

Labor Market Discrimination against African Immigrants': Between Employment Vulnerability and Social Exclusion

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Abstract This article explores labor market discrimination against African immigrants' who are settled in Norway. For this, it considers to what extent the career prospects of the migrants' are limited in the Norwegian labor market. In addition, it examines how the employment position of the migrants' affect their socioeconomic status. The article, further, analyze and discuss the factors that mitigate or reinforce inequality in the sector. Using a qualitative interview of 20 respondents with backgrounds from seven African countries, the article uncovers that, the immigrants' seem to suffer from significant discrimination in employment. To this end, labor market discrimination warrants critical analysis aimed at transformation by confronting conditions of unequal power relations in the employment fields. The article recognizes that equal opportunities and a more dynamic labor market is an indispensable element of labor inclusion and integration in mainstream society. Against the background of increasing ethnic diversity, a greater emphasis on equal access to the labor market will have positive ramifications on belongingness, social cohesion, participation and collective well-being. In contrast, inequalities in employment often coincide with destabilizing circuits of social marginalization, vulnerability, poverty, and financial stigma. Accordingly, this article allows stakeholders to recognize the increasingly changing realities in the employment fields, adopt proactive measures, appropriate new world of work and the enhancement of human capital.

Keywords: *employment vulnerability, hegemony, immigrants, labor market discrimination, social exclusion*

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1. Introduction

Labor market discrimination and its impact on the socioeconomic status of immigrants is important for social research. In an unfavorable employment situation, stakeholders appear to be more inclined to explain their concerns with objective circumstances and less personal characteristics. Therefore, the crucial questions that guide this article involves: 'To what extent are the employment prospects of African immigrants', limited in the Norwegian labor market?' 'How, on the other hand, does the employment position of the immigrants' affect their socioeconomic status?' In essence, the article delves into the experiences and perceptions of the African immigrants' regarding labor market discrimination. In particular, it examines the factors that have significant impact on the employment opportunities of the immigrants' in Norway. However, it does not intend to make a historical overview of the phenomena, but rather to discuss some of the ways in which the immigrants' are victims of discrimination, highlighting its socioeconomic impacts. As a complex socioeconomic phenomenon, labor market discrimination

changes the composition of labor resources, creates employment challenges and exacerbates the demographic situation in the receiving state. What underlies this social practice is important both for reasons of economic viability as per normative consideration and better integration outcome. From this perspective, labor market integration of immigrants relates to the host society's ability to guarantee a dignified socioeconomic existence, where dignity means fairness and inclusion [1].

Moreover, the attempt to impose integration without employment inclusion seems less functional to guarantee socioeconomic efficiency. Hence, employment practices cannot disregard full and sincere adherence to the principle of non-discrimination in all areas of labor life. Equal access to the labor market is an important element to protect people at risk of poverty and social exclusion. This path requires investments in terms of policy, commitment and time. Nevertheless, the success or failure of this process can affect other dimensions such as social stability, political participation, and cultural adaptation. An efficient allocation of human resources requires equitable distribution of individual potentials. In contrast, employment discrimination prevents equal opportunities, restricts social mobility and perpetuates economic inequality. It can also

reduce the incentives of the affected persons to invest in human capital, which affects the power to modify individual socioeconomic challenges.

Essentially, this article adopts discourse theoretical approach, especially, Gramsci's conception of hegemony. Hegemonic discourse is a central repository of the diverse effects of social practices that produce marginalization and exclusion [2]. The article dissects a specific dimension of the immigrants' social reality. It seeks to understand this inequity and the need to build a more effective and inclusive labor market. Hence, it aims at a reconstruction of the differences that exist in the sector and identify new elements useful for comprehending this challenge. It further maps the drawbacks of discrimination and argue the inevitable consequences of a silent social change that may push vulnerable groups into the poverty brackets. Indeed, equal access to the labor market contributes to social well-being through a work activity without which vulnerable populations; in particular, immigrants become assisted persons, fueling perceptions of socioeconomic exclusion. There is no exceptional circumstances or demonstration of any peculiar error such as would merit discriminating against immigrants in the labor market.

In the context of the above, this article proceeds by taking into account the literature on racism and discrimination before activating Gramscian thought on hegemony, which forms the theoretical foundation of this article. It thus exploits hegemonic discourses that trigger labor market discrimination. Correspondingly, it presents the methodological approach in part four, while section five analyzes the findings. Finally, section six discusses the findings, before concluding with a critique and a reflection on employment inclusion.

