



Commentating the Contradictions in the Implementation of Canada's Immigration Policy

Yue Yang

Guangzhou, Guangdong 510431, China

Tel: 86- 135-4348-4054 Email: yyllqq2007@163.com

Abstract

Immigrating is the primary means of population growth in Canada and the main source of enlarging the labor force, and the important safeguard for maintaining the national strategy and the people's livelihood. Every Canadian government in history has taken making and implementing appropriate immigration policies as one of the basic tasks. The policies have been adjusted with the historical conditions and international circumstances. However, it is necessary to give a timely analysis of the implementation of the policies and make an adjustment. This text, from the academic perspective, tries to analyze the contradictions in grading standard and the employment criteria of immigrants, in manpower input and waste, in social equity and recessive discrimination, and in short-term benefit and long-term danger during the implementation of its immigration policy. And I recommend it be adjusted and improved.

Keywords: Canada, Immigrant, Policy, Analyze the social contradictions

Canada, in a modern sense, a country composed of immigrants from every part of the world. Canada has a history of pioneering the settlement, founding the state, and making the development. Meanwhile it has a history of migration. Immigrating is the primary means of population growth in Canada, the main source of enlarging the labor force, and the important guarantee for maintaining the national strategy and people's livelihood. Immigrating gives a vital influence on Canadian economy, culture and politics. It is known that in Group of Eight (G8) Canada has the highest population growth rate. Immigration is the major factor. (Note 1). It is no more than that immigration is said to be the foundation of the Canadian state. As a scholar said, Canada is unique in its economic success. The boundless land, large forests, numerous rivers and vast seas have provided requirements to maintain its sustained economic development. Adopting immigration policies to attract the global talents, especially those skilled workers and businessmen and investors, Canada has injected considerable vitality to the domestic economy. (Jiang, 2001, p.3). Every Canadian government in history has taken making and implementing appropriate immigration policies as one of the basic tasks. The policies have been adjusted with the historical conditions and international environment.

However, it is necessary to give a timely analysis of the implementation of the policies and make an adjustment. It is said that Canadian scholars are encouraged to participate in the policy research. "A Canadian scholar Trent published his paper, entitled Social Science Research Contributes a Lot to Canadian Society—Viewpoints of a Spectator. It gives a comprehensive and systematic exposition of the usage and type of contribution and content of social sciences. According to Trent, social science can give recommendations and help the governments to make decisions, draw more proper policies, avoid harmful decisions, and enhance the level of discussing and debating the issues."(Chen, 2003, pp.6-8). In view of this, the text, from an academic point of view, tries to analyze the contradictions of Canada implementing its immigration policy and to recommend it be adjusted and improved.

1. Contradictions in immigrants grading standard and the enterprise employment criteria.

According to the independent skilled immigrants grading standard established by the Canadian Government, a set of strict censoring procedures are adopted to an applicant's educational qualifications and work experience then corresponding marks are given. Those independent skilled immigrants, who are allowed to enter Canada, to a large extent, largely by virtue of the educational certificates and work experience of their own, have gained the approval from the immigration authorities after reaching or even transcending a certain score. That is to say, their educational certificates and working experience are acknowledged by the immigration authority in the course of application. Otherwise, the immigration authority would not approve their applications. However, when in Canada an independent skilled immigrant is looking for a job, he encounters a quite different situation. His certificate and work experience are not recognized by Canadian companies. This phenomenon is not a secret, and it is often reported by the media. For example, a Web site carrying a text says language, education and familiarity with the local community are still the main factors affecting the employment of new immigrants. Their education, not recognized by Canada enterprises forms the

biggest obstacle in employment. (Note 2). Again another Web site has such a text as that when many new Chinese immigrants arrived in Canada, they found it difficult to look for a job. The reasons they are told are that they are lack of work experience in Canada. But if Canada does not provide opportunities for new immigrants the first work, how can they gain the local work experience? This phenomenon often forms a vicious cycle. Many new immigrants are deeply troubled. (Note 3). Why? Because the authenticity of the educational certificates is doubted and the local work experience is stressed. The question of the authenticity of certificate should be settled in the process of a candidate's application. The original work experience of his or her original country and the new work experience in Canada need a step-by-step process. Therefore, there is no convincing reason for Canadian companies to deny an independent skilled immigrant's educational qualifications and work experience. No wonder some one put a question which remains perplexed despite much thought. People allowed to enter Canada according to Canadian immigration standards cannot find a job there. Who is on earth wrong? (Note 4).

The contradictions of immigrant grading standard and corporate employment criteria have reflected the imperfect system of Canada's immigration policy. According to Canadian government's independent skilled immigrant grading standard, the officials concerned censor and recognize the applicant's education and work experience, and declare that he or she has the corresponding ability. While according to Canadian employment standard, the employers involved do not recognize the new immigrant's education and work experience and also do not believe in his or her ability. Who tell the truth? They should discuss the problem and reach an agreement within them. If the former lived up to their words, then the latter should acknowledge the immigrants' educational qualifications and work experiences; if the latter mean what they say, then the former should not recognize the academic qualifications and work experience, throwing the immigrants in the helpless plight in an alien world.

