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# Immigrant settlement outside of the greater Toronto area : determinants of desirability

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**IMMIGRANT SETTLEMENT OUTSIDE OF THE GREATER TORONTO  
AREA: DETERMINANTS OF DESIRABILITY**

by

Ruby Dumais, BA, University of Victoria, 2004

A Major Research Paper  
Presented to Ryerson University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts  
Immigration and Settlement Studies  
Ryerson University

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2009

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# **IMMIGRANT SETTLEMENT OUTSIDE OF THE GREATER TORONTO AREA: DETERMINANTS OF DESIRABILITY**

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Master of Arts  
Immigration and Settlement Studies  
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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper explores barriers and opportunities to immigrant settlement in Ontario's second- and third-tier cities, and the potential role of Opportunities Ontario: Provincial Nominee Program (PNP). The relative desirability of five Ontario cities outside of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) is discussed from the point of view of skilled immigrants, through an assessment of four categories of factors which impact immigrants' successful economic and cultural integration into the communities they live in. The results of the study show that some cities are clearly better suited to immigrants' needs than others. The paper also concludes that while Opportunities Ontario's does provide incentives to employers and nominated immigrants outside the GTA, the current scope of 1,000 nominees per year precludes it from having a significant impact on the regionalization of Ontario's immigrant flow.

Key words: immigration; attraction and retention; provincial nominee program; second-tier cities; third-tier cities; regionalization.

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## **Introduction**

Since the 1960s, major government immigration policy changes, such as the introduction of the points-system, have resulted in a major shift in the top source countries from which Canada's immigrants hail. In addition to a broadening of ethno-cultural, linguistic, and religious communities in Canada, these policies have also led to the urbanization of immigration. In previous immigration booms, such as at the turn of the twentieth century, mass numbers of newcomers settled lesser-populated regions of Canada, many finding opportunities in Canada through agriculture and other primary industries (Kelley and Trebilcock, 2008). More recently, the majority of immigrants have found home in Canada's three largest gateway cities- Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal.

In a 2001 report by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) called *Towards a More Balanced Geographic Distribution of Immigrants*, the department reported that: “[t]he geographic distribution of immigrants is far more skewed than that of the Canadian-born. In 1996, 60 per cent of immigrants lived in Canada's three largest metropolitan areas, and only 14 per cent lived outside the 25 census metropolitan areas. By contrast, only 27 per cent of those born in Canada lived in the three largest cities, and 43 lived in non-CMA areas” (CIC, 2001: 26). The report's conclusion/recommendation is that the most promising alternative to immigrant concentration in the main three gateway cities is increased migration to second-tier cities (such as Ottawa, Calgary, Edmonton, etc) rather than rural communities. The report explains that many of Canada's small and/or remote communities are based on a single industry, meaning that the towns lack diversity of employment sectors. Without pre-arranged employment, immigrants would



be taking a greater risk of unemployment if choosing a smaller town as their first location of settlement.

Although the vast majority of recent immigrants do still settle in one of the three gateway cities, Statistics Canada has reported that over the past decade, the number of recent immigrants residing in Toronto, Vancouver, or Montreal has decreased significantly from 73.4% to 68% (Chong, 2008: 1). In alarming contrast, however, the number of immigrants settling outside of the six largest CMAs “has declined dramatically over three decades, from 30.4% during the 1970s to 22.3% during the 1980s to just 17.3% during the 1990s according to the Canadian censuses” (Hyndman and Schuurman 2004: 5).” Several studies suggest that immigrants who settle in smaller cities fare better in terms of the native-immigrant gap in labour force participation, the native-immigrant wage gap, unemployment rates, and other socio-economic measures than their gateway-city counterparts (Frideres, 2006; Di Biase and Bauder, 2005; Walton-Roberts, 2005). For example, writing about the regionalization of immigration in British Columbia, Bauder (2005) found that immigrants’ average incomes were higher in the small and medium-sized cities of Victoria, Nanaimo, and Prince George than in the Greater Vancouver Area. Jennifer Hyndman and Nadine Schuurman (2004) suggests that “quality of livelihood”, once established, is superior outside of Vancouver.

While there has been increased interest in immigration to Canada’s second and third-tier cities, the majority of academic interest in immigration has focused on the same locations as immigrants do: Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal. Research on the topic of immigrant success in second and third-tier cities has been undertaken, mostly focusing on Western and Prairie provinces (Derwing et al, 2005; Krahn et al, 2003; Walton-Roberts,

2004; and August and Leo, 2006). Thus, the scope of this paper will focus on the research problem of what the major barriers and opportunities are to the successful recruitment and retention of immigrants in second and third-tier Canadian cities, and whether Opportunities Ontario (Ontario's provincial nominee program) has the potential to address some of the difficulties inherent in the "regionalization" of immigration.

The terms PNP and Opportunities Ontario will both be used throughout this paper. PNP represents the agreement that most provinces have with the federal government allowing them to nominate a fixed annual number of individuals for permanent resident status, on the basis of either full-time job offers or investment plans. Once the pilot stage of Ontario's PNP ended in February 2009, the program was rebranded as Opportunities Ontario. Thus, Opportunities Ontario *is* a PNP, but in support of the province's efforts to brand the program under its new name and increase awareness of it, I will often include the name when I am referring specifically to Ontario, and PNP more generically when I speak of the general structure, goals, and results of the provincial-federal immigration agreements.

Similarly, I will alternate between the terms immigrant dispersal and immigrant regionalization. In this paper, dispersal is meant to focus on decreasing concentrations of immigrant populations in Canada's main three gateway cities of Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal. That is, dispersal can refer to past and current government policies and programs aimed at drawing immigrants out of main destination cities. Thus, the goal of dispersal is interpreted as having less to do with a proportional distribution of immigrants across all provinces, and more to do with simply having foreign-born workers settle in cities of all sizes, throughout the country. Immigrant regionalization, on the other hand,

focuses more on growing immigrant populations in regions that currently do not have proportional numbers of foreign born workers for the size of their population. A region could be defined as a whole province, such as Newfoundland and Labrador, or a part of a province, such as Northern Ontario.

The first chapter of the paper consists of a literature review on the history of immigrant dispersal and regionalization (focusing on relatively recent history), followed by a section on the role of provincial nominee programs (PNP). Since Manitoba has the oldest and most established PNP, and thus provides the best study of the results of provincial nominees—that province's experiences are discussed to some depth. Some information regarding recent changes made to Opportunities Ontario are also discussed here. The second chapter, providing the research context, looks first at the barriers and opportunities to immigrant settlement in second and third-tier cities in Ontario, followed by an empirical analysis of the desirability of five sample cities of varying size and distance from Toronto from immigrants' point of view. Four broad categories of factors influencing immigrants' settlement patterns are analysed, using statistics gathered from the 2006 Census and other widely recognized sources. This chapter is inspired by Hyndman and Schuurman's 2004 study, which developed a desirability index for five British Columbia cities based on criteria identified by immigrant respondents in the 2003 Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada. This section is followed by discussion, policy recommendation, and conclusions.

## **Chapter 1: Literature Review**

The regionalization of immigration to Canada has long been a topic discussed across the

country, and especially by policymakers. Provinces and regions which experience shortages in certain sectors of the labour force (such as healthcare) and demographic changes as younger generations leave for the cities, are becoming increasingly aware of the benefits of immigration. In June of 2002, then Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada Denis Coderre proposed that “from the standpoint of the foreign-born, the economic opportunities and ethno-cultural support in large cities may outweigh any arguments that geographic concentration may inhibit the process of assimilation” (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2002). Krahn et al discuss how Coderre proposed a “social contract” that would require skilled workers to agree to live in a community specified by the government for a period of at least three years, and how this ‘social contract’ would not only be difficult or impossible to enforce, but also that it “would violate the individual mobility rights guaranteed under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms” (Krahn et al, 2003: 21). What Minister Coderre had suggested to prevent the violation of mobility rights guaranteed to by the Charter was to “offer a temporary work visa that ties an immigrant to a particular location for up to five years before being granted permanent resident status” (McIssac, 2000:1). Proposed alternatives that would not directly violate the Charter Rights of immigrants include “the provision of extra points for those immigrant applicants willing to locate outside Canada’s first-tier cities...and improved promotion in the newcomers’ countries of origin of a wider range of Canadian communities” (Krahn et al, 2003: 21). Furthermore, the Krahn and his colleagues suggest that “various levels of government put pressure on provincial regulatory bodies to deal with the problem of credential recognition for highly qualified immigrants, thereby making Canada a more attractive destination” (Ibid: 19).

Margaret Walton-Robert states that “[t]he most powerful policy tool relevant to immigrant regionalization at the current time is the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP), which allows some provincial control over immigrant selection in order to address specific labour market needs” (2007: 14). PNPs are one of the ways that policymakers have sought to rectify such demographic trends, and seek to spread, or regionalize, skilled immigrant populations across Canada. Since Manitoba is the province that has been most successful with PNP, with more than half of the province’s immigration now coming from its PNP (Government of Manitoba, 2007), “–pulling in 87% of all provincial nominees coming to Canada in 2000” (August and Leo, 2006: 18), this province’s experiences merit some expansion in the discussion of immigrant regionalization. The other reason that Manitoba’s recent experiences with immigration attraction are of interest is that the province was the first to establish a PNP, and thus has the broadest documented experience and results available. Before expanding any further on the PNP experience, however, it is useful to provide a deeper background of the history of immigration to that region.

Over the past several decades, provinces such as Manitoba and Saskatchewan had difficulty attracting immigrants, and thus, had disproportionately low numbers of newcomers settling in their communities (Kelley and Treblicock, 2008). In previous periods of high immigration levels to Canada, from the late 1800s to the 1920s, mass migration and settlement in the Prairies was accomplished through economic incentives such as land for agricultural practice, or “guaranteed employment,” for those deemed desirable by the regions and by the federal government at the time (Europeans with agricultural experience in similar climates) (Ibid). Both Canada and its regions were

promoted overseas— sometimes less than realistically. For instance, full disclosure on the nature of a promoted region's long cold winters was often omitted, as was the degree of isolation that one would face as a result of how sparsely populated rural agricultural areas were at the time (Ibid).

During the period in which the Canadian West was being heavily settled by immigration from 1867-1914, Prairie provinces were competing for desirable migrants not only with more developed Central Canada, but with other opportunity-providing immigrant-receiving countries such as the United States, Australia, and Argentina. Advertising the West and recruiting immigrants at the end of the nineteenth century was quite different from today in many respects, although was still as joint provincial-federal venture at that time. As Kelley and Trebilcock describe, "At the same time that it was pursuing land policies to facilitate Western settlement, the government also dispatched immigration agents to the United States and overseas to proclaim the relative advantages of Canada and to solicit, in particular, agriculturalists with enough means to establish themselves in Canada, farm labourers, and domestic workers" (2008: 77). Even with free land, "it took deceptive propaganda about the quality of the land and the climate to draw large numbers of northern Europeans" (CIC, 2001: 1). While scruples and honesty may have suffered in the manner Canada's relatively undeveloped West was presented to unknowing potential migrants, current promotion and policy such as that of the PNP aim not to "trick" unsuspecting migrants, but to attract individuals who are as fully prepared as possible for the transition ahead.

