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Neo-liberalism: Employability, and the Labor Mobility among Racialized Migrants. Canada's Study

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Neo-liberalism: Employability, and the Labor Market Mobility among Racialized Migrants. Canada's Study

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Abstract

The paper discusses the effect of political paradigm on the path of career development and the predicament of employment outcomes among racialized migrants in Canada. The study highlights challenge of retraining, skills development and access to Canadian work experience that meets neo-labor market demands. The study also examines how neoliberals' interventions in market place, elimination of social services, and employment support programs have deterred labor force integration of the racialized migrants' job seekers. In this Grounded Theory study (GT), participants have shared their experiences and challenges they have encountered from own perspectives. They shared stories about difficulties of finding suitable training and employment support programs within the current neo-liberalized labor market in Canada. The outcomes suggested that the rise of neoliberalism as noted in policies of social and employment services cuts, coupled with employment standard Acts reforms (ESA), have given employers more powers over hiring process which in many cases has nothing to do with candidate's skills or qualifications. In this neo-political paradigm, the racialized migrants felt they have wasted most of their productive years searching for (1) training, mentorship or employment support programs that can facilitate effective transition to the labor force, and (2) dealing with challenges of improving unrecognized skills and qualification attained from countries of origin.

Keywords: neoliberalism, employment, racialization, skills development, training, political paradigm, migrants



Neoliberalismo: Empleabilidad y Movilidad en el Mercado de Trabajo entre los Inmigrantes Racializados. Un Estudio de Canadá

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Resumen

El artículo aborda el efecto del paradigma político sobre la vía del desarrollo profesional y el logro ocupacional entre los inmigrantes racializados en Canadá. El estudio subraya el reto de la formación, del desarrollo de habilidades y del acceso a la experiencia laboral canadiense que satisface las demandas del nuevo mercado laboral. El estudio examina así mismo cómo las intervenciones neoliberales en el mercado de trabajo, la eliminación de los servicios sociales, y los programas de apoyo al empleo han evitado la integración laboral de los inmigrantes racializados en búsqueda de trabajo. En este estudio de Teoría Base (TB), los participantes han compartido las experiencias y retos que han tomado forma en sus propias perspectivas. Ellos han compartido historias sobre las dificultades de encontrar formación y programas de apoyo al empleo adecuados dentro del actual mercado de trabajo canadiense neo-liberalizado. Los resultados sufieren que el aumento del neoliberalismo en forma de políticas de recortes en los servicios de empleo y sociales, combinado con reformas en las actas estándar de empleo (AEE), han proporcionado más poder a los empleadores sobre el proceso de contratación, lo que en muchos casos no tenía nada que ver con la calificación y habilidades de los candidatos. En este paradigma neoliberal, los inmigrantes racializados notaron que gastaron la mayor parte de sus años productivos en (1) formación, programas de pupillage o de apoyo al empleo que pueden facilitar una transición efectiva hacia la fuerza de trabajo, y (2) tratar con los retos de mejorar las no reconocidas calificaciones y habilidades obtenidas en los países de origen.

Palabras clave: neoliberalismo, empleo, racialización, desarrollo de habilidades, formación, paradigma político, inmigrantes

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The discourse of migrants' skills development and access to employment opportunities has begun to take a new path with the rapid globalization and economic decline within the capitalist societies of which Canada is not an exception. Previous research has focused on discourse of discrimination, marginalization, unemployment and poverty among racialized migrants in Canada. Limited attention was given to changing dynamic of socio-economic and political paradigm within the global north countries which are also considered the main host of migrants and refugees (Madut, 2015). Nonetheless, the global economic crisis and adoption of neoliberalism policies and approach as a remedy of economic realignments have hindered these host countries' abilities to effectively integrate an annual steady wave of qualified new migrants' manpower into local labor force (Reitz, 2014).

According to Stanford (2008), Canada's economy is experiencing a profound structural change that will define and limit national prospects for decades to come (p.7). The worries about recessions and uncertainty of a sustainable economic development have unified politician and policy makers' thoughts on the adoption of neoliberalism as a viable alternate economic policy and philosophy for economic recovery (Craig & Porter, 2006). The neoliberalism in this sense has been thought of as a process of economic realignments that will help rescue the capitalist society from the current trends of economic downturn and the impact of globalization in local labor market (Thomas, 2010).