2. The contradictions of the input and waste of human resources

A fierce competition of talents has been on across the world. At present, the developed countries are, with their strong economic strength and technological superiority and excellent working and living conditions, transforming the front of competing for talents to every corner of the world. (Xu, 2001, p.204). Both the basic conditions of sparsely-populated land and the globalization of international competition have wanted Canada to import human resources on end. To develop national economy and safeguard the national interests, or to abide by the prevailing norms of international relations, it is necessary and unalterable for Canada to do that. Obviously, human resources input is determined by the educational state of labor force and the research fields. It is mainly senior human resources that can easily cross the threshold to migrate. In fact, because every government in history gives timely readjustment of the immigration policy, Canada has imported a large number of senior human resources from other countries. It must be noted that, the human resources immigrating into Canada are also a valuable national wealth to the original countries. In the world competition for talents, Canada is fascinating and attractive by its favorable conditions.

Snatching human resources is one thing. But how to utilize them is quite another. Due to various reasons, the new immigrants in Canada encountered many obstacles or difficulties to find employment. They cannot give full play to their talents. Canada's new immigrants, the high unemployment and low employment rate and low income are an indisputable fact recognized officially.

Canadian Statistics Bureau has recently published a new immigrant employment report and revealed the employment of new immigrants to Canada. Statistics shows that, compared with the native-born people or those with local college education, these new immigrants are difficult to melt into the Canadian society and find jobs. For example, in 2006, the Canadian national average unemployment rate was 4.9 percent. But the average unemployment rate of these new immigrants was as high as 11.5 percent, more than twice the locals. The educated new immigrants had lower employment rate than their local counterparts. The unemployment rate of the new immigrants with degrees of Bachelor was 11.4 percent, while the unemployment rate of the native people with the same degrees was only 2.9%. (Note 5). The report of Canadian Social Development Board shows that immigrant families in Canada earn less than the native families, colored people less than the white. (Note 6). The Center of Social Studies and Industrial Relations of the Toronto University surveys that from the early 1970s to the mid-1990s, the income gap between immigrants and the local people had obviously enlarged. Since 1996, new immigrants have found it harder to find jobs and their average wage is equivalent to 60 per cent of the local people's. (Note 7). Therefore, there appears a kind of phenomenon of wasting human resources in Canada, quite different from the pressing human resources input narrated above. Talents become useless because they cannot find a job. The skillful talents have to divert to the low-skilled jobs. From the global perspective to observe the human development, the human resources wasted in Canada had consumed the cost of education and other resources and should have created economic benefits in the exporting countries. Furthermore, most modern emigration countries belong to the developing countries. They need more senior human resources comparing to the developed Canada. Witnessing the senior human resources who are in great need have been wasted, the developing countries almost get into a helpless situation. The international conflicts fighting for the human resources have been on. It is learnt that the officials of South Africa and other countries even complained to Canadian officials repeatedly that

some of their people with higher education had flown into Canada. (Note 8).

Canada emphasizes examination and approval while carrying out its immigration policy. But there exists a relatively weak part in the immigrant employment. Therefore, the migration process is in a serious imbalance. On the one hand it is active to introduce human resources and talents to meet the demand of its domestic labor market; on the other hand, it forms an obstacle of immigration employment and human resources are wasted greatly. No matter what human beings develop to be, the idea of making the best and proper use of talents will never outdated. It is an immoral behavior and phenomena to make a great waste in any country at any time. Wasting human resources, owing to Canada's immigration policy, is irresponsible for the new immigrants and the human resource exporters.

3. The contradictions of social justice and recessive discrimination.

It is widely publicized by international opinion, media and immigrant intermediary that Canada has developed economy and advanced technology. It has vast land which is of beautiful scenery. It also has rich natural resources. It is a country of social equity, cultural pluralism, and political stability. Therefore, Canada has attracted annually tens of thousands of migrants. Social equity is a vital reason. Many people in their original countries have higher education, a longer period of work experience, a considerable high pay and quite an outstanding work performance. They abandoned the jobs they had had in their original countries and migrated to Canada. To much degree, they believed in Canada's social justice, hoping to further improve their living environment. Indeed, social equity is one of the cornerstones of Canadian legal system. Constitution of Canada has such provisions that every citizen is equal before the law. Every citizen should not be discriminated and enjoys the equal protection and benefit by the law. Canadian Human Rights Act provides that everyone should have the same equal opportunities that other people have to create a life that he or she can do and hope to have. Meanwhile, he or she should undertake the responsibilities and obligations as a member of the society. To ensure the opportunities, the Canadian Human Rights Commission was established to correct any unlawful discriminations, including racial, national and ethnic original discriminations. Canadian Plural Cultural Law says that it should promote all the ethnic communities formed in the development of various fields and encourage individuals to take a full and equal participation, help them eliminate any obstacles in the participation, and secure everyone to be equally treated and protected by the laws. (Gao, 1999, pp.331-333).

