

# RURAL IMMIGRATION & WELCOMING COMMUNITIES

## IMPLICATIONS FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**Ryan Gibson**

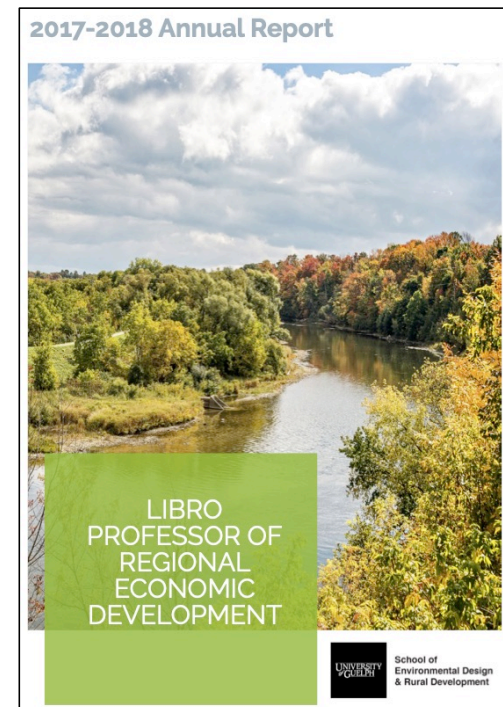
University of Guelph

Western Region Workforce Summit  
London, Ontario

The logo of the University of Guelph, featuring the words "UNIVERSITY" and "of GUELPH" in a serif font, with "of" in a smaller, italicized font.

# Libro Professorship

- » \$1 million, 10 year initiative
- » focused on regional economic development
- » teaching, research, service, and community engagement



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[www.ruraldev.ca](http://www.ruraldev.ca)



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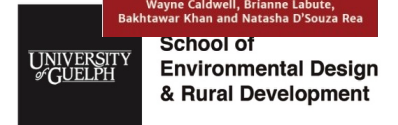
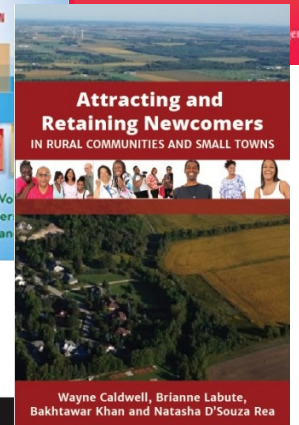
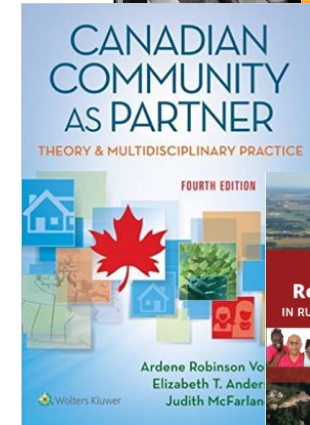
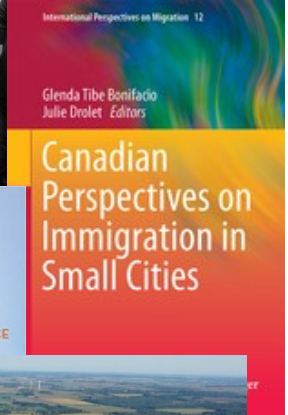
# Context

» welcoming communities are fundamental to workforce development

» the past does not determine the future



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# Rural immigration

- historically low experiences
- tide has shifted ...

## Is Immigration to Rural Areas in Canada's Future?

A surge in urbanization in Canada has led to the decline of rural areas, leaving Canadians with the hope that immigration can fill the void.

Canada's most recent census, administered in 2011, made it clear that Canada's major cities are booming. More than 23.1 million Canadian live in one of Canada's 33 metropolitan areas, marking just under 70% of the population as city dwellers. A total of 35% of Canada's population lives in one of Canada's three largest cities, Toronto, Montreal, or Vancouver.

While the population growth in cities is an excellent prospect for business in major cities, the growth seems to be occurring at the expense of rural areas. Much of the growth in urban areas is driven by a combination of immigration from abroad and migration from small towns and rural areas, leaving Canada's rural areas to shrink in both population and economic impact.



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## Douglas Todd: Immigrants could prosper in Canada's small towns