Prospective settlers from Northern and Central Europe were enticed by the opportunity to acquire free or very affordable land in the New World. This opportunity

usually took the form of ‘homesteads’, or agricultural plots that could be managed by a family. Not only was land plentiful, but passages were often free, or paid on load (Kelley and Trebilcock, 2000). Immigrants with agricultural experience, as well as the constitution required for living in the extreme climate of the Prairies, were with few exceptions from Europe or the United States. This flood of immigration slowed with the onset of WWI, the economic depression, and did not recover until after WWII, when the door was opened back up to immigrants—albeit a different sort of immigrants. From this point on, more and more immigrants gravitated toward major urban centres, and in the period from 1960 to 1973, immigration policy underwent major changes with the introduction of the ‘Points System’, which would finally erase barriers based on nationality, religion, and race (August and Leo, 2006).

In the past decades, inflow levels of immigrants have increased to the current annual average of between 200,000 and 250,000, with the largest source countries mainly from Asia. In the case of Prairie provinces, such as Manitoba, the decline of European agricultural migrants and increase of urban Asian, South Asian, African, and other new groups has meant that once again, aggressive measures are deemed necessary to attract successful migrants to drive regional growth. It is notable that on the Manitoba Government’s website for Business Immigration (Manitoba PNP-Business), much of the information, such as brochures and presentations, are available in two non-official languages: Korean and Mandarin. This fact demonstrates very clearly who the MPNP-Business program targets, and who has entered successfully through this program thus far. Still in its infancy, and dealing with a much more diverse pool of potential applicants, Opportunities Ontario currently does not offer any literature, forms, or information

sessions in non-official languages. Nevertheless, Manitoba's 'courting' of East Asian migrants is specific to the investor class, and is notably in contrast of the white European migrant that was courted in previous immigration booms in the twentieth century.

Current federal immigration policies are unable to push large numbers of immigrants into less-populated regions that truly need immigrants, leaving the provinces such to develop programs and policies that will not only attract but retain valuable immigrants. August and Leo (2006: 4) describe the agreements with the federal government that have created PNPs:

“that grant provinces the responsibility to recruit, assess, and select prospective immigrants, based on provincially-designed criteria, and in order to meet provincial economic and social priorities. Although these programs account for a small proportion of immigrant inflow to Canada [hovering around 3-4%], they provide us with the opportunity to test whether lower-levels of government will provide programming that is more flexible and responsive to local needs and priorities.”

Through the provincial nominee programs, provinces identify labour market needs and select migrants who possess the skills and qualifications for these positions. Potential migrants have the incentive of being matched with employers, and vice versa, and much shorter processing timeframes mean that positions can be filled more efficiently. The processing timeframes listed for the PNP are on average a fraction of the wait times listed for applicants through the federal skilled workers stream. Federal wait times through the point system vary vastly from country to country. For example, the wait time listed on Citizenship Immigration Canada's website for applicants from Accra, Ghana is 72 months through the federal skilled worker stream, and just 15 months through the PNP (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2007).



The PNPs are also attractive in that they offer permanent residency and eventual citizenship to individuals with either business/management capital or previous work experience in the province as Temporary Skilled Workers. Rather than applying to Citizenship and Immigration Canada for permanent resident status through the federal family or skilled worker classes, prospective immigrants apply directly to their province of choice. Successful applicants receive a 'Certificate of Nomination' from their nominating province, and include it in their application to CIC for Permanent Resident Status (August and Leo, 2006).

Provincial nominees receive priority processing by CIC, and they skip past assessment at the federal level (Ibid). In the case of most provinces using PNPs, the federally-designed point system is not used, in favour of more regionally specific criteria. For instance, in Ontario, language skills are not tested, but only a restricted number of employment occupations are eligible (Government of Ontario, 2009). Ontario's PNP was only recently greenlit past its pilot stage on February 20, 2009 (Ibid). The PNP is now known as Opportunities Ontario, and has a target of 1,000 nominations for 2009 (Government of Ontario, 2009). The process of securing a provincial nomination is outlined as such:

"Employers first apply for approval of the positions they intend to fill. If the positions are approved, employers then recruit individuals who must apply to Opportunities Ontario for a nomination. Eligible individuals are nominated, along with their dependents, for permanent resident status.

Applications from employers who are seeking positions for foreign workers residing abroad, or foreign workers who are visiting Canada, will receive priority processing if those employers have tried to recruit Canadian citizens or permanent residents located in Ontario for those positions before applying to the program." (Ibid).

All positions being filled through Opportunities Ontario must be permanent, full-time positions. They must also be skilled positions. Generally, an employer within the GTA can apply for one position for every five full-time employees employed by the company (one position for every 3 full-time employees outside the GTA). Another interesting incentive that Opportunities Ontario provides to employers in smaller cities and towns is a lower application fee. Applications from the GTA range from \$2,000 to \$3,500, while non-GTA applications are \$1,500 (Ibid). Also, it is easier for employers located outside the GTA to qualify to have a vacant position filled by a provincial nominee. Companies seeking to nominate must have “a minimum of \$1,000,000 in gross revenue if located in the GTA or \$500,000 if outside the GTA and a minimum of five or three full-time permanent employees respectively” (Government of Ontario, 2009).

One of the key ways that Opportunities Ontario provides incentives to skilled immigrant settlement outside of the GTA is through a lower fee structure for applicants located elsewhere. For instance, the fee for an application to fill a position in the GTA is \$2,000, but only \$1,500 outside the GTA (Government of Ontario, 2009). In all cases, employees nominated by foreign individuals applying to immigrate through Opportunities Ontario’s Investor Class are charged a fee of \$3,500 (Ibid). The application guidelines do not state whether it is the role of the employer or the employee to pay the application fees--which are then still followed by CIC’s regular processing fees. This decision is left up to the individuals involved in each case. Opportunities Ontario does explicitly state that the offered wage for a nominated position must meet or exceed the prevailing wage for the intended occupation, according to Statistics Canada statistics on entry level wages, and skilled wages for each occupation listed under the National

Occupation Classification (NOC) (Ibid). Thus, although Opportunities Ontario is essentially an employer-driven program, policies are in place to protect nominated newcomers from economic exploitation at the hands of their employers.

Opportunities Ontario defines itself as being employer-driven, meaning that the goal is to supply employers whose needs for qualified skilled workers that cannot be met by the existing provincial workforce with skilled foreign workers, who will be eligible for permanent resident status in Canada (Ibid). Admittedly, 1,000 individuals constitute a mere 'drop in the bucket' when compared with the numbers of foreign workers entering the province through Citizenship Immigration Canada (CIC), either through the economic, family, or refugee classes, and as temporary foreign workers through such programs as the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP) or the Live-In Caregiver Program (LCP).

In Manitoba, the tone of the PNP seems to be less strictly employer driven, and more planned as a means to achieve the province's economic development and demographic goals. Also, a high emphasis is put on building small concentrations of ethnic communities. The province has entered into agreements with certain ethno-cultural and/or religious communities to successfully select and settle newcomers. The most active of these communities is the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg (JFW), which uniquely holds a Community Support Agreement with the province, which means that it recruits, selects, and submits applications on behalf of prospective immigrants, who will not be subject to any further assessment, based on the province's trust in the JFW and its track record (August and Leo, 2006). Once again, this has proven to work on a small scale within a specific community in Manitoba, and advances the possibility of ethno-cultural

communities throughout Canada becoming more involved in the selection and settlement of non-familial members of their communities abroad. As quoted by August and Leo (2006), Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) found that “communities of people from the same country exert a strong pull on most immigrants” and that “the chances of retention are enhanced if the origins of new arrivals correspond to those of the existing community” (2001: 57). It is a very compelling idea to imagine the same type of partnership being developed between Ontario’s Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) and the multitude of ethnic communities active in the province. With just 1,000 annual nominees, the competition would undoubtedly get fierce between groups, with Opportunities Ontario potentially coming under fire for perceived favouring of certain source countries.

As the CIC report astutely points out, “an inflow of immigrants to a region cannot be expected, by itself to generate a sufficient number of jobs for new arrivals; it will induce an outflow of people, unless economic growth occurs for other reasons” (CIC, 2001: 55). The PNP is only as successful as a province’s ability to retain these migrants.

The province of Manitoba has clearly been successful in selecting immigrants that are well-suited to Manitoba, as provincial nominees have high levels of retention and employment. Gerry Clement reports that “recent statistics tracking the success of provincial nominees include those who arrive in the 1990s and the year 2000, and these reported that a 90% retention rate had been achieved, and 94% of provincial nominee principal applicants were working” (Clement, 2003, p. 19). To increase retention, and make sure that prospective immigrants

“really intend on staying in Manitoba, the Province has not only zeroed in on adaptability, but in May 2004 they tightened up the

application by requiring documented evidence of an applicant's connections to Manitoba. Previously, only a rather nebulous claim of having "family or family-like connections" was required of applicants, which was difficult to verify. Now, the Province requires family members or close friends to actually vouch for the applicant, and put it in writing. A signed "MPNP Affidavit of Support" must accompany Family Support stream applications demonstrating "genuine support of applicants to the MPNP" (August and Leo, 2006: 25).

Thus far, Opportunities Ontario has not developed the same measures to ensure immigrant retention. This may be because Ontario is the most popular province for immigrants overall, and the largest risk is then that the individual will not stay with the employer who nominated him or her, or even remain in the same occupation or city.

Not all provinces see themselves this way. One Prairie province that has aggressively been recruiting immigrants for permanent settlement is Saskatchewan. The province has promoted itself as a place for immigrant families to settle this year in an advertising campaign in Central Canadian cities including Toronto. Posters of happy visible-minority families proudly placed before attractive affordable housing were plastered in Subway stations, where many commuters are frustrated low-income immigrants living in small apartments struggling to make ends meet. An article appearing in *The Globe and Mail* on September 30 this year reported on Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall's efforts to attract immigrants away from Toronto, Canada's most popular destination for immigrants, to his own booming province. He even went as far as hosting a barbecue party in a low-income Toronto neighbourhood heavily populated by newcomers trapped in low-income menial jobs, at which he served "lamb curry and halal chicken biryani" to the multicultural crowd (Jimenez, 2008: A14).

After examining the inter-provincial mobility of immigrants from 1976-1981,

Trovato (1998) found that “those most recently arrived were also the most likely to move” (Krahn et al, 2003). In contrast, immigrants who had lived in Canada for ten years or more exhibit similar mobility patterns to the Canadian-born, and that “the primary reason immigrants go to large cities is the existence of well-established ethnic communities” (Ibid, 2003). This is interesting because it demonstrates a problem that could potentially be solved by successful PNPs, such as the case of the German Mennonite community in Steinbach, Manitoba, where the supported creation of an ethnic community ensures that an immigrant community will have a strong network outside of an urban setting.

