Work experiences of qualified immigrants: a review of theoretical progress

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Abstract

Purpose – Qualified immigrants (QIs) and their work experiences have been studied using a wide variety of theoretical approaches with divergent characteristics. This paper reviews theoretical progress and proposes directions for future research and practice.

Design/methodology/approach – Using relevant keywords, articles indexed by Web of Science in management, business, industrial relations and applied psychology were systematically searched for and analysed. In total, 60 theoretical articles published during 2008–2018 were included. The theoretical progress and future theoretical and practical challenges were organised based on the notions of equality, diversity and inclusion.

Findings – Eight theoretical approaches utilised to study QIs' work experiences were recognised: (1) human capital theory, (2) career capital theory, (3) theory of practice, (4) intersectionality, (5) social identity theory, (6) sensemaking, (7) cultural identity transition and (8) the career-centred approach. The contributions and limitations of each theoretical lens were then scrutinised. Overall, research on QIs still lacks a comprehensive theoretical framework. As a step towards that, the paper proposes considering the role of organisations and labour market intermediaries, strategic view over the immigrant workforce, agency–institution play, identity–capital play and host–immigrant play.

Research limitations/implications – The focus is on theory development and empirical papers with no clear theoretical foundation are excluded.

Originality/value – This review is the first attempt to summarise and direct the divergent research on the topic. The main contribution is setting an agenda for future research, particularly by proposing the elements of a comprehensive theoretical framework for studying QIs in the workplace.

Keywords Immigration, Qualified immigrant, Employment, Equality, Diversity, Theoretical review

Paper type Literature review

Introduction

Immigrant workers contribute significantly to global social and economic development. However, migration is a complex issue that presents challenges for immigrants, in terms of access to the labour market and career development, and for organisations and host societies, in terms of increased diversity (Burke and Ng, 2006). With a recent rise in research on immigrant workers, academics and practitioners have documented several key, permeating issues regarding migration and global careers (Cohen *et al.*, 2011). However, there has been no systematic review devoted solely to immigrant workers, similar to reviews regarding expatriate workers (e.g. Baruch *et al.*, 2016; Shaffer *et al.*, 2012).

International migrant workers are a diverse group. The literature mainly identifies three types of immigrant workers: assigned expatriates, self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) and immigrant workers (Farcas and Goncalves, 2017). An expatriate is a migrant worker relocated by a corporate to a foreign subsidiary for a specific mission; they receive full support from the corporate during their temporary stay abroad (McNulty and Brewster, 2017). By contrast, SIEs decide to move and work abroad of their own volition but, like expatriates, their stay is temporary (Farcas and Goncalves, 2017). Like SIEs, immigrant workers are not supported by a corporation at the time of arrival; unlike SIEs, however, they intend to permanently reside in the host country and eventually acquire citizenship (Przytuła, 2015). These groups of immigrants differ significantly in their motives, needs and attitudes regarding the work and integration context (Baruch *et al.*, 2013; Haines *et al.*, 2008).

This paper focusses primarily on qualified immigrants (QIs). Among developed countries, there is a trend towards policies that aim to control migration flows by selectively attracting highly QIs (Emilsson, 2015). However, QIs mostly remain a "forgotten minority", especially in management and organisation research (Binggeli *et al.*, 2013). Focussing on QIs is vital from the perspectives of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI): despite the efforts of QIs and host societies, matching their employment to their skill level remains challenging (Elrick, 2016; Ette *et al.*, 2016). Researchers and policymakers have recently recognised that QIs as a group require independent labour markets initiatives and treatment, and the number of studies on this group has increased sharply in recent years (Hajro *et al.*, 2019). This review attempts to demonstrate the breadth of research on QIs' work experiences and understand the theoretical insights of existing literature. This review tackles two research questions:

RQ1. Theoretical progress: Which theories have been used to study qualified immigrants' work experiences? What is our state-of-the-art understanding of qualified immigrants' EDI experiences in the workplace, as illuminated by theories?

RQ2. Challenges ahead: From a theoretical perspective, what relevant constructs and areas of research are lacking and what are the main theoretical gaps? Subsequently, which directions should future research take to offer new insights on qualified immigrants' EDI experiences in the workplace? From a practical perspective, what should immigrants, employers and other social actors do to enhance EDI in the workplace for qualified immigrants?

By addressing these research questions, we contribute to QI research by organising the fragmented and rapidly growing literature, providing an in-depth picture of recent progress. We also expand on prior enquiries by proposing new directions for both research and practice regarding EDI in the workplace for QIs.

The remainder of this paper is organised as follows. We first define the concept of QI and clarify the process of identifying relevant research. Then, we detail the eight identified theoretical approaches, discussing the contributions and limitations of each approach, as well as their main empirical findings. To show the commitment of the research to creating positive change, we also discuss practical initiatives and mechanisms to enhance EDI in the workplace. We also propose a future research agenda.

Defining QIs and work experiences
QIs have diverse attributes in terms of reasons for migrating, level of human capital or social connections, degree of cultural closeness to the host culture and level of motivation to integrate. They are also diverse with respect to the traditional diversity dimensions of race, age, ethnic and national origin, gender and disability (Binggeli *et al.*, 2013). However, QIs are

considered to have some common attributes, such as agency in their international relocation with the intention to enhance their career (Cerdin and Selmer, 2013; Doherty *et al.*, 2013). Following Cerdin *et al.* (2014), we define QIs as immigrants with a foreign university education who have moved on a permanent basis to reside and work in countries other than their own. Specifically, they have been educated in a country other than the host country (mainly the "Global South"), as QIs' foreign education is found to be associated with higher unemployment and a larger earnings gap between recent immigrants and native-born citizens, whereas local education decreases this gap (Banerjee and Lee, 2015; Mahmud *et al.*, 2014).

Work experiences are events or activities that occur as part of QIs' international mobility and influence their motivation and performance, with potential subsequent effects on their career trajectory (Tesluk and Jacobs, 1998). Work experiences include periods of job-seeking and employment. They might also include experiences beyond the workplace, such as the effects of migration on well-being, happiness or family conflicts.

Method
Data collection
The first step of a literature review is to develop a database of relevant research. Using the Web of Science database, potentially relevant research was identified by conducting structured keyword searches in the abstract, title and keywords of indexed papers. The search comprised strings of all possible combinations of ("skilled [im]migrant" OR "professional [im]migrant" OR "qualified [im]migrant") AND ("work" OR "employment" OR "career" OR "labo[u]r market integration"). The search returned 1,196 articles. Therefore, the search scope was limited to studies indexed by Web of Science in management and organisation, which are considered the most relevant fields to work experience. The initial search returned $n_1 = 180$ articles. Identified articles were then exported to EndNote citation manager software for further analyses. Initial reading of the title and abstract of all identified works led to the exclusion of $n_2 = 36$ articles: most focussed on low-skilled immigrant workers (e.g. Busch *et al.*, 2017; Hopkins *et al.*, 2016; Srour *et al.*, 2017) or issues unrelated to work, such as health (e.g. Bernal *et al.*, 2017; Yakushko, 2010) or remittance (e.g. McDonald and Valenzuela, 2017); the others focussed on second-generation immigrants (e.g. Baycan *et al.*, 2012; Busch *et al.*, 2017), minority native-born citizens (e.g. Alvarado and Ricard, 2013; Behrenz *et al.*, 2016) or illegal foreign workers (e.g. Kao, 2017).

