Devolution and Evolution

Assessing Manitoba's Provincial Nominee Program a Decade Later

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Presentation Outline

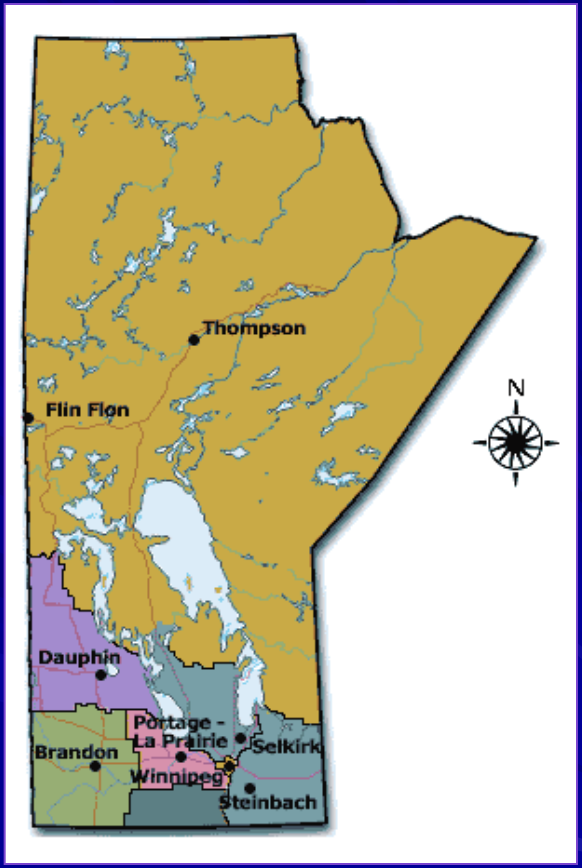
- Overview and objectives of Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program (MPNP)
- Tracing the evolution:
  - Mixed methods (data/interviews)
  - Economic/demographic outcomes
  - “Growing” pains
  - “Persistent” pains
- Logistical and social challenges for immigrants and receiving communities
- Future considerations

MPNP Overview

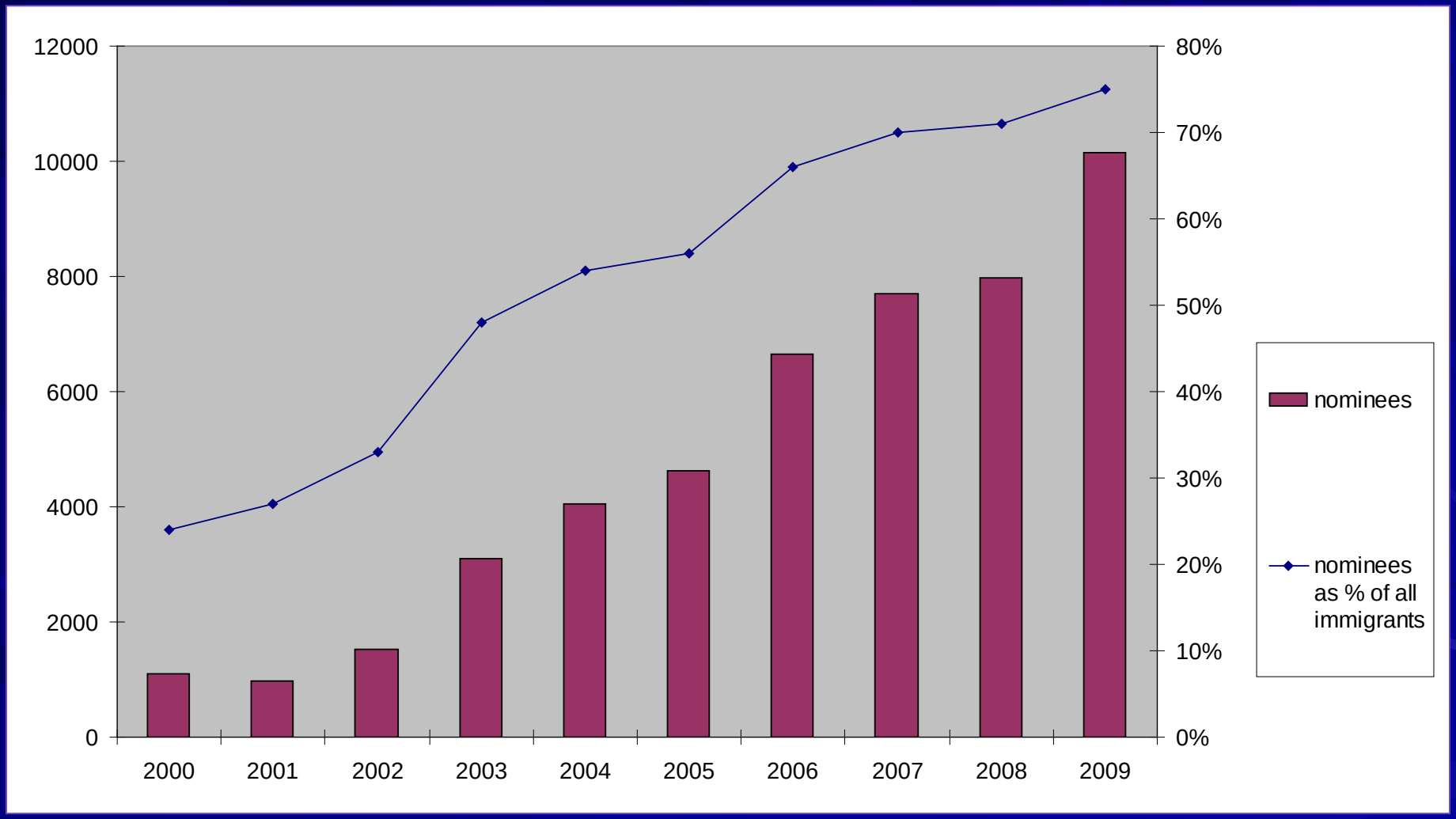
- A program that—through a federal-provincial agreement—devolves selection, settlement, and integration responsibilities to Manitoba
- One of 10 nominee programs in Canada, but also the largest and usually cited as the most successful
- Allows the province to be more flexible on entry requirements and to “tailor” settlement and integration strategies to local needs
- Part of a larger project to reduce pressure on the federal immigration regime and boost non-MTV populations and economies (similar to early 1900s)

