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THE IMMIGRATION OF ARGENTINEAN JEWS TO WINNIPEG:  
EMIGRATION AND SUCCESSFUL SETTLEMENT

by

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ABSTRACT

Manitoba has strategized from 2002 onwards to incorporate a free-market approach into Manitoba's Provincial Nominee Programme in order to fulfill its labour market goals. In the grand scheme of attracting new Argentinean Jewish immigrants, it was an opportunity for these people to leave their homeland that was suffering under an economic depression and a currency crisis. Both the provincial government (through the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Programme) and an ethno-cultural institution (the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg) forged a partnership that matched these immigrants with jobs and also helped integrate them into the Winnipeg Jewish community. Seventeen interviews of Argentinean Jews now living in Winnipeg explained how they had a choice of emigrating to Spain, Israel or the United States but they selected Winnipeg and they give their reasons for doing so.

Key words: Immigration, Manitoba Provincial Nominee Programme (MPNP), Argentinean Jews, Jewish Federation of Winnipeg (JFW).

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## Chapter 1 – Introduction

The central focus of this major research paper (MRP) is to examine and evaluate the Argentinean Jewish immigrant experience under the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Programme (MPNP). These immigrants who came under the auspices and assistance of the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg (JFW) from 2004 onwards were considered to be applicants who “have the support of an ethno-cultural community organization or a regional economic development organization in Manitoba that will help candidates arrange an exploratory visit to the province that has been pre-approved by the MPNP.” (Canada Visa 2010).

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, Argentinean Jews started receiving letters of invitation to apply for the MPNP as part of a targeted promotional initiative on behalf of the province. The sensitive economic and political conditions existing in Argentina at the time gave potential newcomers the incentive to accept ‘inspection’ visits to Manitoba.

In the decade between 1994 and 2004 there were two incidents that transformed the daily lives of Argentines in general and the 170,000 Jews in Buenos Aires (out of 200,000 in the country). The first catastrophe was in 1994 when 86 people were killed and 236 wounded in the destructive bombing of the Jewish community centre – the Argentine Israelite Mutual Aid Association or AMIA in downtown Buenos Aires.

The second instance of trouble was more pervasive and is known as “*la Crisis*” (Palmerlee 2008; Tye 2003). A short summary of events shows that at the end of 1999 Argentina was facing an economic crisis with an unstable economy and an outstanding foreign debt of US\$114 billion. With the peso pegged to the US dollar, Argentina was unable to compete in the international trade market and the country’s exports slumped. A further decline in international

prices of agricultural products pummelled the Argentine economy. By 2001, Argentina was on the brink of collapse and the federal administration, through the Minister of Economy, took measures to end deficit spending and slash state spending, including employee salaries and pensions. After hearing talk of possible devaluation of the peso, middle-class Argentines began emptying their bank accounts. The Minister of Economy responded to the run on the banks by placing a cap of US\$250 per week on withdrawals, a measure that would become known as '*el correlate*' (meaning small enclosure or playpen).

This decision contributed to the rapid decline of the economy. By mid-December 2001 unemployment hit 18.3% and unions began a nation-wide strike. After several changes in the Presidency (five in a two week period of time), the last one, Eduardo Duhalde, devalued the peso in January 2002 and announced that Argentina would default on US\$140 billion in foreign debt. At that time, it was the biggest default by any country in world history. For Argentina '*la crisis*' was (and still is, many years later) an economic collapse that sent poverty skyrocketing, foreign investors running and there was an exodus of tens of thousands of immigrants to the United States (Miami, Florida), Spain, Israel and Canada. However, an overwhelming majority of Jews stayed in the country because they could not afford to travel abroad because of limited funds and no access to foreign currency to meet entry fees for some immigrant 'receiving' countries.

The timing of Argentines wanting to leave their country for a country with a more stable economy dovetailed perfectly with western Canada provinces' proposed solution to correct an ongoing imbalance of low immigration levels, in particular in their smaller cities and rural areas (Huynh 2004). This solution was direct provincial involvement in the immigration process and led to the promotion of Provincial Nominee Programmes (PNP) which represented an option that would potentially achieve the provincial settlement goal. In Manitoba under the

umbrella of provincial immigration legislation, the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg (JFW) established a link with the Manitoba Settlement Strategy. This 'strategy' was meant to improve social services and expand settlement programs for newly arrived immigrants and thereby assure their retention by supporting permanent settlement in Manitoba.

The top two inquiries to be evaluated in this MRP are first, how do employment and labour market support systems work to match immigrants with job opportunities and minimize the newcomers' frustration at not being able to use their skills? A second question follows - do immigrants have access to timely and reliable settlement information and to orient them in their new community? (Manitoba 2010). From the perspective of the economic theories of human capital it is important to note from both a government and an immigrant's viewpoint, that employment rates and levels of earning respectively, are critical indicators of overall employment success. The economic struggles of immigrants relate directly to limited literacy skills in either one of the official languages, unrecognized education qualifications, and finally the recognition of non-Canadian work experience (Castles 2004: 854).

In the immigration discourse, there is a prevailing expectation that an immigrant's worth is measured by their level of human capital and by the net economic benefits they produce for the resident population (Li 2003). This expectation is premised on two assumptions. First, immigrants are deemed unworthy unless they benefit the existing population, and this is typically measured in economic terms. Second, the higher the human capital of immigrants, the more they are considered to be productive, and thus the greater their potential to contribute to the receiving society.



There are two defining views of human capital theory: the first was developed within neoclassical economics and the second was derived from the labour market segmentation theory (Hiebert 1999).

The most prominent theory designed to explain how individuals and jobs are matched was devised by neoclassical economists and is based on the concept of human capital. Within this approach, it is assumed that the labour market provides for an equilibrium that allocates workers to jobs on the basis of their economic “worth”, as measured by education, skill, age, experience, and past performance (Becker 1964). Employers are portrayed as rational actors who are motivated by economic maximization and who pay attention only to the attributes of potential workers that affect their job performance – literacy, numeracy, specific training and work-related experience. In essence, human capital theorists portray the labour market as a neutral arena that is gender and colour-blind, interpreting gender and ethnic clusters in the labour market as products of forces that exist outside the labour market.

Ethnic clusters are understood as a product of the immigrant experience. Immigrants normally arrive lacking fluency in the language of their adopted countries and with inadequate training experience for their new labour market context. They must, therefore, accept poor-paying jobs, at least at the outset (Hiebert 1999). However through systematic efforts at upgrading their human capital – especially language and other skills, they move to more desirable occupations and achieve higher incomes (Galarneau and Morissette 2008). This view of the labour market has much in common with an assimilationist perspective on ethnicity, whereby immigrants gradually become indistinguishable from the receiver society both in terms of culture and economic standing.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, efforts at migration control became more intense in developed countries (Castles 2004: 857-858). As a result there were two perspectives that arose from the social dynamics of the migratory process. These two perspectives for the most part, have been influential in migration policy formation. One belief, based on neo-classical theory which focuses on market behaviour, is that people move to maximize their individual utility (usually through higher income), and cease to move, or return home, if the cost-benefit equation changes. The second is based on bureaucratic government policy where regulations are designed to categorize migrants and to regulate their admission and residence to effectively shape collective behaviour. Together these two perspectives add up to the idea that migration can be turned on and off like a faucet by appropriate policy settings.

In addition to these theories of human capital there are three foundational points that tie in with Canadian immigration policy (Biles, et al 2008). First, immigration and the chain of consequences that immigration produces represent a fundamental choice that Canadians have made and have adhered to over a century. Second, all modern societies receive migrants, not only because they have active immigration programs but also because they have made these choices in other areas of government domestic and foreign policy, including both human and social rights. Migration can be thought of as a by-product of these choices. Third, having made the choice of accepting large-scale immigration, Canada has converted the integration of immigrants into a societal endeavour; defined as a “two-way street”, both immigrants and resident citizens are expected to adapt to each other, to ensure positive results for all participants in social, cultural, political and economic spheres.

In terms of overall immigration policy, there have been two fundamental developments in the post Second World War period. The first occurred in the 1960s, when Canada abandoned its

traditional practice of preferred admission for those of European ancestry (Hiebert 2006:39). By 1967, a system of selecting economic immigrants based on their human capital (the 'points system') was introduced. The second occurred in the mid-1980s, when Canada experienced a crushing recession in the early years of the decade and then an upswing of a new business cycle. For the first time, demographers began to raise serious questions about the long-term impact of falling fertility and simultaneously a population that was aging. The Mulroney federal 'conservative' government introduced sweeping changes to immigration policy that envisioned it as both an economic stimulus and also as a way of achieving demographic replacement. Together, these changes led to a pronounced internationalization of the newcomer population.

The first change called for a revision to the rules of admission, giving priority to those who had human capital, or business skills and/or significant financial wealth. The latter priority led to higher numbers of permanent residents (Li 2003). Accordingly, the business immigration programme was enhanced, the ratio of economic (versus family or humanitarian) immigrants was raised and the overall target numbers of newcomers was dramatically raised from about 85,000 permanent arrivals in 1985 to 250,000 in 1992. The national target for immigrants has remained in the range of 200,000 to 250,000 since the early 1990s with minor ad hoc changes. The net result for the 1990s was that 2.2 million permanent residents were added to the Canadian population and the same number followed in the next decade (Li 2003:82). The point system in this case rested on whether the newcomers were either able to 'sink or swim' in the settlement process.