For articles whose title and abstract suggested potential relevance to QIs' experiences ($n_3 = 144$), the full-text version was obtained and examined to determine eligibility for inclusion. In the full-text analysis phase, another $n_4 = 36$ articles were excluded. These focussed on: short-term temporary migration for work, study or an internship (e.g. Bahn, 2015; Hirt *et al.*, 2017; Li *et al.*, 2016; McKenna and Richardson, 2016; Toh *et al.*, 2009; Zimmermann and Ravishankar, 2011); non-documented and unauthorised employment (e.g. Amuedo-Dorantes and Sevilla, 2014; Bohn and Owens, 2012; Marfleet and Blustein, 2011); non-skilled immigrants (e.g. Baxter-Reid, 2016; Bell *et al.*, 2010; Friberg *et al.*, 2014; Hagan *et al.*, 2011; Lima and Martins, 2012); professional athletes with a short-lived career (Allmen *et al.*, 2015; Ryba *et al.*, 2016) or skilled SIEs (Ford and Kawashima, 2016; te Nijenhuis *et al.*, 2014). We also excluded $n_5 = 60$ exploratory articles with no theoretical foundation (e.g. Asali, 2017; Bimrose and McNair, 2011; Flynn *et al.*, 2011; Gericke *et al.*, 2018; Harvey, 2012; Horverak *et al.*, 2013; Liu *et al.*, 2015; Manroop *et al.*, 2013; Neville *et al.*, 2014; Rissing and Castilla, 2016; van den Broek and Groutsis, 2016). By investigating the reference list of the articles, editorials and literature reviews, and based on suggestions from this paper's reviewers, $n_6 = 12$ additional theoretical articles were identified and included. Figure 1 presents an overview of the process of developing the database of relevant studies. A total of
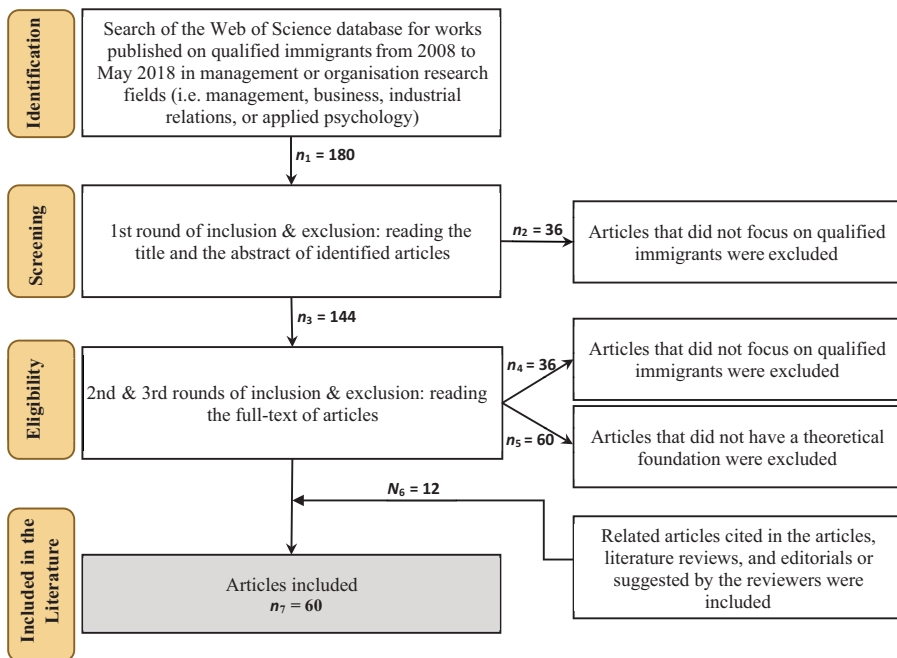
Figure 1.
The process of developing the literature database

Identification	Search of the Web of Science database for works published on qualified immigrants from 2008 to May 2018 in management or organisation research fields (i.e. management, business, industrial relations, or applied psychology)

$n_1 = 180$

Screening	1st round of inclusion & exclusion: reading the title and the abstract of identified articles

$n_2 = 36$ → Articles that did not focus on qualified immigrants were excluded

$n_3 = 144$

Eligibility	2nd & 3rd rounds of inclusion & exclusion: reading the full-text of articles

$n_4 = 36$ → Articles that did not focus on qualified immigrants were excluded

$n_5 = 60$ → Articles that did not have a theoretical foundation were excluded

$N_6 = 12$

Included in the Literature	Articles included $n_7 = 60$

Related articles cited in the articles, literature reviews, and editorials or suggested by the reviewers were included

$n_7 = 60$ articles which theoretically investigated QIs' work experiences were included in this literature review. These articles are listed in Appendix.

Data analysis
Each article was first subject to coding regarding the scope. A summary of the results is presented in Table 1. Most of the extant literature investigates migration to the "Global North". Regarding the destination country, existing studies mainly cover two geographical spans: countries with a points-based system for attracting (skilled) immigrants, such Canada and Australia, and European countries whose immigration system is mainly characterised by humanitarian aspects, such as easier family reunifications and asylum-seeking and a relatively generous welfare system. As shown in Table 1, most of the studied immigrants originated in the Middle East, China or South Asia. Table 2 overviews the management and organisation journals demonstrating interest in the work experiences of QIs. *International Journal of Human Resource Management* and *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal* are the two main outlets for relevant publications.

Theoretical approaches to studying QIs' work experiences
Researchers have adopted different theoretical approaches to analyse QIs and their experiences. Having an overview of the theoretical approaches used can inform a more nuanced understanding of current progress. The literature review reveals that QIs' work experiences have been studied from eight theoretical perspectives, which Table 3 outlines. The approaches can be roughly categorised into two groups. One group of theories concentrates on the type of variables explaining antecedents of the migration decision and particularly on the consequences of immigration in terms of employment and career

Scope		# Studies
Profession	Medical profession	4
	Accountants	3
	Academics	2
	IT professionals	2
	Other professions	3[a]
	Mixed professions	6[b]
	No specific profession	40
Host country/region	Canada	16
	Australia	12
	Western/Southern Europe	10
	UK	6
	Scandinavia	4
	USA	3
	Japan	1
	Mixed sample or not specified	8[c]
Country/region of origin	Middle East and North Africa	8
	China	5
	South Asia (India, Nepal, Pakistan)	5
	Europe	3
	Central/Latin America	3
	Philippines	1
	Norway	1
	Mixed sample or not specified	34

Note(s): [a]Scientists (biotechnology), Engineers and Managers, [b]IT and Accounting (2), IT and Engineering, IT and Medical, Nursing and Engineering, and Regulated professions, [c]Including France and Germany, Western Christian countries, the UK and US, countries in the United Nations Development Programme, the US and Canada, Canada and Spain and France

Table 1.
Geographical and
occupational
distribution of articles

Journal title	No. of articles
International Journal of Human Resource Management	12
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal	5
Career Development International	3
International Journal of Manpower	
Journal of Vocational Behavior	
Work, Employment and Society	
Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources Management	2
Gender, Work and Organization	
Human Resources for Health	
Journal of International Migration and Integration	
23 journals	1

Table 2.
Distribution of articles
by journal

outcomes. The second group is characterised by focus on the acculturation process, the challenges for immigrants and their host society, and the coping strategies. Following Lohaus and Habermann (2019), the former are labelled content theories and the latter are labelled process theories.