While economic immigrants and their families applying directly to Citizenship and Immigration Canada are free to choose where they want to live, government-sponsored refugees and provincial nominees do not have this same initial freedom. Once they are established and have received permanent resident status however, many do choose to live in Canada’s first-tier cities (Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal). Thus, the main challenge for second and third-tier cities, like Manitoba,—is not only to attract and select desirable immigrants through its PNP, but to retain them. This implies not only keeping suitable candidates within provincial borders, but also achieving an appropriate regional distribution, so that newcomers are not simply clustered in the two or three largest urban centres in the province.

Applicants who meet these requirements must also visit the province on an exploratory visit of at least seven days, during which potential immigrants are to not only assess business opportunities, but also local lifestyles, to ascertain whether a suitable life may be established in Manitoba. During the exploratory visit, prospective immigrants are

encouraged to visit schools and housing, in addition to mandatory attendance of two days of presentations (which are also offered in either Mandarin or Korean). The intention is to correct immigrants' pre-migration perceptions of Canada, which may be inaccurate, particularly depending on which region an individual will be settling in. For reasons such as distance and cost, exploratory visits were not made by the vast majority of immigrants who settled in the prairie provinces in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Current Manitoba immigration policy's emphasis on ensuring that both the province and the immigrant is aware of the challenges to be faced, and can more adequately prepare to overcome said challenges, is wise for all parties involved.

The federal selection system "was not addressing Manitoba's labour market needs, because it favoured the admission of high-tech workers who were needed in Central Canada, but rejected the tradespeople who were desperately needed in Manitoba" (August and Leo, 2006: 21). Tradespeople are in high demand throughout the prairies, both in urban and rural areas, due to the oil industry booming in Alberta, mining in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and construction in all three provinces. Nurses and other healthcare professionals are also in high demand in the region, with immigration currently providing the most immediate solution to the problem. Nurses and caretakers from the Philippines have been migrating to Manitoba in growing numbers in recent years through the MPNP, resulting in the Philippines being the top source country for immigration to the province in 2007 with 29.9 percent (3,279) (Government of Manitoba, 2007). In 1999, the Manitoba government established the Nurses Recruitment and Retention Fund "to support one-time funding costs for specific strategies or initiatives to attract and keep registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and registered psychiatric

nurses in Manitoba, and to promote nursing as a profession” (CIC, 2001: 12). Women make up more than half of primary applicants from the Philippines, and the ensuing sponsorship of family members is further contributing to the presence of this community throughout the province.

In contrast, in Ontario, until the recent changes that came with the inception of Opportunities Ontario, occupations eligible for nomination were restricted to managerial and professional positions (Government of Ontario, 2009). Moving towards Manitoba’s model to some degree, Opportunities Ontario’s approved occupations list has been expanded to include many skilled trades, and other positions that require college and/or apprenticeship training (Ibid). This move reflects the inherent characteristic of all provincial nominee programs, which focuses on frequently updating eligibility policy to reflect a province’s labour market changes.

The means by which desirable migrants are attracted, selected, and settled have changed, as has the definition of ‘desirable immigrant’. Agricultural immigration, which was the foundation of the settling of the West, is still a part of Manitoba’s immigration policy, but a diverse new list of skilled workers and other professionals, such as nurses and trades people, are arriving through Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia’s PNPs—from new source countries, including China, the Philippines, India, and the Ukraine. Those provinces’ cities and towns are changing, and economic growth is among the strongest in the country. In provinces such as Manitoba, established provincial nominee programs are being lauded as a model for the successful integration of newcomers in a manner that benefits the communities they live in across the country, and by the federal government. Attracting immigrants is not enough, however.



Immigrants will behave like the region's sons and daughters, and leave unless they find opportunity.

## **Chapter 2: Research Context**

### **Research Problem: Immigrant Dispersal**

While the section above makes it evident that PNPs have provided many individuals the opportunity to build successful lives for themselves and for their families while contributing economically and otherwise to the communities they have settled in, attracting valuable workers who come from abroad remains problematic in many locations. There are many reasons that these second-tier and third-tier cities have such a hard time attracting and retaining skilled immigrants (remote location, lack of services, lower salaries, climate, etc). This chapter addresses this problem, examining both the barriers to this type of settlement, as well as the opportunities that settling outside of the GTA provides to newcomers and their families.

Knowing that statistically, recent immigrants who settle in second and third-tier cities are more successful than their more urban counterparts (Bauder, 2004; Hyndman et al. 2006), why aren't immigrants choosing smaller cities and towns to settle in? *The Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC)* Wave 1 asked immigrants how location of settlement was chosen. The most popular responses were: social and familial networks; employment opportunities; educational prospects; lifestyle; and business prospects (Hyndman et al., 2006: 11). Thus, based on immigrants' own articulation, key barriers include lack of social and familial networks, perceived difficulty finding suitable employment and climate. Other sources show that a lack of awareness of cities outside main three gateway cities is also a major barrier to regional dispersion of professional

immigrants (McIsaac, 2003; Shanes, 2006; and Vardy, 2008). Settlement services in many smaller cities are often lacking, although this is not uniformly the case. On the website of Settlement.org, one can search for all settlement services available in any Ontario city. Frideres notes that “there are major differences in the services and the level of language training available across the country. In larger centres, [LINC] Level 8 is offered, while in smaller centres the most advanced might be Level 3” (Frideres, 2006: 6). This deficiency in specialized services, such as those targeting specific ethnic communities, or professions, is a difficult problem to solve, since funding for settlement services is largely linked to the number of people in a given location who may use said services.

Of all the barriers listed above, the lack of pre-existing social and familial networks in smaller cities is perhaps the most difficult barrier to address through policy. Many recent immigrants list this as their chief criterion, but without establishing a crucial “first wave” of immigration in a city lacking diversity, how can this barrier be addressed? Proximity to a large metropolis such as Toronto could fulfill this gap initially. For example, given the right job opportunity, a professional immigrant such as a physician or nurse might be willing to live in a third-tier city such as Guelph (located approximately a one-hour drive from Toronto) without family or social connections if they have easy and frequent access to said connections in the nearby city. In time, through family sponsorship or word of mouth, other valuable immigrants from their community could be enticed to relocate there. In fact, one trend identified by Manvi Bista (2009), in her study of South Asian female dependents living in small and medium-sized Southern Ontario cities,--is that making new social connections with others from the same ethnic group/

source country is easier, and more manageable in the second-tier cities than in gateway cities such as Toronto. For example, respondents in her study stated that they were much more likely to approach strangers who shared their ethnicity in their current second-tier cities of residence than in Toronto, where many had previously lived (Bista, 2009).

Employment opportunities are commonly perceived to be greater in larger cities due to more diversified economies. This is likely true for low-skilled labour or employment requiring on-the-job training. However, for professional immigrants, opportunities might in fact be greater in certain cities or regions of Canada due to regional shortages. For example, Newfoundland and Labrador, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan are eager to employ internationally-trained physicians through provisional licensing, which means that they can sidestep the common qualification of being a fellow of a Canadian College of Physicians, such as the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC), which requires two years of Canadian experience (Vardy et al., 2008). This provisional licensing is far less likely in provinces such as Ontario and British Columbia, which means that immigrants internationally trained as physicians have much more easy and rapid access to suitable employment in some regions of the country than others.

Also related to employment is the popular notion that salaries are lower outside of the three largest gateway cities. Mary Shanes' 2006 study explores this discrepancy. The five second-tier cities used for this study are: Calgary, Edmonton, Ottawa, Hamilton, and Winnipeg. Shanes compares the labour-market integration of recent immigrants by comparing their levels of education as well as their average income to the Canadian-born population in relation to the same comparison made between recent immigrants in Toronto to the Canadian-born. The difference between the two groups (newcomers and

Canadian-born) is generally much smaller on average in second-tier metropolitan areas. For example, average income of very recent immigrants living in second-tier metropolitan areas ranges from \$17,630 to \$24,810 vs. \$28,000 to \$37,870 for Canadian-born workers, in comparison to \$20,030 for recent immigrants in Toronto vs. \$39,100 for the Canadian-born (Shanes, 2006: 48). For professional immigrants, these figures are likely quite different, and would merit further analysis in another study.

Lifestyle is listed as another barrier to professional immigrants selecting smaller cities for settlement. A lack of services such as place of worship, international food shops, and general cultural amenities may indeed be the case in many places. These amenities reflect the current population of a city, and thus could be developed over time as an ethnic community expands. Other lifestyle factors associated with living in a smaller city could in fact be framed as advantages of settling there: cleaner air/environment, lower crime rates in most places, shorter commutes to work and/or school, etc. This category of factors that can be framed either as barriers or advantages to immigrant settlement will be further discussed in the next chapter, showing the relative strengths and weaknesses of five of Ontario's second and third-tier cities.

It has also been shown that many immigrants select gateway cities as their initial location of settlement simply because of limited awareness of other options. Lusi and Bauder (2008) conducted a study on the experiences of the Filipino communities living in Guelph, Kitchener-Waterloo, and Niagara Falls, showing that "the type of pre-migration information immigrants receive has a great deal of influence over their settlement choices and immigration experiences in second-tier cities" (p.1). This certainly reinforces the argument made earlier that once a first 'pioneer' ethnic community settles in a particular

city, that barrier will be removed for future prospective immigrants, who will also be more likely to have heard of the location through word of mouth.

As mentioned previously, suggestions have been made by policymakers that federal and provincial governments should have some say in determining where immigrants settle for a fixed amount of time. Of course, a more rights-based approach—and a more realistic one—would be to provide individuals with the incentive to do so through either granting extra points, or priority selection in the case of the provincial nominee program. This is an idea that is deserving of further exploration. In fact, if the extra points were allotted under a special point-allotment scheme at the Opportunities Ontario level, and the contract to stay in the specific location was conditional to successful employment and for a fixed duration, this would not be so different from the current practice of medical students accepting contracts to work in Northern Ontario and other rural areas for specific periods of time after completing their residencies in exchange for either student loan forgiveness or salary increases. In some cases, depending on CIC visa post processing timeframes, the expedited application process provided by Opportunities Ontario could mean that spending a period of time (3-5 years) residing in a smaller city not selected by the immigrant could result in attaining full freedom of mobility (permanent resident status, and even citizenship) faster than applying through the federal skilled worker stream. Since “it is the professional class that is the most mobile,” (CIC 2001), this type of scheme could be used to provide opportunity to internationally trained and educated professionals seeking timely immigration to Canada.

Some authors are of the opinion that settlement outside of the GTA in Ontario is so undesirable to potential immigrants that “such a category of immigration is not likely

to attract the highly skilled immigrants—those for whom the policy is intended—because of the limitations it would place on them and the options they have on the global market” (McIsaac, 2003: 4). Given some of the factors listed above, I suggest that for many migrant—particularly those with family dependents—incentives to live in more rural locations could have significant positive outcomes. It is true that in general, small towns and cities have fewer employment opportunities than large urban centres. However, Opportunities Ontario, which is explicitly employer-driven, provides individuals who have been offered permanent, full-time positions before settlement the opportunity to bypass lengthy application processing timeframes for permanent work visas and permanent resident status. In short, only skilled workers who *can* be integrated in local labour markets will be successful through the PNP.

