Small Places, Big Changes: Migration, Immigration & Demographic Change in Rural Canada

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Outline

- National context
- Provincial context
- Local context
- Industrial labour needs
- Family reunification
- Welcoming Communities
- Rural challenges
Canadian Immigration Policy

• Promote Canada as a destination of choice
• Assist newcomers in making a successful transition to Canada
  – Credential recognition
  – Welcoming communities
• Improvements to existing policies and programs
  – Ensure temporary migrants are entitled same protections as Canadian workers
  – Support for international students
• Deliberate measures aimed at fostering social cohesion, adapting to increased immigration, diversity, and multiculturalism
• Proud tradition of immigration and multiculturalism
• 260,000 individuals became Canadian citizens in 2006
• One of every six Canadians was born outside the country
• About 200,000 temporary foreign workers and students are admitted annually

BUT historically urban centric…
Manitoba

- 1996: Canada-MB Immigration Agreement
  - 1998: included Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) and settlement services
- 2007: PNP accounted for 70% of Manitoba’s newcomers
  - 28% of Provincial Nominees chose rural destinations
- Policy framework – *Growing Through Immigration Strategy (2007)* for the whole province
  - Current annual target is 10,000 arrivals
  - New target is 20,000 over the next decade
Brandon

Population = 41,115

- Second largest urban centre
- Relatively homogenous population over time
- Destination for hundreds of temporary foreign workers
- Rapid and unprecedented change
Maple Leaf Foods Brandon
• 1999: Maple Leaf Foods (MLF) pork processing plant opened
• 2001: MLF began foreign recruitment campaign
• 2008: Second shift fully operationalized
• Today there are approximately 1500 international recruits employed at MLF
  – 70% of employees are international recruits
  – From Mexico, El Salvador, Ukraine, China, Colombia, Mauritius and Honduras.
Family Reunification

- Approximately 3,500 family members will relocate to Brandon between June 2007 and February 2011
- Supporting reunification after separation
- Evolving needs
  - ~ 5 new students per week enrolled
  - Housing shortage
  - Local service delivery
Rural Challenges

- Small centres and rural regions face unique retention challenges
- Amenities and services associated with large-scale immigration may not exist

Therefore...
- Local trust is imperative
- Effective communication is vital
- Community welcome is influential

Perspective evolves...
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
• Holistic approach to service provision
• 360 degree feedback
RDI Temporary Foreign Worker 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
Ethnocultural Organizations, 2008-2009

- To increase understanding of the needs and capacities of ethnocultural groups in rural Manitoba
- Ensure vibrant and active ethnocultural communities
- Multi-phase project with focus on Brandon and Steinbach
- Establishing relationships between community organizations and ethnocultural communities
Mutual Intercultural Relations in Plural Societies

- International collaborative project that builds an understanding of intercultural relations
- Designed to understand intercultural relations by considering both recent immigrants’ and community members’ experiences and ideas

- Citizenship
- Mobility
- Ethnic Origin
- Neighbourhood Ethnic Composition
- Languages
- Social Contacts
- Cultural Identity
- Security
- Acculturation Attitudes and Expectations
- Perceived Discrimination
- Multicultural Ideology
- Tolerance/Prejudice
- Attitudes Towards Immigration
Practice/Community

- Need forums for rural immigration discussions
  - Temporary Foreign Worker Dialogue Group (Brandon, MB)

- Need to develop local strategies for settlement, integration, and retention

- Need to build relationships among governments and local stakeholders

- Need to share lessons learned with other jurisdictions
• Increase awareness and fit between provincial policy and local needs
• Reduce vulnerability of foreign workers
• Cross departmental communications and working relationships
• Canada needs increased attention to immigration policy with regards to rural and northern populations
• Continuing efforts to foster federal and provincial linkages to develop policy, program mandates, and accountability.
Research

- Understanding individual community needs and capacities
- Understanding intercultural relations
  - Mutual Intercultural Relations in Plural Societies project
- Academic immigration literature is predominantly urban focused
- Strengthen rural immigration research networks
Community Challenges

• 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 at 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
Required

Additional
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