Neoliberalism and Radicalization

According to Thomas (2010), the neoliberalism in its core is an attempt to rethink government spending in basic social services such as health, community programs, education, including employment support programs. The aim is to eliminate government intervention in resolving social issues with the excuse of cost savings, efficiency and sustainability (p. 68). The neoliberalism also seek to reduce government intervention in labor market activities by "*introducing changes to Employment Standards Acts*" (ESA) and promotion of privatization which gave employers more flexibility over who they should or shouldn't hire (p. 75-78). Thomas (2010) argues that,

neoliberal politician and policy makers are not clear on who benefits from such approach and who are left out, rather, it has proven to make the rich richer and the poor poorer.

These have been evident in several reports on labor market condition in Canada, which highlighted racial inequality in the course of several decades of neoliberals' policies of labor market restructuring in Canada. These reports suggested that racialized migrants continue to experience barriers to adjust to labor force requirements or acquire skills and work experience that will meet employers' expectations (Knights & Kizilbash, 2010). Nonetheless, various labor laws and research work have highlighted correlation between these conditions of inequality and issues associated with the new reforms in the Employment Standards Acts (Employment Standard Work Group, 1996).

The neoliberalized labor market regulation takes form of policy changes that seek to empower employers over workers with a minimal government intervention. Such changes, according to Mark Thomas (2010) have "*weakened employment standards by promoting a privatized model of workplace regulation that expose workers to market forces...i.e. inequality, discriminations and unsafe work condition*" (p. 76-78). In this case, most affected groups are the racialized and gendered labor force.

Racialized Migrants and Discourse of Employment

Policy studies conducted by Statistic Canada between years 2001 to 2006 provided a background illustration of racialized migrants' participation in the local socio economic development, their migration scale, education and skills development. The study also evaluated the outcomes of economic integration of the racialized immigrants in local labor market. The mentioned study indicated that immigrant contribution in the local labor market was about 79%. The report also indicated that 75.1% of recent racialized immigrants and that 38.8% of these racialized populations are not immigrants. Further, 63.2% of the racialized groups are youth 15-24 years old. Refugees comprised 17.9% of residents. According to the report, the labor force participation rate among the racialized migrants is 67.6%, with an employment rate of 60.3% and an unemployment rate of 10.8%

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(Statistics Canada, 2006). About 52% of its population aged 25 to 64 had university degrees. The study also revealed that about 66.4% of newly arrived racialized migrants (2001 to 2006) were holders of post-secondary graduate level education (Social Planning Council of Ottawa, 2009). Statistics Canada also indicated among the 84% of the general population who have a post-secondary education, 53.8% were immigrants. Further, in the year 2006, about 46% of the total number of migrants received their education inside Canada, and 84.4% of recent immigrants took their post-secondary qualification outside Canada, a group known as foreign trained professionals (Statistics Canada, 2006). Figure 1 below reflect the composition of the Canadian labor force and how migrants fair with the first 5 years to 10 years compared to their counterpart Canadian born.

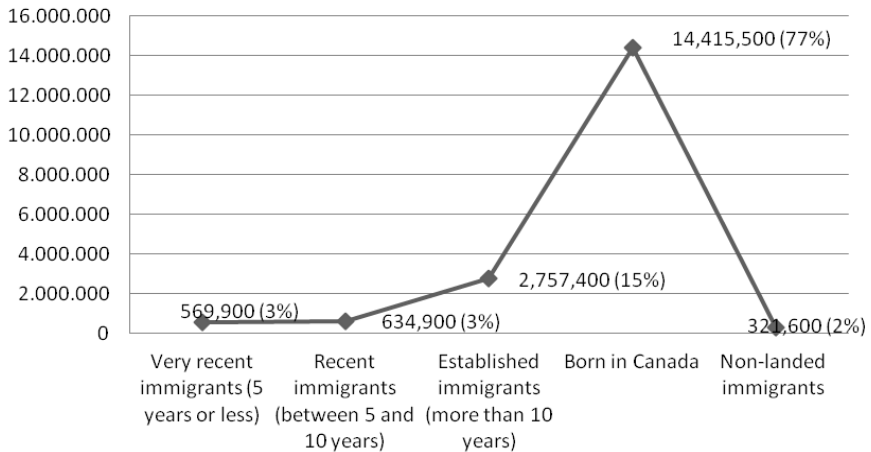


Figure 1. Composition of the Canadian Labour Force, 2011

Source: Wannell & Usalcas, 2012, p. 8

These migrants' qualities however, did not enhance their abilities to secure jobs and to effectively integrate into local labor market, nor changed the high rate of unemployment and underemployment among racialized professional immigrants. Steward (2010) confirms that racialized migrants

