

# Intercultural Relations in a Rural Canadian Prairie City

**Robert C. Annis**

*Research Affiliate, Rural Development Institute, Brandon University, Canada*

**Ryan Gibson**

*Doctoral Candidate, Department of Geography, Memorial University, Canada*

**John Berry**

*Professor Emeritus, Department of Psychology, Queen's University, Canada*

Presented at Mi/Más Konferencia  
Eger, Hungary  
October 2010



- Immigration to Rural Canada
- Welcoming Communities
  - Hallmarks of a Welcoming Community
  - Case study of Brandon, Canada
- Mutual Intercultural Relations in Plural Societies (MIRIPS)
  - Description & Means of Main Variables
  - Hypotheses
  - Findings
- Implications for Policy, Practice, and Research
- Conclusions



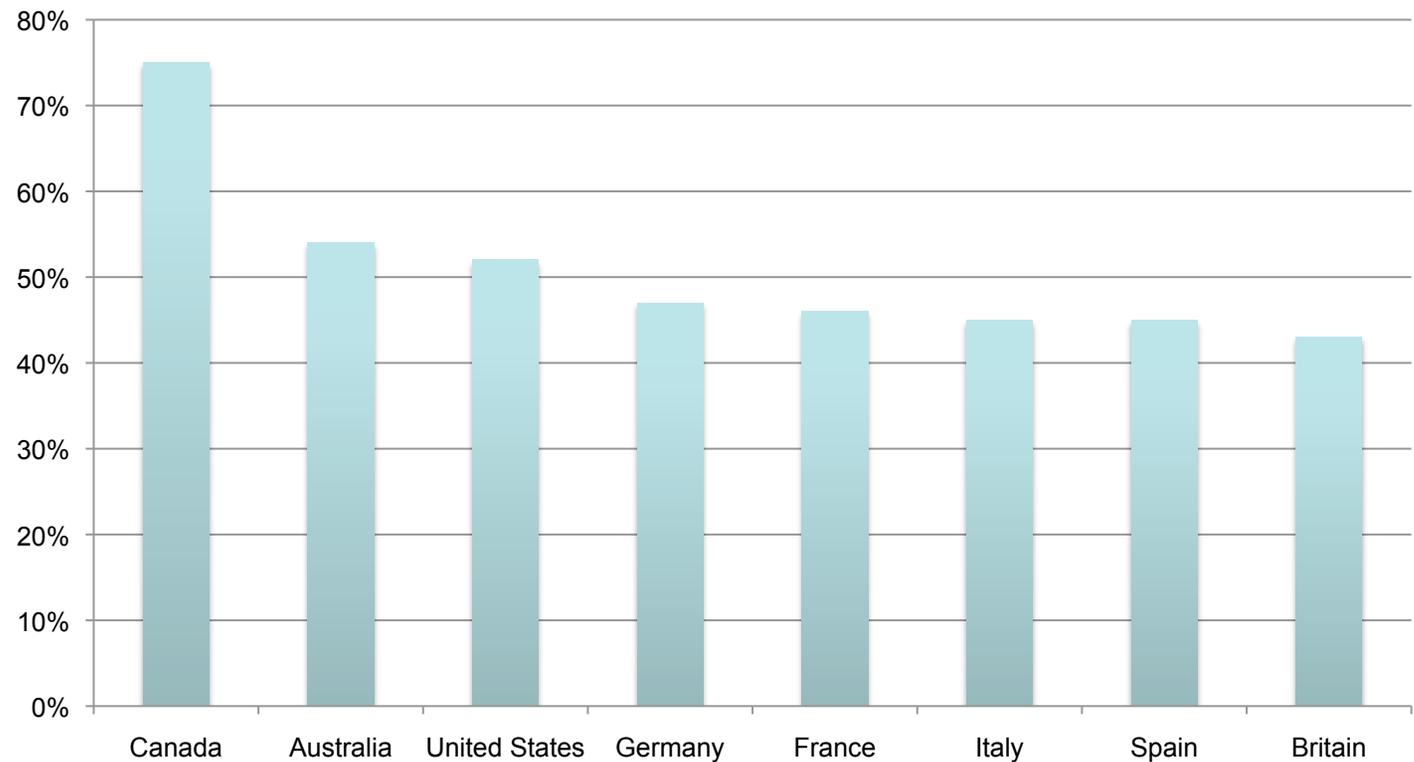
# Mutual Intercultural Relations in Plural Societies

- Purpose of the presentation is to discuss:
  - Welcoming community initiative from a Canadian prairie city
    - Designed to build multi-sector collaboration and partnership among community leaders, community-based organizations, three levels of government, and industry
  - Mutual Intercultural Relations in Plural Societies
    - Canadian study is part of International collaborative project (MIRIPS).
    - Designed to understand intercultural relations from the dual perspectives of recent immigrant workers to a prairie town and long-time residents.



