Why Stay? An Ethnographic Analysis of the Settlement Decisions in a Small Atlantic Centre

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Abstract

This paper explores how immigrants living in Miramichi, New Brunswick, make decisions about whether to settle there or move on. We address positive and negative aspects of living in the community and whether immigrants feel sufficiently welcome to contemplate remaining in the Miramichi. Our ethnographic research indicates the importance social and cultural factors play in decisions about remaining in a community. Many immigrants appreciated the scale and pace of life in this small community, noting that it provided a safe and secure setting to raise a family. From a policy perspective and in keeping with the literature on welcoming communities, such factors can be further highlighted in future initiatives concerned with the retention of immigrants already living in an area. However, our research also identified some issues suggesting there is room for improvement in the provision of information from all levels of government to better facilitate the immigration process in general.

Key words: immigration, socio-cultural factors, welcoming communities, retention

<u>Introduction and Theoretical Context</u>

This pilot project provides a case study of the complicated decision-making processes for immigrants as they navigate their immigration pathways into Canada and determine where to settle. It also answers the call for further study of the motivating factors in rural retention (Akbari et al. 2007; Reimer, 2007). From a theoretical and a methodological perspective, the data collected are framed by motivational analysis, described by Ouattara and Tranchant (2007, p. 98) as investigating "the reasons and motivations that guide migrants in their choices". This is in contrast to existing studies that compile demographic statistical data or take an economic approach using mathematical models to understand factors involved in migration decisions. As Ouattara and Tranchant argue, the benefit of a motivational analysis is that it emphasizes the personal and processual nature of migration without the automatic assumption of economic or material motives, thereby allowing for a much more nuanced understanding of the decision-making process.

The concept of social networks, the social connections between people or groups (such as organizations) (Granovetter, 1983, 1973), informed this analysis of the decision-making process of immigrants living in a small city. Social networks have been shown in the migration literature to potentially play a role in influencing where people move and how they socially integrate (for examples, see Weerasinghe et al., UBC Press Forthcoming, 2011; Hannerz, 1992; Goldring, 2001; Olwig, 2007). In relation to social networks, another theoretical concept used to initially formulate this research project was social capital (Portes, 1998; Bourdieu, 2001; Putnam, 2000; Colclough & Sitaraman, 2005; Smart, 2008). Social networks and social capital are intricately related concepts and therefore need to be clearly distinguished. Also, social capital has been variously defined, so to specify, "the consensus is growing in the literature that social capital stands for the ability of actors

to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures" (Portes, 1998, p. 6). However, in addition, social capital can act as a means of social control, that is, "social capital networks become a means of inclusion and exclusion, of maintaining dominant hierarchies and preventing social change" (Colclough & Sitaraman, 2005, p.478). The difficulties faced by those immigrants we spoke to in terms of lacking social capital are discussed in the *Community Reception* section of this paper. While social networks may not have been a critical initial factor influencing the decision to move to the community, development of social networks and social capital subsequently becomes important in the retention of immigrants. As well, the possibility remains that social networks might encourage further immigration to the community in the event that immigrants put down roots.

The notion of community itself needs to be differentiated from social capital and clearly defined. Historically, community has been variously defined referring to mutuality, service and the state (Yeo & Yeo, 1988). These definitions go beyond geopolitical understandings; as Wellman and Leighton (1979) argue, the importance lies in the notion of communal social ties. To clarify, "social relationships foster a sense of belonging and social identity that constitute fundamental characteristics of community" (Colclough & Sitaraman, 2005, p. 478). While community is used in this paper to refer to the geopolitical area of Miramichi, New Brunswick, which constituted the research site, immigrants were also asked whether they felt welcomed in the community and about the community in general. These questions elicited responses that referred to the social relationships and social identity of the community, as well as geographic understandings of community.

Further, concentration on the social aspects of immigrants' decision-making relative to internal migration contributes to the literature on migration that is critical of emphasizing economic concerns over all else (Castles & Davidson, 2000) and presents new avenues for informative

empirical investigation. Overall, our study further confirms that non-economic factors have a major influence on the decisions of immigrants to remain in a community. In part, such decisions confirm results from other welcoming community reports that highlight the significance of community initiatives in matters such as attitudes towards diversity and the quality and accessibility of local infrastructure and services, as well as the provision of effective settlement services in successful immigrant retention scenarios (Bruce, 2007; National Working Group on Small Centre Strategies, 2007; Gibson et al., UBC Press Forthcoming, 2011).