The content theories include human capital theory, career capital theory, intersectionality and cultural identity transition. The process theories include theory of practice, sensemaking and social identity theory. The articles and associated theories are presented in Appendix. In the following sections, we analyse the contribution of each theoretical approach to the

Theoretical approach	Origin	Leading author(s) in the field of origin	No. of articles	Category	Main focus
Human capital theory	Economics	Shultz (1961), Becker (1962)	13	Content theory	Individual-level knowledge, skills, abilities, personality and social attributes as determinants of migration and its consequences (e.g. employment and wage)
Career capital theory	Management and Organisation	DeFillippi and Arthur (1994)	6	Content theory	Individual human, social and motivational capital, in interaction with organisational characteristics and strategies, determine migrants' career prospects
Theory of practice	Sociology	Bourdieu (1977, 1986)	8	Process theory	A combination of multi-level, individual capital and agency (habitus) and the institutional framework (field) determine work experiences and career strategies
Sensemaking	Management and Organisation	Weick (1995), Helms Mills et al. (2010)	6	Process theory	Explains the cognitive processes and strategies of QIs in managing barriers to their career transition and development
Social identity theory	Sociology	Tajfel and Turner (1986)	8	Content theory	Employers' behaviour is often associated with stereotypes, and subtle discrimination leads to adverse selection of QIs
Intersectionality	Feminist studies	Crenshaw (1991)	6	Content theory	Intersection of individual gender, migration status, country of origin and religion with institutional and cultural pressures affects power relations in the host society
Cultural identity transition	Psychology	Berry (1997)	4	Content theory	Identifies different outcomes of acculturation (4 types of cultural transition in terms of attachment to the culture of country of origin and host country) and the associated antecedents and career outcomes
Career-centred approaches	Management and Organisation	Various scholars	9	Loosely specified theoretical concept	Personal choices, individual and organisational career management strategies, and destination country institutions affect QIs career outcomes

Table 3.
Theoretical approaches to studying qualified immigrants' work experiences

research area (i.e. QIs' work experiences), summarise the related empirical findings and consider each approach's limitations.

Human capital theory (HCT)
Contribution to the research area: Human capital theory (HCT) prevails in the study of migrants. Human capital refers to the knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics (KSAOs) that individuals learn and develop through education and training. Rooted in economics and the seminal works of Schultz (1961) and Becker (1962), HCT is based on the idea that migration is an investment and individuals may migrate and sacrifice short-term security for the sake of future pecuniary and non-pecuniary returns, such as higher salaries, better employment opportunities and better quality of life. For example, Harvey (2012) found

that British scientists are motivated to move to the United States by professional opportunities, whereas Indian scientists are mainly driven by educational opportunities. In short, HCT explains why people migrate through a cost–benefit perspective.

The principal theoretical assumption of HCT in migration research is that the decision to migrate is logical and pertains to the rate of return from migration. According to HCT, a QI's human capital can explain their labour market outcome in the new country. As an early theory in migration study, HCT emphasises human capital as the key predictor of career success: the better a migrant's knowledge and skills, the better their career outcomes (Syed, 2008). Therefore, individuals might consider international mobility as moving towards a market where their human capital is valued more. Accordingly, in our research context, HCT mainly explains the choices (i.e. reasons to migrate) and consequences (i.e. labour market outcomes) associated with skilled migrants.

Beyond micro studies focussing on differences in KSAOs, the human capital concept is also an important construct in macro-economic studies. Some articles use the notions of brain gain and brain drain to analyse the gain or loss of human capital by immigration flows between countries. This macro perspective considers the migration of skilled migrants a win for the host country, as qualified migrants fill the skills gap in certain occupations and transfer knowledge. Conversely, the migration of professionals is negative for the country of origin as it loses talented and productive workers (Bornat *et al.*, 2011; Brugha *et al.*, 2016; Ganguli, 2015; Herfs, 2014; Humphries *et al.*, 2013; Liu *et al.*, 2015; Silvanto *et al.*, 2015; Stankovic *et al.*, 2013). The migration of medical professionals is particularly discussed in terms of brain gain/drain. The points-based policy regimes adopted by countries such as Canada and Australia follow HCT and the brain gain/drain perspective. Such immigration policies and nation-branding campaigns target migrants possessing specific skill sets in high demand in the destination country, and assume that such migrants will fully integrate into the job market, thereby contributing to long-term economic growth, higher productivity and greater competitiveness (Covell *et al.*, 2017; Hakak *et al.*, 2010; Silvanto *et al.*, 2015).

Empirical findings: Nevertheless, in empirical testing of HCT, only a few studies support the assumption that skilled immigrants' higher levels of human capital lead to better labour outcomes in the short- to mid-term. Contradictorily, many studies report the opposite. Although QIs, on average, are a privileged group with regard to their human capital, socio-cultural and institutional factors shape their career outcomes differently (Ette *et al.*, 2016). Despite a shortage of doctors in the Irish healthcare system, migrant doctors reported deskilling, brain waste and intention to emigrate (Humphries *et al.*, 2013). Despite being skilled and selected based on their qualifications by the Australian immigration office, immigrant engineers and IT professionals face hurdles in the selection process and in integration once employed (Mahmud *et al.*, 2014). Relatedly, a higher likelihood of skill underutilisation has been reported by IT and accounting professionals (Almeida and Fernando, 2017). Internationally educated nurses who had recently arrived in Canada were found to have high levels of human capital (knowledge, professional experience and language proficiency) but still had difficulty securing employment (Covell *et al.*, 2017).

Human capital is not completely transferable between countries (Neubecker, 2014). Banerjee and Lee (2015) show that the national source of human capital (e.g. educational credentials from the host country) contributes to decreasing the earnings gap between QIs and locals.

Limitations: Some of the articles using micro-economic theories of HCT are less attentive to the complex effects of the socio-economic context of host societies on immigrants' career outcomes. Their cost–benefit perspective tends to overlook the importance of social networks and structural challenges (Harvey, 2012). For instance, Hakak *et al.* (2010) suggest that QIs' career success and satisfaction in host economies is strongly influenced by their ethnic origin.

HCT also has theoretical restrictions in capturing the attitudes and behaviours that migrants display as processes, rather than individual qualities.

Career capital theory (CCT)

Contribution to the research area: To enrich the HCT perspective, extensive research has investigated social capital and its effects on immigrants' career development (Lancee, 2012). For instance, Gericke *et al.* (2018) analyse the available types, uses and benefits of social capital with regard to refugees' accessing and integrating into the labour market. They found that vertical bridging social capital (i.e. organisations/institutions based on shared religion, nationality or ethnic background) is a valuable source for securing decent work, whereas horizontal bonding social capital (i.e. family members, friends and acquaintances in the host country) and independent job-searching methods often result in employment in low-skilled jobs. Similarly, Allen (2009) showed that access to co-ethnic social capital upon arrival decreased earnings for female refugees. Lubbers *et al.* (2020) review and classification of research on migrants' transnational social networks offers valuable insight.

A more exhaustive alternative to human capital and social capital is career capital theory (CCT; (DeFillippi and Arthur, 1994), also relabelled intelligent career theory (Arthur *et al.*, 1995). CCT broadens the scope of human capital and provides a comprehensive typology of capitals needed to develop and achieve success in one's career. Adopting a resource-based perspective, DeFillippi and Arthur (1994) and Inkson and Arthur (2001) identified the main types of capital as knowing-why, knowing-how and knowing-whom. Knowing-why refers to the energy, sense of purpose, motivation and identification with the work that an individual brings to their career. Knowing-how, very similar to the notion of human capital, refers to the skills, expertise, and both tacit and explicit knowledge an individual accumulates. Knowing-whom, similar to the notion of social capital, refers to one's network of work-related connections, including not only supervisors and co-workers but also customers, suppliers, consultants, etc. (Inkson and Arthur, 2001). In the context of migration research, knowing-why refers to knowing the reason for migration, the motivation for integration, and the expectations of the local labour market; knowing-how is the accredited skills and the knowledge of and familiarity with local business culture; and knowing-whom refers to developing a proper work and non-work network (Zikic, 2015).

