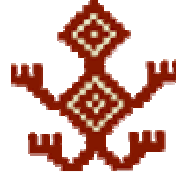
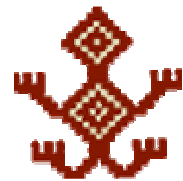


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**Section1:**  
**Literature Review**



## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Context and change**

In 2001, immigrants constituted 18.4% of Canada's population (CIC, 2003). By 2011 immigrants will account for all net labour force growth, and by 2026, will account for all net population increase (Metropolis, 2003). The importance of immigration, valued by sheer numbers, presents itself clearly in the composition of this country. Crucial to the nation's growth, immigration helps define and distinguish Canadian culture, supports the health of the economy, and comprises the better part of population increase in Canada each year. With its yearly target of establishing immigration levels at approximately one percent of the total population, the Canadian government has recognized the long-term benefits of accepting newcomers. As such, we are obliged to consider how the benefits of immigration are spread across the diversity of Canadian lives and landscapes.

The overall goal of this project is to develop a better understanding of the complexity of regionalization in British Columbia (BC) and to develop recommendations and opportunities for community-based solutions to attract and regain immigrants. The following section is a literature review describing the underlying factors for immigrant choice of destination, settlement and decision to leave rural regions or small towns.

Due to migration (both forced and voluntary), something quite remarkable is happening to cities, towns, and regions within Canada. New geographies are being created within and between cities, which presents a challenge to the ways in which we understand settlement and integration experiences. The social geographies of service

provision and social networks are key areas of inquiry into new Canadian settlement geographies.

Two concurrent trends of recent immigration characterize the ever-changing face of Canada's population: the increasingly globalized composition of immigrants and their continued uneven geographic settlement in Canada's three major metropolitan areas, Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver (Bourne and Rose, 2001; Papillon, 2002). The urban concentration of immigrants has accelerated the changing social geographies of these fast-growing cities. By comparison, the remainder of Canada seems virtually untouched by immigration. We must not, however, "discount the importance of relatively small numbers in relatively small places" (Halliday, 2006, p.89).

British Columbia received 20.2 % of immigrants to Canada between 1991 and 2001, and during that same time 87.6 % moved to the Greater Vancouver Regional District (CIC, 2003). Immigrant settlement patterns in BC polarize the demographic, economic, and cultural differences between the metropolitan area of Vancouver and less-populated centres in the rest of the province.

Macro-level demographic trends have a significant impact on the day-to-day lives of all Canadian residents, and certainly on immigrants themselves. The tendency of newcomers to settle in metropolitan centres is reflected in the wide extent of research that focuses on immigration to Vancouver, Montreal and Toronto. Research on small and medium centres remains understudied, though over the last four years, the topic has garnered considerable attention. The following is a review of the recent literature on immigrant settlement, dispersal and regionalization policies in Canada, with a focus on BC.

## **Uneven geographies**

According to the 2001 census, about 74% of all immigrants who arrived in Canada during the 1990s settled in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver (Statistics Canada 2003, p.10). Why do immigrants choose to settle in Canada's three largest cities? There are several answers to this question, and each of them brings insight into the challenges faced by immigrants who settle in non-metropolitan regions.

People come into Canada through a variety of migratory classes, both temporary and permanent. Place of settlement is determined differently by each class of migrants. International migration is selective and requires those who have moved to overcome both physical and social barriers. It also requires migrants to adhere to government immigration policies (Li, 2003). To understand the trends in settlement of immigrants, one must observe the immigration system. Temporary student visa holders or seasonal workers are normally committed to an institution or employer in place. Immigrants are admitted into Canada under different legal categories as defined by immigration regulations and statues. Definitions may change on occasion however, three main categories are clear: Family Class, Independent or Economic Class, and Refugees.

### **Family Class**

The number of people who could be included in the Family Class category has varied over the years. According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2005a) the Family Class is defined today as:

“Permanent residents sponsored by a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident living in Canada who is 18 years of age or over. Family class immigrants include spouses and partners; parents and grandparents; and others” (p. 108).

Migrants entering through family-reunification settle initially with the family members that sponsored them. A study by Statistics Canada found that the most important reason for choosing a particular location to settle included the presence of family or friends (Statistics Canada, 2003). According to Telegdi (2006), the presence of family in Canada rather than language skills, services, or work experience is the most influential indicator of successful retention of immigrants. Family reunification serves the purpose of enabling the successful settlement of new immigrants and enhancing the quality of life of new Canadians by providing them with an extended family support network (Telegdi, 2006).

### **Refugee**

As part of international humanitarian commitments, 10,000 or more Refugee immigrants come to Canada (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2005b). There are a few subcategories within the Refugee category. According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2005a) Refugees are defined as:

“Permanent residents in the Refugee category include government-assisted Refugees, privately sponsored Refugees, Refugees landed in Canada and Refugee dependants (i.e., dependants or Refugees landed in Canada), including spouses and partners living abroad or in Canada” (p. 110).

Refugees quickly change their residence after arrival, compared to Family and Economic Class immigrants (Houle, 2007). One explanation for the high migration rates of refugees is the size of the community where they were sent (CIC, 2001). Most

refugees and asylum seekers do not choose their initial place of landing in Canada because they must initially settle in the community inhabited by their sponsors (Statistics Canada, 2003). Other groups of refugees are often directed to a city that can provide the necessary settlement services (Bauder and Sharpe, 2002).

### **Economic Class**

While Canada has paid close attention to the humanitarian objectives of family reunification and refugee settlement, in recent years the balance in the annual immigration targets has moved towards the economic classes (Ley and Hiebert, 2001). According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2005a) Economic Class immigrants are defined as:

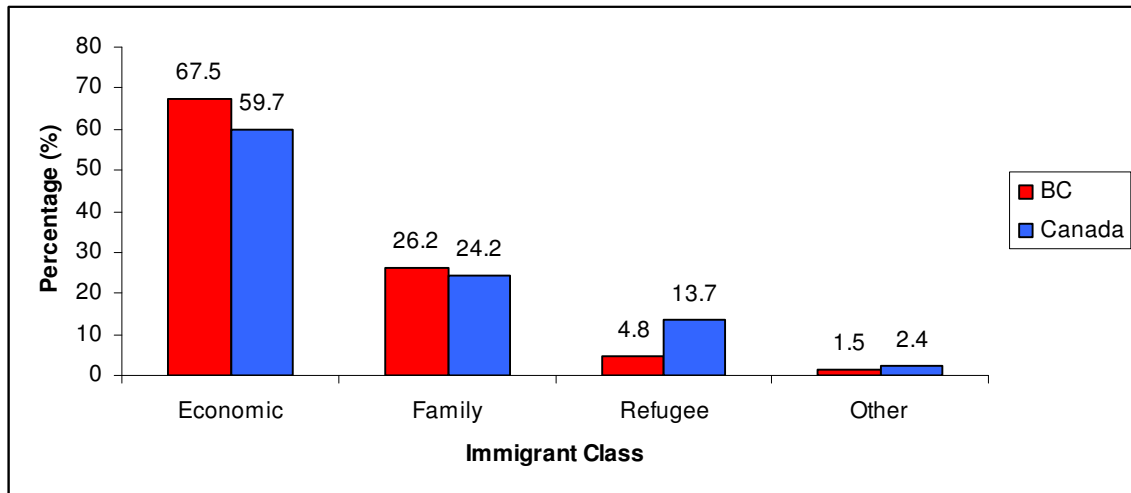
“Permanent residents selected for their skills and ability to contribute to Canada’s economy. The economic immigrant category includes skilled workers, business immigrants, provincial or territorial nominees and live-in caregivers” (p. 107).

Settlement patterns and secondary migration is likely to vary with respect to immigrant type (refugees, economic class, or family class) (Newbold, 2007). The economic class arguably has the most choice when selecting a city in which they will settle, however, several determining factors may affect this decision. For example, if Economic Class immigrants are presented with new employment opportunities, it may promote relocation (Newbold, 2007).