By the early twenty-first century census figures and public discourse amplified the fact that those immigrants that arrived at that time were, on average, not faring particularly well in the Canadian labour market (Hiebert 2006). The most widely publicized statistic was the fact that

poverty rates among recent immigrants had increased noticeably between the 1981 and 2001 censuses. These statistics also led to the second discourse that suggested that immigrants were susceptible to failure and would experience the symptoms of wasted human capital. Therefore, these immigrants would not be able to realize their economic potential. As a result, if immigration did not propel growth then it was reasoned that immigration should be curtailed.

For purposes of this research paper the author outlines how Manitoba strategized from 2004 onwards to incorporate a free-market approach into Manitoba's Provincial Nominee Programme to fulfill its labour market goals by admitting immigrants from Argentina. In the grand scheme of attracting new immigrants both the provincial government (through the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Programme) and the ethno-cultural institution (the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg) forged a partnership that assisted Argentinean Jews to immigrate to Canada, then matched them up with jobs and helped integrate them into the community. This strategy is still ongoing but at a lower rate of new arrivals from Argentina.

## Chapter 2 – Argentine Migration Policy and the Challenge of Choosing a New Homeland - Spain, Israel, United States or Canada

The emigration of Argentinean Jews was largely due to the country's economic downturn which began in 2001, but experts say anti-Semitism was a factor. Argentinean Jews decided to leave after more than a decade of fighting for justice and attempts to spur the Argentine government to make arrests of those responsible for a 1994 bombing of a Jewish community center that led to the deaths of 86 people (St. Petersburg Times 2004).

But before finalizing their choice of a foreign destination Argentinean Jews had to justify their reasons for even leaving Argentina. In many cases they were second or even third generation citizens who had limited experience of living abroad. But in the early twenty-first century local economic and political circumstances dictated a hard assessment of their future success and safety in Argentina. A sequence of Argentinean governments had proposed changes in the country's migration policy which would discourage a brain drain and perhaps would even encourage more immigrants to settle in the country. But significant number of Argentinean Jews (30-50,000) were determined to explore their best options; in countries such as Spain, Israel, United States or Canada. Each of these options will be explored in light of what these expatriates faced when trying to move to these foreign destinations.

### Argentine Migration Policy

In many ways, Jews have long occupied a shifting position within Argentina's national vision. The first major wave of Jews who migrated to Argentina in the late nineteenth century were fleeing pogroms underway in Eastern Europe and Czarist Russia. They came between the years of 1880 and 1930, when approximately four million European immigrants settled in Argentina (Zaretsky 2008: 234). Yet these Jews were not the immigrants from Europe that the Argentine

elites and intellectuals envisioned would bring progress and modernization to their new nation. In contrast, the Argentine elite welcomed the labour of southern and eastern Europeans, mostly Italians and Spaniards, because they benefited from the economic prosperity that their work produced.

Despite initial anti-immigrant sentiment, Italian and Spanish immigrants eventually became assimilated into the national fabric of Argentina. The position of Jews, however, remained ambiguous throughout Argentinean history. They did enjoy periods of growth in their social, cultural and religious institutions but they also remained vulnerable to surges in anti-Semitism stemming from other members of Argentine society and from the state itself. This vacillation between acceptance and rejection within Argentine society has always led the Jewish population, numbering almost 200,000 in the 1990s (Ben-Ur 2003), to keep an open mind and an open door to possibly migrating to other countries that would allow them to maintain their Spanish language (Spain); reaffirm their Jewish identity (Israel) and possibly acquire wealth and unfettered religious freedoms (in the United States or Canada). All these countries could provide a stable lifestyle with the exception of Israel where Mid-East conflict and wars was an ever-present concern for families that had military-age children or male spouses who would be called up as reservists.

For immigrants, the question has always been - where is the best place to live, to earn a living, and to raise a family; in short which country would provide some assurance of a better life? The choices of resettlement for this group of Argentinean Jews were few in number. They could use their Spanish language skills and settle in Spain; or they could take advantage of the “Law of Return” and immigrate to Israel; or they could be even more adventurous and seek their fortune in the United States or Canada.

However, the choice of a destination was also shaped by Argentina's emigration policy. To understand Argentina's population and migration policies it is best to remember that they have been based on and shaped by political ideas and economic needs (Margheritis 2007). These ideas have affected and defined a wide range of policies since the nineteenth century such as the unification of the territory, the actual formation of the state, the implementation of different development strategies, the prevalence of certain notions of ethnic and cultural eligibility, and finally, external factors like international crises, wars, and cooperation agreements (Albarracin 2003; Kritz and Gurak 2001).

In the late 1950s the Argentinean government showed alarm over the exit of scientists and drew up plans to repatriate them. By 1965 a special commission was created to study the problem. Then 1973, emigration was included as part of an overall design of public policies acknowledging the need to repatriate these technicians and scientists (Margheritis 2007; 92).

The military governments that governed in the 1960s and 1970s implemented restrictive migration policies by limiting their citizens from holding foreign currency that was needed in traveling abroad and charging a exit fee for leaving the country (Bodvarsson & Van den Berg 2009). Further xenophobic discourse was heightened when unrest increased and the state applied repressive human rights policies. As a result, emigration and the exile of political and intellectual cadres increased in tandem with the political violence. The brief democratically elected governments between periods of military rule (1963-66; and 1973-76) tried to link economic development and migration policies when they laid the groundwork to increase and geographically reorient immigration. Their idea was to reduce emigration and integrate other Latin American immigrants while promoting immigration from outside the region.

Emigration, actual exiting from Argentina to other countries is a relatively new phenomenon in Argentina. The country has always been considered to be a country of immigration. In the past, emigration was considered to be a temporary problem, mostly linked to political instability and persecution. However since the 1990s the number of emigrants rose, the characteristics of flows changed and emigration now seemed to be a constant trend that related to the deteriorating political and economic situation (Margheritis 2007: 91).

While immigration in Argentina was historically seen as a tool for development and was linked to the notion of progress and national wealth, emigration, on the other hand, has always been associated with failure of development and the loss of valued human resources (Castles 2004: 860). It was usually assumed that emigration was a short-term, temporary phenomenon caused by specific negative domestic events. As in other Latin American countries, population and migration policies have never been at the top of the governmental agenda – especially since the 1980s when neo-liberal programmes were implemented and the Argentinean state withdrew from planning and regulating socio-economic activities. However, by the 1990s, unlike the earlier two Peronist governments (1946-1955), population and migration policies were seen as part of a broader development policy and therefore were subject to planning and management.

The democratic governments that followed in 1983-89 formally adopted an open door migration policy. However, the loss of highly-skilled professionals particularly worried the government. In 1984 they enacted a general amnesty and then showed some interest in counteracting emigration by implementing a plan for the return of Argentine refugees living abroad as well as offering a special programme to ease the return of ‘gifted Argentines’. As part of an attempt to break with the authoritarian and anti-democratic past, President Alfonsín’s



government made a commitment to end persecutions, respect human rights and welcome exiles. (Albarracin 2003: 103-8).

In 1991 Law #24007 was passed to allow Argentines living abroad to vote in national elections. In addition, this increasing preoccupation with Argentinean expatriates translated into the creation and expansion of specific offices geared to emigrants' demands. The Argentines Abroad Office, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was expanded in terms of personnel and functions. Likewise the International Affairs Office was created in the National Migration Office (Ministry of the Interior) in 1998 to deal with all issues and negotiations that involved foreign state and non-state participants. Finally, it is worth noting that the international and regional situation moved migration issues from the strictly domestic sphere to the foreign policy agenda and they were included in bilateral and multilateral negotiations.

The friendly relations established with Spain and Italy since the restoration of democracy in Argentina provided a favourable opportunity for collaboration when the migration flows reversed in the twenty-first century and the number of Argentinean emigrants (mostly Italian and Spanish descendents) increased to those countries (Margheritis 2007: 93). In other words, based on former historical links, cultural and linguistic connections, family ties and diplomatic channels it was evident that a special travel 'exit' route existed for migrants from Latin America to Spain (Peixoto 2009).

### Spain as a choice

At the end of World War II with less than 1,000 Jews living Spain, the Franco government was explicitly ant-Semitic for example they were only allowed to pray in private buildings. In 1965, the first public Jewish prayer service was legalized for non-Catholics and in 1968 Spain finally revoked the 1492 expulsion edict of Ferdinand and Isabella. Franco died in 1975 and following

the restoration of democracy Jews began arriving from Argentina, Chile and Israel. The Jewish population of Spain steadily increased, reaching 10,000 by 1976. (Simple to Remember 2001).

Migration from Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries to Europe is shown on *Table 1* below (Peixoto 2009: 7-8). In quantitative terms, Spain received the highest number of LAC nationals with a total of 1,064,916 people or 35.2 per cent. *Table 2* below provides 2001 figures of people born in LAC countries who reside in several European countries. Considering the volume of flows, Spain again received the largest total of over 840,000 people or 38.7 per cent. Jews from Argentina were a small part of the wave of migration from South America to Spain. Around 14,000 Jews lived in Spain during the first decade of the twenty-first century. For the most part they were Moroccan Jews who immigrated in the 1950s, along with expatriates from the Americas and some Spaniards rediscovering their roots (The Jewish Federation of North America 2004). Jews were a relatively small number of the Argentinean who moved to Spain to escape years of dictatorship and waves of hyperinflation.

