global societies” (p. 154).

This paper will use theoretical approaches to analysis of Canada’s recent policy developments that explore neo-liberalism and examine the deregulation of immigrant-facing employment services by the federal government. Developing a human capital opportunity infrastructure in Canada should be considered a key component of federal policy towards immigrants, if underemployment and skills mismatches are to be seriously addressed. The decreasing presence of the federal government in social programming will not be considered ideologically discouraging in this study, but as an uncontestable reality. Courchene’s call to action must then be directed away from the federal government, and used as a target for practices in other sectors.



There is another theoretical position that should be considered in terms of all levels of policy and the concerns of businesses in Canada: replacement migration. An aging and declining population is poised to put deep economic strain on Canadian markets (TD Economics, 2013), as the working population will be outweighed by the non-working population public infrastructure will begin failing due a decreasing tax base (PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, 2008). Population decline is likely to introduce a whole range of compound economic and social challenges, such as strain on social security and health services, change in public health and resource distribution, and an unmanageable increase of dependence on pension income (Saczuk, 2013). With the deregulation of services occurring as the needs of communities and markets for skills development and employment-oriented services increase, communication, collaboration, and an understanding of shared interests across sectors are more vital than ever. This study assumes population decline to be a motivating force across sectors for the improvement of labour market outcomes of immigrants, and that the economic and social forecasts speaking to the impact of unmitigated population decline are disastrous enough to encourage action.

### **Institutional Knowledge**

Some areas of Canada are already dealing with declining population growth, and are turning to immigration and settlement in hopes of a solution (Theriault and Haan, 2012; Depner, 2012). In other areas, economic growth is happening too fast for labour to keep up with demand, and once again, immigration and settlement are turned to as an immediate relief on the demand for labour (Rai, 2013; Lodermeier, 2012). Unfortunately, settlement and retention are not always private sector priorities. As Alboim and Cohle (2012)

recognize, the increasing dependence of companies on the Temporary Skilled Worker Program has led that immigration class to grow rapidly in Canada, while Family Sponsors, Refugees, and Federal Skilled Workers numbers decline. This troubling trend contributes to Courchene's concern (2001), that global-scale labour practices and increasingly mobile capital are a threat to social cohesion in Canada, as the middle class loses ground to precarious, international labour and social programs and institutions lose the economic support of a healthy domestic labour force (2001).

Since these issues do not affect all areas of Canada equally, the practical analysis of this study will be informed by practices and policies from specific regions in Canada as well as sectors within the economy. Some of these are examples of where the demand for skilled labour is particularly high, or populations are dangerously low. Others are examples of planning ahead for a changing labour force. Best practices are especially rich in sub-federal programs and organizations, such as the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program (MPNP) or Immigrant Employment Councils (IECs), and in branches of the private sector such as HR Strategy and Talent Management. Beyond these examples a larger issue stands to impact the future of immigrant labour market outcomes; the introduction in 2015 of a new federal system for FSWs under an EOI model, known as 'Express Entry' (Government of Canada, 2014). Fundamental to this study is the level of congruence of the new federal model with existing best practice, and what it means for regions and sectors that depend on an increasingly effective system for the increase and optimization of immigrant talent.

## **Methodology**

While this research largely takes the form of an inductive policy analysis, it should

be revealed that the method is largely influenced by strategic forecasting. Within Canada, anxiety is strong in the short term regarding economic 'jobless recovery' and 'skills mismatch' (Deloitte, 2014; Government of Canada, 2013; Cryne, 2014), but these are symptoms of wider-reaching trends over the long-term. The two influences on projections and strategies for any informed stakeholder are demographic trends and technological development. When discussing policies that affect and will effect employment, my method accounts for the progressive decline of Canada's working population, particularly as it will have effects that vary across regions, making the very idea of a unified Canadian labour market and strategy appear as a moving target. The impact of technology is also troubling when considering labour. Part of the concern is that technological progress continually reorganizes and specializes labour demand, another part is that it increases the mobility of capital and liberates industry stakeholders from their dependence on public sector labour regulators and in many cases labour itself. In part, as this paper analyses discourse and policy, there is always a need to consider how decisions made now, and in recent history, will respond to demographic change and technological impacts on labour that reasonable forecasts predict.

The analysis presented here will depend upon several positivist assumptions regarding the function and goals of a range of policies. Establishing these will allow a comparative analysis of the general progression over the past fifteen years of how immigrants in Canada's labour market are institutionally approached by key stakeholders in the federal government, sub-federal governments, and the private sector. It will be important to present certain goals as fundamental to development in each of these theaters, while not suggesting the absence of nuance, in order to establish where the different

sectors compete and where they strive for compatible ends. From this I will present the theory, grounded in the heuristic analysis of practices that suggest common and uncommon positivities across sectors, that although each stakeholder is demonstrably working towards achieving compatible goals there is a particular institutional responsibility being left vacant by all participating forces; and that is a standardized, hard-target intercultural competency development program aimed at adding value to the labour market performance of immigrants and the market performance of their employers.

The theoretical background that positions this theory is somewhat more broad and conceptual, though I would argue not abstract. The context of this development, I claim, is the historical period in Canada in which the established (though in some ways imaginary) industrial state best described by Galbriath (1966) is incrementally giving way to the much reduced post-industrial state that Courchene (2001) describes within the influence of a Global Information/Knowledge Revolution. There are a series of key definitions and concepts related to this theoretical background that should be addressed.

Neo-liberalism is an often discussed influence on Canadian policy in the current era, though the term is very pliant across diverging arguments. This paper is largely interested in neo-liberalism in the sense that Courchene (2001) describes, as a global force that supersedes and influences central state authority, largely in that it downloads and uploads institutional authority away from the central government. In the context of immigration, this means the increase of private sector mechanisms in influencing the selection process, but also the increased importance of regions (with their specific labour market and demographic centers of gravity) on the selection *and* institutional settlement of immigrants.

Another important conceptual theme is skills. Courchene refers to skills in terms of

human capital, the new value metric for labour in a post-industrial economy. Courchene discusses skills as the factor that Canada must turn to as a safeguard for the middle class now that labour competition is global. Skills also play an important role in the relationship between labour and capital, as hiring practices have become very focused on specific value chains (<http://www.humanresourcesiq.com/talent-management/articles/talent-management-the-people-value-chain/>), involving highly technical skills, communication skills, cultural competencies, leadership, experience and qualifications, and sometimes the largely intangible concept of organizational 'fit'. This revolution in human resources strategy is not only impacting immigrant employment, but the entire Canadian labour market, as unemployment and job vacancies paradoxically expand together in a 'skills mismatch'. Human capital, the long hallmark of Canada's successful economic immigration 'points' system, has taken its place at the center of HR strategy and in many ways economic strategy, as 'talent'. Talent is the new economic question for Canadian businesses (Dobson, 2014; Deloitte, 2014), and the role that the immigration system plays in finding and developing talent will be important.

The importance of immigration in the search for talent is connected to the unsettling concept of growth. Canada's native born population is not growing, but economic growth is still desirable. It is in this respect that federal and provincial concerns are at least in sync. The federal concern is primarily in ensuring that growth industries have fast access to the talent they need, but the demographic crunch forecasted for Canada has not yet influenced their policies. Provinces also must provide fast access to talent, particularly because some labour markets are outgrowing populations while others are shrinking quickly enough that regional economies cannot survive. Many regional policies, however, are equally concerned

with demographic and social decline as they are with economic decline, and for this reason fast access to talent is not enough. Retention of talent is very important, and even beyond that, retention and social cohesion of community populations in general.

The final concept that should be established, and in some ways one that connects the others, is Diversity. Businesses in Canada have learned, through branding and compliance with multicultural regulations, that hiring immigrants is the 'right thing' to do, but this has not translated into positive labour market outcomes for skilled immigrants in Canada. Now, diversity is not only socially responsible but is recognized as good business (Bernier, 2014b), especially with the successes made by large employers and industry leaders in improving performance outcomes by developing more inclusive human resource policies. This mirrors regional efforts to improve diversity and welcoming in their communities and business regulations, and most importantly has led to the growth of many satellite programs and even growth industries in consulting and education/training sectors. Diversity practices have heuristically created the beginnings of workplace intercultural competency training at an institutional level, by virtue of market demand.

The missing element, I will argue, is cross-sector standards and dialogue. Unlike other critics of neo-liberal policy, there is one area where I will argue that it has a promising influence. While the federal government retreats from settlement and immigrant employment services, ultimately becoming a talent recruiter through the new Express Entry EOI system, it leaves a funding and leadership vacuum in the non-profit and sub-federal sectors. The arrival of immigrant talent will need to be managed, and in the post-industrial state this paper argues that a collaborative effort between private sector and regional demand is poised to create a high-performance growth sector of immigrant talent

management and development. Existing diversity practices in private and sub-federal institutions have heuristically created a scalable, practical foundation for intercultural competency development models that can reform workplaces and communities to be more inclusive and optimize immigrant labour market performance. The real power to implement this new talent management strategy is not federal authority, it lies in the intersection between regional economic strategy, HR strategy, talent management, and talent itself.

## **Review of the Literature**

Fundamentally, this project is about the labour market performance of immigrants. It is necessary to establish a review of the relevant perspectives on the connection between immigrants and the labour market in Canada, and the implications stated in their findings. Not only is this important to show the increasing relevance of workplace skills development to employers of immigrants, but it should demonstrate to policy makers that this issue is at the crux of Canada's long-term economic future. The main focus of these issues is on immigrants who enter through the Federal Skilled Workers Program, as economic Provincial Nominees, or are in Canada as international students. A more complete review would also address Family Class migrants, Refugees, and Business Class migrants.

Javdani, Jacks, and Pendakur (2012) provide a review of literature that establishes the broad claim that immigrants are key to Canada's economy and labour market policy. 'The literature on economics of immigration, including studies reviewed in this report, has mainly focused on analyses of two main questions: How do immigrants fare in the host country labour market? And what effects do immigrants have on the host country labour

market?’ (Javdani et al., p. 6). In the literature, relative employment earnings (to Canadian-born) are the main measure of labour market performance. As an example of the more optimistic end of the general trends, recent male immigrants enter the labour market at low-wage extremes, advance over time, but a glass ceiling prevents their entrance into high-wage areas. Labour market outcomes are perceived as deteriorating, causes are hotly debated, largely in terms of whether immigrant human capital is inferior or only perceived to be so by discriminatory employer values.