In 2005, 442, 772 new immigrants arrived in BC (BC Stats, 2007). Based on the data from BC stats (2007) the most common immigrant group arriving in BC has come through the Economic Class, largely because of Skilled Workers, Investors, and Provincial Nominees. They accounted for 67.51% of the new immigrants in BC in 2006,

significantly higher in number than the national percentage of 59.7%. The second most common classification was Family Class, with 27.2% of new immigrants in BC, again slightly higher than the national average at 24.2% (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Immigrant landings by class in British Columbia in 2005**

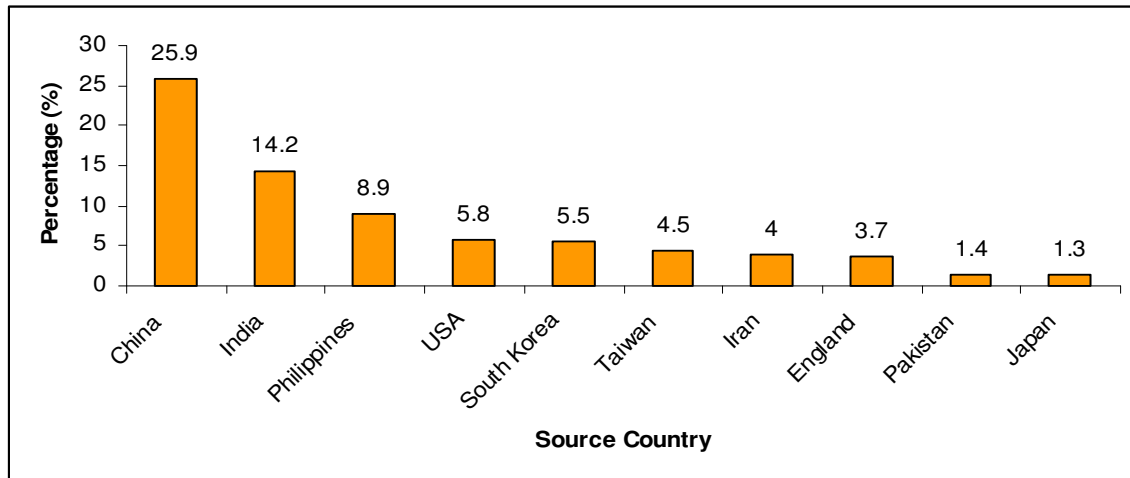


(Source: BC Stats, 2007)

Immigrants that arrived in BC between January to December 2006 were originally from a number of countries around the world. The most common countries of origin included: China (25.9%), India (14.2%), Philippines (8.9%), USA (5.8%), South Korea (5.5%), Taiwan (4.5%), Iran (4.0%), England (3.7%), Pakistan (1.4%), and Japan (1.3%) (Figure 2).



**Figure 2: BC Immigrant landings by source country in 2006**



(Source: BC Stats, 2007)

### Settlement factors

A review of recent literature highlights the most frequently cited factors that encourage settlement in major centres are:

- **The size and health of the labour market.** Immigrants consider the availability of work in their field of employment, in which they have skills. The majority of migrants entering through Canada's economic-class are skilled and possess a level of education slightly above the average Canadian adult (Reitz, 2001). Most professional and service sector employment is concentrated in Canada's biggest cities, while non-metropolitan regions offer a smaller pool of appropriate job opportunities. In rural non-metro-adjacent regions, one-quarter of the new immigrants are working in primary-sector occupations (Beshiri, 2004). Smaller centres, however, have unique employment contexts. Some communities suffer

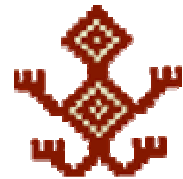
from domestic out-migration and underemployment, while others (like Fort St. John) are experiencing unassailable growth and major labour shortages. The mismatch between professional training and the kind of jobs available is unfortunately still an issue of major concern for the government and immigrants alike.

- **The presence of rooted social networks.** Family, friends or pre-existing linguistic or ethno-cultural communities help to lower the costs and risks of movement for new migrants, making it easier to find a place to live, a source of employment and a community in which to find support (Massey, 1990; Taylor, 1986).
- **Networks sustain themselves, and each act of migration alters the social context within which subsequent migration decisions are made** (Massey *et al.*, 1993). Linguistic enclaves, the availability of cheap ethnic goods and foreign-language media (Chiswick and Miller 2000), are the glue that prevents dispersion in Canada (Devoretz, 2003). Ram and Shin (1999) suggest that some immigrants may not see the need for assimilation into mainstream Canadian society as their ethnic enclaves provide them with social and economic security (p. 162). Congregational association characterized by in-group interaction is critical to identity formation and maintenance for all cultural groups and is not unique to immigrant or ethnic groups (Ley, 2003; Hiebert and Ley, 2003; Ray, 1999).
- **The quality of life and livelihood.** Moving to a big city guarantees a wider array of schools, medical centres, public transport, cultural activities and social services. Moving to a smaller centre limits those choices. Quality of life can also

include the tolerance of the receiving society. According to Peake and Ray (2001), concentrated immigration has led to the highly urban character of the distribution of people of colour and therefore sensitivity to racism and the normalization of 'mainstream' society is not part of the every-day lives of many Canadians in smaller centres. Quality of life, however, is a highly idiosyncratic and qualified measurement.

- **Accessibility of infrastructure, administration and information.** Because of transportation networks, immigrants are most likely to arrive in major urban centres that have international airports. Similarly, the location of processing centres or embassies (both in the home country and in Canada) can affect the choice of where to settle. Information accessibility can help break down any misconceived stereotypes about place, for example, the quality and clarity of a promotional website or pamphlets/educational sessions, can direct immigrants to certain regions. The availability of language training is another key factor. These themes will crop up at a later point in this report.

**Section 2:**  
**Regional Insights**



## REGIONAL INSIGHT

### Government and policy

The following section provides an understanding of regionalization, transnationalism, the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP), and some key factors influencing immigrant recruitment and retention in rural and small towns (RST). Immigrants select a place to settle based on several factors such as, a warm and welcoming community, immigrant services provided by the community, educational, cultural and economic opportunities (CIC, 2003). Most choose to settle in Toronto, Montreal or Vancouver (Beshiri & Alfred, 2002). The Canadian federal and provincial governments have expressed increasing concern with uneven settlement patterns. This concern is founded on two perceived challenges: the assumption that metropolitan areas cannot manage rapid and ethno-linguistically diverse population growth, and the fear that smaller centres cannot survive without population growth and skilled workers (Walton-Roberts, 2005). Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC, 2001) has developed new strategies for achieving a “more balanced geographic distribution of immigrants” and refugee settlement to small cities, towns, and rural areas of Canada. Immigrant dispersal, or “regionalization”, has been envisioned as a possible solution to these two challenges (CIC, 2003).

It is important to consider the theories of **transnationalism** because it offers a critical perspective on what makes a place attractive for recent immigrants. Transnationalism is a useful lens through which to study the interplay of local and global processes in the settlement process and the dynamic nature of population change through

forced and voluntary migration (Nolin, 2006). Transnationalism urges an exploration of the relationship between globalization and international migration and the myriad factors which link the processes of migration and settlement (Basch *et al.*, 1994; Castles 2001; Malberg 1997; Portes 2001). Immigrants and refugees are likely to settle in areas where they can maintain transnational connections with their home country (Levitt and Glick-Schiller, 2004). Transnationalism “accents the attachments migrants maintain with families communities, traditions and causes outside the boundaries of the nation-state to which they have moved” (Vertovec, 2001, p. 574).