# International Attitudes Towards Immigration

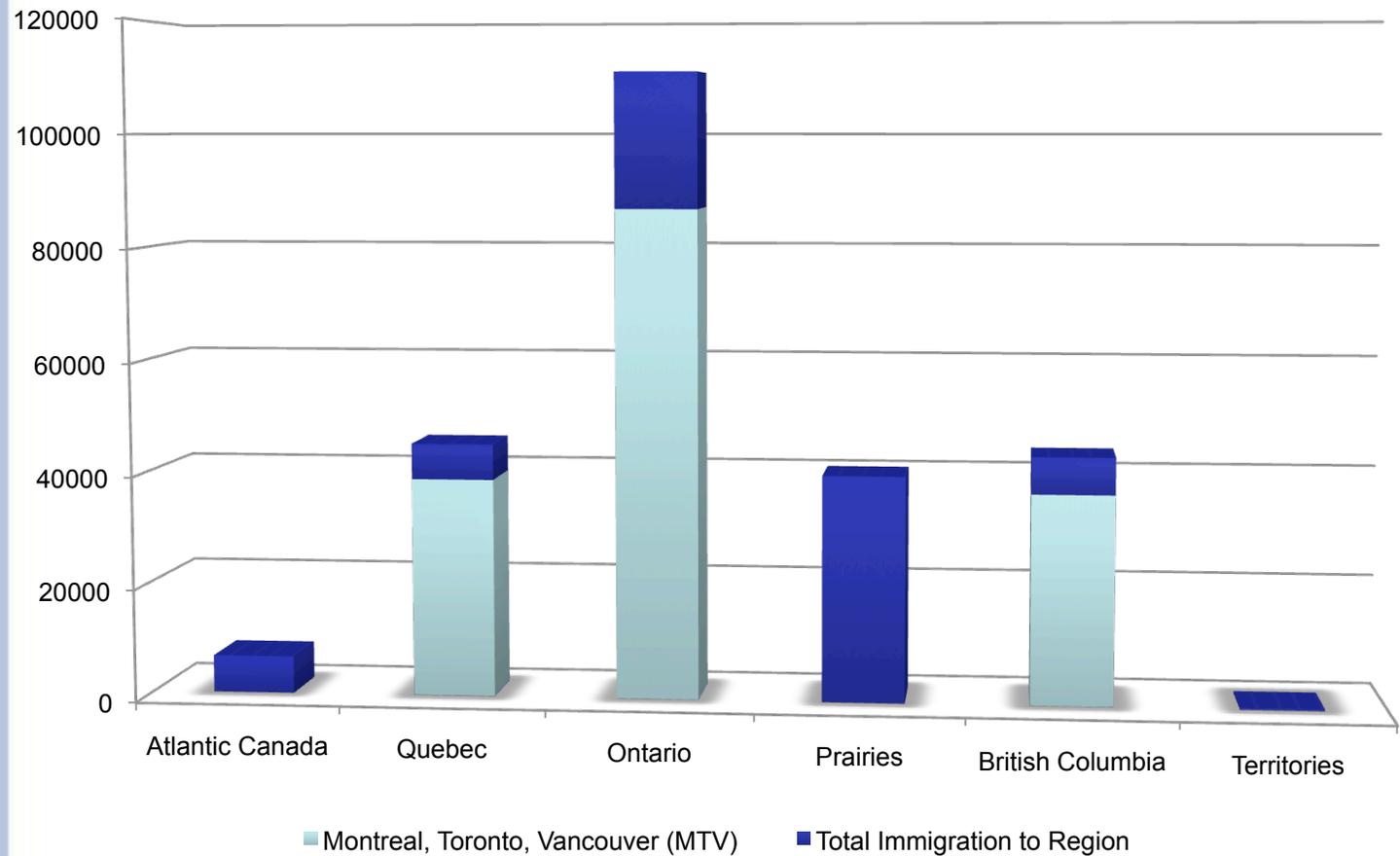
**Immigrants are having a good influence on the way things are going in your country**



Source: Angus Reid, 2006



# Regional Distribution of Immigrants in Canada, 2008



**Total: 247,423**



# Immigration: A Component of Rural Development Strategies

- A community economic development strategy
- To address declining populations
- To revitalize and diversify rural communities
- To attract higher skilled workers
- Rural lifestyle can be attractive to newcomers, but attraction, settlement and retention efforts are required



# Steinbach, Manitoba

Population = 11,000

- 2008: Steinbach welcomed about 488 immigrants
  - Consistently ranks in the top 4 destination communities in MB.
- Family and religious connections: Mennonites from Russia, Germany, and Paraguay
- Recent influx of Filipino immigrants (83)
- Community has successfully addressed many issues related to housing and settlement



