

Highly Skilled Talent and Governance Dynamics in the Bruce County Energy Sector

BRIEF SUMMARY

Rural areas are increasingly shaped by global economic restructuring, sectoral specialization and competition for highly skilled labour. In regions anchored by dominant industries, these dynamics generate opportunity while reshaping governance relationships and regional identity.

This research examines how a single dominant actor influences highly skilled talent attraction, retention and local governance using Bruce County, Ontario, as a case study. Anchored by Bruce Power, the region has transitioned from an agriculturally oriented rural economy to a specialized energy hub, offering insight into how rural places navigate growth, specialization and long-term resilience through industry-led development.

The research addresses three questions:

- How does a dominant industry actor influence attraction and retention of highly skilled talent?
- How do governance arrangements align with a dominant economic anchor?
- How does specialization reshape regional identity, inclusion and resilience?

KEY MESSAGES

- Strategic sector alignment strengthens regional competitiveness
- Cluster development is actively supported through coordination
- Public-private collaboration expands local delivery capacity
- Economic benefits extend beyond core operations
- Talent attraction is a clear strength
- Retention depends on household settlement conditions
- Governance effectiveness is grounded in trust-based coordination
- Resilience is reinforced through inclusion and shared benefit pathways

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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IMPACTS

- Leverage the nuclear cluster to grow adjacent innovation
- Strengthen place-based talent retention
- Broaden participation within collaborative governance
- Support diversified workforce pathways
- Embed integration in regional development practice
- Advance a dynamic regional identity

FURTHER INFORMATION

The full thesis can be accessed online at: <https://hdl.handle.net/10214/29440>