2. The Discourse of Racism and Discrimination

Racism and discrimination remain factors that often come into play in terms of African immigrants' access to the employment fields despite Norway's policies and approaches aimed at addressing the challenge [3]. Conceptually, racism exemplifies a complex cluster of racially based representations, views, attitudes, beliefs and spheres of opinions that serve to establish social, political, or economic marginalization of other groups [4]. It further exhibits traits of exclusion, hate and repugnance [4]. Thus, discrimination takes place between two asymmetric poles. Firstly, the discriminating group, active and dominant, and secondly, the discriminated group, passive and dominated. It implies, therefore, a practice of power that produces an inferior status in the victims of discrimination. These discriminatory practices have the purpose of compromising or preventing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise of vital freedoms [4]. The practice can also be systemic conveyed by policies or practices that promote, maintain, or reinforce particular advantages or privileges to certain groups or individuals. Both direct and indirect discrimination of immigrants are evident in the Norwegian labor market [4]. The former transpires where people receive less favorably practices than the others are. Likewise, the later occurs when a provision, criterion or

practice would render an individual or a group, a particular disadvantage compared with the others [4]

In Norway, while attitudes towards immigrants have been positive in recent years, there remain signs of polarization in the Norwegian public discourse [5]. A recent report indicates that over 60 per cent of the population believe that immigration creates more insecurity ([5], p. 7). Among immigrants in Norway, aspects of a person's identity, ethnic background, skin colour, race, and nationality, forms an important basis for unpleasant and condescending comments in discussions that take place in the public domain ([3], p. 9). In addition, immigrants from Africa are disadvantaged in the labor market as well as having the lowest employment rate after more than 10 years of residence in Norway [5]. Past research further shows that workplace discrimination remains a challenge [6]. Midtbøen and Rogstad [7] comprehensive study about the Norwegian labor market illustrates that the probability of being called in for a job interview is reduced by an average of 25 percent if the prospective applicant has a foreign-sounding name. From this perspective, discrimination is a key obstacle to the full integration of immigrants and their offspring into the labor market and mainstream society. This inequality may not only negatively impact social cohesion and immigrants' incentives to integrate but can also represent an economic loss to the host society [6].

According to Reisigl and Wodak [8], discrimination is not an isolated practice but may take place in a structural-institutional context. This dimension creates a system whereby certain groups are discriminated and excluded from power and influence [9]. The actor may not directly intend to differentiate but the practices may generate discriminatory elements that exclude and ignore the conditions of the other. From this position, discriminatory and exclusionary practices have multiple facets that overflows the social, economic and the political spheres [10]. Discrimination discourse is thus a practice that weaken the power position of vulnerable groups from equal participation in society [11]. However, the impact of migratory flows has undermined the national oneness, homogeneity, and monoculturalism of most receiving states [12]. In turn, this has automatically produced the qualification of the immigrant as a threat, unemployed, poverty, criminal, excluded, and a potential terrorist [13]. For, Hampshire [14] and Togral [15], discrimination has its basis in migration control, which has been on the increase since September 11 attacks and other terrorist-related incidents. In this securitization-migration nexus, migrants are seen as social, political, economic, cultural, and security threat [16,17,18,19].

Furthermore, racism and discrimination require a reflection on the rights of immigrants and on policies aimed at promoting their recognition and effective participation in mainstream society. An argument by Walzer [20] weighs heavily in this regard. In line with Walzer, in most Western societies one can distinguish two categories of people; 'full citizens', and 'others' who are non-citizens [20]. Walzer likened this perspective to how two types of residents coexisted in ancient Athens. The Athenians, full citizens, and the Metic's, mostly foreigners tolerated as useful but without citizenship. Only citizens

and not foreigners participate in decisions relating to the city governance. This according to Walzer is the most common form of tyranny in the history of humanity. Walzer perceives this as the denial of belonging that becomes the first link in a long chain of discrimination.

However, the dominant group in mainstream society may deny attributions of racism and discrimination [21]. Invoking the theme of race and racism can be uncomfortable and trigger a dose of criticism [8]. Nevertheless, this denial is ideologically constructed [21]. The racist ideology succeeds in the intent of placing filters that alter perceptions and lead to a stereotyped and stigmatizing social representation of the 'other'. Responsibility for this alteration is not simply attributable, just as it is challenging to start a conversation about race and racism. From this perspective, the mechanisms of discriminatory practices can be termed as the naturalization of prejudiced discourse. Consequently, the tendency to consider discrimination as a natural phenomenon unites a relevant part of this discourse. In contrast, Anthias and Yuval-Davis [22] argue that racism and discrimination should not lead to the demonization of the dominant group, but instead take into account the complex power relationships in a diverse society.