Declining labour market performance could call into question immigration as a way to boost economic growth with high-skilled workers, but the appropriate response is difficult to guess, as the problem is so multi-faceted. While Javdani and colleagues (2012) question whether immigrants are an appropriate tonic for Canada’s economic future, a challenge to my position, they provide a solid overview of current perspectives to start from and identify key labour market concerns in detail.

Several challenges have extended across the Canadian labour market, creating general malaise around the idea of a ‘skills mismatch’ caused by entrenched bad practices. Simon (2013) comprehensively criticizes inaction across employment and skills development areas, notably claiming that Canada is desperately weak at generating reliable labour market information (LMI), and even acting on what data does exist. This is a question of institutional performance, and its impact on the labour market performance of immigrants has been well documented (Sakamoto et al, 2013; Girard and Bauder, 2005; Schwartz, 2012; Weiner, 2008). Concurring with Simon, TD Economics (2013) addressed education and both public and private sector training as needing radical reform to combat the skills shortage, though they characterize the crisis as a matter of forecast and



speculation. One suggestion from their report points to professional development training as one key to ensuring that Canadian businesses attract employees to their vacancies,

“Employers often view the labour market as a public good. However, the direction of training expenditure is not just a private-sector development, as public sector training has also fallen short ... Language training for immigrants and on-the-job training for people drawn from non-traditional labour pools will be crucial for boosting labour force participation. However, firms investing in human capital development can be risky due to the frequent turnover of workers, notably in the echo and Millennial generation. Obviously, employers who appeal better to Millennials, while staying profitable, will attract these workers. However, in aggregate, poaching is a zero-sum game.” (TD Economics, 2013, p.38)

TD Economics also point to a change in public sector attitudes to address the issue, as the Canada Job Grant evinces. Another relevant measure is the continual need for more action of foreign credential recognition improvements, with enthusiastic anticipation of the more EOI-focused FSWP system.

Quinitini (2014) identifies another level of mismatch, below the actual disparity between job vacancies and the underemployed. Skills proficiency and skills use are drastically disjointed in many Canadian workplaces, leaving talent underutilized. Part of the resulting issue is that investment in professional development by the individual can yield low return on wages, and investment in skilled labour by employers can yield sub-optimal return. The detail of this study is extensive and shows that skills mismatch is not only about tying individuals to positions but about activating their competencies in the workplace. Workplaces that fail to account for structural/cultural limitations on high-proficiency employees such as learning-at-work, influencing, and co-operation waste the human capital that could be available to them, and would be well served to invest in upgrading some generic skills through workplace programming in such individuals.

Quinitini's assessment suggests that certain skills become activated only when packaged with other skills in the same individual, or in a workplace that invests in, fosters,

and rewards the right skills combinations. McMahon's study (2010) connects cultural competencies to firm performance in an integrated ten year study accounting not only for balance sheet performance, but returns on assets in the workforce and a range of other variables. Several key findings emerge. Bio-demographic diversity is the most recognizable, but the most significant impact on performance is cognitive and task-related diversity (p. 44), which is profoundly influenced by culture. It was also shown that the impact of diversity is amplified in situations with more interpersonal interactivity. "Diversity research has also recognized the importance of organizational culture in enabling firm performance" (p. 44). This study leads the way in an important field of research for the private sector, and the following statement is the instructive take away,

"The instrumental implications of workplace diversity are doubtless important to businesses, and therefore diversity needs to be managed. In doing so, one could be "reactive" to deal with the phenomenon of diversity. A better approach might be to be "proactive" in leveraging diversity to achieve superior business performance. However, it is important to recognize that diversity is a fact of life in today's workplace. It is a reality as much as sustainability and achieving energy efficiency are in the 21<sup>st</sup> century" (2010, p. 47).

Norris et al (2007) review tools and techniques in ICC development training and assess their impact on the performance of individuals in increasing proficiency and use of other skill sets. ICC addresses the aforementioned issue of organizational culture, in other words, an effect ICC program can create the right environment to optimize international talent, rather than squander valuable human capital. Norris et al., like McMahon, represents what may soon be a very significant field of study, as an early example of research on the potential of ICC programming as a commercial product for organizations with intercultural talent management needs.

Moving beyond the 'skills mismatch' issue, there is a range of literature relevant to the attitudes and policies across sectors and stakeholders in Canada's immigration system.

Flynn and Bauder (2013) claim that Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) views Expression of Interest (EOI) statements from direct employers of immigrants as an efficient mechanism for linking migrants to labour market needs. Part of the appeal is also to get them 'in the labour market faster than existing immigration streams' (p. 12). Giving employers greater discretion on immigrant selection represents a general deepening of neoliberal policy. Employers also exert regional influence on policy, particularly in areas of Canada where populations fail to meet labour market demands. The main criticism of regionalization is that it could be self-defeating if services are too poor to retain immigrants. This paper criticizes the increasing influence of neo-liberal policy on labour market integration, but in doing so demonstrates how significantly this new direction has taken root and is continuing to build, meaning that employer concerns and demands are an important influence on policy.

On the opposite side of this discussion, EOI-focused immigration is the key to increasing access and speed of process for employers who see immigrants as an answer to skills shortages. Holmes, Hjartarson, and McGuire (2014) present both the enthusiasm and concerns from the employer perspective regarding upcoming changes that will strengthen the influence of EOIs. Drolet, Sampson, and Burstein (2014) also address the employer perspective on this issue with a review of literature anticipating upcoming changes, raising concern that a gap has been left in the research detailing the specific role of employers under the new system, which will be faster but not necessarily more solution-focused. As this study illustrates, the literature does not represent an employer-facing investment scheme in settlement, development, and retention of immigrant talent; and even with its focus on improved recruitment it leaves the role of the employer and the business

argument for increased investment in immigrant talent undefined. This means that incentives to hire are not clear enough, services related to immigrant talent acquisition are not employer-friendly or accessible as single-point-of-service, tools and resources facing employer targets (hiring, training, retention) are not available, and employers are not at the table with policy makers discussing solutions to these questions (p. 29-30).

Lodermeier (2012) describes how the skills shortage situation in Alberta has turned to immigrants in hopes of a direct workforce solution, and the need for workforce development services is a barrier to targets. The most particular demand for services is in smaller communities where even basic settlement services are insufficient for the needs of both immigrants and their employers, who face an issue of retention. Participants in the study (including immigrants, local administrators, and employers) strongly support initiatives to develop workplace skills for immigrants, and cooperative relationships between communities and industries have been the most effective way of overcoming barriers to this goal. Lodermeier concludes that ICC programs are widely viewed by the private sector as value-added investments and employers are calling for government subsidies in that area.

Girard and Bauder (2005) identify two major structural issues impacting labour market outcomes of immigrants. Small communities have higher labour market participation and wage outcomes than 'gateway' cities, but licensing processes that devalue immigrant human capital force settlement back to 'gateway' cities because it is easier to find survival jobs there. The major losers in this study are, leaving aside the immigrants themselves whose hopes for high-wage employment are frustrated, the economies of smaller immigrant-receiving communities who experience a type of brain-

drain as potential high-skilled workers relocate to 'gateway' cities where they can find low-wage, informal work to survive. McIsaac (2003), criticizes 'dispersion strategy' as a solution to this in immigration policy. Dispersion relies on coercion by tying temporary workers to regional economies through work permits that do not allow relocation. Instead, McIsaac argues, regions with population and labour deficits might adopt policies that strengthen regional economies through horizontal partnerships across sectors. This is a practice that can focus on retention goals, but integrates them into a larger strategy of regional economic strength, partnerships, and development.

Rai (2013) demonstrates that information about the Canadian labour market is misleading, unreliable, or inaccessible for economic immigrants. This problem is most keenly felt when the federal government is primarily responsible for producing and delivering the information. With regard to services that are aimed at minimizing the negative impacts of credential recognition policy, the best practices seem to involve simplifying information access to be accessible at single-points-of-contact, and involving local level stakeholders in developing policy and delivering services. Concerns about credential recognition barriers are widely corroborated across the literature (Schwartz, 2012; Reitz, 2005).

Rai indicates that provincial and municipal level success has been gained through cooperation between stakeholders, communities, and policy makers in simplifying the connections between immigrants and jobs. In this case, employment services and settlement services are more tightly connected to ensure that immigrants have access to a single-point-of-entry when seeking assistance with economic and social integration.

Like Girard and Bauder, Walker (2006) approached the question of immigrants in Canada's labour market with concerns of underutilization, economic marginalization, and general deskilling. In a very comprehensive review of literature on the subject from sources at different levels of government, policy research and journals, public forums, professional, community, and education institutions a picture emerges of labour market integration being treated with a high level of focus on skilled immigrants. The initiatives are shown to be continually and increasingly developed. Several gaps in the research and existing initiatives are revealed, showing that the momentum of these developments should be deployed in certain programming areas to make outcomes more effective. The following is an excellent outline of what would ideally characterize the next phase, "re-examining issues and operating assumptions; expanding cultural literacy, and communication training and mentoring services; addressing common barriers across different occupations; expanding services outside metropolitan areas; creating rural-urban labour market linkages; and bringing more immigrant integration programs into the workplace" (Walker, 2006, p. 3). All of these recommendations will be reinforced in my study.

The literature reviewed above corresponds to the objectives of my paper in the attention to immigration as a labour market issue, the demonstration of increased cross-sector cooperation to improve skilled immigrants' labour market performance and basic human capital capabilities, and the recognition of barriers across markets that can only be addressed by partnerships between stakeholders in different sectors. Though neo-liberal policies are often problematized, they are viewed as the reality of Canada's current political and economic paradigm, and at the root of any successful policy and practice is a realistic understanding of neo-liberal priorities and motivators.