TABLE 1  
POPULATION OF FOREIGN CITIZENSHIP, BY NATIONALITY, IN SELECTED  
EUROPEAN COUNTRIES - NATIONALS FROM SOUTH AMERICA, CENTRAL  
AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, 2005 OR LATEST AVAILABLE YEAR

Country & Date of Data	Latin America and the Caribbean					
	South America	Central America	Caribbean	Total	Other Nationalities	Total
	Number					
Austria 2005	4,174	759	1,909	6,842	758,461	765,303
Belgium 2003	7,972	1,102	1,499	10,573	837,823	848,396
Denmark 2005	3,095	613	452	4,160	253,192	257,352
Finland 2005	971	277	221	1,469	106,877	108,346
France 1999	25,357	3,950	17,355	46,662	3,216,524	3,263,186
Germany 2005	66,459	10,270	17,031	93,760	6,107,491	6,201,251
Greece 2004	494	75	217	786	585,258	586,044
Italy 2004	167,197	11,599	26,030	204,826	2,022,741	2,227,567
Luxembourg 2001	601	45	187	833	161,452	162,285
Netherlands 2005	19,714	1,638	2,280	23,632	675,719	699,351
Norway 2005	4,450	535	721	5,706	207,597	213,303
Portugal 2005	55,366	386	690	56,442	312,855	369,297
<b>Spain 2006</b>	<b>946,116</b>	<b>20,461</b>	<b>98,339</b>	<b>1,064,916</b>	<b>1,956,892</b>	<b>3,021,808</b>
Sweden 2005	15,778	1,815	1,388	18,981	462,160	481,141
Switzerland 2005	28,239	2,792	7,948	38,979	1,485,684	1,524,663
United Kingdom 2004	42,204	5,147	65,430	112,781	2,628,607	2,741,388
	Percentage					
<b>Spain 2006</b>	<b>31.3%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>35.2%</b>	<b>64.8%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

TABLE 2  
FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION, BY REGION OF ORIGIN, IN SELECTED  
EUROPEAN COUNTRIES - INDIVIDUALS BORN IN LATIN AMERICA  
AND THE CARIBBEAN, 2001 OR LATEST AVAILABLE YEAR

Country & Date of Data	Latin America and the Caribbean				
	Latin America	Caribbean	Total	Other Countries of Origin	Total
	Number				
Austria 2001	6,054	-	6,054	996,478	1,002,532
Belgium 2001	20,387	3,976	24,363	1,074,832	1,099,195
Denmark 2003	9,208	785	9,993	361,060	371,053
Finland 2003	1,817	261	2,078	129,370	131,448
France 1999	79,987	24,836	104,823	5,763,419	5,868,242
Germany 2003	47,578	-	47,578	10,208,506	10,256,084
Greece 2001	5,486	1,128	6,614	1,116,026	1,122,640
Ireland 2002	2,793	688	3,481	396,535	400,016
Italy 2001	223,994	25,187	249,181	1,990,864	2,240,045
Luxembourg 2001	1,562	274	1,836	140,816	142,652
Netherlands 1995-2000	221,626	93,326	314,952	1,300,425	1,615,377
Norway Variable	15,133	1,268	16,401	317,368	333,769
Portugal 2001	74,949	914	75,863	575,609	651,472
<b>Spain 2001</b>	<b>744,221</b>	<b>95,979</b>	<b>840,200</b>	<b>1,332,001</b>	<b>2,172,201</b>
Sweden 2003	59,965	2,840	62,805	1,014,791	1,077,596
United Kingdom 2001	95,357	232,940	328,297	4,537,266	4,865,563
			Percentage		
<b>Spain 2006</b>	<b>34.3%</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>38.7%</b>	<b>61.3%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

By 2004, 157,323 native-born Argentines were living in Spain, up from 64,020 in 1999. At the same time remittances sent back to Argentina reached \$724 million, triple the 2001 figure (Migration Policy Institute 2006). By 2008 studies showed an increased total of slightly more than 800,000 Argentineans living abroad (International Organization for Migration 2008). Of those Argentineans living abroad, 42 percent lived in Spain followed by the United States at 14 percent. These emigrants had earned university and post-graduate degrees but nevertheless, left Argentina because of the deterioration of the domestic socio-economic situation. They were fortunate in re-locating to Spain which had cultural similarities, a common language and relatively better levels of economic prosperity (Margheritis 2007: 93; Novick and Murias 2005:20-22, 35-39; Pizarro 2003: 35).

These expatriates felt 'expelled' by a socio-economic system that failed to provide for their needs and aspirations. The 2001 'crisis' contributed to their sense of frustration and negative expectations about their future life in Argentina and most likely accelerated their plans to emigrate.

In an interview, a former Argentinean Jew now living in Spain (but formerly a resident of Israel) said "the pattern of Argentine Jewish emigration follows the money. The people with money go to Spain or the United States. Those with no money go to Israel," (The Jewish Federation of North America 2004) where the government makes generous financial and social benefits available to Argentinean arrivals. But it was soon realized by Jewish leaders in both Madrid and Buenos Aires that "Israel is the most secure place for Jews to live. But not all Jews are going to make *aliyah*, [but they should] know what their options are." (The Jewish Federation of North America 2004).

### The Israeli Option

When we review the ‘exit’ travel strategies for Argentinean Jews anxious to immigrate in the period from 1990 to 2002, a second option always appeared a viable choice. Israel’s Law of Return (passed in 1950) established an open-door policy for all Jews world-wide to settle in Israel. It offered extensive support and benefits for immigrants and refugees seeking a safe haven (Shuval 1998; DellaPergola et al 2005: 73). The Law of Return automatically entitles every Jew who immigrates to Israel to full citizenship upon arrival (Sznajder & Roninger 2005: 358).

In the context of the Israeli culture “immigration” is an ideologically charged concept which is expressed in the following terms. Immigration to Israel is *aliyah* (going up) while emigration is *yerida* (going down). The former is socially defined as a positive act worthy of support and approval, while the latter was viewed for many years with derision or even outright hostility. Discourse on this topic has often avoided the more neutral term “migration” or *hagira* which appears only rarely in discussion of this subject. These different approaches to migration in Israel cause internal pressure for many potential Jewish immigrants to accept their religious birth right, and make an *aliyah* commitment to permanently settle in Israel.

The movement of the world’s Jewish population helps us understand how Jews were pulled and pushed to Israel. Prior to 1948 and the declaration of independence, the State of Israel already attracted Jewish immigrants from all over the world. From Latin America alone 110,000 Jews were pulled there by their Zionist beliefs more than any other factor (Lesser & Rein 2006). Nearly sixty percent of this group came from Argentina (Herman 1984). In the years, 1948 to 1970, importance of push factors such as right-wing anti-Semitism and left-wing nationalism highlighted an even greater danger to the Jewish community. It was clear that the inroads of anti-Semitism in the far right-wing armed forces, internal security branches as well as other layers of

Argentine society presented a major threat to this country's Jews, either under civilian or military rule.

In the thirty-two year period from 1970 and 2002 the Jewish population in Israel increased by 97 percent, while world-wide the total size of the Jewish Diaspora decreased by over 22 percent (DellaPergola et al 2005: 71). Out of 2.8 million Jewish migrants in a 32 year span of time (from 1969 to 2001) Israel received 59 percent (1.65 million) of the total, while 41 percent (1.15 million) were distributed throughout major Western countries. Israel's capacity to absorb large numbers of immigrants has always depended on these basic factors: a rapidly growing economy and sensitivity to the social and human dimensions of immigrant absorption (Doron & Kargar 1993:498).

At the time of *La Crisis* more than 200,000 Jews lived in Argentina, 85 percent of them in Buenos Aires (Simple to Remember 2001). In 2001 some 3,000 to 5,000 Argentine Jews were expected to make *aliyah* to Israel from Argentina (The Jewish Federation of North America 2004a; The Jewish Federation of North America 2004b).

The Jewish Agency is the institutional mechanism within the state of Israel that is charged with regulating Jewish immigration from countries with which Israel has diplomatic relations (Sznajder & Roninger 2005: 358). Representatives of the Agency are charged with processing the applications of those wishing to immigrate to Israel legally and who are able to do so openly, through regular immigration procedures.

By 2001 the Jewish Agency projected estimates that showed about 20,000 Jews in Argentina were living on welfare and as much as a quarter of the country's Jews (50,000) were believed to be living below the poverty line. As a result, the number of Argentines applying and preparing for *aliyah* exceeded earlier estimates and reached 6,325. On their arrival, many of

them were escorted to the Ministry of Absorption for orientation and initial immigration processing before heading to absorption centres in Beersheba, Ra'anana and Haifa (The Jewish Federation of North America 2004d). Subsequent to 2001, more than 10,000 Jews from Argentina immigrated to Israel.

In 1990 and 1991 more than ten years prior to the arrival of Argentinean Jews, the absorption of more than 300,000 former Soviet Union (FSU) immigrants entering a country with a population of 4.5 million inhabitants placed a massive strain on Israel's immigration system (Stier and Levanon 2003). This group of FSU immigrants possessed a high level of human capital and had high participation rates in the Russian labour force. Many had professional degrees in highly technical and scientific fields. Upon arrival, the state of Israel and the Jewish Agency attempted to place university trained professionals in highly skilled, technical and professional jobs (Beenstock & ben Menahem 1997). This was not an easy task because of the different levels of qualifications and professional standards existing between Israel and the former USSR. Over the last two decades Russian immigrants have achieved high levels of Hebrew language proficiency but many FSU immigrants remained under-employed due to non-recognition of their professional accreditation. Some have jobs equivalent to those they had in Russia, while others settled for much less. However, for the most part, FSU immigrants have integrated into Israeli society at all levels; political, social and economic.

A smaller number of Argentineans immigrants arrived after 2002 and they tried to assimilate into the Israeli labour market but they also faced the same challenges of transferability of skills from one labour market to another. In particular, women encountered more difficulties in securing employment than men. Older immigrants were forced to adapt and learn new skills or undertake training for this 'new' labour market. These economic and labour barriers hampered



them as returnees to their rightful homeland (Shuval 1998: 10). They did not require a work permit to obtain employment. Those who arrived received a special benefit package approved by the Israeli government. The package was valid for one year and included \$20,000 in government assistance to purchase housing – one third of that was a grant, while two-thirds was a low-interest loan - plus there was a \$2,500 Jewish Agency absorption grant. These benefits were also in addition to plane tickets and Hebrew language classes and a year of financial subsidies to help ship their belongings to Israel.