Essentially, in a diverse society, social relationships can promote access to socioeconomic resources including employment prospects, opportunities for career advancement, and entrepreneurial advancement [23]. However, networking and high-status contacts are among the primary source that can also assist in securing employment [24]. In addition to providing information, these contacts can foster social interaction and belonging [25]. Conversely, other studies point out contradictions and propose negative returns on social capital. They argue that social relationships alone do not result in employment prospects but underlines the importance of host language proficiency [26,27,28].

3. Activating Gramscian Conception of Hegemony

Gramsci's [29] centerpiece on hegemony as a focus of constant struggle around points of instability between economically defined classes and other social forces is vital to elaborate discrimination in the labor market and employment fields. It is an invitation to critical analysis about socioeconomic inequity as a practice of domination and resistance. At the same time, it is both a search for emancipatory knowledge, as well as to demonstrate or label situations of poverty and social marginalization, which materializes in practices at the micro and macro social level. Accordingly, this permeates the article to enter into a dynamic and enriching exchange, with respect to the approaches given here, and steeped into the intersubjective processes experienced by the study respondents'.

Hegemonic practices manifest in the social, economic, cultural, and political fields. People become aware of the intersubjectivity in this reflective process, as subject and object. Similarly, as victim and perpetrator of the hegemonic forms of subordination, naturalizing inequality

and injustice [29]. These practices are established and automatized in power relationships that conceal or reproduce patterns of racism and discrimination. Yet, within the framework of the welfare state, the extension of wage labor remains vital for the individualization of the socioeconomic sphere [30].

Hence, hegemonic practices contain several competing features, which includes the institutions of civil society, but with unevenness between different levels and scopes [29]. Hegemony is thus the superstructure through which ideological presuppositions naturalizes cumulatively and produces structural changes in socioeconomic relations. These relationships are typically not transparent to the people involved [1]. This facilitate showing connections and causes that are hidden and providing informative resource for those who may be disadvantaged in this relationship [2]. In turn, this practice develops into a transformative social practice of a counter-hegemonic character [29]. It is a possibility of getting involved in the processes of change from various forms of subordination and domination. Hegemony thus appears as a "common sense" that guides people's understanding of the social world. It is a view of the world that is "inherited from the past and uncritically absorbed" and which tends to replicate a sort of "moral and social passivity" ([29], p. 333).

Furthermore, hegemonic discourse has considerable virtue in facilitating a focus upon the power that affect the socioeconomic order. It encloses and presupposes implicit mechanisms of power that contributes to the reproduction and transformation of the order of discourse, legitimized by ideologies of the dominant actors. Whereas coercive power is the exclusive realm of the state, the institutions of civil society are responsible for the creation and reproduction of hegemonic relations. Various traits appear in the clusters of racism and discrimination discourse. This include hegemonic legitimation of exclusion; individual discourse of difference with the consequence of marginalization; public discourse of difference where ethnic and cultural traits are used for domination and subordination [8]. Nevertheless, discrimination can also be subtle enough and go unnoticed by the dominant group. This is due to the process of naturalization of hegemonic discourse prevailing in mainstream society [9].

4. Methodological Approach

In social life, there is a need to clarify perceptions and understandings, and give meaning in problematic lived situations [31]. While quantitative method focusses on the extent of the phenomena, a qualitative approach seeks to understand it [31]. To this end, this article employs a qualitative methodological approach. Accordingly, data is founded on information taken directly from the author's master's thesis: '*Uncovering Norway's Dual Citizenship Discourse: Possibilities and Challenges for African Immigrants' Integration and Political Engagement*', conducted in the period 2019-2020 [32].

The study adopted both semi-structured interview and policy document analysis [32]. It explored numerous aspects of Norway's dual citizenship policy, integration, and political participation [32]. Furthermore, it provided an opportunity to investigate the main challenges

encountered and perceived by the respondents' in the Norwegian employment fields. The overall size of the sample consisted of 20 respondents from seven African countries, namely, DR Congo, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe [32]. The age of the respondents ranged from 20 and 50 years, where 11 were men and 9 were women [32]. The respondents' have lived in Norway for more than three years.