Such cases as the law articles may betray the fact can appear in any country in the world. Canada is no exceptional. Open discrimination in Canada have already been cast aside, but hidden discrimination, particularly the recessive discrimination endured by new immigrants in the employment, still remains widespread. It is a typical example that employers do not recognize the educational qualifications and working experience of new immigrants, which is contrary to the spirit of social justice. Canada Social Development Board reports that the reason why the income of an immigrant family is much less than that of a non-immigrant family lies in the racial discrimination by employers and Canada's refusal of the educational qualifications out of the scope of North America. (Note 6). Population census data announced by Canada government and academic studies indicate that the income and the employment prospect of the immigrants are going from worse to worst. There exists in Canada a recessive discrimination against foreign immigrants. Scholars and immigration interest advocates point out that discrimination is one of the factors that reduce the income of the immigrants. (Note 8).

Canada's immigration policy plays a relatively weak role in the immigrant employment, resulting in the recessive discrimination against new immigrant employment. In the present world, it is not surprising to find that social justice and hidden discrimination are coexisting. However, those new immigrants suffering from the discriminatory employment barriers in Canada will be disappointed at social justice. It is undoubtedly a worse injury. In such a modern civilized country as Canada, should those people who have enacted laws and those who have social conscience want to see such things happen? The new immigrants are new blood though they belong to vulnerable group. In order to reduce and eliminate all kinds of recessive discriminations finally, it is necessary for the government to interfere and enact a special law for them.

4. The conflicts of short-term interests and long-term damage.

There is no doubt that Canada's current immigration policy can still go on. All over the world, Canada still remains attractive to candidate immigrants. In recent years, the number of migrants to Canada is generally consistent with Canada's plan. Such case will be on in the coming several years. Immigrants have and will have served as the main source of Canada's population and workforce. Though the Canadian government plays a small part in providing assistance to the immigrants except of introduction and examination, the new immigrants rely on their own efforts to overcome various difficulties, to find their settlement, to receive education and training, to find employment. They have made positive contributions to the social development and social progress of Canada.

If Canada won't give a major structural adjustment to its immigration policy, some of the potential hazards will gradually be felt with the time going by. The new immigrants, especially those from developing countries, because of the obstacles of employment, the recessive discrimination, the helplessness of unemployment due to the refusal of

acknowledging their educational qualifications and work experience are very likely to doubt the social fairness and the credibility of the Canadian government. For example, if a Chinese-Canadian has university education, knows English, and has rich work experience, after 20 years of hard work, his total income is only half of that of a Canadian ordinary worker. Many people immigrate to Canada in order to earn more money and seek for a better life. But after their arrival, they feel disappointed and frustrated at their unsatisfactory employment and life. Some immigrants blame Canada for its deception. (Note 2). This kind of emotion is very expansive and inflammatory. With a broken dream, some new immigrants may leave Canada for other countries or just come back to his original country because they have no way out of their plight. It is reported that, according to some Experts, more and more foreign immigrants are forced to rely on unemployment insurance and welfare payments for a living. Some even return to their homeland or emigrate to the United States. (Note 8). Learning of this, many candidate migrants who had wanted to go to Canada will probably stop their plans and choose to go to other places. The accumulation of the negative impact of the new immigrants' living conditions may destabilize the status of Canada as an ideal for immigrants.

In order to nip in the bud and for the national interests of the long-term development, Canada's immigration policy needs a major structural adjustment. All migrants generally experience two diametrically different situations. One is that application and examination must be approved by the Canadian governments. The other is that Canadian governments are absent while you are looking for a job after your landing. The starting point is to find a balance for its immigration policy adjustment. To meet the demand of its domestic labor market, Canada continues to recruit the qualified immigrants. But what is stressed is that it should promote its domestic labor market to accept, absorb or assimilate these immigrants. Here the shift in emphasis reflects the structure of the immigration policy. In the past the recruitment and approval are stressed but the reasonable measure, I think, is to promote the employment of immigrants.

5. Conclusions

Based on the above analysis of the contradictions, the main problems in Canada's immigration policies get displayed from different perspectives. From angles of humanistic concern or Canada's reputation and interests, Canadian government should pay much attention to these contradictions and exert their efforts to solve them. Good advice is harsh to the ear. Canada, a democratic country, might be able to adopt different ideas and public opinions and make corresponding improvements. In the context of globalization, to pay attention to and improve the people's lives should be beyond the boundary, and any government officials, scholars or even ordinary people have the right to say.

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Notes

- Note 1. Canada has introduced 1.2 million migrants in the last five years. [EB/OL]. 2007-08-03. [Http://www.okwang.cn](http://www.okwang.cn).
- Note 2. Chinese-Canadians earn half of the locals. [EB/OL]. [Http://www.londoncn.com/Canada/](http://www.londoncn.com/Canada/).
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