Bauder (2006) suggests that there is more to the immigration/labour market dynamic than finding jobs for immigrants. The nature of work, the access to professional and employment development, and the long-term outcomes relating to stable employment and the optimization of skills deserve more attention. It is these factors that will ultimately have the greater impact; that of workers on the labour market, rather than the individual impact of a labour market on workers. Unskilled, low-wage labour is normalized by the underuse of immigrant talent, making low talent-optimization the standard. In other words, it is in the interest of Canada's overall labour market to pursue programs that ensure employers mobilize the talent of their immigrant employees, rather than fall short of top performance due to the many reasons immigrants are underemployed in Canada. The impact of deskilling, underperformance, and survival jobs among immigrants in the workforce will reproduce itself across the general Canadian economy.

Colleges Ontario (2008; 2009) and the Canadian Labour and Business Centre (2004) each provide useful background on the types of workplace specific services for immigrant skills training already practiced or in development. The general importance of immigration to the Canadian labour market expressed in these reflects the general themes already presented here. The details, however, of private sector involvement in program development and the increasing demand should add credence to the argument that these services are becoming essential and are beginning to demand attention to supply. Also relevant here are provincial bridging programs such as MCIs commitment of funding in Ontario (Canadian Newcomer Magazine, 2014), often linked to service delivery in non-profit agencies and education institutions.

LaRoche (2002) represents a well-developed, refined model for the delivery of programming aimed at developing intercultural competency in the workplace and articulating diversity into business strategy. As manager of a consulting firm in ICC and D&I (Multicultural Business Solutions), LaRoche joins others such as Michael Bach of Deloitte, Guillaume Dias (Schulich Executive Education Centre), the Intercultural Development Index, Joe Gerstandt at Venn Market Strategies, and others in a growing but infantile discipline of employer-facing strategy and consulting on how to optimize the talent of a diverse workforce.

As presented above, Canadian institutions are struggling with questions of how skilled immigrants can be made to reach optimal labour market potential, and private sector involvement in this area is on the rise. As such, the questions of what methods are being used to apply and evaluate ICC and D&I programs and how such initiatives appeal to their core interests are important ones for coordinating policies and standards across organizations and sectors.

A final area of concern in the literature is population decline and the incorporation of the concept of replacement migration into the immigration and settlement policies of Canada, mainly at regional levels. This is an important focus for my study because it demonstrates a very tangible shared interest for the public and private sector regarding the future of skilled labour in Canada. Regions with declining population growth have focused on recruitment and retention of immigrants, which has meant the necessary improvement of all settlement services, particularly those that impact quality of life (Theriault and Haan, 2012; Depner, 2012). Largely, services of this kind prioritize the attainability of high wage employment, and include language and skills training, network facilitation, quality



education, mentoring, and other measures that go beyond basic services. Burstein (2007) argues that regional governments can only salvage declining economies by reaching out to local stakeholders, in the community and the market, with policies that reward D&I strategies and promote the holistic economic and social integration of newcomers. This means a job market without segmented opportunity, in effect, an environment that encourages the human capital development of newcomers.

Replacement migration as a concept is itself somewhat suspicious, and the theoretical literature in Canada has here an important gap. Kupizewski (2013) offers an analysis of the theory in the European context, critiquing its short history as a 'silver bullet' response to population decline alongside forecasts about fertility, mortality, and labour force participation. Sazcuk (2013) provides a core critique, revealing that replacement migration in Europe is provably insufficient as a solution to the coming population and labour force crisis. However, there is room in immigration policy for the replacement concept. Social cohesion is precarious in aging demographics, and the influx of newcomers should be treated with conscious attention to social integration, meaning quality jobs and access to professional development services that improve opportunities.

PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (2008) forecasted that Eastern Canada has public infrastructure concerns to prepare for with respect to population aging. A majority of the population that depends on income from sources that are not employment based, while simultaneously depending on health services at an unprecedented level, will represent a dangerous strain on public infrastructure, both physical and institutional. That replacement migration has been adopted as a serious concern in Canadian sectors is doubtless, appearing in literature from the Canadian Council of Chief Executives (2009, Preparing Now

for the Labour Needs of Tomorrow), TD Economics (2013), and Deloitte (Canada 2025, 2014).

The above review all bears out the forecasts of Courchene (2001). Canada must adapt to the current paradigm, which is a post-industrial ‘information-era’ economy. In this era, the state is less aggressive about regulation, and the public sector is shrinking. Capital is globally mobile, and no longer dependent on labour in the traditional forms of industrial workforce production. Value in this type of economy is only added by skills, technical and cultural, that correspond to a post-industrial production model in the form of human capital. It is in this way that Canadian immigration policy and private sector interests can collaborate to build, improve, and institutionalize programs that improve the human capital of newcomers.

Courchene’s call to action may not be apparent in the neo-liberal policies of the federal government that have retreated from service delivery, but the involvement of the private sector in funding programs with Colleges Ontario, mentoring and networking in eastern Canada, demanding subsidies and other support for ICC training in Alberta, and adapting diversity policies in British Colombia, are all demonstrated in the literature above. This study will also provide analysis of best practices from Human Resources (HR) Strategy and Talent Management. This bears out the value of human capital in the labour market, and the crucial role it plays in the economic and social integration of newcomers. The motivation of securing a healthy labour market for the future that can play a role in addressing population aging is established across sectors, and the development of skills has become a core programming concern for many immigrant service providers and employers. All of this validates Courchene’s astute assessments about the value of human capital now

and in the future. Building on this evidence this study will posit hard targets shared across sectors, and deepen the discursive validity of human capital development for newcomer employees as a value-added investment. It will link ICC and D&I programming to improved economic outcomes, and support the expansion and standardization of successful models.

What follows is an illustrated presentation of Canada's immigration system in an informal sense, as stakeholders in different sectors are deeply active yet not necessarily in formal communication or collaboration. The right column expresses what, after a literature analysis, appears to be the goal of each sector or the lens through which each sector applies its influence and needs. If we understand these as independent positivities, the whole immigration system is then illustrated by the combination of these distinct parts. What is common to all, and what strategy do their combined efforts generate? The formula at the bottom of the chart is intended as a simple summary of the current and future Canadian immigration strategy as represented by the needs of its stakeholders.

**Table outlining summative policy positions:**

Federal Policies			
<b>Neo-liberal;</b> deregulation and funding cuts, regionalization, private sector influence.	<b>Upskilling;</b> scaled-up proportions of high-skilled and economic migrants in general, CEC (combined with increased pressures on Family and Humanitarian Class immigrant streams not to be discussed here).	<b>Combating Skills Shortages:</b> Streamlining credential recognition, use of LMOs, Occupation Classifications, EOIs to target the selection process at in-demand labour needs.	<b>Fast Labour Market Relief:</b> Selection targets high skills and labour needs, not adaptable human capital. The new system is about meeting immediate needs with manpower.
Sub-Federal Policies			
<b>Regionalism;</b> lack of reliable federal funding has turned settlement towards alternative funding models, outreach to employer partners, and excessive use of TFWP. Skills priorities are focused on the labour needs of specific regions, including low-skilled positions.	<b>Welcoming;</b> in areas with demographic needs, 'whole-of-society' initiatives combat discrimination, improve settlement services, ensure labour equity, and build cohesive cross-cultural communities.	<b>Skills and Social Services:</b> The provinces have devoted more attention to developing the skills of newcomer employees in their regions by connecting public services to employment outcomes where possible.	<b>Growth:</b> The leading PNPs are those that require immigration to combat decline, they are aggressive about funding and policy partnerships, but will not compromise on the importance of programming with a social focus, particularly on improving labour market opportunities and performance rather than selecting for it.
Private Sector Policies			
<b>Open talent;</b> Canadian employers are generally eager to gain access to global talent through immigration or temporary immigration.	<b>Addressing shortages;</b> Canada is dealing with a skills mismatch across most growth sectors, making employers more desperate to hire immigrants. Credential recognition and fast processing are top priorities.	<b>Diversity and Inclusion;</b> the private sector has moved beyond the equal rights mandate of the 'Multiculturalism Policy' to regard cultural diversity as adding value through talent and market expansion	<b>Profitable Diversity:</b> Large companies forecast increase in culturally diverse workforces while appreciating the importance of intercultural competency in workplace culture related to optimal performance in the marketplace.

**The Strategy Map: Fast Labour Market Relief + Growth + Profitable Diversity = Talent Focused Migration**

### **Analysis**

I have described each sector as having a distinct theme for policy targets, expressed as an objective positivity. Inductively, I envision what these apparently compatible yet distinct forces aim to achieve if understood as a unified system, and the hypothesis generated from this is that Canada is a country that operates with a Talent Focused immigration system. The value of this hypothesis to policy and practice is that Talent Management is a clear HR strategy, and if the immigration system's model is compared against the Talent Management model, it is possible to see which areas are still in need of institutional development. The recommendation that this analysis then generates is that to achieve a more effective Talent Management Strategy for immigration, Canada should build on existing ICC and D&I programs by developing national standards, establish a clear a value chain model for both immigrants and employers, and establish metrics for evaluating the return on investments in immigrant talent.

The Fast Labour Market Relief model espoused by federal policy has come to the point of introducing the Express Entry Model on January 2015. This sees the CIC setting itself up as a talent recruiter for Canadian businesses by doubling down on the importance of LMOs and EOIs, eliminating the "first come first serve" admission system and replacing it with a talent pool, and promising faster processing. Regions are promised faster processing for Express Entry stream applications for permanent residency, hoping to ease their dependence on TFWs. Employers are enthusiastic about this prospect, and hope to be brought into policy discussions for consultation as many successful provincial policies have done in the past. The following breakdown of the above trends offers a clearer understanding of the Talent Focused Migration hypothesis.

## **Federal Analysis**

Many of the debates around immigration policy in Canada today, motivated as they are increasingly by private sector concerns, are grounded in a single process that can be recognized throughout civil society. The institutions that have defined the developed world since taking root after the Industrial Revolution are deteriorating and losing ground to a new set of principles. Courchene presents the motivating force behind this change as the Global knowledge/Information Revolution (GIR), which is dismantling the structural foundations of the industrial (he sometimes refers to as Fordist) paradigm (2001).