Moreover, the choice of the respondents' from the seven African countries is geared towards a balanced representation in terms of gender, as well as providing an adequate information about the respondents' experiences of racism and discrimination in the social, economic, and political fields. For positivists, interviews are essentially about ascertaining facts out there in the world, but for interpretivist, interviews allow access to the 'common-sense thinking' of the respondents', as well as interpret their actions and social world from their point of view [31]. Therefore, the article provides an account of the respondents' social reality.

In relation to the main objective of this article, respondents' experience and perception of having been discriminated in the Norwegian employment fields on the grounds of ethnic or racial origin are considered. In particular, questions highlighted whether the respondents' have been discriminated in employment, that is, treated less well than the dominant group did, while they applied for work or in employment. I further considered potential confounders of the association between outcome and determinant age, level of education, ethnic origin, and length of stay in Norway. The respondents' further answered questions about whether the tasks they performed in the various industries matched their qualifications.

Furthermore, I explored whether contact capital or social relationship played a role in the respondents' employment prospects. Additionally, other questions centered on the socioeconomic challenges faced by the respondents' in Norway. Indeed, the respondents' are not a representative sample of all African immigrants in Norway, which limits the study's generalizability. Yet, according to Bryman [31], "in the context of qualitative research, this is not a meaningful question, because no case can be representative in a statistical sense" (p. 553). Thus, the issue is one of establishing a coherent theoretical account and examining it with the phenomenon [31].

Finally, the study obtained approval from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) [33] before the data were gathered. The study also complied with the institutional guidelines for the management of research data developed by the Department for Research and Internationalization at the University of South-Eastern Norway [34]. Accordingly, the interviews took place with the free, explicit and informed consent of the respondents'. The information was adequate, provided in an understandable way and included modalities for withdrawal of consent without negative consequences for themselves [33]. Equally, all identifiable data of respondents remain anonymous in accordance with NSD regulations. In all, the author produced what has been said without stating out of context or divert the content in a way that suits the author's interests.

5. Findings

Although the inclusion of immigrants into the labor market remains a top priority of the Norwegian policy makers [35], nevertheless there remain significant shortcomings. The findings uncover a higher account of perceived discrimination in employment among most of the respondents'.

Firstly, the respondents indicated that discrimination is a reality, especially in getting access to employment. In their view, discriminatory practices are often invisible, noiseless, and difficult to distinguish with the naked eye. In addition, majority of the respondents felt discriminated regarding employment opportunities advertised in the Norwegian electronic media. In all, 16 out of the 20 respondents who answered questions about employment discrimination stated that they are temporary employed in the health, construction, and hospitality industries in Norway. They recounted the discriminatory practices they face in employment. Five respondents, who have bachelor's degree in nursing from their origins, stipulated that they work on a temporary basis as healthcare assistants in the Norwegian public health service. Likewise, three skilled respondents in nursing from their origins stated that they are temporarily workers in the public health sector and perform the tasks as 'untrained' healthcare personnel. In addition, out of the eight respondents who are holders of liberal arts and humanities degree, two stated that they are part-time cleaners in the hospitality industry. Similarly, six respondents indicated that they are laborers in the construction sector. The respondents' further stressed that their temporary status has not changed after working for more than three years in the various sectors. Worst of all, they are denied a permanent position even when there is a vacancy in the industry. Instead, natives are preferred and recruited to fill the vacant position that they themselves are qualified to perform. Correspondingly, two of the four non-degree respondents stated that they are temporary employed in the private sector as newspaper distributors, while two respondents said that they are taking up courses to improve career prospects.

Moreover, a key respondent who is taking up courses for career improvement emphasized that becoming a Norwegian citizen has not strengthened his position in the labor market. According to him, over the last two years, he has applied for many jobs, but none has gone to his favor. He underlined that he has the motivation and desire to work, but do not consider it is worth the effort. He believes that he is part of the working population, but do not have equal opportunity in the employment fields. Furthermore, he stated that he has four children, but he is unemployed. As a result, he is worried about the long-term consequence about his children's welfare. He remains concerned about the stigma attached to claiming social assistance as well as the problem of immigrant child poverty. He further stated that the phenomenon presents new challenges. In particular, how to develop the human, social, and emotional potential of his children.

Furthermore, another respondent emphasized that during job interviews, employers legitimately carry out extensive investigations about the applicant, predominantly an

immigrant. From the respondents' opinion, employers thus exercise surveillance and control function of the security agencies. Consequently, the immigrant in search of employment is rejected apparently due to distorted constructions and formulations without due diligence of an opportunity for defense, beyond a reasonable doubt under natural justice.

