

Counterurbanization and the Growth of Canada's Rural and Small Town Municipalities: 1996-2001

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Canada's rural and small town (RST) municipalities have undergone considerable change over the course of the past 40 years. Recent study (Mitchell 2005) has demonstrated that although the dominant pattern has been one of population decline, more than 40 per cent of Canada's smallest settlements grew during the 1996-2001 census period. Some of this growth may be attributed to higher levels of natural increase, particularly in municipalities with a large population of Aboriginal residents (Mitchell 2005, Vartiainen 1989). In other cases, however, in-migration from larger Canadian municipalities is likely responsible.

This paper focuses on migration to those Canadian RST municipalities that experienced growth between 1996 and 2001. The primary goal is to assess the contribution of "counterurbanization" to this demographic trend. Although evidence has verified that rural in-migration from larger urban centres has occurred sporadically in Canada since the 1970s, no national study has yet described nor explained its magnitude and spatial extent for the period 1996 to 2001. This paper will provide this information thus enhancing our understanding of the dynamics at work in rural and small town Canada.

Counterurbanization

Counterurbanization is a demographic movement that sees residents of larger population concentrations relocate to smaller municipalities either within, or beyond, a political border (Findlay 1991; Allan and Mooney 1998; Boyle and Halfacree 1998; Fielding 1998; Champion 2000; Mitchell 2004). It is a migration type that has been observed periodically across the developed world since the early 1970s (Berry 1976a,b; Fielding 1982; Robert and Randolph 1983; Dean 1984; Vartanen 1989 and Champion 1990, 1998). Likewise, its presence has been recognized in Canada in both national and localized studies of population change.

Data collected by Statistics Canada, and summarized by Rothwell et al (2002), show that between 1966 and 1996, RST municipalities in Canada experienced three periods of positive net migration: 1971 to 1976; 1976-1981; and 1991-1996. During the earlier periods, this favourable scenario was a result of lower levels of rural out-migration, combined with higher levels of in-migration from larger urban areas. In the latter census period, however, the trend was attributed to higher rural retention rates, with levels of in-migration falling slightly (by 1.3%) from the previous period. Although the level of counterurbanization was not sufficient to contribute to a positive rate of net migration, the movement of residents from large urban areas to rural municipalities did, nonetheless, continue.

Case study research has accompanied national-level studies of population change. Here we find evidence that urban residents are drawn to smaller municipalities for myriad reasons. Economic factors, such as affordable housing and the availability of employment opportunities, have been isolated internationally as conditions pushing some people out of larger population centers (van Dam et al 2002; Mitchell et al 2004; Gkartzios and Scott 2005). Urban residents are also drawn to rural environments for the perceived amenities that they provide.¹ This quest, or what is sometimes called “amenity migration” (Chipeniuk 2004), has been recorded in the international literature for the better part of forty years (van Dam 2002; Crump 2003). In Canada, for example, Paquette and Domon (2003) demonstrated the importance of landscape to rural incomers living outside Quebec City. In this, and dozens of other cases (see Mitchell 2004), the notion of environmental amenity has been found to prevail over economic concerns. Indeed, Harvey’s (1990) suggestion that post-modern societies value the past, a sense of place and roots, seems to be reflected in the choice of many residents to leave behind the disamenities of urban life.

Counterurbanization, therefore, is an international phenomenon that is occurring in select municipalities offering certain economic and/or environmental amenities. In Canada, we do know that this movement has occurred nationally in the past (Rothwell et al 2002). However, we do not yet know the extent or spatial distribution of this migration path for the period 1996 to 2001. Furthermore, although anecdotal evidence has revealed that urban residents do seek out bucolic

1. In fact, some argue that the term “counterurbanization” should be reserved for those moves that are driven by more existential reasons (for example, Buursink 1986).

settings, no attempt has been made to distinguish between what I call “metropolitan counterurbanization” (migration of residents from Census Metropolitan Areas) and “sub-metropolitan counterurbanization” (movement from Census Agglomerations), as opposed to “lateral migration” (movement between rural areas and small towns). Nor has any attempt been made to distinguish between migration both to rural areas within, or beyond, a region’s (provincial or territorial) borders. This paper will uncover and explain these patterns, thus revealing the contribution of various migration paths to the growth of Canada’s smallest settlement areas.