Settlement occurs within the context of a labyrinth of relations that connect immigrants and refugees to multiple nation-states (Al-Ali and Koser, 2002; Vertovec, 1999; Portes, 1997; Basch *et al.*, 1994). Transportation and communications advances enable migrants to develop relations and identities between both their country of origin and resettlement (Vertovec, 2001). In this scenario, immigrants may find non-metropolitan regions less attractive because they are farther from international airports; however communications technologies (internet, telephone, web-cams) provide a degree of connection for individuals in smaller centres. The fluid context in which immigrants are able to transcend national and regional boundaries raises the question of how to adjust an understanding of immigration (Ray, 2002).

Along with the demands of changing employment opportunities and labour shortages, Canadian immigration policy has played a part in the location and composition of immigrant settlement in regions across Canada. As a result, there is an increased interest in studying the connection between policy-making and the settlement patterns of

new immigrants moving to highly populated metropolitan regions, and more recently towards smaller centres and communities.

Interest in regional immigration has grown over the last decade and in 2002 it became an important topic on the agendas of meetings of Canada's Federal, Provincial and Territorial immigration ministers. Former Minister Denis Coderre strongly supported investigating the benefits of regional immigration during his time in office. Since the wave of protest against his original proposal to have immigrants sign "social contracts" of commitment to settle (for a time) in a smaller community, the federal government has presented more positive, choice-based initiatives to encourage regionalization (Bauder, 2003a). Unlike European discussions on the geographic dispersal of immigrants and refugees that speak of "spreading the burden" (Robinson, Andersson, & Musterd, 2003), from the beginning, **Canadian dialogue has supported the notion of "sharing" or "spreading" the benefits of immigration** (Denton, 2004). The shift of focus to "welcoming communities" exemplifies this turn towards valuing immigration and also highlights that the responsibilities for successful settlement rest not solely on immigrant shoulders. Indeed, public opinion towards immigration and immigrants is relatively positive compared to any other country (Hiebert, 2004; PGAP, 2002). Concern with the intense concentration of immigrants in the gateway cities of Vancouver, Toronto, and Montréal is coupled with a desire for the geographic dispersal of immigration to share growth and opportunity with smaller centres so they too can benefit from Canada's immigration vision.

In Canada, jurisdiction over immigration is complex and is constitutionally split between the federal and provincial governments. Studies stress the importance of

collaboration between federal, provincial and municipal governments, along with local service providers (Di Biase and Bauder, 2005). There has been a growing interest amongst provincial governments expressed through the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) to attract immigrants.

### **Provincial Nominee Program**

The government of Canada wants to achieve a greater dispersion of immigrants. The Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) may be viewed as a tool that can potentially “fix” the problem of regional distribution (Vander Ploeg, 2000).

The program, negotiated between federal and provincial governments (now for all provinces and most territories), is designed to identify skilled workers and direct them to a particular region. The provincial agreements allow provinces and territories to play a role in attracting workers with skills or, individuals who will contribute to the economic development of that province (Fonta, 2003). This immigration counts over and above the normal federal admissions each year and, “represents a small step towards increasing immigrant populations outside of Canada’s largest cities” (Krahn, Derwing, & Abulaban, 2003; p. 5). Over the space of five years, BC is able to fast track 1000 provincial nominees through the immigration process. The BC PNP has had some success attracting immigrants for hard to fill positions in health care and education (BC Chamber of Commerce, 2007). According to recent numbers published by the Canada West Foundation, PNPs are demonstrating considerable growth, even if the overall numbers are relatively small compared to immigration as a whole. In 2004, provincial nominees made up 2.1 % of BC’s 20,525 economic class immigrants (Huynh, 2004). In 2005, BC



had 9.8% of the provincial nominees moving to the province, which was the second highest rate after Manitoba (See Table 1).

**Table 1: Provincial Nominees by Province in 2005**

Province	Total	Percentage of Provincial Nominees
Manitoba	4619	57.4%
British Columbia	789	9.8%
Alberta	609	7.6%
Ontario	483	6.0%
Saskatchewan	468	5.8%
New Brunswick	438	5.4%
Nova Scotia	326	4.1%
Prince Edward Island	204	2.5%
Newfoundland	85	1.1%
Quebec	26	0.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8047</b>	<b>100%</b>

(Source: Manitoba Labour and Immigration, 2006)

Recent academic literature critiques ‘regionalization’ concepts that focus overly on the benefits of place, and reduce the importance of effects for immigrants (McIsaac, 2003). Krahn *et al.* (2003) assert that the federal and provincial governments (with the exception of Quebec) have not focused the discussion of geographical dispersion in terms of integration, but rather in terms of economic development, the national decline in population, and resultant labour shortages. There is a call to **make immigrants a more important consideration in regionalization policy**. Place matters, and selecting a place for settlement has a deeply personal and determining impact on the lives of immigrants. “Aspects of identity or self develop in relationship to place, but places set a brute limit on what individuals can make of themselves” (Pile, 1996; p. 55). As such, place is key when considering just how the various dimensions of physical environment impacts all aspects of one’s social life.

## **Moving ‘out’**

Since its incarnation as policy, there has been debate about how to define regions and smaller centres, and where to direct regionalized settlement. Bryant and Joseph (2001) warn that the term ‘rural’, as a category of residual areas outside metropolitan regions, risks homogenizing the diversity of non-metropolitan Canadian landscapes. One body of research emphasizes that dispersal policies should focus on second and third tier cities; cities that presently receive about 20% of new immigrants (Frideres, 2006). Growing opinions, however, argue that the definition of “small” must involve an element of **self-identification** by those places in Canada that wish to receive more immigrants. A town, a city, or an entire province may consider themselves “small” while others may see them as large (Denton, 2002; CIC, 2003). Either way, self-identifying small centers possesses the drive for change and should be encouraged and helped if they have the desire to attract and retain more immigrants.

Recently, there has been a shift in focus to the concept of a welcoming community. The concept of ‘welcoming’ intones the proclivity of a given city’s population to *welcome* and *accept* new immigrants (Hiebert, 2003; Reitz, 1998). One definition of a welcoming community includes:

“... appropriate housing, availability of initial accommodation, medical services, social services, education (language and general) for all ages and skill levels, access to arts, cultural, recreational and leisure programs, cross-cultural and anti-racism resources and voluntary support programs.” (CIC, 2003).

A constellation of effective and local settlement services makes a place more welcoming, as does the general receptivity of all residents. Media representations affect

public opinion and may have a role in the creation of more welcoming societies (Mahatani and Mountz, 2002). This concept suits smaller communities since it focuses on how a place can create a more welcoming community and not exclusively on the already-present attractions.

Non-metropolitan regions struggle to provide the same set of attractions. Nonetheless, there are immigrants in Canada's smaller and medium-sized cities. The sheer volume of immigration to Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver should not dwarf the importance of immigration to smaller Canadian cities. Recent literature has highlighted the benefits immigrants can find in non-metropolitan centres. Reimer (2007) states:

“[r]ural areas provide the commodities that give us a positive balance of trade, they hold the sources of our water, the location of recreation and natural amenities to which we turn to be refreshed, they contain much of our biodiversity, they process most of the urban pollution, and they contain a large part of our social and cultural heritage” (p.3).

Some key factors influencing immigrant recruitment and retention are employment opportunities, social support, language, amenities, and community response (Reimer, 2007). The next section will discuss the economic and non-economic reasons why newcomers choose to move and settle in rural areas and small towns (RST).

### **Economic**

The reason an arriving immigrant intends to live in a community depends on a number of factors. For some, the most significant reason for staying in a community is acceptable employment (Abu-Ayyash & Broch, 2006; Voluntary Sector Initiative, 2003). The first, and most often cited reason why immigrants move to non-metropolitan regions is because they are *faring better economically* than their urban counterparts. This is an

especially poignant fact in light of the steady decrease in overall immigrant economic output since the 1980s (Beshiri, 2004; Bauder, 2003b). Bauder (2003a) states that:

“The newcomers' average income is higher in smaller communities than in Vancouver. Recent immigrant men averaged well above \$22,000 in places outside of Greater Vancouver, as opposed to only \$17,350 within it. Recent immigrant women in Victoria earned almost \$16,000; their counterparts in Vancouver made on average slightly more than \$12,000”.