Secondly, 15 out of the 20 respondents who have higher education recounted the difficulty in having their academic and professional qualifications recognized in Norway. It emerged that eight out of the 15 respondents with higher education have been unsuccessful to get their degree in nursing recognized, thus failing to utilize their skills and competence. They expressed that with a degree in nursing from their origins they thought everything will be easier, but they found themselves only closed doors, because their qualifications were not recognized. In addition, seven respondents who have degrees from liberal arts and humanities face the same challenges.

However, the findings also contain some encouraging results as social relationships or contact capital had a partially positive effect on the respondents' employment prospects. The respondents' answered questions about what channels improved their employment situation. It emerged that the presence of previously relocated family members and personal network increased the probability of employment for most of the respondents'. This, therefore, provided a safety net for the respondents' who would otherwise be unemployed. Yet, majority of the respondents' remain vulnerable in the labor market due in part to the lack of a good command of host language as well as adequate knowledge about the employment sector. In this context, they are forced to accept job insecurity by relying on friends and acquaintances to obtain a work of any kind in order to survive.

6. Discussions

6.1. Labor Market Discrimination

As the findings demonstrates, significant gaps persist in the Norwegian labor market and work fields. This has profound consequences on the socioeconomic status of the immigrants'. Although most of the employment sectors are essential regardless of race or ethnicity, majority of the respondents' with degrees in nursing from their origins, work on a temporary basis. They perform as mentioned, various tasks including healthcare assistants or untrained healthcare workers. In a similar perspective, respondents with non-professional degrees indicated that they are laborers in the construction and hospitality industries respectively. Furthermore, majority of the respondents' feel discriminated in job search because of their ethnicity. These people are willing to obtain a stable employment, but they are unable to change their status due to discriminatory practices in the employment fields. The impacts of these practices produce perceptions of marginalization, socioeconomic instability, and exclusion from mainstream society. The respondents' experiences resonate with Gramsci's [29] intuition regarding hegemony as a focus of constant struggle around points of instability between economically defined classes and other

social forces. Here, the employment opportunities of the respondents' remain fragile by virtue of their social position in this hegemonic discourse. Therefore, hegemony alludes to the exercise of power, a complex and dominated relationship between the center and the boundless peripheries. Nevertheless, discrimination against African immigrants in the Norwegian employment fields is undeniable captured in previous research [3,6,7]. Likewise, Becker suggests that discrimination occur in the labor market because some employers do not like being in contact with workers of different ethnicity [36].

Furthermore, the findings seem to confirm the results of previous studies according to which labor market discrimination weakens socioeconomic status [1,5,7]. The Norwegian welfare model with its care-centered system has given way to an active approach positioned on empowerment and maximizing people's abilities to make them self-sufficient and autonomous citizens [8]. This capability approach provides the micro foundations of the new welfare model to protect against employment vulnerability and social exclusion. Consistent with Potocky-Tripodi [24], in order to guarantee an individual's social capacity, the provision of material and institutional conditions remains indispensable to compete on an equal footing in the labor market. This deliberative social space enables all persons to develop their capabilities [24].

The findings further suggest that, discrimination is a practice that appears pervasive. The ability to identify a discriminatory behavior is not immediate as it is often implicit, covert, administrative, apparently neutral and not perceived by the actor [8,21]. These practices, crossed by power relations, justifies and naturalizes hegemonic construction of subject positions [2]. It thus act as a force that maintains and reproduces discrimination, where the dominant group are favored unconsciously, without reflection on the power position of the subjects. These trails, though, explicit or implicit, follows the discourse of difference as stakeholders who act to a certain extent as models within each society, feel impelled to remind their audience that their employment prospects are not threatened [8,9]. As emphasized by van Dijk [21], notions of discrimination in European and United States' public discourse are denied by the dominant group as part of a strategy of defense, a pre-emptive act to preserve a positive self-presentation, or to maintain the claim of 'telling the truth' [37]. Thus, it is not surprising that discriminatory practices are unnoticed, but by the direct consequences of peoples actions. In contrast, recognizing discrimination is not as basic as it seems. In turn, a person who has been a victim of discrimination may tend to see discrimination everywhere, even where it corresponds to the usual functioning of the system.

However, in Norway, discrimination is a barrier to participation in the labor market and in meetings with public agencies [3,6]. As emphasized by Midtbøen and Rogstad, the probability of an immigrant to been called for a job interview is reduced by an average of 25 percent [7]. Similarly, immigrants from Africa have the lowest employment rate even after 10 years of legal residence [3]. Additionally, labor-market integration of these immigrants comes to a halt well below those of similar natives after five to seven years of stay in Norway [39]. Yet, Norway's Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act have not completely

reversed this trend [38]. Furthermore, different forms of discriminations occur in various segments of society, mostly in relation to immigrants access to institutional services from public administrations [38]. The Norwegian Government 2020-2023 action plan against racism and discrimination seems to substantiate labor market discrimination articulated by the respondents and previous research [35].