Informally, from the 1970s to 2004, Israeli government representatives in Argentina played an important role, in the life of the organized Jewish community. There was also a commercial relationship between the countries involving the sale of Argentine meat to Israel and the sale of Israeli arms to Argentina. (Sznajder & Roninger 2005: 352). In this same period of time the Israelis were not only receptive to calls for help by local Jews, but these same Israelis generated a 'policy' of helping many to leave and find safety in Israel. Many Argentinean Jews, even those with hostile attitudes toward Israel and Zionism, requested assistance from the Israeli and Jewish Agency representatives to move to Israel for their own personal well-being.

From a practical point of view, the existence of the Law of Return and the automatic bestowal of citizenship upon any Jew who opts for it when s/he arrives in the country, presents a problem (Sznajder & Roninger 2005: 363-364). For example, Argentinean expatriates who adopted Israeli citizenship were subject automatically to the duties and responsibilities of this new status, including mandatory military service for those over eighteen years of age. The intensity and duration of military service (two years for women and three years for men) are a source of anxiety for many immigrants. In the case of Argentinean Jews, adopting Israeli citizenship meant a trade-off that might actually become life-threatening. Another adjustment

was that Argentines who were accustomed to living in a large city like Buenos Aires had enjoyed a certain level of prosperity based on their previous success in trade and commerce (Weinberg 1967). However, they were often unable to prosper in Israel with its smaller cities and its more strictly organized and bureaucratic society. As well, it became difficult for immigrants without solid work experience in a well-defined profession to enter the Israeli labour market.

As a result of the problems identified above, many Argentina Jews left Israel for Spain or returned to Argentina. Nevertheless a large part of the more than 10,000 Argentinean Jews who immigrated to Israel remained and integrated themselves into everyday Israeli life. but they settled throughout the entire country, rather than forming a cohesive community (“Latin America Aliyah” from Wikipedia 2009).

#### The United States or the American Option

Focusing on the figures relating to the foreign-born population in the Tables 1 and 2, it is important to refer to non-European destinations (Peixoto 2009: 9). The United States is by far the most important destination for LAC immigrants. Among the 15.6 million people born in Latin America and now residing in a developed OECD country, around 13.5 million (86.2%) live in the United States (Castles and Miller 2003:144-152). The inflow of Argentine permanent immigrants to the United States from 1994 to 2004 amounted to 28,710. In the period 2001 to 2004, 14,975 Argentinean Jews settled in the United States as permanent immigrants (Castles and Miller 2003:144-152).

For example, in Miami, Florida in 2004, Latin American Jews seeking economic stability benefitted from the Latin American Migration Project (LAMP) with some immigrant families receiving \$1,000 loans to pay for immigration (INS) and lawyers’ fees. The LAMP co-ordinator started the program in June 2001 with a \$240,000 grant from the Greater Miami Jewish

Federation (GMJF) and in three years managed to assist 2,500 people, of whom 80 percent were from Argentina (The Jewish Federation of North America 2004e). There is no exact data on the number of Latin American Jews living in Florida, but a 1994 demographic study by the GMJF revealed that around 12,000 Jews of Hispanic origin lived in Miami-Dade County or 5.6 percent of the area's total Jewish population, with the largest contingent coming from Argentina. These recent immigrants have little to do with the 8,000 Cuban Jews who arrived in the early 1960s. Likewise they have not succeeded in mixing with the 135,000 or so English-speaking American Jews in the same area.

In February 2002, the U.S. immigration authorities removed Argentina from the visa waiver program and currently all prospective Argentine travelers must visit the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires before they can come to the U.S. In addition, to getting a visa, the applicant needs to have a bank account and credit cards and they have to show the immigration authorities that they were planning on not staying in the United States (The Jewish Federation of North America 2004e).

However, those who arrive on a three-month tourist visa are able to obtain a non-immigrant working visa if they wish to get a job. Furthermore, changing one's legal status has become harder since post-9/11 immigration laws have become stricter. In fact, it was learned by this author from interviewing Faye Rosenberg-Cohen, Planning Director / GrowWinnipeg Coordinator of the Jewish Federation in Winnipeg (JFW) that the United States' Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) are currently not renewing visas for Argentinean Jews after living there for a number of years. These new visa restrictions prompted the JFW to produce a brochure directly marketing their Winnipeg community to those Argentineans living in Miami, Florida and still seeking a safe haven in North America rather than returning to Argentina.

The single most important factor behind the rise in emigration to Spain, Israel and the United States, was the declining level of economic performance in Argentina. By the time of *La Crisis* in 2002, Manitoba promoted its province as an attractive alternative to these other destinations and invited Argentine Jews to visit and evaluate their migration there. As evidence on Table 3 below, Canada attracted the interest of an increased number of Argentinean immigrants during the years 2003, 2004 and 2005 (CIC 2009). Moreover during the same three years Argentina moved from 13<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> in rankings as a top source for new immigrants to Canada from Latin American source countries (Migration Policy Institute 2006). In subsequent years the numbers reverted back to the earlier years as shown below.

Table 3 – Immigration Overview by Source Countries – Argentina

1999	406
2000	455
2001	625
2002	844
2003	1,783
2004	1,648
2005	1,169
2006	894
2007	624
2008	542

### Chapter 3 – The Manitoba Provincial Nominee Programme

In common with other developed, industrialized countries in Europe, Asia and the Americas, Canada expects a huge change in the balance between the number of retirement-age people and working-age people. In 2001 it was estimated that fifty years earlier seven to eight people were of working age for every one person of retirement age. In 2001 there were about four. By 2051 it was suggested that there would be two workers for every retiree (The Business Council of Manitoba 2001). Therefore, Manitobans were faced with the following questions: How will the necessary work get done? Will governments and businesses have limited choices and be forced to raise the retirement age, increase the hours of work, and raise pension contributions or reduce benefits? The reality is that Canada is in an international competition for skilled workers and all parts of this country will need hundreds of thousands of skilled immigrants over the next twenty or more years.

In the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Manitoba's population was older than the Canadian average, unemployment rate was the lowest in Canada but the province received only two percent of the total of Canada's annual immigration, less than half of its proportionate share based on Manitoba's population. These facts awakened the local political and business leaders to the need for a new immigration agreement with Ottawa.

Without a comprehensive plan and policy Manitoba foresaw a possible meltdown in every aspect of life, from government revenues, to wages and living standards, to public institutions (Leo and Andres 2006). This crisis was made more difficult because Manitoba was actually experiencing a strong economy that needed more workers to keep up the pace of growth.

At the start of this century the Business Council of Manitoba, along with the Canada West Foundation and the Council for Canadian Unity co-sponsored a national conference on

immigration policy, Pioneers 2000, which was held in Winnipeg. The conference concluded that immigrants were essential to the region's future success (The Business Council of Manitoba 2001). Furthermore, a poll the Council commissioned by Angus Reid for the Pioneers 2000 Conference showed that the people of Manitoba and Saskatchewan were the most progressive and tolerant in North America.

With encouragement from the Business Council, the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement of June 2003 (Annex B) (CIC 2003) was developed to address the subject of Provincial Nominees. It is an agreement pursuant to Section 87 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA or IRPR) which gives provinces the authority to recruit and select immigrants under a Provincial Nominees Programme (Huynh 2004).

The objective of Section 3.2 in this Annex B is "to provide Manitoba with a mechanism to increase the economic and social benefits of immigration to the province based on Manitoba's economic priorities and encourage balanced growth through regional development as well as the development of minority official language communities in the province." (Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement June 2003) (CIC 2003). Section 3.3 "recognizes that the provincial Nominee Class...is a jointly administered immigration class, where Manitoba has an active role in the processing, which may include promotion and nomination, and to acknowledge that both parties have an interest in the process." Section 4 details shared obligations whereby Manitoba and Canada agree to cooperate in the promotion and recruitment of Provincial Nominees. Section 4.2 outlines seven steps that Manitoba will undertake as targeted active recruitment initiatives that are designed to implement its Nomination Plan. These steps include: the province's participation at trade fairs and other missions; the development of promotional materials describing the nature and quality of life in Manitoba; the provision of information on a

Manitoba-maintained website for prospective immigrants; the preparation of information for staff working in Canadian missions abroad; consultation with representatives of minority official language communities in Manitoba; consultation with regional and community representatives; and finally the targeted promotion to temporary residents present in Manitoba such as international students, temporary workers and visitors (Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement June 2003) (CIC 2003).

The Provincial Nominee Programme (PNP) was renewed on June 6, 2003 (it was originally signed on October 22, 1996). As outlined in the Manitoba government-issued brochure, “Manitoba Provincial Nominee Programme for Skilled Workers”, the MPNP is not a sponsorship program. To be nominated, a potential immigrant must be able to demonstrate their ability to successfully settle in Manitoba as a skilled worker. Potential newcomers are eligible for admission under the MPNP only if they can provide evidence of financial resources in their own name showing that they are able to:

- pay their Government of Canada immigration fees and travel expenses to Manitoba
- support themselves while they are looking for employment (if they have not been nominated by an employer) and
- ensure their successful settlement in Manitoba

It further stated as a general requirement, the potential newcomer should have at least \$10,000 Cdn. plus \$2,000 Cdn. for each accompanying dependent. These funds are certified to be true by submitting financial documents with their application.