Empirical findings: QIs are very likely to lose some of the human and social capitals crucial to their career advancement (Cooke *et al.*, 2013). This can happen in various ways, such as non-accredited foreign degrees and certificates, lack of local work experience and ineffective communication due to language barriers. CCT conceives varied forms of career capital as dynamic factors, rather than static, fixed and given. As well as the stocked human capital brought from the country of origin, an immigrant may want to add to their human or social capital in the host country (Fang *et al.*, 2009). Coping strategies include, for example, re-education and participation in bridging programmes to familiarise oneself with the country-specific professional culture or communication style (Fang *et al.*, 2009). Regarding knowing-why and motivation for migration, Cerdin *et al.* (2014) propose that migrants frame immigration in terms of expected gains versus losses. QIs who fear losing a lot by moving to the new country will have the lowest motivation to integrate, whereas those who believe they will substantially gain by so moving will be more motivated (and strive more) to integrate.

The role of organisations is very critical to QIs' career outcomes. Organisational characteristics such as size, resource availability, the global culture of the profession (e.g. IT) and having clients with a similar ethnic background to the migrant can all influence the employment of QIs, either unfavourably or favourably (Almeida *et al.*, 2012). Organisational integration policies affect the motivations and, consequently, efforts of QIs to develop their career capital (Cerdin *et al.*, 2014). Firms that embrace a level of diversity beyond race, age,

and gender equality and that seek QI capitals as a source of competitive advantage increase the likelihood of QIs' employment and the full utilisation of their capitals (Zikic, 2015).

Limitations: Although CCT extends the narrow focus of human capital and considers other types of capital, including social connections and personal motivation, the researchers adopting this theory do not explicitly explore the significance of institutional environment on the development and deployment of career capital, particularly for QIs undergoing international career transitions.

Bourdieu's theory of practice (BTP)
Contribution to the research area: Several authors have found Bourdieu's theory of practice (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu, 1986) to be useful for studying QIs (e.g. Al Ariss and Syed, 2011; Eggenhofer-Rehart *et al.*, 2018; Fernando and Cohen, 2016; Liversage, 2009; Winterheller and Hirt, 2017). Like CCT, Bourdieu's theory (1986) considers other types of capital. However, beyond perceiving QIs as individuals possessing easily transferable capital, Bourdieu's theory of practice (BTP) argues that the home and host society value capital differently. This theory recognises the structural barriers that severely restrict legitimacy and use of capital in the host society. Another central notion is the agency of skilled immigrants in shaping their international work and lives (Al Ariss and Syed, 2011).

Rooted in sociology, the notions of habitus, field and capital are key elements of BTP (Bourdieu, 1986). According to Bourdieu, four forms of capital – economic, social, cultural and symbolic – determine the actions of a migrant in the new institutional framework of the host society. Migrants enter the host society with a specific worldview and set of dispositions (i.e. habitus). Habitus is a product of history (such as social class, family upbringing, and educational and work experiences in the home country) but can also be transformed. Through cultural encounters and socialisation, the habitus of the migrant transforms and they might change how they feel, act, talk, dress, hold their body, etc. BTP is essentially a relational theory that links migrants as agentic, reflexive and strategic actors with the embedded institutional contexts (i.e. field). In the context of international mobility, field refers to the socially constructed career environment in the new country, influenced by the national culture and labour market characteristics.

Bourdieu's theory elucidates the complex work experiences of skilled migrants embedded in a multi-layered context, encompassing, for example, migration policy, professional association policy, and individual characteristics and career strategies.

Empirical findings: Migrants might initially fail to achieve a desired career, due to devaluation of migrant capital in the host society (Joy *et al.*, 2018) and inadequate job-search strategies in the new and different labour market (Eggenhofer-Rehart *et al.*, 2018). After initially experiencing negative emotions, loss of identity and status, and a sense of out-of-placeness, skilled migrants begin to learn the rules of the game in the country of migration and change their habitus accordingly. From an agentic view, Bourdieu proposes that skilled migrants mobilise the social, cultural and economic resources they possess and generate new forms of capital to sustain or improve their position within the host country's power structure (Al Ariss and Syed, 2011). Skilled migrants attempt to adjust to the new career field by accumulating career capital that is highly valued within the field (Winterheller and Hirt, 2017). Akkaymak (2017) showed that, in Canada, highly educated Turkish asylum seekers had considerably lower career attainment than Turkish skilled migrants. Besides having lower language proficiency, asylum seekers were also not permitted to apply for student loans, which prevented them accumulating Canadian institutionalised cultural capital.

According to Bourdieu, a new field necessitates change in habitus or capital. For instance, some migrants might leverage the capital connected to their country of origin (e.g. extensive knowledge of the culture, market and language) to create a new and rare culture-specific

capital (Neville *et al.*, 2014; Winterheller and Hirt, 2017). This type of culture-specific capital is valuable for a company in the host country that wants to do business in a migrant's home country. QIs might also become cultural brokers for other migrants and engage in activities such as translation or immigrant case work (Liversage, 2009). Sometimes, QIs might even try to change the rules of the game (Joy *et al.*, 2018). From an agentic view, migrants might change the process of assessment and validation of their capital. For instance, McGuire and Lozada (2017) explored the reluctance of Filipino nurses in the UK to join unions and highlighted the activities of one particular nurse: a passionate advocate of non-EU workers' rights. She covertly acted as a Filipino trade union organiser to fight inequality in the workplace. In such cases, rather than relying on existing institutions, migrants strive to change the field and its rules.

Limitations: Bourdieu's theory has a macro perspective and focusses on the effects of the institutional framework and migrants' agency. It has less power to explain the role of organisations, such as diversity strategy, human resource (HR) processes and manager characteristics. Furthermore, BTP insufficiently emphasises the regulatory aspect of the institutional framework. Recent articles on the effects of regulatory standards and immigration policies include Fellini and Guetto (2019), Ozkan (2018), Tani (2020) and Devitt (2011).

Sensemaking

Contribution to the research area: Rooted in cognitive and social psychology, sensemaking (Weick, 1995) and critical sensemaking (CSM); (Helms Mills *et al.*, 2010) provide a research lens to examine how immigrants make sense of their new environment. Sensemaking results from a shock, break in routine, or crisis, such as entering a new labour market, the interruption of routine understandings and practices regarding job-searching, networking and recruitment, or initial failure to adjust to the new life or integrate into the new labour market. The discrediting of their foreign experiences and the need to learn local business culture before gaining employment is a surprise for QIs (Zikic *et al.*, 2010). Following such shocks or surprises, immigrants engage in sensemaking to not only determine what to do next but also resolve the anxiety and fear that may accompany the experience. CSM expands Weick's model by addressing the role of power and context and fusing structural and socio-psychological factors. CSM explains how the combination of individual psychological properties, organisational rules and the context in which organisations exist allow individuals to make sense of their environments and take action on a day-to-day basis (Helms Mills *et al.*, 2010).