Methodology

Data to meet the objectives of this study are procured from a special run of census data on internal migrants, five years and older, who moved from somewhere in Canada to a RST municipality. These are census subdivisions located beyond the boundaries of large urban areas (CAs and CMAs) which, according to the 2001 census, provided residence for one-fifth of Canada’s population (Statistics Canada 2001a).² In-migration data were extracted for all Canadian RSTs meeting three criteria.

First, a positive rate of growth must have occurred between 1996 and 2001.³ Second, the CSD must have a designation other than “reserve”,⁴ and third, the municipality must have complete population and migration data, and be large enough to avoid compromising the confidentiality of survey participants. Given that 50 CSDs did not meet this latter criterion, the final sample consists of 1 146 Canadian RST census subdivisions. This represents about sixty percent of municipalities reporting growth between 1996 and 2001, and 95 percent of all growing non-reserve CSDs (Table 1). Migration data extracted for each of these rural and small town municipalities is used to meet three objectives set out below.

The first objective of this study is to determine the extent of rural in-migration occurring within Canada’s provinces and territories. Next, the magnitude and spatial distribution of three types of migration are isolated (metropolitan and sub-metropolitan counterurbanization and lateral migration). The third objective is to offer a tentative explanation for spatial variations in these patterns. This is accomplished by comparing the relative importance of each migration type with data on provincial population and economic dominance. Linear regression analysis is the technique used to determine this degree of influence.

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2. To be included in the CMA, adjacent municipalities “must have a high degree of integration with the central urban area, as measured by commuting flows derived from census place of work data.” <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/Products/Reference/dict/geo009.htm>.
 3. See Mitchell (2005) for a detailed discussion of population change occurring in Canada’s RST municipalities between 1996 and 2001, and Millward (2005) for a closer examination of population change underway in Nova Scotia.
 4. This criterion is isolated because levels of net natural increase in Aboriginal municipalities tend to be far higher than in other jurisdictions.

TABLE 1 The Sample

	Number of suppressed	
	CSDs	Number of RSTs in sample
NFLD	1	23
PEI	0	37
NS	7	10
NB	0	44
QUE	0	401
ONT	0	125
MAN	1	61
SASK	28	164
ALTA	8	168
BC	1	71
YUKON	3	8
NWT	1	10
NUN	0	24
CANADA	50	1146

Notes: 1. CSDs are Census Subdivisions.
2. RSTs are Rural and Small Town Municipalities.

Immigration to Canada's Rural and Small Town Municipalities: 1996-2001

Data collected by Statistics Canada reveal that 4.4 million residents (over the age of 5) migrated to a different census subdivision in Canada during the 1996 – 2001 period, with Ontario generating the greatest percentage of all moves (34.9%). Included in this “internal migrant” category are more than one half a million people who chose to take up residence in a RST municipality reporting growth (Table 2). This represents nearly twelve per cent of all internal moves taken during the 1996-2001 census period.

The largest number of rural in-migrants is found in Ontario (167 010) followed closely by the province of Quebec. Although experiencing the greatest influx of rural in-migrants, this type of information accounted for only 10 per cent of moves taken within this jurisdiction. In contrast, rural in-migration is of greater relative importance in Alberta, a province also experiencing high levels of rural in-migration (1 14 395 migrants, representing 20.9% of all moves).

Table 3 demonstrates that intra-provincial migration to RST municipalities decreases as one progresses outwards from central Canada. In the two core provinces of Quebec and Ontario, more than 90 per cent of all moves originate within the province. As one moves across the country, the percentage of intra-provincial migrants falls. By the time one reaches Prince Edward Island in the east and Alberta in the west, this migrant pool has declined by approximately one-quarter (to 64% in P.E.I and to 70% in BC). If one travels to the extreme coasts, however, this demographic trend is reversed. In both Newfoundland/Labrador and British Columbia, more than a quarter of all moves to these provinces' growing RST

TABLE 2 Migration to Canada's Growing Rural and Small Town (RST) Municipalities: 1996-2001