### **Research Design**

Before segueing into the following empirical research and results, I would like to define how cities are classified by size for the purpose of the following discussion. Frideres offers a valuable breakdown or categorization of Canada’s cities. “Today, we find that there are 25 cities in Canada with a population of 100,000 or more...four of the centres have a population of over 1,000,000 [first-tier] and four between 500,000 and 1,000,000 [second-tier] and 17 between 100,000 and 500,000 [third-tier]” (Frideres, 2006: 3). Thus, unlike all other provinces, Ontario is in a unique position, due to its status as Canada’s significantly most populous province, in that it boasts a large concentration of second-tier and third-tier cities. The five cities selected for analysis in this study were chosen with the aim of representing as wide a scope as possible in terms of location, size, climate, and diversity.

In the next section, I will examine the barriers and opportunities faced by immigrants settling in small and medium-sized cities in the context of five second-tier and third-tier cities in Ontario. The five cities, in ascending order of population size, are: Thunder Bay, Guelph, London, Hamilton, and Ottawa. These cities were chosen for their wide range of size, local economies, current population demographics, and proximity to Toronto. Figures on the Toronto CMA are also included to provide a basis of comparison between the cities I am assessing for immigrant desirability and the city that most of the province's newcomers currently choose to settle in.

Ottawa, as the nation's capital and Ontario's second-largest city, offers a unique experience to immigrants, with its bilingual job economy, and vast number of public-sector jobs. Hamilton and London offer an urban setting with high-quality post-secondary institutions, and access to both Toronto and the United States as business markets. Guelph, located less than a one-hour drive from Toronto, has experienced significant growth in ethnic diversity in the past several years, fuelled by the presence of high-tech, manufacturing, education, and agricultural industries. Finally, Thunder Bay is added to the sample to represent Northern Ontario, and a city that does not currently have high numbers of foreign-born workers.

The analysis is based on the desirability index developed by Jennifer Hyndman and Nadine Schuurman (2004), which ranked five second-tier and third-tier cities in British Columbia based on criteria identified by immigrant respondents to the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC) (Statistics Canada 2003). The authors categorized LSIC respondents' articulations of why they chose to settle in a particular British Columbia city into four broad categories: 1) job/business prospects

(37.8%); 2) the presence of family and friends (35.6%); 3) educational opportunities (12.1%); and 4) lifestyle factors (5.6%) (Hyndman and Schuurman 2004). The percentages in parentheses above represent the proportion of immigrants listing each factor as a decision-guiding reason for selecting a particular city for settlement. While Hyndman and Schuurman's model is of great use in the context of their study, the criteria used had to be altered for this study when adapted to the Ontario context.

The main results and interpretations of Hyndman and Schuurman's index were that certain factors, such as city size, disproportionately altered results, and each broad category of decision-making factors produced different rankings for the cities in that study (Ibid). Thus, instead of simply mimicking Hyndman and Schuurman's index, the following section takes the same broad four categories of factors identified by the authors and informed by the results of the 2003 LSIC survey, and provides a more detailed picture of the data within each category, adapted for the Ontario context. Data was compiled mostly from the 2006 Census, using Statistics Canada's Community Profiles. Additional data, such as that related to climate, crime, school performances, and geography, was collected from maps, statistics published by the Weather Network, Statistics Canada's 2007 Crime Severity Index, and the Fraser Institute's Report Card on Secondary Schools. All data was collected for the five Ontario cities named above, and compared with the same statistics from Toronto. In cases where figures from Toronto were extremely different from the five sample cities, the Toronto data is excluded from the chart, but discussed in the text below. This is done in order to prevent distortion of significant differences between the sample cities when the proportion of the figures listed is severely altered by Toronto's large population and immigrant base.



### **Chapter 3: Results**

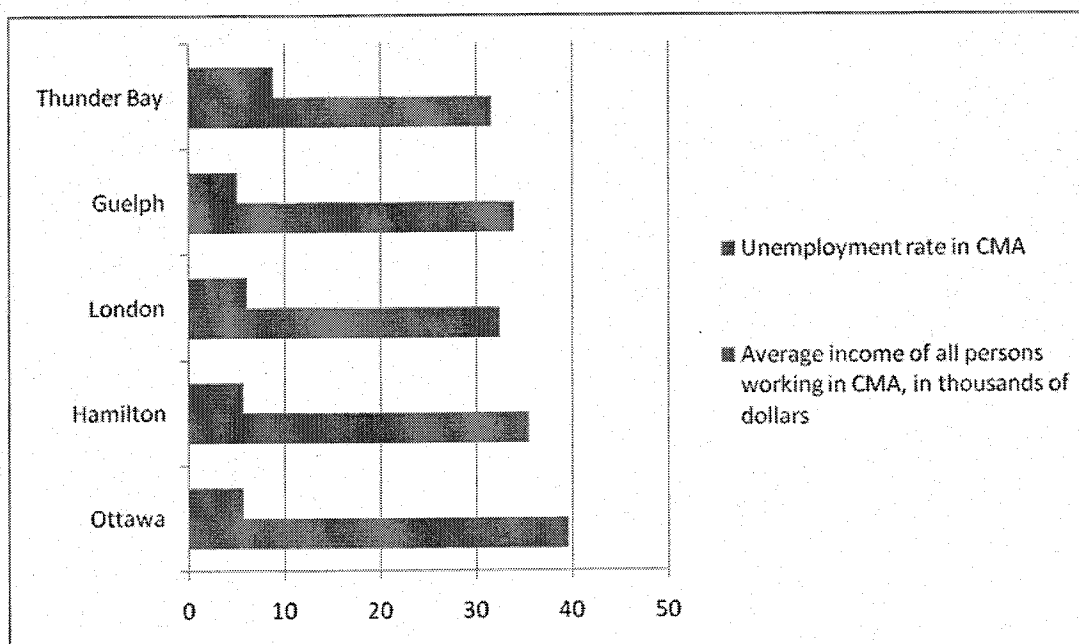
The four broad categories of job/business prospects, presence of settled immigrant communities, educational opportunities, and lifestyle offerings discussed provide a vast set of data that enables an assessment of each of the study's small and medium-sized cities' relative advantages and disadvantages, from the point of view of prospective immigrants. The decision-making process of immigrants is based on what each individual/family values most in their location of settlement in Canada according to the LSIC.

The first category, job/business prospects, examines two different economic factors to assess potential for economic success for immigrants settling in a given CMA. These facts are:

- A) Average income of all employed persons in CMA (2006 Census)
- B) Unemployment rate in CMA (2006 Census)

Economic prospects are arguably the most important factor that will determine an individual immigrant and/or family's long-term successful integration into Canadian labour market and wider society. The chart below outlines relative earnings and unemployment rates in all five sample cities.

Chart 1: Economic Factors (Job and Business Prospects)



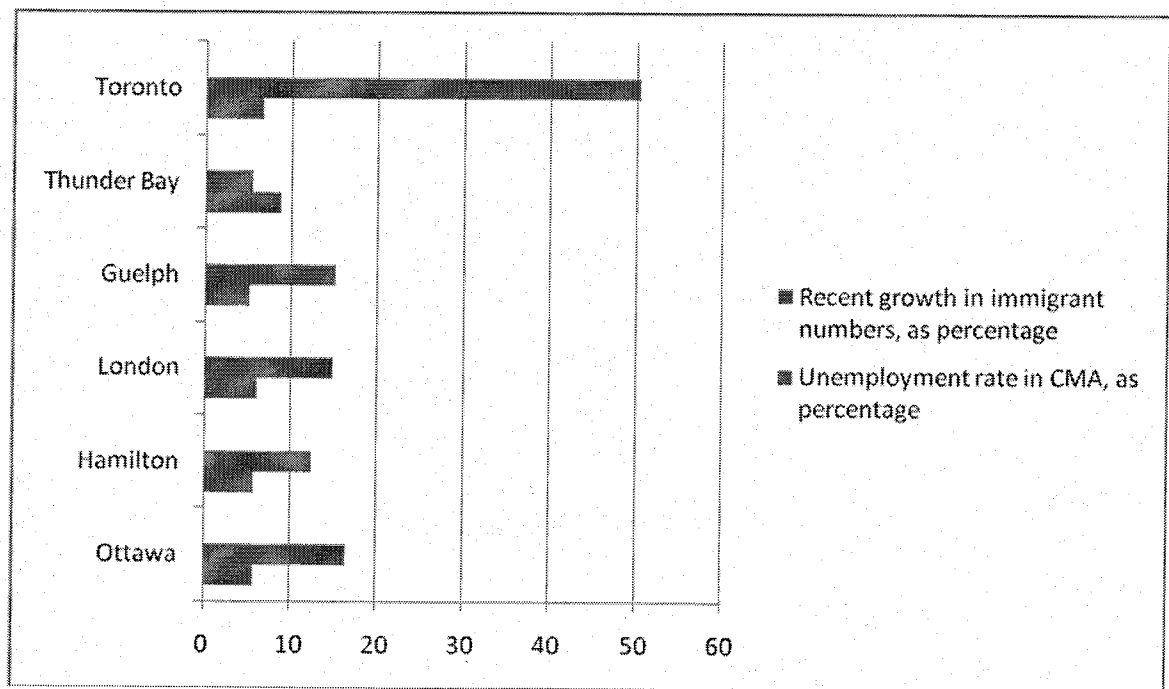
*Source: 2006 Census*

The chart above shows that Ottawa and Guelph are the overall best cities for economic prospects, while Thunder Bay and London, with their relatively high unemployment rates and lower incomes, may be less promising labour markets to try to break into. In particular, the high unemployment rates indicate high risk for settlement without previous employment set up. One unique circumstance that should be considered in the category of economic prospects is the bilingual status of much of Ottawa's employment opportunities. The knowledge of both English and French is required for many positions in that city, including a large proportion of jobs with the city's largest employer—the federal government. For skilled immigrants applying through the federal (CIC) skilled worker class, English language skills may result in a sufficiently high score to gain permanent residency, but this does not mean that language barriers for those choosing to settle in Ottawa will not pose a serious challenge to labour market integration.

The second broad category, adapted from Hyndman and Schuurman's study is that of the presence of family and friends (social and ethnic networks), measured through the presence of pre-existing immigrant communities in each CMA. Similarly to the authors, this settlement motivation is measured in two ways:

- A) Total of all immigrants in each Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) who immigrated since 1991 (Statistics Canada Community Profiles data is broken down into the following groupings: "all immigrants", "before 1991", "1991-2000", and "2001-2006").
- B) Growth in recent immigrants from 2001-2006. Shown as number of recent immigrants (2001-2006) as a percentage of all immigrants living in CMA.