According to Bratsberg, Oddbjørn and Røed [1], immigrants tend to have a more precarious attachment to the labor market, with more marginal and less secure jobs. In addition, these immigrants have shorter than average tenure, and are typically harder hit by adverse employer shocks and reorganization processes. This practices thus impedes the capacity of the individual to participate equally in different socioeconomic planes. At the vertical level, the immigrant facing employment discrimination may lose interest in investing in material resources such as housing, health, education, and training. At the horizontal level, the institutionalization of these practices entails an economic loss to the receiving state [1,6]. This becomes an impediment to integration and social cohesion.

While lack of work and economic precariousness are factors that affect adults, yet they have direct impact on the economic security of migrant children, because they cannot influence the situation themselves [6,39]. The effects go beyond mere material deprivation, to social exclusion from sport, culture, and the possibility of having social relations with peers. In particular, these children could linger in disadvantaged conditions and in the continuous search for a balance in crossing the thin red line of definitive poverty. It is worth considering that socioeconomic liability often has relational hegemonic practices [2]. In a way, many immigrant families facing socioeconomic challenges come to perceive social services more as a threat than as a help. Thus, avoiding in many cases to turn to them in fear of losing their children [40]. This condition deriving from the state of progressive labor market impoverishment of migrant families affects minors. This results in producing long-term negative effects, entailing, as has been observed, a greater risk of poverty and social exclusion. Given that, children are prone to inherit the economic hardships of their parents, which they will carry with them throughout their lives. In essence, a rapid stabilization of employment can allow immigrants to consolidate their social integration. Hence, socioeconomic stability rests on the ability to create and equitably distribute labor resources.

6.2. Professional Credentials and Employment Prospects

The findings reveal that, human resource remain untapped by the challenge of non-recognition of academic and professional skills obtained from the respondents' origins. Academic and professional training enhances employment prospects, yet challenges remain. According to the respondents', it is often difficult to gain recognition in Norway for titles and qualifications obtained from their origins. In addition, a picture emerges from the respondents' account that after years of study, it is very rare for them to find employment that match their qualification. Equally, the tasks performed by most of the

respondents' does not have anything to do with the studies they have undertaken. While it is possible for holders of foreign degrees to apply for recognition in Norway, the respondents' believe that the path to do so is often confusing or too complicated. However, to obtain the validity of a non-EU degree in most host countries, takes time, and, in most cases, the qualification involves passing additional exams [41]. This has direct influence on the employment struggles that the respondents' have to grasp. Therefore, it plays a crucial role in the construction of hegemonic discourse. It is where the bloc of social actors who occupy positions of power, maintains their domination. From this perspective, it cannot be shattered in one fell swoop, thus a complex phenomenon that become the focus of a series of struggles and resistance.

Moreover, recognition of skills obtained abroad is to gain authorization for a certain profession. This in part, plays a crucial role in the development of an individual's career development [41]. Indeed, the preparation for work involves acquiring skills and competence to perform a task. In turn, vocational skills and academic degrees certify the possession of a specific standard of knowledge and competence, achieved through a course of study or work. This contribute to increase the efficiency of labor, which raises the level of exchange between the skills of the individual and the assigned tasks. Nevertheless, the respondents' underlined that, the formal recognition of qualifications provides for a very complex procedure, which is hardly practicable for most of them. In most cases, the undergraduate degrees, in particular nursing are devalued, in others, the credentials are not recognized. This knowledge and opportunity deficit are major factors of socioeconomic insecurity. In addition, it shows that labor potential is underutilized, which negatively affect the effective use of human capital [2].

The respondents are aware of their potential, interests, and skills, and want to facilitate their integration through inclusive labor market. However, while employment participation is available for all migrants, yet, the effect of academic and professional credentials remains valid only after recognition and inclusion in the national system. As the findings shows, skilled respondents' find themselves in less skilled employment, where the work is heavier, with possible lower wages, and often with unstable contracts [41]. In essence, academic and professional credentials contribute to labor efficiency as well as intellectual and creative potential of the immigrant. In addition, immigrants themselves consume goods and services, thus stimulating socioeconomic development.

