

## **Diversity: To Encourage or Not to Encourage, That is the Question**

The embracement of diversity and inclusion is commonly connected back to Canada. In many ways, diversity has been a cornerstone of Canada's identity, and it is of little surprise to many that Canada has supported the growth of multiculturalism. However, especially during these uncertain times where cases of xenophobia are rising, one question rings in the back of everyone's heads: are diversity and inclusion solely moral imperatives? Does Canada only encourage multiculturalism because it feels obligated to in order to make Asian Canadians feel safer? Well, to anyone out there asking this question, here is a simple answer: yes, but also no. From a more logical perspective, humans are often motivated by the idea to fit in, or to do something for the sake of seeming "normal". Although many may say they support the Asian communities, their actions and real persona as they interact with the Asian community may be completely different. As such, one cannot rule out if Canada promotes diversity and inclusion simply as an act or if their intentions are genuine. However, what one can definitely determine is that diversity and inclusion should not solely be seen as moral imperatives, but rather something that can be used to create socio-economic growth in Canada and in turn, the world. This can be seen in areas of Canadian society, ranging from the impact Asian Canadians had on Canada's science, politics, and the economy.

Taking a look at Canada's economy, it is noted that Asian Canadians and the increase in diversity from immigration has positively influenced Canada's economy greatly. For instance, according to the Government of Canada, thanks to immigration, Canada's labour force continues to increase slightly and reduces unemployment rates each year. If not for immigrants, who are of  $\frac{2}{3}$  Asian descent, employers would have difficulty filling available jobs due to the decrease in children born annually as well as the growing senior population (Ministry of Finance, 2017). Furthermore, immigrants and Asian Canadians not only decrease unemployment rates, but also

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play a large role in Canada's GDP and business's revenue. According to Policy Options, with each 1% increase in diversity amongst employees, the business's revenue would average a 2.4% increase and 0.5% increase in productivity within the workplace. Furthermore, in 2009, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration indicated that the costs of "not recognizing immigrants foreign credentials to be between \$2.4 and \$5.9 billion a year" (Monani et al., 2017). This clearly demonstrates the impact immigrants and foreign groups such as Asian Canadians have on Canada's economy. Without the removal of barriers that allow more diversity and immigration, Canada's economy would take a serious toll in growth.

Alongside Canada's economy benefiting from the increase in diversity and inclusion, Canada's scientific field is also positively impacted by diversity and Asian Canadians. For instance, Dr. Tak Wah Mak is a renowned scientist who made groundbreaking work in the sciences and is a prime example of the benefits of diversity. Joining the Department of Medical Biophysics at the University of Toronto, in 1984, he discovered how the immune system detects pathogens, a question that puzzled scientists for years. Over the next 25 years, Dr. Mak continued to lead the field of molecular biology and solved several mysteries surrounding cancer and the immune system (Suhasini, 2015). As seen through Dr. Mak's work, it is clear that Asian Canadians such as himself have played an immense role in leading the scientific industry. By encouraging diversity and groups such as Asian Canadians to feel more welcome within Canada, it in turn has and will continue to lead Canada to more scientific advancements and create a healthier society.

One final prime example of diversity's incredible importance to Canada's society is seen within Canada's politics, specifically through Douglas Jung. Born February 25, 1924, in British Columbia, Jung is considered to be one of the most notable Asian Canadian politicians in history. As the first Chinese Canadian to become a Member of Parliament in the House of Commons,

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Douglas fought for Chinese Canadian rights during a time when Chinese immigrants were not acknowledged. Furthermore, he fought for regulations that benefited seniors and students, played a role in the establishment of the Economic Council of Canada, and was even the Chairman of Canada's Legal Delegation to the United Nations (Butts, 2019). Breaking cultural barriers during his time, even when others shunned him for his Chinese background, he is an excellent example of how an increase in diversity is a positive decision for Canada's politics.

Highlighted through Canada's economic, political, and scientific growth, it is evident that Asian Canadians have played a huge role in the development of Canada's wellbeing—and further demonstrates that encouraging inclusion is vital to both oneself, to a country, and to the entire world as well. Seen through analyzing Canada's economy, Asian Canadians are a huge reason for the rise in revenue amongst certain business sectors, and influences both GDP and unemployment rates positively. From a political standpoint, the embracement of diversity allowed incredible Asian Canadians to rise to the top of the political system and allowed them to make big changes federally. Even when looking at Canada's scientific sector, many Asian Canadians played a large role in the creation of scientific advancements and the development of important medicine that has saved millions of lives. It is clear that countless lives have been positively affected by Asian Canadians: and this was all made possible because of the diversification of Canada. Rather than being deemed solely moral imperatives, diversity is beneficial for the Canadian economy and can be a tool for economic prosperity. However, the conversation about diversity does not end there. Canada is a nation built on immigration, but more importantly, is a nation built on difference. During this difficult time when xenophobia is rapidly rising, it is important that Canada should continue to celebrate the things that make us unique, while reinforcing the things that bring us together.

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