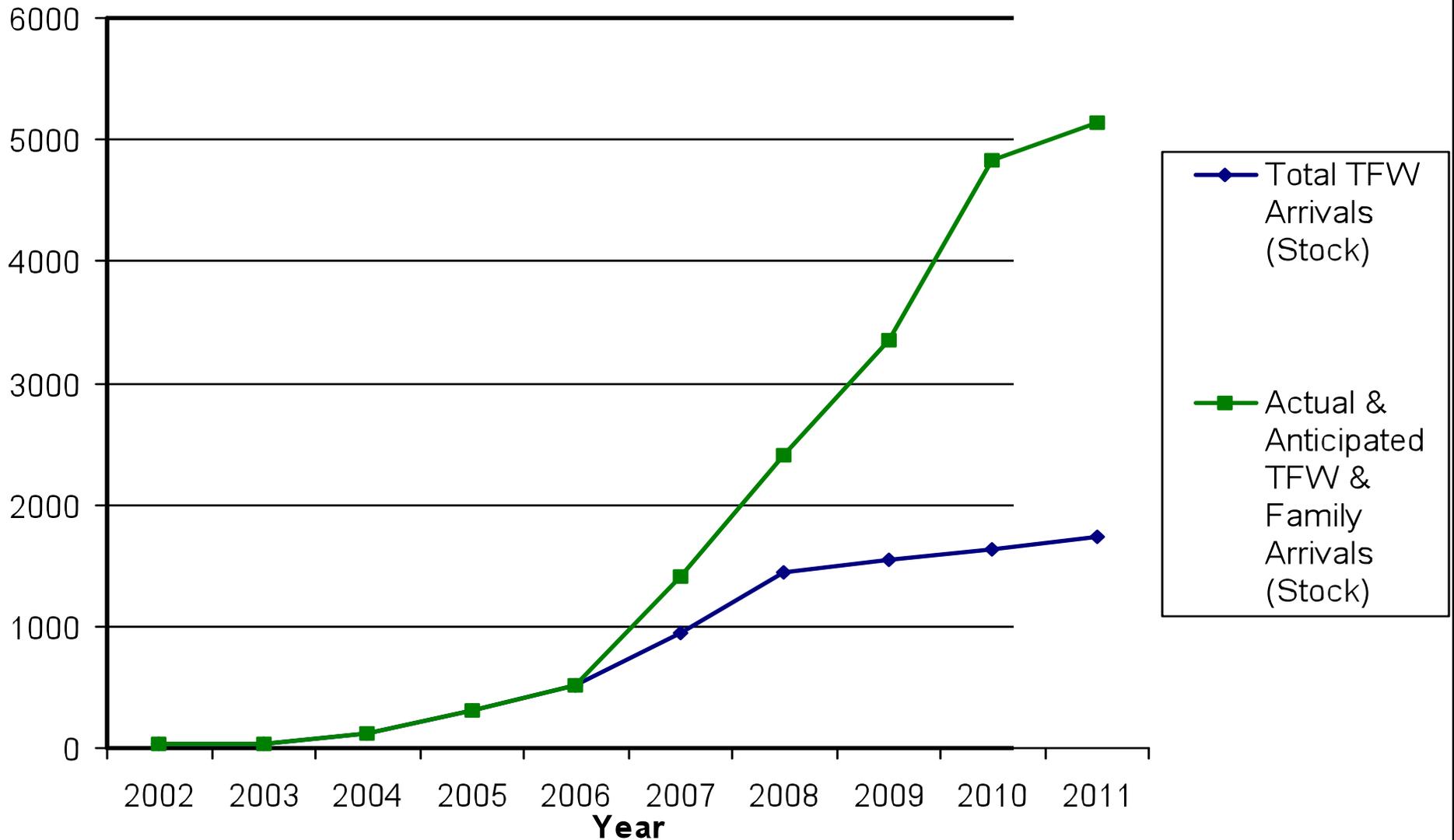
# Brandon, Manitoba

Population = 41,511

- 1999: Maple Leaf Foods (MLF) pork processing plant opened
- 2001: MLF began foreign recruitment in Mexico; later in China.
- 2007: Highest rate of immigration growth in Manitoba
- 2009: Approximately 1,500 international recruits employed at MLF
  - 70% of employees are international recruits
  - From Mexico, El Salvador, Colombia, China, Mauritius and Ukraine.



# Significant New Immigration to Brandon



# Hallmarks of a Welcoming Community

- Respects diversity
- Has accessible public services
- Has a range of educational opportunities
- Promotes health and wellness for all
- Is safe and talks about it
- Invites newcomers to share leisure time activities
- Acknowledges faith and spirituality

National Working Group on Small Centre Strategies. 2007: p. 75



# Becoming Welcoming: What do we need to do

- Organize in preparation for immigration
- Establish multi-stakeholder regional or community groups
- Foster capacity, community, and partnership building
- Develop local immigration plans
- Celebrate diversity
- Proactive approach to service provision
- 360 degree feedback



# RDI Immigration Dialogue Group

- 2007: First meeting
- Forum for community, community-serving organizations, industry, governments, and researchers
- Began as dialogue around temporary foreign workers
- Transitioned to dialogue on welcoming communities

## Membership

- Economic Development Brandon
- Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives
- Manitoba Labour and Immigration
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- Rural Secretariat
- Service Canada
- Brandon School Division
- Brandon Regional Health Authority
- Westman Immigrant Services
- Maple Leaf Foods



# Brandon Survey: Welcoming Community and MIRIPS

- Interview 200 recent immigrants and 200 long-term residents concerning the characteristics of a welcoming community and intercultural relations
- Themes include
  - Housing and Neighbourhoods
  - Service provision
  - Education and Employment
  - Multicultural Ideology
  - Tolerance/Prejudice
  - Attitudes Towards Immigration