challenges and disparities within Canadian local labor market are deep-rooted in inequality, rejection and the lack of government intervention.

Even though highest percentages of the recent racialized migrants coming to Canada had post-secondary qualifications. Yet these high credentials are not reflected in the types of jobs applicants were able to obtain, despite their over-representation in local labor force (Larose & Tillman, 2009). As such, their group's unemployment rate remained high at 18%, especially among recent immigrants aged 15-24, and 13% among recent migrants aged 25-plus. This percentage is comparable to a typical unemployment rate during the 1933 collapse into the Great Depression (Statistics Canada, 2006).

To move towards policy improvement, policymakers have tried to understand, discuss, and meet the challenges of transition into labor market faces racialized migrants in Canada. They have constantly used statistical analysis and presenting quantitative data on skills, levels of participation and contributions made by these migrants in labor markets within cities of resettlements (Li, 2004). These reports, produced annually, tend to state the obvious in terms of participation, qualification, and types of jobs racialized migrants were able to access within the Canadian labor market. In sense, these reports have not addressed the concern of the majority of members of these groups who strive for jobs that meet their needs, career aspirations and social well-being (Madut, 2015).

Method and Data

This study seeks to highlight experience of racialized migrants in accessing training, skills development and bridging programs in the current era of economic crisis that affected all major industrial countries. Nonetheless, the study also discusses the rise of neoliberalism and disappearance of social services and employment programs on the integration of racialized migrants within Canadian labor force. These can be achieved through perceptions of the racialized migrants and their experience with access to training and bridging programs under the rise of neoliberalism policies and approach. Participants were asked the following:

- A- Their experiences with social services cuts, lack of several employment support programs and its impact on employability and labor market outcomes?
- B- Opinions about factors that led professional racialized migrants to consider training and bridging programs instead of looking for employment with skills and qualification attained in countries of origin.
- C- The important of employment services perceived as an effective tool in enhancing job seeker abilities to access jobs and integrate into Canadian labor market, i.e., perspectives on job coaching, bridging programs, mentorship or volunteering to acquire Canadian work experience?

Procedures

The research participants were interviewed to discuss their experiences dealing with access to training, employment supports, career counseling and the consequences of lack of employment support program. The interviews explored viewpoints of the participating migrants on how they have perceived access to employment supports, career transition programs and how they resolved these feelings and experiences.

Interviews included written field notes, observations and one-on-one conversations with the participants. This process also included sound-recording tapes and field notes. The information collected was written up afterward, classified, coded, and interpreted using NVivo 10th edition software. This study utilizes the qualitative design of a grounded theory, which was historically developed and successfully used in sociology to investigate social problems for decades. Grounded theory (GT) is a quantitative research approach that uses the constant comparative method, which became a key element in what has become known as grounded theory (Glaser, 1998; Charmaz, 2006). Grounded theory is defined as an inductive reasoning process emanating from a corpus of information that facilitates development of theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Participants in this study were identified as racialized migrants using the definition of the Employment Equity Act of 1986.

In this process, 25 members of the racialized professionals/migrants were interviewed. These participants have lived in Ottawa between two and 10 years. Participants have met the following screening criteria to participate in the study: (1) self-identified as a member of the groups targeted by the Employment Equity Act under the cluster of racialized migrants, (2) unemployed or underemployed, and (3) seeking a second career or in career transition to gain “Canadian work experience” and (4) has been living in Ottawa, Canada for the last three years. Most of the interviews were conducted within participants’ homes, coffee shops and occasionally University of Ottawa, faculty of social science Lap. Initial data collection started on March 14, 2014 and concluded by June, 2015. Using NVivo 10th edition software analysis, the first phase of analysis, included labeling of information and emerging categories along their properties and dimensions (Denzin, 2007).