In essence, the provincial nominee class was set up to recruit immigrants who would create economic benefits specific to the province, and meet particular labour market needs that could not be filled by the local labour market or the point system. The PNPs are mainly

employer-driven. If an employer is in need of workers and cannot fill this need with additional training or through the local labour market, the job can be filled by recruiting internationally.

In the first stage of the provincial nominee process, the province reviews the prospective nominee's application. Once the application has been approved, the appropriate information is sent to Citizenship and Immigration (CIC) for review, and medical clearance and security checks are conducted. After this step has been completed, the provincial nominee is issued permanent residency by the CIC. The completion of this entire process ranges from three to nine months, as opposed to the federal immigration process, which ranges from eighteen to twenty-four months.

According to the government-issued brochure, the "Manitoba Provincial Nominee Programme for Skilled Workers" states that "MPNP applicants must demonstrate as genuine intention and ability to settle successfully in Manitoba. The MPNP has four priority assessment streams and a General stream based on the type of connection applicants have to Manitoba. Priority assessment streams are designed for applicants who can demonstrate the strongest potential to settle successfully and permanently in Manitoba." Priority streams include family support, employer direct, international student, community support agreement and strategic initiatives streams (Manitoba Immigration Facts 2006). Over 70 percent of applications are processed through the priority streams of the family support and employer direct streams (see Figure 1 below).



## Figure 1: Manitoba's Assessment Streams

Source: Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program brochure.

### PRIORITY ASSESSMENT STREAM

#### POTENTIAL IMMIGRANT HAS

#### APPLY UNDER

- a valid work permit for full-time employment
- AND worked for a Manitoba employer for at least six months
- AND a long term, full-time job offer from the same Manitoba employer

#### Employer Direct stream

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- a post-graduation work permit received after completing a post-secondary program in Manitoba
- a long-term, full-time job offer from a Manitoba employer for whom they have been working for at least six months

#### International Student Stream

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- a close relative in Manitoba who has signed a Manitoba Affidavit of Support (MAS)
- AND they meet the minimum criteria for the Family Support Stream

#### Family Support Stream

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### ELIGIBILITY TO APPLY UNDER THE GENERAL STREAM?

IF THE POTENTIAL IMMIGRANT'S APPLICATION IS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR CONSIDERATION UNDER A PRIORITY STREAM THEN THEY MAY BE ELIGIBLE TO APPLY UNDER THE GENERAL STREAM IF THEY HAVE ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING:

- a close relative in Manitoba
  - completed education in Manitoba
  - two distant relatives or friends in Manitoba Affidavit of Support (MAS)
  - previous work experience in Manitoba (at least six months)
- 

### ELIGIBILITY TO APPLY UNDER A STRATEGIC INITIATIVE?

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES ARE UNDERTAKEN AT THE DISCRETION OF THE MPNP IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROGRAM NEEDS AND AVAILABLE RESOURCES. THE POTENTIAL IMMIGRANT IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY TO THE MPNP THROUGH A STRATEGIC INITIATIVE IF THEY:

- participated in an exploratory visit to Manitoba confirmed by the MPNP, had an interview with a MPNP officer and received an invitation to apply
  - were interviewed by a MPNP officer and received a letter of invitation to apply as part of a MPNP targeted overseas promotional initiative
-

The intent behind these immigration streams is to efficiently process the applications of skilled workers. The Skilled Worker category was redesigned to ensure the identification of those applicants who will most likely be able to settle and adapt with relative ease. Each nominee is evaluated against criteria to determine whether the applicant is a good fit for the province. There are two factors in this assessment: retention and skills.

Both attracting and keeping immigrants is a major concern because of the investment dollars required to bring in new immigrants and the downloading to the provinces of the cost of settlement services (Alboim 2008). Age (maximum 10 points), education (maximum 20 points), work experience (maximum 16 points), language (maximum 18 points) and adaptability (individualized but cumulative are 47 points) are the five main selection factors and their related maximum point levels. A total number of 55 points or more are sufficient points for consideration. In addition, the immigrant must have sufficient settlement funds and/or settlement supports in Manitoba. Finally, the applicant must have satisfactorily demonstrated both the ability and intention to establish successfully in Manitoba based on their connections and employability potential in Manitoba.

Adaptability is a major criterion because it is a key factor in determining retention and it is specifically measured by the following standards and the assigned maximum points: close relative in Manitoba (12 points) or family-like support of distant relative or friend in Manitoba (5 points); full-time work experience in Manitoba of six months or more (10 points); completed post-secondary education in Manitoba of two years or more (10 points) or completed post-secondary education in Manitoba, eight to 18 months (5 points); completed high school in Manitoba (5 points); and regional immigration (5 points). These various criteria relate to

attachments and indicate the likelihood of the immigrant staying in Manitoba. (see Figure 2 below)

Figure 2: Manitoba General Stream Self-Assessment Worksheet  
Source: Manitoba Provincial Nominee Website

CRITERION	MAXIMUM POINTS
Age	10
Education	20
Work Experience	16
Language	18
Adaptability	
• Close relative in Manitoba	12
• Family-like support of Distant Relative or Friend in MB	5
• Work Experience in MB: 6 months or more	10
• Completed Post-Secondary Ed. in MB: 2 years or more	10
• Completed Post-Secondary Ed. in MB: 8-18 months	5
• Completed High School in MB	5
• Regional Development	5
• General Assessment	5
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>121</b>
Minimum Requirement	55

In comparison, the federal points system is based on a maximum of 100 and the minimum requirement is set at 67 whereas Manitoban PNP applicants have a lower passing requirement of admittance based on 55 of 121 points.

The last component of “regional immigration” allows applicants to receive additional points on their application if they can demonstrate that they have a connection to an area outside the perimeter of Winnipeg. This connection may include – those with a job waiting and those who are likely to find employment, a relative or friends in the area; unique ties to the community; experience in living/working in rural areas, a list of potential employers in the area that would be hiring in occupations specific to the applicant’s skills, and evidence of contact between the employer and potential employee. This component of regional development presents

immigrants with the incentive to locate in smaller communities and it leads to greater regional dispersion in the province by populating rural areas that are in need of skilled workers.

The self-assessment results measures three factors that **all** need to be in the affirmative – that the immigrant has sufficient points, i.e. 55 points or more, for consideration; that the immigrant has sufficient settlement funds and/or settlement support in Manitoba and finally, that the immigrant has satisfactorily demonstrated both the ability and intention to establish successfully in Manitoba based on their connections and employability potential in Manitoba.

Attracting skilled immigrants provides economic benefits, as immigrants represent a rich source of human capital. Provinces are in the best position to determine what types of skilled workers they need, since labour shortages particular to a certain province arise due to regional differences. For industries experiencing immediate skills shortages, the PNP has become a valuable policy, bringing in highly-skilled immigrants in a relatively efficient manner. However the government has had to avoid creating the impression that “it’s easier to enter Canada through Manitoba” and work to retain immigrants.

The Manitoba government has devised financial incentives for immigrants to stay and also attempted to eliminate the problem facing many of them, namely, the issue of foreign credentials recognition. Success in speedier recognition of qualifications has placed Manitoba in the lead in terms of attracting workers in needed professions and skilled trades. The Manitoba government has also pushed immigrant settlement services, which include English language instruction, support for those who arrived with limited funds, and those who need to be placed in work-ready jobs as quickly as possible. Having a paying job is the single most important factor in an immigrant’s self-esteem, successful settlement, integration and retention. Both government

and business sectors realize that market forces and practices must be supplemented with some strategic planning in establishing a job registry system.

Under Manitoba's assessment streams, there are flexible categories that determine whether the applicant will be a good candidate for immigration by establishing the individual's connection to Manitoba. This flexibility feature imbedded in Manitoba's policy, is meant to help the province reach its high immigration goal (Manitoba Immigration Facts – 2004 Statistics Report). In particular, the Argentineans who showed an interest in immigrating to Manitoba were eligible to apply “under a strategic initiative” (see Figure 1 above) and they participated in an exploratory visit to Manitoba and then received a letter of invitation to apply as part of a MPNP targeted overseas promotional initiative.

In 1998, Manitoba was the first province to develop a Provincial Nominee Programme to attract a greater share of immigrants and it increased the distribution of immigrants across Canada. With over 30,000 skilled workers, business provincial nominees and their family members received since 1998, Manitoba has the largest share of provincial nominees. Immigrants choose Manitoba because of the supports provided through employment, family and community connections. Over 75 per cent of provincial nominees are processed through priority streams (cited above), the majority through family support and employer direct.

Between 1999, when the first Provincial Nominees landed in Manitoba and December 31, 2004, 11,168 principal applicants and their dependents arrived in the province. But most significantly in 2004, Manitoba received 64.79 percent of all of Canada's provincial nominees – 4,048 out of 6,248 (an increase from 1,527 in 2002 and 3,106 in 2003) (Carr 2006). For two years running – 2003 and 2004 – Argentina was the seventh or eighth ‘source’ country for Manitoba's PNP with 118 immigrants arriving each of these years.

The province of Manitoba adopted a target of 10,000 immigrants by 2006, basing the number on 4% of Canada's average annual immigration of 250,000 (Vineberg 2010). As Manitoba accounted for slightly less than 4% of Canada's population, this was seen as Manitoba's 'fair share'.

Figure 3 – Years 2004 to 2007 inclusively show the Provincial Nominee Programs across Canada (Manitoba Immigration Facts – 2006 and 2007 Statistical Reports).

