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A Canadian Union Perspective on Education and Citizenship: The role immigrant experience of labour markets and work¹

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Introduction

Canada is a nation of immigrants. Immigration has been one of the most important forces that have shaped the country in the past, and continues to do so today. The notion of citizenship, thus, is a crucial one. Citizenship can be variously defined as I'll discuss below, however just as important is understanding the educational processes – or more broadly the learning and experiential processes – that define citizenship as it is actively produced across major social institutions. While more frequently we find analysis of the relation between immigration and labour markets, discussions of *citizenship* – involving issues of identity, values, expectations, experiences, rights and responsibilities – have not typically been examined for the ways that it is defined and actively created within labour markets, workplaces and the economy. In particular, it remains very rare that issues of citizenship are explicitly linked with a union perspective on immigration, educational credentials and work. This article seeks to make such linkages, placing them amongst the broader discussion of citizenship and education, by drawing on a recently completed study focusing on the recognition of foreign credentials in the economy and the experiences of new Canadians that result.

Inspired by the statements issued from the 1997 International Conference on Adult Education in Hamburg Germany, in recent years, adult educators in Canada have returned to critical consideration of citizenship and education with renewed interest (Schugurensky 2006). This conference involved over 1500 delegates from 130 countries and produced an “Agenda for the Future” document that lists commitments across 10 theme areas which include reference to democracy, peace, justice and tolerance as they involved citizenship education. The document explicitly states that, in so-called first world countries like Canada, there needs to be a commitment to a “new partnership between the state and civil society” (UNESCO 1997, p.36).

The aim of this article is to build and extend the ideas of this document; to expand it to include a union perspective on immigration, citizenship, and the recognition of educational credentials. This aim assumes that full participation in democracy for peace, justice and tolerance includes justice in the realm of the economy and paid work. As this article will document, currently such forms of participation are seriously underdeveloped, and the position of recent immigrants in Canadian society in relation to labour markets and educational credentials is a major factor in the perpetuation of injustice. In short, citizenship education in Canada must strive to incorporate the democratic struggle for fair treatment in the economy as

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well as civil society. Amidst the vast wealth and resources of a country like Canada, the research report herein show the serious erosion of faith amongst Canada's new citizens.

Citizen education in Canada has long history. This history is fraught with sexist, racist and classist, as well as imperialist and religious, presumptions on what and who 'good citizens' and 'good workers' are, and exhibits a program of cultural and economic assimilation. It's most clear articulation can be seen in both the early and in many ways ongoing citizenship-making policies and practices that surrounded First Nations Aboriginal peoples where severe cultural and economic domination has been effectively established. This program meant the imposition of language, religion, identity and values uncomplemented by equality of differences. Since then the curriculum has been further developed to promote an official history version of Canadian society which necessarily ignores the conflictual imperialism, resistance and domination which characterized it. Today, citizenship education broadly conceived affords many of the same principles though often more subtly expressed. And, as I argue here in this article, it is supplemented by the experiential learning that comes from immigrant experiences in the labour market and workplace.

In fact, Canada is not particularly unique in this regard. According to Schugurensky (2006) citizenship can be thought of as speaking to several aspects common to many countries around the globe. Thus, the term 'citizenship' itself includes at least four dimensions: status, identity, civic virtues and agency. As in Canada, the most common focus in terms of citizenship and education is the notion of status: that is, a status that confirms full membership in a nation-state community which includes rights and duties. Of course, all citizens are supposed to enjoy the same rights and duties according to citizenship status, but this is not the case, either historically or in contemporary Canada. This underlines the importance of recognizing *ideal* versus *actual* citizenship. Likewise, in Canada, citizenship as identity, civic virtues and agency, when viewed through the lenses of ideal versus actual citizenship are seen to be equally wanting. As this and other research shows, with a focus on how labour markets and the workplace mediate their experience, contemporary immigrants to Canada come to see that in actuality they do not fully belong as citizens and thus do not enjoy the ideal Canadian *identity*; that in actuality they do not experience the *civic virtue* touted in the citizenship materials; and that in actuality they find their *agency* severely constrained.

As I'll discuss more fully below, the article reports on a research project based on an action research approach which featured immigrant workers from the autoparts sector in the Greater Toronto Area of Canada going into their own workplaces to interview other immigrant workers (n=39) in order to gain insight on labour market and workplace experiences for the purposes of building a union-based, social justice perspective on how the lived reality of citizenship in Canada relates to the economy. Thus, to fully understand the notions of ideal versus the actual reproduction of citizenship experiences in relation to the economy and paid work it is vital to look at labour market outcomes as they relate to formal education achievement, work experience as well as the vast informal learning experiences of Canadian immigrants. That is, according to our review of national research literature, the often repeated image of PhD graduate driving taxi or the doctor serving up Big Macs has serious grounding in reality. In this research I advanced the idea that citizenship and education must include experiences, education and learning in and through the labour market, and that in pursuit of the ideals of the 1997 Hamburg Agenda document, the Canadian labour movement is and must continue to respond.

Recent reports on immigration in Canada have explicitly included discussions of labour market participation (e.g. McKay 1993; Derwing, Jamieson and Munro 1998). Often these

discussions have been interwoven with language learning, but our research has a broader focus. This research project sought to explore the broader outcomes associated with the experiences in which the new Canadian immigrant: the engineer, school teacher, professor, accountant, nurse or pharmacist (all of whom can be found amongst our interviewees) struggle to achieve genuine citizenship while labouring away from public sight in the factories of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Like the taxi driver and fast food worker, however, these people do not show up on the statistics of the unemployed – rather they are among the grossly *underemployed*; hidden all the more since they typically perform very well at their jobs, despite the enormous waste of experience, training and ability and a growing erosion of faith in Canadian labour markets, society and citizenship.

The interest of this action research project is to develop a union-based action plan for achieving justice for workers in the context of a first-world, northern hemisphere, advanced capitalist country. In particular, immigrant credential recognition is a broad research area that has received significant political, policy and research attention in Canada in the last decade. While the research has correctly looked at both employed and unemployed citizens, our focus beginning with a specific sub-group (by virtue of the autoparts sector demographics, virtually all interviewees are male) of United Steelworkers (USW) membership in the GTA, and thus excluded unemployed workers. Our project's start was modest: to learn what we can in the specific case of the lives of foreign born USW members in the auto-parts sector.