Sensemaking has a retrospective nature, and migrants mostly rely on the past to interpret their current situation. Retrospective sensemaking may, thus, have particular impact with respect to migrants' initial failure, as thinking-as-usual and expecting a set of actions to result in a specific outcome is not valuable in the new context. For example, the training that a skilled migrant has received previously or the negotiation skills they have used may not be applicable to their new job role and organisational setting. Sensemaking is grounded in identity construction in the context of social and ongoing interactions, and thus helps us understand how professional identity and other identity labels (e.g. newcomer, employed or unemployed, ethnic person, second-class) are produced, maintained and normalised in lived experience of QIs (Hilde and Mills, 2017). Sensemaking is not accurate but merely plausible. The understanding of post-migration events may not be the same among different migrant groups, and one event or situation may have various explanations. This reflects a situation where different meanings and coping strategies may emerge as plausible for different groups (Hilde and Mills, 2017). A similar approach is professional (re-)socialisation of immigrants (Neiterman and Bourgeault, 2015a, b), which considers the subtle aspects of work and language and the identity modification of QIs.

Empirical findings: Although immigrants collect information about the destination country before migration and prepare themselves mentally for a change, they face challenges during the cultural transition phase. These can be related to missing family and friends, as well as coping with unfamiliar spaces, landscapes and ethnoscapes. Moreover, despite the belief that professional codes are universal, a new style of communication and different techniques and tools might form part of a myriad of social practices in a given cultural locality that the professional should adopt. After initial feelings of loneliness and alienating experiences, professionals begin to learn and understand the norms and practices through meaning reconstruction that eventually results in establishing equilibrium between self and society.

Malik *et al.* (2017) use four-phase transition cycle: preparation, encounter, adjustment and stabilisation. No matter how well a migrant has prepared for the new environment, novel experiences in terms of new work roles and cultural dissimilarities might bring stress, anxiety and new expectations. To adjust to these and pursue personal development, a migrant may adopt different strategies such as information seeking, relationship building, and formal and informal networking (Malik *et al.*, 2017).

Aten *et al.* (2016) studied how a sample of Filipino engineers employed cognitive schemas (Weick, 1995) to overcome anxiety and uncertainty in the new context. Aten *et al.* (2016) identified three mobility frames that migrants use to make sense of career options and barriers: (1) the *migrant* mobility frame, which emphasises adaptation, high attachment to the host country, accepting invincible occupational barriers and taking available jobs, often leading to brain waste; (2) the *mobile professional* mobility frame, which emphasises opportunity exploitation, professional achievement and only taking professional jobs commensurate with one's skills level and (3) the *migrant professional* mobility frame, which lies in between and emphasises integration, acceptance that it takes time to overcome contextual barriers. This frame often leads to underutilisation of talent. Similarly, Zikic *et al.* (2010) found three types of sensemaking process and outcome: (1) *embracing* career orientation, characterised by QIs' motivation to succeed and take advantage of opportunities, their boundary-less and protean attitude, and proactive and self-directed decisions; (2) *adaptive* career orientation, characterised by maintaining aspiration to work in the previous occupation while taking survival jobs and participating in bridging programmes and (3) *resisting* career orientation, characterised by QIs' inability to exercise psychological mobility and discouragement by the challenges of the new context.

Limitations: Related research concerning QIs does not explicitly use the properties proposed by sensemaking (e.g. plausibility or identity construction). In addition, the decision to migrate and the period before the early shock (e.g. the antecedents of and sensemaking before migration) is outside the scope of CSM. The application of CSM in migration studies can be developed by focussing on resistance to diversity and inclusion in the host society and the social and psychological processes through which discriminatory practices spread and become acceptable.

Social identity theory (SIT) and the similarity effect

Social identity approach is now one of the most influential theories of group processes and intergroup relations worldwide.

Contribution to the research area: social identity theory (SIT) (Tafjel and Turner, 1986; Turner *et al.*, 1987) is an influential social psychology perspective for explaining group processes. According to SIT, people tend to categorise others and themselves based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, age and gender, and make "us vs them" or "in-group vs out-group" distinctions. Part of an individual's self-concept (i.e. attitudes, memories, behaviours and emotions) is social and formed by the groups to which the individual thinks they belong.

This social self might occasionally overwhelm the idiosyncratic, individual qualities of the group's members and determine their attitudes, behaviours and emotions, such that a group member evaluates in-group members more positively than members of other groups (Hornsey, 2008; Sacco *et al.*, 2003). Unlike theories focussed on immigrants' behaviours and perceptions, SIT essentially explains the non-inclusive behaviour of members of the host society. In particular, it is useful to explain subtle workplace discrimination.

Empirical findings: Some immigrants report pressure to mimic in order to access professional work: specifically, they need to adjust their professional identities to more closely resemble native professionals in their accents, way of dressing, assertiveness in meetings, etc. (Thomson and Jones, 2015).

SIT is well suited to explain discrimination towards minority ethnic groups during recruitment, performance management and promotion (Dietz *et al.*, 2015). DelCampo *et al.* (2011) found perception of discrimination among both immigrant and native-born minorities. Candidates who resemble the majority natives in terms of ethnic background, religion, dress or accent are perceived as similar and in-group; otherwise, they are regarded as different and out-group (Almeida *et al.*, 2015). Perceived similarity creates interpersonal attraction and facilitates both communication and prediction of the candidate's performance (Sacco *et al.*, 2003). In-group/out-group distinction and subjective perception of similarity is also an appropriate framework to explain the negative stereotypes and ethnic biases against immigrants. Within an organisational context, the lack of perceived similarity and discrimination towards migrants lead to an ethnic penalty, entailing lower occupational attainment and wages and higher unemployment that cannot be explained by human capital and demographic characteristics (Rafferty, 2012). Aslund *et al.* (2014) showed that, on average, 6% of hires by native managers are immigrants while the corresponding figure is 21% for immigrant managers.

In a macro-level study, Annisette (2017) explains how three recognised professional accounting associations collaboratively aimed to separate accountants trained in the Canadian and British systems (i.e. "us") from foreign-trained accountants (i.e. "them", as undertrained, racialised minority accountants with credentials from a country in the "Global South"). Thus, categorising foreign-trained accountants and requiring them to train further normalises their inferior position in the landscape of accounting in Ontario, defined by the dominant Anglo-centric culture.

Limitations: Immigrants' role in diminishing subtle discrimination by interacting with and influencing the host society, along with the learning process of host society members and employers, is undermined in SIT.

Intersectionality

Contribution to the research area: Intersectionality is rooted in US-based feminist studies which focussed on the intersection of race and gender in the lives of black women (Crenshaw, 1991). Rather than treating gender, race and class as distinct social divisions on separate axes, intersectionality explores how oppression and resistance are constructed through amalgamation of such social and cultural divisions (e.g. the amalgamation of gender (male vs female), race (native vs ethnic) and class (immigrant or refugee vs local)). Intersectionality provides an alternative framework to analyse how power and inequality form based on the interplay of these divisions (Cole, 2009).

Empirical findings: Intersectionality has predominantly been used to study migrant women (Ali *et al.*, 2017; Karlsen, 2012; Mulinari, 2015; Ressia *et al.*, 2017b; Riano *et al.*, 2015; Sang *et al.*, 2013). Because the disadvantage discourse is often used in both migrant studies and women studies, it can be assumed that the intersection of gender and migration negatively affects working migrant women, such that they experience double disadvantage.