Chart 2: Pre-Existing Immigrant Communities



*Source: 2006 Census*

The chart above illustrates some interesting information. The City of Guelph, while small in size, is experiencing relatively rapid growth in immigrant landings. One could argue that the reason for this is at least partly due to the results of other factors assessed in this

section, such as proximity to Toronto, the impressive relative safety of the city, and access to plentiful job and educational opportunities. Perhaps the figure that stands out the most in the chart above is the relatively minuscule number of immigrants living in Thunder Bay, as well as the lower growth rate there. One factor that accounts for this is the fact that most foreign-born in Thunder Bay settled previous to 1991 (several decades previous, in many cases) (Statistics Canada 2006). Also, the remote location of the city is likely a main reason for these statistics, as well. Like all cities, with major upcoming demographic changes throughout the province and country, the prosperity of Thunder Bay's economy may increasingly depend on higher numbers of foreign-born workers (DiverseCity Counts Report, 2009).

Another city that stands out in the chart above is Hamilton. Although the city does have a significant foreign-born population, when juxtaposed against its fairly low recent growth in immigrant landings, this raises questions about why current immigrants aren't choosing the City of Hamilton in numbers proportional to its large second-tier status. Satzewich and Shaffir (2007) discuss this issue, noting that recent immigrant flows to Hamilton are unique both in terms of country of origin and immigration categories. For instance, while other large Canadian cities cited Asian and other non-European countries as top source countries for newcomers, Hamilton counted many European immigrants between 1991 and 2001, with most coming from troubled Baltic nations such as Croatia, Yugoslavia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina (Ibid: 118). This trend is clearly linked to the large refugee outflow from this part of the world during political strife there at the time. Thus, this most recent cohort of new immigrants to Hamilton shows "proportionately more family class immigrants and refugees and proportionately fewer skilled workers and

business immigrants than in the rest of Canada” (Ibid: 119). These classes of immigrants can be especially difficult to absorb, since linguistic, economic, and--in the case of refugees--health barriers are often greater than they are for the economic class. If Hamilton and the large number of family class and refugee newcomers are to have a mutually beneficial long-term relationship, opportunity through settlement services, help from more settled members of immigrant communities, and educational prospects for younger immigrants are especially crucial.

Without existing ethnic communities from their native countries, many individuals may be reluctant to settle in a city, particularly when this city is far away from Toronto. Also of note is the relatively low number of recent immigrants in London. For a city of significant size (large third-tier city), one would expect higher numbers, and this invites speculation that London may find itself on a similar path as that outlined above for Thunder Bay if diversity in the city’s demographics does not increase.

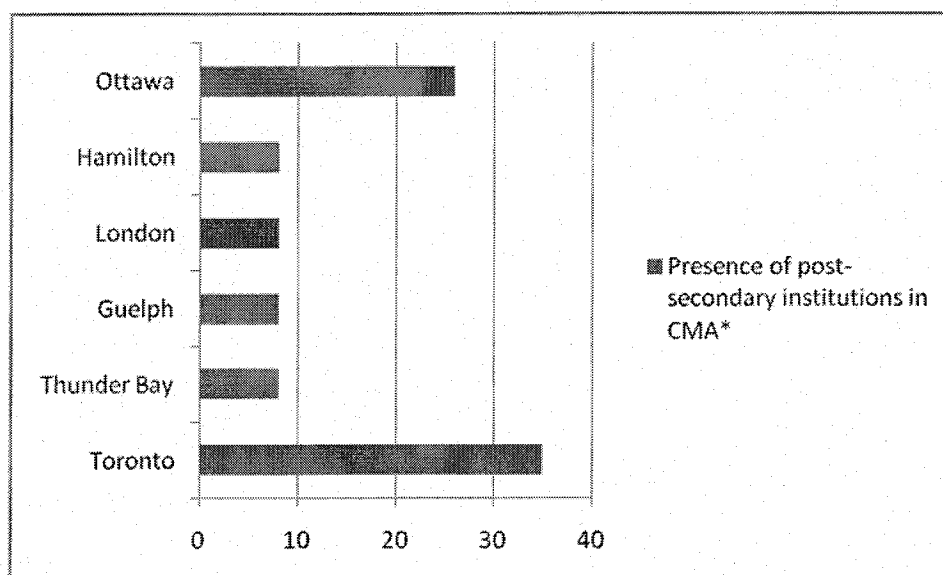
For the category of educational prospects, three values are considered:

- 1) Availability of post-secondary educational institutes in each CMA, with points awarded for each institute (University= 5, University College= 4, and Community College = 3).
- 2) Average rankings (out of 718 Ontario public high schools) of all high schools in each CMA (all data from the 2008 Fraser Institute Report Card on School Performance, which uses Grade 9 and Grade 10 Educational Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) test scores from 2007).
- 3) The proportion of the CMA’s population holding a minimum education of college diploma or undergraduate university degree.

The presence of quality post-secondary educational institutes is a strong draw to a city, as it demonstrates opportunities to improve one’s employability by either updating

credentials, gaining the tools to start a new career, or give children the opportunity to live in the same home and/or city as their parents while studying. The assigned point values to the three types of post-secondary educational institutes are taken from Hyndman and Schuurman's study. Although the rationale behind this point system is not elaborated upon in the study, I assume universities are granted more points than colleges and university-colleges because of the wider scope of professional and academic degrees they offer, and thus, their attractiveness to immigrants with professional ambitions for either themselves or their children may be greater for this reason. In many cases, colleges are smaller, and graduates may not have the same earning potential as university graduates.

Chart 3: Educational Opportunities: Post-Secondary Schools



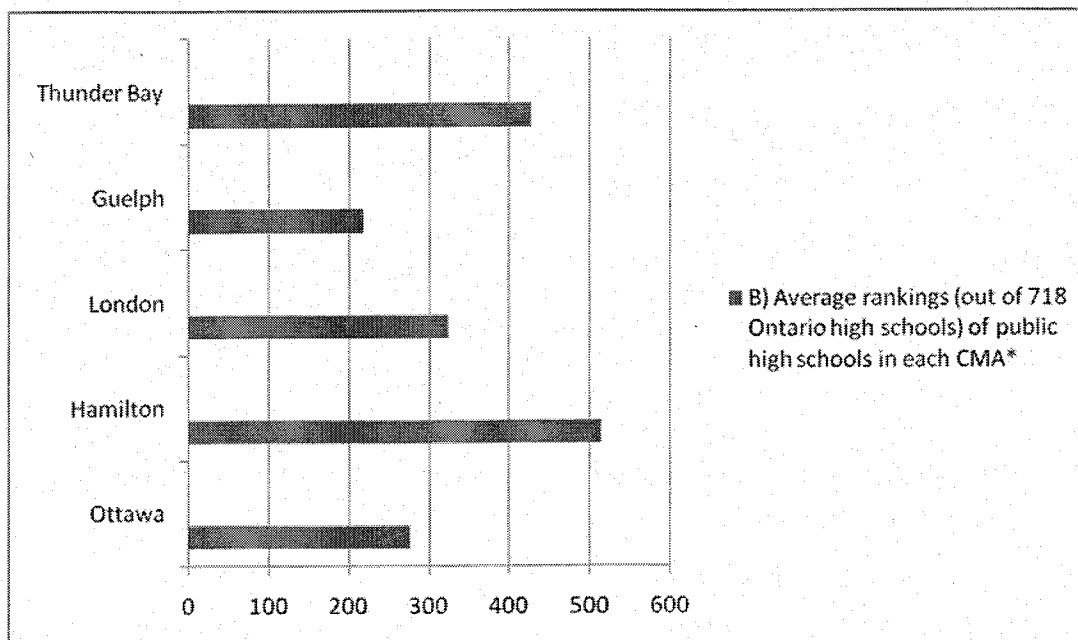
*Source: Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, 2009*

It should be noted that this value, adapted from Hyndman and Schuurman's work, only considers institutions located within CMA borders. Thus, a CMA such as Guelph, which has only one university, does not get extra points for being within easy commutable distance from several of Canada's best post-secondary institutions, such as the University

of Toronto, University of Waterloo, and Wilfred-Laurier University. Instead, the city receives the same score (8) as Thunder Bay, which is not within commutable distance from any schools other than those located within the CMA.

I added the rankings of local high schools as this is a strong measure of evaluating the opportunities available to the children of immigrants, who may face challenges adapting to Canadian schooling, due to language barriers and/or major differences between curricula between their previous school and new Ontario school. Skilled immigrants who occupy professional, middle-class positions in their native countries often consider their children's educational opportunities when deciding to emigrate, and where they will settle. Cities such as Guelph and Ottawa, where public high schools had much better average rankings than other cities evaluated, should use this asset to attract valuable newcomers who are settling as families with children. Coincidentally, these two cities are also poised to offer the most post-secondary educational opportunities as well.

Chart 4: Educational Opportunities: Secondary Schools

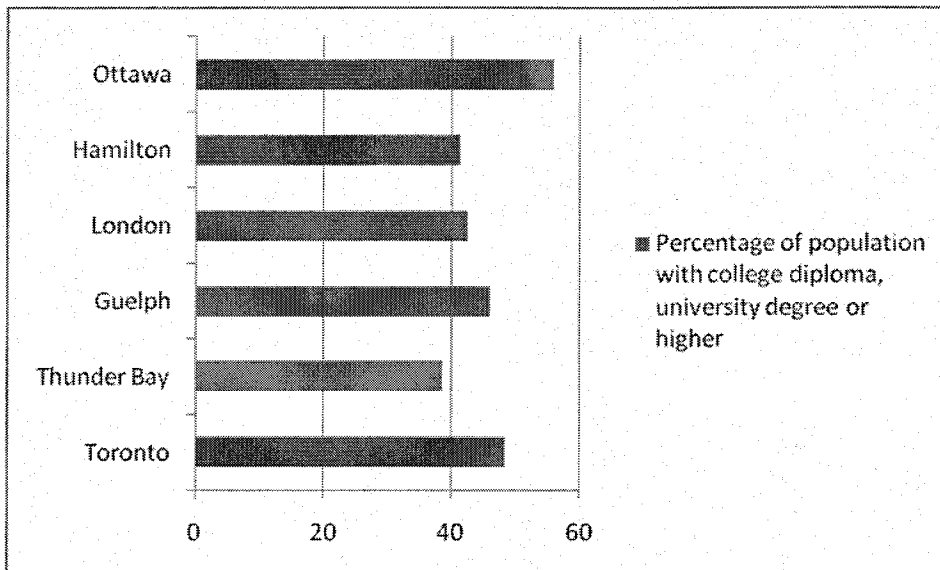


*\*Data Source: 2008 Fraser Institute Report Card on School Performance, which uses Grade 9 and Grade 10 Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) test scores from 2007 for ranking.*

In the chart above, the numerical rankings represent a city-wide average, out of 718 Ontario public high schools, for each CMA (with 1 being the best performing high school in the province, and 718 being the worst performance). The poor average ranking of Hamilton and Thunder Bay's high schools is the standout result of this data set. As Hamilton and Thunder Bay are very different cities, in terms of their economies, sizes, and demographics, it is likely that the underlying problems and reasons for this poor performance are different, but nevertheless may startle prospective immigrants searching for a good place to raise a family. In a continuing trend, Ottawa and Guelph are the clear winners in this ranking, as well. Whether the impressive results of the two cities' high school students are a reflection of superior instruction, increased involvement of parents, or other reasons is unclear, but very intriguing. Cities with the positive trait of highly ranked public schools should leverage this information in attracting highly skilled immigrants to Canada.