As I'll show, the literature has a variety of defining characteristics and has made many specific policy proposals; some of these our project supports, some of these our project seeks to clarify, challenge and re-assess. Unlike so much recent research that has been either very broad (international), Canadian but general in scope (macro-analysis / quantitative) – our study did not seek to, in the first instance, generalize and control for the unique factors that shape the lives of new Canadians but rather explored these unique factors directly through open-ended, semi-structured immigrant-worker to immigrant-worker conversations. Moreover, our concern in looking at how citizenship is actively reproduced through labour markets and workplaces did not simply deal with, for example, training participation rates and the mediating effects of immigrant status on them, although our project does provide evidence on this matter. Instead our interest was to put training participation (often presumed to be the chief problem and solution to the challenges outlined here) as a component of a broader analysis of citizen participation: participation in the work processes, participation with *both* professional *and* civil society more broadly. Thus our focus was as follows: to describe and assess the patterns of lived experience of citizenship as it varies across different people, different immigration pathways, different employers; and to confirm on the level of lived experience the facts and assess the possibility for a union-specific response to the needs of these specific members to contribute to developing a new role for organized labour on the question of citizenship, the economy, foreign education and experience recognition.

At its most basic, this research takes on important significance because of the exclusion of an empirically-based union vision from the general social debate in Canada. More substantively, of course, the union movement – both in Canada and the rest of the world – brings with this vision its own unique set of resources, powers and concerns, rooted in social justice and economic democracy; issues that often become marginalized in discussions of recognition of foreign credentials.

Beyond this basic rationale, as compelling as our project believes it is, there is still more that can be said. To do this, I first ask 'why': Why it is that employers – amidst the rhetorical flourishes as well as the growing bulk of research and public policy documentation –

appear to retain their reticence in achieving a more ideal form of citizenship by employing immigrants and by adequately recognizing the value of their skills, knowledge, credentials and experience? Certainly one of the most under-acknowledged explanations for this is that under our current political economic system such recognition may not be in their direct, short-term, individual economic interest. At its most basic level, as Li (2001) and others have shown, the earnings of new citizens in the Canadian labour market are, virtually universally, lower than native-born Canadian citizens due “to the lower market value being attached to immigrants’ educational qualification that are potentially equivalent or comparable to those of native-born Canadians” (p.23). An obvious but rarely articulated point emerges: capital makes a lot of money from these conditions of (non-)recognition. Such elementary points are central to my analysis, and are a key in our project’s view to opening the door to important, if not fundamental, solutions to the injustice and waste of our current social and economic situation.

However, as we will see, employers are not alone in their reticence. Putting aside the (debatable) issues of the comparative quality of training from inside versus outside Canada for the moment, key professional associations or rather occupational regulatory bodies (ORB’s) (e.g. engineering, financial services, medical doctors, teaching, nursing) have been increasingly researched and demonstrated to have shown significant ‘foot-dragging’ on the issue of recognizing foreign credentials and experience as well. Again, a largely under-reported explanation is that: in the context of competitive, professional segments of the labour market – here again there is, under capitalist labour markets, reason to believe that it may not be in their direct, short-term, individual economic interest to do the right thing. That is, opening these segments of the labour market would tend to lower wages/benefits and with it the power of such professional groups; groups which, unlike the labour movement, have never made formal claims to representing issues of fairness and social justice.

Below, I provide a brief overview of the relevant Canadian research on the problem of recognition and social justice. I then provide a more in depth outline of the action research methods we undertook before moving onto an analysis of the interview data emerging from our diverse team of immigrant steelworker/researchers, and their workplace conversations with those, like themselves, who’ve experienced the shameful state of work, learning, credentialization and labour market dynamics from the standpoint of new Canadian citizens. Drawing on the active voice of immigrant steelworkers in the autoparts sector of the GTA, our findings speak to three key areas. First, the findings represent the experiential meaning of current work conditions, massive underemployment, somewhat mixed assessments of the meaning of these conditions, and the types of interlocking cultural/material conditions that constrain capacity and produce injustice and economic waste across community, workplace, and bureaucratic interrelations. This addresses the actual, reality of the production of citizenship through economic relations. Second, the findings speak directly to the unfulfilled hopes and erosion of faith in Canada’s willingness to recognize credentials and experience, as well as the potential erosion of skills and knowledge through both the mis-matched as well as, more broadly the de-skilled job design conditions both immigrant and non-immigrant workers face daily. This addresses the contradiction inherent within economic relations between the ideal and the actual conditions of citizenship for new Canadians. Third, our research points beyond individual coping, information support, and rationalization of the bureaucratic quagmire that characterize immigration, labour market and work relations to highlight the possibilities for collective solutions; here in the form of innovative, union-based initiatives and advocacy. This addresses the future possibilities for achieving more just forms of citizenship for new Canadians. I conclude with the recommendations and initiatives specific to countries like

Canada that emerge from our project's efforts: ideas which I believe flesh out more clearly than has been done in the past, the questions and solutions raised by other researchers in the field regarding the linkages between the production of citizenship, labour markets, work and economic relations.

Overview of Canadian Literature and Current State of Affairs

Historical and Contemporary Context in Canada

The United Nations ranks Canada as a good country in which to live. Canada is seen globally as a culturally diverse, prosperous society and has attracted newcomers from over 200 countries. According to the 2001 Census of Canada, immigrants make up 18.4 percent of the nation's population, the highest proportion since 1931 (Statistics Canada, 2003, p.5). Historically, the country has relied on immigration for skills and professions. While immigration from a variety of sources has continued throughout Canada's history, the country has experienced several, identifiable waves of immigration over the last century. Three key periods stand out in this regard. First, in the early part of the 20th century there was a significant inflow of central and eastern Europeans in particular as the economy required farming, mining, lumber and railway workers to fulfill its economic role as a supplier of raw materials to other countries, most notably the British empire, and to build national infrastructure. This period stands out also for its active efforts to shape citizenship through worker educational institutions such as Frontier College, established in 1901, with the goal of raising (English) literacy levels to create 'good workers', 'good Christians' and through this, 'good citizens' (Welton 1987). Second, after World War II, Canada was faced with a shortage of trained professionals along with other advanced capitalist countries such as the U.S.A., U.K. and Europe (Li 1992, 1996 as cited in Basran and Zong 1998, p.3). Finally, as a nation, given falling birth rates amongst Canadian-born citizens, we are now amidst another significant wave of immigration, as the country attempts to replace skilled labour against a backdrop of an aging population and increased global economic pressures.