	Total # of internal migrants	% of Ca- nadian internal migrants	Total # of internal mi- grants going to growing RSTs	% of internal migrants who moved to a growing RST	% of all Ca- nadian inter- nal RST in- migrants	# of origin CSDs of internal RST in-mi- grants
NFLD	57030	1.3	1070	1.9	0.2	54
PEI	18015	0.4	3380	18.8	0.7	127
NS	109130	2.4	9275	8.5	1.8	191
NB	96305	2.1	10810	11.2	2.1	277
QUE	1152815	25.7	114730	10	22.2	1078
ONT	1566365	34.9	167010	10.7	32.3	758
MAN	125390	2.8	26220	20.9	5.1	368
SASK	146345	3.3	15615	10.7	3	443
ALTA	548730	12.2	114395	20.8	22.1	1063
BC	644935	14.4	49795	7.7	9.6	523
YUKON	5320	0.1	325	6.1	0.1	23
NWT	7975	0.2	420	5.3	0.1	10
NUN	4410	0.1	4090	92.7	0.8	151
CANADA	4482765	100	517135	11.5	100	4558

Note: 1. To ensure confidentiality, Statistics Canada randomly rounds all migration data either up or down to a multiple of "5" or "10". Thus, values presented are approximations and do not reflect the exact number of migrants choosing to locate in a rural and small town municipality.

2. There are no urban areas in Nunavut.

Source: Statistics Canada (2001b).

TABLE 3 Regional Origin of RST In-migrants to Canada's Regions: 1996-2001 (%)

From To	NFLD	PEI	NS	NB	QUE	ONT	MAN	SASK	ALTA	BC	TERR	TOT
NFLD	75.3	0.9	7.9	0.9	2.3	5.6	0	2.9	0.9	3.3	0	100
PEI	5.3	63.9	4.9	2.6	4.9	11.4	1.5	0.7	2.4	2.4	0	100
NS	5.5	1.3	66.3	4.1	1.9	11.5	0.9	0	4.9	3.1	0.5	100
NB	3.9	0.3	5.9	70.3	3.3	10.1	0.3	0.6	2.1	2.5	0.7	100
QUE	0.02	0	0.2	0.3	94.3	4.4	0.07	0.06	0.2	0.4	0.03	100
ONT	0.5	0.1	1	0.5	2.6	91.3	0.5	0.3	1.5	1.6	0.1	100
MAN	0.2	0.1	0.5	0.4	0.7	5.4	80.6	4.2	4.4	3.1	0.4	100
SASK	0.9	0	0.5	0.3	0.7	1.6	2.9	75.5	11.3	5.3	1	100
ALTA	1.1	0.1	1.3	0.8	1.4	4.8	2.4	5.3	70.2	11.7	0.9	100
BC	0.2	0	0.4	0.3	1.3	6.4	1.6	2	9.6	77.1	1.1	100
TERR	8.5	0.3	5.3	0.9	5.9	13.3	5	1.6	7.3	6	45.9	100

Note: 1. Bold numbers represent intra-provincial moves.

municipalities originate in other regions. In these cases, geographic proximity appears to play a major role in the decision of migrants to undertake an out-of-province move.

TABLE 4 Regional Destination of RST In-migrants from Canada's Regions: 1996-2001 (%)

FROM TO	NFLD	PE I	NS	NB	QUE	ONT	MAN	SASK	ALTA	BC	TERR
NFLD	17.4	0.4	0.8	0.1	0	0	0	0.1	0	0.1	0
PEI	3.9	82.1	1.5	0.9	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0
NS	11.1	4.6	56.3	3.7	0.1	0.6	0.3	0	0.5	0.5	0.9
NB	9.1	1.5	5.8	72.7	0.3	0.6	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.5	1.5
QUE	0.9	0.8	2.2	2.9	93.8	2.9	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.8	0.9
ONT	15.6	4.9	15.5	7.9	3.2	89.2	3.4	2.7	2.8	4.6	4.6
MAN	1.4	0.6	1.2	1.1	0.2	0.8	79.8	5.2	1.3	1.4	2.4
SASK	3.2	0	0.6	0.5	0.1	0.1	1.7	56.8	1.9	1.5	3.7
ALTA	27.4	4.8	12.3	8.3	1.4	3.2	10.2	29.3	87.4	23.3	26.9
BC	1.9	0	1.8	1.6	0.5	1.9	3.1	4.7	5.2	66.8	12.5
TERR	8	0.4	2.1	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.8	0.3	0.3	0.5	46.6
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note: 1. Bold numbers represent intra-provincial moves.

