*J*ournal of *R*ural and *C*ommunity *D*evelopment

Welcoming Communities? An Assessment of Community Services in Attracting and Retaining Immigrants in the South Okanagan Valley (British Columbia, Canada), with Policy Recommendations

Author: Wolfgang Depner & Carlos Teixeira

Welcoming Communities? An Assessment of Community Services in Attracting and Retaining Immigrants in the South Okanagan Valley (British Columbia, Canada), with Policy Recommendations

Wolfgang Depner
University of British Columbia, Okanagan Campus
Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada
depner72@shaw.ca

Carlos Teixeira
University of British Columbia, Okanagan Campus
Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada
carlos.teixeira@ubc.ca

Abstract

The urban bias of Canadian immigration has led to policies intended to redirect immigration away from major metropolitan areas. Policy makers have identified the Okanagan Valley in British Columbia as a region that could benefit from additional immigration. Whether the policy succeeds depends on the presence of (a) quality services in a welcoming community; (b) affordable, suitable, and adequate housing; (c) educational opportunities; (d) employment opportunities that offer an adequate income; and (e) opportunities to integrate into the community. This study evaluates community services and their role in attracting and retaining immigrants to the South Okanagan, a sub-region of the Okanagan Valley. The study uses data from four focus groups with 31 immigrants, 10 semi-structured interviews with immigrants, and 15 interviews with key informants. The researchers found that immigrants face two major obstacles in their service use: physical access, given the near-absence of an effective public transportation system; and financial instability, as many of the surveyed immigrants rely on low-paying 'survival jobs' in the cyclical tourism and service industry. These findings have led to recommendations to improve regional socio-economic conditions.

Keywords: Regionalization of immigration, community services, immigration, economic development, Okanagan Valley, Canada

_____

1.0 Introduction

It has become commonplace to say that immigration is changing the face of Canadian society. Between 2001 and 2006, the share of the Canadian population born outside the country rose by 13.6%, as Canada welcomed more than 1.1 million new arrivals; foreign-born residents now account for almost 20% of the national population – the highest share since 1931 (Statistics Canada, 2007a). One measure of this diversity is the rising number of visible, non-Caucasian minorities within Canadian society (Statistics Canada, 2010a). These communities have further deepened Canada's diversity, and their presence pays tribute to the tolerant nature of Canadian society (German Marshall Fund, 2010; Kobayashi, Li & Teixeira, 2011), even as the discourse over multiculturalism has shifted (Banting, 2010; Banting & Kymlicka, 2010).

Many scholars see immigration as one of the principal solutions to a series of emerging problems facing the Canadian economy (Akbari 2011; Kitagawa, Krywulak & Watt, 2008). They include a shortage of skilled workers (British Columbia, 2010; Hodgson, 2010; Kitagawa et al., 2008) to replace retiring baby boomers in fields such as health care. Nolin, McCallum and Zehtab-Martin (2009) note that immigrants will account for all net growth in Canada's labour force and total population by 2011 and 2026 respectively. Researchers also identify immigration as a source of economic innovation and cultural enrichment (Kitagawa et al., 2008).

Canadian immigration is primarily an "urban phenomenon" (Hiebert, 2009, p. 42). Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs), especially Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver, attract the lion's share of immigrants to Canada. About 70% of all newcomers admitted into Canada between 2001 and 2006 settled in those three cites, because they offer the best job prospects, among other benefits, such as cultural support networks (Kobyashi et al., 2011; Statistics Canada, 2010a).

Although this pattern has its benefits, some observers fear this urban bias will stress Canada's urban infrastructure (such as schools) and create an illegal underground economy that depends on a growing supply of unskilled immigrant labour (Stoffman, 2003). Others have predicted that this urban bias may make it more difficult for immigrants to integrate, trapping them in poor, ethnic ghettos, where they do not need to learn the language of their new home. While scholars have challenged the transferability of these findings to Canada (Hiebert, 2003; Hiebert & Ley,2003; Ley & Smith, 2000), the urban bias of Canadian immigration continues to generate interest (Leitner & Preston, 2011; Walton-Roberts, 2005), while other scholars sound the alarm about the declining state of rural Canada (Petrov, 2007; Statistics Canada, 2010b; Walton-Roberts, 2005).

Provincial and federal politicians have proposed policies to reverse this trend. Measures include incentives to encourage skilled professionals (such as medical doctors) to work in rural areas and the 'regionalization' of immigration away from Canada's metropolitan areas into the rural hinterland (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2001; Reimer, 2007). Some believe that regionalization would benefit not only rural regions, but also immigrants themselves (Bauder, 2003; Bernard, 2008).

1.1 The Regionalization of Immigration

The redistribution of Canadian immigration for the benefit of specific provinces, regions, and specific communities is not a new concept (Garcea, 2003). In 2002 then-minister of citizenship and immigration Denis Coderre proposed to settle one million immigrants in rural Canada by 2011 (Abu-Laban & Garber, 2005; Clark, 2002). While this since-abandoned proposal enjoyed some level of public and political support, it also generated considerable controversy, partly because it encountered constitutional obstacles (Abu-Laban et al., 2005; Rose & Desmarais, 2007; Stoffman, 2003).[1]

Notwithstanding such criticisms, regionalization continues to interest the federal government (Brock, 2009; Burstein, 2007; Copps, 2007; Garcea, 2003). Provincial governments, which share constitutional jurisdiction over immigration under S.95 of the Canadian constitution, influence immigration policy through Provincial

---

[1] As Rose et al. (2007) note, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* limits the ability of governments to actively direct the initial destinations of immigrants as they arrive in Canada, as well as their subsequent settlement choices.

Nominee Programs (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2010; Rose et al., 2007). These programs grant provinces the right to select immigrants to fill specific labour (and, in the case of Quebec, linguistic) needs (Walton-Roberts, 2005). Municipalities, which lack constitutional powers, have also developed measures to attract and retain immigrants (Nolin et al., 2009; Reimer, 2007; Walton-Roberts, 2005). Burstein (2007) concludes that all levels of government have an interest in rebalancing Canada's population. In this context, the Okanagan Valley has been identified as a region that could benefit from additional immigration. The demographics of the Okanagan region do not reflect larger provincial and national patterns in that the area is a 'white and aging region', with an economy focused on tourism and retirement communities (Teixeira, 2011).

The successful integration of immigrants requires that communities offer: (a) quality services in a welcoming community; (b) affordable, suitable and adequate housing; (c) educational opportunities; (d) employment opportunities providing adequate income; and (e) social and cultural integration opportunities (Teixeira & Li, 2009). Policy makers and immigration researchers are increasingly seeking to understand the relationship between immigrants' attainment of these needs and their successful integration into Canadian society (Teixeira, 2011). While these issues have long been a concern in metropolitan areas, they are also increasingly important in small- and mid-sized cities and rural areas (Broadway, 2000; Drolet, Robertson, Multani, Robinson, & Wroz, 2008; Halseth & Ryser, 2006; Nolin et al., 2009).

Relatively little is known about immigrants' settlement experiences, including access to local services, in Canada's more remote areas, including the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia. This study addresses this gap by evaluating the state of community services and their role in attracting and retaining immigrants in this area (Figure 1).
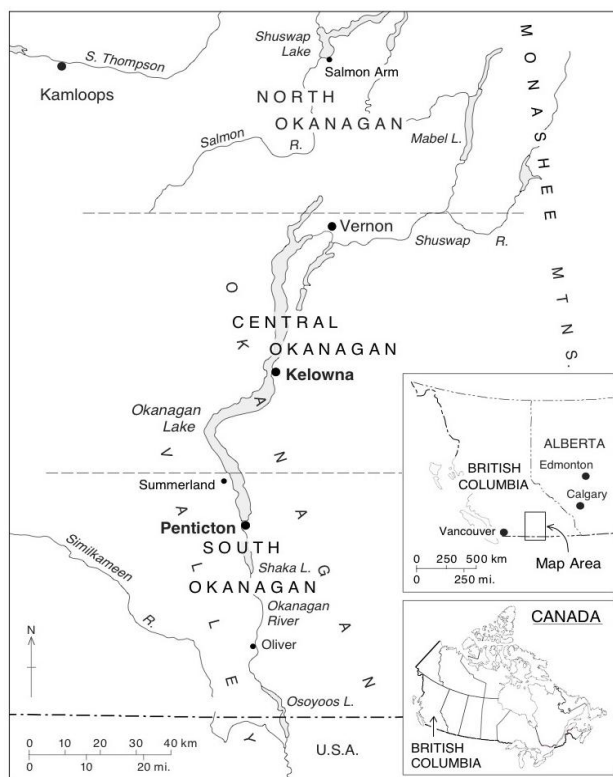

Figure1. Location of the South Okanagan Valley, British Columbia, Canada

In the face of potential demographic and economic stagnation, if not decline, local stakeholders are considering the possibilities of regionalizing immigration into the South Okanagan. The key questions in this study are: (a) what is the state of local services supporting immigrant communities? ; (b) what role do services play in the successful integration – attraction and retention – of immigrants to this remote region of the country? This study builds on research (Tamang, 2010; Walton-Roberts, 2005; Zehtab-Martin & Beesley, 2007) responding to a data gap identified by Nolin, McCallum and Zehtab-Martin (2009), who note that the geography of social provision ranks among the "key areas of inquiry" as immigration patterns continue to re-shape, even "polarize" (p. 6) the social geography of Canada. Yet service providers (along with others) are struggling to understand this emerging landscape, because much of the available research concentrates on the major urban centres of Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver, as they attract almost 70% of new arrivals (Nolin et al., 2009; Radford, 2007; Walton-Roberts, 2005).