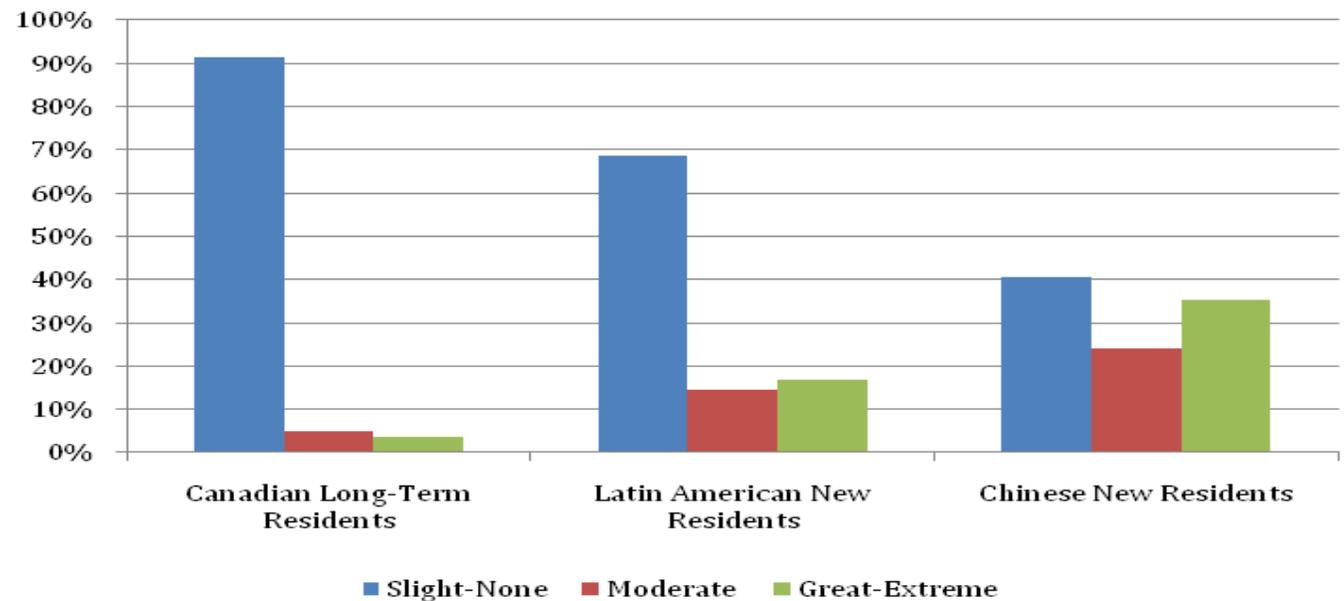
# Sample Description

Variable	Canadian Long Term Residents	Latin American New Residents	Chinese New Residents
N	138	93	96
% Male	30	76	60
% Female	70	24	40
Mean Age	49.4	33.5	32.5
Average length of residency in Brandon	27.9 years	1.8 years	2.3 years



# Obtaining Housing in the Community

- Great to extreme difficulty in obtaining housing:
  - 4% of Canadian long-term residents
  - 17% of Latin American new residents
  - 35% of Chinese new residents



# Difficulties Experienced in Brandon

Canadian Long-Term Residents	Chinese New Residents	Latin American New Residents
Dealing with climate (12.3%)	Obtaining housing (35.4%)	Dealing with climate (17.7%)
Dealing with government (8.0%)	Understanding ethnic and cultural differences (35.4%)	Obtaining housing (16.7%)
Using the transport system (7.2%)	Communicating with people of different ethnic group (31.3%)	Finding foods you enjoy (14.3%)
Communicating with people of different ethnic groups (5.8%)	Finding foods you enjoy (25.0%)	Communicating with people of different ethnic groups (11.4%)
Finding foods you enjoy (4.3%)	Understanding jokes and humour (21.8%)	Making yourself understood (9.3%)
Obtaining housing (3.6%)	Dealing with people in authority (19.8%)	Understanding ethnic or cultural differences (6.3%)
Going shopping (3.6%)	Going to social gatherings (17.7%)	Using the transport system (6.2%)
The pace of life (2.2%)	Worshipping (15.7%)	Making friends (5.2%)
Relating to members of the opposite sex (2.1%)	Dealing with government (13.6%)	Going shopping (4.2%)
Family relationships (2.1%)	Finding your way around (13.6%)	Going to social gatherings (4.2%)
Understanding ethnic or cultural differences (1.4%)	Relating to members of the opposite sex (11.5%)	Dealing with government (4.1%)
Talking about yourself with others (1.4%)	Talking about yourself to others (10.4%)	Understanding jokes and humour (4.1%)

# Is Brandon Welcoming?

Brandon is...

- **A welcoming community:**
  - Over 80% of Canadian long-term residents agree
  - Over 90% of Chinese and Latin American new residents agree
- **A good place to live:**
  - 99% of Canadian long-term residents agree
  - 100% all Latin American new residents agree
  - 71% of Chinese new residents agree
- **A good place to raise a family:**
  - 97% of Canadian long-term and Latin American residents agree
  - 43% of Chinese new residents agree