Information on the destination of all out-migrants who took up residence in rural Canada is provided in Table 4. Rural Alberta is the main destination for out-migrants from six southern provinces and also the northern territories. In contrast, rural Ontario is the most sought-out province for residents of Quebec, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island. In each case, however, Alberta follows closely behind, with adjacent British Columbia being the most popular destination of choice. This discussion reveals, therefore, that all parts of the country both send and receive rural and small-town in-migrants. Whether these migrants come from Canada's urban centers (CMAs or CAs), or its smallest settlement areas (RSTs), is considered in the following section.

Migration Paths

It is frequently assumed that most rural and small town growth is a function of the relocation of urban residents into either a nearby, or more distant, countryside within the province of origin (Bourne and Rose 2001; Mitchell 2005). This movement, defined as counterurbanization, sees residents of either large metropolitan regions (CMAs), or smaller urban agglomerations (CAs), take up residence outside the urban realm. These moves may be contrasted with lateral migration, which involves the migration of rural residents to a new home within the countryside (Mitchell 2005). Given that a relatively large percentage of the Canadian population resides in its largest settlement areas (62.2% in 25 CMAs in 1996), it is assumed that the majority of migrants will indeed be drawn from these source areas. Furthermore, given the predisposition of many residents to desire the commuting benefits of urban proximity, it is likely that more intra-provincial moves will be found than those that cross a provincial border.

TABLE 5 Contribution of Metropolitan Counterurbanization (MC) to Canada's Growing RST Municipalities: 1996-2001

	Total MC	% of internal RST migrants engaging in MC	Total inter-prov. MC	Inter-prov. MC as a % of internal RST migration	Total intra-provincial MC	Intra-prov. MC as a % of internal RST migration
NFLD	315	29.4	140	13.1	175	16.4
PEI	540	16	540	16	n/a	n/a
NS	4085	44	1125	12.1	2960	31.9
NB	2320	21.5	1490	13.8	830	7.7
QUE	48295	42.1	4650	4.1	43645	38
ONT	84565	50.6	6530	3.9	78035	46.7
MAN	10590	40.4	1715	6.5	8875	33.8
SASK	5000	32	1245	8	3755	24
ALTA	36865	32.2	10725	9.4	26140	22.9
BC	19955	40.1	6010	12.1	13945	28
YUK	70	21.5	70	21.5	n/a	n/a
NWT	40	9.5	40	9.5	n/a	n/a
NUN	1030	25.2	1030	25.2	n/a	n/a
CANADA	213670	41.3	35310	6.8	178360	34.5

Note: 1. n/a is not applicable given the absence of Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs).
Source: Statistics Canada (2001b).

Metropolitan Counterurbanization

Evidence provided in Table 5 reveals that metropolitan counterurbanization is indeed the most prevalent type of migration taking place to Canada's growing rural and small town areas. However, although more than 200 000 individuals moved from Canada's CMAs to growing RST municipalities during the 1996-2001 period, this number represents only 41.3 per cent of all internal moves. In the majority of provinces/territories, this migration path is responsible for less than one-third of all relocations to RST municipalities experiencing growth. In fact, in only one province (Ontario), does this type of migration constitute more than half of all internal RST migratory moves taken. This trend has not gone unnoticed in the literature (Bourne and Rose 2001; Bowler et al. 2002; Bourne and Simmons 2004). In the Georgian Bay area, for example, several studies have found that residents of Toronto, Hamilton and other Canadian metropolitan centres have moved to scenic towns and villages in this location to escape the disamenities associated with city life (Dahms 1996; Dahms and McCoomb 1999; Mitchell et al 2004).