First, the nation-state as a central policy instrument is under radical transition. GIR transforms governments because 'powers are being transferred upward, downward, and outward from central governments of nation-states' (p. 6). Economic space is now integrated completely at a supranational level, while privatized services devolve powers from states to local markets and subsidiary partnerships empower provincial and municipal governments with more freedom to control regulation. While not yet irrelevant, the nation-state is no longer a suitable policy instrument for a world in which centralized economic localities interact at high-speed within a completely global market interface. The concept is often referred to under the blanket statement of neo-liberalism, but from the perspective of paradigm shift, it appears as much as an adaptation strategy.

Also, physical capital is losing importance and human capital is gaining importance (Courchene, 2001). Pre-GIR economies privileged industrially developed nations because, with markets that were relatively closed, domestic consumption was necessary to turn production into profit, and for that high wages were important (p.102). With a completely integrated global economic space, domestic consumption loses its importance to the

business elite, as does the maintenance of a high wage economy within territorial boundaries. High wage labour now has no protective buffer against the reserve army of 'floating' labour that works to drive down wages and work standards in developed countries. What supports wage demands in a global market is not territorial boundaries or industrial production. Technical skills and networks, human capital, is what delineates value in the global labour market.

Courchene frames these issues largely as questions of instrumentality (2001, p. 104). The Canadian standard of a developed economy has lost its institutional protections. Alboim and Cohle (2012) accuse fast-relief labour motivations in immigration of short-sightedness, and articulate very clearly where the development of recent policy in Canada has arrived. Their major concern is that short-term policies geared at low-cost economic relief are counter-productive to building social cohesion in Canada. The return of guestwork as a prominent federal strategy, in particular, appeals to the most simplistic interpretations of industrial era capitalism. Precisely because the earmarks of current times are so different to the industrial era, with small rather than large scale production and a population that is stagnating rather than growing, new strategies are needed.

A certain tension exists in neoliberal regimes between permissibility and regulation (Menz, 2009). Often it seems that regulation is tightening in some areas while simultaneously loosening in others. This is what Courchene identifies as 'glocalization', or decentralization (2011, p. 6).

"The neoliberalized state does not abandon migration control. Migrants are desirable in principle so long as they are perceived as useful human resources, while barriers are erected against the unsolicited entry of "undesirables"" (Menz, 2009, p. 316).

In the European context, Menz refers to Germany and the U.K. as examples where private employers influence migration policy, but Canada could easily be described the same way when one considers Provincial Nominees, Labour Market Opinions (LMOs), and even the Canadian Experience Class (CEC), and EOIs.

In some ways, the involvement of market interest in immigration represents a weakening of state sovereignty, but in practical terms this is balanced by immigration policies that reassert the power of the federal state. The insertion of increased federal control over funding strategies for non-profit immigrant services is one type of *neo-liberal* regulation (OCASI Discussion Paper, p. 3), manifested for example in the decision not to renew the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA) partnership with Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI), that was institutionally establishing devolved settlement-service responsibilities to include more input from the province and local providers. Instead of such non-profit sector oriented partnerships, the federal government appears more comfortable with Provincial Nominee Programs (PNPs), perhaps not surprisingly, as their focus is on economic selectivity based on labour market predictions rather than engagement with the non-profit sector (Alboim and Cohle, 2012). The threat of these trends is that the focus on recruiting fast, sometimes expendable labour does damage to programs and policies that support retention, mainly in the settlement sector.

Menz, somewhat oddly, seems to put the burden of responsibility for increased economic immigration based on low-wage, low-skill employment demands on the working class in the developed world who are not interested in low-tier jobs (2009, p. 323). If this is true, then the accommodation by the neoliberal state to the needs of employers can hardly be considered irresponsible. When considering a future defined by an aging and declining



population, however, the associated wage competition that this practice engenders is a major step in the wrong direction. What the state failed to do in turning to guestwork for the benefit of employers is uphold labour standards as defined by the industrial era middle-class, and institutions such as labour unions, public education, and minimum wage. It is possible to claim that this capitulation of the state was not caused by a low supply of workers for low quality jobs, but by the failure of the state to maintain the integrity of middle-class institutions as industrial production began to disappear from the developed world.

The FSWP continues to operate on the point system, which strongly favours highly skilled immigrants, who often find their skills devalued by employers and regulators in Canada (Girard and Bauder, 2005; Schwartz, 2012; Alboim and McIsaac, 2009). The federal failure here is allowing human capital to go to waste as programs that develop potential were downscaled in favour of economic immigrants with high technical skills, defined as job-ready. 'Best and brightest'-focused point system evaluations are a misallocation of the human capital model. Federal regulations have recently used the National Occupational Classification list (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 2011) to screen for specific labour market needs, thus rearranging the human capital model as a filter that values in-demand technical skills over generic transferable skills.

As Bauder (2006) claims somewhat singularly, the real impact of a system that fails to integrate immigrants into the labour market by ensuring employment that optimizes top talent is less crucially about poor employment outcomes, but rather about a labour market that only grows in low-skilled sectors and demands the erosion of middle-class labour relations and conditions. The screening process that values occupational demand above

other key concerns is less flexible and future-proof than one that assumes the development of competencies during the integration process.

It will take time for the federal government to realize that occupational screening may be sensible from the macro-management view, but at the local level communities and governments place higher value on investing in the potential of immigrants. The 'best and brightest' high-skilled immigrants found that federal macro-LMI providers overestimated their labour market worth, and the federal government was not investing in their success by providing settlement services to keep them from falling below the poverty line (Rai, 2013). Unfortunately, by deregulating the human capital system to be more responsive to EOIs and LMOs, the federal government has become positioned away from settlement and development, with the selection process completely devoted to the values of fast, occupation-specific immigration requiring minimum support in economic or social integration.

### **Sub-Federal Analysis**

From 1998 until present, provincial nominee programs (PNPs) have deviated from the more centralized national agenda that has defined selection policy through the point system. Unlike the Economic Class Immigrants (ECIs), who are screened through the point system and its human capital/ high skill priorities, provincial nominees are often selected to address labour needs in low skilled fields. In Manitoba, Nominees are recorded to earn 39% higher wages than ECIs (Pandey and Townshend, 2011, p. 10). This successful outcome comes from thinking beyond the confining high-skills priorities of the FSWP and focusing rather on the needs of particular regional labour requirements.

A key aspect of the MPNP is that it is distinctly less focused on highly skilled immigrants than federal programs are. Working to some extent against the 'best and brightest' regime, Manitoba's nominees were less likely than federal ECIs to have a university degree (Carter et al, 2010), which suggests either more youth, or a prevalence of low- and medium-skilled job opportunities, or a combination of both. In this model, there is a value chain that prioritizes qualities beyond high technical competencies, understanding rather that growth of populations and low-skilled jobs are economically advantageous, at least in the short-term. But there is a component of the value chain that looks beyond immediate employment.

The MPNP has worked with a number of stakeholders to develop innovative programs providing settlement services, such as language development and training niche populations such as seniors and single mothers (Carter et al., 2010). The Community (now defunct) and Family Support immigration streams are evidence that Manitoba views its nominees as an opportunity to address population decline through a focus on developing the quality of integration and the strength of community, and therefor increasing retention. It also means that the province does not view economic productivity as the only measure of successful integration, and suggests that immigration targets are connected to strong communities that grow and build increasingly solid connections within the province.

The Carter study (2010) revealed that Manitoba nominees became progressively integrated into their communities over the five-year period following arrival. Cultural ties and community activity was a category that the interviews addressed, revealing cross-cultural connections are developed in Manitoba's cities and towns, unlike the "ethnic enclave" concept common in large cities. Language skills also yielded a positive result, with

90% of those who had lived in Manitoba for three years having improved (2010). These are important metrics on the value of investing in immigrant success through a whole-of-society approach.

In the study, 98 of 100 principal applicants received some type of settlement assistance. These go beyond basic services, as the following illustrates,

“The services received by the highest proportion of provincial nominees included community orientation, language training, help in finding a job or housing, and help with the banking system. At least 70 percent of the arrivals received such services. Help with job training, translation, children's schooling and health problems was received by between a third and a half of the respondents. Lower proportions had help with shopping, getting loans or credit, legal matters and personal problems” (Carter et al., 2010, pg 28).

Lewis argues that the MPNP has devolved settlement services responsibilities to the extent that it is now a burden on the immigrant community (2010). However, the Carter study shows general satisfaction and even a very positive response from the nominees, suggesting that this reallocation of tasks has not led to low quality in the services provided. Furthermore, it is apparent that there is little failure in these services reaching the nominees, at least the principal applicants. Perhaps a more internal community approach to settlement services should be explored in other provinces and by the federal government.

Settlement in Canada is critically focusing on attraction and retention of immigrants, and it is becoming clear that this concern will in some ways be impossible to address unless policy looks beyond employer recruitment considerations. Two concepts inform this approach; replacement migration and economic growth. Based in the population needs of smaller urban and rural communities in specific regions of Canada, where immigration is seen as an answer to economic and demographic decline, there is a crucial need to ensure social cohesion and limit political fractures at a local level when considering the settlement

of immigrants (Burstein, 2007). Another key recent development in Canadian settlement has been connecting successful economic outcomes for immigrants and their employers with community-building and services, the needs of immigrants as families as well as individuals, and innovative skills training. In New Brunswick, settlement agencies in the non-profit sector have expanded in under a decade to create accessibility in small communities province-wide, using the model of transversal casework to broadly improve services that contribute to quality of life for immigrants and thereby encourage retention to support labour needs (Theriault and Haan, 2012). In smaller communities in Alberta, skills development training and workforce development is supported by employers from the private sector, cooperative culture between community agencies and industry is on the rise because of the shared goal of making the labour market more rewarding for immigrants through professional development and other training (Lodermeier, 2012).