In the second phase, connections were made between categories to identify conditions that led to the emergence of these categories and in which circumstances they appear (Charmaz, 2009). The third phase of the analysis involved selective coding, in which the main category to be used was identified. Any gap in the data was rewritten by returning to the participants for additional information. Triangulations, constant comparisons, interrelation of concepts, categories and memos have led to four central main categories of (1) career transitions and (2) job readiness, (3) career path and (4) services gap.

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Table 1.

Participants' profiles

Participants	Age	Gender	Foreign Credentials	Countries of origin	Years in Canada
P#1	40-45	Female	B Medicine	India	10-20 years
P#2	40-45	Female	BA Psychology	China	15-25 years
P#3	40-45	Female	B.A. Psychology	Peru	15-25 years
P#4	30-35	Male	BA. Sociology	Egypt	5-10 years
P#5	50-60	Male	BA. Economics	Iraq	10-15 years
P#6	40-45	Male	BA. Engineering	Syria	15-25 years
P#7	45-55	Male	BA. Hospitality	Bangladesh	15-25 years
P#8	45-55	Female	MA Education	Kenya	10-20 years
P#9	25-35	Male	Diploma	Eritrea	5-10 years
P#10	35-45	Male	BA Business	Sudan	10-20 years
P#11	20-35	Female	MA History	Mexico	5-10 years
P#12	22-30	Female	BA Arts	Somalia	5-20 years
P#13	30-45	Female	BA Nursing	Mexico	5-10 years
P#14	40-45	Male	BA Geography	Iraq	10-20 years
P#15	22-35	Female	B.ED Education	Oman	5-10 years
P#16	22-35	Male	PhD Political Studies	Uganda	15-25 years
P#17	40-45	Male	MD. Medicine	India	10-20 years
P#18	30-45	Male	BA Religion	Morocco	5-10 years
P#19	30-40	Male	BA Political Studies	Jamaica	10-20 years
P#20	25-30	Male	BA Journalism	Ethiopia	5-10 years
P#21	25-30	Female	BA nursing	Congo	15-25 years
P#22	40-45	Female	PhD Psychology	Libya	5-10 years
P#23	30-40	Male	MA Public Admin	Angola	10-20 years
P#24	25-30	Female	BA Commerce	Liberia	10-20 years
P#25	40-45	Male	BS Agriculture	Indonesia	15-25 years

The table 2 below highlights study categories, themes and their properties discussed by the racialized migrants as challenges of skills development faces them in their attempt to improve their chances of finding jobs or acquire new skills in demands by the Canadian employers. These challenges are framed to highlight perceptions of participants' on the issues affecting their abilities in making a successful transition into the neo-local labor market with skills, experience and education attained in countries of origin. In this sequential line of events, the quest for skills development is often recognized when participants do not succeed in finding employment with skills, work experience and education attained back home (Evans & Gibbs, 2009). Therefore, the discourse analysis begins herein by framing narrative that explains and discuss these four categories and themes which

have emerged as per participants' stories and perception from their own perspectives.

Table 2.
Categories and trainings

Categories	Themes	Properties
C=1 Training	Employability	Looking for employment with skills, education, qualifications and work experience acquired in countries of origin.
C=2 Rational	Job Readiness	Efforts to acquire new skills in demands and certifying employers' expectations.
C=3 Career Path	Skilling and de-skilling.	Decisions on making transition to labor market, i.e., evaluating experience of others, accepting training in different field and reconsidering training in preferred field.
C=4 Services Gap	Institutional	Lack of employment support services and programs tailored towards migrants' needs and employers expectations.

