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Outcomes of Migration to Small Regional Retirement Communities on the Canadian Prairies

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Abstract

The broad aim of this paper is to further our understanding of the mobility of older people by investigating the outcomes of migrations to small regional retirement communities on the Canadian Prairies (i.e., Manitoba's Interlake). A three-stage survey design includes (i) a interview survey of 34 recent older movers to the retirement communities; (ii) an interview survey of 10 community leaders; and (iii) two focus group interviews. Community leaders and elderly migrants were in general agreement about key issues facing newcomers to the study area. However, the migrants were generally satisfied with their moves to communities in the study area and had no migration intentions for the future. These results may be viewed as evidence of the successful place integration of elderly migrants within semi-rural retirement communities located in a cold Canadian climate. Policy interventions should be directed toward maintaining sustainable retirement communities to facilitate the integration of older migrants.

Keywords: rural communities, qualitative analysis, migration intentions, migration outcomes, place integration.

1.0 Introduction

During the twentieth century the proportion of older persons has continually risen, a trend that is expected to continue well into the twenty-first century. According to the population division of the United Nations, population ageing is unprecedented, having major consequences and implications for all facets of human life (United Nations, 2002). In Canada, the number of seniors aged 65 years and over surpassed the four million mark for the first time in 2006, with their proportion of the total population increasing from 13.0 percent in 2001 to 13.7 percent in 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2007), and to 14.8 percent in 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2012d).

Retirement often prompts a desire for a simplified life in a smaller rural or semi-rural community (Walters, 2000; Brown & Glasgow, 2008). The broad aim of this paper is to further our understanding of the mobility of older people by investigating the outcomes of migrations to small regional retirement communities on the Canadian Prairies. A regional retirement community is located in a rural or semi-rural area which (i) is rich in amenities and infrastructure, (ii) has high concentrations of seniors, and (iii) attracts a relatively high proportion of older people from places within the same region (Cuba & Longino, 1991; Dahms, 1996). There is no doubt that the everyday experiences of older people are shaped by their home community and the decisions of community leaders. However, it is quite rare for most people to recognize the role of larger structures such as assisted living facilities, infrastructure of the community, and health care facilities in their everyday experiences (DeVerteuil, 2003). Accordingly, the main objective of the present study is to investigate the effect of post-move changes in residential settings on the personal outcomes of older people. Outcomes address: (i) the role of elder's experience in place integration, and (ii) the role of community structures in place integration. In particular, we shall consider the impact of the macro-environment of the destination community on these outcomes.

Elderly migration plays a major role in determining the spatial distribution of older people in a population. In light of the ageing of Canadian society, increased migration of seniors to smaller rural or semi-rural communities is expected. Thus, the explicit focus on the outcomes of elderly migration to small Prairie lakeshore communities is warranted. It is significant that the present study focuses on Manitoba's Interlake region given that the area is characterized by a particularly cold climate.

The work presented in this paper is based on a wider investigation of the processes and outcomes of the migration of older people to small western lakeshore communities in the Interlake region of Manitoba (Spina et al., 2013). This work found that: (1) the decision to move is influenced by place ties with the destination community, and (2) the relocation process is influenced by previous place experience with the destination community together with personal contacts. In the current study, we address the outcomes of these migrations. As with our previous work, our study communities offer an ideal study area for exploratory research on the migration of seniors to Canadian regional retirement communities. First, our study area clearly has a highly truncated population in terms of age distribution, with a large percentage in the older age cohorts (Statistics Canada, 2012abc). Further, the communities comprising our study area have developed as popular

“retirement resorts” for both permanent and seasonal migrants. Finally, although a limited number of studies has investigated selected American, Canadian and Scandinavian regional retirement communities in cold climates (i.e., Dahms, 1996; Dahms & McComb, 1999; Gustafson, 2001), little is known about this phenomenon on the Canadian prairies.

The paper commences by presenting the background literature and conceptual framework of the present study. A profile of the study area is next outlined, followed by an explanation of the methodology and survey stages. The results of the analysis of the paper are then presented in detail, while the paper concludes with a discussion of the research findings and their implications.

2.0 Previous Literature and Conceptual Framework

There is a vast literature on retirees and retiree migration. This research has reviewed typologies of elderly migration types (Litwak & Longino, 1987; Walters, 2000), and the migration decision-making process (Brown & Moore, 1970; Wiseman & Roseman, 1979; Wiseman, 1980; Haas & Serow, 1993; Walters, 2000; Longino et al., 2002; Bradley et al. 2008). Research has also explored the characteristics of older movers (Lovegreen et al., 2010), motives for moving (Wiseman 1980; Duncombe, Robbins & Wolf, 2003; Sunil, et al., 2007; Longino et al., 2008), the dynamics between the elder and family members during the move decision process (Sergeant & Ekerdt, 2008), and return migration decisions (Jauhiainen 2009; Hunter, 2011). The economic and social consequences of retiree concentrations in North America (Serow, 2003) have also been examined, along with those factors that help rural communities successfully develop tourism and its entrepreneurship opportunities (Wilson, et al., 2001), the types of images used to sell retirement communities (Lucas, 2004), and elderly in-migration and return migration as a trigger for local development (Rowles & Watkins, 1994; Jauhiainen, 2009).