**Figure 3 - PROVINCIAL NOMINEE LANDINGS BY PROVINCE/TERRITORY 2004 - 2007**

	2004		2005		2006		2007	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
<b>Manitoba</b>	4,048	64.8	4,619	57.4	6,661	49.9	7,689	45.0
<b>British Columbia</b>	598	9.6	789	9.8	1,924	14.4	2,519	14.7
<b>New Brunswick</b>	161	2.6	438	5.4	967	7.3	921	5.4
<b>Saskatchewan</b>	323	5.2	468	5.8	960	7.2	1,839	10.8
<b>Alberta</b>	425	6.8	609	7.6	956	7.2	1,651	9.7
<b>Nova Scotia</b>	64	1.0	326	4.1	863	6.5	896	5.2
<b>Ontario</b>	280	4.5	483	6.0	470	3.5	684	4.0
<b>Prince Edward Island</b>	141	2.3	204	2.5	423	3.2	816	4.8
<b>Newfoundland</b>	171	2.7	85	1.1	77	0.6	67	0.4
<b>Quebec</b>	37	0.6	26	0.3	32	0.2	9	0.1
<b>Yukon</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	6,248	100.0	8,047	100.0	13,333	100	17,091	100

This number of immigrants in Manitoba steadily increased over these next few years while other western provinces – Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia increased the

participation rates in their own Provincial Nominee Programme (Manitoba Immigration Facts – for 2004 to 2008 Statistical Reports inclusive).

In 2008 Manitoba received the largest share of provincial nominees (7,968) reaching over 35 percent of a Canadian total of 22,418 (Manitoba Immigration Facts - 2008 Statistical Report [http://www2.immigratemanitoba.com/asset\\_library/en/resources/pdf/mif07.pdf](http://www2.immigratemanitoba.com/asset_library/en/resources/pdf/mif07.pdf)). It is evident that immigrants choose Manitoba because of the support provided through employment, family and community connections. By 2008 (**2004 figures in brackets**) under the MPNP, Manitoba nominated 3,584 (837) skilled workers, 233 (69) business people, and 6,454 (4,048) family members were ready move to Manitoba. In 2004, it was reported that approved Business Provincial Nominee applicants had an average investment of \$366,652 and created an average of 2.18 jobs in Manitoba businesses (Manitoba Immigration Facts - 2004 Statistical Report).

The result of the policy changes introducing the Provincial Nominee Programme and Manitoba's aggressive use of this new policy has enabled Manitoba to receive, on a per capita basis, more immigrants than Ontario. Figure 4 below, summarizes the recent growth in immigration to Manitoba and the impact of the PNP on that growth (Vineberg 2010).

Figure 4: Growth of Manitoba Immigration & Provincial Nominee Programme

Year	Immigrants	MPNP	MPNP Share of Total Immigration
2005	8096	4619	57%
2006	10047	6661	66%
2007	10957	7689	70%
2008	11221	7968	71%

In 1996, Manitoba was the first province to develop a Provincial Nominee Programme to attract a greater share of immigrants at the same time increasing the distribution of immigrants across Canada. Over 75 percent of the provincial nominees were processed through the priority streams (Figure 1), the majority through family support and employer direct streams.

The competition for skilled workers continues to be intense both within Canada and internationally. The northern Alberta oil sands project alone has expanded the search for truck drivers, welders, electricians, carpenters and mechanics. In Manitoba major construction projects such as the Red River Floodway expansion, the construction of the Hydro headquarters downtown, the pending projects to build the Wuskwatim and Conawapa dams and the new airport terminal building at the Winnipeg International Airport puts increasing pressure on the labour market. Manitoba has continued to improve employer connections and increase the number of job offers, and seems to be successful because of effective partnerships with employers and ethno-racial communities such as the Jewish community. The Jewish Federation of Winnipeg (JFW) offers their own sources of pre-migration background information on labour market and settlement services specifically for prospective Jewish immigrants coming to Winnipeg.



## Chapter 4 – Jewish Federation of Winnipeg

Immigration promotion to increase the Jewish population of Winnipeg was one of the major strategies undertaken through the GrowWinnipeg initiative of the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg (JFW) (GrowWinnipeg Immigration Fact Sheet – 2009). The focal point of the Federation was facilitating access to the immigration system and then welcoming and integrating Jews into the community. The province of Manitoba, as seen in the previous chapter, had adopted immigration as a strategy to increase the population. Its goal was to renew the labour force and attract skilled workers and inventors in order to promote continued economic development. This strategy included government expenditures to provide for the resettlement of recently arrived immigrants. At the same time the JFW decided to take advantage of the PNP to support its GrowWinnipeg strategies to increase the size of Winnipeg Jewish community through immigration, renewal and retention (Hecht, 2009)

When the Winnipeg Jewish community became aware that Manitoba was promoting immigration from South America they raised awareness within the Jewish community that they were interested in welcoming and integrating Argentinean Jews.

“It all started with a serendipitous meeting on a plane between an Argentinean named Emilio Dumaní and Janice Filmon, wife of then Premier Gary Filmon. Emilio was interested in immigrating to Canada and Janice told him about [the Winnipeg] community, suggesting that he consider coming to Winnipeg. He came on a visit and was impressed with what he saw. He told [the Winnipeg community leaders] that other Argentinean Jews might come to Winnipeg, suggesting that someone go to Buenos Aires to talk to them” (Hecht, 2009).

In 1995, two representatives of the JFW, Larry and Jack Hurtig travelled to Buenos Aires along with the Deputy Minister of Culture Heritage and Citizenship, Tom Carson. They met with Canadian Embassy officials and Argentinean government representatives to explore possibilities for cultural exchanges as well as opportunities to promote Manitoba as an immigration

destination. Active support was also received from the local Member of Parliament, Anita Neville, who joined a mission to Argentina and Uruguay to see the situation first-hand. She helped the accompanying JFW staff meet with Canadian Embassy officials to discuss the backlog of applications and the urgency of processing them as fast as possible.

Over the next few years a variety of recruitment missions involving Manitoban government officials and the Winnipeg branch of the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society (JIAS), which was acting on behalf of the JFW, were set up to meet Argentinean Jews in Buenos Aires to discuss immigration to Winnipeg. Meanwhile, the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg launched a website called *Jewish Winnipeg* and posted Spanish and Russian language web pages to advertise the community's interest in attracting immigrants which led to direct email contact with many interested parties (Hecht, 2009).

When Federal immigration rules changed in 2004, the Manitoba Nominee Agreement (whose slogan was Manitoba Advantage) was modified to allow the province to select immigrants based on their suitability. The Jewish Post & News (published in Winnipeg) reported that Emily Shane, Executive Director of the Jewish Child and Family Service and Faye Rosenberg-Cohen, the JFW's Director of Planning both confirmed that "Israelis had become the biggest group of Jewish immigrants settling in Winnipeg" (August 4, 2004). In fact, the first six months of 2004, 42 families out of 78 immigrating to Winnipeg were from Israel and 31 were from Argentina. Rosenberg-Cohen explained further that a "large number" of Argentinean Jews applied to come here over the past two years and many of those applicants have now arrived." All of these immigrants came through the provincial nominee programme. These newcomers had been encouraged to come on exploratory visits first, to explore job possibilities in the area. The

Jewish Federation of Winnipeg also had a “job placement consultant” who after their arrival, co-ordinated employment networking evenings for both employers and potential employees.

Between 2004 and 2009 the average percentage of immigrants that came as Manitoba Nominees with community support was around 50 percent, increasing to 75 percent in 2009. The funds spent by the JFW and its beneficiary agencies in order to support the immigration process came from government grants, foundations, and other sources as well as the allocation of dollars raised through the Combined Jewish Appeal (CJA) campaign. The JFW/CJA joint venture campaign operates as the focal point for both fund raising and community programmes in Winnipeg’s 14,000 - member Jewish community. The JFW/CJA allocates funding from its CJA campaign to support ideas proposed under the GrowWinnipeg initiative. The MPNP Community Support Agreement under the auspices and sponsorship of JFW/CJA ensures that the Jewish community is able to provide services in the future as it grows older. Immigrants who integrate into the Jewish community also help maintain a critical mass of people that support existing private schools, public institutions and local programmes (Manitoba Nominee Programme Community Support Agreement with the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg/ Combined Jewish Appeal).

It is evident from Table 1 that direct and subsidy fund-raising increased remarkably in the years 2002 to 2005 from \$292,450 to \$1,092,957 (a 374% increase) to assist JFW immigration promotion through the GrowWinnipeg initiative:

**Table 1: JFW/CJA Fundraising Dollars**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Direct</b>	<b>Subsidies</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Annual % Change</b>
2000/01	\$ 65,662	\$ 28,949	\$ 94,611	-
2001/02	\$ 70,752	\$ 78,882	\$ 149,634	58%
<b>2002/03</b>	<b>\$157,155</b>	<b>\$135,295</b>	<b>\$ 292,450</b>	<b>95%</b>
<b>2003/04</b>	<b>\$305,744</b>	<b>\$515,363</b>	<b>\$ 821,107</b>	<b>281%</b>
<b>2004/05</b>	<b>\$203,408</b>	<b>\$889,549</b>	<b>\$1,092,957</b>	<b>33%</b>
2005/06	\$185,561	\$784,667	\$ 970,228	-12%
2006/07	\$195,441	\$790,175	\$ 985,616	2%

The number of immigrants that benefited from the JFW/CJA fundraising were reported as follows: (Hurtig 2008)

Arrivals from everywhere:	Families	Adults	Children	Total
In 2003	129	<b>229</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>384</b>
In 2004	148	<b>271</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>449</b>
In 2005	116	<b>215</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>335</b>
In 2006	132	<b>235</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>384</b>
In 2007	155	<b>289</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>495</b>
In 2008	111	<b>214</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>378</b>
In 2009	90	<b>166</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>263</b>
	881	1,619	1,069	2,688

In the crucial period, 2004 to 2006 the JFW made the following financial commitments for the introduction and promotion of the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Programme to Argentinean Jews: (Rosenberg-Cohen: JFW Budget Records 2004-2006).