Employability and Training

Racialized migrants initial objectives upon arrival to Canada centered on finding employment with skills, education and work experience attained from countries of origin. Research has proven that attaining employment with foreign training and qualification is rather challenging and only few were able to succeed to secure jobs with foreign credentials (Lochead & Mackenzie, 2005). Participants' perceptions on such challenges influenced their decisions to seek new skills in demand, or to further their education to attain Canadian education and credentials to maximize their chances to gain meaningful employment. These includes thoughts about accessing employment support services, and whether to continue further studies in the field of profession or to shift to a totally different occupation with better prospects of securing a sustainable job. Participant states:

I had my first degree in history from my country...I am now on a career transition to do Master's program either in social work, or

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education studies program to increase my chances to find employment. It has been difficult finding employment without Canadian job experience and credentials. [31 years Male]

Participants' preference for training was driven by previously acquired work experience and education in the country-of-origin. In this process, the most influential factor to successfully complete training was comprehension of one of the official Canadian languages, French or English. The chances and opportunities gap narrowed if individuals comprehended both and widened if they grasped neither of the official languages. Participant discussed:

I found an advertisement in a website for the Master's degree in Social Work taught in French at Ottawa University. It was much closer to what I did back home, because I was practicing community medicine, which was community related work. I was also encouraged because the program is thought in French. [Female, 34]

Language of best comprehension was perceived as one of the determining factors in the selection of training and faster path of career development. The two primary reasons participants chose training program was that it was related to work experience gained back home and the language of instructions i.e. One of the two official languages of French or English best comprehended. Focusing on related experience in selecting training was developed as individualized plans to narrow skills gaps between what is defined as foreign trainings and Canadian experience. In this context, a trained medical doctor, engineer, nurse, or a teacher prefers to pursue educations and trainings that would further develop previous knowledge in the context of Canadian socio-cultural perspectives and labor market requirements. The common problem was that many racialized migrants job seekers did not at first understand was the concept of having the Canadian experience first before being employed. Participant commented.

I have applied to several companies and organizations after completion of my degree here in Canada. The feedback has been always that they have hired someone with better skills and

qualifications. But my Employment consultant is telling me that I have no much of Canadian experience on my resume, and that the degree alone is never enough... [Male, 32 years old]

The concept of Canadian experience and what it entailed was neither well-defined nor clearly understood by the racialized migrants' job seekers. They therefore concluded that taking up further training or volunteering in Canadian institutions could resolve the dilemma and help reduce the Canadian workplace skills gap. Even here, there was confusion over how to go about selecting training, as some institutions evaluated foreign degrees as equal to degrees obtained from Canada, yet the same foreign degree could not substitute for a local degree when applying for a position. In other words, one could not take the degree at a Canadian college because the college considered it redundant, yet the degree was not considered equal when applying for a job. One means of solving this dilemma was to earn a graduate degree from an accredited Canadian institution. However, completing graduate studies in Canada led to the classification of "overqualified candidate" for jobs available to them, which another factor was promoting unemployment and confusion among racialized migrants job seekers. Those who failed to access training in their field of professions have decided pursue training in a different field, especially at the advanced level that led to an entry level position in the field of profession. Another rationale for accepting training in a different field was to avoid feelings of demotion in the field of specialization, as racialized migrants felt that they had more skills and qualifications than their superiors in the workplace.

Rational and Decision Making

The reasons to seek training and acquiring new skills were prompted by the job market demands and lack of understanding of the systemic and bureaucratic barriers in the profession. The decision to select training was influenced by experiences of employed Foreign-Trained racialized migrants working in entry level jobs in field of profession. This included stories racialized migrants shared with members of the group in the community concerning how they felt about their jobs. Failure to achieve desired training

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left individuals feeling uncertified and frustrated due to lack of effective employment support systems. Participant commented:

Being a trained medical doctor, I wanted to complete a program in Nursing. A professional at the community center told me that “you are a doctor, and I know that some doctors who took Nursing jobs were not happy, because they were doctors, and when they see something wrong they don’t have to speak up. They are encouraged to forget that they were doctors, which makes it very difficult for a person trained to be a doctor to accept. [Female, 40 years old]

Selected Training was considered “successful” if it led to a meaningful full time job in the field of profession. Otherwise, re-training in the field of profession was revisited if an opportunity warranted. In this case, an advanced training gained from Canada had an impact on assessment for further training, or retraining in the field, when the financial burden was covered by government employment services and programs, such as Ontario, Student Support Program (OSAP), or a Second Career program (SC). Participant stated:

