Responding to labour market needs in rural Canada through immigration to welcoming communities

By
Robert C. Annis and Bill Ashton
Rural Development Institute
Brandon University

Presented at
Metropolis Conference
Vancouver, BC
March 24, 2011
Overview of Presentation

• Immigration to Canada
• Immigrant distribution in Canada
• Policy matters: Immigration to Manitoba
• Welcoming communities
• A case study: Brandon Manitoba
• Implications for policy, practice, and research
• Challenges for moving forward
Population Forecast

For Canada, it is anticipated that deaths will exceed births in about 2030 and from that point forward the only source of population growth will be from immigration.
Natural balance (births minus deaths) is projected to be negative in about 2030: then, all of Canada's population growth would come from immigration.

Rural Immigrants in Canada: An Overview

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Rural Immigrants in Canada: An Overview

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Within rural and small town Canada, 5.3% were immigrants in 2006
• And most arrived in Canada at least 20 years earlier

Within larger urban centres, 23% were immigrants in 2006
• And most arrived within the previous 20 years
Regional Distribution of Immigrants, 2008

Total: 247,423
Concentration of Immigrants: Top 10 cities / Other

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2007
• 1996: Canada-MB Immigration Agreement
  – 1998: included Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) and settlement services
• 2006: PNP accounted for 67% of MB’s newcomers
  – 30% of Provincial Nominees chose rural destinations
• Policy framework – *Growing Through Immigration Strategy (2007)*
  – Current annual target is 10,000 arrivals
  – New target is 20,000 over the next decade
  – Strategic growth group – senior officials
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 retention efforts 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

Year

Total TFW Arrivals (Stock)

Actual & Anticipated TFW & Family Arrivals (Stock)
• 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
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Canadian Long Term Residents</th>
<th>Latin American New Residents</th>
<th>Chinese New Residents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Male</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Female</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Age</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average length of residency in Brandon</td>
<td>27.9 years</td>
<td>1.8 years</td>
<td>2.3 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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
Current Employment

• Work at Maple Leaf Foods:
  – 78% of Latin American new residents
  – 82% of Chinese new residents

• Is your primary job an occupation related to your training and/or experience? (affirmative responses)
  – 73% of Canadian long-term residents
  – 34% of Latin American new residents
  – 8% of Chinese new residents
## Difficulties Experienced in Brandon

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

Welcoming communities

• Regional approach to WC in rural communities
  – Indicators of WC
  – WISR model
  – Housing strategies
  – Hiring TFW

• Research and policy implications
What is a Welcoming Community?

A welcoming community attracts and retains newcomers
• identify & remove barriers
• promote a sense of belonging
• meet diverse individual needs
• offer services that promote successful integration
Welcoming communities strive to improve capacity to inviting, settling, and retaining new residents

- **Invite** - attract and recruit immigrants to the community
- **Settle** – identify & remove barriers, and meet diverse individual needs, including sensitivity to and acceptance of cultural diversity
- **Retain** – integrate new residents into fabric of community and community celebrates cultural diversity of new residents

*Esses et al. (2009) indicators: employment, housing, education.*
WC – Housing needs vary

New Immigrant

• **Invite** – different housing available, affordable, suitable

• **Settle** – Housing choices – starter, fix-it-up, to mid and upper range, location

• **Retain** – Housing choices for family, location

Vacancy rates are very low & have been for several years

Immigrants require affordable, but not necessarily low income housing
Elements of housing strategies
- Settlement system
- Housing inventory
- Land supply
- Housing industry
- Market trends
- Regional market

Actors
- Federal government
- Provincial government
- Local municipalities
- Private sector
- Community organizations
- Individuals
## MB PNP (outside of Wpg)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centre Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 centres</td>
<td>7,816</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 centres</td>
<td>558</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2,123</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside</td>
<td>10,497</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Typical immigrant in MB:

- 80% married
- 70% with children
- 85% employed
- 66% spouse working
- $49k avg income
- 18% < $30k/yr

Typically, immigrant household shave adequate earnings to afford a reasonable house.
WC – Housing strategies

Larger regional centres
Greater demand → build new units

Smaller centres
Limited demand → modify existing stocks
Hiring TFWs

Pathway: rural employers hiring TFWs

Step 1: Confirm labour shortage: Cdn citizens
Step 2: Register your MB Business
Step 3: Recruit TFW
Step 4: Apply for a Labour Market Opinion-LMO
Step 5: Apply for Temporary Work Permit and Visa (if applicable)
Step 6: TWF enters Canada
Step 7: Welcome and settle employee
At lot of them [TFW’s] haven’t lived in cold climates, economic standards are different.

Rural living isn’t for everyone and sometimes that’s the hardest thing.

Our history with these people [TFWs] is that they are committed to the job.

It’s in our best interest [employer] to make sure that they’re well settled & happy so we certainly endeavour to do that.

There is a huge cost to recruitment, so it is better to retain the TFW’s, settle them & have them contribute to the community.

Through the LMOs [Labour Market Opinion] there’s no leeway it’s like simon says – one wrong move and you’re out…that’s the thing we dislike most is the fact that once it’s rejected you have to start all over again.

It’s a big process for a small business.

It’s about a 2-year process now before you get all the paperwork in.

It’s a big process for a small business.
Gov’t agencies reviewed Information Pathway for rural employers

- Sharing the Information Pathway
  - Gov’t agencies
  - Business service groups
  - Employers

- **Challenge:** keeping Pathway current (evergreen)
Policy implications

- **Communicate gov’t solution**
  Better integrated immigration processes (for TFW) among gov’t agencies

- **Hiring process too lengthy**
  Connect rural employment opportunities with available urban immigrants (provincially, nationally)?
Further research of WISR model

• What’s practices working in WISR?
  Strategies and engagement activities used by rural communities and service providers with new residents

• Individual choices?
  Sequence of strategies and activities by immigrants to become long term residents in rural communities
Policy implications

• Differentiated policy response
  How best to adjust public services in response to an uneven distribution of immigrants in rural regions?

• Community development
  To what extent will rural immigration contribute to rural communities (economically, socially, culturally, politically, environmentally) and what is at risk if they do not?
Acknowledgements

• Brandon Welcoming Communities Dialogue Group
• Southwest Rural Immigration Committee
• Rural Employers
• Rural and Cooperative Secretariat, Agricultural and Agri-Food Canada
• Federal and Provincial government agencies
• Local governments, agencies and organizations