MPNP Objectives

- Boost the economic sectors:
  - in need of need workers
  - not favored under federal selection
- Resettle increasing numbers of immigrants outside Winnipeg
- Obtain a rate of 20,000 newcomers per year by 2016
- Intended to dovetail with federal goals of bringing “all immigrants” to “all parts of Canada”



Total Provincial Nominees (PNs) and PNs as a percentage of all newcomers, 2000–2010



Economic and Demographic Outcomes

- Manitoba receives higher proportions of immigrants relative to its population than any other province
- Specific industries and companies have been able to recruit and obtain workers quickly
  - Nursing, manufacturing, hog and chicken processing
  - Maple Leaf, Loewen Windows
- Previously declining areas of the province have grown by as much as 25% since 2000
  - Steinbach, Winkler, Altona, Morden
- But what are the costs associated with the rapid pace of a labour-driven program?

A Process of “Growing Pains”

Issue	Solution
1998–2004: Consultants take lead in PN recruiting and often falsify labor market information and overcharge for services	2004: Manitoba mandates that all consultants be authorized by CSIC
1998–2004: PNs frequently find limited job availability for professions listed on the MPNP “desired occupations” list	2004: “desired” list replaced with a “restricted” list to limit mismatch
2006–2008: a large flow of TFWs, able to seek PN status after 6 months of work, experience abuses from recruiters/employers	2008: Manitoba *Worker Recruitment and Protection Act* implemented

- 2003–2010: regulatory changes aimed at increasing numbers

Persistent “Pains” of MPNP

- Highly variable funding (federal contribution for immigration = 41–74% of Manitoba’s contribution)
  - funding for integration has “not quite kept up” with services rendered to existing and new PNs
  - increased reliance on non-funded support systems (families, friends, churches)
- Knowledge transfer issues
  - settlement agencies may not know in advance how many immigrants they will be receiving
- Continued focus on increasing the number of PNs
  - Many groups (e.g., TFW-to-PNP “transitional” workers) may come with limited English or transferable skills

Community Challenges: Logistical

- Housing availability in rural areas: few rental properties; many PNs cannot afford to buy
- Lack of access to family physicians
- Inability to work in given skilled trade (and a need for better pre-arrival job market information)
- Ongoing problems of credential recognition
- Many PNs still come without adequate English ability and therefore cannot find work if they lose their first job where an employer shares language

Perspectives from the Integration Sector

- “A lot of learning has come through in the past 10 years, but for us a lot of the process is *reactive*. A lot of the initial problems, like with consultants, are less common now ... but if this is a labour market strategy, we need to get people who meet the needs of the region in a sustainable way. If [the nominee] loses that first job, are they employable elsewhere? Without language, it is a long road. Everything is fine until that first job fails” (settlement worker, Winkler).

- “Clients come to me and I see the pain they’re in when they can’t get a physician or work in their trade. The public is generous, but they’re not professionals. Eventually schools and housing will be built, but if we would be good if we could take it a bit easy” (settlement worker, Steinbach).

Community Challenges: Social

- In rural Manitoba, earlier and ongoing recruitment (e.g., by employers and consultants) of groups believed to have “cultural similarities” with the region has aided chain migration (MacDonald 1964), resulting in a preponderance of particular groups (e.g., German-speaking Mennonites)

- When combined with increasing reliance on localized and often ethnically based services
  - Decreasing awareness of and association with destination communities
  - Decreasing perceived need to learn English
  - Growing distance between communities and new PNs

Further Perspectives from the Integration Sector

- “The challenge for a lot of communities is a growing population in just one or two ethnic groups, like German-speakers from Russia. It’s about knowledge of the community for newcomers; they do a lot of activities through the church, often several times a week, and the church meets all the needs they have” (settlement worker, Winkler).

- “The stream is a bit overwhelmed and we’re not really modifying it. We have a fabulous relationship with Europe, but not for others. It does depend on factors like age—young families integrate more—but it creates a bit of an ‘us vs. them’ situation and you see it play out on school grounds and elsewhere” (settlement worker, Steinbach).

Challenges of a Labour-led strategy

- A need to assess preparedness and capacity more critically—considering the need to “catch up” and “take care of who’s there”
- A need to assess whether there are adequate information-sharing mechanisms for multi-scalar governance (Leo 2009)
- Consider whether employer-led strategies promote ethnic selectivity and challenge integration
- Consider MPNP goals (removing annual cap of 5,000; 20,000 newcomers annually by 2016) in light of economic realities such as the current recession

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