I had an opportunity to take a course to be an Ultra Sound Technician. That course was a fast track course geared toward foreign-trained doctors for three months to work as an ultra sound technician in Canada and the United States, as I could have written a test for the two Associations. I asked for the money through Second Career program (SC) to cover the cost of training, but they denied me because of having a Master of Social Work from Canada. Their decision made me very upset with the system, because that course would have encouraged me to go back to work in my field as a Medical Doctor. [Female, 40 years old]

Training in the field and the possibility of gaining employment in the field of a profession was the central focus in interviews. Even after completing advanced training in different field of profession, participants express strong desires to return to working in their field, i.e. those who took nursing programs are counting on future opportunity to return and work in their profession as Medical Doctors in Canada. In some situations,

individuals preferred to continue training because they thought working in entry level positions was waste of time and talents. Participant said:

I don't want to waste my time and qualification by looking for an entry level job in healthcare. I am trained as a medical doctor and as such would like to work in my field as a medical doctor. I was told by immigration officers that I will find a job in my when I come here. They told me they have shortages in doctors. If I can work in my field, then I will prefer to return to school to complete a graduate program and earn a Canadian degree... [Male, 42 years old]

In this sense, socio-cultural realities of the Canadian labor market and the many and ambiguous requirements placed on Foreign-Trained Professionals have created a perception that having a Canadian education may reduce prejudices when competing for jobs with people having the same Canadian qualification. As explained, it is relatively true that recognition of the Canadian education and abandonment of foreign credentials has improved the racialized migrants' chances to gain jobs through work placement and internships. According to the participants, it did not mean an equal status with Canadian-born candidates when competing for a job, as employers would still prefer a Canadian-born candidate with the same qualifications because of such factors as cultural familiarity, gender, business experience, and age differences.

The Second Career Path

This category outlines participants' perceptions on factors influenced their decision in choosing training or accepting training in a different field, i.e., those with doctoral degrees becoming taxi drivers, and medical doctors becoming personal support workers or nurses. The second career was considered an alternative due to difficulties in obtaining Canadian qualifications and work experience. Participant stated:

There was no clear guidance and information on how I can get job in my field as a foreign trained engineer. The immigration officers advised me that I would get a job in my field when I arrived to

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Canada, but that was not true. I had difficulties getting my degrees recognized or finding job with it. I therefore decided to first find a job as a Security Guard and later became a taxi driver [Male, 37 years old]

According to the participants, major substitutes for foreign credentials and factors that helped in attaining Canadian workplace experience were retraining, work placement and volunteering with public and non-profit organizations. In this respect, participants' interaction in local labor market has shown that finding jobs with Foreign Credentials and qualifications is difficult. Accordingly, retraining was considered an alternate pathway, whereby racialized migrants enter the labor market with skills and trainings attained in Canada. Participant stated:

Many people who came to Canada before me 15 years ago have shared their stories with me their stories on how they can't find work as medical doctors in Canada. I therefore chose to become join nursing school and became a nurse after a failed several medical exams attempts. I am now over fifty years old and therefore no longer interested in becoming a medical doctor. It is just a waste of time and resources. [Male, 50 years old]

Participants further discussed four avenues in their decision-making process that led to selecting a training that fit their aspirations and needs for their professional development. These consisted of (1) choosing training through evaluating experiences of other individuals with the same profession and seeking jobs and training in the same field, (2) a struggle with letting go of previous qualifications and seeking training in different fields of specialization, (3) reconsidering training in the profession, and, (4) deciding what training fits their professional needs. These training path best understood as the factors influencing the decision-making process leading to selection of training and retraining.

Support Services Gaps

The narratives on services gap category reflects the participants' experience with lack of programs, neoliberal policies and requirements set by the government, as prerequisites that immigrants must meet before being recognized as a desirable candidate to participate. In this context, participants discussed the inadequacies of provincial and municipal employment programs designed to help migrants secure jobs. One notable shortcoming was the lack of customized employment programs geared toward the employment needs of racialized migrants. In addition, programs lack resources such as staff competent to deal with barriers to employment specific to foreign trained migrants. According to the participants, these programs should have more integrity, professional expertise, and the real world knowledge needed to maximize migrants' abilities to secure jobs and succeed in local Canadian labor market. Participant stated:

In Canada, there are no institutionalized programs in place for immigrants to work in their fields. I know some doctors who are working as personal support workers, or driving taxis--what a waste of experience. I think government has a power to change this situation of foreign doctors, but why they don't do it, I don't know [male 32 years old].