Methodology and Research Site

With the focus on understanding how social and cultural factors influence the retention of immigrants in small cities and/or rural Maritime Canadian communities, a modest ethnographic approach was adopted in that the primary researcher took up residence in the community, attended social events and had casual conversations with both immigrants and other community members about the research project during the study period. The goal was not to produce a representative sample of immigrants in the community but instead one that offered depth and detail on immigration experiences.

Seventeen semi-structured interviews were conducted with people who had immigrated to Miramichi, New Brunswick, and were living there during the fall of 2009. Also, several interviews were conducted with people providing settlement services to the area, allowing further contextualization of comments by immigrants themselves. In addition, participant observation was conducted at several community events and in the community at large.

Unfortunately, interviews could not be obtained with immigrants who had moved out of the area. However, both immigrant and service provider respondents reported a few incidents of

immigrants moving away from Miramichi. Those instances known to respondents living in the area and specifically mentioned included employment opportunities elsewhere as the motivation for leaving. A further example of motivation for onward migration was described as a longing for a more "urban lifestyle". In most cases, those immigrants who had left the community had not maintained any local ties, which could indicate that they had not formed social networks in Miramichi either with other immigrants or through the local multicultural association. Nor do we have evidence about whether they remain in touch with friends, neighbours, and co-workers. However, research by Ramos and Yoshida (2011) suggests that the region of Atlantic Canada may suffer from chronic outmigration of immigrants, of which some of the above may be examples. The interprovincial outmigration of immigrants from the region is part of a broader trend among Canadians; in particular, Atlantic Canada lost 10-15 percent of its population between 1982 and 1995 (Finnie, 1999).

Miramichi was chosen as the site for this case study because it is a small city of 18, 129 that experienced an overall population loss of 2 percent between the 2001 and 2006 censuses (Statistics Canada, 2007). This loss reflects a common problem found outside larger urban centres in Canada (Wulff et al., 2008; Flint, 2007; Reimer, 2007; Ouattara & Tranchant, 2007; Gibson et al., UBC Press Forthcoming, 2011). Immigration overall in New Brunswick almost doubled during this same period, and retention increased from 67 to 75 percent (Akbari, 2008). Immigration currently contributes to the overall population stability of New Brunswick as a whole (Akbari et al., 2007). However, as Akbari et al. (2007) found, most immigrants to New Brunswick settled in the three cities of Fredericton, Saint John and Moncton, so non-urban areas are not benefiting from this increased level of immigration.

While technically a city, Miramichi was made so through the amalgamation of several towns and surrounding rural areas in 1995 (Beaudin, 1999). The city is situated in a northern rural area of the province removed from the three urban centres of the province (*Ibid*). As a small city, it shares commonalities with other Canadian small cities and rural areas in the positive aspects of a slower pace of life, relative safety, friendly people and natural beauty (Baldacchino, 2006; Flint, 2007). However, small cities face distinct challenges in attracting and retaining immigrants due to issues such as the lack of provision of/access to services, employment, racism and nepotism (Baldacchino, 2006; Flint, 2007; Wilkinson & Kalischuk, 2009). Another challenge for small cities is that unlike urban areas, there are likely no ethnic enclaves where immigrants could live or socialize with people predominantly of their ethnic origins (for discussions on ethnic enclaves, see Qadeer & Kumar, 2006; Preston & Lo, 2009). Certainly the current number of immigrants in Miramichi makes an ethnic enclave unlikely.

According to Statistics Canada, between 2001 and 2006, the area of Miramichi attracted 80 new immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2009). The city of Miramichi is an example of a smaller centre not near an urban area (or non-metro adjacent) within New Brunswick and suffering from population loss and an aging population that could benefit from increased immigration. However, the community faces several challenges in attracting and retaining immigrants: the large forestry sector suffered a major downturn in the past decade (Bruce, 2010), and the youth population is declining (Statistics Canada, 2009), which people in the community believe to be due to a lack of job prospects. Hence, the city of Miramichi finds itself in the contradictory position of needing an influx of population but seemingly unable to generate the job opportunities to support such growth. However, our small sample indicates two correctives to this assumption: First, there *are* in fact job opportunities in the city that attract immigrants. Further, retaining people who choose to move to the