2.0 The South Okanagan: A Regional Profile

The study area is roughly halfway between Vancouver and the Alberta border, a narrow strip of land that like its namesake lake runs north to south, from Vernon to Osoyoos near the border with the United States. Estimates published in 2010 put the regional population of the Okanagan Valley at 351,342 — about 7.75% of B.C.'s population (B.C. Statistics, 2010). Kelowna, the largest municipality, has an estimated population of 121,306 and serves as a commercial and institutional hub. Other regional centres include Vernon, Penticton, Summerland, Oliver and Osoyoos (see Figure 1). This study focused on Summerland, Penticton, Oliver, and Osoyoos.

Historically, the region has depended on the regional fruit and tourism industries for economic survival in displaying the characteristics of a regional hinterland. This dynamic changed at the end of the 1970s as the region started to develop a retirement industry that built on its attractive scenery, mild winters, and plentiful sunshine (Aguiar, Tomic & Trumper, 2005; Webber, 1999). This industry creates a particular social geography of adults-only housing, gated communities, golf courses, and health care services.

Regional tourism has mirrored these developments. Whereas the region once advertised itself as a destination for affordable family vacations, it has changed its focus to attract an older, wealthier clientele (Aguiar et al., 2005; Getz et al., 2006; Martin & Williams, 2003). The regional wine industry has also collaborated with tourism agencies and commercial real estate developers to expand its reach (Poitras & Getz, 2005). The growing presence of the wine industry in the Okanagan with its allies in economic development offices and the development community led to the so-called 'Silicon Vineyard' strategy, an attempt to attract high-tech industries to the region on the strength of its lifestyle and low labour costs (Aguiar et al., 2005).

Such efforts, coupled with other broader regional developments such as the 2005 opening of the University of British Columbia–Okanagan,[2] have contributed to a regional housing boom (McEwan 2010; Teixeira, 2011), primarily but not exclusively in the Central Okanagan around Kelowna, one of the fastest-growing cities in Canada,

---

[2] The provincial government created the university by re-naming and expanding the main Kelowna campus of Okanagan University College, which ceased to exist. Its smaller satellite campuses in Kelowna as well in surrounding communities became part of Okanagan College.

now experiencing rising housing costs and low rental vacancy rates (Teixeira, 2011). This boom also spilled over into the South Okanagan, where local leaders must now deal with the fall-out of an ambitious and unrealized growth agenda (Trudeau, 2008; Walkinshaw, 2010a, 2011a, 2011b). While the aforementioned housing boom has somewhat faded (Michaels, 2011), it has had two effects. First, regional housing prices experienced a temporary spike, which is only now starting to subside. This spike has in turn affected the livability of South Okanagan communities in an arguably negative way. Consider Penticton, the region's largest and arguably most important community. According to *MoneySense* (2012),[3] Penticton finishes near the bottom in terms of affordable housing, when compared to other communities across the country. Worse, local wages have failed to match rising housing costs, as Penticton also ranks near the bottom of the *MoneySense* (2012) survey in terms of job prospects and household income.[4] In short, residents living throughout the region face high housing costs and a limited number of well-paying job opportunities. Readers are encouraged to keep this point in mind as the paper unfolds.

2.1 South Okanagan: Aging Demographics

Second, and more importantly, the recent housing boom has responded to a demand from seniors looking to retire in the region. This has further skewed the demographics of the South Okanagan towards the upper end of the age spectrum, a trend that B.C Statistics (2011a) expects to continue through 2036, as baby boomers (whether they currently reside in South Okanagan or come from elsewhere) prepare to retire. Table 1 shows that the region is already significant older than the rest of the province. If predicted trends hold true, seniors aged 65 and over could make up close to 35% of residents living throughout the region (B.C. Statistics, 2011b). Table 1 shows that some communities in the study area have already passed that threshold.

Table 1. *The Median Age and Percentage Share of Population Aged 65+ for Selected Communities in the South Okanagan*

Jurisdiction	Population	Median Age	% of Population of 65
Summerland	10,825	49.5	25.8
Penticton	31,910	47.3	25.7
Oliver	4,370	54.6	35.0
Osoyoos	4,755	58.5	37.0
British Columbia	4,113,485	40.8	14.5

Source. Statistics Canada 2007b.

In this sense, the South Okanagan will mirror the rest of the province as its population grows older thanks to falling birth rates and rising life expectancy (B.C. Statistics, 2011a). But this congruence with a general provincial trend should not blind readers to regional variations. According to the projections, the share of

---

[3] According to *MoneySense* (2012), Penticton ranks 132rd among 190 Canadian communities in terms of overall desirability and livability.

[4] In terms of jobless rate, Penticton finishes 121st overall, 160th overall in terms of household income and 169th in terms of affordable housing *MoneySense* (2012).

seniors aged 65 and over will on balance grow faster in rural areas than in major urban areas such as Greater Vancouver area (B.C. Statistics, 2011b), which will benefit from its status as the preferred destination of people from elsewhere, whether they would be internal or international migrants (B.C. Statistics, 2011b). In fact, the share of seniors aged 65 and over appears to be growing the fastest in the study area (B.C. Statistics, 2011b).

Yes, the region will continue to see its overall population grow through 2036 compared to other rural regions of British Columbia as it continues to attract internal and international migrants. But this projected population growth appears to be below the provincial average, according to available figures for the Greater Okanagan region as a whole (B.C. Statistics, 2011a). Figures for the regional district encompassing most of the study area paint a comparable picture (B.C. Statistics, 2011b). Not surprisingly, these trend-lines pose a number of problems for local business and maintenance of various public services. They mean the region's workforce – already small compared with the provincial workforce (Statistics Canada, 2007b) – will continue to shrink in a relative way, forcing fewer individuals of working age to support a growing portion of seniors unless the region can find ways to attract and retain qualified workers, including immigrants. This problematic has drawn the attention of the provincial government for some time. In 2004, the then-Liberal government in Ottawa partnered with the B.C. Liberal government in Victoria to launch the Regional Immigration Initiative (Nolin et al., 2009), which identified the Okanagan region (and by implication, its sub-regions) as one of eight areas that could benefit from additional immigration.

This agreement sought to "create awareness of immigration as a tool to support socio-economic development outside of the Greater Vancouver area," (ii) to "increase the capacity of these communities and regions to attract and retain immigrants" in the identified areas; and (iii) "to develop strategies to improve the ability and capacity of smaller cities and communities outside of the Greater Vancouver area to attract and retain immigrants" (Nolin et al., 2009, p. 32-33). It has inspired other policy initiatives, such the creation of the Welcome B.C. Initiative in 2007 (Nolin et al., 2009). But this agenda also acknowledges past failures and confirms the relative unattractiveness of the region to immigrants, who will account for almost 80% of B.C.'s population growth through 2036 (B.C. Statistics, 2011a).

2.2 Immigration Patterns in British Columbia

In the 1980s and 1990s, few immigrants were willing to settle outside Vancouver or Victoria (B.C. Statistics, 2009b). More recent statistics have revealed a small reversal in this trend. Kelowna (located in the Central Okanagan) has emerged as the third most popular destination in the province. It attracted over 13% of all B.C.'s immigrants who choose to settle in 'other areas' as of 2007, doubling its share of immigrants relative to 1990. (B.C. Statistics, 2009b). This said, the contemporary racial diversity of the Okanagan Valley as a whole has remained relatively low compared to the rest of the province, although it is changing (Bahbahani, 2008; Steyn, 2008). Whereas the CMAs of Vancouver and Victoria attract immigrants who qualify as visible minorities, areas outside these centres primarily attract immigrants from Western Europe (the United Kingdom, Germany) and the United States (B.C. Statistics, 2009b; Rose et al., 2007). At the same time, internal rather than international migrants, often in the form of affluent white retirees from other parts of Canada, have driven the greatest growth in the

regional population (Teixeira, 2011), as noted earlier.