Further, participants also discussed concerns with the lack of early intervention through assessment and referrals to appropriate programs and trainings geared toward facilitating transition into the local labor market. They felt that the lack of customized employment programs has let them flounder until they figured it out for themselves. They thought that employment programs did not provide a clear understanding of the expectations of the Canadian workplace culture. Participants felt that current employment programs in Ottawa are mainly geared toward understanding the process of entering the Canadian labor market and understanding requirements for obtaining jobs in Canada. They felt inadequate to comprehend the complicated process and the endless hurdles and barriers to success in finding and keeping a job. Participant said:

There is no program that help integrates migrants into local labor market, a program that would start with skills assessment when a person is still fresh with their knowledge and experience as they first arrive in Canada. I need programs such as job placement and customized training to work in fields of profession. I think such an opportunity would give me an exposure to the system and maximize my chances to pass interviews and employment tests. [Male, 29 years old]

To the contrary, participants thought that experience gaps often perceived by employers as their personal deficit were, in fact, a matter of previous work experience obtained in country-of-origin and educational background being inappropriately assessed and recognized. The employers depended heavily on the regulatory bodies for credential assessment and interpreted this as an accurate indication of the candidates' ability to function in their field of profession. Participants felt that this sort of evaluation and its letter of assessments were meaningless and worthless, except for the minimal confirmation of the authenticity of degrees and the degree-granting institution. Participants stated:

My degrees were assessed to be equivalent to a degree obtained from a reputable Canadian institution; however, this assessment did not help in any way to compete for jobs with my counterpart Canadian born job seekers. [Male, 32 years old]

In addition, other professions such as medicine, engineering and teaching required further accreditation, licensing, regulatory body registration, and union affiliations. Participants' disparities were discussed in form of difficulties with licensing, accreditation and evaluations, which they thought took an unduly long time to assess, were costly and were not recognized by employers. The pattern of requiring racialized migrants firiegn-trained doctors to take additional tests and training not required of their Canadian-born counterparts in the same field, with the same qualifications, was also a barrier.

Further, after passing the prescribed test, foreign-trained doctors in the field of medicine were required to secure residency in the rural areas to practice under the supervision of a practicing Canadian doctor. Participants discussed this requirement as challenging due to the unwillingness of many hospitals to allow foreign-trained medical residents to practice in hospitals under the supervision of a practicing Canadian doctor. Racialized migrants who had passed the required exams were given a fraction of the residency spaces available annually—in fact, less than a quarter of the total number allocated to the Canadian born who graduated from Canadian medical institutions. Participants stated:

...to have a residency, I was asked for three references from previous professors at universities overseas. I finished my school seven years before coming to Canada and lived in Canada for 10 years... I think they might not be there anymore...also, immigrants write an additional screening test that cost \$1000 and a language test, both oral and written. In addition, the provincial regulation demands additional residency and specialization, even if I had one already. Further, there is a problem of securing residency even if I passed the tests, because they have quotas of 100 positions for Canadians who finish here and only 25 for immigrants. [Female, 34 years old]

According to the participants, early exposure to workplace culture and the way the labor market works would save many wasted dollars, wasted hours and enormous turmoil, and this could be achieved through work placement, internships, mentorship and job shadowing. It would be added value if Canadian institutions were willing to accept racialized Foreign-Trained Professionals to join their institutions to practice and be mentored by Canadian professionals. It does not make sense to give potential immigrants priority admission to Canada and tell them their skills are needed and then abandon them to a complicated process in which they endure systemic racism and protectionism and wherein jobs and access to economic opportunities are reserved for mainstream Canadian-born professionals.

Discussion

The employment barriers and the tedious requirements placed upon the racialized migrants were perceived as the main reasons why they shift their focus from the main objectives of finding employment to retraining and skills development. Training was considered as an alternate route to secure employment with skills, education and work experience attained in Canada. In this process, lack of funding and programs cuts have rendered many social, community or professional employment programs nearly dysfunctional with a limited support that are not tailored toward support and employment needs of the newly arrived migrants. This cynicism and sense of futility is not surprising, since most of those who have been in Canada for several years have participated in these programs over and over without success (Madut, 2013a).