# Mutual Intercultural Relations in Plural Societies



**BRANDON  
UNIVERSITY**

*Founded 1899*



**RURAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
INSTITUTE**

# Main Variables in the MIRIPS Project

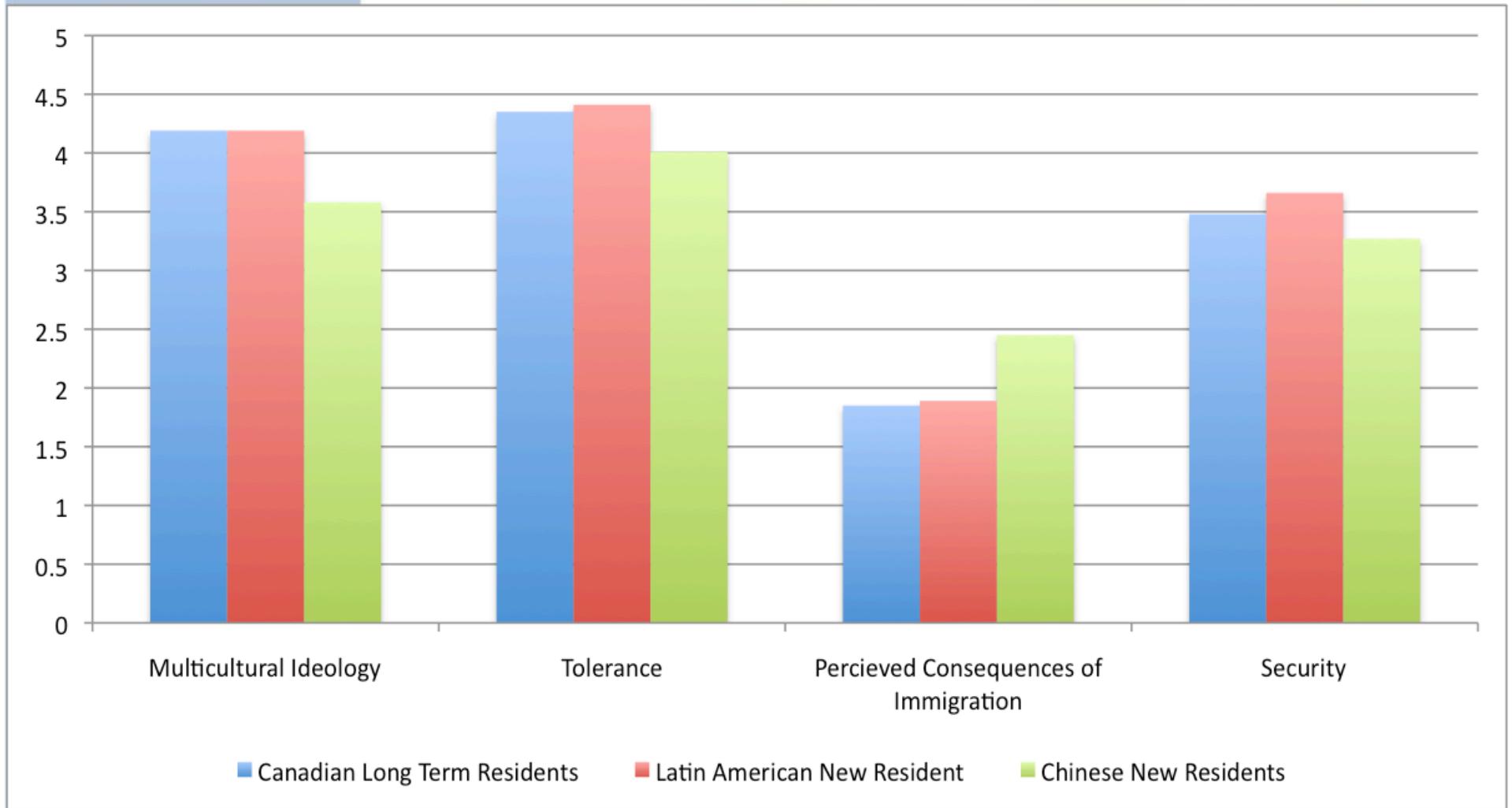
1. **Multicultural Ideology (MCI)**: the degree to which people value cultural diversity.
2. **Tolerance (TOL)**: the degree of acceptance of 'others'
3. **Perceived Consequences of Immigration (PCI)**: the perceived negative consequences of immigration (Negative)
4. **Security (SEC)**: the degree to which individuals feel secure in their cultural identity, and in their economic and personal situations.
5. **Self Esteem (SE)**: the degree that individuals value themselves
6. **Life satisfaction (LS)**: the degree to which individuals are satisfied with their lives
7. **Psychological Problems (PP)**: the extent to which individuals experience problems such as anxiety, sadness. (Negative)
8. **Sociocultural Competence (SC)**: the degree to which individuals are able to master situations in their daily lives
9. **Integration (INT)**: the degree to which individuals believe that people should be allowed to maintain their cultures and to participate in the larger society
10. **Assimilation (ASM)**: the degree to which individuals believe that people should give up their cultures and become incorporated into the larger society.
11. **Separation (SEP)**: the degree to which individuals believe that people should maintain their cultures, and do so with little involvement with the larger society.
12. **Perceived Discrimination (PD)**: the degree to which individuals experience discrimination against themselves or groups.



# Means of Main Variables

Variable	Canadian Long Term Residents	Latin American New Residents	Chinese New Residents	F Value	Sig
MCI	4.19	4.19	3.58	0.202	.888
TOL	4.35	4.41	4.01	0.592	.363
PCI	1.85	1.89	2.45	0.052	.877
SEC	3.48	3.66	3.27	0.544	.263
SE	4.52	4.71	3.57	0.291	.784
LS	4.27	4.41	3.84	0.241	.406
PP	2.12	1.73	2.04	0.401	.646
SC	4.55	4.35	3.82	1.599	.585
Integ	4.47	4.70	4.28	1.209	.641
Assim	1.66	1.96	1.94	0.645	.184
Separ	1.78	1.53	2.38	0.166	.216
PD	1.49	2.13	1.93	1.102	.594