Such findings make a powerful case for regionalization at a time when the economic performance of new immigrants is significantly declining when compared to previous immigrant cohorts and Canadian-born workers (Hiebert, 2006). Bauder's (2003) study, however, does not include an analysis of labour force participation by immigration class, which may show that more family class immigrants settle in Vancouver while a higher proportion of economic immigrants settle outside of the metropolitan region. Furthermore, his study does not account for the different labour market experiences of visible minorities, and visible minority immigrant settle more frequently in metropolitan centres (Caron-Malenfant, Milan & Charron, 2007).

**Reduced cost of living** is another consideration. Home ownership, a milestone strongly connected with feelings of establishment and belonging, is more quickly achieved in housing markets outside of metropolitan areas. The majority of immigrants, however, already know where they will be living upon landing in Canada (Ruddick, 2004). Location choice is strongly connected to the presence of family or friends (Hyndman and Schuurman, 2004; Ley and Tutchener, 1999). The incentives and reasoning that work against settlement to Canada's smaller regions are poignant and

difficult to compete with. Each community, however, possesses a unique set of benefits and challenges in attracting immigrants and encouraging them to stay.

### **Heritage and identity**

Rural places are distinguished from urban places by their heritage, identity and infrastructure. Many urban residents have rural roots through family, employment, or experience. According to Reimer (2007, 6), “our media, businesses and politicians make considerable use of this legacy often arguing that the institutional and value foundations of our nation are rooted in elements of our rural heritage.” In some ways, it is the characteristics of a place that maintain a person’s social and personal relations (Reimer, 2007). The particular place and social relations it supports, therefore, can serve as a destination to which potential immigration may flow (Reimer, 2007).

### **Amenities**

Rural places are often distinguished by their amenities, usually in the form of natural resources such as mountains, rivers, lakes, and beaches (Reimer, 2007). The process for destination selection based on amenity value is most likely to be different than migrants seeking work or safety (Reimer, 2007). Tourism, seasonal migration and marketing brochures will likely play an important role in this process (Reimer, 2007).

### **Social factors**

In a study to identify the future settlement needs of immigrants, Zehtab-Martin (2006, 101) found that many immigrants identified small towns and rural areas as a “safe

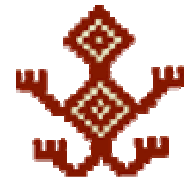
place,” with “less crime,” and “a good place to raise children.” One of the immigrants from her research commented that rural small town communities made it easier to get around the community and understand how different aspects of the community work, such as transportation, banks, and shopping (Zehtab-Martin, 2006). Smaller places also provide opportunities for immigrants to get to know the various services that are available, whereas in larger city centres it is difficult for the newcomers to familiarize themselves with available services.

**Critical points:**

- There is a gap in the literature related to the conditions under which the social inclusion of immigrants thrives in rural communities.
- In order to support the integration and retention of immigrants, Fontana (2003, 15) argues that “settlement resources in regions of low immigration must; come first if we expect newcomers to settle and stay in these areas.”
- Most research on immigrant settlement and retention has taken place in urban centres.
- One size does not fit all (Rose & Desmaris, 2007). There is no typical rural reality. The percentage of rural dwellers varied across provinces, and even between rural areas. Differences among rural areas and regions carry important implications for public policy aimed at rural development.

**Section 3:**

**Canadian Contracts**



## **CANADIAN CONTRACTS**

### **Regional Case Studies**

This section gathers some insight from recent research on immigrant settlement and experiences from regions across Canada, and reflects the range of regionalization that is happening across the country. The review is divided into sections based on Canada's provinces and regions. However, within this literature there is debate about how to define these regions and smaller centres and on where to emphasize regionalized settlement. Bryant and Joseph (2001) warn that the term 'rural', as a residual category consisting of areas outside of metropolitan regions, risks homogenizing what are in actuality a cornucopia of diverse Canadian rural landscapes. One project put together by Citizenship and Immigration Canada emphasizes that dispersal policies focus on second and third tier cities. A second CIC study (2003), written in partnership with representatives from the settlement and voluntary sectors, argues that the definition of "small" must involve an element of self-identification by those places in Canada that wish to receive more immigrants. A town, a city, or an entire province may consider themselves "small" while another perspective may see them as large (CIC, 2003). This study argues that self-identifying small centres should be encouraged and helped if they have the desire to retain or attract more immigrants. According to Burstein (2007), there is reason to be optimistic regarding the prospects of effecting modest change, as outlined in the next section.



## **Alberta**

The main concerns expressed in Alberta-based studies include the promotion of cross-cultural understanding, the need for more workers to fill labour shortages (with an emphasis on the oil sands), and competition for immigrants between Edmonton and Calgary (Derwing, Krahn, Foote, & Diepenbroek, 2005; CIC, 2001; Azmier, 2005). Derwing *et al.* (2005) emphasize **the importance of accessible information**, especially through ‘immigrant-friendly’ websites. They identify **the Internet as the second most common source of information** that immigrants use when choosing where to move (after consultation with family and friends). Using website examples from Toronto, Vancouver and Manitoba, suggest this is the simplest and most efficient approach to attract immigrants.

Abu-laban *et al.* (1999) studied the mobility of refugees who landed and settled in seven smaller Alberta cities from 1992-1997. Their research found that a very high percentage of refugees moved from their original city of settlement (40% out of the original city, 25% out of the province). **Secondary-migration** and **retention** have become prominent topics of research. The primary recommendation for retention from stakeholder group meetings and the survey data from the work done by Derwing *et al.* (2005) is that cities such as Edmonton should work towards ensuring that immigrants feel accepted in their community, workplace, classrooms and neighbourhoods.

Alberta is interested in attracting and retaining more newcomers to the province for two main reasons (Derwing *et al.*, 2005). The first is related to the economic prosperity of the region. The provincial government estimates that in the next ten years, Alberta will be short 100,000 workers (Province of Alberta, 2007). Companies are already at the

point where labour shortages are hurting business, mainly because the oil patch is drawing workers from other industries (Derwing *et al.*, 2005).

The other reason for wanting more immigrants to come and stay in the province is the clear connection between the overall vibrancy of a city and its immigrant population cities that are appealing to the “creative class” (Stolarick & Florida, 2006).

### **Manitoba**

Manitoba is the leading player in terms of putting innovative and complete regionalization strategies into place (Denton, 2004). Manitoba was one of the first provinces to sign a Provincial Nominee agreement (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2001). As a result, Manitoba is at the forefront of provincial involvement in immigration, and was the first province to extend its Federal-Provincial agreement on immigration indefinitely (Azmier & Lozanski, 2004). The Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program (MPNP) has a significant impact on immigration to the province and is a successful tool in assisting regional immigration initiatives (Silvius, 2005). The province has committed significant resources in an aggressive strategy to attract immigrants.<sup>1</sup> In 2001, of the nine rural census tracts that made the top thirty tracts with the largest percentage of immigrant population, four were from Manitoba (Beshiri, 2004). Successive governments over the past decade have supported the province’s immigration strategy.

In a qualitative study of four of Manitoba’s rural communities, Silvius and Annis (2005) found that immigrants in small centres appreciated the positive aspects of safety, proximity to parks/nature and a healthy environment for their children. Special challenges included isolation, disconnection from family and friends, lack of services (especially

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<sup>1</sup> The province’s dedicated website ([www.immigratemanitoba.com](http://www.immigratemanitoba.com)) received 9.3 million hits in 2003.

language training), lack of funding, and disappointing job prospects. The major recommendation for service providers included more recruitment strategies for rural immigration, however, with the proviso that communities need to better **pool resources** to ensure the availability of services, and that a **background study of location** should be conducted before promoting immigration since **every place offers different challenges** (Silvius & Annis 2005; Zehtab-Martin & Beesley, 2007).