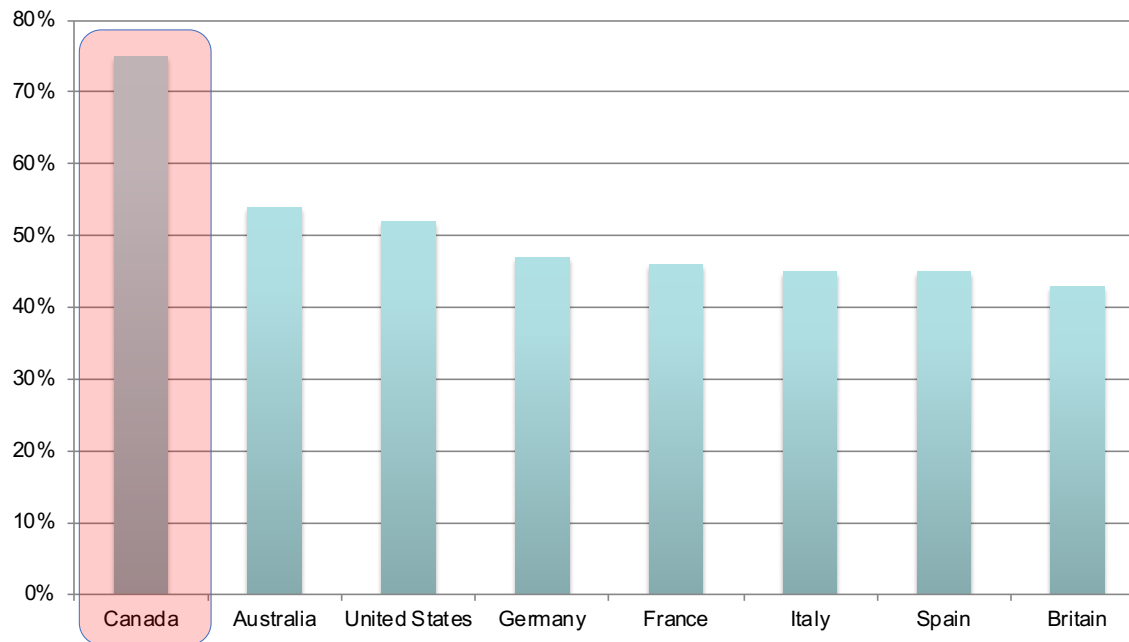
DOUGLAS TODD Updated: September 1, 2017



- » immigrants represent approximately 5% of rural Canada population
- » various recent catalyst for increases in rural immigration
- » rural immigration is fundamental to workforce
  - » sustaining current labour force
  - » attracting new labour force

# Perceptions of immigration

Immigrants are having a good influence on the way things are going in your country



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Source: Angus Reid, 2016



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# Rural Reality



# The Good News

- » growth in most rural communities
- » 17% of the national population
- » immigrant attraction
- » GDP contribution equals share of population



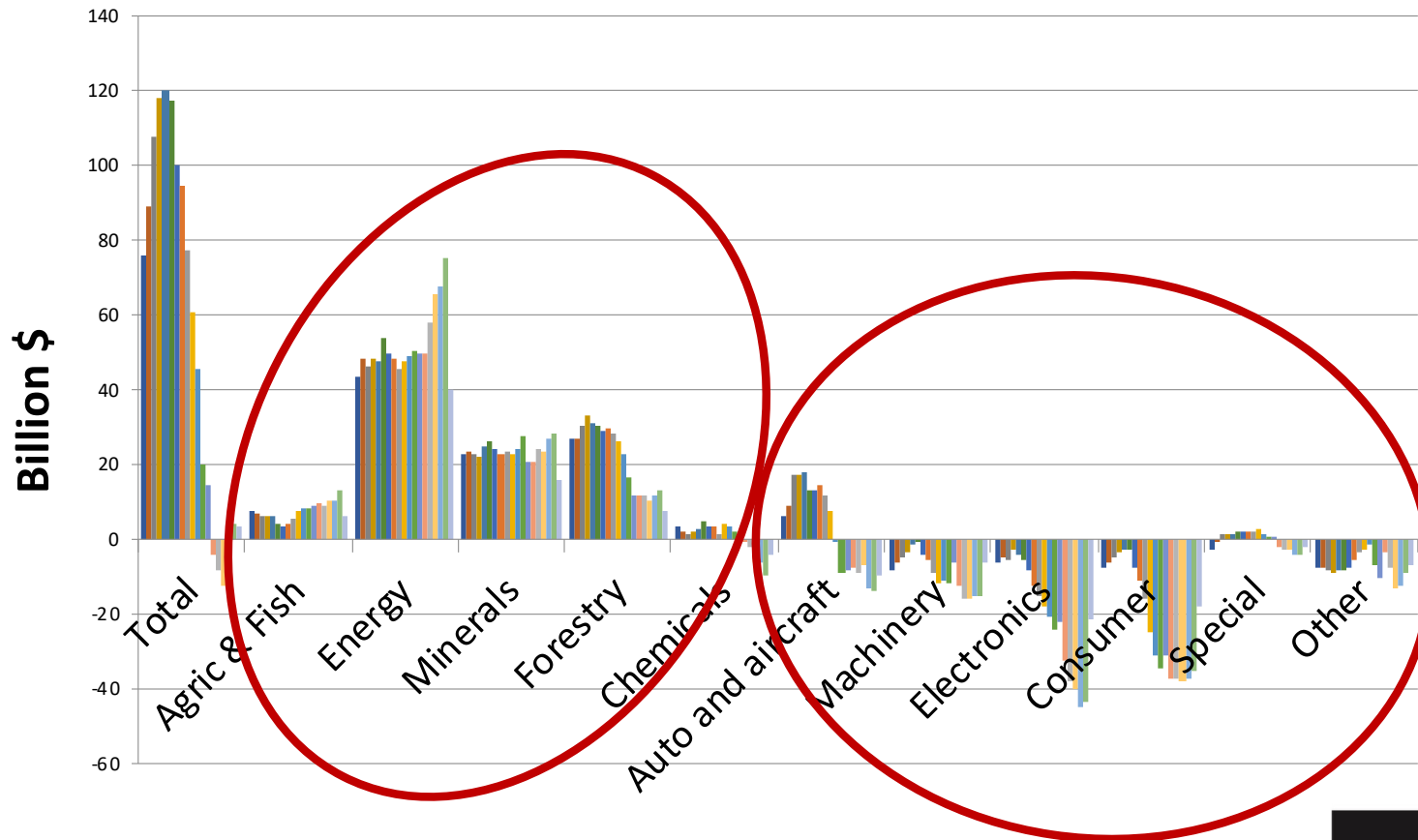
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# Canadian Balance of Trade 1997-2015