A comparison of provincial origins of rural in-migrants reveals that counter-urban moves taken from metropolitan regions within the province of origin are much more prevalent than are those that cross a provincial border (178,360 compared to 35,310). As anticipated, numbers of intra-provincial moves of this type vary significantly across the country. Rural Ontario again leads the way (78,035)

in its ability to attract local in-migrants, followed at some distance by Quebec (43,645) and Alberta (26,140). All other parts of the country containing CMAs do attract members of this cohort, although their numbers are quite limited in a number of regions (i.e. NFLD, NB).

Although accounting for less than 7 per cent of all rural in-migration, some Canadian residents living in metropolitan regions have indeed elected to leave their home province and take up residence in a less concentrated setting (35 310). Alberta stands out in this regard given that it attracted more than 10 000 metropolitan residents from out-of-province; a number that far exceeds that reached in any other region. Municipalities such as Foothills (#31) and Mountain View County each attracted more than 400 residents from metropolitan centres outside Alberta. Although luring fewer migrants, New Brunswick is also noteworthy since it is the only province (or territory), housing Census Metropolitan Areas, where inter-provincial moves from large urban regions are more important than are those occurring from within the province (1,490 compared with 830 respectively). Nearly 300 residents from the Toronto CMA, for example, moved to New Brunswick and settled in a variety of scenic towns, including Shediac and Woodstock.

Results suggest, therefore, that metropolitan counterurbanization brought more than 200,000 new residents into growing municipalities of RST Canada between 1996 and 2001. Although more than half of these urban out-migrants can be found in central Canada, their presence can be felt across the country. In one jurisdiction (NB), rural municipalities are benefiting most from the decision of metropolitan residents to seek out a rural living space outside their home province or territory. In all other locations, however, more CMA residents have chosen to relocate within their home province. In both cases, the end result is the growth of rural areas and small towns fortunate enough to be the recipient of this migration stream.

Sub-metropolitan counterurbanization

Sub-metropolitan counterurbanization takes migrants from Canada's 39 (in 1996) Census Agglomeration Areas to its smallest census subdivisions. Table 6 shows that this movement was responsible for about one-fifth of all migrations to Canada's RST areas (Table 6). Small CSDs in Alberta, Ontario and British Columbia are the prime destinations for these residents, although their presence can be detected across the country.

The majority of sub-metropolitan counterurbanites relocated to rural dwellings within their province of origin during this census period. In Ontario, for example, 32 445 migrants took up residence in a local rural area. Barrie, as the largest source of out-migrants, contributed nearly 3 000 residents to rural Ontario, with the adjacent municipalities of Adjala and Oro-Medonta being the main beneficiaries (1,070 and 475 Barrie out-migrants respectively). The only exception to this trend may be found in Manitoba, where slightly more residents from census agglomerations located out-of-province settled in this region's rural settlement areas (1,055 compared to 955 respectively). The municipality of Leamington,

TABLE 6 Contribution of Sub-Metropolitan Counterurbanization (SMC) to Canada's RST Municipalities: 1996-2001

	Total SMC	% of internal RST migrants engaging in SMC	Total inter-prov. SMC	Inter-prov. SMC as a % of internal RST migration	Total intra-prov. SMC	Intra-prov. SMC as a % of internal RST migration
NFLD	185	17.3	50	4.7	135	12.6
PEI	1215	35.9	285	8.4	930	27.5
NS	1810	19.5	895	9.6	915	9.9
NB	3020	27.9	580	5.4	2440	22.6
QUE	19310	16.2	750	0.7	18560	16.2
ONT	35195	21.5	2750	1.6	32445	19.4
MAN	2010	7.7	1055	4	955	3.6
SASK	2880	18.4	870	5.6	2010	12.9
ALTA	26310	23	11065	9.7	15245	13.3
BC	12470	25	2100	4.2	10370	20.8
YUK	125	38.5	50	15.4	75	23.1
NWT	80	19	40	9.5	40	9.5
NUN	690	16.9	690	16.9	N/a	N/a
TOT	105300	20.4	21855	4.2	83445	16.1

Note: 1. N/a is not applicable given the absence of Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs).
Source: Statistics Canada (2001b).

Ontario, sent the largest number of sub-metropolitan counterurbanites to this province (150), with the majority choosing to secure homes in the Regional Municipality of Hanover and the community of Winkler. Alberta leads the way in its ability to attract members of this migrant pool (11,065 migrants). The majority of these residents arrived from adjacent B.C. (5,625), with a sizeable number also coming from Ontario (1,105).