# Means of Acceptance of Others Variables by Subsample



# Variations in Acceptance of Others

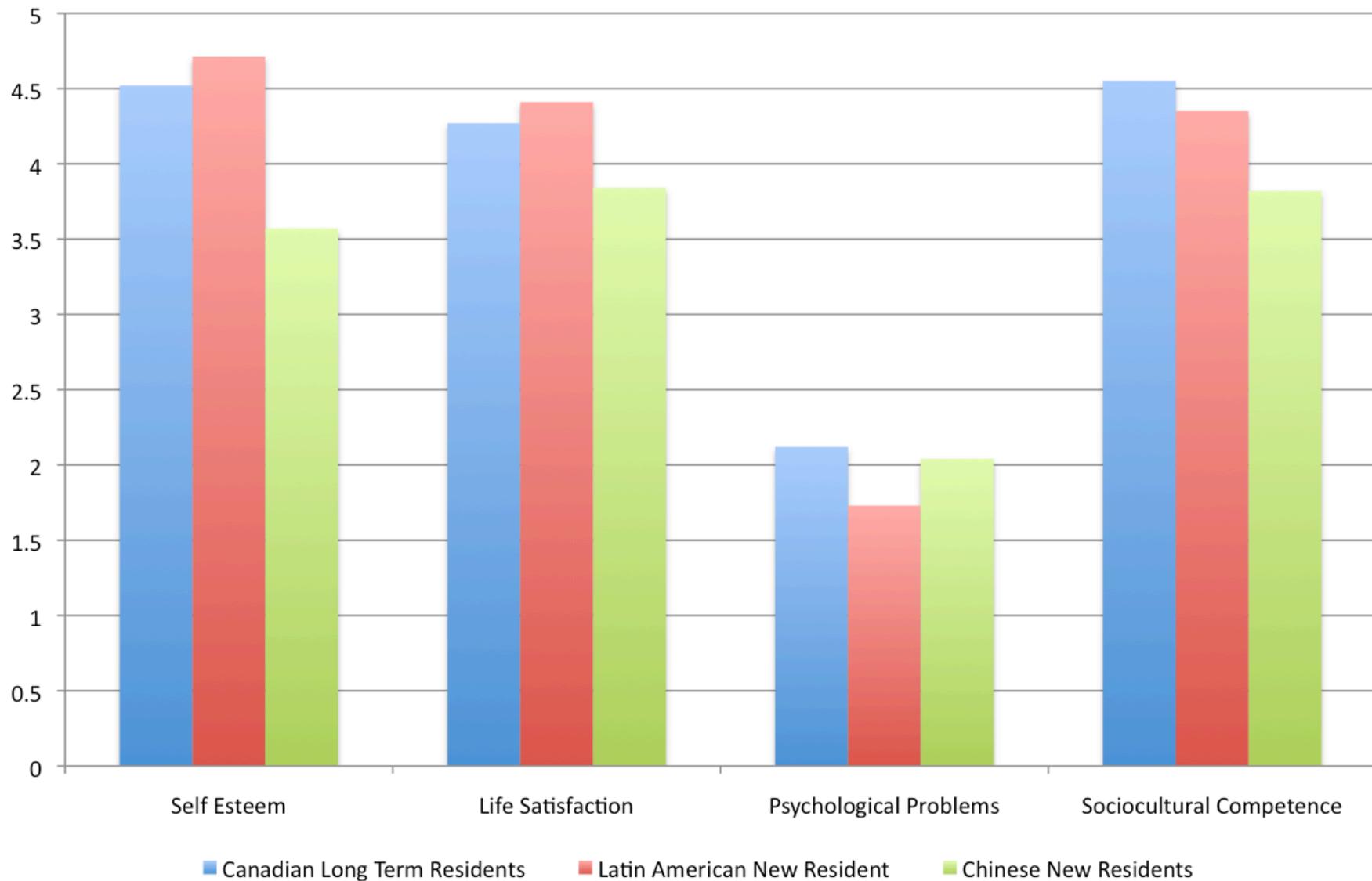
There are no significant variations across the three samples in the group of four variables that indicate *Acceptance of Others*:

- *Multicultural ideology*
- *Tolerance*
- *Perceived Consequences of Immigration*
- *Security*

However, there is a tendency for the Chinese sample to be less in favour of Multiculturalism, less Tolerant, and to perceive more negative Consequences for Immigration .