Importantly, it was in 1967 that Canadian immigration policy changed remarkably with legislation and regulations that sought to alter an essentially racist immigration policy into one more likely to accept new citizens based on pre-determined merit (Basran and Zong, 1998 p.3; Pendakur 2000, p.82). Potential immigrants were thus judged on a 'point system' based on education, age, specific vocational qualifications, experience, occupation, pre-arranged employment, knowledge of French or English, personal suitability and the destination of settlement in Canada. Today, more than half of all recent immigrants to Canada report language ability in English, French or both official languages. Over 40 percent of immigrants to Canada between 2000 and 2002, for example, reported English language ability. Newcomers are distributed relatively equally in terms of gender. The Asia and the Pacific, African and the Middle East regions are among the top sources for principal applicants and dependants. The majority of immigrants to Canada in this time period are visible minorities (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2003).

In Canada, immigrants enter the country in three main classifications: economic, family and refugees. About 60 percent were economic immigrants, predominantly skilled workers, as well as business immigrants, live-in caregivers and provincial/territorial nominees, together with their families (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2003). At least 45 percent of the immigrants and refugees entering Canada had completed some level of post-secondary education. Among this group, over half reported completing a university degree. In 2000, 58 percent of working-age immigrants (25 to 64) entering into Canada had completed a post-

secondary degree, compared with 43 percent of the existing Canadian population (Statistics Canada 2001 cited in Government of Canada 2002).

Currently, the federal government anticipates a shortfall of up to one million workers within twenty years and suggests that by 2011 immigration will account for all net labour force growth in the nation. Already, immigration accounts for over 70 percent of net growth in the labour force (Government of Canada 2002, p.49). While the issue of skills shortages in Canada and Ontario has been the subject of considerable debate (McMullin and Cooke, 2004), publicly employers have tended to indicate serious concerns regarding emerging skills shortages, particularly in occupations such as nursing, skilled trades in manufacturing, and engineering. The Conference Board policy and research organization in Canada suggests that the country stands to gain up to \$5.9 billion annually from improving its system of learning recognition and promoting learning recognition. More than 340,000 Canadians possess unrecognized foreign credentials, many of them visible minorities (Bloom and Grant, 2000). Amidst all of these concerns, the issue of what it means to be a citizen is central, and experiences in the labour market and workplace show that for new immigrants ideal notions of citizenship do not reflect lived reality.

The Experience of New Citizens in Canada

Many so-called first world countries (OECD 2000a, 2000b, 2001; Barth, Bratsberg and Raaum, 2000; Zegers de Beijl, 2000; Coppel, Dumont and Visco, 2001; Bratsberg and Ragan, 2002) have reproduced somewhat similar citizen experiences for new immigrants. Generally speaking, the following context holds stable for immigrant workers:

- lower wages,
- higher unemployment
- higher under- and mis-employment
- lower access to employer sponsored training (despite higher formal education and a lower likelihood of refusal to accept training opportunities)

In Canada specifically, numerous barriers exist for immigrants seeking access to employment commensurate with their skills and experience (Canadian Labour and Business Centre 2002, 2003a, 2003b). In many Census Metropolitan Areas, increases in low income during the 1990s were concentrated among new citizens, including those in the GTA (Reitz, 2000; Heisz & McLeod, 2004). In particular, barriers that restrict access to professions, trades and management positions have limited employment success and immigrant earnings directly, and significantly shape what it means to be a new citizen.

Between 1991 and 2000, 2.2 million immigrants were admitted into Canada at a rate of approximately 220,000 annually (Chui, 2003, p.5). Of these newcomers, Ontario received about 100,000 each year. The nation's largest metropolitan areas have experienced the most substantial population growth resulting from immigration. In 2001, the proportion of foreign-born population was 43.7 percent for Toronto, 37.5 percent for Vancouver, 23.6 percent for Hamilton and 18.4 percent for Montreal (Statistics Canada, 2003a, 2003b).

Wallace and Brady (2001) describe sweeping transformations in Canadian and American economies during the 1990s, including de-industrialization, outsourcing, downsizing, contingent work and perpetual restructuring of jobs which impacted opportunities for full time employment in high wage occupations. However, these factors do not in themselves account for the marked disparities in economic opportunity between immigrants and their Canadian-born

counterparts that plays such an important role in what it means to be a new citizen in the country today.

In *Immigrants and the Labour Force* (2000), Pendakur gives detailed quantitative analysis of Canadian immigration policy and how it has influenced the composition of the current labour force and the integration of immigrants into the labour force (Wanner 2001, p.147). Using a “cohort attainment model”, he compared three groups of immigrants and non-immigrants in four census periods: 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991 in their industry of employment. This census data is taken for the six largest Canadian Census Metropolitan Areas. The cohorts are tracked from their entry point into Canada and then into the decades following. Some salient findings included the following:

- the cohort that entered in 1961 did not vary in their occupations over the 30 years they were tracked. Immigrant men remained concentrated in construction and manufacturing, while women remained in manufacturing and service industries. These jobs were markedly high in immigrants who lacked fluency in an official language (p.71)
- Country of education seemed to be a cause of discrimination faced by immigrants; immigrants schooled in the UK and US were given full credit for their education and were competitive with Canadian-born workers. The reverse is true for immigrants schooled elsewhere (p.70)
- Movement of significant numbers of immigrants into self-employment, particularly in the areas of construction and services. This could be due to the lack of mobility for immigrants as a result of discrimination and the entrenchment of ethnic niche employment. Self-employment was much higher for immigrants compared to non-immigrants over the 3 decades (p.117)
- Employment equity initiatives are problematic in that the creation of the category “visible minority” homogenizes a diverse population. Although Pendakur shows that people of colour earn significantly less than whites in Canada, the wage gap is experienced differently by different ethnic and racial groups (p.147)

According to Reitz (2000, p.18), employment and earnings success of newcomers to Canada during the period of 1971 to 1996 has been significantly eroded by rising levels of native-born education and the increasing importance of education in Canadian labour markets, especially in major urban areas such as Toronto. The fact is that while Canada has become a leader in post-secondary education attainment, job entry requirements have increased substantially (Livingstone, 2001, 2004; Reitz 2000). In effect, the *foreign credentials-jobs gap* has widened despite rising levels of qualifications among new citizens (Reitz, 2000; Li, 2001; Government of Canada, 2002).

A significant amount of research has been undertaken documenting fundamental issues that relate to the lack of recognition and devaluation of foreign credentials and experiential learning in Canada (Alboim and Maytree Foundation, 2002, 2003; Bloom & Grant, 2000; Brouwer, 1999; Reitz, 2000; Sangster, 2001). Regularly, however, the discriminatory nature of citizenship of new immigrants versus Canadian-born workers is not challenged as a functional distinction in terms of citizen rights. Lack of recognition of immigrants’ prior learning, including educational attainment, professional qualifications and work experience is one of the most pervasive issues influencing their successful integration into Canadian society.