**Table 2 - Jewish Federation of Winnipeg**

	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006 (7 months)</u>
# of Manitoba Nominees	53	69	81
GrowWinnipeg staffing, office, promotion & travel costs	\$103,500	\$97,600	\$59,500
Outside Grants/Sponsorships		\$10,000	\$10,000
<b>JFW NET COSTS</b>	<b>\$103,500</b>	<b>\$87,600</b>	<b>\$49,500</b>

Thus, with the involvement and support of the Government of Manitoba, the Jewish Federation undertook the promotion of the Winnipeg Jewish community as a destination for Argentineans and other Jewish families (e.g., Israelis originally from Russia) who were looking for a stable, safer, prosperous place to live.

The MPNP was marketed to embassies throughout the world. Applications and accompanying information were available on line. The Manitoba regulations covering their PNP allowed for direct application to the Provincial Department of Labour and Immigration (Hecht 2009). Over time much needed changes were made to the program which placed more emphasis on education, language and transferable skills. But there was a continual frustration with the list of occupations (accounting, medical, dental and pharmacy) that required accreditation by either a Manitoba or a Canadian licensing body. Protocols were developed for dealing with potential immigrants by calling for mandatory visits to Winnipeg before immigration. During this personal visit the potential 'newcomer' would meet with a Manitoban immigration officer and submit his application along with the JFW letter of support which almost always guaranteed that an application would be approved because the JFW protocol for the mandatory exploratory visit was stringent. During this seven-to-ten day period, the immigrant applicant would be introduced to every aspect of the city, the Jewish community and the Asper Jewish Community Campus, giving advice about their employment potential, meetings with community leaders to learn about community and synagogue life, and have discussions about the cost of living in Winnipeg. One of the major supporters of JFW's endeavours was Jim Carr, as President and Chief Executive Officer of the Business Council of Manitoba. He recognized and reported on the need for new immigrants to continue the development of Manitoba's diverse economy. In support of this

project, member companies of the business council provided their special assistance by offering employment opportunities to these newcomers.

The Winnipeg Jewish community also had many committed volunteers who chaired committees to create employment contacts for newcomers and arrange for mentors. Community members also agreed to act as hosts to these “visitors”. After arrival, Jewish Child and Family Services (JCFS) worked with these newcomers and their families to assist them to settle into work, school as well as access the health care system.

One additional initiative was created by a few ‘hi-tech’ immigrants who were already living in Winnipeg. This group helped the initial immigration recruitment and promotion process by setting up a Spanish language e-list discussion group called Winni-friends, whereby potential newcomers could pose questions about Winnipeg, such as, the weather and job opportunities. These questions would be answered by knowledgeable Winni-friends who had first-hand experience and were willing to share it in the Spanish language over the internet. The second support group was the WinniPapás, a group of Argentinean parents based in Buenos Aires, whose children had moved or were in the process of migrating but they themselves were in need of psychological help to get over the intense loss they felt, even though they supported their children’s decision to leave. Despite all of the hardships of leaving Argentina, hundreds of Jewish immigrants have settled in Winnipeg. A few have returned to Buenos Aires or gone elsewhere for school or better jobs, but the retention rate was about 88 per cent (Hecht, 2009:116).

Immigration promotion was a major strategy undertaken through the GrowWinnipeg initiative of the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg. It was started primarily to increase the Jewish population of Winnipeg. The Jewish community investment was geared to accessing and

working with the provincial and federal immigration systems and then, using these funds to welcome and integrate Jews into the Winnipeg community. Both the province of Manitoba and the Manitoba Business Council provided support; they endorsed and adopted immigration as a strategy for increasing population, thereby keeping the labour force young and skilled in order to promote local economic development (Rosenberg-Cohen: 2008).

## Chapter 5 – Outcomes - Interviews with Argentinean Jewish Immigrants Living in Winnipeg

The purpose of using interviews in this exploratory research was to examine how effectively and efficiently the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg (JFW) used the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Programme to promote and support the immigration of Argentinean Jews to Winnipeg from 2004 onwards. Furthermore, interview questions were geared to establish: when they came to Canada; did they do an exploratory trip before formally moving to Canada; their gender; at what age they came to Canada; with whom did they come to Canada; their education level; the type of employment prior to and after arriving in Winnipeg; what do they like and dislike about living in Canada; have they travelled to other parts of Canada and finally did they make the right decision to emigrate to Canada? The primary purpose of sampling the Argentinean Jews who came to Winnipeg was to learn more about and clarify the extent of the success of immigrants who were assisted by the JFW under Manitoba's Provincial Nominee Programme.

Neuman's text, "Social Research Methods – Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches" outlines the personal qualities needed by an exploratory researcher (readily attempted by this researcher) – "[they] must be creative, open-minded, and flexible; adopt an investigative stance; and explore all sources of information. They must ask creative questions and take advantage of *serendipity*, those unexpected or chance factors that have larger implications." (Neuman, 2008:34).

There were a few types of non-probability samples used in selecting the final interview candidates. These sample types can be described as "quota", "purposive", "snowball", and "theoretical". Initially the quota sample included a preset number of interviewees (12-15) subject to availability, who had the necessary qualifications of having arrived in Canada around 2004. Second, the purposive type was used to get a fair representation of cases that fit the particular



criteria by using a broadcast email to people on the JFW's case list identified as Argentinean Jews who came to Winnipeg around the selected time period. Third, the snowball method was applied after early candidates who participated in the interview process, found it to be agreeable and then referred others to the researcher's attention. Lastly, the theoretical type was applied to get cases that help reveal features that were theoretically important about the topic of Manitoba's Provincial Nominee Programme (MPNP). As a result, a narrative developed outlining how each interviewee came to participate in exploratory trips to Winnipeg and be part of the MPNP from its early inception in 1996 and through the changes of 2004.

All seventeen individuals who were interviewed (out of 20 who responded) were selected from the client files of the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg of immigrants who had participated in the MPNP. An email was sent out (composed by this researcher) introducing the "graduate research" being undertaken and the need for interview subjects who were Argentinean Jews who arrived in Winnipeg under the MPNP. Since this researcher had arranged to visit Winnipeg from June 11<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup>, 2010 there was a request that 'potential subjects' immediately contact this researcher by email to arrange for an interview time. On arrival on June 11<sup>th</sup>, only two (2) appointments had been confirmed but by Monday June 14<sup>th</sup> another seven (7) emailed followed by another by eight (8) in the next two days. Saturday and Sunday (June 12-13, 2010), serendipity played a part in recruiting more interview candidates. On Saturday, June 12, 2010, this researcher visited a local synagogue and on Sunday, June 13, 2010 he was invited to an Argentinean Bar-BQ in a local Winnipeg park. In both instances 'potential' candidates were present who had received the email invitation but never had responded. By meeting the researcher they felt more comfortable participating in the interview process over the next four days.

The following is a summary of data from all 17 respondents:

- 11 females and 6 males were interviewed;
- They arrived in Winnipeg between 1996 and 2007;
- All candidates did an exploratory trip to Winnipeg prior to immigration;
- Husbands sponsored wives, regardless of the wife's better professional qualifications;
- All candidates were married when they arrived;
- They ranged in age from 23 to 45 when they arrived in Canada;
- 15 out of 17 candidates have children - 8 came with children and 7 started a family here;
- 33 children were recorded amongst them, ranging in age from 6 months to 30 years old;
- All 17 have earned university or college degrees from Argentina in various subjects – psychology, computer systems analyst, business analyst, early childhood teaching, communications, advertising, hospitality, marketing, graphics design, and anthropology;
- Seven have advanced professional degrees from Argentina in Law, Dentistry, Architecture, Business Administration and Pharmacy;
- The lawyer in the group is using her legal background in the capacity of 'Acting' Director of the MPNP;
- The dentists (all women - one interviewed and plus two more were met casually but not interviewed) are improving their English language skills before beginning their re-training, re-accreditation process. The dentist interviewed is working on the Jewish Community Campus in their daycare program while improving her English.
- Twelve (12) interviewees had difficulty transferring their education and working skills to a Canadian work environment, often leading to work outside their area of expertise;
- Six interviewees suggested that more could be done to improve the 'accreditation' process, possibly implementing a mentorship program or offering the program in Spanish. However, the pharmacist in the group was adamant that there was room for advancement of immigrants in this professionally accredited field.
- In all 17 cases, difficulties arose in learning English, obtaining Canadian work experience, adapting to the local Canadian culture and getting used to the 'cold' Winnipeg winters;

- All 17 valued the great support group offered by the Jewish community when it came to learning about the local area schools, businesses and job opportunities;
- All 17 left Argentina because it was “unsafe”, there was “no economic stability”, “laws changed whenever the government decided it was in their best interests”, and “because of corruption with the police and the politicians”.
- All 17 “liked” Canada because it was “safe” for everyday living for adults and children; the “quality of life is better and more positive”; there are “opportunities to improve our quality of life”;
- All 17 “missed” their family and friends in Argentina, but many recognized that some of their friends and family also left for other destinations such as Spain, Israel and the United States. Going home for a visit was not the same as when they left Argentina years before;
- 15 out of 17 interviewees took vacation time to visit other parts of Canada – from Toronto, Ontario to Torfino, B.C. In most cases, Argentina was the still main focus of their travel plans.
- In all 17 interviews the candidates responded strongly in the affirmative saying that they made the right choice in moving to Canada. One respondent added that “he should have moved ten years earlier”.

