

# Creating a Welcoming Prairie Community Through Community Partnerships

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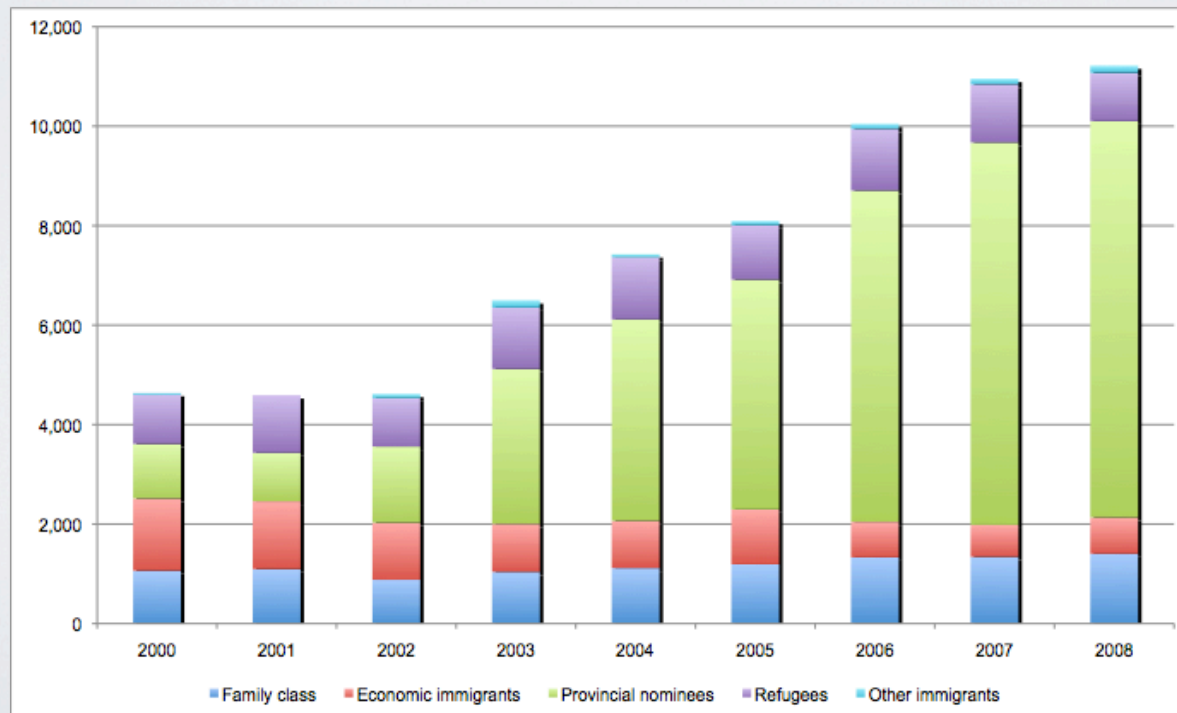