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From: CANSIM Table 376-0006 Balance of international payments, current account, goods, annual (dollars x 1,000,000)



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# Not So The Good News

- » good news is geographical uneven
- » urban population growth far exceeds rural growth
- » rural economy is more intensive, seasonal
- » creative destruction
- » labour force replacement



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# New Reality

- » economic restructuring, creative destruction, globalization
- » increased migration
- » retreat from rural and northern
- » focus on natural resources



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# **Brandon Welcoming Communities Dialogue Group**



# Brandon, MB

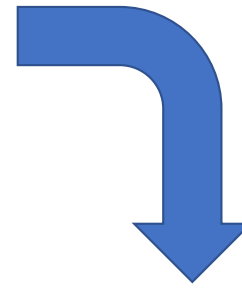
- » population of 48,859 (2016)
- » historically low immigration
- » everything changed in 2001



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**1,500 immigrants**



**5,000 immigrants**



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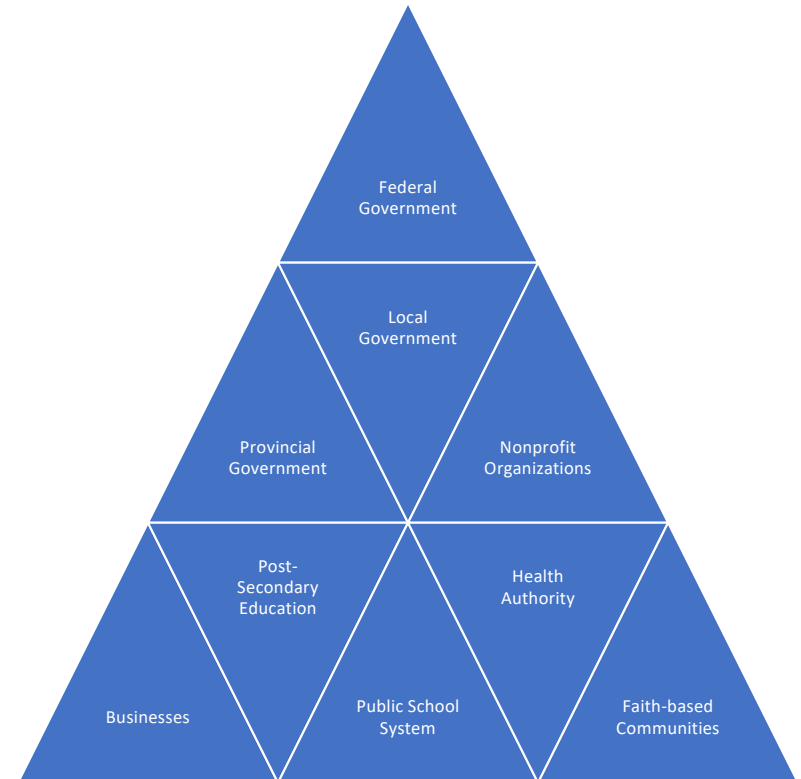
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# Welcoming Communities Dialogue Group

» innovative partnership

» focused on

- information sharing
- strategizing for welcoming
- building capacity
- proactive planning



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# How to ...

1. Gather key stakeholders
2. Identify gaps in knowledge
3. Assess community's current state of 'welcoming'
4. Build knowledge sharing 'systems'
5. Ask who is missing from the process
6. Engage with recent newcomers
7. Back to step #1



Actions



Actions





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# Is Brandon Welcoming?

Brandon is...

- A welcoming community:
  - Over 80% of Canadian long-term residents agree
  - Over 90% of Chinese and Latin American new residents agree
- A good place to live:
  - 99% of Canadian long-term residents agree
  - 100% all Latin American new residents agree
  - 71% of Chinese new residents agree 
- A good place to raise a family:
  - 97% of Canadian long-term and Latin American residents agree
  - 43% of Chinese new residents agree 



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# Key lessons

- » partnerships, partnerships, partnerships
- » leadership
- » sharing information



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