A key longitudinal study of immigrants to Canada commissioned by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2003) looked at how citizens adjust to their new home and to the labour market. The study sample included 12,000 immigrants age 15 and older who were admitted into Canada between October 2000 and September 2001 (Chui, 2003, p.5). The sample was consistent with the ethno-cultural portrait of immigrants arriving in Canada outlined above. Their destination was influenced most by the location of family or friends and by job prospects (Chui, 2003, pp.10–13). The majority of immigrants who arrived in Canada during the study period were well educated, with 55 percent reporting having a university education. For the primary working-age group, 25 to 44 years, the proportion was even greater. Most of them indicated their ability to converse well in English or French. During the study period, of the newcomers determined to be ready and willing to work there was a 70 percent participation rate in the labour force (30 percent unemployment). The participation rate for men was 82.5 percent compared to 57.6 percent for women (Chui, 2003, p.7). Amongst the disturbing findings of this study was that, of the immigrants who were employed at the time of the survey, only four out of ten were working in their same field after arrival. This shift in occupational distribution occurred for both men and women. Many of the study participants found themselves in sales and service occupations and manufacturing jobs. Lack of Canadian experience and transferability of foreign credentials were cited as the most critical barriers to successful employment in a chosen field. Educational attainment level had little or no impact on whether newcomers worked in the same field (Chui, 2003, pp.30-33). The study also highlighted racial discrimination as a major factor inhibiting integration into the labour market for visible minority immigrants. Country of birth and official language skills appeared to have a particularly harsh effect on whether immigrants were successfully employed within the same field as they had been before coming to Canada. Looking at comparable countries, for example, we see that 63 percent of new citizens in the United States and 68 percent from Australia and New Zealand were employed in the same occupational groups. Whereas, only 33 percent of those born in Asia and the Middle East and 36 percent of those from Central and South America were employed in the same occupational groups (Chiu 2003, p.30).

The fact is that many newcomers end up working in whatever jobs they can obtain to earn a living rather than working in higher-wage occupations for which they are qualified. Through economic relations, racialized forms of differences are thus quickly transformed in racial/social class based discrimination. For those who cannot speak English or French, these issues are amplified. Many professions such as law, engineering, nursing, and teaching are regulated by self-governing ORB's. These organizations have been established under provincial law and have the authority to set educational and entry requirements and standards of practice for selected professions. They are also involved in assessing the qualifications and credentials of applicants and registering qualified applicants (see Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, 2002).

Alboim and The Maytree Foundation (2002) note that immigration involves a multi-jurisdictional array of services, which in itself, poses significant challenges for newcomers. The responsibility for integrating new citizens is shared by federal, provincial and municipal governments, employers, community-based organizations, public institutions and ORBs. Navigating the maze of services can be intimidating, time-consuming, and costly; and represents a significant inter-institutional mechanism for the reproduction of race/class biases of new citizenship. They argue that solutions are needed, not only to overcome the many barriers to effective labour market integration, but also to improve co-ordination and streamline services

for immigrants, especially services involving assessment of foreign credentials and work experience.

Methods

In keeping with a participatory perspective on union efforts to bring about change in the discriminatory experiences of new citizens, the study I report on here drew on the tradition of participatory action research to explore the challenges of foreign education and experience recognition. Action research is one amongst a family of methods of inquiry that seek to create more reciprocal relationships between researchers and their subjects (Ansley and Gaventa 1997, p.46; see also Fals-Borda 1987). The term '*participatory research*', as it is commonly used, refers to a set of principles and related practices that are intended to distribute power more equitably in the research process. '*Participatory action research*', also commonly referred to in educational research and community development, possesses many of the same values and uses similar methods. Differences aside, there is consensus among practitioners of collaborative research that a strong applied component aimed at generating social change is central (Brown and Tandon 1983, p.1). An introduction to the literature (see Hall 1993, 1994; Park et al. 1993; Maguire 1987) describes participatory research as research that proposes to return power to "ordinary people" (Maguire 1987, p.39). In Sawchuk (1999; Livingstone and Sawchuk 2004) there is a discussion of how action research may be applied to educational research carried out by and through unions in countries like Canada. Throughout all of these descriptions, we see that the research problem arises out of a collective process that identifies the needs of people who share a particular circumstance. People's own knowledge and experience is valued and holds authority over the direction the research takes (Fischer 1997, p.3). For the purposes of this study, this means that immigrant worker/researchers in the project were involved at all stages of the research, from determining the research focus, framing the questions and designing the investigation tools. Roles also included collecting data, analyzing data and communicating the results.

Practically speaking, our participatory relationships were rooted in our recruitment of worker/researchers in partnership with an innovative and energetic leadership of USW Local 13571. The project in fact depended on the fore-sight of the union local for its success. People were recruited to attend an opening presentation by the PI's, and seven members chose to stay on as part of the team. All of the team members were male. In addition, however, all team members were workers of colour, themselves new citizens who had experienced the issues our project was to investigate. Over two half day sessions held at the Steelworker union hall in downtown Toronto, the issues were talked about and the preliminary interview schedule was vetted and adjusted. Worker/researchers were trained in basic interviewing techniques, and issues of how best to generate diverse and useful samples were discussed.

The actual process of interviewing used a 'snow-ball' sampling technique in which workers, armed with a knowledge of the questions and issues as well as consent forms and taperecorders, would approach other immigrant union members in their workplace to interview them on breaks, lunches, before or after work, and then ask if there were others who the interviewee knew who might be experiencing similar issues. In total our team conducted 39 interviews which lasted between 20 minutes to one hour each.

Our sample represents mostly men, again in keeping with the gender distribution of the plants where the research was conducted. Origin countries of the interviewees included Pakistan, Sri Lanka, India, Poland, Banladesh, Phillipines, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guyana, Trinidad, Mexico, Ecuador, Peru, China and South Korea. The average age of the interviewees was approximately 42 with relatively even distribution across those in their 30's, 40's and 50's with

only two interviewees under 30 years old. An important slip in the interview process was that the number of years spent in Canada was not evenly recorded though there is enough evidence in the detailed descriptions of employment histories that the majority had been in Canada between 3 and 10 years, with a small minority having been here for up to twenty years.

Our snow-balling sample roughly approximated the distributions outlined by the major Statistics Canada survey carried out by Chui (2003): over half had university education; all could converse in English and many demonstrated significant facility in the language. Most of our interviewees, by virtue of the type of study we carried out in our project, were *not* working in their field of choice, although like Chui (2003, pp.30-33) we can see that educational credentials did not seem to have been adequately taken into account.