city or surrounding area does not depend solely on economic factors. This disconnect between widely held perceptions of employment opportunities and the types of jobs that immigrants have taken up may in part relate to the kinds of employment that are valued or available to non-immigrant community members. As noted in a later section of this paper, the forms of employment drawing immigrants to the area are quite dichotomous: highly skilled health professions on one hand, and on the other, service industry jobs that require few, if any, post-secondary education credentials. Some, but fewer, mid-level positions also are on offer. Therefore, in the discourses about the lack of local employment expressed in everyday conversation, non-immigrant community members may be discounting available low-paying service industry jobs, as well as those high-paying health care positions for which they are likely not qualified.

The qualitative interviews for this study were predominantly with recent immigrants, that is those who had arrived in the previous five years. The themes covered in the interviews included the immigration decision-making processes, community reception and the ways in which the final decision about where to resettle was determined. These themes clearly relate to the concept of welcoming communities, which, it turns out, is not just an artefact of policy makers concerned to attract and retain immigrants. Rather, immigrants themselves represented it as a critical aspect of their assessments about whether to stay or leave the Miramichi.

Miramichi Immigrant Respondents

The immigrants interviewed had varied backgrounds, but most were economic immigrants. Most lived within a nuclear family household, having moved to Miramichi with those families. At the time of the interview, only two people remained separated from partners who remained in their countries of origin for the time being. The countries of origin were diverse, reflecting Akbari et al.'s statistical study of immigrants to New Brunswick (2007, p. 11). For most interviewees (12/17),

Miramichi was the initial area of residence in Canada. They ranged in age between 25 and 78 years old, but most (13/17) were between 31 and 50. Eleven interviewees were men, and six were women, four of whom were raising children and not employed outside the home. Taking these gendered divisions based on labour into account, only two interviewees were unemployed at the time of the interview, both of whom were actively job hunting.

The people interviewed were also at various stages of the immigration process, but two had already taken out Canadian citizenship. All of those who were not Canadian citizens stated that they wished to be and were actively pursuing this goal. In terms of breaking down where interviewees were in the immigration process, nine currently had Canadian work permits, six had permanent residency and, as noted, two were Canadian citizens. The occupations of interviewees were also diverse but could be divided into three categories: of the nine employed outside the home, one-third were medical professionals, one-third were in the food service industry, and the others worked in a range of industries.

Research Findings

Immigration Decision Processes

Generally, people immigrated to Miramichi because of one of three situations: employment, a move with a partner who had a job offer, or marriage to someone from the area. In only three cases did people move without employment offers; this would indicate that there are job opportunities available in Miramichi despite common community attitudes to the contrary. Those interviewees who mentioned the motivation behind moving to Canada generally linked it to having better job prospects, wanting a good place to raise their children and also wanting to see a different part of the world.

The occupation of the interviewees or their spouses in many cases importantly informed their immigration experiences. In particular, medical professionals described overall easier transitions into the community in terms of initial work permit immigration processes and community reception. As one spouse related, the hospital was very positive about recruiting her husband; "they said come here, they need a doctor so they try to help doctors to come here. Which was, it was really, really wonderful for us." Other health care professionals also mentioned that the community was very supportive of them and appreciated their willingness to practice in the area. This clearly speaks to the general knowledge and concern within the community about medical professional labour shortages. These professional interviewees and their spouses indicate overall trends, with highly skilled immigrants making up increasingly large numbers of overall immigrants to New Brunswick (Akbari et al., 2007, p. 30).

Those people hired by companies, agencies or the local health authority clearly had an advantage as the employer helped (to various degrees) with the initial immigration paperwork. Also, medical professionals had the advantage of being offered a site visit to the local hospital responsible for their hiring, and there was mention of a monetary signing bonus. However, outside the site visits for medical professionals, employers seldom gave much information about the community itself. Information workers did receive about the community included commentaries on the low cost of living and remarks about the long winters. So immigrants resorted to other means of finding information about the Canadian immigration process and the community, including searching the internet, contacting the Canadian embassy and asking friends living in Canada. Eleven of the 17 interviewed knew people living in Canada before moving here; however, of those, only two knew people actually living in Miramichi at the time of their arrival. Hardly surprising considering the area's small population of immigrants, most interviewees did not move to the area to join family or

friends. However, one person told us about having encouraged friends from the same country of origin to move to the city and with some success in that one family had indeed moved to Miramichi as a result of the encouragement. This clearly positive story indicates that building up the community through immigrant social networks could become a self-fulfilling process due to the positive experiences of those living in the area.