2.3 Immigrants in the South Okanagan

Even so, the South Okanagan has had a history of attracting European and non-European immigrants from a range of source countries. Like much of British Columbia, immigrants from the British Isles settled the South Okanagan during the mid to late 19th century (Koroscil, 2003). Aguiar and Marten (2011) note that many of the new arrivals aspired to recreate an improved version of their old homes. The latter days of the 19th century also witnessed a transition in the regional economy from ranching (which relied on First Nations labour) towards fruit farming in setting the regional economic base for decades. Notably, this economic transition towards fruit farming accelerated the agenda of turning the region into a space to be reserved for the "educated, white, rich and opportunistic, and obviously not local individuals with capital to invest" (Aguiar et al., 2011, p. 134). Settlers of non-Anglo-Saxon backgrounds so common in the growing urban areas of Canada were to be excluded as much as possible. "Whiteness" (Aguiar et al., 2011, p. 134) became a foundational principle for the region and its economy, which has also placed an on-going premium on skilled trades from western Europe. This immigration pattern changed somewhat after the Second World War when immigrants from Portugal and South Asia primarily India started to take over the fruit industry starting in the 1950s (Leibel, 2007; Teixeira, 2009). Their numbers, however, did not significantly change the ethnic make-up of the South Okanagan. Nor does the available evidence suggest that such a change might be imminent.

Consider the following statistics, starting with Table 2. It shows that the respective populations of selected communities in the South Okanagan include fewer immigrants generally and fewer visible minorities specifically when compared to the rest of the province. In fact, the whiteness of the Okanagan Valley becomes even more apparent, once one looks across the international border into nearby Okanogan County in Washington State, where Hispanics make up almost 18% of the local population (US Census Bureau, 2011), one of the highest concentrations in that state, with numbers expected to rise in the future as youthful Hispanic immigrants both legal and illegal continue to re-shape the realities and perceptions of rural America (Kirschner, Berry, & Glasgow, 2006; Nelson & Hiemstra, 2008).

Table 2. *The Share of Immigrants and Visible Minorities as a Percentage for Populations of Selected Communities in the South Okanagan*

	Immigrant (%)	Visible minority (%)
Summerland	16	4
Penticton	16	5
Oliver	17	4
Osoyoos	18	2
British Columbia	27	25

Source. Statistics Canada 2007b.

In fact, statistics show that the share of immigrants as a percentage of the regional population has actually declined from 17.1 in 1991 to 16.6 in 2006, just as the provincial share of immigrants arriving into Canada has risen (B.C. Statistics, 2006). This appears to indicate that the growth in the numbers of Canadian-born people, either through natural increase or migration from other parts of the province or country, has been greater than the growth of the local immigrant population (Welcome B.C., 2008). It might also be related to the 'greying' of local immigrants, most of whom (about 80%) arrived in the South Okanagan before 1991. Meanwhile, less than 6% of immigrants living in the region (some 775 individuals) arrived between 2001 and 2006 (B.C. Statistics, 2006). Notably, three countries/regions supply the majority of these recent newcomers: the United States (95), Europe (160), and Southern Asia (315), particularly India (310) (B.C. Statistics, 2006). These figures confirm the status of South Asians as the largest single visible minority group in the South Okanagan, accounting for almost 63% of the regional population that qualifies as a visible minority (Statistics Canada, 2007b). But these statistics also largely contradict broader provincial trends concerning source countries. Immigration from Mainland China and the Philippines (two of the top three source countries of immigrants in Canada along with India) has hardly registered in the South Okanagan.

Summarizing, these numbers indicate that immigrants constitute a smaller, far less 'visible' part of the regional population in the South Okanagan compared to the provincial average in confirming the uneven distribution of immigrants in British Columbia. Aguiar et al. (2011) suggest that this current pattern reflects a deliberate path dependency that dates back to the initial settlement of the region by the first wave of Anglo-Saxon settlers. Yes, the subsequent presence of certain 'ethnic' communities has somewhat challenged this conclusion. But most of these ethnic communities did not build ethnic neighbourhoods or enclaves in the region with effects for the subject of this study – the state of community services for immigrants. Most importantly, this pattern denied the historical development of ethnically oriented services and economies, as they exist in larger urban centres such as Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. This absence has forced new immigrants to the South Okanagan to rely on services outside their own group or community, a dependency that has compounded and complicated the barriers facing them (Teixeira, 2011). They include among others concerns about racial tolerance in the region.

2.4 Growing Racial Diversity and Tensions in South Okanagan

Various sectors facing local labour shortages (Leung, 2008; South Okanagan Immigration and Community Services, 2007) such as the construction (Aguiar, McKinnon, & Sookraj, 2011) and fruit industries (Leibel, 2007; Otero & Preibisch, 2010) have tried to close emerging labour gaps and costs by importing seasonal labour in responding to the realities and pressures of neo-liberalism (Aguiar et al., 2011) in British Columbia (Young, 2008). Evidence from elsewhere, however, suggests that this approach actually discourages the permanent settlement of immigrants (Nolin et al., 2009). The temporary presence of several hundred Mexican-born farm workers under the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP) since 2004 also challenges local service providers and community leaders – as seasonal workers deal with problems such as inadequate housing, long working hours, and language barriers (Aguiar et al., 2011; Otero et al., 2010). Other groups, such as Punjabi immigrants who work as contractual farm workers and youth who arrive from Quebec, face similar barriers (Leibel, 2007; Otero et al., 2010).

These realities have on more than one occasion led to racial tensions (Leibel, 2007). One local resident even hosted several racist Internet sites through his service provider company (Roberts, 1998). Although this individual does not represent a majority position, racism remains a concern in the region (Aguiar et al., 2011; Rolke, 2011) as the region tries to reconcile its self-image as a gentile place of retirement and leisure that caters to an aging society with the very demographic, economic and social challenges such an orientation creates. As suggested above, the South Okanagan is facing a potential crisis in its population and economy, which an influx of permanent immigrants could ameliorate. But in competing with other small cities and rural areas in Canada for a relatively small number of new immigrants, the South Okanagan must address the formal and informal barriers experienced by immigrants to attain the declared objectives of civic leaders in attracting, welcoming and retaining new immigrants to the region. This agenda appears to be particularly imperative in light of the fact that any would-be immigrants to the region cannot count – at least for now – on ethnic organization and services to help ease their transition into their new homes.

3.0 Methodology

This study defines community services as (i) settlement services designed specifically to reach immigrant communities and (ii) services that fall either completely or partially within the domain of local municipalities. The authors have chosen this definition because it acknowledges the systemic relevance of settlement services and the importance of municipalities in creating welcoming communities. They supply or support a range of services that affect the settlement experiences of immigrants, such as arts and leisure services, recreation, and local festivals. Municipalities also bear partial or full responsibility for items such zoning, urban planning, and the provision of various forms of infrastructure, including public transportation. Municipalities also continue to assume greater responsibilities in policy areas once firmly in the domain of senior government levels, including the provision of social services, housing, and local economic development services. Municipalities, in short, represent the 'front-line' of public governance, with considerable influence on the daily lives of all residents within their jurisdiction, including immigrants.

Note that this definition of community services does not include general, non-settlement services within the domain of the provincial or federal governments, because their inclusion would have significantly broadened the scope of this research. This omission, however, does not mean that senior levels of governments do not play a role in the effectiveness of community services that reach and support immigrant communities. As the report will note later, many of the local experiences that frustrate immigrants in the South Okanagan require responses that include input from all levels of government.

Data for this study was gathered from June 2010 to January 2011 with four focus groups of immigrants, 10 semi-structured interviews with immigrants, and 15 interviews with key informants and community leaders. In the focus groups and interviews with immigrants, researchers asked a series of open-ended questions about settlement experiences; access to service providers; challenges immigrants face in securing community services; strategies immigrants use to cope with barriers/challenges they encountered in settling in the region; quality of life; employment; and plans for future moves.

Three focus groups took place at the South Okanagan Immigrant and Community Services (SOICS) headquarter in Penticton and one at SOICS' new facility (opened during the research period) in Oliver. The interviews with immigrants took place at a location chosen by the interviewees, usually SOICS. For immigrants to be eligible to participate in the focus groups as well as in the one-to-one interviews, they had to have been born outside Canada, to be permanent residents and be currently living in the South Okanagan. In total, four focus group and 31 immigrants shared their settlement and living experiences in the South Okanagan, including access to local services.

Since community agencies, including service providers, do not have lists of immigrants to South Okanagan, most focus groups participants as well as the immigrants who participated in the semi-structured interviews, were recruited with the assistance of SOICS staff members. Because these interviewees were identified by a service organization, a bias may have been introduced, as the sample may over-represent people in more need of assistance from service providers. In this respect, the research design shares many of the limitations of other exploratory studies that focus on the settlement experiences, including access to service providers (Teixeira, 2011).