As Reitz articulated a decade ago, the federal government lacks a focused strategy to understand labour markets and the potential performance of immigrants across regions. “The success of Canada’s immigration policy depends on the presence of one essential feature in the emerging global labour market; namely, institutions that link workers to jobs and provide for the international transferability of skills” (p. 8). His main focus was on credential recognition, which has indeed seen developments at both the federal and provincial level (Schwartz, 2012; Rai, 2013). The Manitoba Strategy on Qualification Recognition is a prime example of how devolving responsibilities from the federal government to the provincial has allowed for real communication and cooperation between stakeholders. After identifying the need for a Qualification Recognition Framework, the Province reached out to immigrants, regulators, employers, government representatives,

post-secondary education representatives, and experts from outside Manitoba (Office of the Manitoba Fairness Commissioner, n.d.) to form a think tank on the issue. This core group then reached out into the broader community of stakeholders to present their ideas. By 2009, a best practice model had been documented, and Manitoba could move forward with a tool that would help assess international qualifications that was built on the nominee program itself and the diverse facets of the labour market represented throughout the community. Using principles of continuous learning, collaboration, and commitment to understanding the immigrant experience, this model is considered successful in bridging the gap between credentials and employment, because it stays grounded in the context and specific experiences of the MPNP.

The FCRO (Foreign Credential Recognition Office), founded in 2007, is the federal government's attempt to resolve the question of foreign credential recognition under the mandate of CIC. CIC recognizes that Foreign Credential Recognition is now largely the domain of Provinces and Territories, defining its own role as primarily maintaining an online compendium of information and facilitating referrals (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2013). It recognizes a role for the federal government in actively engaging stakeholders and facilitating communication between interests of immigrants and the interests of Canadian business. In this context, CIC views itself as one of many responsible parties, seeking to maintain managerial authority but not interested in a more assertive role.

Reitz also made the point, however, that foreign education and training may be strong in most areas and yet still leave small gaps in certain proficiencies.

"Immigrants also experience difficulty in gaining a licence when there are specific gaps in their training or when specific skills are not transferable. In other words, their

educational background may be relevant, but it may not contain all of the elements required in a Canadian context. Frequently in these cases they are required to repeat the entire training program in Canada, which of course is wasteful. A more efficient way to fill specific skills gaps would be to provide some form of bridge training, such as occupation-specific programs involving collaboration among educational institutions, governments and regulating bodies. The University of Toronto's Faculty of Pharmacy has developed such a program, which enables pharmacists trained outside North America to take university-based courses and other resources, thereby facilitating their preparation for professional practice in Ontario. Known as the International Pharmacy Graduate Program, it is offered in collaboration with the Ontario College of Pharmacy and the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. There are a few such programs in the health professions, and others are being developed" (2005, p. 9).

Again, Reitz's recommendation has been to some degree heeded. Since 2003, Ontario Bridging Programs have helped 50,000 skilled newcomers find work in their fields (Canadian Newcomer Magazine, 2014). This is an area where cross-sector collaboration has been especially effective. Importantly, there have been innovative institutional developments that respond to the need for transitioning or complementing skills that immigrants arrive to Canada with. It is important to recognize that in one decade, the very idea of programs and services that effectively condition skilled workers for success in the context of a new market and society has gone from theoretical to the practical delivery of direct solutions. This has mainly taken place under provincial purviews, perhaps because labour markets are simply too diverse to be approached above the regional level.

### **Private Sector Analysis**

In a current project for Pathways to Prosperity, Drolet and colleagues (2014) have conducted a strong review of the literature, research, and key issues related to employer investment in developing immigrant skills. One of the most prominent findings of this review refers to the lack of information for employers regarding the role they can play in

integration and settlement of newcomers. In this context, the newcomers in question would be employees, and the authors refer to a total absence of literature pertaining the potential for employers to support the families of newcomers with services and other benefits.

“The most prevalent gap identified in the online literature is the perspective of employers and their role. While this information is starting to become more available, it is unclear whether the lack of information is due to the researchers failure to engage employers, or if the employers themselves are apathetic. There is an abundance of online resources available to employers about the value of diversifying their workforce and successfully integrating newcomers into the workplace, but the advice is not usually framed from an employer perspective. Although it is noted that there is an important role for employers to play in the overall integration and settlement of newcomers, information on what that role really looks like is discussed in less than 25% of the relevant literature” (Drolet et al, p. 31).

This illustrates that one key barrier to progress here, if not the most important issue, is one of discourse. In other words, policy and research is failing to connect with the private sector. One interesting theater in which this will play out is the introduction of the new Express Entry system that is to replace the Expression of Interest model under which employers have been given increased influence over the selection of skilled immigrants. Without meaningful collaboration between employers and the federal government, this new policy could fall short of its objectives and create more inefficiency than it solves. In ten years, despite a consistently increased economic focus within immigration policies, employers still report the same issues of language, cultural competency, Canadian experience, and credential recognition as barriers to hiring immigrants in high and low skilled positions (Reitz, 2005; Drolet et al, 2014; Lodermeier, 2012; Ontario Colleges, 2009).

The motivations for employers to attract immigrant workers are not mysterious. Drolet et al. refer to job gaps and skills shortages, and the need to become more globally competitive (p. 18). With major private sector advocates like Scotiabank, Google, and



Microsoft disseminating this logic, plenty of opportunities exist for research and collaboration between policy developers and the business world to develop discussion, shared interests, and actionable objectives.

Part of developing this new way forward would involve an updated understanding of workforce skill development programs. When offered by non-profit immigrant serving agencies or contextualized as newcomer-facing services, it is unlikely that employers can appreciate diversity and inclusion, or cultural competency training and development, as investments that will add value to their business. Drolet et al. emphasize the need for employer-facing programs, meaning targeted solutions to the concerns of the company rather than general services for individual newcomers (p.29). As a result, employers can rationalize increased support for these programs through appeal to bottom-line, rather than attempting to justify what appears to be a hand-out to a specific subset of employees.

How does one begin to reshape the discussion? Ideological language in Canada exists in different silos of public and private interest, as explained by The Whetstone Group, “Official Canadian multiculturalism policy is based on a philosophy of accepting and explaining cultural difference, rather than eliminating this difference. In the Canadian private sector the process of addressing cultural difference in the workplace falls more commonly within the fields of cross-cultural communications and diversity management. Cross-cultural communication training is now frequently considered essential to Canadians” (SP Consulting; The Whetstone Group, 2006, p. 35).

The Whetstone Group highlights The Maytree Foundation, TRIEC, WRIEN, and EASI as examples of organizations that have led the way in developing practices that bring the right training methods together with business models and goals. These include involving the various stakeholders in an inclusive and transparent collaborative model. With input from employers to develop the training tools, these models seem less like an imperative to

promote acceptance for the sake of social change, and more like a practical solution to problems that affect the performance of businesses. With that as a bookend, the ensuing years since 2006 have produced a number of changes for large Canadian employers.

As summaries by the likes of Drolet (2014), Javdani (2012), Walker (2006), and Flynn and Bauder (2013) show, the development of government policy over the past ten to fifteen years has been given due attention by academia. Likewise, the private sector has produced its own literature of wisdom on the topic of employing immigrant workers. What follows is a review focused on the development of diversity and inclusion trends, with particular focus on the increasing role of Intercultural Competency (ICC).

A logical place to start is 1999, when the Canadian Global Leadership Initiative was launched by the Canadian Council of Chief Executives, which included progressive human capital development at the institutional level as part of rebranding Canada in the global marketplace (Canadian Council of Chief Executives, 1999).

RBC produced its first Diversity Report in 2005. 'Building Cross-Cultural Competence was piloted in 2005 in Toronto and offered to HR professionals and the Royal Bank national sales team. This customized, interactive workshop helps employees learn about specific cultures, assess their own cultural IQ and build cultural curiosity' (RBC, 2005). In 2006, they partnered with TRIEC's Mentoring Partnership, ACCES Employment, and CareerBridge.ca. They piloted new programs and training workshops – *Business Excellence Through Diversity*, *Building Cross-Cultural Competence*, and *Creating an Inclusive Environment for People with Disabilities*. In the 2007 report, each of these had been delivered to between 250 and 400 employees. In 2011, the process had continued to develop, with programs such as *Building Cultural Dexterity for High Performance*.

Today, understanding workplace cultural differences and communicating effectively with people from diverse backgrounds is more important than ever. Facilitated webcasts enable employees across the globe to discuss diversity, cultural differences, “unwritten rules,” stereotypes and generalizations, and communicating in a cross-cultural context. RBC also has Diversity Moments. Using short, web-based vignettes, Diversity Moments help increase employees’ and managers’ knowledge of diversity and inclusion. The “moments” cover topics including invisible disabilities, Aboriginal awareness, generational diversity and identifying stereotypes.

In 2007, Cisco created the Global Inclusion and Diversity Council. “The council is led by the Senior Vice President of Human Resources and is supported by sponsors at the executive level who work with Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) to improve the skills, networking capabilities, and career opportunities for particular groups in the Cisco community. Council members also serve as executive sponsors for major diversity programs and are important communicators of the diversity message”. This language highlights a profit incentive message rather than a focus on workplace culture such as RBC espouses, but the approaches are targeted at nearly identical goals.

Husky Energy has received a number of awards related to their Diversity Initiatives since 1999 (examples include Vision Award from Human Resources Development Canada, 1999; Alberta Equity Achievement Recognition Award, 2004; Certificate of Recognition in the areas of Workforce Diversity and Aboriginal Affairs from Human Resources and Development Canada; 2006, Finalist for Diversity Leadership Award of Distinction from Alberta Human Rights and the Alberta Chamber of Commerce; 2002 and 2011). The basis for such accolades are programs such as, *“Education and Training: Husky's web-based*

Respectful Workplace training program, delivered to both employees and contractors, outlines Husky's commitment to diversity and expectations relating to respect and inclusion in the workplace. Other sessions addressing multi-generational teams, workplace bullying, cultural competency, and creating an inclusive environment are delivered regularly to staff and leaders at all levels. *Integrated Communication Strategy*: Husky's communication activities in this area are guided by a framework that increase dialogue and discussion on the various elements of workplace diversity and inclusion" (Social Responsibility, 2014).