Many interviewees noted that little information about the Miramichi community was available online so they lacked information about the city before moving there. The city's lack of promotion as a destination for immigrants, or rather the lack of the provision of information for those actually coming to the city, does not contribute to the attraction and retention of newcomers In terms of information about immigration processes, some interviewees stated that the information found on government websites was inadequate or, worse, identified conflicting information among various web pages, making finding accurate information much more difficult than it should have been. This does not facilitate immigration and was experienced as extremely frustrating for some interviewees.

Community Reception

Interviewees generally felt welcomed in the community, particularly in terms of how friendly people were on an individual basis. When asked about the positive qualities of the community, interviewees frequently mentioned that the area was nice in terms of both the people and physical space; most also mentioned it was quiet, with a simple way of life and safe with both low crime rates and a low cost of living. As one interviewee explained,

> It's nice and quiet; I think it's a great place for small children. To commute to almost anything is like five minutes or three minutes. I mean my daughter's school is two minutes. I think that it's relatively safe compared to other bigger cities. The people

are very, very friendly and hospitable. They don't make you feel like you are not from here or anything. You're not a stranger; they make you feel very welcome.

Also mentioned was that the various levels of government provided good social services, including health care and education; as well, most positively noted the Miramichi Regional Multicultural Association (MRMA). In the previous year, the MRMA had begun to provide settlement services, and many interviewees were involved in some way with the association. Several said that the association was important to them in providing English language classes, information about immigration generally and direction about who to contact for troubleshooting. It also provided a space to form friendships with other immigrants (which was stressed). This is an important point; not only did the organization help in providing information and services, but it also served as a social space for immigrants to find others with common experiences. Such a space becomes critical to the building of social networks in smaller communities without the immigrant-run services and social institutions so commonly described in the literature on ethnic enclaves (be it positively or otherwise) in larger Canadian cities (Heibert 2000; Qadeer & Kumar, 2006; Preston & Lo, 2009). Settlement service providers acknowledged that the most sought after services were English language instruction and socialization. As one worker noted, socialization was an important part of their mandate because "social isolation is a problem among newcomers." Due to the relative newness of the provision of settlement services in the area, workers acknowledged that they were kept busy both identifying and responding to various needs while seeking to improve services. Also, an important part of the MRMA mandate is to educate the community about the benefits of immigration. As one employee stated, this community education component is imperative because it helps to facilitate a welcoming community so essential to successful immigration and retention.

When it came to describing the difficulties associated with the immigration

process or within the community, several commonalities emerged. In terms of socially based problems, a few immigrants cited instances of their direct experience of racism in local social institutions. They also reported on the experiences of family members and other immigrants with whom they had spoken. Further, they went on to say with deep disappointment that they did not feel that the concerns raised were being addressed within those institutions. Remarkably, however, despite these instances of reported discrimination, the vast majority still felt welcomed in the community. This conclusion extended to one person whose family had been directly subjected to discrimination. In making sense of this experience in our conversation, this immigrant said she considered the instances in question not representative of the community as a whole. She also thought it was ultimately positive for the community to experience diversity through immigration. She said, "I think if immigrants come to here and if they have a good experience, they can be a good example for the community."

The remaining difficulties cited dealt more with the practicalities of living in this particular municipality. Interestingly, an important issue to the respondents was the negative, or 'naysaying,' attitude displayed by municipal government officials who explicitly expressed pessimism about the city's future economic prospects. One person who raised this issue noted that overall, she enjoyed living in the Miramichi; however, as she put it, "the other downside for me is I just sometimes I just feel like, like I don't know, like the council whoever, has just given up, like what's the point of fixing the roads. This is just a little town with nothing going [on], you know." Some others said they were exposed to an attitude of "disbelief" on the part of provincial officials and local community members about why they would move to Miramichi. One person also mentioned that by email with provincial government immigration representatives, he was "asked for a reason why we've come here rather than going anywhere else." This negative attitude shocked interviewees at

the time as their impression had been that the community needed to expand its population and therefore should be much more positive in trying to convince newcomers about the benefits of the area. Further, the negativity, a "defeatist attitude" in the words of newcomers and others alike, also extended into common community discourse about the inevitability of an aging population of the city compounded by a perpetual out-migration of younger residents. It was the defining of these demographic problems as inevitable and unfixable that seemed so remarkable to the much more positively inclined newcomers. Clearly, there is a lesson to be learned here.

