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### The Search for Employment

In today's society, Canada has become an icon of multiculturalism and diversity, developed through its increasingly welcoming attitudes towards immigrants and refugees. This image was promoted through the introduction of the merit-based point system for immigration in 1967, representing significant advancement in fair immigration legislation, greatly reducing racial biases and discrimination. The decades following the creation of the point system revealed new challenges for immigrants integrating into Canada. Canada's approach to resolving these issues has revealed that Canada has not adequately addressed the challenges immigrants face acquiring fulfilling employment. This long-term neglect has made Canada a nation that needs to do more to truly champion multiculturalism.

Many immigrants' struggle to find fulfilling work stems from a lack of effective government aid programs. The Canadian government began to notice that the challenges Canada was facing with immigration stemmed from more than bias within the selection process with efforts to develop a formal population policy in 1985, motivated by a consensus among "governments, companies, and labour organizations" that an increase in the number of immigrants were required to maintain Canada's population size (Dirks, para. 5). These efforts and concerns resulted in the number of immigrants increasing, but no structure or support system had been created to guide these immigrants to filling the jobs they had been expected to fill. Moreover, the development of programs to better integrate immigrants and incentivize them to fulfill jobs only came more than 20 years later with the creation of the CIIP

(Canadian Immigration Integration Program) in 2007 (Statistics Canada, 2013). The CIIP provides immigrants a degree of personal assistance through every step of their integration into Canada, from pre-arrival services to orientation workshops to help immigrants become accustomed to the Canadian job market. However, the CIIP has only helped 4800 immigrants throughout its lifetime, and only 87% of those immigrants succeeded in securing employment within the first 6 months of landing in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2013). Although the CIIP has made a significant positive contribution to the lives of these 4800, there have been more than 230,000 immigrants coming to Canada every year since 2007 (Statistics Canada, 2017). Such a large disparity between the number of immigrants government programs like CIIP have helped secure a job and the number of immigrants coming into Canada each year reflects an attitude of not taking immigrant struggles to acquire fulfilling work seriously. Furthermore, the lack of cooperation between government organizations like the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and community or provincial immigration and settlement services prevents immigrants from quickly accessing settlement services within their communities. In a recent report by the Western Region Working Group, a group dedicated to strengthening immigrant settlement and integration in Western Canada, participants of a study explain that pre-arrival services face a “lack of support from IRCC officials in promoting [our] services” (Bhuiyan, 2016). This lack of cooperation between government organizations and provincial or community settlement services isolates immigrants by preventing them from easily reaching out to services that can help with securing employment available in their community that they are simply unaware of. This represents a major barrier for immigrants who need to balance a multitude of factors in a foreign country and need all the assistance that can be provided by local settlement services. The realization that immigrants faced an inordinate amount of stress from challenges beyond

fair qualification for immigration spurred the creation of numerous government aid programs, but these programs face challenges of their own, of not assisting an appreciable number of immigrants in securing employment to disorganization within government organizations, preventing immigrants from reaching out to these services to begin with.

The point system, as it was created in 1967, assessed whether a potential immigrant based on 9 categories, each being worth a different amount depending on its importance, but primarily relying on the major factors of the “age, education, language skills, and economic characteristics of applicants” (Boyd and Vickers, 8). When the point system was introduced in the late 1960s, Canada’s economy was doing reasonably well, and there was a demand for skilled immigrants who could become “nurses, teachers, doctors, professors, engineers” (Simons, 12). Today’s point system still prefers those who are fluent in either English or French and have a few years of post-secondary education, as both categories are weighted the most. Unlike the late 1960s however, while there may be a need for skilled immigrants who can fulfill critical jobs such as nurses, teachers, doctors, professors, or engineers, many skilled immigrants do work for which they are overqualified. Many immigrants, after developing their education and work experience in their home country to qualify to immigrate to Canada, face significant challenges with securing employment because their hard-earned foreign education and work experience is not recognized. Specific professions like those in medicine suffer the most because of long and rigorous standards and procedures to obtain Canadian accreditation. Immigrant doctors made up a sizeable portion of the 170,000 economic immigrants that immigrated to Canada in 2015, but “almost half never get to practice medicine in Canada. Instead, they wind up as nurses, sonographers and care aides, among other related fields” (Dharssi, 18). Moreover, many immigrant doctors are not even able to acquire positions such as nurses or sonographers and must take jobs such as cleaners

or labourers simply to make ends meet (Dharssi, 28). This mismatch of qualification to job results in immigrants pursuing, out of necessity, jobs that are unfulfilling, and are unable to acquire the life that Canada is associated with. Furthermore, immigrants face challenges overcoming a language barrier (Dharssi, 36), which only exacerbates their struggles with acquiring a job. Even once an immigrant secures their first job and finally begins to better integrate into Canada, it takes, on average, 6 to 12 years for a Canadian newcomer to regain the quality of life they left behind, primarily because of language barriers (Valentine, 37).

Multiculturalism has always been ingrained in Canada's identity, made possible due to the significant advancements in immigration, particularly with creating fairer immigration legislation with the point system. However, to truly champion the tenets of multiculturalism, Canada must better address the challenges immigrants face in acquiring fulfilling employment, from creating better settlement services that can help the majority of immigrants secure employment, to ensuring that immigrants' foreign work experience and education is still recognized in Canada.

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