Of the 31 focus group participants, 20 were women and 11 were men. Close to one-third were born in Central America or South America, followed closely by South East Asia (29%), with another 10% from Europe and another 10% from Africa/Middle east and the remaining ones (16%) coming from other parts of the world (North America and the Caribbean, Japan, Korea, and China). Slightly over two-thirds of the immigrants arrived in Canada after 2005 and the majority (74%) came directly to South Okanagan. Most (77%) had relatives who sponsored them. The majority (81%) were in their late 30s, early 40s, and could read and speak English fluently. However, close to one-third of the immigrants who participated in the focus groups were taking English language classes through SOICS.

More than one-third (39%) of the respondents had a university degree and another one-third had a college diploma or technical training. However, higher levels of educational attainment for some of these immigrants did not transfer into 'good paying jobs' in Canada. At the time of the focus groups, close to two thirds were working in low-paying, blue-collar, 'survival jobs' (e.g., service jobs and semi-skilled manual jobs). In sum, this group of immigrants was under-employed relative to their educational attainment. The non-recognition of foreign credentials/diplomas and the 'lack of Canadian experience/expertise' were identified as barriers to their integration in the South Okanagan job market.

The 15 key informants and community leaders represented the regional district, individual municipalities, educational institutions, social service agencies, and the business community. All were knowledgeable about the settlement and living experiences of immigrants in the region. Questions explored immigrants' settlement experiences, employment, attraction and retention of immigrants to the region, obstacles to service delivery, economic development, and the future of the region. Key informants were recruited through contacts developed by one of the authors, himself a former journalist with a local newspaper and a resident in the area. All focus groups, as well as the interviews with immigrants and with key informants were tape-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed by theme.

4.0 The Role of Settlement and Municipal Service

4.1 Settlement Services

This section presents research results into the state of settlement services as described by research participants. Before presenting these findings, the paper will first describe the local institutions, which supply settlement services aimed at immigrants. This survey, which will help readers contextualize research results, begins and ends with South Okanagan Immigrant and Community Services (SOICS). Part of the Penticton and District Multicultural Society, this agency offers a range of services in acting as the central stopping point for immigrants arriving in the region. Its coverage area includes the South Okanagan from Summerland to Osoyoos, as well as the nearby Similkameen Valley. Settlement services, which arrivals can access through SOICS, include among others (i) English-As-A-Second-Language classes, (ii) orientation services designed to familiarize immigrants with their new communities, and (iii) employment services. SOICS also offers child-care for immigrants and diversity training for local employers looking to hire immigrants.

Funding for these and other services offered through SOICS comes from the Government of British Columbia, which in late 2011 awarded SOICS just over $461,000 in annual funding to operate out of a central office in Penticton and a satellite office in Oliver serving the southern part of the South Okanagan. A member of the Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Services Agencies (AMSSA), the umbrella agency representing settlement services in British Columbia, SOCIS has played a prominent role in AMSSA's leadership. SOICS also recently won AMSSA's 2011 Riasat Ali Khan Diversity Award for producing a series of local radio broadcasts that detail experiences of immigrants to the region.

Turning to results, immigrants were asked about the quality of settlement services they had used since arriving in the South Okanagan. Most of those who participated in the four focus groups expressed few obvious complaints with the settlement services offered through SOICS. [5] One focus group participant noted that SOICS serves as an exchange where newcomers can gather information of all kinds about their new community:

> The community is very good, but you need somebody to bring you into the community and for me, it was this place (SOICS) here. Before, it was just trying different places.

An informant, whose organization has over the years interacted with community groups that use SOICS services, confirmed the quality of key settlement services such as language classes.

> As far as I understand, the language lessons that are offered through (SOICS) are great, if you can get there. I have only heard good things, if you can get there. But the problem is getting there and a lot of people cannot even apply for their new driver's licence, even if they have a car, because they need the language lessons.

The lack of accessible and affordable transportation represents a barrier for many. Immigrants who do not have access to a private vehicle find it difficult to reach services

---

[5] See Section 3. Methodology.

because the region lacks an effective public transportation system. This assessment applies to the communities in which SOICS currently offers settlement services – Penticton and Oliver – as well as the region generally. For example, residents in South Okanagan communities cannot reach any of the neighbouring communities, including Kelowna, by regular public transit (Depner, 2008; Waters, 2011).

Regional municipal leaders have recognized this problem and Penticton has invested additional resources into public transportation. Regional officials are planning a review of the regional transportation system (Arstad, 2011). But the focus groups have made it more than clear that Penticton's local system currently fails to meet their needs. Oliver lacks a public transit system entirely. This service gap has caused considerable frustration among immigrants, particularly among newcomers who live outside Penticton, which until recently served as the central location for settlement services. One immigrant summed up the concerns:

> I don't see a public transportation system, which is so very disappointing again, because I would want to be independent without waiting for a driver's licence or having to buy a car and buy insurance. As a newcomer, I don't have that much (money) to support myself. Being dependent on family is okay, but then it doesn't feel all that great all the time, because you are so used to being independent.

Immigrants in the region have responded to this gap in different ways. One informant mentioned a network of voluntary (but untrained) English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers, which includes a privately organized shuttle service. This, however, hardly represents an ideal solution. Others, especially those living outside Penticton, have simply abandoned efforts to access those services, particularly language services.[6] In short, the absence of an effective public transportation has created a service gap by restricting, perhaps even denying immigrants the use of available services. This gap has closed somewhat since SOICS expanded its presence in Oliver, where the agency now operates an expanded branch office on the town's main thoroughfare. This improvement now permits immigrants who live in the Oliver-Osoyoos area to access a variety of settlement services that were previously unavailable to them.[7] But this improvement does not negate the need for improved physical access to settlement services.[8]

Yet transportation emerged as only one of the barriers limiting the use of settlement services. One SOICS official noted many newcomers rely on 'survival jobs' – low-paying jobs in the regional tourism and services industries, which

[6] One immigrant living in the Oliver area with his family recently resumed English language lessons twelve years after he had abandoned such efforts, partly because he could not access such services in Penticton, where he had lived previously.

[7] Notably, users of this facility can access services offered in Penticton through a remote uplink. For a detailed study of the role of technology in the delivery of immigration services in rural areas see Mills and Legault (2007), who studied community service delivery in rural Nova Scotia.

[8] SOICS also practices a form of direct outreach by regularly dispatching staff to the Sikh temple in Penticton to reach that community during religious services. SOICS staff in Oliver also engages with senior leaders of the Sikh community. As a non-SOICS community leader noted, this particularly prominent community of immigrants remains difficult to reach: 'When it comes to the Indo-Canadian community or people from India, it is challenging to connect. Sometimes, I go to the Sikh temple and I distribute information. I like that. But there is so much segregation. I am not sure if they segregate themselves or if the community is comfortable with that.

experience seasonal cycles. The focus groups and interviews confirmed for the most part this phenomenon. The financial precariousness of several immigrants surveyed for this research has affected their ability to use various settlement services, which in turn affects their ability to improve their English language skills and thereby, their overall job prospects.[9] One immigrant described this situation:

> The important things that the government should do (to) help immigrants is, please increase the salary a little bit...that way immigrants like us, we don't have to find two jobs, three jobs to earn money...to have more time to study or do something else.[10]

The majority of immigrants who participated in the focus groups consistently ranked the local supply of well-paying job opportunities and affordable housing ahead of other relevant considerations, including the availability of settlement services. Frustrations about the region's high cost of housing and limited job opportunities appeared to be particularly strong during a focus group whose members self-identified themselves as skilled workers. As one participant noted:

> In India, I was working in corporate finance department of a huge multinational and here I am in Royal Bank and I am starting from scratch. That is far from satisfying. But then there is no option. I have to work my way up… I think immigrants are really not helped in (finding employment) than we would like. The whole purpose of being a skilled worker somehow gets defeated at the end of the day.

Another said:

> [They say] 'Come to Canada, there are jobs available.' It is not true. They are deceiving all the immigrants. Yes, there are jobs, but first you need to gain the experience and get certified in Canada, even though you already have five, six years, or more of experience. They don't count that.

One South Okanagan mayor cited the lack of regional job opportunities as one of the contributing reasons for not attracting more immigrants to the region.

> For us, the major problem is the lack of jobs. There is a lack of industry, there is a lack of manufacturing … so if you are coming here to find work, it is tough, really, really tough. And the jobs that are more frequently available are those that are minimum wage, and that makes it very difficult to live comfortably.