# Means of Well-Being Variables by Subsample



# Variations in Wellbeing

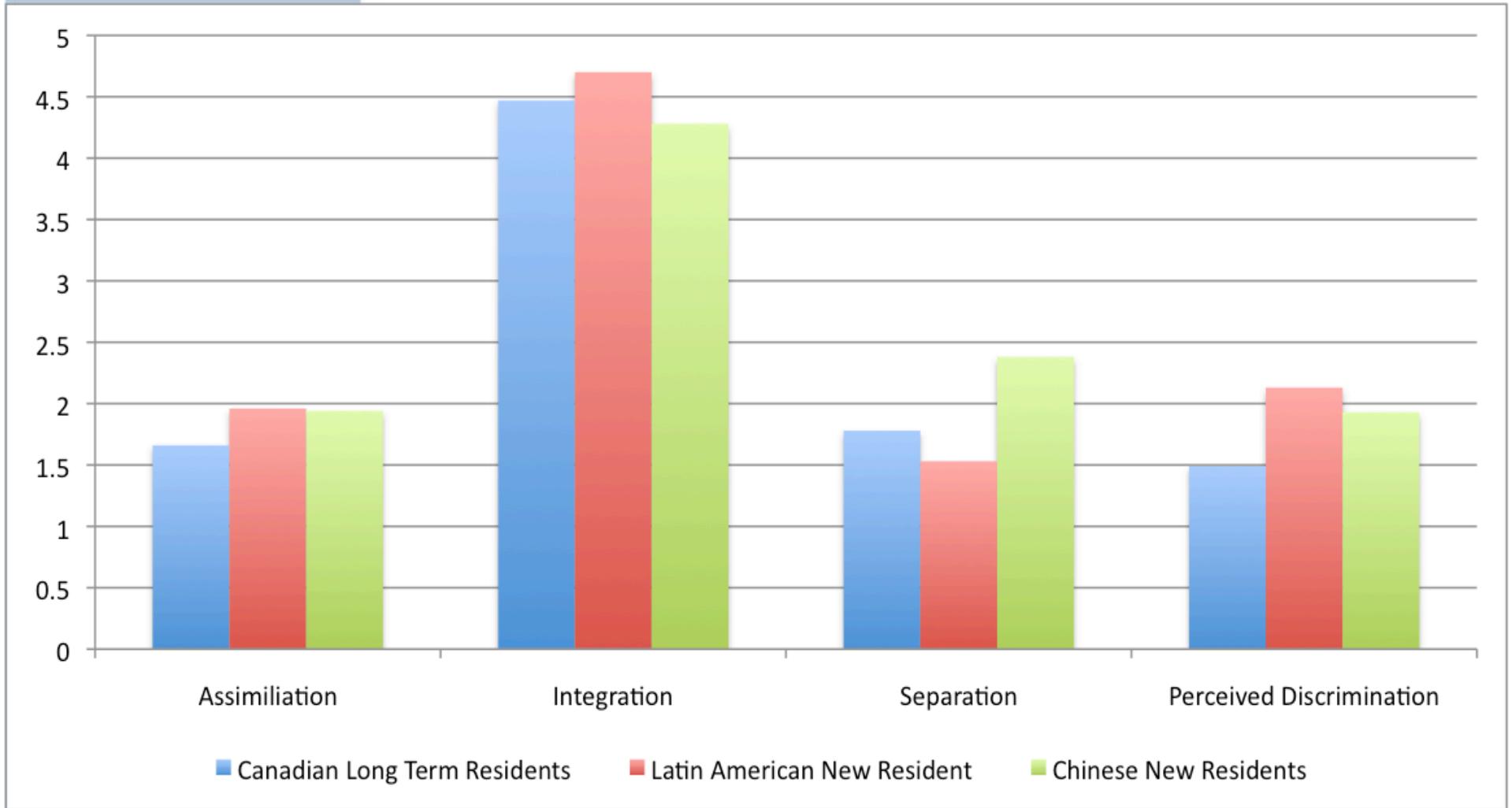
There are also no significant variations across the three samples in the group of four variables that indicate *Wellbeing*:

- *Self esteem*
- *Life Satisfaction*
- *Psychological problems*
- *Sociocultural Competence*

However, there is a tendency for the Chinese sample to have lower Self Esteem, Life Satisfaction, and Sociocultural Competence



# Means of Acculturation Attitude Variables by Subsample



# Variations in Acculturation Expectations and Attitudes

- There are no significant variations across the three samples in the variables that indicate acculturation expectations (for the Canadian LTR) and attitudes (for the Latin American and Chinese samples).
- The usual finding with immigrants is replicated: the mean preferences (both expectations and attitudes) for Integration are higher than for Assimilation or Separation.
- There is a tendency for the Chinese sample to prefer Separation, compared to the other two samples.
- There is a tendency for Perceived Discrimination to be higher in the two immigrant samples.



In MIRIPS, two hypotheses were proposed in the Plenary talk:

## 1. Multiculturalism Hypothesis :

When people feel secure in their cultural identities and in their economic and personal situations, they will accept others. That is, Acceptance of Others ( high MCI, and TOL and low PCI) will be associated with Security.

## 2. Integration Hypothesis:

People will have a high degree of Wellbeing when they prefer Integration rather than Assimilation or Separation. That is, Wellbeing (high SE, LS and SC, and low PP) will be associated with a preference for Integration

# Multicultural Hypothesis Correlations

## 1. Multiculturalism Hypothesis :

When people feel secure in their cultural identities and in their economic and personal situations, they will accept others. That is, Acceptance of Others ( high MCI, and TOL and low PCI) will be associated with Security.

Variables	Canadian Long Term Residents	Latin American New Residents	Chinese New Residents
MCI x TOL	.56**	.23*	.36**
MCI x PCI	-.55**	-.13	-.24*
TOL x PCI	-.63**	-.28**	-.48**
SEC x MCI	.46**	.05	.21*
SEC x TOL	.42**	-.18	.23*
SEC x PCI	-.54**	-.26	-.42**

\* Correlations significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

\*\* Correlations significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)



# Multiculturalism Hypothesis: Correlations

- An important issue is whether the main Acceptance variables cohere in all three samples.
- As expected, in all three samples: MCI and TOL correlate positively; MCI and PCI correlate negatively; and TOL and PCI correlate negatively.
- This pattern provides a degree of convergent validity.
- Our main interest is whether the multiculturalism hypothesis is supported in all samples.
- Correlations between Security and MCI are positive, and between Security and PCI are negative, in all three samples. However, there is a negative correlation between Security and TOL in the Latin American sample.



# Multiculturalism Hypotheses: Factor Analysis

- In all three samples, the three variables of MCI, TOL, and PCI come together to form a factor, called Acceptance of Others.
- This factor is related to Security.
- This supports the Multiculturalism Hypothesis.
- That is, feeling secure is related to the Acceptance of Others.