Chart 5: Educational Opportunities: Local Population



*Data Source: 2006 Census*

The third education value, which uses census data to calculate the percentage of adults in a given CMA with completed post-secondary education, is also modeled after Hyndman and Schuurman's index. Interestingly, Ottawa (at 55%), performs very well in all three educational factors assessed, as does Guelph, in second place once again. Of interest would be to see comparative data that separates Canadian-born workers from immigrants, and whether the cities would be ranked similarly.

The fourth and final category, which most significantly deviates from Hyndman and Schuurman's model, is that of lifestyle/quality of life. For this category, the only factor assessed by the authors was climate. Interestingly, when respondents to the LSIC were asked to identify their primary reason for deciding to immigrate to Canada, the answers were quite different from those articulating how the city of settlement within Canada was selected. In fact, lifestyle factors ranked number one, at 32% (Statistics Canada, 2007). Since these responses come from individuals four years after landing,

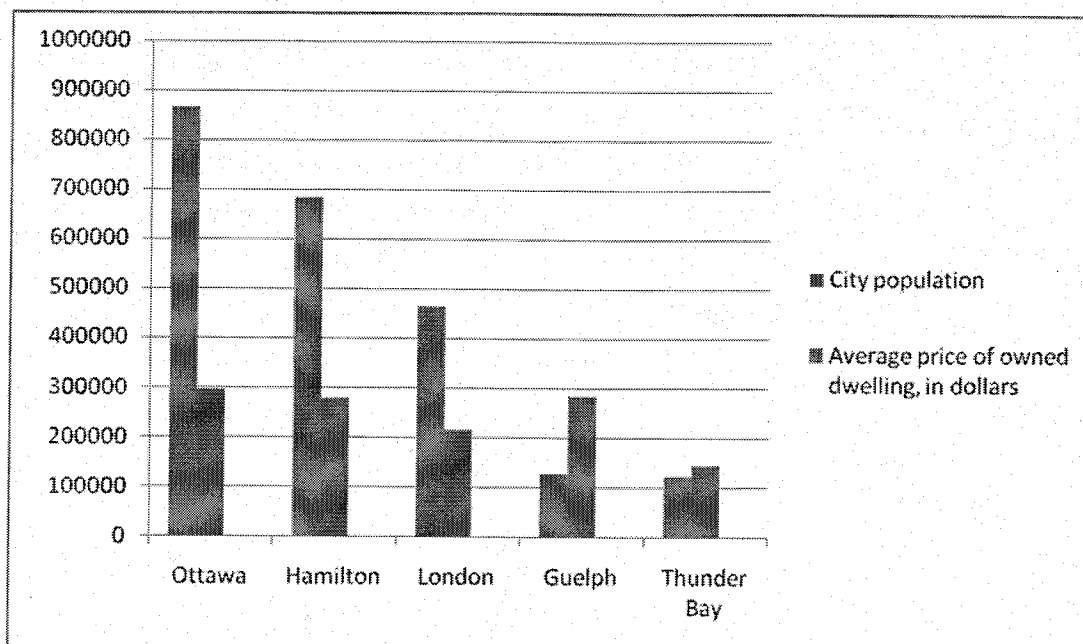
I've construed them to be indicative of retention factors not only of the country in general, but of the cities and specific communities where respondents reside. Thus, finding Hyndman and Schuurman's decision to reduce lifestyle factors down to climate insufficient, I've split this category into four factors to be assessed:

- 1) City size (Census 2006 CMA population);
- 2) Safety of the CMA (assessed by using Statistics Canada 2007 Crime Severity Index rating);
- 3) Climate (measured by annual snowfall); and
- 4) Housing affordability (measured by Census 2006 average price of an owned dwelling).

These four factors were chosen because as a whole, they capture non-economic advantages and disadvantages of choosing a location for settlement. The size of a city largely determines the availability of many services and amenities (such as settlement services, hospitals, public transit, and cultural offerings). Since most immigrants either land in Canada with family members, or plan to either sponsor family members from home or start a family here, the safety, or crime rate of the location of settlement is surely valuable information to be considered. Climate is included in this category because there is some significant variance in the harshness of the winter season throughout the province, which undoubtedly affects all individuals quality of life. Finally, housing affordability is considered, since many immigrants dream of becoming homeowners, and may achieve this more easily and/or quickly depending on where they settle.

The chart below combines two of the aforementioned factors, since they are often thought to be related.

Chart 6: Lifestyle Factors: City Size and Housing Affordability

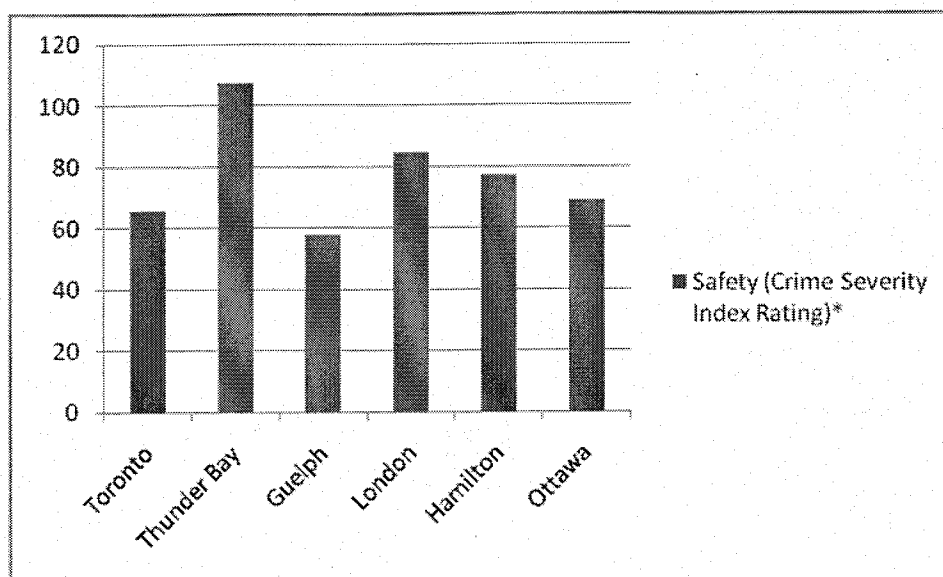


*\*Source: 2006 Census*

Clearly, the assumption that real estate markets are directly related to city size is not always correct. The smallest sample city, Thunder Bay, does happen to have the most affordable housing of the five cities, but the link between size and price is less evident in the case of the four other cities. Hamilton, with approximately quadruple the population of Guelph, boasts lower average house prices than the much smaller third-tier city. For immigrants hoping to achieve the goal of home ownership in Canada, this data on relative affordability may be of interest. Of interest for the sake of comparison, the average price of an owned dwelling in Toronto in 2006 was \$403,112, and the provincial average was \$297,479. All five sample cities fall below both Toronto and average provincial prices (with the explanation for such a high provincial average being that nearly half of the province's home are located in the Toronto CMA) (Statistics Canada 2006). As previously shown in the analysis of economic opportunities, average incomes are indeed

lower in the cities with more affordable housing, but it merits mention that the disparity between earnings is much less than that between housing prices in most cases (particularly Thunder Bay).

Chart 7: Lifestyle Factors: Safety



*Source: Statistics Canada 2007*

*\*Statistics Canada Crime Severity Index accounts for both amount of crime as well as relative seriousness of crimes committed in a given jurisdiction.*

Statistics Canada's Crime Severity Index was developed to measure changes in the severity of crime across Canada, in addition to volume. The ratings reflect different weights assigned to crimes of varying seriousness, and are calculated as follows: "the number of police-reported incidents for each offence is multiplied by the weight for that offence [and] all weighted offences are then added together and divided by the corresponding population total" (Statistics Canada 2007).

The chart above, which includes data on the five cities, as well as Toronto, Canada, and Ontario (for the purpose of comparison), shows some interesting data on

crime in Ontario. Of the five CMAs in this study, only Thunder Bay is ranked above the national average rating. Of perhaps even more relevance in our Ontario context, only Ottawa and Guelph were ranked as having lower Crime Severity than the provincial average. Interestingly, these same two cities scored most favourably in most other categories of this analysis. Toronto is included in this chart as a measure to compare crime severity in the city where the majority of immigrants to Ontario settle, and several other CMAs in the province. Toronto, as the province's largest city, boasts a perhaps surprisingly low Crime Severity rating, when contrasted with much some much smaller cities. The underlying reasons for this contrast are not examined in further detail due to the scope of this study, but should be pondered nevertheless.

LSIC respondents consistently rank poor climate conditions as one of the most difficult changes in their lifestyle to adjust to upon settling in Canada. The long winters, low temperatures, and heavy snowfall are a stark contrast to the much milder, or even tropical climates that Ontario's top source countries for immigrants enjoy. For the purpose of this ranking, I've compiled statistics on the average annual snowfall in all five CMAs:

Chart 8: Lifestyle Factors: Climate

CITY	AVERAGE ANNUAL SNOWFALL (CM)	AVERAGE JANUARY DAILY HIGH TEMPERATURE (DEGREES CELCIUS)
OTTAWA	198	-5
HAMILTON	153	-2
LONDON	213	-2
GUELPH	158	-2
THUNDER BAY	196	-8
TORONTO	111	0

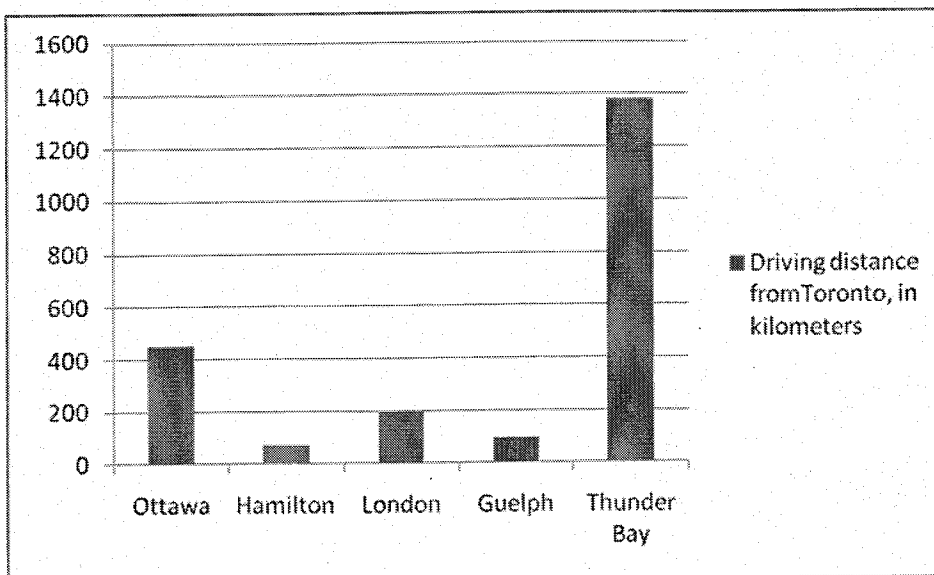
*Source: The Weather Network*

As is apparent in the table above, despite some variance in snowfall and temperature, such as London's high annual snowfall or Thunder Bay's relatively cold winters, all five cities in the sample experience substantial winters, which cannot be avoided in the province of Ontario. Nevertheless, it is evident that Toronto experience much less severe winters, which appeals to many foreign-born residents. In Hyndman and Schuurman's BC context, where climate varies dramatically from Vancouver Island to northern and inland parts of the province, this factor may have a much stronger weight than it does in Ontario.