Our sample, as it turned out and given the limitations of the sectoral context, appears to be relatively suitable to develop some limited extrapolated claims. Picking up on points made above in our literature review I note that up to the 1960's Canada's immigration policy was racially based and presented European 'white faces' to Canada more often than not (Whitaker 1991; Guo 2005). While people of colour are not new to Canada by any means, since this covers the two previous immigration booms in Canada (early and mid 20th century), we can see that our third, current immigration boom is historically unique: it now includes much greater proportions of Asian, Latin American, Caribbean and Third World immigration; and at the same time has revealed the racialization of economic integration in profoundly new ways. Our sample mirrored these basic characteristics closely.

Findings

Experience of New Canadian Citizens at Work

I came to Canada in 1998. In Montréal, I was looking for a job in lots of different places, so at last I get a job in the factory. At that time I cried, I don't like to but I cried. I worked there six months. I said to my wife: let's go back. But she didn't agree to go back and that's why I stayed here. (G9)

So said this former accountant with advanced graduate degree from his former home in Bangladesh where he worked for just over 6 years as a financial administrative officer for both UNICEF and a multi-national garment company.

Most of our interviews began with a discussion of the work that people currently do. While the descriptions show similarities, the assessments break down into majority and minority views. The majority view assesses this work as monotonous, unfulfilling and unchallenging, and possibly corrosive of their former skills, knowledge, familiarity with technologies and techniques. It also expresses the degree to which the options for moving out of this work are very narrow. In our research project, these experiences were viewed as essential for fully understanding the role of labour markets, work and the economy in forming race/class relationships that distinguish the meanings of *ideal* versus *actual* citizenship. A former computer engineer from Bangladesh remarks:

It don't need qualification, anybody can do that job... Yeah, and I worked as a computer hardware engineer, seven or eight years of experience there. But now I come four years almost I spend in a labor job. (G8)

Likewise, a former engineer from China who now works who now works as a machine operator feels a sense of undervaluation by the general labor occupation, because it seriously undermines his qualification and skill he brought to Canada:

- I: Do you like your job?
R: But actually, I think this job should not belong to me. Because I think I have so much experience in my major, I think the general help is a waste of time. But for me this is a job for survival... My ideal job is to be a professional engineer. You know, I worked in this major for about fifteen years and I would like to continue in my career. But I think because it's very difficult to get this dream, because there is a long way to go. Because my degree is not recognized by the government... (J2)

The minority view, it should be registered, assesses this work as a reasonably well-paid unionized job that in the context of a busy family life and the general stresses of establishing oneself in a new country, meant much less stressful and much less demanding levels of engagement as compared to their previous work lives. A young, Trinidadian man, a former welder, told us:

- I: Ok, do you like what you are doing right now? Do you like this job?
R: Yes I do. I like the job I am doing right now. It's ok. We have good benefits and stuff. (H1)

And likewise a former construction engineer from the Phillipines, now working as a parts assembler contrasted the stress of project leadership on large-scale building plans with the comparative ease of his current situation.

- Yes, I enjoy my work because it is too easy. It doesn't need brains to work on this and not too much stress. (G4)

We'll learn more about the individual and collective response to these conditions in the following sections, but one which should be noted now is the degree to which their responses revolved around 'educational solutions'; that is, whether or not to engage in further education. Engaging in further education, in the sense of my argument, is an individual strategy to achieve the forms of ideal citizenship in the sphere of economic relations that countries like Canada on the surface seem to offer. But, most workers interviewed discussed the tortuous weighing of options that was required when family finances, overall time commitment including not simply a lack of time but also sober projections of how long it would actually take to make a full transition back into their former career. Material reality, conditioned by both racism and class society, make the achievement of ideal citizenship an impossibility for the majority. Depending on the field (nursing, engineering, pharmacy, teaching all differ), interviewees gave estimates on the time-commitment they would anticipate: 3-5 years of full-time schooling plus 4-6 years of junior and/or developmental posts before, entering into the occupational levels they enjoyed prior to arriving in Canada.

- I: Do you feel you know enough now about how to get credits for your background education and experience?

- R: I know you have to go back to school, upgrade your whole educational status; get experience from somewhere whether voluntary work or work from a friend and get experience so you can get back into the workforce... When you are new immigrants it's very difficult. You have no idea what you are doing.
- I: Now every person, now most of us have an ideal job in mind. What is your ideal job? You have one or more ideal jobs in mind?
- R: No, actually my ideal job is my old job which I do from back home, which is nursing; and I was having great intention of starting all over again. But due to all these obstacles, in a way you can't. (F10)

Many others, such as the experienced mechanical engineer below, trained in India, describe a mix of professional upgrading courses, as well as cultural courses (for effective job interviews) that have been taken along with efforts to become re-established in his profession. This man begins by contrasting the conditions of his current work:

The present job I am doing mainly is manual work, which I do not appreciate it much. I am a qualified engineer and I am used to doing project management, financial management, and certain things, so it's something new to me. But now I'm supposed to do this because there's no other option I have. I have applied to so many firms, financial institutions but there is no positive response from them, that's why I'm forced to do this job... I've been doing this for around 10 to 12 years. Also I have furthered [my education] in a software financial management courses which were complementary to my experience. And based on this, my immigration papers were processed, but unfortunately I'm not able to get into that line because they wanted experience-- Canadian experience... Now I have also obtained a Canadian Security Course because with my financial background I could get into some financial institution to further use my experience but that has not helped in any way... I also went to a job training course of around 3-4 weeks. I think it was basically to familiarize myself with the Canadian interviews, and how to present myself. (F3)

Extra-course taking by new citizens was common, though not universal, in the interviews. It is a strategy that makes sense on the individual level for workers (at least for those able to find the necessary time, resources and household help) hoping to create conditions of full citizenship through a return to their former professions. Unfortunately, it is also a strategy that results in already under-employed, new Canadian citizens actually creating an even larger gap between their credentials and their occupational attainment where they are unsuccessful in the transition.

Here, in the voices of workers we see the very real possibility of erosion of professional skill and knowledge through lack of use that also results under such conditions. We can see more than a little concern over the sometimes stultifying effects of de-skilled work. As is so often the case in this field of research, the solution to the problem of treatment of new citizen's education and experience is, in some ways illogically, sought in deficiencies of the workers themselves rather than the context with which they're confronted. In short, a point I'll return to again throughout the article we might ask: Where is the balance between supply-side (i.e. workers/education/labour market) and demand-side (i.e. employers/work) analysis and solutions? In terms of the above section, connected to this issue, a key general point is that, as some of the immigrant workers in our research pointed out themselves, the limited, monotonous, un-engaging nature of the jobs they work is not the strict experience of new

Canadian citizens alone. In fact, there is every reason to think that Canadian-born workers also find these jobs undesirable in some ways. I argue it is vital to focus on *both* the gross skills mismatches represented by the experiences of new citizens while *also* challenging the (economic, social and individual) wastefulness that such forms of work design – so prevalent in this apparent age of ‘knowledge work’ – represent more broadly.