# Overview

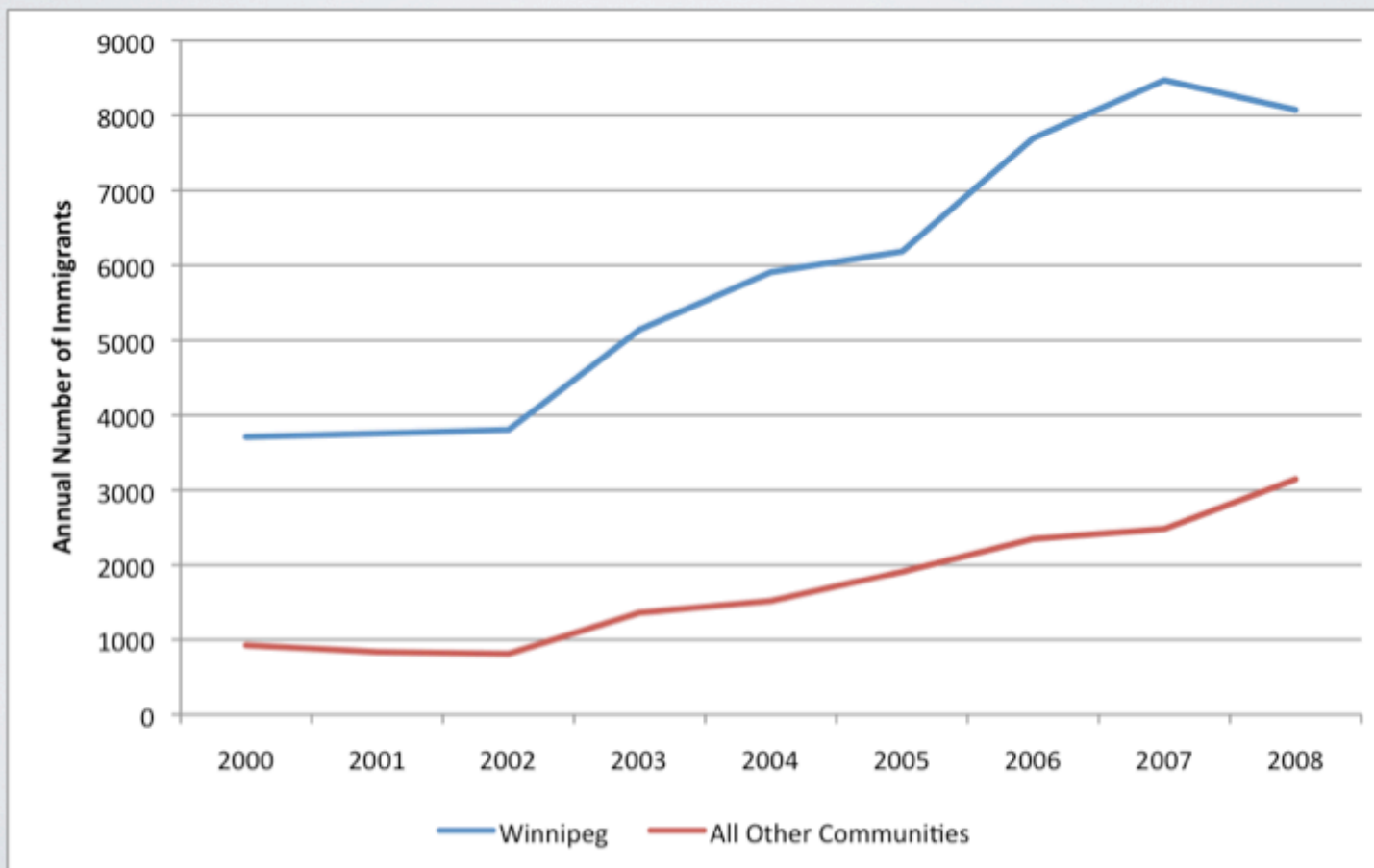
- Provincial Immigration Policy and Context
- Introduction to the Brandon Case Study
- Initiatives to Foster a Welcoming Community
- Implications for Community Development, Policy, and Research

# Provincial Context

- Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement (1996)
- Provincial Nominee Program



- Provincial declaration to double number of immigrants from 10,000 to 20,000 in ten years
- Trend of immigrants residing outside Winnipeg