One final variable that cannot precisely be defined as a lifestyle category, but is

nevertheless of interest in this section is that of relative proximity to Toronto. In both British Columbia and in Ontario, the great majority of immigrants tend to settle in the province's largest city. In 2002, 87% of newcomers who settled in BC did so in the Vancouver CMA (Ibid: 3). Similarly, 2006 Census data shows that in the period of 2001-2006, 77% of immigrants landing in Ontario settled in the Toronto CMA (Statistics Canada Census 2006). Since immigrants are evidently and undeniably attracted to Toronto, one may argue that cities located in commutable distance from the city could potentially have an added advantage in attracting and retaining valuable immigrants to settle there. Thus, as a discussion point, the distance of each CMA from Toronto ought to be considered. This factor, excluded from Hyndman and Schuurman's study, is of relevance because of the many opportunities that proximity to Ontario's largest city provide. Access to employment and business opportunities, as well as ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious communities in the Toronto CMA and surrounding areas is a much valued feature of settling in a nearby city such as Guelph or Hamilton (each less than 100km from Toronto).

Chart 9: Distance from Toronto



*Source: All data from Google Maps*

Guelph and Hamilton are each less than 100km (driving distance) from Toronto, granting residents of these CMAs easy access to all services and cultural offerings that may not be available in their cities of residence. Furthermore, access to friends, family, and other members of their cultural/ethnic/religious communities is greatly increased by this close proximity to Canada's largest and most diverse city.

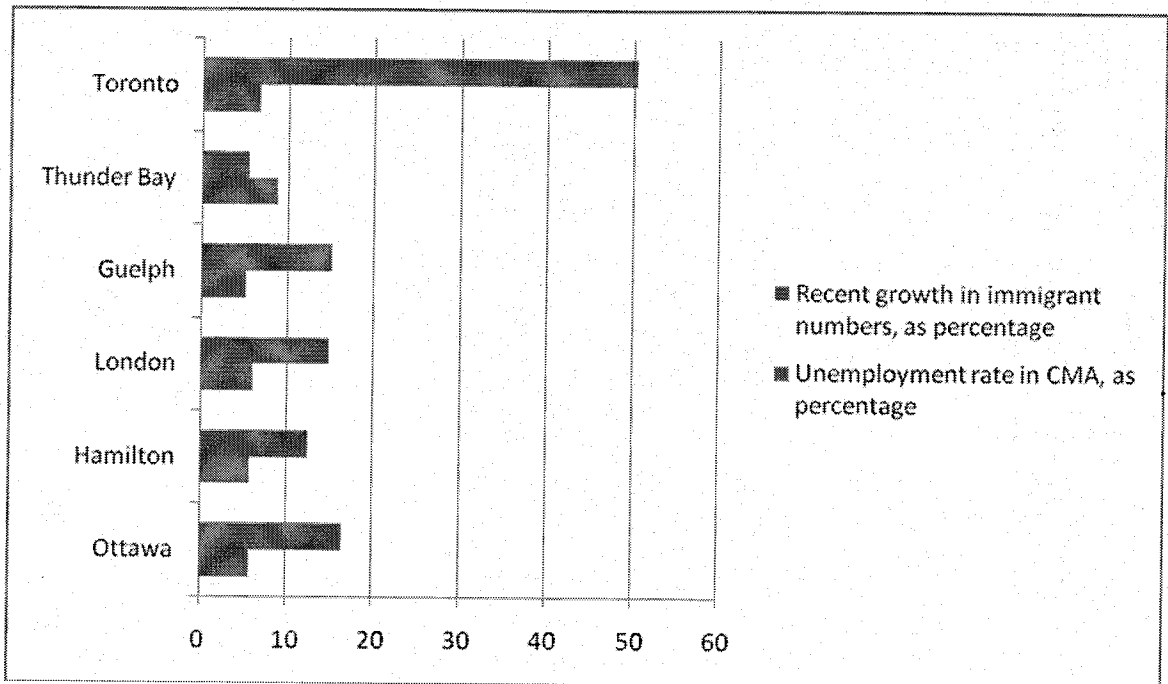
Arguably equally important are the increased opportunities for employment and education for immigrants living in small or medium-sized cities located near either Toronto or other cities. The high density of population in Southern Ontario means that cities are less isolated than they are elsewhere in the province, and goods and services unavailable in the CMA of residence can usually be easily attained nearby.

Much can be learned from where immigrants are currently choosing to settle. For instance, the data above showed which cities have experienced faster growth in immigrant numbers in recent years--Ottawa, London, and Guelph. Let us compare this



with some economic data.

Chart 10: Comparison of Recent Growth in Immigration and Unemployment Rates



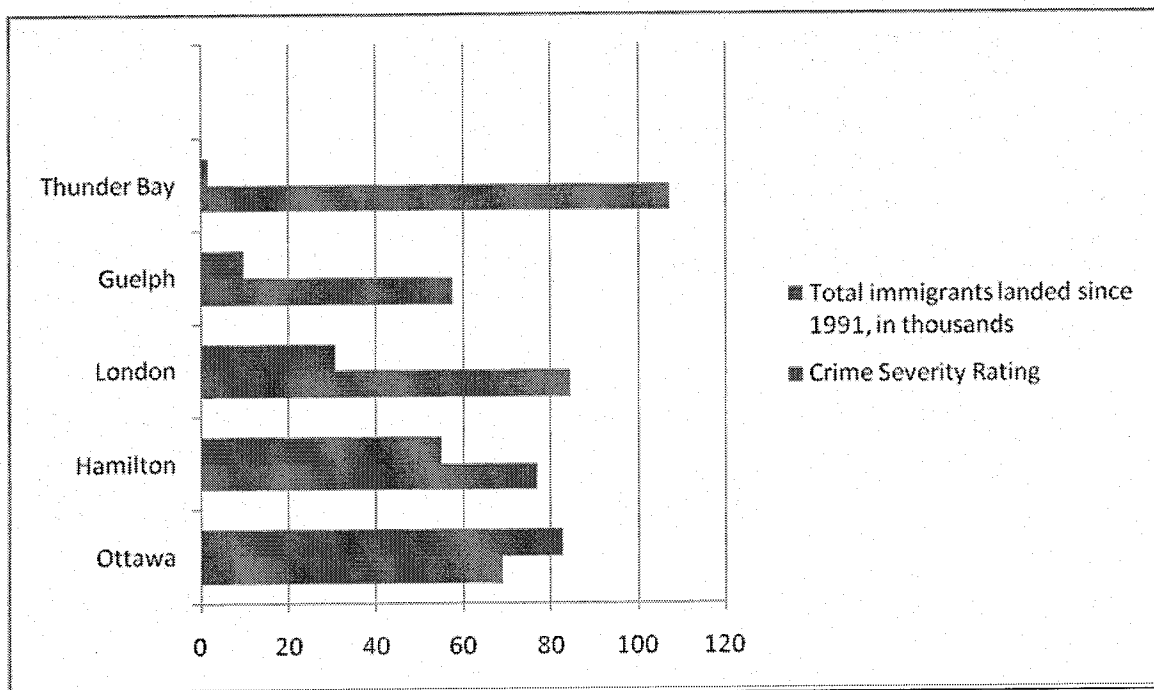
*Source: 2006 Census*

The trend from the comparison of the two values in the graph above is that of the five sample cities, those with highest rates of growth in immigrant numbers are also those with lower unemployment rates. This is not to say that high immigrant numbers necessarily results in low unemployment, but rather that immigrants are likely attracted to cities with strong labour markets. For cities with weaker labour markets, the recruitment of potential immigrants to fill specific positions through Opportunities Ontario is a great option. Individuals who would be deterred from selecting a small or medium-sized city due to fear of few job openings may feel differently if they had a full-time fair-wage job offer. Particularly for those emigrating from smaller urban centers, or even rural areas,

the transition into a second-tier city with employment pre-arranged is a relatively low stress option to international relocation.

One of the most surprising results above is that pertaining to the sampled cities' Crime Severity Ratings. After all, an important reason that many immigrants choose Canada as their destination is the country's reputation as a safe place. A common misconception is that smaller cities are safer than large metropolitan areas. Unfortunately, media can influence this perception, even linking high crime rates with the presence of immigrant communities.

Chart 11: Comparison of Crime Severity Ratings with Number of Recent Immigrants



*Source: 2006 Census*

In the chart above, the size of a CMA was found to have little-to-no bearing on how cities

were ranked for other lifestyle factors such as climate and safety. While many might believe that city size and crime rates might have an inverse relationship, the study showed that population size cannot be used to predict safety, and that each city ought to be assessed individually in determining its desirability in this respect. The two smallest third-tier cities examined in this study illustrate this point well. While Thunder Bay, with a population of 122,907, has a much higher Crime Severity Index rating than any other sample city, including Toronto, Guelph, with a population of 127,709 (Census 2006), is the safest CMA in Canada (Statistics Canada 2007).

The four categories of factors shown above, which all impact immigrants' settlement patterns, enable some conclusions to be drawn regarding the opportunities and/or barriers faced by newcomers willing to settle in each respective location. These conclusions will be discussed below, in light of Opportunities Ontario's potential to broaden the province's immigrant dispersal outcomes.

#### **Chapter 4: Discussion and Conclusion**

The conclusions drawn from the preceding empirical study can be narrowed down as follows: 1) scholarly implications, 2) municipal policies, and 3) provincial policies. The majority of research on immigrant dispersal in Canada has focused on provinces other than Ontario, such as Manitoba and British Columbia. Bauder (2003) concludes that "[s]maller communities seem to reward immigrants more generously than gateway cities" (2003b: A13). Knowing that Ontario receives such a large share of the country's newcomers, and that increasing numbers are venturing outside of the GTA, more scholarly research is needed to assess the positive and negative outcomes for these

individuals, and the changing cities they settle in.