Taking into account Gramsci's hegemonic discourse underpinning discrimination in the employment fields, the phenomenon materializes in differentiated and unequal treatment of people in various sectors of social life [8]. It hinders access to the rights of the affected persons, as they are prepared, promulgated and legitimized discursively [8]. These practices incorporate significations that contribute to sustain or restructure socioeconomic relations [6,8]. It unwittingly but disproportionately disadvantaged skilled persons due to discrimination and non-recognition of professional credentials. In this context, hegemony is the condensation point. It condenses different relationships and practices into a definitive system of domination and marginalization.

Furthermore, a third of the respondents' specified that most immigrants are stigmatized as unskilled job seekers by assessment systems, while employers appear reluctant to recruit or test their qualifications. This propensity defines the immigrants as inexperienced to hide the real hegemony concerning unequal power relations and the unfair distribution of labor resources. The tendency to consider as natural a differentiation that result in discrimination is one of the constant foundations of hegemonic discourse. Such hegemonic practices exclude subjects belonging to groups in decline or disadvantaged from fundamental rights [8]. It further reflects a refusal to grant a certain degree of power to the immigrants, a conferment felt as illegitimate by the actors who hire people into the workforce. As van Dijk effectively pointed out, racial prejudice serves the majority group to promote a better self-image, then feeling legitimized in taking discriminatory measures against those minorities categorized as prone to deviance [21]. This echoes the hegemonic discourse, instead of promoting labor inclusion, the actors prefer to exclude, or at most accept diversity with the clause of perennial subordination. In reality, despite enormous integrative approach that have manifested in modern contemporary western societies, discrimination is not an outdated discourse. It assumes new forms, linked to the social, economic and political spheres. A crucial point of contention lies in the fact that employers do not behave efficiently; they hire workers based on their preference, which is undeniably an underground offshoot of discrimination.

Indeed, a key advantage to recognition of professional credentials obtained abroad is the ability to retain competencies and their role in achieving good performance in employment domains. Recent research shows that the acquisition of knowledge must transform into practical applicability and ability [24,28,39]. This largely implies that, the agency of humans, through the effective productive skills that they acquire, they are able to increase production possibilities. In addition, work is the starting point of identifying the personal qualities that are essential for the proper performance of a given activity. Therefore, it is worth mentioning that this requires the development of new strategies and new forms, and methods of labor inclusion. Hence, recognizing academic and professional credentials is both crucial in expanding human freedom to lead a freer and dignified life as well as to be more productive in mainstream society. Additionally, improving employment prospects positively contributes to an increase in the socioeconomic status of the immigrants'. In sum, the chances of employment prospect corresponding to the qualification obtained from country of origin showed no significant effect in career prospects for the respondents'. These challenges coincide with the apparent difficulty of the respondents' in obtaining recognition for degrees acquired from origins.

6.3. Job Opportunities: The Role of Host Language and Social Relationships

An important role in achieving employment is what relationships the applicant has and the extent to which the person is able to mobilize them for a given goal. Social relationship and competence in host language are essential

tools for effective exchange in mainstream society, without which engagement in the community would be challenging. They are bridges through which the migrant can have access to other socioeconomic resources [23,24,25,26,27]. On the one hand, a good command of host language, constitutes a key that can enhance an individual's socioeconomic status. In fact, host language is also essential in different context such as in job interviews, the application for employment, rules relating to holidays, insurance, or file a tax return [41]. The employment field as a whole require a good command of host language, thus, generating a relative competitive disadvantage for the immigrants'. Indeed, host language proficiency, means not only having the certainty of being able to move more independently and satisfy one's basic life needs, it also involves full participation in the activities of mainstream society.

Essentially, in every society there is a form of thinking intrinsically linked to a language, which does not only serve as an instrument of communication but is also the expression of a way of conceiving the social world. It translates a scheme of thought and the reflection that the people with the common language have. This group language, received through tradition and custom, gradually configures an identity, that is, a common cultural heritage. The result of this cycle is fed back with new creations within the same group and especially in contact with other social actors. In this sense, the central role that language occupies in the group cannot be ignored. Equally, mutual communication and engagement become paramount in situations that the exercise of one's duties and rights is at stake. Hence, it represents the real difference to succeed, in not only finding a job, but also to collaborate with both the private and the public sphere. Therefore, host language barrier remains a factor that hinder the dynamic process of immigrant labor market inclusion in the host society [41]. Thus, limiting employment security and openness in an innovative sense.