The 2008 Social Responsibility Report from KPMG included cultural training through web modules, and classroom training called 'High-Impact Communication in Diverse Workforce', targeted not only at the workforce but management and partners (KPMG LLP, 2008). Also Advanced Micro Devices has a sophisticated approach to international diversity in the workplace that includes education and training for employees, pay-for-performance incentives, and a talent management strategy that focuses on international employees with metrics to represent progress and development (AMD Employees, 2014).

These examples show that large Canadian employers are highly focused on institutional solutions for the question of how diversity in the workplace can optimize talent performance and ultimately profits. Cultural competency is a major theme, because it improves communication and teamwork, and fosters employee satisfaction when applied to the culture of the whole company. In fact, the strategy behind diversity and inclusion models shares a great deal with the provincial targets of retention and talent skills development. Looking ahead, in the human resources field, recruitment is likely to have less

impact than how companies work to retain and optimize their key talent. In this context, there is much ground to cover in Canada.

Dobson (2014a) shows that Canada ranks behind America in terms of information management, workforce analytics, enabling systems and infrastructure, collecting metrics, and measuring the business impacts of HR. Organizations that make those investments now will be more business-driven regarding talent when the crunch becomes more competitive. HR must become more analytical and forecast-capable to be taken seriously as a leader in strategy and a partner of management rather than as a traditional admin department (Dobson, 2014a). This will be especially key when the updated EOI system generates an abundance of talent with intensive management needs.

Research in the United States, for example, has made significant advancements in mapping the correlation between workplace diversity and firm performance (McMahon, 2010). McMahon drew together several studies on these topics from 2000-2009, each focusing on the correlation between certain metrics from each side of that equation. Some examples include Horwitz and Horwitz (2007), who compared “task related vs bio-demographic diversity and cognitive diversity” and “quantity and quality of performance, social integration, team cohesion, decision making, creativity, and problem solving” (McMahon, 2010, p. 45). Other studies used metrics like management diversity initiatives to knowledge/skills/abilities in the workforce, individual demographic attributes to sales revenue, nationality to net contribution margin/market share, ethnicity to productivity, boardroom diversity to financial performance, and so on (McMahon, 2010, p. 9). The conclusion, after synthesizing the various data, was that the impact of diversity on performance is curvilinear in that in general more diversity leads to long-term improved

performance, but that this is better realized through an integrated and complex relationship of causes. In other words, a variety of cooperating metrics are required to demonstrate the impact of workplace diversity on the performance of a company, though over the long term a clear correlation can be made between diversity management and profit.

Not surprisingly, this type of conclusion creates more open questions than those it closes. The true impact of workplace diversity on performance is revealed less by direct financial performance than by longer-term change in the company. The research, then, adapts and broadens to look at return on assets, return on sales, return on equity, and market share as more illustrative metrics (McMahon, 2010, p. 9). Even further, the metrics are being altered to account for impacts on quality of results, decision making, social integration KSAOs (Knowledge, Skills, Abilities, Other), and other less tangible qualities in the ongoing research. It is in this area that ICC is relevant to company policies as it can be programmed for deliverables and assessed using defined metrics. Given the significance of this research regarding hard solutions for maximizing economic success, the vacuum of research on this subject in the Canadian context is troubling. Looking to practices in human resources, it is possible to get some sense of how the subject is framed and what practices are under way.

Companies have moved beyond the view that diversity is the 'right thing' to an understanding that it is the way to top competition, as illustrated by the high performance firms on the list of Canada's Best Diversity Employers, such as Enbridge, Sodexo, and CIBC (Bernier, 2014b). TD is progressive in strategically eliminating biases among all managers by providing training in cross cultural awareness, diversity interviewing and hiring (Dobson, 2014b). Also becoming clear in HR strategy is the importance of combatting the

effect of screening for Canadian experience and credentials, and a push for making recertification and bridging for foreign-trained professionals through professional associations more easily attainable (Kreissl, 2014). Dealing with these issues, from a hiring perspective, can reduce the impact of the skills shortage which is exacerbated by procedural inefficiencies such as those mentioned above, and make the opportunities or lack thereof for foreign-trained professionals in Canada more transparent.

The hiring and recruitment question has been so dire that it has created a growth industry of third party talent consultants to connect immigrants to employment opportunities. Organizations such as emergiTEL provide assessment of immigrant job candidates that companies with traditional hiring practices simply lack the structure for, such as long-term value and soft skills assessments (Bernier, 2014a). In many ways, this type of service only exists because HR practice and the assessment mechanisms of governments in Canada are faulty when it comes to understanding the full value of immigrant talent. The metrics used traditionally are not sophisticated enough to understand the potential locked behind low competencies in areas that are easily met by effective (and existing) programs, such as enhanced language training (ELT), occupation-specific language training (OSLT) and bridging programs, soft skills and intercultural competency training, and training in understanding Canadian workplace culture. More to the point, hiring practices are forgoing hiring immigrants in many cases who could be trained in these competencies after being brought into the company, integrated into their job training and responsibilities.

Human Resources strategy has a great deal to say about workforce training. In training for hard skills, such as workplace health and safety, it is understood that effective

programs have continuity, that is, that training programs need to be reinforced with periodic follow-ups and review sessions (King, 2014). Building group dynamics and facilitators within the training module for ongoing self-accountability, and strong participation from supervisors can increase the added value of training sessions. This should also apply to soft skills and intercultural competency training. The more a company as a whole is able to buy in, with group accountability and the enthusiasm of supervisors and management, the more impact will be made by the deliverables of the training. Corus CEO John Cassaday embodies this understanding of leadership by seeing his role as a consistent impression across the company regarding vision, values and other aspects of brand culture (Gorsline, 2014).

Corus displays a values-first, skills-second approach to employees, screening for 'organizational fit' and basic qualifications. With specific skills at the bottom of the value chain, Corus is able to establish a workforce with compatible core values and ensure quality performance that will have a positive bottom line impact. The assumption is that if a candidate is a great organizational fit but lacks a certain skill, the company or the individual can easily direct resources toward addressing that gap. The way that immigrants are screened through the FSWP is essentially the opposite of this.

The federal government screens on a value chain with the top priority as high skills, and a close second is labour market compatibility. The Express Entry changes will be an attempt to raise labour market compatibility on the value chain, thereby the two values become balanced as the dualistic sole criteria. A term often used for this combination is 'job-readiness'. Provincial programs place high priorities on labour market compatibility but some, in regions that hope to grow, put likelihood of retention equally high. In this



model, it is understood that economic immigrants have added value when they are looking for somewhere to settle and build a career, so such indicators as accompanying family and community integration are important factors for selection. It is understood that investments in social development such as settlement services, employment services, skills development programs, and access to quality education have two important functions for individuals of this type. 'Job readiness' can be developed after arrival using these types of programs, improving the competencies and qualifications of the immigrant through Canadian funded and generated programs (in some cases employer generated), while this same social spending serves as an attraction and incentive to stay.

Employers have a variety of approaches to screening foreign trained employees. Most, as is traditional across hiring practices, have competencies and qualifications high on the value chain, but assume that all immigrants have soft skill defaults that mitigate the quality of their actual abilities. As shown, many large employers have tried to reimagine the culture of their organizations to be more inclusive, or address hiring biases. The real innovation, however, involves the value chain. As Corus demonstrates, there is tremendous value to consistency across the company around values and vision. Intercultural competency training that affects the entire company culture creates a functioning environment that can access the full potential of skills and competencies that get lost when communication, leadership, and values are simply not connecting (Guillerme, Keating, and Hoppe, 2010; LaRoche, 2003). In other words, there is an organizational benefit to reorder the value chain when screening for immigrant talent; priority number one is that the individual is highly skilled, priority number two is that the programs are available to develop cultural and communication competencies between the individual and the existing

workforce (in effect the capacity to efficiently ensure 'job readiness'), and the final priority is that the individual will be surrounded by a compatible community and is able to integrate comfortably so that retention of the talent is likely. This last point is important because once the investment has been made to bring the newcomer into the country and develop soft skills and cultural competencies to ensure that talent is effectively utilized, the company deserves a long-term employee and regions in Canada are desperate for demographic growth.

### **Assessment 1 – Toward EOI-driven Selection**

Canadian businesses have had a long interest in hiring immigrants, and a long struggle with institutionalizing practices that can optimize immigrant talent. The private sector has mainly focused on advocating for faster processing, better systems to verify credentials, and other mechanisms related to 'hit-the-ground-running' job-ready immigrant selection (Holmes et al., 2014). With EOIs, many of these concerns have been institutionally addressed, but why do the same concerns exist today as ten years ago (Reitz, 2005)? It may be that neo-liberal policies are inherently detrimental to a healthy domestic economy, as some argue. The central authority of the federal government has been deemphasized, creating regionally specific policies and the downloading of traditionally federal services to sub-federal government, private, and non-profit bodies. With less rigorous federal attention to settlement and skills development, and only the guidance of macro-analytic LMI to ensure strong employment outcomes, the recruitment-facing EOI system does not have strong enough institutional support in areas that encourage skills development, talent optimization, and retention.

The reason for a continuation of the same complaints from the private sector reflects a core confusion about newcomers held by both the private sector and policy makers. Neither sector has shown committed interest in the responsibility for skills development tailored to newcomers. The government tends to view economic immigrants as a necessary challenge to labour market practices; they are the solution to declining economic growth, but their actual skills and ability to succeed without excessive amounts of assistance are suspect. To account for this, the system prioritizes high skills and labour market demand (Rai, 2013), believing this is a formula for job-readiness. The private sector tends to view immigrants as a silver bullet for skills shortages; they are internationally connected and possess in-demand skills, but the burden of getting through federal processes and regulatory bodies makes access to them inefficient and costly (Holmes, 2014; Drolet, 2014). In fact, neither view captures the economic reality of immigrants of every class in Canada today. Immigrants are an investment opportunity.