One local economic development officer noted the high cost of housing

---

[9] As Zehtab-Martin et al. (2007) note in their research of service provision in Brandon, Manitoba, some immigrants end up working for years without ever improving their language skills. While the authors did not directly encounter this phenomenon in the study region, the authors are aware of anecdotal evidence. Zehtab-Martin et al. also found that immigrants struggled to access ESL lessons because they fell primarily during regular business hours. SOICS, meanwhile, schedules such lessons throughout week days, including evenings.

[10] Not everybody agrees with this demand. When the authors asked members of a different focus group to respond to this demand for higher wages, one participant offered this response. 'If we are skilled immigrants, then we should be getting way above the minimum wage, so where is the point about fighting over the minimum wage?'

compounds the unattractiveness of the region for immigrants unless they arrive with financial means and in-demand professional skills.

> If you are an unskilled migrant, there is no use coming here. I will be blunt. You might want to come here, but how do you live? You might find rental (housing), but you are not going to go ahead in a lot of respects.

There was agreement among immigrants and community leaders that there is an urgent need for more involvement by all levels of government (municipal, provincial, and federal) to provide more funding for affordable housing – profit and non-profit in the South Okanagan (see also Teixeira, 2011). Immigrants also identified a need for 'housing experts' working for local community organizations, to whom immigrants could go for information about local housing markets.

4.2 Municipal Services

Overall, the focus groups have revealed a general satisfaction among immigrants about the state of municipal services. They certainly did not reveal any obvious defects, or any particular desires for improvements.[11] The following comment from a focus group participant might well be reflective of this point.

> People here are so friendly. I myself I feel that I am more than welcomed here than in Vancouver. Public institutions, offices, they are really welcoming.

Nevertheless, none of the four communities surveyed offer immigrant-specific services. They all lack provisions to help newcomers who might be struggling with English as they navigate the municipal bureaucracy to gain access to municipal services. Similarly, Kelowna in the Central Okanagan (Walton-Roberts, 2005) has not dedicated significant resources to helping potential newcomers. One South Okanagan mayor readily acknowledged this failure, stating, 'We have not done anything actively to welcome immigrants.' Other municipal leaders have echoed this point.

But they also readily admit immigration-related matters rank near the bottom of municipal priorities[12] relative to infrastructure improvements, economic development, and the effects of provincial downloading and municipal downsizing (Walkinshaw, 2010b). One economic development officer offered this comment when asked about past efforts to attract a broader number of immigrants to the region.

> It hasn't been a focus of our organization. That kind of immigration is a needed thing, [but] you have to do it on a shoe-string budget. It is an expensive venture.

This same person also noted that the expenses associated with recruiting would-be immigrants (such as travelling to recruitment fairs abroad and building a multilingual presence on the Internet) would generate political opposition during a time of financial austerity. Recruitment efforts also suffer from the lack of a broader vision to match identified target groups with regional needs, according to the same source.

---

[11] One focus group participant offered this comment: 'We know how to speak English. We know how to interact with people. [Municipal services] have nothing to do with immigration.'

[12] One South Okanagan mayor summed up this attitude as follows: 'Unfortunately, on [immigration] issues like that, we are not proactive, we are reactive.'

> Nobody really gets together and says, 'Here is what we are going to do, here is our brand, here is our mission, here are the resources that we are going to put into this.' That has never happened.

Still, efforts to attract entrepreneurial and skilled migrants to the region have gained some momentum. These efforts have focused largely on the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. One economic development officer, who has since left the area, justified this approach as follows.

> We see it as an opportunity to attract people to this region, who for one thing can afford to move here. Then we are also looking at the language barriers and also skills sets that are easily transferable.

This commentary reveals hidden assumptions among some key informants that the region might be unprepared to cope with an influx of non-Caucasian immigrants. This same source confirmed as much, when he discussed provincial efforts to recruit immigrants from Asian countries, such as South Korea and China.

> I think it would be very difficult to join [the province] and offer someone in South Korea easy integration into this [community]. All of us [economic development officers] up and down the valley realize that this program does not work for us.

In fact, comments from the same source suggest that local measures to attract and retain immigrants confront a general lack of awareness and understanding about the broader problems facing the region that would justify the regionalization of immigration.

> We need to have some [community] support here first. I am hoping to have a couple of workshops in this fall [of 2010][13] … we need to supplement our economy with new people coming in. I am sure you have noticed the statistics. We are dwindling away if we do not have an influx of new people coming in.

Municipal leaders are not indifferent to the concerns of immigrants. The mayors of Keremeos, Oliver, Osoyoos, Penticton, Princeton, and Summerland joined the Chair of the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen on February 20, 2010, to co-sign a Community Diversity Protocol that acknowledges the importance of ethnic diversity in recognizing efforts to promote cultural awareness and fight racism (Kidd, 2010).[14] One of the said South Okanagan mayors has also stated that he would welcome 'greater ethnic diversity' in municipal politics[15] in acknowledging the need to improve the delivery of municipal services to immigrant populations.

---

[13] The economic development officer quoted here has since left the position. The community has currently put his previous efforts on hold.

[14] Local aboriginal leaders and officials from senior levels of government also participated in the signing.

[15] During one focus group, the authors asked whether participants would consider becoming politically active – on the municipal level or in some other capacity – in lobbying for improvements that might end up benefiting immigrants. One participant responded that such a move would be counter-productive because it would draw the attention of employers. This line of questioning could certainly generate future insights into the level of political mobilization among immigrants.

> You need to have people [in municipal services] who can speak multitudes of languages, when you are in a multicultural community. That is important.

This same mayor, who has had extensive dealings with the Consulate General of Mexico in helping to coordinate efforts between the municipality, other public agencies, growers, and seasonal workers from Mexico working in local orchards, also suggested lifting certain restrictions on the program.

> I would like to see some of them stay on a permanent basis…my attitude is that those are hard-working individuals. Why don't we give them an opportunity? We have an open-door policy for a lot of people in the world. May be that open-door policy should be (available) to the Mexican workers and give them an opportunity to get their foot in the door here.

The informant, whose organization has over the years interacted with community groups that use SOICS services, offered the following assessment.

> I find that municipal governments are supportive. They are busy. Sometimes, it feels like they are not up on everything… But it is hard to be aware of absolutely everything. I guess it is up to us to help them be more aware. But I do find that they are receptive and open.

On the other hand, municipal governments admit the concerns of newcomers have not received the attention that they deserve beyond what one mayor called 'symbolic measures,' an arguably unfortunate condition because municipal governments can play a role in attracting and retaining immigrants to the region as part of a concerted effort that would also include local suppliers of settlement services, as well as senior levels of government (Walton-Roberts 2005; Teixeira, 2011).

5.0 Policy Recommendation

5.1 Redefine the Rationale for Attracting and Retaining Immigrants to the South Okanagan

Key informants recognize the potential benefits of attracting and retaining additional immigrants. They have acknowledged past failings and even identified specific target groups, despite facing financial and political limitations. Yet it is not clear that they have developed a consistent and "robust" argument that mobilizes "the complex web of stakeholders" (Burstein, 2007, p. 45) including senior levels of government needed to authorize, design, fund and implement a strategy for attracting and retaining immigrants to the region. Yes, local stakeholders have made the argument that attracting and retaining immigrants (including visible minorities) would sustain the region from an economic and demographic perspective. But this argument, which in its "most naive state" (Burstein, 2007, p. 43) takes the form of replacing the shrinking local population with immigrants, appears to have limited public support. The neo-liberal premise of this argument has also received considerable criticism locally (Aguiar et al., 2011). Local community leaders could also advance in the words of Burstein, a "more speculative" (2007, p. 43) argument by adopting the ideas of Richard Florida (2005), who has linked diversity with success in the global economy, although

Burstein (2007) suggests this rationale lacks strength in light of research elsewhere. A more fruitful approach would focus on multicultural diversity as a good in itself. Burstein (2007) notes "diversity is a core value" (p. 44) that animates nation-building. This in turn would link the rationale for regional policies promoting greater diversity to the larger national rationale underpinning immigration and multiculturalism.

5.2 Continue to Build Community Capacities

In light of the previous recommendation, suppliers of settlement services must continue to monitor and enhance settlement services, especially services designed to combat discrimination. As Burstein (2007) writes, "members of visible minority groups, no matter where they choose to go, work or live in Canada are entitled to protection from overt discrimination" (p. 43). Burstein's appeal is also a call to improve the broader conditions of the community, such as the supply of affordable housing and the state of the public transit system. For example, several focus group participants expressed frustrations with the local state of day-care facilities.[16] The authors would also like to stress the importance of improving local educational institutions. South Okanagan community leaders have certainly recognized this potential. Several community leaders interviewed for this research identified the Centre of Excellence in Sustainable Building Technologies and Renewable Energy Conservation at the Penticton campus of Okanagan College as the central piece of a regional cluster of 'green' high-tech industries, particularly in the field of residential construction. This policy direction might also have the benefit of increasing diversity by attracting students from inside and outside of British Columbia. Walton-Roberts (2008) has argued post-secondary institutions can play an important role in diversifying the economic and demographic characteristics of lower-tier communities and regions. This said, she has also warned cautioned against the "creeping neo-liberalization" (Walton-Roberts, 2008, p. 23) of this approach, a warning we have also heard from scholars in the Okanagan itself (Whiteley, Aguiar, & Marten, 2008).