Moreover, from the interviews, it emerged that host language skills remain a marked weakness for most of the respondents'. A third of the respondents' stated that they were unsuccessful on the labor market due in part to adequate competence in the host language. In essence, a work environment is a community where the starting point is communication, of which good command of host language forms an integral part. The prospective worker is expected to possess a much wider range of communicative prowess determined by the specific work tasks. In addition, the structural changes in the content and organization of work, together with the use of digital technologies, have also made language proficiency important [41]. Whether it is dealing with email correspondence, receiving instructions from a supervisor or a colleague, or reporting on an activity to other co-workers. In addition, work is undoubtedly an important generator of integration, building autonomy for the immigrant, enhancing development of one's professional career, and increasing the possibility of social mobility.

Moreover, the findings also revealed that through social relationships, the respondents' improved career prospects. Indeed, informal contacts play an important role in the distribution of employment. In reality, individuals are embedded in a complex network of relationships.

This relationship determines access to a variety of socioeconomic resources. In turn, career prospects thus spread through the referrals of these social networks. Relatedly, from the study, the proportion of the respondents' who stated that relational resources aided in finding employment remains high. Majority of the respondents' stated that their career improvement is the result of a suggested choice. Both the respondents' with high and low education status expressed an orientation to rely on friends and family in career advancement. Thus, social ties played a significant role for the respondents' to obtain information in finding a specific work. Yet, there are differences when I consider the nature of the relationships involved in the employment outcome. Less skilled respondents' faced lower prospects in the labor market compared with the graduates. This challenge has a bearing in little innovativeness based on the respondents' academic potentials. In contrast, Li [26] highlighted that strong attachment of immigrants to their ethnic network, often goes hand in hand with the preservation of language and culture that result in labor market disadvantages. Thus, the group's limited socioeconomic and network resources could dwindle social capital arising from belonging to one's own ethnic group. Nevertheless, favorable employment outcome is fundamental not only in terms of subsistence, but also, participation in mainstream society [23,24,25,27,30].

7. Conclusions

Discrimination in the labor market is attributable to numerous, but well-defined factors, which interacting with each other; contribute to outline a picture of lower socioeconomic status and social exclusion. It inhibits the acquisition and consolidation of economic stabilization prospects for the immigrants'. This include, access to decent housing, better health status, and human development. It must be underlined that the problem does not solely rely on the absence of work, but in employment insecurity and the uncertainty of prospects regarding one's integration in mainstream society. Here, connection to the society partly coincides with the degree of labor inclusion and participation. However, the presence of immigrants influences many other aspects such as the prices of consumer goods, housing, the usability of public services, or cultural integration. From them often derives advantages but also disadvantages. In principle, natives are prioritized in the employment fields, possibly related to sociocultural ties, rather than with the 'others'. Hence, immigrants face discrimination due in part to mistrust and prejudices originated in part by traits of racism and hegemonic discourse of national preference. Exclusion can thus lead to a low degree of trust, which undermine social cohesion. The quantification of these effects has significant implications for labor policy.

In a fair and just society, individuals and groups must feel that they live with each other, not next to or in opposition to each other. Therefore, redistributive labor policies are necessary to mitigate discrimination and obstacles that hamper equal access in the employment fields. The belief that natives must come first in the attribution and distribution of employment opportunities

negates redistributive justice and non-discrimination. Hence, the actions and practices of stakeholders must be oriented towards the logic of employment equity between the center and the periphery. The individual then returns to exercise full citizenship and participate in mainstream society. Yet, it remains unclear whether inequitable labor practices are pure discriminatory orientation or the result of prejudice of social actors. Conversely, competition for employment is also intensifying, with individuals facing complex skills challenges. Thus, the career prospects of the migrants' remain precarious by the fact that technological innovation have become a direct competitor, and knowledge related to modern tools is vital. In this fierce competition, lifelong learning seems no longer enough, which places a significantly greater burden on each current and future jobseeker than before.

Nevertheless, a policy that enhances equal access in the employment fields remains indispensable to enhance migrants' contribution to mainstream society. Therefore, it is prudent to highlight employment discrimination for greater equality and efficient use of migrant potentials. Indeed, the policy document against racism and discrimination underscores the authorities resolve to address the phenomenon. Hence, better use of the human capital of immigrants is a fundamental growth factor that can improve the quality of life of those concerned. Based on these, it is not only important to index the consequences of employment discrimination, but also, where appropriate, to develop intervention strategies that are able to improve diversity and inclusive workforce. In effect, labor market inclusion involves thinking, understanding, and critically confront unequal power relations to promote greater social and economic justice.

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