This analysis reveals, therefore, that sub-metropolitan counterurbanization is roughly half as important as migration from Canada's largest urban areas. Thus, in combination, nearly two-thirds of all moves taken to municipalities in rural Canada originate outside the rural settlement system. The remaining third are drawn from towns, villages, or rural areas found within the Canadian countryside.

Lateral migration

The term "lateral migration" is one that describes a migration path taken between communities of the countryside. Between 1996 and 2001, approaching 200 000 rural residents followed this path (Table 7). In five regions (NFLD/LAB, NB, MAN, NWT and NUN), lateral migration is the most important demographic movement taking place. In contrast, it is the least significant type of migration in Ontario where, as already noted, metropolitan counterurbanization dominates.

Variations in inter and intra-provincial moves may be gleaned from Table 7. Like all forms of migration described thus far, intra-provincial moves are much

TABLE 7 Contribution of Lateral Migration (LM) to Canada's RST Municipalities: 1996-2001

	Total LM	% of RST internal in-migrants engaging in LM	Total inter-prov. LM	Inter-prov. LM as a % of internal RST in-migration	Total intra-prov. LM	Intra-prov. LM as a % of internal RST in-migration
NFLD	570	53.3	75	7	495	46.3
PEI	1625	48.1	395	11.7	1230	36.4
NS	3380	36.4	1105	11.9	2275	24.5
NB	5470	50.6	1140	10.5	4330	40.1
QUE	47800	41.7	1120	1	46680	40.7
ONT	46575	27.9	4745	2.8	41830	25
MAN	13620	51.9	2320	8.8	11300	43.1
SASK	7735	49.5	1705	10.9	6030	38.6
ALTA	51220	44.8	12300	10.8	38920	34
BC	17370	34.9	3270	6.6	14100	28.3
YUK	130	40	60	18.5	70	21.5
NWT	300	71.4	145	34.5	155	36.9
NUN	2370	57.9	730	17.8	1640	40.1
CANADA	198165	38.3	29110	5.6	169055	32.7

Source: Statistics Canada (2001b).

more prevalent than are those taken between provinces or territories. The absolute size of this cohort in Quebec is worth noting. High numbers of intra-provincial lateral migrants are also found in Ontario and Alberta. It is the latter province, however, that excels in its ability to attract non-local lateral migrants. The largest origin province for these incomers is British Columbia (920). However, all other provinces of Canada (except PEI) contributed rural migrants who fuelled the growth of Alberta's smallest municipalities during the 1996-2001 census period.

A Preliminary Explanation

The importance of lateral migration was not anticipated at the onset of this study, given the assumption in the literature that most rural growth is driven by urban out-migration, (e.g. Mitchell 2005). Although this supposition is supported for the nation as a whole, this study has shown that movement between local rural settlements is the most important form of migration taking place within five of Canada's province and territories (Table 8). The question that now arises, is why do these variations exist?

To answer this necessitates that one compare the relative importance of each migration path across Canada with variables that are assumed to be at least in part responsible for the observed patterns.⁵ First, to explain variations in the relative

5. The northern territories were excluded from this analysis since Nunavut was only created in 1999, and the data presented here are for 1996.

TABLE 8 Regional Distribution of Internal RST In-migrants by Migration Path (%): 1996-2001

