

Regional Immigration Strategies: A Policy-Research Perspective



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Brandon, April 2005



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CIC's regional immigration strategy

- Commitment to work in partnership to share the benefits of immigration more evenly across the country by testing new approaches:
 - in the short-term, to examine possibilities for adapting existing programs
 - in the longer-term, to explore creating new programs or approaches based on community interest and initiative



What is Known

- Immigration is the primary driver of population and labour force growth
- About 75% of all immigrants go to Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver
- The Prairies' share of immigration dropped steadily from:
 - 21% in 1982 to
 - 10% in 1992 and
 - 9% in 2002



What are the Challenges?

- The draw to bigger cities
- Competitive services & infrastructure
- Development of community capacity
- Need for partnership
- Need for information, promotion
- Need to dispel “myths” about communities smaller than 1 million



What are the Opportunities?

- Commitment from Minister and Federal Government
 - building capacity within CIC to help facilitate pilot projects
- Interest from many provinces
 - Manitoba, NB, Alberta, Saskatchewan, NS
- Emerging regional or local skills shortages



The Federal Government's Role

- **Facilitator**
 - Facilitating provincial and community-led initiatives through processing and removal of policy and procedural impediments
- **Promoter**
 - Going to Canada web portal
 - Missions abroad
 - Publications (e.g. the Tool Box for Smaller Communities)
- **Partner**
 - Working with provinces and territories, other federal departments (e.g. IC, HRSD), NGOs, to remove barriers



Guiding Principles for Action

- Respect for mobility rights of all residents
 - Increase choices for settlement in Canada
 - Increase information for intending immigrants
- Flexible approaches and arrangements to meet diverse regional needs
 - Provincial Nominees
 - Francophone initiatives
 - Student and Temporary Worker initiatives
 - Municipal involvement (e.g. Winnipeg Agreement)



Have we turned the tide?

- In 2003, immigration to Canada declined by 8,000 from 229,000 in 2002 to 221,000 in 2003.
- But in 2003 the Prairies received 24,100 immigrants, an increase of 3,000 over 2002.
- The Prairies share rose to 10.9% - the first relative increase since 1988.



Perhaps

- Immigration to the Prairies increased again in 2004 to 26,000 or 11% of Canada's total of 235,824
- This represented an increase of 7.58% over 2003
- Also more are going to more destinations



The Data*

| <u>Province</u> | <u>2003</u> | <u>2004</u> | <u>Change</u> |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Alberta | 15,834 | 16,468 | + 4.0% |
| Saskatchewan | 1,668 | 1,941 | +16.4% |
| Manitoba | 6,500 | 7,426 | +14.3% |
| <u>City</u> | | | |
| Calgary | 9,153 | 9,307 | + 1.6% |
| Edmonton | 4,566 | 4,810 | + 5.3% |
| Winnipeg | 5,126 | 5,890 | +14.9% |



The Manitoba Data*

| <u>City</u> | <u>2001</u> | <u>2004</u> | <u>Change</u> |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Altona | 4 | 36 | + 800% |
| Brandon | 69 | 130 | + 88% |
| Morden | 9 | 73 | + 711% |
| Steinbach | 150 | 310 | + 106% |
| Winkler | 259 | 465 | + 80% |
| Winnipeg | 3,715 | 5,890 | + 59% |



The Data* (con't)

Francophone & Bilingual Immigration

| <u>Province</u> | <u>2003</u> | <u>2004</u> | <u>Change</u> |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Alberta | 491 | 846 | + 72% |
| Saskatchewan | 54 | 159 | +194% |
| <u>Manitoba</u> | <u>160</u> | <u>231</u> | <u>+ 44%</u> |
| Total | 705 | 1236 | + 75% |

** Provisional Data for 2004*



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What does all this mean?

- We need to look at “what’s hot” for policy makers.
- Regionalization of immigration is “hot!”
- Policy makers need to know what works:
 - Compare Provincial nominees programs
 - Compare student pilots
 - Assess effectiveness of municipal initiatives
 - Examine Francophone pilot projects
 - etc.



Conclusion

- This is new territory but early results are encouraging, especially in Manitoba.
- We need to evaluate programs and pilot projects, act on recommendations and share what works.
- Practitioners and researchers have a real opportunity to help to define future regionalization policy.