New Citizen Perspectives on Recognition of Non-Canadian Education and Experience in the Labour Market

Having looked at the interviewee’s experience of work and their views on where and how they might change this situation on an individual basis, we turn now to their lived experiences of and perspectives on – or faith in – the just recognition of their skills and experience here in the Canadian labour market. This too is an under-recognized element of what it means to be a full, Canadian citizen.

Below we frequently get a sense of mixed of reactions; puzzlement amidst personal experience of the injustice. They seem to retain a human surplus that has yet to be fully eroded that, to date at least, has barred the emergence of class and racial bitterness. There is, nevertheless, a near collapse of faith that the Canadian economy will recognize their education and experience towards the achievement of non-discriminatory citizenship. Not infrequently, workers have openly arrived at experientially-founded charges that Canada harbors a deep form of institutional racism rippling through its institutions of employment and certification that is reproducing forms of class biased citizenship. To be clear, as some but not all research in the area reviewed above highlights, I note that the terms ‘immigrant’, ‘new Canadian’ and ‘new citizen’ serve as period-specific codes; and that these codes meant something quite different during our two previous major immigration waves. Currently and specifically under discussions of recognition of foreign credentials/experience, the terms now refer to visible-minority immigrants, non-whites. The consistent, sometimes tacit, sometimes brutally overt, lesson being taught to the generation of new citizens represented in our research is a clear one: there is a place for them in the Canadian economy, *and* it is not a place where they will be valued. Like Josef K. in Franz Kafka’s novel *The Trial*, they find themselves compelled to move through a maze of irrational conditions, enacted through complex bureaucracies, absurd, even comical were it not so tragically unjust.

Again, as with workers cited above, this research engineer in his 40’s with additional graduate education and significant work experience from China, now working on a production line, begins by noting forces pinning him into a position before going onto outline his background, and the misrepresentations made to him by Canadian immigration services in his home country.

Actually, to me this job is a surviving job. I prefer to work in my field because I was a well trained professional. I have a Master’s degree of Engineering. My major is Civil Engineering. It’s related to building highway and airport and construction of buildings... I have a Master’s degree in Civil Engineering from China. And I got my degree in 1987. After that I worked in a research institute as a Research Engineer for thirteen years before I came to Canada... When I applied as an independent immigrant they said they would recognize my experience, my degree from abroad. But actually, when I came to Canada trying to find a job in my field I find that is not the truth—it’s only for immigration purpose. And then, if I really want a job, they said if I don’t have Canadian experience, your degree must be re-appraised. They have to make an

assessment of your educational background.... Actually I have contact with the Professional Engineers of Ontario and I sent all my past education records to them. Then they said they would make an appraisal. The problem is to work, a professional has to get a license. In order to get a license you have to get at least one year's Canadian work experience. So if you have no job, no experience. No experience, no job. That is the chicken and the egg, who come first problem. To me it's very hard. I don't know how I can get license without Canadian experience. (G1)

In the case of this former mechanical engineer from Pakistan with a Master's in Engineering who currently works as a machine operator, his certification was reduced to that of an electrician/electrical technician by the Ministry of Education and Training upon arrival, thus limiting his ability to enter his ideal profession, despite having ten years previous experience:

- I: Do you feel your non-Canadian background is properly recognized?
R: Some foreign officials tried to get credit for my educational background. So I get credits about my educational background. But according to Canadian calculations, my higher degree is not the equivalent of a four year degree in Ontario. So a four year engineering degree is equivalent to my Master's degree. And my three year diploma is considered a technician in this country. So when I went to the Ministry of Education to work as an electrician too, they accepted my previous experience—they accepted everything. So they gave me the chance to pass for the examination as for an electrician.
I: As an electrician, not engineer?
R: Not engineer. So they accepted me as a technician and electrician, so I provided them my certificates to the Ministry of Training and Education of Ontario and they gave me the chance to write the exam. For the electrician job examination, they need a five-year apprentice. So they accepted my experience as an electrician and my education background, so they gave me the chance to participate in an examination. So I passed that, so I have a license from Ontario as an electrician. As well I well, I passed every examination too. So I have two electrician's licenses here, so it means they accepted my background; they accepted my education and working experience...I am the member of the Ontario Association of Technologists and Technicians in Toronto. (J4)

This is an example of the mix of racial/social class citizenship effects that are produced through the contemporary Canadian labor market.

What can be called the 'Canadian experience trap', so commonly described by these workers, is spelled out clearly here. This pharmacist from the Phillipines provides a more extended account:

- I: Do you feel your non-Canadian educational background is properly recognized? Your non-Canadian education you have in the Phillipines?
R: I don't think so because before when I was in my country, they told me that my future will be in this country because of my job before as a Pharmacist. When I came in this country, then I find out that there is no room for us. And they are always telling us that: Ok, do you have any Canadian experience? Or something like: do you have an Ontario College of Pharmacists Certificate? If

you answer you don't have it then they are going to put your application in the garbage.... when I was certified as a Pharmacist in my country, I took the board exam for 6 months and past the board exam. I got my license and I'm a licensed pharmacist, or branch pharmacist. Because in the Philippines from year 1995 to year 2000; and then after that in a Mercury Drug Store, that's the biggest drug store chain in the Philippines. And then after that, the drug company was sending me some letters to get another job as a pharmacist also, from 2000-2003. And then after that, I came to Canada last November 22. And December 7 I got a job as a bus boy in a bakery shop for almost 3 months. And then I can't stand it because they treat us like animals, like animals. Plus they always tell you to do this, do that; wash this, wash that but it didn't bother me. And then I found another job as a Security Officer at Pearson International Airport last February 18. And then that lasted until April 20 2004. And then after that, when I found out that the security agency that I was working for was going to slow down so I look for another job because I know here in Canada you have to obtain money because everything costs money—you have to pay this rent. I go on this company in ten weeks—that's June 22; and then when I was working here the Shopper's Drug Mart calls me to work as a merchandiser but I find out its so very hard job, because they have no job for relaxation or something like that. So I quit the Shopper's Drug Mart. And then after that I get only one job as this assembler in CV joints. (F7)

Nor are the inadequacies of the various ORB's the only factors to be seriously questioned here. Such gaps and failures in recognition are buttressed by more mundane material forces as well, as this electrical engineer (Ethiopian), currently hard at work in an autoparts tear-down and parts cleaning department, put concisely enough.