	Total			Total			counter-urbanization	Total		
	MC	MC	MC	SMC	SMC	SMC		LM	LM	LM
NFLD	29.5	13.1	16.4	17.3	4.7	12.6	46.8	53.3	7	46.3
PEI	16	16	N/a	35.9	8.4	27.5	51.9	48.1	11.7	36.4
NS	44	12.1	31.9	19.5	9.6	9.9	63.5	36.4	11.9	24.5
NB	21.5	13.8	7.7	28	5.4	22.6	49.5	50.6	10.5	40.1
QUE	42.1	4.1	38	16.9	0.7	16.2	59	41.7	1	40.7
ONT	50.6	3.9	46.7	21	1.6	19.4	71.6	27.8	2.8	25
MAN	40.3	6.5	33.8	7.6	4	3.6	47.9	51.9	8.8	43.1
SASK	32	8	24	18.5	5.6	12.9	50.5	49.5	10.9	38.6
ALTA	32.3	9.4	22.9	23	9.7	13.3	55.3	44.8	10.8	34
BC	40.1	12.1	28	25	4.2	20.8	65.1	34.9	6.6	28.3
YUK	21.5	21.5	N/a	38.5	15.4	23.1	60	40	18.5	21.5
NWT	9.5	9.5	N/a	19	9.5	9.5	28.5	71.4	34.5	36.9
NUN	25.2	25.2	N/a	16.9	16.9	N/a	42.1	57.9	17.8	40.1
CANADA	41.3	6.8	34.5	20.3	4.2	16.1	61.6	38.3	5.6	32.7

TABLE 9 Population and GDP/capita in Southern Canada: 1996

	% of Canada's				Gross domestic product per capita (\$)
	% of Canada's total population	CMA population	% Canada's CA population	% of Canada's RST population	
NFLD	1.9	0.9	1.5	4.8	18 900
PEI	0.4	0	1.6	1	20 586
NS	3.1	1.8	4.9	5.5	21 291
NB	2.5	0.7	5.5	5.6	22 384
QUE	24.7	24.9	23.9	24.9	25 190
ONT	37.3	44.1	27.7	25	31 415
MAN	3.9	3.7	1.6	5.8	25 305
SASK	3.4	2.3	3.2	6.7	29 117
ALTA	9.3	9.4	6.9	10.9	36 413
BC	12.9	11.9	22	9	29 006

Source: Statistics Canada (2001a).

importance of each type of intra-provincial migration, the percentage of Canada's population (in 1996) residing in each type of settlement area (CMAs, CAs and RSTs) within each region is calculated (Table 9). This variable is selected because it is assumed that the size of the migrant pool will be greatly influenced by the number of people living in the region under consideration. Second, to enhance our understanding of variations in inter-provincial migration, gross domestic product/capita in 1996 for each region is calculated. This variable is chosen because it is believed that residents may be drawn to out-of-province destinations if economic conditions are more favourable than in the origin region (Coulombe 2006)

TABLE 10 Linear Regression Results for Intra and Inter-provincial Migration Paths

Dependent Variable	Independent variable	R ²
% of Canada's total intra-provincial RST in-migration	% of Canada's population	0.93
% of Canada's intra-provincial metropolitan counterurbanization	% of Canada's CMA population	0.97
% of Canada's intra-provincial submetropolitan counterurbanization	% of Canada's CA population	0.77
% of Canada's intra-provincial lateral migration	% of Canada's RST population	0.84
% of Canada's total inter-provincial RST in-migration	Per capita GDP of destination region	0.76
% of Canada's total inter-provincial metropolitan counterurbanization	Per capita GDP of destination region	0.78
% of Canada's inter-provincial submetropolitan counterurbanization	Per capita GDP of destination region	0.67
% of Canada's inter-provincial lateral migration	Per capita GDP of destination region	0.76

Note: Significant at 95% confidence level.

(Table 9).⁶ Each of these variables is regressed against total RST in-migration, and its three sub-forms, occurring both within and across provincial borders.

Results of the linear regression analyses are provided in Table 10. It may be seen that population size is an excellent indicator of total intra-provincial rural and small town migration (R² of .93), particularly for metropolitan counterurbanization. Moreover, economic conditions are a good predictor of levels of inter-provincial RST in-migration (R² = .76). This suggests that economic motives may be a more dominant incentive for relocating to a rural municipality than previously thought (Mitchell 2005). Indeed, the relatively high number of out-migrants from Newfoundland (Table 4), who have taken up residence in the Alberta countryside, is likely a result of disparities in the strength of these regional economies.

In other cases, however, differences in population and economic well-being are not the sole determinant of the size of the migrant pool. It is highly plausible that some regions lure urban residents because of their abundance of physical and/or cultural amenities (Aguiar et al 2005). The decision of more than 600 residents of Ontario (Table 4) to move to rural municipalities in Atlantic Canada, for example, is probably an indication of this trend.