However, Sang *et al.* (2013) report that the intersection of two marginalised identities (female and ethnic) does not necessarily result in a double disadvantage; rather, it sometimes offers opportunities. For instance, a professor stated that working closely with her cultural group in the UK provided opportunities for unique research publications and further academic career development.

Intersectionality can potentially be utilised to study the intersection of migration with age (e.g. Fernando *et al.*, 2016), religion (Ali *et al.*, 2017), class status and minority identity (Al Ariss *et al.*, 2013), sexual orientation or disability.

Limitations: Intersectionality is primarily focussed on delineating the formation and maintenance of inequality, rather than elaborating on strategies for social change. It does not acknowledge how a class (i.e. immigrants) can be a source of power. Intersectionality also undermines the agency of migrants, whereas researchers have reported the efforts and ability of migrants to move forward and change. For instance, Murray and Ali (2016) reported Muslim women professionals successfully exercising their agency within the workplace "in response to western stereotypical organisational and societal norms and deep-seated patriarchal customs".

Cultural identity transition (CIT) approach

Contribution to the research area: Through this lens, immigration is perceived as a large-scale cultural change; accordingly, the migrant worker faces new societal and work cultures to which they need to adjust by negotiation between the home and host culture. This line of research is mainly based on Berry's (1997) immigrant acculturation strategies for explaining cultural transition. Berry's work is grounded in constructing a new identity and/or maintaining the previous identity. The intersection of these two identities creates four types of acculturation strategies: integration, assimilation, separation and marginalisation.

Empirical findings: Learning the language and developing socio-cultural relationships with natives increases the visibility of immigrants' ethnic identity. This visibility encourages immigrants to assess whether their identity fits the new context and, consequently, to engage in identity exploration, wherein they: (1) reinforce their ethnic identity; (2) adopt the host nation's dominant identity or (3) create a bicultural identity (Dheer and Lenartowicz, 2018).

Berry's (1997) typology provides a theoretical foundation for studying the antecedents and consequences of QIs' acculturation type. Researchers have identified several determinants of the type of acculturation strategy. Longer duration of stay, language proficiency and social support in the workplace help migrants to more comprehensively capture critical information and to perceive acceptance and inclusion, eventually leading to positive acculturation strategies (i.e. assimilation and integration) (Lu *et al.*, 2011). Interdependent self-construal (seeing oneself as part of an encompassing social relationship and focussing on the connectedness and relatedness of individuals) is significantly associated with adopting integration strategy and avoiding marginalisation (Lu *et al.*, 2016). The host country's collectivistic culture, collective workplace culture and organisational interventions to strengthen relationships among colleagues all increase the likelihood of adopting integration and decrease the likelihood of adopting marginalisation (Dheer and Lenartowicz, 2018; Lu *et al.*, 2016). Krysa *et al.* (2017) use post-colonial analysis to investigate "the underlying assumptions embedded in the messages that are conveyed to teach and prepare immigrants for the Canadian workplace" (p. 483); they discover that neoliberalism, as the dominant paradigm, facilitates the assimilation of QIs, turning them into conforming members of a capitalist system.

Dheer and Lenartowicz (2018) assert that the type of acculturation strategy plays an important role in shaping a QI's career decisions. Separation likely leads to employment in the ethnic economy, either working for firms both owned and controlled by co-ethnic individuals

who mainly employ people with common linguistic and cultural ties, or starting business ventures focussing primarily on the needs of ethnic consumers in the host society. Assimilation likely leads to mainstream employment: being part of the general workforce in the host country. Finally, integration likely leads to entrepreneurship, driven by opportunities in the host country's economy.

Limitations: CIT considers immigrants' experiences beyond their workplace and includes the interaction of QIs with the host society in general. However, its focus so far has been on the antecedents and outcomes of the transition, rather than the psychological processes of transition and identity reconstruction following immigration. In particular, the professional identity and its change process have been neglected.

Career-centred approach

Contribution to the field: Career development plays a significant role in QIs' decision to migrate and evaluation of their success or failure. In the context of rising international migration flows, we found extensive research focussing on new conceptualisations of career in an international context (Agullo and Egawa, 2009). Although careers take varied forms, an international career is seen as a work-related decision in the broad socio-economic context that has salient effect on the QI's life. Unlike the approaches discussed above, the career-centred approach is a loosely specified theoretical concept – an umbrella term – that combines a set of ideas about the QI's career.

Empirical findings: From a multi-level perspective, Baruch and Forstenlechner (2017) use Baruch *et al.* (2016) model to identify the determinants of highly skilled immigrants' motivation to migrate from or stay in peripheral countries (using the case of UAE). Multiple interconnected factors operate simultaneously at the individual, organisational and national levels, influencing QIs' motivation to consider employment in another country. Proposing the life–career integration model, Chen and Hong (2016) see profession and career choice as a way for QIs to place themselves within their broader society. Career is seen a critical element in the private and public identity of individuals. Similar to the sensemaking approach, the life–career integration model proposes that the career rebuilding experience happens alongside general life transition, significantly influencing migrants' sense of self-worth and identity.

Guerrero and Rothstein (2012) use elements of Kanfer *et al.*'s (2001) job-search model to investigate behaviours and cognitions that QIs can change to enhance their job-search outcomes. Job-search clarity (having clear search objectives and knowledge of job opportunities, how they plan to search, and when they will obtain a job) and job-search self-efficacy (confidence in one's ability to effectively accomplish job-search activities) are positively related to higher job-search intensity (more frequent and broader searching) and, ultimately, employment (Guerrero and Rothstein, 2012). Ressia *et al.* (2017a) revealed that skilled migrants concentrate on career self-management strategies, such as volunteering, finding any job to secure income and utilising social networks.

Al Ariss (2010) identifies four orientations or modes of engagement chosen by migrants to navigate within their new organisational and national structures and to cope with associated structural barriers. *Maintenance* refers to working around, rather than trying to alter, the recognised barriers (e.g. by changing name or hiding one's religion). In contrast, *transformation*, *entrepreneurship* and *opt out* reflect change entailing attempts to alter structural barriers or career capital (e.g. by pursuing new studies), taking additional risk in establishing a new business to overcome discrimination (e.g. opening a bookstore, instead of pursing an academic career) and operating outside exiting structures due to the pressure of barriers (e.g. deciding to be a housewife), respectively. Similarly, Murray and Ali (2016), referring to Bandura's human agency theory (2001, 2006), investigated the reactions and reflections of Muslim professional women on stressful workplace events, such as

discriminatory behaviour, and categorised their responses. Casado and Caspersz (2016) and Morgan and Finniear (2009) use the psychological contract lens to analyse migrants' experiences and expectations in the workplace. They are perceived by employers to be better performers as they work longer and have higher motivation. However, migrants' lower levels of communication and language skills increase the possibility of error and limit their ability to cope with exceptional situations, such as unusual customer demands.

Discussion: EDI experiences of QIs in the workplace

This section goes beyond synthesising the existing literature by advancing prior inquiry. First, the identified theoretical approaches are combined to provide a comprehensive in-depth picture of the literature. To do so, the three anti-discriminatory approaches of EDI are used to map progress in explaining the discrimination experienced by QIs in the workplace. This addresses Research Question (1). Second, we supplement theoretical progress in the field by identifying new challenges facing societies and the research community. This addresses Research Question (2). Practical new challenges in the form of mechanisms and initiatives for combating workplace discrimination and improving EDI are presented. The suggested mechanisms and initiatives are based on insights from different theoretical approaches and international findings. Furthermore, a future research agenda is suggested, setting out the theoretical challenges confronting scholars, especially in the management and organisation field. The agenda outlines new or fused theoretical approaches that can provide better understanding of QIs' work experiences regarding EDI.