I: ...what kind of education do you have?

R: I have electrical engineering and computer programmer, but due to that, I couldn't find a job and I am just doing this. Anyway, as long as something is for my family, I will do it. I'm just forced to do it... I don't have to lie what I am telling you right now, but the facts—what is going on right now in this country as long as it is hard for many people to find a job. Even though I have Canadian experience, it is really hard to get a job. It's not what you know, it's who you know. This is how it works right now.... I'm just work[ing] the morning shift. But by the time you go home, everything is closed at four o'clock so its very hard to find a job. (H2)

Finally, this worker (an experienced agricultural mechanic from Guayana) currently working as an 'order picker' in the autoparts plant warehouse, connects the dots for us with his charge that under the light of a broader, systemic perspective the results he's experienced directly speak to something more than simply unfortunate contexts and bureaucratic gaps.

R: You know, I have a family to look after, I have mortgage payments, I have bills and I can't afford to say: Ok, because of the foremost important thing in this country is everything is based on a certificate or Canadian experience; and if you compare this to what I have, I'm pretty sure it's equivalent or even higher.

- I: What factors do you feel are barriers to you obtaining your preferred career?
- R: I think you know, honestly speaking, it never crossed my mind before I came here and I don't like to say this but I think color or race plays an important part.
- I: Well if you feel that way, you know, if that's the way you feel I think it's a legitimate comment.
- R: Color plays a very important part, I mean because I've seen in companies that are in Canada, not with me personally but friends of mine working in factories and companies in the low paying jobs. And they have the higher quality of education that can be used in that company. You know, rather than having people there who rely on you and they're making the money; they rely on you for your experience and know-how and they're the ones getting the money.
(F9)

As Mojab (1999) points out, under advanced capitalism the job market is deeply shaped by, not simply education, experience and 'merit' but perhaps more fundamentally by other factors such as gender, national origin, race, that systemic racism affects immigrants in unique ways. In other words, at an important intersection where race and social class together are reproduced, only those with financial resources at their disposal can afford the Canadianization of their experience. Referencing the 'double jeopardy' concept put forth by Basran and Zong (1998), Guo's (2005) research sums up the situation in a way that reflects our analysis well:

In the first place, non-recognition of foreign credentials prevents them from accessing professional jobs in Canada and acquiring Canadian work experience, which subsequently makes it difficult for them to be qualified for professional jobs... [R]efugees with high educational and occupational qualifications experienced downward occupational mobility after arriving in Canada. A lack of recognition of prior learning and work experience was identified as the top contributing factor to this downward mobility. Other factors include: a shortage of Canadian references and work experience, English language difficulties, and employer discrimination. (p.3)

Clearly, the sense of individual powerlessness in the face of systemic, labour market-based racism, emerge in our analysis confirming much of what was document, for example by the large-scale Statistics Canada survey undertaken by Chui (2003) discussed earlier.

Immigrant Workers' Perspectives on the Role of Unions

Our research project focused on the role of unions in challenging limited forms of citizenship. This perspective demands that we try to envision and, in turn, explore something more than individual responses and resistance in the face of obstacles. In short, it helps bring into view the collective options which span a – to date largely ignored – field of action made possible by the collective legal representation of immigrant workers through their unions.

This type of collective orientation is expressed nicely by this worker, yet another engineer, trained and with years of experience in his profession in India. His comments forefront the notion of collective, formalized, representative voice unique to the role of organized labour:

Yes, I think the union is a right forum where the many people like me doing this job which they are not suited for, but still are forced to do. So this is a type of forum for

people like us, it's a voice. The union can give us a voice to our concerns. And I am sure the union will try to do this and take it forward to whoever is listening, or looking after this immigration type of thing; because the immigration process is totally out of touch with the actual reality. Back home they process it from our home experience, the home qualification which is not recognized here. (F3)

According to this former engineer from China, the union could assist new citizens in achieving credential recognition by negotiating or supporting co-operative (i.e. work experience internship) placements in skilled trades and professions in Canada:

Yes, I think it is very important so we can get more chances. Right now, if I get some co-op chances, I am afraid I will lose this job. You know I've worked in these factories for several years and my salary is relatively higher. If I quite this job, maybe I can't get any EI, and my life will turn difficult...I just need someone who can tell you how the Canadians they do that. If we can get some co-ops we can learn it on the job. If we can take some courses, I think it is very important for us. I took part in a government workshop you know; the government supported a workshop. I think they are important to tell you how to make a resume, or how to take part in an interview. I think it's important but it's not the most important. Because professional guys, we need the professional experience in Canada. So we need professional training to know how the Canadians work. So we can connect our experience in China to Canada. (J2)

Particularly unique to the role of organized labour in these matters is, of course, the option of applying pressure for justice at in the workplace itself. This worker's comments stand in for a variety of those made by interviewees.

- I: Do you feel your work experience from a country other than Canada, do you feel it is properly recognized? That means, your background working there fifteen years as an electrical engineer, right now you couldn't find the job you are looking for—could your qualification be recognized here?
- R: Yeah of course. If I would be given the chance to work as an electrical engineer, of course I'd love to. I want to contribute in Fenco especially, since this is my first job and I love my job here. Well, if I'd be given a chance to work in other companies just to practice what I have studied in the Phillipines, I'd love it.... The union can help me a lot in my field of job. Especially if they will endorse me through some company... I like my job here at Fenco if I'll be given an opportunity to contribute here for a higher opportunity.... For this opportunity that I was trying to get this job, you know when I applied here at this company I think I need to continue here because for three years my wife has not been working regularly. (G7)

This Phillipino electrical engineer points directly toward the willingness of many workers to find new ways to contribute to their own specific workplace. Through innovative collective bargaining seeking to regulate and require more transparent and effective internal labour markets, there are important, new potential solutions to be added to those already identified in the literature reviewed at the outset. This autoparts warehouse packer (a mechanical engineer

from India) directly addresses the fact that both new skills and expertise and new, legally enforced responsibilities might be important for the implementation of such novel strategies.