Further, participants discussed concerns with the lack of early intervention through assessment and referrals to appropriate programs and trainings geared toward facilitating transition into the labor force or retrain for new skills. Participant felt that the lack of customized employment and social programs has let them flounder until they figured it out for themselves. They thought that employment and resettlement programs did not provide a clear understanding of the expectations of the Canadian employers' needs and expectations. The new research suggested that Canadian employers preferred work experiences over education and qualification (McInnes, 2012). Participants felt that current employment programs in Ottawa are mainly geared toward understanding the process of entering the Canadian labor market and understanding requirements for obtaining jobs in Canada. They felt inadequate to comprehend the complicated process and the endless hurdles and barriers to success in Canadian society.

In addition, the socio-cultural realities of the Canadian labor market and the many and ambiguous requirements placed on racialized migrants professionals have created a perception that having a Canadian education may reduce prejudices when competing for jobs with people having the same Canadian qualification. As explained, it is relatively true that recognition of the Canadian education and abandonment of foreign credentials has

improved the racialized migrants' chances to gain jobs through work placement and internships (Morrow, 2007). According to the participants, it did not mean an equal status with Canadian-born candidates when competing for a job, as employers would still prefer a Canadian-born candidate with the same qualifications because of such factors as cultural familiarity, gender and business experience.

In this context, participants discussed the inadequacies of provincial and municipal employment programs designed to help migrants secure jobs or effectively integrate into the Canadian labor force. One notable shortcoming was the lack of customized employment programs geared toward the employment needs of racialized migrants. In addition, programs lack resources such as staff competent to deal with barriers to employment specific to racialized migrant and cultural variations. Participants thought, these programs should have more integrity, professional expertise, and the real world knowledge needed to maximize migrants' abilities to secure jobs in their fields of professions (Madut, 2013b).

Nonetheless, the neoliberalized policies and approach has eliminated access to employment support programs specifically geared toward racialized migrants' job seekers, reduced early interventions in areas such as information, customized trainings, employment resources and support. Other factors such as protectionism was also evident in the practices of unions, regulatory bodies and professional associations, reformed provincial and municipal Employment Standard Act (ESA). In this context, lack of bridging employment services has limited racialized migrants understanding of other barriers to employment such as licensing process that was characterized as costly and time-consuming, multiple exams and a residency requirement, fulfill, biased credentials assessments and accreditation.

All these social instructional and policies gaps can be summarized in the lack of programs specifically geared toward racialized migrants employability and skill development needs, lack of early interventions in areas such as information, customized trainings and employment support programs. These also include protectionism as evident in the practices of unions, regulatory bodies and professional associations. Participants have also complained about the licensing process that was characterized as costly and time-consuming, coupled with biased credentials assessments and

accreditation, as well as being unfamiliar with workplace culture and social norms.

In the field of medicine for example, after passing the prescribed test, racialized foreign trained doctors were required to secure residency in the rural areas to practice under the supervision of a practicing Canadian doctor. Participants discussed this requirement as challenging due to the unwillingness of many hospitals to allow them to practice in hospitals under the supervision of a practicing Canadian doctor.

Conclusion

In short, an effective integration of racialized migrants into the Canadian society socially and economically, will require effective employment support programs that start with an early exposure to workplace culture and understanding the way labor market works. Such intervention would save many wasted dollars, wasted hours and enormous barriers experiences by migrants. Practically, this could be achieved through investment in work placement, internships, mentorship and job shadowing.

Further, it would be added value if Canadian institutions, both public and private, were willing to accept racialized migrants to join their institutions to practice and be mentored by mainstream professionals. It does not make sense to give potential immigrants priority admission to Canada based on work experience, education, tell them their skills are needed and then abandon them to a complicated process in which they endure systemic institutional, cultural and personal barriers, wherein jobs and access to economic opportunities are reserved for mainstream Canadian-born professionals. Finally, the wave of economic crisis and neoliberalism approach interventions as cited in eliminations of social and employment support programs, has as well complicated the integration process of the racialized migrants into local labor market o to effectively contribution in Canadian socio-economic development.

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