What the empirical analysis above shows clearly for the Ontario context is that each city offers unique barriers and opportunities to skilled foreign workers and their families. The various degrees of attractiveness of Ottawa, Hamilton, London, Guelph, and Thunder Bay cannot simply be chalked up to any single factor, such as size, existing immigrant communities, climate, or distance from Toronto. Once all these factors are combined, the research above illustrates trends showing that the cities of Ottawa and Guelph are generally outperforming the other three sample cities in all categories. The consistently positive rankings of the two cities in all factors excepting housing affordability indicate that if other small and medium-sized cities in Ontario wish to increase their share of the province's skilled immigrants living in their communities, they may wish to study and learn from Ottawa and Guelph's relative success. Thunder Bay's desirability from the point of view of a skilled immigrant, ranks quite low, with Hamilton and London underperforming for their size and proximity to Toronto. The fact that many of the negative factors, such as Crime Severity Index ratings, public high school rankings, and unemployment were shown to be poor for the same cities suggests that certain cities have deeper underlying problems that prevent them from being attractive to immigrants. As mentioned previously in this section, future expected labour force demographic trends will impact these cities disproportionately unless immigrants attraction and retention can be increased. A report released by the Maytree Foundation, based on research by Ryerson University's Diversity Institute predicts that by 2012, all net job growth in Canada will come from immigration (DiverseCity, 2009: 4).

As noted previously, Hyndman and Schuurman's 2004 study relied on data from

the 2003 LSIC. Since the empirical study of this paper is so closely linked to that research, the 2003 LSIC also shaped this paper, despite the fact that the third and final wave of the LSIC was released in 2007. At the time of the 2003 survey, respondents had been in Canada for approximately two years. The third wave polled individuals after being in the country for four years. The 2007 responses yielded interesting differences when contrasted with the 2003 study. After four years of settlement, instead of proximity to family and friends, immigrants identified satisfaction with their decision to come to Canada (even if they hadn't yet found suitable employment) because of quality of life here (Statistics Canada 2007). Difficulties attaining high proficiency in an official language were deemed a major problem in economic settlement in the 2007 survey, suggesting that language barriers may have been underestimated both by immigrants and immigrant officials in many cases. The fact that Opportunities Ontario does not have a minimum language proficiency requirement is worrisome in this respect, since nominees with lesser language skills may face greater difficulty in the labour market if they leave the employer they were nominated by.

Scholars interested in immigrant dispersal and regionalization within a certain area of the country have much to learn from the past and present experience of various levels of government to achieve such demographic changes. Since Manitoba's experiences with PNP were extensively discussed in the literature review, it is worthy of mention here that a major difference between Manitoba and Ontario is that Manitoba, in the absence of a major city like Toronto, is merely attempting to prevent provincially nominated immigrants from leaving the province. Ontario's PNP, if expanded, will have to grapple with the lack of control of *where* in Ontario nominated workers settle or more

exhibit similar mobility patterns to the Canadian-born, and that “the primary reason immigrants go to large cities is the existence of well-established ethnic communities” (Ibid, 2003). If large cities like Toronto cannot absorb current numbers of immigrant workers in all fields, and is thus failing some immigrants, then perhaps some incentives other than well-established ethnic communities will eventually become enough to convince significant numbers of skilled immigrants to settle outside of the cities.

Discussing the necessity of involving municipal governments in policy affecting the settlement of newcomers, Margaret Walton-Roberts acknowledges the 2006 Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA), “which explicitly aims to build relationships with municipalities in areas of immigration that are related to their interests” (2007: 14). Walton-Roberts goes on to state that “[t]he inclusion of municipalities in immigration planning and discussion is the first step to addressing the disconnect between a nationally initiated, but locally managed process” (Walton-Roberts, 2007: 14). Since the city characteristics discussed earlier show that some cities are faring much better than others, it is a good idea to encourage dialogue between municipalities, and also between municipalities and provincial and federal levels of government. Opportunities Ontario does currently conduct outreach to target audiences such as universities (aimed at international students) and large employers, but focuses on the GTA since for logistical reasons. Employers located outside of this area, such as those in the mining and agricultural industries, may benefit from improved awareness of the PNP. For instance, in conjunction with De Beers Canada’s new diamond mine in Northern Ontario, a contract was recently awarded to open a diamond cutting and polishing facility in Sudbury (Hill, 2009: 1). This facility will require dozens of workers with technical expertise to operate

machinery that has never been used in Canada (Ibid). It is safe to assume that this employer will have to go outside of Sudbury (and Ontario) for most of its workers, and would benefit greatly from the PNPs expedited immigration process, which would allow workers to start much sooner than otherwise possible.

Organizations such as the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), should work to share best practices and exchange information to enhance immigrants' and cities' success with the attraction and retention of valuable immigrants. The AMO "develops policy positions and reports on issues of general interest to municipal governments; conducts ongoing liaison with provincial government elected and non-elected representatives; informs and educates governments, the media and the public on municipal issues; markets innovative and beneficial services to the municipal sector; and maintains a resource centre on issues of municipal interest" (Association of Municipalities of Ontario, 2009). This mandate suggests the organization would be an ideal forum for information sharing and for promotion of immigration and settlement issues at the municipal level in general. The AMO should be considered an important stakeholder by Opportunities Ontario.

Speaking of the 2005 Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA), and of the importance of municipal, provincial, and federal levels of government working together in areas of immigration, Margaret Walton-Roberts states that: "[t]he inclusion of municipalities in immigration planning and discussion is the first step to addressing the disconnect between a nationally initiated, but locally managed process" (2007: 14). In light of the previous chapter, which showed that not all small and medium-sized Ontario cities offer equally advantageous conditions to prospective newcomers, it should be

argued that funding from the COIA should be spend by the province accordingly, rewarding those municipalities that stress the importance of making themselves desirable places to live for immigrants. This point, also made as a recommendation by Bista (2009), does not mean that underperforming cities ought to be penalized, but rather that successful initiatives should be funded so that they continue to flourish. Municipal governments and employers in safer cities should use this information in marketing themselves to potential residents. Similarly, Opportunities Ontario should have this type of information when conducting outreach to target audiences, such as international career fairs, and international students nearing completion of studies in Canada.

International students studying in Toronto who hope to become permanent residents and work in Canada, may have little exposure to other cities in the province, and thus need to be enticed to consider job prospects elsewhere. These individuals, with Canadian-earned credentials, are ideal candidates for PNP. Cities in Ontario that lack skilled workers in professions which require provincially recognized licensing such as most health care professionals, educators, and engineers, should consider appealing to international students completing degrees in these fields locally and use the PNPs expedited processing timeframes and more forgiving regulations than the Canadian Experience Class (CEC). For instance, international students applying through the CEC must have completed a minimum of one year of skilled work in Canada in addition to graduating from a Canadian post-secondary institution (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2009). In contrast, Opportunities Ontario can nominate an international student for permanent residency as long as they have completed at least two years of study here and have a full-time job offer (in any skilled occupation) (Government of Ontario, 2009).



Of course, nothing obligates these nominees to stay in a given city or with a particular employer once they have permanent resident status. Essentially, cities still must be desirable in order to retain valuable provincial nominees.

Throughout this study of examining what makes second and third-tier cities attractive enough to skilled immigrants for these communities to successfully attract and retain said individuals, it is apparent that no single federal or provincial government policy can solve the underlying issues causing the disproportionate distribution of immigrants throughout Ontario's cities. Rather, what is needed is further awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of various cities in immigrant attraction, as well as a conscious awareness by municipal governments of the potentially grave future impacts of low immigration rates in the next decades, as demographic changes result in labour force shortages. Some cities that match immigrants' articulations of what is desirable in a location of residence simply don't attract large numbers of newcomers because of lack of awareness of the city and its offerings.

In the end, the fact that unlike some other provinces' provincial nominee programs, Opportunities Ontario's quota for nominees (excluding dependent family members) is of 1,000 skilled workers or investors per year. Even if Opportunities Ontario is able to facilitate employers located in smaller cities outside of the GTA in hiring and retaining valuable internationally trained workers, the scope will never compete with the masses of immigrants settling in the province through the federal skilled worker class. All of this is not to say that the incentives the program provides to immigrants willing to settle outside of the GTA and to their employers are inconsequential to those individuals or to the communities they settle in, but rather that the larger demographic and economic

trends of the province will not be impacted significantly by a provincial immigrant-selection program unless the scope and/or incentives are much greater. On the whole, Ontario receives a great share of new Canadians, even though they are not evenly distributed throughout the province. Any major expansion to Opportunities Ontario's scope would be very expensive to the province, which currently benefits from large numbers of immigrants without much active recruitment. Therefore, without new policy stressing regionalization of immigrant flows as a priority, it is unforeseeable that the program would be expanded significantly.

However, it can be argued that success of the individuals admitted to Ontario at the inception of Opportunities Ontario will set the tone for the expansion of the program in upcoming years. It will be interesting to see where the first substantial cohort of skilled foreign workers in Ontario's PNP choose to settle permanently, and what mutual impact they and the communities they settle in will have on each other's success in the long term.

Hypothetically, if we imagine a further transfer of the immigrant-selection role from the federal government to provincial governments, resulting in a much wider scope for Opportunities Ontario, what impact would this have on immigrant dispersal in the province? If awareness of the program increased, and the 1,000 annual nominees increased to a high figure such as 50,000, then surely municipal governments and employers located outside of the GTA would have to take action to make themselves desirable to skilled immigrants. The competition for attracting these individuals would possibly result in a scenario of "job-shopping" or "city-shopping" on the part of prospective newcomers. If employers in smaller urban centres used the program with

positive results (i.e. nominated employee is good at job and stays with employer), a positive reputation would develop, enticing more and more companies to recruit temporary foreign workers or workers from abroad to fill their vacant positions. As these increasing numbers of immigrants formed communities in the cities and regions they settle in, others from the same source countries would be much more likely to both be aware of the existence and quality of the smaller cities, and be willing to settle there. Larger numbers of recent immigrants would likely positively impact municipal governments' ability to get funding for relevant settlement services. Since provincial nominees are inherently employed, settlement dollars could be diverted from job banks and resume workshops and more spent on creating welcoming environments through translation/interpretation services, improved second-language training for nominees and especially their spouses, and celebrating diversity in the city.

In conclusion, I recommend that in addition to Opportunities Ontario, employers in second-tier and third-tier Ontario cities should look to municipal governments, in cooperation with provincial and federal agencies, to assess what their communities can do to increase attractiveness to newcomers. While some factors, such as climate or geographical location, are impossible to improve upon, much positive work could be done elsewhere. For instance, settlement agencies catering to the needs of newcomers should seek funding to provide services such as: linking to mentorship/bridging programs for internationally trained professionals, translation and interpretation services (at least for top non-official languages), referrals to healthcare professionals who speak non-official languages, etc. As discussed elsewhere (Bista, 2009), it is often the female spouses of skilled immigrants who experience more difficulty integrating into a smaller

city in some respects (I.e. into the labour market). A local culture of inclusiveness, which supports multicultural businesses, and generally makes newcomers feel welcome, can have a significant impact on the retention of immigrants in the area.

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