I feel that the people who are assessing our applications, should have a basic knowledge of what is the qualification meant for, and the nature of the job I do. Because mainly what I feel is the HR people, they just look for some specific words in the resume and then if they don't find that word they toss it out without giving it thought, to what the actual qualifications are. So I think HR should be more trained to spot out people with potential and how they can help that particular organization.... They could have a consultant from that particular country to assess whether this is really from a recognized university, or whether the qualification is suited for this particular job. So it will help to have a consultant on job site also, to assess our skills and experience...Like I said, the main barrier is the non-recognition of our educational background, and our experience—that is a main hindrance. (F3)

As a way of concluding this section it is important that we also begin to note some of the more basic issues of building greater commitment and participation of new citizens in their unions. In our research project, many workers spoke emotionally and eloquently in their interviews with fellow immigrants about the importance of union efforts to go this next step. As the worker below suggests, such efforts should be seen as building deeper bonds between the union and this particular segment of its membership. As modest as our efforts in this regard were, they were warmly received:

The union could hold more interviews like what we are doing right now, but with a broader selection of people. Because I been working with my company for three years. This is the first time in three years that the union ever had something like this. And I find this is something that is very good. If they would do this more often I think things would be much better. (H1)

The two key points of pressure that the union could uniquely exert in an effort to counter racial/class biases in achieving full citizenship begin, first, with capitalizing on this problem as an opportunity to connect more deeply with members who are recent immigrants to Canada on the basis of an issue that reflects deeply the union movement's standing commitment to social justice. Second, combined with innovative collective bargaining strategies, individual unions can contribute to the research base and advocacy for employed new Canadians, many of whom are performing at high levels in jobs that are, nevertheless, mis-matched to them. Particularly but not exclusively when connected to collective bargaining such orientations do what NGOs, ORBs and governmental initiatives seem unprepared to do: push not simply 'supply-side' (labour market side/worker) but 'demand-side' (employer regulation) solutions. In other words, filling the labour market with more qualified applicants is not enough to achieve the types of social/economic gains or the much needed conditions for social justice and legitimacy made possible through proper recognition. Indeed, it is reasonable to imagine from a union perspective, that strict focus on the 'supply-side' solutions might result in increased supply, and thus increased competition and lower wages/benefits in specific (professional) segments of the labour market were demand to remain relatively constant. A partial solution is to also focus on the demand-side: that is, effective regulation (*vis-à-vis both* public policy and contractual obligations established through collective bargaining) which establish employer

responsibility for such things as changes in business human resource practices, and, on a broader level, might also better encourage employers to re-evaluate job and work design to allow the use of otherwise wasted skills and knowledge.

Moving Toward Action: Possible Union Initiatives for Full Citizenship

Emerging from our research are both broader observations related to the barriers that workers face, and their responses, as well as information relevant to making recommendations for union action. These recommendations can be organized into four key areas; many revolving around the need for union-based citizenship service centres.

Collective Bargaining. While there is some evidence of contract strategies and specific bargaining language for negotiating recognition commitments amongst unions in Canada, these are not wide-spread. The union movement's standing commitment to literacy initiatives is necessary but not sufficient. Our research project's recommendations propose bargaining for the following:

- Company human resource practices to effectively recognize foreign credentials and experience, while respecting where relevant existing seniority structures
- Expanded ESL/FSL literacy programs during working hours
- Resources and supports for workers to finalize/process their foreign credentials through relevant regulatory bodies (e.g. ORB's)

Research Support. One of the functions of new union-based citizenship service centres would be in the area of research support. We recommend continued development of union federation and union affiliate based policy and social research in this area, including where appropriate partnership with relevant academic centres.

Membership Education / Individual Consultation. Another of the functions of the union-based citizenship service centres would concern education and consultation. We recommend that immigrant USW workers be trained to effectively staff pilot services in order to guide and direct union members to appropriate community, ORB, NGO or governmental resources. Elements of this would include general membership education/presentations, the distribution of educational resources so that members know the supports that are available, and face-to-face consultation at a union-based centre. Based on individual need, immigrant workers would receive focused advice and information regarding language and literacy training opportunities, professional assessment services, knowledge concerning entry requirements of the occupational regulatory bodies of Ontario (ORBs) and the licensing processes for professional associations in Ontario and Canada.

Actively Engaging Employers, Employer Associations and Sector Councils. Finally, the union movement is ideally positioned to put the interests of workers who are new citizens on the table in discussions and consultation with individual employers, associations and sector councils. The union-based citizenship service centres could act as an important addition to the struggle currently being waged across the range of service providers.

Conclusions

Canada is known as a first world country, but in our case this includes the fact that it is also an immigrant country. Issues of citizenship are thus central to our society. However, as I've suggested, rarely has issues of citizenship and education been explicitly linked with a union

perspective on immigration, credentials and work. In this article I've argued that citizenship is actively produced through a complex web of institutions. Conventional analysis has revolved around immigration policy, language policy and citizenship education regarding values, rights and responsibilities without enough attention to the experiential learning in work and labour markets that shapes lived, actual citizenship. Currently, citizenship is produced – implicitly and explicitly – along the line of continued racial discrimination that forms a mechanism of class stratification.

Understood through the lens of labour market, workplace and economic experiences, the disparity between the meaning of citizenship for new and Canadian-born people is radically divergent. In fact, while issues of national identity, values and citizenship responsibilities are consistently placed foremost in official programs, this disparity – in terms of social agency and social/economic rights – challenges 'ideal' preconceptions that underpin such programs.

While the immigration point system may in fact be more "colour blind" than in the past (Whitaker 1991, p.19), what we can see from the research is that race-based, class reproduction processes have re-emerged in new invigorated forms through the non-recognition of foreign credentials and experience. Workers such as those USW members involved in our research often struggled with both job mis-matching specifically and de-skilled work generally. As I noted, this is a problem for both immigrant and Canadian-born workers that in many ways can serve to unify them across racial lines under the right conditions. For new citizens specifically, however, there is a massive erosion of faith generated by non-recognition of education and experience, and a growing questioning of the economic irrationality and social injustice that it necessarily entails.

Our project's action research also asked questions about a new, invigorated role for the Canadian union movement in challenging the contradictions between *ideal* and *actual* citizenship. Interviewees and worker/researchers themselves added flesh to the nature of this contradiction both in terms of a general call for greater union action, and specific areas of concern. Taken together, there is a strong claim for an expanded notion of citizenship agency: agency that is supported by the movement from individual coping and limited, discriminatory forms of citizenship to collective union action, full citizenship and equitable treatment with an emphasis on labour markets, work and economy. The concrete recommendations give potential outlets for the experienced brought to light through the research.

Clearly, the situation in Canada discussed here cannot continue to be tolerated by the union movement, by like-minded social agencies or by government representatives who wish to claim any interest in the issues of collective cultural and economic development and social justice for full citizenship.

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