5.3 Focus Efforts on Economic Development, Mindful of Community Needs

While immigrants surveyed for this research identified the natural surroundings and easy-going lifestyle of the South Okanagan as attractive features, many expressed concerns about its long-term economic prospects and high living costs. In fact, many focus group participants expressed the desire to leave the region for larger urban centres, particularly Vancouver. This appears to be particularly the case among younger newcomers, such as the woman quoted below.

> I enjoy the weather and it is very peaceful. But I am young. I would rather live in Vancouver. But my mom really likes to live here. It is really hard for me to find a job here.

In a way, such frustrations appear to be similar to the sentiments of other young individuals who live in the rural regions of Canada in facing limited job prospects, educational opportunities, and access to attractions (Clemenson & Pitblado, 2007). They also underscore earlier comments about the crucial role, which economic

---

[16] SOICS offers day-care through its Penticton facility, but it has limited space and cannot meet the demand for the service.

opportunities play in attracting and retaining immigrants to the South Okanagan. This context has specific policy implications. Burstein (2007) notes that investments designed to promote the presence of immigrants (and by implication, visible minorities) "should only be undertaken in the context of ample or growing job opportunities and a growing capacity to integrate newcomers building towards a critical, and self-sustaining, visible minority (numeric) threshold" (p. 44). This said, research on the meat-packing industry in Brooks, Alberta, and elsewhere has amply demonstrated what can happen if rural communities fail to prepare ahead for the arrival of new immigrants. Broadway (2000, 2007) shows the absence of affordable housing, cultural offerings, linguistic services, and religious accommodations can tear at the social fabric of communities; hence, the earlier recommendation to build up various community capacity.

5.4 Create Collaborative Environment

As earlier comments make it clear, any plans to attract and retain additional immigrants to the South Okanagan require a series of steps that will demand input and final decisions from a number of stakeholders. They include, as suggested earlier, not only suppliers of settlement services, but also local municipal leaders, educational leaders, and the business community, not to mention senior levels of governments acting from the outside. Stockdale (2006) notes that endogenous development policies designed to achieve rural development will have limited value on their own. Coordinating these (frequently) competitive actors will likely require a great deal of energy and effort on each of their part. It is therefore crucial that they engage each other in a collaborative environment that values their respective contributions. Encouragingly, the provincial government has recently recognized the importance of strengthening ties between local governments, private sector business, non-profit organizations and public sector organizations in fields such as health and education through a pilot project that developed "broad and long-term partnerships across sectors that would develop resources, plan, and manage capacity building initiatives that would result in communities being more welcoming and inclusive of newcomers" (B.C. Ministry of Jobs, Tourism, and Innovation, 2012, p. 5). Based on the success of this pilot project, the provincial government is currently considering a re-design of its settlement services delivery, particularly in smaller communities, where resources might be limited.

5.5 Continue to Investigate and Track Settlement Choices

Sorenson (2007) notes immigrants choose one rural location over another for a variety of reasons, some of which go beyond economic considerations. They might include the proximity of family and friends, the presence of a co-ethnic group, the availability of culturally familiar services, and quality of life considerations. "To the extent that immigrants increasingly cannot be viewed as a homogenous group with the same interests and needs, a better understanding of the decision-making processes among immigrants from a variety of backgrounds and demographic characteristics" (Sorenson, 2007, p. 124) is necessary. As the region's settlement service supplier, SOICS can play a crucial role in collecting this information, because of its frequent contacts with various immigrant communities. The collection of this information would permit the agency to share that information with other key stakeholders such as senior levels of government (thereby strengthening ties) and tailor (whenever possible) their service provision in such a way that it responds to the specific needs of the recipients.

6.0 Conclusion

This study sought to identify gaps in the delivery of services to immigrant populations living in the South Okanagan, and develop recommendations that would remedy identified service gaps. This research agenda in turn unfolded against the background of a broader query: what role do community services play in the successful attraction and retention of permanent immigrants to areas such as the South Okanagan?

The research therefore responds to a gap in the geography of social provision as immigration continues to reshape the social geography of Canada. Canadian immigration has a distinct urban dimension, as new arrivals prefer to settle in major metropolitan areas, given the availability of jobs and the presence of co-ethnic networks in large cities. At the same time, rural, rapidly aging regions like the South Okanagan face the prospect of economic and demographic stagnation, if not outright decline. This prospect has generated interest in the regionalization of immigration and this research offers a qualitative assessment of the part that community services might play in attracting and retaining immigrants in such regions.

This study concludes that immigrants in the South Okanagan face two major obstacles in their use of community services. The first is a lack of physical access to such services. The near-absence of an effective public transportation system compounds the physical distances that separate immigrants in different parts of the region from relevant services, particularly settlement services. The second factor is financial instability. Many of the surveyed immigrants rely on low-paying 'survival jobs' in the region's cyclical tourism and service industry, which makes it hard for them to use settlement services. Overall, the region's high living costs and lack of economic opportunities discourage immigrants, even as they report general satisfaction with the level of available services.

Immigrants and key informants offered recommendations that highlight the importance of improving the broader social and economic conditions of the region. The authors, however, would like to remind readers of potential alternatives and limits to the regionalization of immigration as a response to the economic and demographic problems confronting the region.

If the past, present and future of Canadian immigration is a moving, dynamic picture like a film, this study appears to be nothing more than a small piece of still photography that captures one particular scene – the state of community services and their role in the attraction and retention of immigrants to the South Okanagan, an area that could benefit from the regionalization of immigration. But the narrow frame of this research should not discourage readers and other interested parties from probing beyond its initial focus. This study raises potential research questions, such as: Which other measures could accomplish the same aims as the regionalization of immigration? Can temporary labour, despite its drawbacks become a viable, dignified alternative to the regionalization of immigration? This question deserves at least some study in light of research from Burstein (2007) who notes "rural and remote communities should be excluded from promotional policies and (instead) be served by temporary immigration programs" (p. 44).[17]

Implementing this recommendation could mean that parts of the South Okanagan

---

[17] As Burstein (2007) notes, this "recommendation is consistent with the existing distribution of immigrants which reflects visible minority preferences" (p. 44).

would be considered unsuitable for policies designed to attract and retain more immigrants. In short, such measures might be nothing more than a waste of resources. The study has found that community leaders inside and outside the region appear to favour the regionalization of immigration. While one might question their practical commitment to this agenda, they have at least devoted some thought to the issue. At the same time, the window for action will not remain open forever. More ominously, Burstein's recommendation raises the uncomfortable question of whether it still makes sense to invest resources of any kind in the region. Burstein hints at a future in the South Okanagan featuring a mix of policies – some geared towards attracting and retaining immigrants over the long term, others to support seasonal labour. Whether such a division of political, financial, and social capital would benefit the region appears uncertain. The question requires additional study.

Two other questions loom. If regional community leaders commit themselves to policies that promise to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of the South Okanagan, how will this broader commitment (and the resources that would accompany it) affect First Nations in the region? Will the regionalization of immigration further marginalize a hitherto marginalized group still dealing with the legacy of colonialism? Or could the region and its population use the continuous process of integrating another group of 'newcomers' to reconcile competing notions of citizenship, ethnicity and race? While one should not discount hope for the latter outcome, it would be naive to dismiss the former as unlikely. This discussion underscores earlier points about the importance of an inclusive process that engages as many relevant stakeholders as possible.

It would also be a mistake to divorce the future social geography of immigration in the South Okanagan from its natural context. Although this relationship might not be readily apparent, nobody would deny that the Okanagan Valley ranks among the most diverse and threatened ecosystems in Canada (Hessing, 2010/2011). Changing its social geography against the unfolding effects of climate change would undoubtedly put additional stress on what is already a fragile environment to the detriment of natural and social systems, unless current and future residents find ways to balance economic and ecological interests without framing them as either-or choices. The current conditions in the South Okanagan might tempt stakeholders to see false choices where none exist.

7.0. Acknowledgements

8.0 References

Abu-Laban, Y., & Garber, J. A. (2005). The construction of the geography of immigration as a policy problem: The United States and Canada compared. *Urban Affairs Review, 40*(4)*,* 520-61.