Although it is impossible to empirically describe the regional distribution of environmental amenity, a surrogate measure may be found in the provincial and territorial tourism satellite accounts (Barber-Dueck and Kotsovos 2003). These accounts describe total expenditures of inter-provincial tourists visiting each

6. Unemployment levels were also considered, but were found to explain only a very small percent of the variation in migration patterns recorded.

TABLE 11 Resident, Inter-provincial Tourism Expenditure Ratio, 1996

Region	Total Inter-provincial Tourism Expenditures (\$ millions)	Resident: Inter-provincial Tourism Expenditure Ratio
NFLD	163.9	1:297
PEI	100.3	1:745
NS	374.1	1:411
NB	247.1	1:335
QUE	1439.7	1:202
ONT	2005.2	1:186
MAN	451.9	1:406
SASK	314.1	1:317
ALTA	1086.3	1:403
BC	1697.6	1:456

Source: Barber-Dueck and Kotsovos (2003).

region of Canada in 1996 (Table 11). When we express these expenditures on a per resident basis, then an indication of the relative importance of the tourism industry is revealed. If we then assume that tourists are lured to various regions of the country to experience its environmental amenities (both physical and cultural), then a comparison of the relative importance of tourism expenditures provides an, albeit rough, indication of the relative importance of these amenities to Canadian residents.

A comparison of the resident: tourism expenditure ratio for provinces of southern Canada reveals that tourism is of greatest relative importance to Canada's smallest province, Prince Edward Island (Table 11). Tourism is also important to four other regions, where the ratios exceed 1:400 (NS, MAN, ALTA, BC). In all other regions, the ratio falls below 1:400, suggesting lower levels of overall appeal. Although one may argue that this measure is far from ideal, it does illustrate that inter-provincial tourism is of greater relative importance outside the economic core. It is likely that the favourable environmental conditions in these regions lure both temporary visitors and permanent residents. Additional case study research of individual migrants is necessary to confirm if this is, indeed, the case.

Conclusion

Internal migration is an ongoing occurrence within Canada's vast settlement system. It is without a doubt that Canadians continue to prefer the amenities of urban living. However, at the same time as our metropolitan and sub-metropolitan centers continue to expand, small numbers of residents (about half a million during the study period) have elected, either by choice or necessity, to move to small municipalities where small town or rural life may be embraced.

This study has found that more than one-third (41%) of migrants who moved to a rural residence (between 1996 and 2001), came directly from a metropolitan

centre. It also finds, however, that about one-fifth of all RST in-migrants left Canada's smaller urban agglomerations and elected to relocate in a less concentrated setting. However, for more than one third of the sample, the decision to move was taken by residents already living in the countryside; a migration path that dominated in five of Canada's thirteen regions. This finding is unexpected, given the frequent assumption that counterurbanization from urban areas (Mitchell 2005) drives the growth of non-urban municipalities.

This analysis also has revealed that the majority of rural in-migrants are drawn from within the local province or territory. In only two cases (New Brunswick and Manitoba), are moves from out-of-province of greater importance for one migration path (metropolitan counterurbanization and sub-metropolitan counterurbanization respectively). In all other regions of the country, population growth is largely a result of the decision of local residents to move to, or retain, a dwelling in the countryside. Whether these individuals have taken up residence in areas that lie adjacent to urban areas, or beyond the sphere of urban influence, remains to be seen.

This study also has demonstrated, as expected, that the magnitude of intra-provincial moves is influenced greatly by the number of residents located within each region. This is particularly true for moves taken from Census Metropolitan Areas, but is of slightly less significance for migration occurring within the rural countryside. Relative variance in economic conditions, as measured by gross domestic product per capita, was found to be a good indicator of the size of the migrant pool crossing a provincial border. Thus, the decision to move to a rural setting outside the province is, to a large extent, influenced by favourable economic conditions in the destination region.

Economic and demographic motives, however, do not fully explain the patterns observed herein. I suggest, as others have, that environmental amenity is likely an important motivator, particularly drawing residents to Canada's hinterland regions. These motives also undoubtedly influence the decision of local residents to relocate to attractive settings within the same province. Such influences will only be revealed, however, through additional localized investigation of demographic change occurring within rural and small town Canada.

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