### **Ontario**

In 2001, CIC funded a study of settlement services and needs in four separate communities in northern Ontario. The study emphasized the uneven spread of services across northern regions of the province and the varied funding bodies, volunteers and organizers who made services available in their communities. It suggests **alternative approaches to bridging the physical distance between non-metropolitan regions** and urges a more creative attempt to provide **uniform levels of social and settlement services** across the sparsely populated Canadian landscape. Di Biase and Bauder (2005) study the distribution of immigrant settlement patterns and their link to labour force processes across Ontario. They recommend a better provision of services, co-ordination of immigrant skills with opportunities in the local labour market, and the marketing of smaller-centres to potential international immigrants. They also stress the need for innovative ideas on **how various levels of government can help** to guide spatial settlement patterns.

### **The Atlantic Provinces**

Interest has been growing in the Maritimes around attracting and retaining immigrants. Provinces such as New Brunswick have begun to take stock of their resources and their ability to attract immigrant and minority populations (Radford, 2007). Most communities in the Maritimes are facing a negative growth rate which impacts all aspect of community (Mills & Legault, 2007). Immigration is being seen as one of the potential solutions to address issues of population and economic decline. Since the 1990s, it was recognized that the provinces' economic future would depend on immigration. By the second half of the 1990s between 630-750 immigrants, and between 150-170 refugees arrived in New Brunswick, doing little to redress the falling population (Clews, 2004). The policy focus has not only been on attracting immigrants but also on their distribution and retention across rural and urban areas (Akbari & Sun, 2006). Akbari & Sun (2006) found that there are three important variables in attracting and retaining immigrants in small municipalities of Atlantic Canada: (1) the presence of jobs; (2) the presence of other immigrants; and (3) the presence of an ethnic community network with which new arrivals can consult.

There are two major recent immigration policy initiatives designed to attract and retain newcomers to the region: The **Atlantic Provincial Nominee Program** and the initiative to **attract international students** (Province of Nova Scotia, 2005). All four Atlantic provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador have signed a Provincial Nominee Agreement. In most

cases, the PNP is a five-year agreement that allows each Atlantic province to nominate 1000 immigrants over a five year period (Akbari & Sun, 2006).

**International students that have been trained in Canada** do not face to issue of foreign credential recognition (Akbari & Sun, 2006; The Province of Nova Scotia, 2005). In an effort to retain international students, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia recently signed agreements with Citizenship and Immigration Canada to **allow students to work in their fields of study** for two years after completing their education. The agreement also allows international students to **work off campus** for up to 20 hours per week. Allowing international students to gain valuable Canadian work experience off campus prepares them to be fully adapted to the Canadian workforce and society (Akbari & Sun, 2006).

## **Research in British Columbia**

### **Immigration context**

In its 2003 report on regional labour market experiences, Statistics Canada identified BC as the second most attractive destination for newcomers. The province also appears to be gaining the largest share of immigration when compared to other provinces. BC received 15% of all immigrants to Canada in 2003. During that same time period 87% moved to the Greater Vancouver Regional District, 2.2% to Victoria, and 9.8% to other locations across the province (CIC, 2003). Central to new initiatives are strategies for a more balanced geographic distribution of immigrants and refugee re-settlement to small cities, towns, and rural areas of Canada.

### **Academic Insights**

Recent work in BC by Walton-Roberts (2005) on immigrants in Squamish and Kelowna provides important insight on non-metropolitan settlement issues in the province. Walton-Roberts (2005) studied the role taken by regional governments in Squamish and Kelowna to attract and retain immigrants. Her research underscores **the impact of pre-existing social and economic contexts** as well as the importance of **municipal, provincial and federal cooperation** for the successful attraction, retention and subsequent settlement experiences for immigrants in these areas. Walton-Roberts also points out that the very demographic change that justifies relatively high immigration numbers, reshapes the labour market demands of the community. As is the case in many small towns, **a graying population relies less on resource-dependence and becomes increasingly oriented towards personal services, especially healthcare.** Finding skilled workers to fill positions requires a degree of coordination between local and regional levels of government to allow for more local selection control. Recent provincial cutbacks have reduced the funding for social and healthcare services in smaller communities. Funding cuts work to impede dispersed immigrant settlement and saddles municipalities, who may have no experience organizing immigrant services, with the responsibility to address their needs along with wider social service programs.

Henin and Bennett (2002), in a study of Latin American and African immigrants in Victoria, focused on the experiences of **visible minority immigrants** and identify **several obstacles to inclusion**, including the challenge to find work in their field of training (a complex, national problem) and securing decent, affordable housing (a

challenge heightened by Victoria's tight housing market). Using a qualitative research approach, both of these studies have opened up regionalization to the discussion of variable immigrant experience, the uneven geographies of racism (see Peake and Ray, 2001; Burstein, 2007), employment discrimination and credential recognition in BC.

Using a statistical index based on data from the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, Hyndman and Schuurman (2004) work out a 'geography of desirability' for five of Canada's middle-sized cities (Victoria, Kelowna, Prince George, Prince Rupert and Nanaimo). The study, intended to present an immigrant perspective, reveals several key points. The top four motivations for moving were jobs (32.3%) and business prospects (5.5%), the presence of family and friends (35.6%), education prospects (12.1%) and lifestyle consideration. The research emphasizes, however, that **while a quantitative study reveals one pattern of desirability, qualitative research will often reveal another**. Critical factors like racism (Walton-Roberts, 2005; Henin and Bennett, 2002) and the mismatch between (industrial) immigrant skills and the dominance of service sector jobs in medium sized cities (Sherrell, Hyndman, & Preniqi., 2005) are not so easily revealed by numbers alone. Access to a range of reputable educational facilities is also of paramount importance in choosing a place to settle in BC (Waters, 2001). Labour market integration is critical to establishing a sense of achievement and belonging (see Halseth, 1999). In addition, certain regions boast a natural beauty that tips the scales of interest towards quality of life and a love for the surrounding environment.

Central to new initiatives are strategies for a more balanced geographic distribution of immigrants and refugee re-settlement to small cities, towns, and rural areas of Canada. Settlement service provision for northern BC operates from Prince George and struggles

to serve a relatively small number of recent immigrants, thinly spread throughout the vast region.

**Critical points:**

- Qualitative as well as quantitative research needs to be done to account for the specificity of place and the complexity of settlement experiences and choices.
- There is no single “cookie cutter” approach to regional development across Canada or within provinces.
- There is no clear line connecting the regional dispersal of immigration and the economic restructuring of rural and northern Canada.
- Success can be measured variably. Race, gender and the specificity of place introduce other realms of complexity to settlement experiences that must be seriously considered.
- Municipal governments interested in attracting immigrants must forecast their future labour market needs, not only their present needs, and work together with all layers of government to share the responsibility of creating a welcoming place.



## **Regional Immigration Initiative**

The federal and provincial governments recognize the challenge in ensuring that all parts of Canada share in the benefits of immigration. Growing concern with the intense concentration of immigrants in the gateway cities of Vancouver, Toronto, and Montréal is coupled with a desire for the regionalization of immigration and the opportunity for smaller centres to benefit from Canada's immigration vision.

Upon renewing the *Agreement for Canada – British Columbia Cooperation on Immigration* in April 2004, the federal department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and the then-named Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services (MCAWS) made a commitment to the Regional Immigration Initiative (RII) in BC. Focused on the potential of attracting business entrepreneurs, skilled workers, international students and investment dollars, the initiative carried three principle goals:

- 1) To facilitate the attraction and retention of immigrants to communities outside the Greater Vancouver Region.
- 2) To support the economic development of rural communities within British Columbia
- 3) To develop strategies to improve the ability and capacity of smaller cities and communities outside of the Greater Vancouver Area to attract and retain immigrants.