Theoretical progress

We use EDI to organise the QI literature. Based on reviews by Shore *et al.* (2011) and Oswick and Noon (2014), we distinctly define the three notions. Equality concerns equal opportunities in the labour market and denotes equal chance of entry into employment for QIs. Diversity entails the need to permit new demographic groups into the workplace, as well as providing opportunities for development, job enrichment and hierarchical promotion. Diversity is tied to demographic challenges (ageing population and the rapid rise in labour market entrants with different characteristics to dominant, white male workers) and focussed on improving performance and competitive advantage. Researchers distinguish two types of diversity. Surface-level diversity includes demographic characteristics (e.g. sex, age, race/ethnicity, disability); like equality initiatives, it is concerned with the fair treatment of these groups in the labour market and within organisations. However, deep-level diversity asserts a wider range of characteristics (e.g. attitudes, beliefs and values, cultural styles, functional backgrounds and cognitive styles), making the notion of diversity more distinctive than equality.

Inclusion as an anti-discriminatory approach is more concerned with missed opportunities than a business need. While diversity focusses on the demographic composition of the organisation and teams, inclusion focusses on employees' full participation and contribution to shaping strategy, work processes, management style and organisational culture by considering different knowledge and perspectives. Shore *et al.* (2011) propose the two dimensions of belongingness and uniqueness for perception of inclusion. For a QI to feel included, they should be treated as an insider in the work group (satisfying the need for belongingness) yet also be allowed/encouraged to retain uniqueness as their difference is considered an opportunity for both individual and organisational learning (confirming that their difference is valued).

Table 4 (column 1) outlines theoretical progress to date and explains the EDI challenges that QIs encounter in the workplace according to existing theories. This addresses Research Question (1). Interestingly, QIs sometimes experience advantages in the workplace.

	Theoretical progress	Practical challenges for enhancing EDI
Equality	HCT, CCT: QIs experience limited access to employment opportunities and downgraded career outcomes since their foreign qualifications and work experiences are undervalued HCT, BTP: QIs in regulated professions perceive qualification recognition as a major structural barrier to accessing employment opportunities CCT: Due to decreased social capital, QIs are less likely to be recruited to jobs vetted by informal networks. They would often have a survival job in sectors employing many of their ethnic group. On the contrary, sometimes, being bicultural and having knowledge of the home country culture and market increase opportunities to be employed as a cultural broker BTP: The field (particularly the regulatory aspect of the institutional framework) might systematically prevent some groups of QIs from utilising or accumulating career capital. Discrimination stems from institutional setting, e.g. not permitting asylum seekers to apply for study loans or not recognising foreign qualifications	(1) Bridging courses and supplementary training should be co-created by employers and professional bodies and tailored to characteristics of immigrants' home educational system(s). Offering such courses to QIs reduces the qualification recognition challenge (2) Local authorities should more actively seek collaboration of organisations, professional bodies, unions and civil society organisations to provide QIs with opportunities to engage with local organisations, professional networks and work culture. Survival jobs and learning the language can be combined with local work experience
Diversity Surface-level diversity (demographic)	SIT: QIs experience an ethnic penalty (i.e. higher rate of unemployment, being over-educated and over-qualified for their roles, and receiving lower wages than locals) due to subtle discrimination based on their ethnicity, religion, traditional apparel, appearance and accent. Reasons for discrimination include gatekeepers considering QIs as a threat to local job applicants or the professional identity and negative stereotyping Intersectionality: In many cases, the gender role of caregivers puts women ultimately in charge of settlement and caring for family and children, at the expense of their professional career. The gender role of the breadwinner puts men under psychological pressure when unable to find stable employment and financially provide for their family	(1) Organisations should recognise QIs as an emerging disadvantaged group and respond by: creating separate divisions or dedicating staff to deal solely with issues of nationality, diversity and inclusion; providing diversity training and reflection sessions; monitoring recruitment, pay and promotion with respect to immigrants; and extending the definition of discrimination to include covert forms of daily discrimination prevalent in the workplace, such as microaggressions

Table 4.
Progress and new challenges regarding EDI experiences of QIs in the workplace

(continued)

	Theoretical progress	Practical challenges for enhancing EDI
Deep-level diversity (cognitive)	CSM: QIs experience verbal, attitudinal and professional microaggressions (minor and unintentional degradations and putdowns in the form of sarcasm, stereotyping and scepticism) stemming from their ethnicity/nationality. This recurring, everyday experience contributes to the structures of oppression and marginalisation BTP: QIs' different habitus, including communication skills (e.g. during job interviews and day-to-day work interactions) and unfamiliarity with unwritten rules and norms, lead to higher unemployment and underemployment CSM, CIT: Both explicit formal requirements and the subtler informal demands of employers and professional bodies force QIs to mimic the behaviours and attitudes of local professionals, who they must resemble to overcome structural barriers to employment, recognition and higher status. This mimicry is sometimes performed reluctantly and with frustration that cultural diversity is hypocritically valued in words but not in practice. QIs might unwillingly assimilate into the majority culture at the expense of retaining their original cultural/professional identity	(1) With negative images of immigrants abundant in media and politics (e.g. unemployed people in need regarded as a burden on the welfare system and associated with unregulated work), QIs should actively communicate their contribution to society and the economy (e.g. addressing skills shortages, increasing entrepreneurship and innovation, enriching cultural life) (2) Labour market integration initiatives should include an educational module on the labour market and working culture. Organisations can contribute to this by providing internship opportunities and communicating to QIs the norms and behavioural patterns of the working culture and effective local techniques for job-seeking and networking
Inclusion Belongingness	CSM: QIs experience a constant struggle (continuously oscillating between feelings of foreignness or otherwise) while re-establishing their identity SIT, Intersectionality: Social categorising of QIs as out-group due to their different ethnicity, race and religion is a common phenomenon CIT: Language proficiency and social support at work (supportive supervisor and co-workers) are related to identifying with the host country's cultural identity (higher belongingness)	(1) Organisations should assign trained mentors to QIs. These mentors should act as cultural and technical brokers and interpreters to assist QIs to acculturate (2) Organisations should provide opportunities for immigrants to be involved in diversity management and recruitment processes
Uniqueness	Intersectionality: Being disadvantaged across multiple groups (e.g. based on ethnicity, gender, religion, age) does not necessarily lead summatively to multiple jeopardy. Surprisingly, being an outsider in several domains can give QIs unique career capital	(1) Organisational learning should be part of the rationale for diversity and inclusion. Diversity and inclusion should be reflected in related processes, such as CSR, strategy, sustainability and ethical codes of conduct

Note(s): HCT: Human capital theory; CCT: Career capital theory; BTP: Bourdieu's theory of practice; SIT: Social identity theory; CSM: Critical sensemaking; CIT: Cultural identity transition

Table 4.

For instance, the bicultural identity of QIs and their familiarity with the home culture and market provide opportunities to be employed as cultural brokers.

New challenges
New challenges are divided into two categories: practical and theoretical.