Akbari, A. H. (2011). Labor market performance of immigrants in smaller regions of Western countries: Some evidence from Atlantic Canada. *Journal of International Migration and Integration, 12*(2), 133-154.

Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of British Columbia (AMSSA). (2008). *Inventory and Analysis of Community Services for Immigrants and Refugees in British Columbia,*Vancouver.

Aguiar, L. L. M., & Marten, T. I. L. (2011). Shimmering White Kelowna and the Examination of Painless White Privilege in the Hinterland of British Columbia. In Andrew Baldwin, Laura Cameron and Audrey Kobayashi (Eds.), *Rethinking the Great White North: Race, Nature and the Historical Geographies of Whiteness in Canada* (pp. 127-146). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Aguiar, L. L. M., McKinnon, A., & Sookraj, D. (2010/11). Racialization and the repertoires of racism: Reaction to Jamaicans in the Okanagan. *B.C. Studies 168*, 65-79.

Aguiar, L. L. M., Tomic, P., & Trumper, R. (2011). Mexican migrant agricultural workers and accommodations on farms in the Okanagan Valley, British Columbia. Metropolis, B.C., Vancouver.

Aguiar, L. L. M., Tomic, P., & Trumper, R. (2005). Work hard, play hard: Selling Kelowna, B.C., as year-round playground. *The Canadian Geographer, 49*(2), 123-139.

Arstad, S. (2011, March 8). Transit review regional service. *Penticton Western News,* p. 8.

Bahbahani, K. (2008). *The Changing Face of Kelowna: Report on Ethnicity and Ethnic Relations*, Kelowna: Intercultural Society of the Central Okanagan.

Banting, K. (2010). Is there a progressive's dilemma in Canada? Immigration, multiculturalism and the welfare state *Canadian Journal of Political Science, 43*(4), 797-820.

Banting, K., & Kymlicka, W. (2010). Canadian multiculturalism and local debates. *British Journal of Canadian Studies, 23*(1), 43-72.

Bauder, H. (2003, Sept. 2). Newcomers: Get rich, go rural. *Globe and Mail* (Toronto), p. A13.

B.C. Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation. (2012). Proposed Model for the Welcoming Communities Program Information Paper. Victoria, B.C. Retrieved April 3, 2012, from https://tnrd.civicweb.net/FileStorage/ B0FCD9C94DC04C11B9F2EEA52111EC67-WorkspaceWelcoming%20 Communities%20Info%20Paper%20FINAL.pdf

B.C. Statistics. (2006). *Profile of Immigrants in B.C. Communities in 2006: Okanagan Similkameen*. Victoria, B.C.: Ministry of Citizens' Services. Retrieved March 13, 2011, from http://www.welcomebc.ca/local/wbc/docs/immigration/2006/ Okanagan-Similkameen.pdf

B.C. Statistics. (2009a). *Regional District 7: Okanagan Similkameen Statistical Profile*. Victoria, B.C.: Ministry of Citizens' Services. Retrieved March 13, 2011, from http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/sep/rd/Rd_7.pdf

B.C. Statistics. (2009b). *Where do Immigrants Go: Immigration Special Feature.* Victoria, B.C.: Ministry of Citizens' Services. Retrieved March 27, 2011, from http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/pubs/immig/imm091sf.pdf

B.C. Statistics. (2010). 2010 *Sub-Provincial Estimates Population Estimates.* Victoria, B.C.: Ministry of Citizens' Services. Retrieved March 13, 2011, from http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/pop/pop/mun/CurrentPopulationEstimates.pdf

B.C. Statistics. (2011a). British Columbia in 2036 PEOPLE 36.Victoria, B.C. Ministery of Citizens' Services. Retrieved March 26. 2012, from http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/StatisticsBySubject/Demography/PopulationProjections.aspx

B.C. Statistics (2011b). Overview of the B.C and Regional Populations Projections. Victoria, B.C. Ministry of Citizens' Services. Retrieved March 26, 2012, from http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/StatisticsBySubject/Demography/PopulationProjections.aspx

Bernard, A. (2008). Immigrants in the hinterland. *Perspectives on Labour and Income, 9*(1), 5-14.

British Columbia. (2010). *2009-10 Annual Report: Welcome BC Settlement and Integration Services*. Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, Victoria, B.C.

Broadway, M. J. (2007). Meatpacking and the Transformation of Rural Communities: A Comparison of Brooks, Alberta, and Garden City, Kansas. *Rural Sociology, 72*(4), 560-582.

Broadway, M. J. (2000). Planning for change in small towns or trying to avoid the slaughterhouse blues. *Journal of Rural Studies, 16* (1), 37-46.

Brock, D. (2009). Rural and remote Canada? Far out. *Policy Options, 30*(9), 69-72.

Burstein, M. (2007). Promoting the presence of visible minority groups across Canada. In Bill Reimer (Ed.). *Our Diverse Cities 3: Rural Communities* (pp. 42-46). Ottawa: Metropolis Canada.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2001). *Towards a more balanced geographic distribution of immigrants,* Ottawa: Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2010). *Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration*. Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Ottawa. Government of Canada.

City of Kelowna. (2008). *Official Community Plan 2008: Population and Housing Discussion Paper*, Kelowna: City of Kelowna.

Clark, C. (2002, Oct.16). Small cities, rural towns to lure immigrants. *Globe and Mail*, p. 6.

Clemenson, H. A. and Pitblado, J. R. (2007). Recent trends in rural-urban migration. In Bill Reimer (Ed.). *Our Diverse Cities 3: Rural Communities* (pp. 25-29). Ottawa: Metropolis Canada.

Copps, S. (2007, Dec. 5). Immigration helps our nation prosper. *Whitehorse Star*, p.11.

Depner, W. (2008, July 31). Penticton continues push to get into regional transit loop. *Penticton Western News*, p. 3.

Drolet, J., Robertson, J., Multani, P., Robinson, W., & Wroz, M. (2008) .Settlement experiences in a small city: Kamloops, British Columbia. *Small Cities Imprint*, *1*(1), 21-30.

Florida, R. (2005). *Cities and the Creative Class*, New York: Routledge.

Garcea, J. (2003). *Regionalization of Immigration in Canada: Impetus, Discourse and Strategic Initiative*. Centre for International Migration and Settlement Studies. Retrieved April 9, 2011, from http://integration-net.ca/infocentre/2003/002.htm

Getz, D. & Brown, G. (2006). Benchmarking wine tourism development: The case of the Okanagan Valley, British Columbia, Canada. *International Journal of Wine Marketing, 18*(2), 78-97.

German Marshall Fund of the United States. (2010). *Transatlantic Trend.* Retrieved February 15, 2011, from http://trends.gmfus.org/immigration/doc/TTI2010_English_Key.pdf

Graham, K. A. H. and Phillips, S. D. (2007). Another fine balance: Managing diversity in Canadian cities. In K. Banting, T. J. Courchene and F. L. Seidle (Eds.), *Belonging? Diversity, Recognition and Shared Citizenship in Canada* (pp. 155-194). Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy.

Halseth, G. & Ryser, L. (2006). Trends in service delivery: Examples from rural and small town Canada, 1998 to 2005. *Journal of Rural and Community Development 1*(2), 69-90.

Hessing, M. (2010/2011). After the harvest: Towards a sustainable Okanagan. *BC Studies*, *168*, 81-94.

Hiebert, D. (April 2003). Immigrant and minority enclaves in Canadian cities. *Canadian Issues*, 27-29.

Hiebert, D. (2009) .The economic integration of immigrants in Metropolitan Vancouver. *Institute for Research on Public Policy Choices, 15*(7), 1-42.

Hiebert, D. & Ley, D (2003). Assimilation, cultural pluralism, and social exclusion among ethnocultural groups in Vancouver. *Urban Geography, 24*(1)*,* 16-44.

Hodgson, G. (2010). Canada's future labour market: Immigrants to the rescue. *Policy Options, 31*(7), 54-57.

Kidd, S. (2010, April 15). Schools embrace cultural diversity. *Penticton Western News,* p. 15.

Kirschner, A., Berry, E. H., & Glasgow, N. (2006). The Changing Face of Rural America. In W. A. Kandel and D. L. Brown (Eds.), Population Change and Rural Society (pp. 53-74). Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Springer.

Kitagawa, K., Krywulak, T., & Watt, D. (2008). *Renewing Immigration: Towards a Convergence and Consolidation of Canada's Immigration Policies and Systems,* Toronto: Conference Board of Canada.

Kobayashi, A., Li, W., & Teixeira, C. (2011). Introduction: Immigrant geographies: Issues and debates. In C. Teixeira, W. Li and A. Kobayashi (Eds.), *The Geographies of Immigrants in North American Cities* (pp. xv-xl), Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Koroscil, P. M. (2003). British Garden of Eden: Settlement History of the Okanagan Valley, Burnaby, B.C.: Simon Fraser University.