Jumpstarting the initiative in August, the immigration division of MCAWS put out a call for proposals from mid and small-sized communities in BC. A competitive

proposal process selected eight communities, each within different regional districts working in close partnership with the community and contractors to identify and develop the resources needed for the attraction and retention of immigrants. It is critical to keep in mind that the Regional Immigrant Initiative was always a pilot project, and not something that was intended to be continuous. Many lessons can be derived from the work that has been done. The regions and communities chosen were Abbotsford, Alberni-Clayoquot, Nanaimo, Powell River, the Okanagan, Prince George, Revelstoke and Vernon. It is important to mention here that these communities reflect the range of regionalization within the province. They were not meant to highlight the similarities within their region, but to show the diversity in responses to immigrants moving into the communities. The following is a summary discussion of the key findings from the regional reports.

### **Starting points**

Two basic restrictions guided the path that each of the eight reports took. The first limitation was time; communities normally had from 7 to 11 months to complete their project. The base funding provided by MCAWS was the second limitation, many projects turned to the local government and businesses to obtain supplementary funding.

Perhaps most challenging though, was the starting point from which most of the projects began. Regionalization and immigration strategy were relatively quiet topics in several of the communities (with the exception of Prince George and Abbotsford). There needed first to be a general reconnaissance of the issue in each community, a gathering which was to be followed by action. Several of the projects concluded that their projects

were limited by time, money and the ability to gather already busy people to a project requiring time-consuming imaginative visioning processes. At the point of writing, more than one project has unfinished/un-submitted portions.

**Projects were limited by time, funding, and the necessity in most cases to first collect exploratory information about immigration and settlement in their community.**

### **Methodological Approaches**

Each of the eight projects engaged in one or all of the following methodological steps, as specified:

1. Create an Advisory Committee, Team, or Working Group of people involved in the community who will focus effort and attention on the issue of immigration. All eight projects completed this step.
2. Issued a survey to immigrants and stakeholders in the community (Vernon, Alberni-Clayquot, Powell-River).
3. Ran focus-groups with different involved parts of the community (Alberni-Clayquot, Abbotsford, Prince George, Revelstoke, Powell-River).
4. Conducted informational interviews with stakeholders, and in some cases immigrants themselves to gauge what the community needs to attract, retain or market to new immigrants (Abbotsford, Okanagan, Prince George, Revelstoke, Powell-River).
5. Reviewed relevant literature (Powell-River, Prince George, Revelstoke, Nanimo).
6. Conducted a labour force gap analysis or community asset profile (Powell-River, Abbotsford).

**Methodological steps where taken to address three pertinent needs in each scenario:**

- 1) the need to collaborate/network with all part of the community;**
- 2) the need to better understand the local economic and social climate; and**
- 3) the need to guide a useful set of actions.**

**Productive actions:**

The output of each project differed enormously, as did the number and depth of analysis of methodologies. Some projects achieved product output, while others focused on laying the path for action at a later date. Generally, each of the reports emphasized the following seven products of their report:

1. Create an action plan for attraction and retention.
2. Website or listserv production to unite services, links and people in one place.
3. Produce a template or guide on immigration strategy for use by other communities.
4. Re-brand city and distribute promotional material to attract immigrants.
5. Make accessible an assessment of what jobs need to be filled, what areas suffer from labour shortages and what business opportunities exist.
6. Use public education programs, local media and festivals to publicize immigration as positive to all community residents.
7. Create human connections and relationships useful for collaboration. All reports were actively involved in this action.

The most standout, effective and innovative of the action plans are listed here:

- 1. Introduce the concept of aftercare (Powell River).** Aftercare stresses the need to provide services for new immigrants to help after initial settlement, and during integration process. Funding based on the number of new immigrants hinders the ability for smaller communities to attract new migrants. Aftercare **services need to be developed and funded before immigrants will arrive.**
- 2. Harvest unorthodox opportunities for understanding (Vernon).** This project discovered through the survey responses received from entrepreneurial immigrants that volunteering was a “key component in understanding their new community and culture”. The youth buddy program in Abbotsford is another example of a more direct opportunity to share knowledge and create friendship between new and old residents.
- 3. Make diversity a part of the process (Vernon).** Immigration affects all aspects of the community, and the discussion requires many perspectives. Advisory committees should embody the diversity the community hopes to achieve.
- 4. Connecting through technology is one thing, people are what matter.** The idea of an attractive, comprehensive and intuitive one-stop-shop settlement website is very popular and highly effective (Abbotsford). Still, reports from the smallest communities emphasized the need for a full-time, dedicated, salaried person in the community to act as nodal point for all things immigration (Revelstoke, Powell River, Alberni-Clayquot). Larger communities expressed the need for an umbrella agency (Abbotsford).
- 5. Target secondary migrants, international students and family members**

- (**Revelstoke, Nanaimo, Powell-River**). Send marketing tools to immigrants who are already familiar with Canada, who may be frustrated with housing costs in Canadian metropolitan areas, and who may have already vacationed or visited the region. Immigrant families already present may know of relatives who are interested in relocating.
- 6. Unite the province (Revelstoke).** Revelstoke recommends the Union of BC Municipalities to advocate for improvements to the federal immigration application processing system. A regional immigration initiative needs provincial guidance, and already burdened municipalities would benefit from a larger-scale collaboration with the provincial government, rather than accepting immigrant attraction as a local responsibility.
- 7. Wine and dine (Okanagan).** Quintessentially different from the other studies, the Okanagan report submitted by the United Chinese Community Enrichment Services Society (S.U.C.C.E.S.S.) invited 47 delegates from Vancouver's Chinese business community to tour the Okanagan. On a three day tour, the entrepreneurial immigrants tasted the foods, wine, economic climate, and settlement services of a region they previously knew little about. Post-tour, 80% communicated their intent to further explore the opportunities in the region, and half of the delegates are thinking about the possibility of relocating to the Okanagan-Similkameen region.
- 8. Establish a clearing house of current, relevant real estate properties (Abbotsford).** The Abbotsford report served to highlight the challenging settlement experiences little touched upon by the other reports. This project

moves past the concept of providing a list, and an individual's aspirations to start a business, directly to an opportunity to take up a place in the community.

**9. Business mentorship programs (Nanaimo, Abbotsford).** Akin to the “buddy” and “host” programs set up by various community services groups (YMCA, for example), this matching of immigrant and local business persons helps to clarify the path to starting a business in Canada. This program not only helps demystify some bureaucratic procedures, but serves as starting point for networking.

One of the critical differences between the eight reports was *the class of immigrants on which each focused*. This highlights that the eight communities reflect the range of regionalization that is happening in the BC. For instance, Prince George focused its report entirely on attracting and retaining skilled immigrants due to the community's need to fill a significant skilled labour shortage. The Vernon and Okanagan reports focused on attraction and retention of entrepreneurial immigrants and their investment dollars, though they specify that immigrant entrepreneurs do not come exclusively from the Business Category of migrants, as many immigrants become entrepreneurs after their initial move to Canada. Those two studies looked closely at secondary-migration – drawing successful immigrants from Vancouver into the Okanagan and seeing the businesses they start create jobs for the local population. Alberni-Clayoquot, Abbotsford, Powell River, Nanaimo and Revelstoke all make no distinction between the class of immigrant they aimed to attract, though each of those reports still connected immigration with potential economic revitalization (a correlation encouraged by the mandate of the

RII). Abbotsford, Nanaimo and Revelstoke moved quickly forward with the spirit of creating a “Welcoming Community” for all newcomers.

Considered as individual reports, each is expansive, and most are very productive. Considered as a group, it becomes obvious that two internal tensions challenged the reports and, in the end, reduced their effectiveness.