The authority of the federal government over economic immigration policy is focused on screening rather than development. The point system is designed to determine who the applicant is, and what they have done. This is not a mechanism that understands the impact of immigrants on the labour market, only whether or not an immigrant is qualitatively suitable under a certain normative view of the labour market. The process then becomes focused on identifying the 'best and brightest' applicants, under a central body of criteria. In some sense, these policies have fallen out of step with current migration trends. According to Rai, three trends characterize the current period in Canada's immigration history; increased volume (and increased proportion of economic immigrants), most immigrants are university educated and skilled, and labour market

success within the first five years of settlement is declining (p. 10, 2013). The preference for highly skilled workers has been firmly implemented in policy, but it has not led to improvement in labour market outcomes.

In Human Capital Theory, people acquire marketable skills that enhance their productive capacity, which is a means of increasing status in the workforce. These marketable skills may take the form of specific knowledge or training, strategic connections to other individuals or institutions, and more intangible personal qualities such as manners and communications skills (Lopez, 2007). In any case, the skills attained represent an investment of time and usually labour and money, made by the individual or some other interested party in improving their workforce potential. In other words, returns on human capital investment are not limited to occupation-specific labour relief.

Contrary to the occupation-specific value chain, advocates of human capital in immigration selection, such as Alboim, claim that the most important qualities in an immigrant are youth and the ability to adapt in Canada's changing economy (2009). In spite of the decline in labour market outcomes over the past decade, Alboim argues that this approach emphasizes the right criteria; "education, language skills, and transferrable work experience" (2009, p. 46), and adds that these are still the best predictors of economic success. In Alboim's analysis, human capital priorities represent a long view, as opposed to occupational screens. Judging by the decline of labour market success that Rai (2010) identified as a pervasive trend, the limited definition of human capital used in federal policy is a failure.

The central misconception about immigrants remains, that they are an expense for government and a challenge for businesses, rather than talent to be invested in for

economic growth that will benefit both business and government. But even neo-liberal policies such as regionalization of services have demonstrated the value of investing in immigrant talent, not only as workforce talent optimization, but for social and economic wellbeing in small communities with an existential stake in economic and demographic growth. Recent years have seen the expansion of Welcoming Communities in Canada (Burstein, 2009), which bring the cross-sector approach to bear on issues beyond simply workplaces competencies. In small, growing communities, businesses are investing in social programs and community organizations that serve immigrants and the settlement process. Formerly the domains of public or non-profit sector organizations, settlement and community services for immigrants have become workforce-optimization products (TRIEC, Theriault and Haan, Lodermeier, LaRoche, Bersin). Specifically, these are products that represent added value to the bottom lines of businesses in areas with labour demand. Robust settlement services, including skills development within the workplace and in immigrant communities, are a retention policy and retention means economic growth.

Having reviewed the developments since Reitz (2005) produced his article, we can see that much progress has been made in spite of the continuance of a core misconception. Institutions have been created, within businesses or through cross-sector partnerships, that facilitate investment in immigrant talent, but businesses still advocate for the Think Fast (Holmes et al, 2014) approach of success through selection. Likely there will be no reversal of the EOI and EE developments, but for them to work effectively they should be accompanied by a streamlined system for investing in skills and talent development.

The private sector, over the past decade, has been the realm of development in a different direction; diversity and inclusion (D&I) strategies and talent management. Though

LMOs and EOIs are perhaps the most obvious indicators of private sector reliance on immigration during this period, the businesses have moved well beyond this in terms of programs focused on developing the workplace performances of diverse employees. D&I often has a strong focus on non-immigrant groups such as women and Aboriginals, but more important than who businesses are focused on is the awareness of a need for change in management culture and workplace competencies across the board. On the talent management side is a new awareness of the value of certain workforce segments and therefor the strategic importance of employee retention, appreciation, and development. The position of large employers in Canada, in terms of conventional wisdom, treats diversity as an asset with a real positive impact on the bottom line. Critically, some companies are moving toward developing metrics for evaluating and assessing the impact of immigrant employees and on the workplace environment, or 'culture', that is best able to ensure optimal return.

## **Assessment 2 – Express Entry and the future – a talent management model**

The previous section has illustrated how over recent years, neo-liberal policy has tilted the economic immigrant selection process towards the demands of employers. Although this has largely not met goals, positive institutional developments have been made to improve the capacity of employers to invest and direct policy towards skills development for newcomer employees and job-seekers. While immigrant talent is clearly not an investment either the private or public sector is comfortable making alone, it has at least become clear through the literature that it is an investment opportunity. The non-profit sector would likely be only too happy to make this investment, but investments

require money. Exacerbating this standoff is the misconception that improved immigrant labour market outcomes can be achieved with a more employer-driven selection policy, allowing employers to directly select immigrants from a pre-screened Express Entry pool of job-ready migrants. The response from employers has been enthusiastic, though certain concerns about speed of access to workers remain. As innovative as this new system may be in a perfect scenario, it is still built upon the assumption that immigrants will enter the pool job-ready and totally self-reliant, eliminating the need for reskilling or any type of time consuming skills development programs. The Express Entry mechanism is a recruitment strategy, to facilitate direct access to talent, but talent management does not end with recruitment. The top concern for employers is immediate job-ready immigrants, and with that in mind, a national standard for inter-cultural competency as deliverable through targeted, skills development products (programs, webinars, modules, and strategy consulting) is a necessary institutional development going forward.

Deloitte recently produced a paper on the Open Talent Economy (2014), a strategy model that has nothing to do with immigration, but nonetheless illustrates some realities behind the Express Entry model, and demonstrates what it leaves out. The paper nicely articulates a view of employee/employer relations from the perspective of private sector organizations, in which talent in the knowledge economy can be accessed fluidly in a deregulated environment.

Although it appears to suggest the dissolution of labour laws, this view does have the right attitude toward talent. Talent is not a cost, it is an investment. Returns on an investment are only as good as the resources put toward developing it. If we apply this

concept to immigrant talent, the talent that Canadian businesses will have access to thanks to the Express Entry model, we see that some pieces are missing.

To ensure that talent investments result in added value, a talent strategy is required. The Open Talent concept offers guidance in this respect.

“There are two key dimensions to critical workforce segments. First, they drive a disproportionate value in the organization. Second, they are difficult to find and retain. These are the workforces where talent investments should be made to drive business results. Forming a strategy to guide those investments will also incorporate employer brand, talent program enablers, and the way talent considerations align with the business infrastructure.” (Deloitte; 2014, p. 5-6)

Here we see the Express Entry model effectively characterized. Immigrants are required to populate critical workforce segments, or the employer would have gone the less demanding route of hiring a Canadian. But this does not mean that the talent will arrive fully able to perform the tasks that the employer is expecting. In other words, simply bringing a human being to Canada and expecting a perfect employee having made no attempt to ensure that they are culturally, emotionally, or physically prepared to excel is not a strategy. The next phase of a talent strategy is important for addressing this,

“Next, we need to assess which talent solutions are required to help these critical workforces be effective. We must also assess how well the organization delivers on these solutions. These talent solutions will be the investments the company makes in the critical workforces” (Deloitte, 2014, p. 6).

In the cited example, as stated earlier, immigrant talent is not specifically considered. The literature related to services that optimize immigrant talent is vast, including but not limited to language training, family services, housing and other settlement services, soft-skills training, assistance with networking, and funding for skills development programs and other training. As immigrants require a wider range of services than



domestic talent to reach optimum performance, the cost to the organization will be greater. This does not mean, however, that employers can simply engage the Express Entry system and criticize it when the talent fails to perform. Express Entry addresses the question of recruitment for critical workforce segments, not for management or maintenance of the recruited talent. In the coming years, it will be important to see which sectors step up to fund this programming. A final concern remains unaddressed, and this is regarding measurements and standards. Going back to the talent strategy,

“Finally, every organization needs the infrastructure to track these resources and measure how well they—and the investments—are performing. The observed outcomes drive constant reassessment and adjustment of the talent strategy. That takes analytics, which requires both data and the technology to collect and use it” (Deloitte, 2014, p.6).

One option for this element is to wait for each employer to develop its own metrics for successful investment, leaving the results unreliable for comparative studies. However, there is a potential role for government in this area, either provincial or federal or some type of collaboration. A national standard for assessing the value added by immigrant talent, and for the effectiveness of programs that develop immigrant workforce skills and improve intercultural competencies in the workplace, would be a powerful argument for expanding economic immigration. Additionally, companies that demonstrate improvement or solid practice on the basis of a government-set standard could be rewarded with tax breaks or subsidies, and thereby accrue funds to continue improvements and scale-up their models.

This is the area that could offer a first step in standardizing talent management as a profitable model for immigrant employers. Developing reliable metrics and reporting is not an unusual activity for the private sector, and in fact, demonstrating the added value of

immigrant talent to shareholders is an intuitive practice. This will also help to regulate the effectiveness of economic immigration in Canada with dollar values as evidence, a metric that everyone can agree on. Then, the model of talent management through skills development and investment in basic programs and infrastructure to support immigrant employees can become an aspect of the employer's brand, and a demonstration of good practice on balance sheets.

Just as Deloitte painted a happy picture of an open talent economy with the talent strategy model, what is demonstrated above is excessively optimistic. There is no reason to believe either government or businesses will absorb the cost of managing the influx of skilled immigrant professionals as they arrive through the Express Entry model. The federal government has not given much description of operational specifics beyond the promise that immigrant talent will be quickly and plentifully accessible (Government of Canada, 2014). In spite of the many institutional models mentioned here for cross-sector partnerships, there has been no discussion of their involvement in implementing the new system, which is nothing if not a model demanding cross-sector collaboration. As for the private sector, concerns about speed, deregulation, and incentives for 'trusted' businesses are their main interests (Holmes et al., 2014). All stakeholders are apparently confident that the new system will only allow permanent residency to immigrants who are completely self-reliant, job-ready, and will be fully served by the current settlement system that has failed to integrate immigrants into the economy for the past decade. What type of services will be provided for the families of principle applicants, to ensure they can access the labour market? What funding will be available to community organizations for increased 'whole-

of-society' settlement programs and retention focused programs in regions that intensify migration influx due to heavy use of the system?