On a further note regarding problems associated with the scale and location of the community, most reflections on the relatively small size of the city tended to dwell on the limited opportunities for staging public cultural and social events. The lack of available rental housing was noted by a number of people as well. Also, more predictable were comments about the limited variety and scale of shopping venues. One interviewee thought, in particular, that entertainment geared towards young people was lacking:

> I think the city needs more for youth people, more like entertainment, healthy entertainment. It's not only the movie, the movie obviously but that's it or sports, you can play but usually you have to pay for that. So that's why people here must go to other places, bigger places.

Also, likely linked to the scale of the community and associated with this, the tightness of local social networks, were comments on the difficulties in building the kinds of personal or social connections that would make finding employment more possible. Even well qualified individuals expressed this frustration. One person summed it up in this way:

> It's not what you know in the Miramichi, it's whom you know basically and I've had that experience. I have friends who are immigrants here who had the same experience.

The impenetrability of local social networks was also noted as problematic by those providing settlement services. Related to this were the well studied issues surrounding lack of credential

recognition (Akbari & Aydede, 2010), which one immigrant mentioned as a problem. That it did not surface in other interviews was not surprising given that most of those we made contact with were employed within their chosen fields. However, settlement service providers also mentioned the issue of lack of credential recognition and noted that it was difficult to deal with because there were no clear guidelines (government or otherwise) as to how immigrants should proceed if their professional or educational credentials are not recognized.

Also on the topic of scale and community amenities, a few people mentioned that it would be beneficial to have a university campus so their children and other local youth could aspire to attend it, thereby potentially remaining in the area. Others mentioned that establishing a post-secondary institution was a possible means of revitalizing the area. One interviewee noted that not having a university may be a factor in immigrant attraction and retention:

> So that is the reason the people don't want to come to small places…that they don't
> have university. I think that is more important than they don't have a big mall. You
> know, it's because for example if a family wants to come here an immigrant they look
> if the city has a university. No? I think I'm going to look for another one.

Regarding community infrastructure, some cited poor municipal roads as a problem and that the location of the community makes air travel inconvenient given two hours of driving needed to get to provincial airports. The geographic area is also prone to a long, harsh, snow-laden winter, a feature of local life considered a negative factor by some interviewees. One person noted that the winter weather made it very difficult to get around the city. Indeed, in terms of the accessibility of the sprawling city and adjacent areas, while a municipal bus system had been implemented recently, its coverage and frequency are still quite low. This led many interviewees to comment that having a car and a driver's license was almost a necessity to live in the city. Further, given that cars are costly to operate, the idea of car ownership lead to reflections on further difficulties experienced by immigrants, this time in terms of their relationship to Canada's banking institution. Many people

mentioned having to build an entirely new credit history on arrival in Canada, an issue of widespread

concern to new Canadians generally (Atallah and Rebelo, 2006). Given this situation, obtaining a

lease for a vehicle was next to impossible. One person who arrived in the municipality before

implementation of the municipal bus system noted the difficulties this created:

> The other side of it is that the first thing that I noticed is that basically there was no
> public transport. Which means that I have to go and buy a car, I mean how do you go
> and buy a car just like that? You move from a country, the bank wouldn't give you
> anything, you can't just pay cash and buy a…[car] and it was, winter was coming so
> you need [it] and we're a big family so we need a fairly decent car. The insurance
> was extremely high because they wouldn't accept the insurance from the [name of
> country]…and I had letters and everything from big companies, reputable worldwide
> companies and they wouldn't accept that. The…some of the banks wouldn't let you
> open an account.

Also, there was mention that getting the driver's licence itself required a very inconvenient wait time

and that those who did buy vehicles ended up paying for very expensive car insurance because their

previous experiences were discounted, as noted in the above quotation. But banking problems

extended beyond building a credit history into frustrating aspects of everyday life. For reasons that

are unclear and especially so given the economic contributions of new immigrants, some local

banks, we were told, also made it difficult for new immigrants to open accounts.

Turning now to issues related to the way in which the immigration system is experienced by

immigrants, everyone we spoke to mentioned the need for a much more streamlined approach.