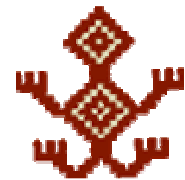
1. The nature of a competitive-bid funding contest rewarded strong proposals, however it also fragmented service providers and municipalities. Regions and communities in some cases became divided over who would submit the bid to MCAWS. Furthermore, at this beginning stage, the spirit of competition between different regions was not productive. Municipalities expended time and effort to understand the reception climate for immigration in their communities and were then responsible for taking action. A tool provided by the Provincial government, like the now available “Attracting and Retaining Immigrants; A tool box of ideas”, strips a layer of work from municipalities, and unites the Province in a series of recommended actions and questions. A regional acting group, once given a template to stray from, may have worked more effectively towards local, innovative approaches to the regionalization debate. Regionalization is a topic that requires provincial visioning, and regional collaboration. Individualistic competition between communities is too demanding and counter-intuitive to BC’s larger economic goals.



2. A tear between the *purpose* of attracting newcomers and the *ability* to host and serve new immigrants became evident in the reports. “Regionalization” as a concept rests uneasily between the realms of tactic and responsibility. Is it part of rural economic development, or is it the ability to create welcoming communities that even the geography of race, diversity and the future Canadian population? Should efforts be focused on the production of a marketable image, or on establishing reputable settlement services? Left on their own, communities grapple with this question and the breadth of possible research time explodes, resulting in an overwhelming number of possible avenues. The concept needs to be carefully refined, and its meaning discussed frankly and openly with all regions of British Columbia.

The push to create welcoming cities, complete with services, is based largely on a simple logic; Immigrants will not stay unless they enjoy a certain quality of life and have employment opportunities, and immigrants who have a positive experience will tell their families and friends in their home country or elsewhere in Canada. Thus, the best marketing is often spread by word-of-mouth from immigrants content with their settlement choice.

**Section 4:**  
**Recommendations**



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Recap

The purpose of the previous sections was to outline a framework for understanding the complexity of, and different factors influencing, regionalization of immigration. As a result, a number of literatures were drawn upon to highlight the uneven geographic distribution of immigrants. First, the distribution of immigrants was outlined because it has been a concern for both federal and provincial governments (Metropolis, 2003). As it indicated in the previous section, drawing on the examples of Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver, the urban concentration of immigrants has accelerated a change in the social geographies of the fast-growing cities, while rural and small cities in Canada *appear* to have experienced little change by comparison. However, there is a risk in discounting the diversity of rural areas by defining all areas outside of metropolitan regions as rural (Bryant & Joseph, 2001).

As such, there needs to be an element of **self-identification** of ‘small’ or ‘rural’ places in Canada desiring immigration. By doing this communities possess the drive to influence the services they require and should be encouraged to do so if they wish to receive more immigrants. Although a large volume of immigrants move to Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver, a portion of immigrants are moving to small and medium sized cities. Immigration to smaller Canadian cities provides benefits to immigrants such as economic incentives, heritage and identity, amenities, and social factors.

Second, growing interest by federal and provincial governments towards the PNP was reviewed to outline how it can be a ‘tool’ used to address the problem of regional distribution. It has been argued that federal and provincial governments have framed the discussion of geographical dispersion in terms of economic development rather than in terms of social integration (Krahn *et al.*, 2003). The regionalization perspective builds on the importance of place by asserting the interaction of physical, economic and social factors in drawing newcomers. These factors clearly need to be considered when addressing regional distribution.

Third, the concept of a ‘welcoming community’ was outlined to examine the shift in focus of what a ‘welcoming community’ is. The definition used to describe ‘welcoming communities’ in this paper is largely positive and offers a fuller understanding of the range of issues any ‘welcoming community’ would have to consider. However, the definition is very focused on service provision, and while it does squarely address the need to educate the public about multiculturalism and diversity, those concepts are widely debated and differentially understood.

The remaining sections will look at some of the contradictory and dual processes that are going on at the federal and provincial level with regards to immigrant regionalization. There will also be an outline of the role that Temporary Foreign Works (TFW) play in the regionalization of immigrants. This section will conclude with some recommendations for future research and identify some of the gaps in the literature.

## **Conflicting processes**

As outlined in previous sections, federal and provincial governments are encouraging immigrant regionalization programs in order to achieve a greater geographic dispersion of immigrants. One thing that has yet to be mentioned is there is a dual process of encouraging immigration and encouraging TFW. People come into Canada through a variety of migratory classes, both temporary and permanent. These policies are incongruent because the TFW policy actively discourages settlement while immigration policy is intended to encourage settlement. For example, recently the BC government has been attracting TFW to fill jobs in the province that could potentially have been used to attract immigrants.

The province of BC is strongly encouraging immigration and settlement outside of Vancouver and Victoria. On June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2007 the Honorable Wally Oppal, the minister responsible for Multiculturalism announced that \$43 million was being directed toward new and expanded initiatives aimed at supporting welcoming and inclusive communities for immigrants (Oppal, 2007). He states that:

“Welcome BC represents a total investment made by the federal and provincial governments of \$217 million over the next two years and brings together the Province’s comprehensive immigrant settlement and multiculturalism strategies under one umbrella. These programs and initiatives aim to ease the transition to living in our province for immigrants and their families and build greater capacity in all communities to support our goals for multiculturalism” (Oppal, 2007 p.30).

While provincial and federal governments are encouraging immigration to BC and other provinces by spending millions of dollars on immigrant services, settlement, and multiculturalism, the government of Canada is also encouraging and promoting TFW. In recent years, Canada has facilitated influxes of temporary workers to help overcome demographic deficits and to fill essential employment vacancies. The Canadian government is working to help keep the economy strong and to help Canadian employers meet their labour force needs. There are thousands of foreign agricultural workers being flown into the country annually to supplement the domestic workforce.

A speech given by the Honourable Monte Solberg, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2007 announced changes to the TFW Program to make it easier for employers to meet their labour market needs (HRSDC, 2007). He stated that, “every year, Canadian employers hire thousands of foreign workers to help address skill and labour shortages. Human Resources and Social Development Canada/Service Canada and Citizenship and Immigration Canada help ensure that foreign workers support economic growth in Canada” (HRSDC, 2008).

In order to meet the ‘needs’ of the Canadian agricultural sector, farmers in provinces such as BC have hired temporary workers from Mexico, Jamaica, and other parts of the Caribbean through the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP). During its first operational year in 1966, the SAWP brought in less than 300 workers; by 2006, this figure exceeded 20, 000 (Basok, 2004). Immigrants are simultaneously being encouraged to move to non-metropolitan regions with the goal of finding valuable employment. What is that going to happen when employers and industries encourage TFW to fill in the ‘labour shortages’?

The question is, ‘*Why are the Canadian governments spending millions of dollars on two different programs which contradict one another?*’ One factor that might explain the contradictory process is a closer examination of the relationships amongst the different ministries in BC. In recent years multiple changes have been made in the ways that BC’s ministries are set up. The ministry of Economic Development addresses the Provincial Nominees entering the province, while the minister responsible for multiculturalism is under the Ministry Attorney General, and TFW are handled at the federal level. With so many ministries dealing with similar immigrant, regional, and service needs, it is very important that communication remain constant, in order to have successful relationships between the different ministries.

Another issue key to this discussion that needs to be considered are the current immigrant policies that are in place, specifically the points system, which immigrants can apply through to enter the country (under the economic class). The points system **indirectly encourages metropolitan settlement**. The points system has created an unintended push for immigrants to move to urban areas. This is due to the ‘checklist’ which encourages highly skilled, educated, business owners, and others to move to places like Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver. The majority of immigrants entering Canada within the Economic Class are skilled and possess a level of education slightly above the average Canadian adult (Reitz, 2001).

At the same time, the Canadian government is encouraging people from different countries to come and work in Canada as TFW. The skills that some of these workers possess could potentially attract them to rural, northern, and/or non-metropolitan areas.