The interviews of all seventeen subjects confirmed this MRP’s thesis that employment/labour market integration in Winnipeg provided these immigrants with a relatively good standard of living on arrival into the community. In addition the MPNP was the main catalyst in motivating these people to consider coming to Winnipeg. Both the MPNP and the JFW provided these potential newcomers with three enticements - an exploratory trip to the city; a personal invitation to a warm, receptive Jewish community in a city with a cold, wintry climate; and finally, there was a group of Winnipeggers who clearly wanted to take advantage of the skills and youth of these immigrants who were seeking safety and an improved lifestyle. These immigrants were perceived to be the right infusion

needed to meet the high standards for 'newcomers' being recruited by both the province and the Jewish community.

For most of these Argentineans, coming to Winnipeg was a major adjustment from the grand-scale European architecture of the diverse metropolitan city of Buenos Aires. The local Jewish population of Winnipeg is struggling to maintain a population level of 14,000 despite its intention of increasing it to 18,000 through increased immigration. The population of the Jewish community of Buenos Aires, Argentina is declining but it still exceeds 150,000. The English language and cultural differences necessitated difficult adjustments. All interviewees stated that the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg was instrumental in augmenting the MPNP English language training services by offering additional language programs at the community centre. On the other hand, getting accustomed to Canadian culture was learnt over time, by living and working in the community with other ethnic groups.

There still remains one aspect of immigration to Manitoba that needs a more concentrated focus and dramatic improvement, both by the provincial government and NGOs. This is enabling these immigrants to get the Canadian recognition of their work experience and proper accreditation of highly-skilled professional education. The need for dentists, pharmacists, architects and doctors in the Winnipeg community is not diminishing, quite the contrary. It is incumbent on the Manitoba government to establish programs and provide financial assistance to encourage re-training and accreditation of these highly motivated professionals who insist on pursuing their careers in Canada. Funds should be earmarked and professional associations should be co-opted to establish focused study programs that could possibly lead to a high success rate of completion. Achieving professional designations would enhance immigrants' self-worth (by removing the underutilization of their

qualifications); give them an opportunity to increase their standard of living and enhance the success of their social integration into the Winnipeg community.

At the same time, there should be recognition of the fact that the number one long-term challenge for the Canadian economy is 'population aging'. According to a recent newspaper article, "that is going to drive two very important policy imperatives. One is the need for improving productivity growth in a sustained way so we can maintain living standards. The second is the need for fiscal adjustments" because of the increasing demands on Canada's health-care system, increasing demands for elderly benefits (Torobin, Globe and Mail, July 19, 2010).

As of April 1, 2010, Manitoba's population and economic trends are currently moving in an upwards direction. The Manitoba Economic Highlights show that population numbers have climbed to 1,232,654, a one-year increase of 16,517 persons (Manitoba Economic Highlights 2010). The City of Winnipeg stands at 683,000 an increase of 8,000 (Winnipeg 2010). However, Jewish population is still at the 14,000 level (Jewish Winnipeg 2010). In tandem with population increases and high rates of retention, Manitoba's labour market employment increased by 10,200 or 1.7% above the national increase of 1.1% (Winnipeg 2010a). Likewise, 11,080 more people moved to Manitoba than left and the net international immigration totalled 12,508, which was more than the inter-provincial out-migration of 1,428. This is the smallest out-migration since 1985. The most significant factor driving the Manitoba's population growth is the Provincial Nominee Programme and since it began, the number of immigrants has steadily increased.

## Chapter 6 – Conclusions

This major research paper (MRP) set out to examine and evaluate the Argentinean Jewish immigrant experience under the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Programme (MPNP) and its direct relationship with the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg (JFW). In addition seventeen recent newcomers were interviewed who shared the hope of a better life in Canada and expressed their thanks to the Jewish community for the opportunity given to them to live with their families in an environment which offered safety, economic stability and possibilities of a bright future. These aspirations for safety and well-being were built up over time starting in their Argentinean homeland where Jews experienced threats of anti-Semitism and economic insecurity. Through serendipity and the right timing, Manitoba in the late 1990s, was also looking for talented immigrants who would increase the population and apply their skills and education in the province's communities.

This MRP shows that the solution to attracting newcomers was direct provincial involvement in the immigration process through the implementation of Provincial Nominee Programmes (PNP) which provided a means of achieving the province's settlement goal. Under this umbrella of provincial immigration legislation, the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg (JFW) established a link with the Manitoba Settlement Strategy. This 'strategy' was meant to improve social services and expand settlement programs for newly arrived immigrants and thereby ensure the retention of permanent settlers in Manitoba.

Two top inquiries mentioned at the outset were evaluated in this MRP. First, how do the employment and labour market support systems work to match immigrants with job opportunities and minimize the newcomers' frustration at not being able to use their skills?

Second, do immigrants have access to timely and reliable settlement information and to orient them in their new community? (Manitoba's Settlement Strategy 2009).

Manitoba has strategized from 2004 onwards to incorporate a free-market approach into Manitoba's Provincial Nominee Programme to fulfill its labour market goals. In the grand scheme of attracting new Argentinean immigrants both the provincial government (through the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Programme) and the ethno-cultural institution (the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg) forged a partnership that matches immigrants with jobs and helps integrate them into the community. However, from the interviews it was evident there is underlining resentment with regards to problems concerning the "discounting of immigrants' skills" and their accreditation they received from foreign university courses and professional degrees (Alboim, Finnie and Meng 2005). In particular, foreign trained dentists and pharmacists among these Argentinean immigrant families are frustrated at being shut out of their profession. The irony is that some of these professionals are females who contributed financially as a strong second breadwinners back in Argentina but were reduced to lower paying 'service' jobs in Winnipeg because of problems securing recognition of their qualifications.

At the beginning of the MRP it was made clear that Manitoba expects a huge change in the balance between retirement-age people and working-age people. In 2001 it was estimated that fifty years earlier seven to eight people were of working age for every one person of retirement age. In 2001 there were about four. By 2051 there could be only two workers for every retiree (The Business Council of Manitoba 2001). Therefore, Manitobans were faced with a crucial question – how will the necessary work get done? Will governments and businesses have limited choice and be forced on deciding whether to raise the retirement age, to increase the hours of work, to raise pension contributions or to reduce benefits? The reality is that Canada

must be committed to compete internationally for skilled workers and realize that all parts of this country need hundreds of thousands of skilled immigrants over the next twenty or more years.

When comparing the 2001 Business Council of Manitoba demographic report to a comprehensive study published in 2008 by the Conference Board of Canada entitled “Renewing Immigration – Towards a Convergence and Consolidation of Canada’s Immigration Policies and Systems” we can look through the lens of Canadian businesses and industry sectors into how the permanent and temporary immigration systems are meeting the needs of employers and immigrants. The Conference Board Report also offers suggestions to encourage and promote the development of effective and timely future immigration policy.

This Canadian Conference Board report recognized in its executive summary that “talent is the lifeblood of successful economies. For businesses, governments, and other organizations, it is the vital source of productivity and innovation. And like other valuable commodities, talent is a scarce resource” (Watt, Krywulak and Kitagawa 2008). At the same time, with falling fertility rates and the aging of the “baby boomer” generation, the supply of such workers is in decline across Canada and around the developed world. The reality is that many countries are facing a shortage of skills and labour. Immigration is one strategy for alleviating this shortage.

The challenge is that Canada and other countries are competing to attract and retain immigrants, particularly immigrants with the right mix of skills, knowledge, and experience to address short- and long-term labour market needs. The Canadian Conference Board clearly recognized that those countries that best adjust their selection, settlement, and migration programs to meet the needs of their employers, immigrants and communities will advance the best. Those that fail to do so will place themselves at a major competitive disadvantage.



The federal, provincial and territorial governments of Canada have taken steps to modify its immigration policies, systems and programs to address the compelling need for skilled and talented workers. In particular new categories and expanded programs such as the Provincial Nominee Programme (PNP), Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW) Programme, and Canadian Experience Class are giving businesses, industry sectors and provinces new and improved opportunities to attract, retain and settle the needed international labour talent. Furthermore, existing immigration policies and programmes are better designed to make the transition from temporary to permanent immigration a much more practical, time-sensitive, and accessible process for businesses and workers (Watt, Krywulak and Kitagawa 2008).

In a brief outline of why international migrants come to Canada, the Canadian Conference Board (CCB) report mentions that most newcomers are drawn to Canada because of the opportunity to enjoy a better quality of life than they experienced in their home countries. These observations and comments were strongly confirmed through the seventeen interviewees who emigrated from Argentina and were now living in Winnipeg. The CCB further recognized the importance of the Provincial Nominee Programmes. Furthermore, employers are turning to this alternative method of PNP by going to the local provincial level in order to nominate and “fast track” international workers into in-demand jobs. Based on employer referrals the numbers have increased 350 per cent in four years – from 1,417 referrals in 2003 to 6,329 in 2007.

In Manitoba promoting immigration through its Provincial Nominee Programme enables the province to place more emphasis on admitting individuals who have the skills, language fluency, education, and transferable experience that are in high demand, thereby meeting the needs of employers and enhancing the success of immigrants. Interviews with Argentinean Jews confirm that they have a high level of labour market participation, a good standard of living and

enjoy the advantages of a supportive community, but full utilization of their skills and professional training remains a program.

It is also important to note that the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg and the MPNP acted jointly to convince Argentinean Jews to immigrate to Winnipeg. The JFW organization provided settlement services for Jewish immigrants, attracted by the outreach programme of GrowWinnipeg. This partnership of JFW and MPNP was a model of coordination and cooperation. It provided a clear focus and strategy to work together towards one common goal; to solve the problem of how to replenish a declining and aging population with highly-educated, highly-skilled and highly motivated professional immigrants.

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