Leibel, G. C. (2007). The changing face of farm labour in British Columbia: Exploring the experiences of migrant Quebecois and Mexican agricultural workers in the Okanagan Valley. Master's thesis, University of Victoria.

Leitner, H. & Preston, V. (2011). Going local: Canadian and American immigration policy in the new century. In C. Teixeira, W. Li, and A. Kobayashi (Eds.), *The Geographies of Immigrants in North American Cities* (pp. 2-21).Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Ley, D. & Smith, H. (2000). Relations between deprivation and immigrant groups in large Canadian cities. *Urban Studies, 37*(1), 37-62.

Library of Parliament. (2008). *Immigration: The Canada-Quebec Accord*. Parliamentary Information and Research Service, Ottawa.

Leung, W. (2008, Sept. 8). Labour shortage? Bring in the Jamaicans. *Globe and Mail*, p. L3.

Martin, E. & Williams, P. (2003). Directions in British Columbia wine tourism policy. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 15*(6), 317-323.

McEwan, J. (2010). In tuition: a case study of UBCO student youth rental housing experiences in the City of Kelowna. Master's thesis, University of British-Columbia Okanagan.

Michaels, K. (2011, March 4). Weak demand for housing predicted. *Kelowna Capital News*, p. 1.

Mills, G. & Legault, C. (2007). Where does the sun set? Can technology help meet settlement needs in rural Nova Scotia? In Bill Reimer (Ed.), *Our Diverse Cities 3: Rural Communities* (pp. 150-154). Ottawa:Metropolis Canada.

Money Sense. (2012). Best Places to Live 2012. Retrieved March 26, 2012, from http://list.moneysense.ca/rankings/best-places-to-live/2012/Default.aspx?sp2=3&sc1=0&d1=a

Nelson, L. & Hiemstra, N. (2008) Latino immigrants and the renegotiation of place and belonging in small town America. *Social and Cultural Geography*, *9*(3), 319-342.

Nolin, C., McCallum, K., & Zehtab-Martin, A. (2009). Regionalization BC 2008: *Regionalization and Rural Immigration in British Columbia*, Vancouver: Metropolis B.C.

Otero, G. & Preibisch, K. (2010). *Farmworker Health and Safety: Challenges for British Columbia*. Final report for WorkSafeBC (Workers Compensation Board of British Columbia). Retrieved March 13, 2011, from http://www.sfu.ca/~otero/docs/Otero%20and%20Preibisch%20Final%20Nov-2010.pdf

Petrov, A. N. (2007). A look beyond Metropolis: Exploring creative class in the Canadian periphery. *Canadian Journal of Regional Science, 30*(3), 451-474.

Poitras, L. & Getz, D. (2006). Sustainable wine tourism: The host community perspective. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 14*(5), 425-448.

Radford, P. (2007). A call for greater research on immigration outside of Canada's three largest cities. In Bill Reimer (Ed.), *Our Diverse Cities 3: Rural Communities* (pp. 47-51). Ottawa: Metropolis Canada

Reimer, B. (2007). Immigration in the new rural economy. In Bill Reimer (Ed.), *Our Diverse Cities 3: Rural Communities* (pp. 3-8). Ottawa: Metropolis Canada.

Roberts, D. (1998, March 13). 'Free-speech' meeting relocated Antiracists outnumber supporters of B.C. Internet provider hosting neo-Nazi Web sites, *Globe and Mail* , p. A6.

Rolke, R. (2011, March 13). Take the challenge to fight racism. *The Morning Star*, p. A6.

Rose, M. M. & Desmarais, J. (2007). Directions to consider in favour of the regionalization of immigration. In Bill Reimer (Ed.), *Our Diverse Cities 3: Rural Communities* (pp. 52-58). Ottawa: Metropolis Canada.

Silvius, R. & Annis, R. C. (2007). Reflection on the rural immigration experience in Manitoba's diverse rural communities. In Bill Reimer (Ed.). *Our Diverse Cities 3: Rural Communities* (pp. 126-133). Ottawa: Metropolis Canada.

Smith, J. (2008, Aug. 28). New route on track to UBC. *The Morning Star*, p. A6.

Sorensen, M. (2007). Rural immigration in the Prairies: Knowledge gaps. In Bill Reimer (Ed.), *Our Diverse Cities 3: Rural Communities* (pp. 121-125). Ottawa: Metropolis Canada.

South Okanagan Immigration and Community Services (SOICS). (2007). *South Okanagan Similkameen Labour Market Project Discussion Paper*, Penticton, B.C.: (SOICS).

Statistics Canada. (2007a). *2006 Census: Immigration, citizenship, language, mobility and migration*, Ottawa: Ministry of Industry.

Statistics Canada. (2007b). 2006 *Community Profiles*. Retrieved March 13, 2011, from   http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-591/index.cfm?Lang=E

Statistics Canada. (2010a). *Projections of the Diversity of the Canadian Population: 2006-2031*, Ottawa: Ministry of Industry.

Statistics Canada. (2010b). Population change across Canadian Communities, 1981 to 2006. The role of sector restructuring, agglomeration, diversification and human capital. *Rural and Small Town Analysis Bulletin* 8, Ottawa: Ministry of Industry.

Stockdale, A. (2006). Migration: Pre-requisite for rural economic regeneration, *Journal of Rural Studies, 22*, 354-366.

Stoffman, D. (April 2003). The mystery of Canada's high immigration levels. *Canadian Issues,* 23-4.

Steyn, D. (2008). *The Changing Face of Kelowna: Are We Ready,?*Kelowna: Intercultural Society of the Central Okanagan/Canadian Heritage.

Tamang, R. (2010). Dynamics of citizenship and identity: Obstacles to sustainable immigration in a small Canadian city. *Journal of Identity and Migration Studies, 4*(1), 51-71.

Teixeira, C. (2009). The Portuguese in British Columbia: The Orchardists of the Okanagan Valley. In Carlos Teixeira and Victor M.P. Da Rosa (Eds.), *The Portuguese in Canada: Diasporic Challenges and Adjustment* (pp. 226-252). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Teixeira, C. (2011). Finding a home of their own: Immigrant housing experiences in Central Okanagan, British Columbia, and Policy Recommendations for Change. *Journal of International Migration and Integration, 12*(2), 173-197.

Teixeira, C. & Li, W. (2009). Introduction: Immigrant and Refugee Experiences in North American Cities. *Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies*, *14*(5), 221-27.

Trudeau, S. (2008, May 7). Beach club comes to a halt. *Penticton Herald*, p.1.

US Census Bureau (June 3, 2011). Okanogan County, Washington. Retrieved September 21, 2011, from http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/53/53047.html

Walkinshaw, B. (2010a, Feb. 2). Final SOEC costs hit $81 million. *Penticton Western News*, p. 4.

Walkinshaw, B. (2010b, April 29). Axe falls again on City Hall staff. *Penticton Western, News*, p. 3.

Walkinshaw, B. (2011a, March 8). Residential zoning approved for former waterslide. *Penticton Western News*, p. 3.

Walkinshaw, B. (2011b, March 17). City reviews Global Operations. *Penticton Western News,* p. 5.

Walton-Roberts, M. (2005). Regional immigration and dispersal: Lessons from small-and medium-sized urban centres in British Columbia. *Canadian Ethnic Studies, 37*(3), 12–34.

Walton-Roberts, M. (2008) Immigration, the University, and the Tolerant Second-tier City, CERIS Working Paper No. 69. The Ontario Metropolis Centre, Toronto, pp. 1-27.

Waters, A. (2011, April 16). Proposed West Kelowna bus route hits roadblock, *Kelowna Capital News*, p. 1.

Webber, J. (Ed.). (1999). A Rich and Fruitful Land: *The History of the Valleys of the Okanagan, Similkameen and Shuswap*, Madeira Park, BC.: Harbour Publishing.

Welcome B.C. (2008). *Census 2006. Regional Settlement of Immigrants in British Columbia.* Ministry of Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism. Retrieved April 2, 2012, from http://www.welcomebc.ca local/wbc/docs/communities/regional_immigrant_settlement_in_bc.pdf

Whiteley, R., Aguiar, L. L. M., & Marten, T. (2008). The neoliberal transnational university: The case of UBC Okanagan. *Capital and Class*, *32*(3), 115-142.

Young, N. (2008). Radical Neoliberalism in British Columbia: Remaking Rural Geographies. *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, *33*(1), 1-36.

Zehtab-Martin, A., & Beesley, K. (2007). Immigrant service gaps in a small city: Brandon, Manitoba. In Bill Reimer (Ed.), *Our Diverse Cities 3: Rural Communities* (pp. 75-79). Ottawa: Metropolis Canada