# Integration Hypothesis: Correlations

Variables	Canadian Long Term Residents		
	Integration	Assimilation	Separation
SE	.20*	-.18*	-.15
LS	.15	-.02	-.10
PP	-.05	.03	.12
SC	.05	-.02	-.15

Variables	Latin American New Residents		
	Integration	Assimilation	Separation
SE	.23*	-.15	-.03
LS	.38**	.10	-.06
PP	.03	.18	-.01
SC	.13	-.07	.15

Variables	Chinese New Residents		
	Integration	Assimilation	Separation
SE	.23*	-.06	-.08
LS	.32**	.01	-.09
PP	-.22*	-.11	.30**
SC	.27	-.09	-.28**

\* Correlations significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)\*

\*\* Correlations significant the 0.01 level (2-tailed)



BRANDON  
UNIVERSITY

Founded 1899



RURAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
INSTITUTE

# Integration Hypothesis: Correlations with Perceived Discrimination

Variables	Canadian Long Term Residents	Latin American New Residents	Chinese New Residents
PD x SE	-.08	-.19	-.27*
PD x LS	-.14	-.23*	-.48**
PD x PP	.24*	.22*	.30**
PD x SC	-.42**	-.18	-.28**

\* Correlation significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

\*\* Correlation significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)



# Integration Hypothesis: Correlations

- In all three samples, Integration is associated with the Wellbeing variables in the direction predicted by the hypothesis.
  - This association is particularly evident for Self Esteem and Life Satisfaction.
  - That is, those who seek to integrate have higher level of Wellbeing
- In all three samples, Perceived Discrimination is correlated with Psychological Problems and Sociocultural Competence.
  - That is, the more the discrimination, the lower the Wellbeing.



# Integration Hypothesis: Factor Analysis

- All four variables (SE, LS, PP, SC) come together in all three samples to support the existence of a Wellbeing factor.
- This factor is associated positively with Integration, and negatively with Separation (and in the Canadian LTR samples also with Assimilation).
- That is, Integration (but not Separation or Assimilation) is associated with greater Wellbeing, supporting the Integration Hypothesis.



# Integration Hypothesis: Correlations with Perceived Discrimination

- The correlations between Perceived Discrimination and Wellbeing (and Security) highlight the importance of the experience of Discrimination in achieving Wellbeing and a sense of Security.
- Discrimination lowers Self Esteem, Life satisfaction, Sociocultural Competence and Security, while increasing the likelihood of experiencing Psychological Problems.
- This pattern is particularly strong on the Chinese sample, but is also present for the Latin American, and Canadian samples.



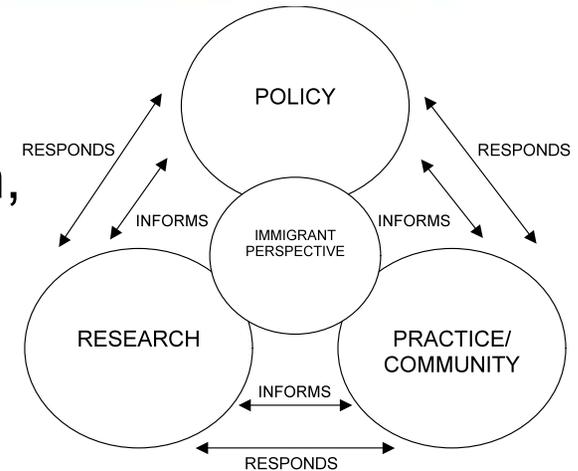
# Some Conclusions

- These two migrant samples represent a departure from the usual work with immigrants who have come to settle permanently in a new society.
- Despite this novelty, the usual pattern of mean differences, and correlations among the core variables are largely replicated.
- Continuing analyses are being carried out in an attempt to better understand the dynamics of intercultural relations in this unique setting.



# Implications from Welcoming Communities Project

- **Community Practice**
  - Need for local strategies for settlement, integration, and retention
  - Need for sharing lessons learned
- **Policy**
  - Increased awareness and fit between multiple levels of government
  - Increased attention to immigration policies to rural and northern populations
- **Research**
  - Need to understand individual community needs/capacities
  - Need to understand intercultural relations



# Challenges in Moving Forward

- Resources for rural immigration planning are difficult to locate
  - Immigration is not the single responsibility of either the federal or provincial government
- Bringing the 'right' voices to the table for discussions
  - Need to create an environment for open discussions among all stakeholders
- Sharing lessons learned from rural and northern communities
  - Need for forums and avenues to share information



- Mackenzie King (Canadian Prime Minister in the 1930s) is quoted as saying:
  - “The problem in Europe is that they have too much history and not enough geography; The problem in Canada is that we have too much geography, and not enough history.”
- The question to consider is whether the findings with ‘newcomers’ in Canada have any relevance for understanding and improving intercultural relationships among ‘oldcomers’ in Eastern Europe.
- However, this question should be examined in the context of the conclusion drawn in the plenary talk.
- There it was concluded that evidence for a similar set of relationships is now being found in a variety of societies, and may constitute a ‘universal’.

# Contact Information



- Robert C. Annis  
[annis@brandonu.ca](mailto:annis@brandonu.ca)
- Ryan Gibson  
[r.gibson@mun.ca](mailto:r.gibson@mun.ca)
- John Berry  
[berryj@kos.net](mailto:berryj@kos.net)

Rural Development Institute  
[www.brandonu.ca/rdi](http://www.brandonu.ca/rdi)