The practical new challenges aim to enhance EDI and include initiatives and strategies that could be considered by social actors to make a difference in the workplace and labour market. Higher levels of communication and collaboration are needed among immigrants, organisations, civil society organisations, and national, regional and local institutions to consider different perspectives. In particular, employers should be more involved in policymaking. Their concern regarding QIs' acculturation to the local work culture, communication style and behavioural norms should be incorporated in labour market integration initiatives. Organisations should also actively participate in these initiatives by offering internships and mentorships to newly arrived QIs. Civil society organisations, such as unions, industry associations and non-governmental organisations, can initiate and direct the communication and collaboration among different levels. Initiatives and strategies for enhancing EDI are presented in Table 4 (column 2).

The theoretical challenges form a future research agenda. We identified the theoretical grounds used in the literature to study QIs. As Table 3 shows, five streams are based on theories borrowed from disciplines other than management and organisation studies, such as sociology, psychology and economics. The remaining three theoretical approaches are developed by management scholars; however, except for a few studies adopting the career-centred approach, the models and frameworks are not developed specifically for studying immigrants. Also, as our classification of theoretical approaches into process and content theories indicates, none of the approaches comprehensively includes the antecedents, process and consequences of migration. Accordingly, developing a comprehensive theoretical framework specifically for QI studies is an urgent necessity.

As a path towards such a framework for studying QIs' EDI experiences in the workplace, we propose several theoretical considerations for future research. Some elaborate on suggestions made by other researchers, some fuse identified theoretical approaches to enhance explanatory power and some are new theoretical approaches for extending current thinking regarding the workplace EDI experiences of QIs.

(1) *Relational/multi-level approach*: The relational perspective proposes that QIs' experiences result from interrelated and interdependent multi-level challenges faced by QIs in the host labour market (Al Ariss and Syed, 2011; Syed, 2008). This perspective particularly emphasises the micro-level individual agency of migrants in shaping their experiences, as well as the meso-level organisational and macro-level professional and institutional influences that shape the reality QIs experience (Al Ariss and Syed, 2011). Specifically, the role of meso-level factors is less studied, with the following critical missing elements needing further investigation: the attitudes and characteristics of hiring managers; diversity strategies; HR practices; unions as proponents of EDI in the workplace; and the initiatives of civil society organisations and non-governmental organisations in assisting migrants to integrate into the host society by offering volunteer jobs, language training, psychological support and informal contacts. At the macro level, we suggest using the institutional theory and its three pillars.

(2) *Strategic human resource view*: QIs build a talent pool in the host country, and through management and utilisation of their talents, the national economy and organisations would gain enhanced competitive advantage (Zikic, 2015). QIs have high potential to influence organisational and societal outcomes. The prevalent

discourse of the lack and deficit approach often frames immigrants as a problem; a group lacking necessary personal qualities in term of capital and language, dependent on assistance from the host society and unable to be integrated (Horner and Weber, 2011; Ponzoni *et al.*, 2017). Adopting a strategic human resource management (SHRM) perspective, more studies are needed to scrutinise migrants' value for organisations in the host society and to identify the rationales of organisations when hiring QIs. These rationales might include creating an optimal mix of competencies, cost-efficient allocation of labour and legitimacy gains for different stakeholders (Ortlieb *et al.*, 2014). The SHRM approach might even reveal how immigrants can influence the strategic course of an organisation in a bottom-up manner, for instance, through entering a new market due to social capital of immigrants in their country of origin. Specifically, the notion of inclusion is in line with SHRM.

(3) *Agency–institution play*: Exercising agency and its effects on career consequences are discussed explicitly in some theoretical approaches, such as BTP. Institutional frameworks have also been discussed mainly in terms of their objective or subtle career barriers in critical sensemaking, BTP and SIT. However, it is necessary to elaborate on the dynamic interaction of agency–institution, how the institutional framework encourages or restricts QIs' agency in their career trajectory, and specifically how QIs can exercise their agency to change the institutional framework.

(4) *Identity–capital play*: Some theoretical approaches, such as CCT or BTP, mainly try to explain how QIs rebuild their capital in the new environment, while others, such as CSM or CIT, focus mainly on changes in professional identity. However, QIs often use a compromise strategy by rebuilding their career capital and simultaneously adjusting professional identity. Some interesting questions to pose include: Under what conditions does a QI's change of professional identity (e.g. becoming an entrepreneur or entirely changing their occupation) lead to a better career trajectory? Under what conditions does accumulation of career capital (e.g. re-education before entering the job market) lead to a better career trajectory? What are the long-term effects of changing professional identity or cultural identity on a QI's career success, job satisfaction and life satisfaction?

(5) *Host–immigrant play (fusing SIT and CSM):* Proper fusion of theories can lead to higher explanatory power regarding QIs' work experiences by addressing the limitations of individual theories. Tatli and Özbilgin's (2012) work on combining BTP and intersectionality is a good example of such an effort. To overcome the predominant etic approach in researching EDI in the workplace (e.g. static, fixed and predetermined notions of difference or Western bias), they propose combining intersectionality and BTP to form an emic approach that starts by empirically identifying situated, context-specific categories of diversity. BTP is then used to "grasp the complex way in which privilege and disadvantage work across the lines of difference" (Tatli and Özbilgin, 2012). As another example, we propose fusing CSM and SIT to relate immigrants' and local perspectives. Both theories have identity construction as a central concept for understanding the process of self-construction. CSM is used to explain how immigrants respond to the questions "Who am I?" and "How should I act?". SIT also deals with self-construction, but its identity construction is based on group membership and rests on the concept of otherness. SIT is used to explain how members of the host society respond to the questions "Who am I and who am I not?" and "How am I different and from whom? How am I similar and with whom?" (Holck *et al.*, 2016).

While a few studies have attempted to explain the process of re-establishing immigrant identity through communication and negotiation with local people and institutions, we are not aware of any study on re-establishing the host society's social identity based on interaction with immigrants. Host societies and organisations must learn to change their attitude, perceptions and behaviours towards immigrants, especially with respect to their integration. Management and organisation scholars could specifically analyse the sensemaking process of gatekeepers such as hiring managers and decision-makers at professional bodies, as well as co-workers and customers in the workplace.

This is a timely topic with important practical implications for investigating how host society members make sense of immigration and the changes that immigrants cause in the society. In recent years, migration has become a challenging political agenda item for almost all countries in the "Global North". For instance, the recent influx of refugees into Europe has intensified social and political concern about immigrants. Fear that the current levels and structure of migration are unsustainable is influencing backlashes against globalisation, such as Brexit, the America First policy and the rise of right-wing parties.

Conclusion

We identified eight theoretical grounds used in the literature to delineate the process of migration and effects on the careers and lives of QIs. To summarise the theoretical progress, we then presented state-of-the-art understanding of QIs' EDI experiences in the workplace. Finally, to extend current thinking, we discussed new challenges facing societies in terms of initiatives for enhancing EDI in the workplace and labour market and identified future research directions.

Due to its focus on theory development, this study excluded empirical papers with no theoretical foundation. This research limitation should be addressed by a systematic review of empirical literature. We also only considered management and organisation literature. There are numerous other research fields, such as sociology, public policy, economics, geography and migration studies that can provide researchers with further insights and guidance.

To develop a holistic understanding of QIs' work experiences, a framework with a multi-level approach and including the strategic human resource view, agency–institution play, identity–capital play and host–immigrant play is needed. It should also focus more on changes, learning processes and the role of organisations, hiring managers and labour market intermediaries. Developing such a framework would facilitate gaining a comprehensive view of QIs' work experiences and could add value to HR and employment research. We hope our review is a first step towards developing the theoretical framework for studying QIs in the workplace.

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Appendix
The appendix is available online for this article.

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