At the very least, some type of metric analytics are going to be needed to assess whether the system is providing talent that adds value to businesses. It would be best if those metrics represented national or provincial standards, so that they could be used as the basis of incentives for those that use the system effectively and responsibly.

### **Assessment 3 - Action Plan**

The current immigration policy trends in Canada –meaning the shift toward employer-based selection, regionalization of services and selection to connect with labour markets, the Canadian Experience Class, and the tumults of the TFWP – reflect an era of transition in which commonly held beliefs are in conflict with circumstance. The conventional wisdom, that underemployment of immigrants can be addressed by reforming the process of selection, is a rejection of certain principles that have begun to register in the practices and policies of employers, though not federal policy. Private sector institutions, without the heavy burden of bureaucratic hierarchy to prohibit the rapid adoption of new practice, are more capable of reforming practice to suit new circumstances than are those of the public sector. While the federal government continues the questionable project of selecting successful new Canadians by occupation, immigrant employers are learning what kinds of programs can be effective in optimizing talent in the workforce by providing the right workplace and community conditions.

The available tools in ICC are either commercial (IDI, CCAI) or non-commercial, direct or indirect or mixed, assessed with self-reporting or evaluative (performance,

portfolio, surveys, interviews, role plays) tools, and exist as established instruments (assessment scales, inventories, indexes). A study of these tools established that they can help set and reach targets for tracking development of students in higher learning or foreign language programs (Sinicrope et al, p.50) and physician trainees (p. 19). In Canada, particularly in those examples of employers that have identified the need for intercultural competency training, studies on the available methods and combinations thereof that offer tools for setting and reaching targets could lead the way to establishing standards.

Some progress has been made in studying the impact of ICC in the private sector, either through performance reports from within companies or in studies by private research consultants across sectors. Bersin reports on companies surveyed regarding motivations to invest in diversity and inclusion, showing that Fortune 500 companies are more likely than others to list 'increase in innovation/agility', enhance employee engagement, or enhance ability to acquire new talent. Conversely, Fortune 500 companies are much less likely than others to be motivated by a belief that investment in diversity is the 'right thing to do' (Bersin and Associates, 2010). The report also shows that mature talent management strategies are now common in sectors such as banking and technology, while other sectors are still in early stages (2010).

Bersin studies show concerns that D&I programs lack focus, in that they often do not map to strategic talent outcomes or business outcomes. D&I accounts for dismally low percentage of funding directed at employee learning, and only 10% of those organizations surveyed adjusted strategy and solutions based on metrics or feedback (2013, p. 24). Bersin highlights that proper follow-through with D&I requires *goals, tracking, and accountability* (p. 33). The initiatives are not meaningful unless they are integrated with a detailed talent

management strategy that has full support from leadership and across the organization (Bersin and Associates, 2013).

There is little need for further theoretical development of ICC and D&I, particularly as the breadth of programs and products is already very rich. Employers are self-reporting to a certain extent, and consultants like Bersin offer more objective reporting as outsourced researchers, but communications of the results of these programs with hard quantifiable returns on investment documented are not in abundance.

This is what the private sector can bring to the discussion, or in other words, the role that remains elusive for employers (Drolin, 2014; Holmes, 2014) in the integrated cross-sector schema of Canada's future FSWP. Talent management strategies are often configured as a way for HR concerns to become integral to the overall business strategy of an organization, and communicating this requires "a coherent, meaningful operating language that ensures the consistent and relevant measurement of talent requirements" (SHL Group Limited, 2008, p. 9). Properly developed, this tool ensures that performance and competency assessments from senior levels are guided by appropriate grounding in a talent strategy with a focus on goals and business needs. SHL claims that a sophisticated organizational strategy involves the process of *define*, *measure*, and *realize* (2008, p. 14). When onboarding international talent, an organization requires the communication capabilities to define intercultural competency as it meets organizational demand, measure and track the development of intercultural competency in the workplace both as it relates to newcomer employees and to the culture of the existing workplace, and finally the infrastructure, technology, and expertise to deploy actionables against measurable targets.

To go beyond talk, HR practice in talent management teaches that there is a core need for infrastructure that centers around metrics, targets, and performance. Earlier in this study, self-reported advances in D&I practice have shown a change in organizational attitudes toward the value of well-managed workforce diversity. What these reports do not reveal to the public is their measurement tools, their targets, and their quantifiable success. An external analysis, as provided for example by Hireimmigrants.ca, is the only opportunity for a real view of progress toward infrastructure and institutional development. Hireimmigrants.ca is a primary resource regarding how talent management is already in practice as an investment in international talent (Appx. 1). Each example has very little to do with recruitment, everything to do with business strategy, and is connected on a continuum from targets to actions to results. One undisclosed piece is critical; the metrics and methods of evaluating success and reporting of them in connection to the programs themselves.

Understandably, this information is not in the interest of the organizations to share, but it is possible to infer through the nature of targets and strategies whether hard reporting and evaluation is at least possible. Of the fifteen employer examples, ten use strategies that depend on quantifiable deliverables (professional development programs, surveys, case-specific initiatives, performance reviews, workplace training workshops and modules, language and ICC training). In other words, there is no reason these initiatives cannot be tracked and reported, though the data is not publically available. In addition, ten examples used these measures to address quantifiable targets (addressing specific shortages in skilled positions, fostering leadership pipelines, compliance with diversity hiring mandate, performance, and talent retention). The less quantifiable strategies and

targets demonstrate a more advanced understanding of value added by D&I programming, such as employee satisfaction and engagement with community, tapping leadership potential, and optimizing key talent performance. To qualify these impacts, long-term studies would be necessary to examine integrated data sets in the style of McMahon (2010) which comprehensively tracks returns on assets, returns on sales, and other profit metrics integrated into a mixed-method assessment of diversity onboarding strategies.

### **Recommendations and Conclusions**

The following recommendations pertain to all stakeholders in the outcomes of economic immigration to Canada.

1. In addition to the Express Entry model, Canada needs a Talent Management model for immigration and settlement.
2. Retention and talent optimization through skills development are the hallmarks of Talent Management Immigration, and so advancements in regional policies should be expanded where they encourage retention and improve social cohesion, economic integration, and the achievement of personal goals for immigrants and their families.
3. Towards defining targets; build on the HR strategies and regional goals of retention, talent optimization, and skills development. Without hard and clearly stated targets for specific regions, organizations, and federal initiatives any progress will be rhetorical only.
4. Towards measuring programs; private sector actions such as those illustrated in Hirimmigrants.ca and self-reported in annual reports require quantitative analysis

and transparency, in order to assign dollar value to D&I programs and tools across regions and sectors.

5. Towards realizing targets; after establishing standard metrics in the analysis of existing practices, upward scaling and new goals can be established. The role of government, much reduced in terms of service delivery, can still be influential in incentivizing good practice through funding and other rewards, and communicating the message of diversity as good business across Canadian labour markets.

This study claims that Canadian immigration is talent-focused and needs to institutionalize talent management through D&I and ICC as well as talent recruitment through Express Entry EOIs. Through a review of existing practices, it is clear that regional policy makers have a range of opportunities to engage with in the private sector, whether through products that develop and track ICC (IDI, Multicultural Business Solutions, CCAI) in specific workplaces or through consulting firms that have solution-focused talent management strategies and methods of evaluation for progress in these regards (Bersin, SHL). The way seems clear to developing a new Canadian standard for workplace D&I and ICC, especially when shared interests of regional governments and businesses through innovative metrics, reporting, and discourse. The federal recruitment infrastructure must welcome and support this complementary strategy. It is not only an argument for equitable reform, but understood by businesses strategists and HR forecasters as sound practice that translates to healthy balance sheets. The idea of immigration and settlement as a burden on economic stakeholders is one that fails to optimize talent and reach targets, it is time that the immigration system be presented across sectors as an investment.



## Appendix 1

Company	Strategy	Target	Trackable
RBC	MOSAIC	ICC Development	Yes, through outside program
Teshmont	ICC and community development	Talent Retention, Engagement	Yes, through employee surveys and HR
ScotiaBank	Invest in skills development, networking, leadership.	Improve performance, foster talent pipelines	Unclear, unreported
Syncrude	Support foreign professionals in upgrading experience and credentials	Develop foreign talent with Canadian competency gaps to address skills shortages.	Yes, on a case-by-case basis. Only specific example reported.
Walmart	On-the-job skills development	Groom internationally trained employee for promotion.	Yes, on a case-by-case basis. Only specific example reported.
Pitney-Bowes	Integrate diversity strategy with leadership pipeline strategy using advisory boards.	Tapping leadership potential in culturally diverse staff.	Yes, not publically reported.
KPMG	Identify transferable skills and encourage engagement with staff and community.	Optimization of International Talent, address shortages.	Unclear.
St. Michael's Hospital	Workplace mentoring, cultural competence guidebook	ICC development	Unclear.
Genum	In-house mentoring	Developing ICC for international talent, onboarding	Unclear.
Providence Health Care	ICC training.	Improve performance facing international patients	Yes, through training schema and scales.

Iris	Intensive training including ICC as part of onboarding.	Minimize cultural barriers to hard competencies of international talent	Unclear, meeting training objectives can certainly be tracked.
City of Saskatoon	Build diversity into mandate as employer	Compliance with self-regulated diversity expectations	Yes.
Mount Sinai Hospital	Survey used to determine onboarding success.	Meet diversity objectives	Yes.
Ernst & Young	Internal diversity training and leadership infrastructure, diversity accounted for in performance reviews	Career development and retention of internationally trained.	Yes, via performance reviews and retention quantities. Unreported.
Cambria Credit Union	On-the-job training for skilled immigrant employees, including culture and communication	Address skills shortages	Yes, via HR, retention, and training evaluations.

The above chart has been compiled from studies collected on Hireimmigrants.ca, and coded to show their value for expanded practice across Canada in terms of clarity of strategy, targets, and the ability to evaluate progress quantifiably.

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