Some people stated specifically that immigration documents and websites at both levels of

government (federal and provincial) were difficult to understand. For example, they were described

as using obtuse language and providing examples that did not reflect the culturally diverse audience

for which the documents were intended. As one person explained,

> some of it is the examples they give aren't tangible to immigrants, they might be
> tangible to Canadians or particularly to Canadian group bureaucrats, not necessarily
> even Canadian people. Some of the examples could do with being a bit more
> immigrant oriented.

Also, some interviewees had problems getting responses from both levels of government to immigration questions either by telephone or email.

Resettlement Decision Processes

Despite this quite extensive listing of difficulties, and as previously noted, most (15/17) immigrants stated that they found the community welcoming. It is hard to know whether this is an effect of the interview itself, of wanting to please the interviewer, or of wanting not to be seen as ungrateful (for a discussion on interviewer effect, see Pratt Ewing, 2008). It could also be a function of the kinds of persons interviewed. Nonetheless, in their answers, people generally mentioned how well they were treated by various individuals with whom they had come into contact. One interviewee explained how people in the community were immediately welcoming:

> Really the people were amazing…we bought this house, and even before we moved in, the people on the street gave us a house warming. I mean that is just so, so strange, something I'm not used to at all. And it was the same everywhere we went, we really were welcomed. Which is great, you never had to fight for a place, you were part of the community, that's it.

In contrast to this was a person who felt that the community was insular:

> I don't think it is welcoming. We have two families whom we consider as extremely good friends, I mean like maybe even part of our family now, that close but they're just two and one of them is obviously, obviously one of them is a foreigner herself so, and I have to say that the other couple is not from New Brunswick. They're from some other province.

This interviewee pointed out that while people in Miramichi were pleasant, they seemed unwilling to create friendships with newcomers; therefore, his closest friends were "from away".

When asked if they were going to stay in Miramichi, seven persons said they were definitely staying for the foreseeable future; the same number also said that they may stay but depending on several factors, the most often cited of which was employment. Two people said that they were definitely going to move at some point in the future so that their children could go to university.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This modest case study suggests that if immigrants have secure employment, there are also what we consider to be sociocultural or quality of life factors about living in smaller communities that will influence their retention. Economic factors, including the lure of good employment and the cost of living, are clearly important in influencing the initial move to the Miramichi. However, most persons we spoke to emphasized such sociocultural factors as feeling welcome and their enjoyment of life in this quiet, small community, adding that it provided a safe and secure setting to raise a family. Hence, while employment is important in trying to attract and retain immigrants to non-urban areas, clearly quality of life aspects remain critical to immigrants' settlement decisions and, more specifically, to the issue of retention of immigrants in small cities.

However, a number of aspects of the immigration process could be improved on for the success of subsequent efforts to bring and keep immigrants in Miramichi and, indeed, in the province generally. Negative attitudes expressed by municipal and provincial officials, as well as by local community members, need to be turned around. Such a move would begin from an understanding of the potential damage these attitudes have that would discourage immigration. Likely not all immigrants will be as willing to brush aside these attitudes as participants in this study. As part of this shift in perception, promotion of Miramichi as an immigration destination could also be implemented in a manner that emphasizes the positive qualities mentioned by interviewees: that is, in summary, nice people and physical space, quiet atmosphere with a low key way of life, safety with low crime rates, and a relatively low cost of living. Municipal online information could also be geared more toward marketing of place to immigrants. Government websites at the federal and provincial levels also need an overhaul to better ensure the provision of detailed and accurate information, and most importantly, contradictory components need to be erased. Also, the language

used in websites and documents could be simplified and examples used that better reflect the culturally diverse target audience. When people need further assistance with immigration processes, this should be more readily available in a timely fashion. E-mails should be responded to perhaps with a systematic acknowledgement of the receipt of the query and give a timeline when the query would be answered..

Finally, regionalization policies would benefit from taking into account that targeting families for settlement in lower populated areas may be a good strategy, as the lifestyle of smaller communities appears to coincide with the needs and desires of this group. Also of key importance are settlement services -- both in terms of the provision of services and as a vehicle for social networking. Immigration has the potential to effect positive change in non-urban communities such as Miramichi, which needs to be further recognized at the municipal level. Addressing the suggested changes above would in the long term make this city, and the province generally, more welcoming and able to retain those immigrants moving to the area.

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