These workers could contribute to the re-distribution of immigrants by settling in non-metropolitan regions. Migrants will inevitably have to consider the availability of work in their field of employment, in which they have skills as a benefit for settlement. However, the nature of the program undermines individual livelihood security and discourages settlement and social integration into the communities that they temporarily reside in. As the majority of Canada's seasonal agricultural workers are concentrated in the rural landscape of Canada, rurality plays a central role in shaping migrant experiences in the program.

Some of the literature and policies related to immigrant regionalization treat it as being synonymous with rural. There are many different communities in BC and across the country that are encouraging the movement of immigrants into their community that are not necessarily rural, some are second and third tier-cities.

Prince George, BC is an example of this. The city provides regional services and receives the majority of immigrants in the region, with Immigrant and Multicultural Service Society (IMSS) providing the 'immigrant' services. IMSS is the only designated immigrant service provider in the North and struggles to serve a relatively small number of recent immigrants (1996-2001) from countries as diverse as India, the Philippines, south Africa, and Russia. These immigrants are thinly spread throughout the vast region.

As Rose and Desmaris (2007) state, one size does not fit all. There is no typical rural, cookie cutter reality. Rural, isolated, and northern communities vary across Canada's landscape. The spaces of inclusion and exclusion shape the cultural and physical landscape of the north. It is a dynamic place, full of residents often drawn by



employment rather than aesthetics, a well-paying job rather than a family or extended social network (Halseth, 1999).

Catherine Nolin and Greg Halseth of the Geography Program at the University of Northern British Columbia are conducting a study ‘Enhancing the warmth of welcome in northern BC.’ This research examines the settlement process, social and economic integration and retention experiences of immigrants and refugees in the northern communities of Fort St. John, Terrace, and Prince George. Participants in each of these communities identified regionalization of services as an important element to provide to immigrants. However, they distinguished that BC’s north-west (Terrace), north-east (Fort St. John) and central (Prince George) regions were all very different and that the ‘north’ should not be characterized as being homogeneous.

The overall goal of this project, as outlined in previous sections, is to develop a better understanding of the **complexity of regionalization** in BC and to develop recommendations and opportunities for community-based solutions for attracting and retaining immigrants. The final section will provide some recommendations and gaps in the literature.

#### **Recommendations and future research needs**

- **Bottom – up process is needed.** The government needs to place emphasis on bottom up processes to understand the types of ‘needs’ communities, immigrants, and organizations have. Interaction with service providers and immigrants is key to identifying what is working in a community and what is not. Generalizations

should not be made in regards to ‘rural’, ‘northern’, and ‘isolated’ communities because they are each unique.

- **Encourage immigrants with skills to settle in non-metropolitan areas instead of encouraging them to come as TFW.** The Canadian government needs to readjust their current point system because it indirectly encourages metropolitan settlement. It also encourages different types of immigrants with different skills into the country. A good example to use is the work being done in Brandon, Manitoba and surrounding area. There has been a recent influx of hundreds of TFW into Brandon and the surrounding area. This influx is related to various labour market factors including, labour shortages in low to highly skilled jobs and expanding operations at Maple Leaf Foods (a meat packing industry). This situation is resulting in the need to adjust recruiting and hiring practices and to extend employee searches beyond the provincial labour pool to overseas countries. Regulated by the federal government, the TFW program offers an expedited process for recruiting and hiring foreign workers with lower skill levels on a temporary basis. Of particular interest, is the fact that in Manitoba TFWs can eventually apply to the Provincial Nominee Program, thus contributing to the province’s annual immigration targets and dramatically changing the demographics of rural centres. More importantly this strategy encourages settlement in the province.
  
- **Local knowledge.** For many communities the influx of immigrants into the community is a new phenomenon. There is a demand for locally based training

- and information regarding the needs of both the community and the immigrants. The process of collaboration and coordination of policy makers, government, and local community members is crucial. Successful coordination and communication is crucial because it is through communication that the community is aware of who is coming into the community. This allows the community to prepare and make sure that the appropriate information needed by immigrants is made available.
- **Regional Employment Model (REM).** BC Stats, with the financial assistance of the Ministry of Advanced Education, developed the REM. This model was designed to forecast industrial and occupational employment needs in regions of BC. One of the limitations of this model is that there is no local knowledge component. A recommendation for this work is that there needs to be a greater emphasis of factors and conditions within communities. This could be achieved through the incorporation of qualitative research. Qualitative research could be combined with findings from the REM to project the employment needs throughout the province.
  - **Language specific services.** In 2006, 42,208 new immigrants arrived in BC (BC Stats, 2007). The most common immigrant group arriving has come through the economic class. This group accounted for 61.1% of new immigrants to BC. Migrants entering through the family-reunification class tend to settle initially where there is a presence of family, rather than because of other factors such as language skills, services, or work experience (Telegdi, 2006). Based on data from

BC Stats (2007), it is recommended that more information about who is coming to the community can help service providers prepare the proper language specific materials and services. For instance, if a community was aware that there was going to be an influx of immigrants from China, India, and the Philippines, they could prepare settlement services in the immigrant's home language to make their initial settlement more convenient.

- **Gaps in the data.** One of the issues that service providers, community members, and policy makers are facing is that they do not know why some people are choosing to stay in the community and why others leave. Much of the research that exists is concentrated on big city centres like Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver. Not enough research has been done in non-metropolitan regions. What causes people to stay or go? Currently there is a lack of information on secondary migration and at the present time there is no way to track who is leaving and staying in the community.

What can be done to help this situation? There needs to be a concerted effort to understand the processes happening within BC. Based on the provincial government's economic drive more and more TFW being employed while fewer immigrants are moving to places outside of metropolitan areas. The government needs to **work with** communities at the grass-roots level, to encourage growth in employment to people *already* in the community.

### **Future Research Needs**

1. Priority must be given to address the ‘unintended’ concentrated settlement pattern in the Lower Mainland due to the contemporary criteria for acceptance as a Permanent Resident. The point system, as we have highlighted, rewards an urban-based applicant [with the focus on education, languages, skills, and so forth] and does not reward rural-based in the same way.

2. Priority must also be given to address the ‘intended’ rural, small town, and isolated settlement of an increasing number of foreign temporary workers (TFW), foreign brides, and others without permanent status within British Columbia.

Research questions include:

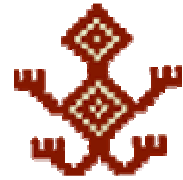
- Where are TFWs working within the province?
- What happens to these workers after their contract is complete?
- How many people transition from TFW status to requests for and acceptance as Permanent Residents?
- For those who transition, do they remain in place or relocate elsewhere (within province or beyond)?
- Are communities interested in permanent settlement of newcomers or TFWs in this precarious economic reality?
- If they are only (or mostly) interested in TFWs, does this fit with the concept of ‘welcoming communities’? What are experiences of welcoming TFWs into their places of employment residence?

3. Priority must be given to addressing the connection between regionalization of immigration initiatives and regional interests and needs for increased opportunities for BC aboriginal population.

4. Clarification, through targeted research of government decision-makers, is needed on the goals of regionalization. For example, is regionalization needed to ease pressure on Lower Mainland communities OR is regionalization attractive to communities with labour shortages? If this process is to assist with labour shortages in rural, small town, and/or isolated communities, then research must be supported to clarify if immigrant labour is the best strategy or empowered and educated indigenous residents. Supported research must consult with indigenous communities particularly in regions of so-called labour shortages to better identify how to transition this growing demographic into the labour market.

5. A coordinated series of roundtable discussions beyond the Lower Mainland must be initiated to bring together community decision-makers, immigrant service providers, informal immigrant service providers (i.e., church leaders), and others together to discuss priorities, needs, concerns, successes, and best practices.

**Section 5:**  
**References & Resources**



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