# Brandon, MB

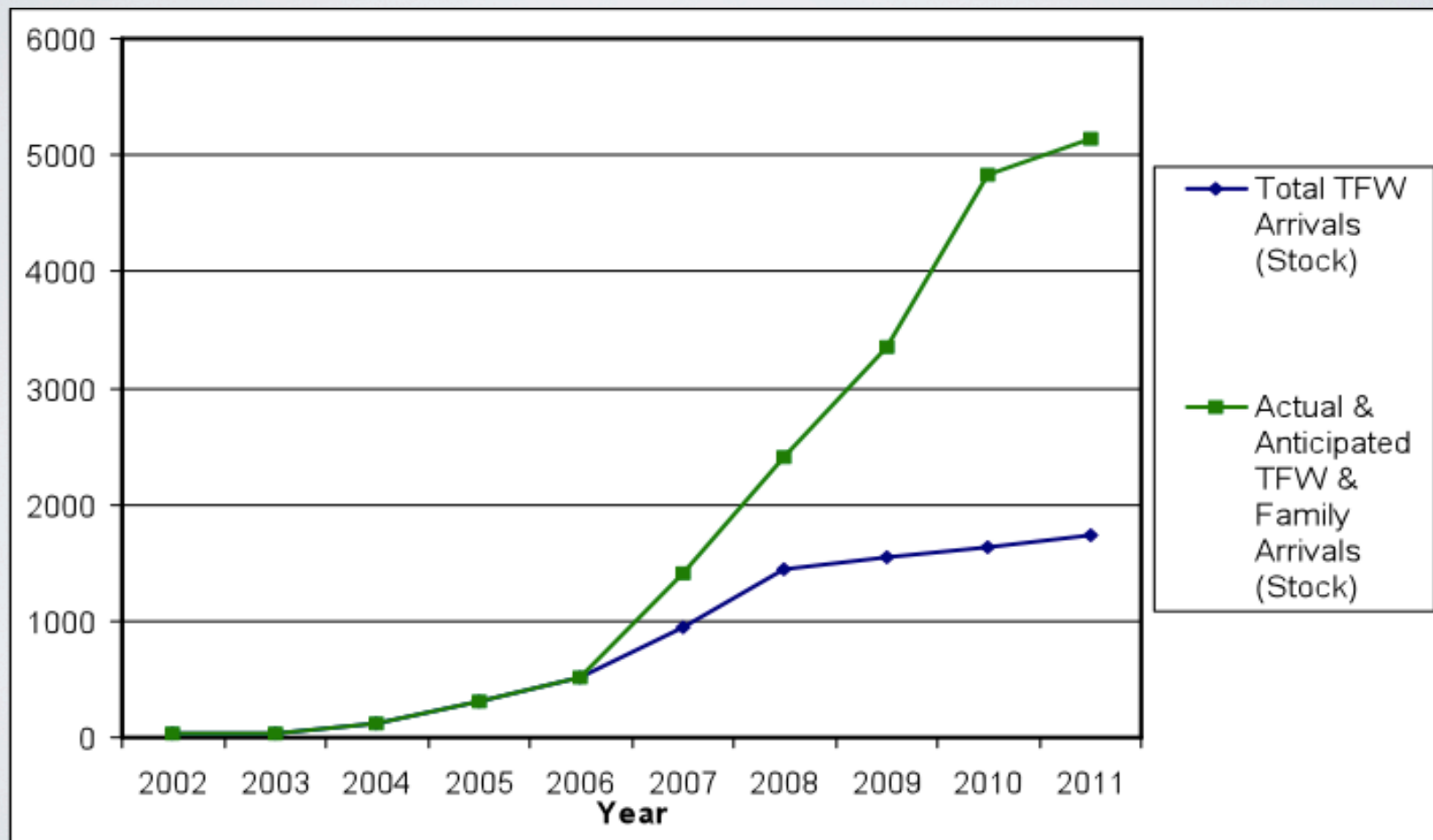
- Population of 41,511 (2006)
- Second largest community in Manitoba
- Retail and service centre for surrounding rural and agricultural communities
- Historically, low number of immigrants to the community



# Immigration Phenomena

- 2001
  - Labour shortages in both skilled and unskilled professions
  - First foreign worker recruitment campaign conducted in Mexico by Maple Leaf Foods
- by 2008
  - 1,500 international recruits employed in the community
  - Source countries: Mexico, El Salvador, Ukraine, China, Colombia, and Mauritius
  - Brandon records the highest rate of immigration growth in Manitoba

# A State of Demographic Fluctuation



# Welcoming Community

- According to the National Working Group on Small Centre Strategies, a welcoming community ...
  - has a strong desire to receive newcomers and to create an environment in which they will feel at home
  - ensures newcomers are able to participate fully in all aspects of community life
  - ensures newcomers have access to a full range of services, programs, and can find meaningful employment



# Responding via Community Partnerships

- Establish a multi-stakeholder community or regional group
- Foster capacity and partnership building
- Develop local immigration plans
- Celebrate diversity
- Explore holistic approaches to service provision

# Welcoming Community Dialogue Group

- Established in 2007
- Multi-stakeholder forum including representatives of community-serving organizations, provincial government, federal government, and industry
- Forum for community serving organizations, industry, government and researchers

- Community initiatives
  - Pre-arrival registrations of school-aged children
  - Linguistic cooperative
- Research initiatives
  - Building Capacity and Skills for a Welcoming Community
  - Mutual Intercultural Relations in Plural Societies
    - interviews with 200 recent immigrants and 200 long-term community residents regarding characteristics of a welcoming community and intercultural relations



# Initial Findings

- Brandon is a welcoming community
  - 80% of Canadian long-term residents agreed
  - 90% of Chinese and Latin American new residents agreed
- Brandon is a good place to raise a family
  - 97% of both Canadian long-term residents and Latin American new residents agreed
  - 43% of Chinese new residents agreed

# Implications Emerging from Brandon

- Community Development and Practice
  - Need for forums on rural immigration discussions
  - Need to build relationships among local stakeholders, industry, and government departments
- Policy
  - Need to share lessons learned with other jurisdictions
  - Increased attention to immigration policy related to rural and northern populations
- Academia
  - Academic immigration literature is predominantly urban focused
  - Strengthen immigration research networks focused on non-traditional immigrant receiving communities

# Acknowledgements

- Brandon Welcoming Communities Dialogue Group
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- Manitoba Labour and Immigration

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