Amenity migration is a distinctive form of mobility among retirees (Wiseman & Roseman, 1979; Wiseman, 1980; Meyer & Speare, 1985; Litwak & Longino, 1987; Speare & Meyer, 1988; Brown et al., 1997; Walters, 2000). Amenity areas are primarily located in non-metropolitan regions or small town settings (Rogers, 1992; Walters, 2000), and amenity migrants are strongly attracted by pleasant climates, favourable economic conditions, and the amenities of small towns (Litwak & Longino, 1987; Rogers, 1990; Rogers, 1992; Dahms, 1996; Dahms & McComb, 1999; Walters, 2000; Dandy & Bollman, 2008; Brown & Glasgow, 2008; Brown et al., 2011).

The accumulation of place ties that connect people with places impacts both the attachments that elderly migrants have with different locations and their migration patterns. Whereas Burholt (2006) identified seven key areas of attachment to place among older people in rural Wales, including general location satisfaction and social integration, several studies have found that elderly migrants tend to move, or anticipate moving, to places they know through various ties, including friends and family, previous residence, and repeated vacations or visits (McHugh, 1984; Oldakowski & Roseman, 1986; Longino et al., 2008; Spina et al., 2013). Research has also addressed the development of place ties following a move or decisions to make additional moves (Haas & Serow, 1993; Carlson, et al., 1998; Longino et al., 2002), and whether retirees assimilate/integrate into the host community (Longino

et al., 2002; Van Den Hoonaard, 2002; Waldron, et al., 2005; Bahar et al., 2009). Cutchin (2001) attempted to further develop the concept of place attachment by proposing the notion of place integration to extend our knowledge of the experience of elders in place. Cutchin argued that the ongoing experience of place includes conflicts in the continuity of place. Place integration refers to the short-term elimination of conflicts in place and the creation of new meanings and values for individuals through individual and social action.

In the current study, we attempt to provide a significant extension of work that we previously reported (Spina et al., 2013) and address the outcomes of migrations to small regional retirement communities on the Canadian prairies. In our previous work, we examined the importance of place ties on the process of migration and found that pull factors, particularly previous place experience with the destination community, assumed greater importance than push factors in the decision to move. In addition, the close proximity of destination communities to major urban centers, the locations of friends and family and the information that they provided, also played important roles in the migration decision-making process. Moreover, we also found that while previous place experience was a major source of information for older migrants, the high mobility levels of migrants throughout the life-course made later life migration easier and less stressful. Finally, our research had implications for the development of theory on the relationships among place ties, elderly migration, and community development. In the current study, however, we propose that the concept of place integration will help further our understanding of the experiences of migrants in regional retirement communities following a move.

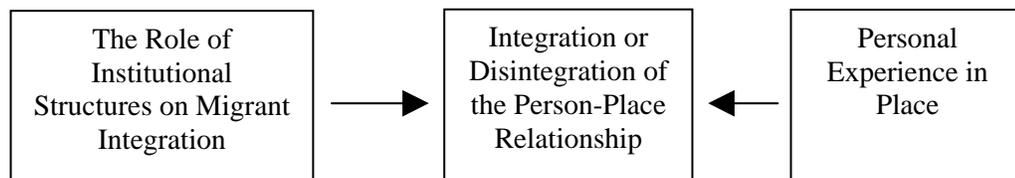
Our broader conceptual framework incorporates elderly relocation processes and outcomes in the specific context of migration to regional retirement communities. Figure 1 presents that part of this framework which explicitly focuses on components relevant to our research objective concerning the outcomes of migrations. Once a move has been made, the migrant may integrate into, or disintegrate within, the new community. Figure 1 indicates that the basis of this amended version of the conceptual framework is the *integration or disintegration of the person place relationship* which ultimately influences migration intentions. In turn, the figure discloses that the integration or disintegration of person and place is influenced by (i) the elder's *personal experience in place* (i.e., the impacts of the demographic, social, and built environments) (Van Den Hoonaard 2002; Bahar et al., 2009), and (ii) *the role of institutional structures on migrant integration*.

The elder's *personal experience in place* includes any general problematic situations that he/she may encounter. These problematic situations, which negatively impact an older adults' level of satisfaction with their community, represents a major input into the elder's place integration or disintegration. Relevant components of place experience include the migrant's views concerning service provision and the role of community organizations which may also shed light on how the various institutional strategies can prevent elders from spinning out of the place integration cycle and ultimately leaving the community to relocate elsewhere (Cutchin, 2001), a major input into place integration or disintegration.

A full understanding of the *integration or disintegration of the person place relationship* requires consideration of *the role of institutional structures on migrant integration*, which include assisted living facilities, community

infrastructure, and health care facilities (DeVerteuil, 2003). By examining how the experiences of older migrants are in part shaped by external forces involving local community structures, communities are not only seen as repositories of migrant streams from varied locations, but active agents in place integration (Cutchin, 2001). Thus, formal interactions between communities and the migrants themselves should take place through public consultations and focus groups comprised of both migrants and community leaders. Certainly, the voices of the migrants should be heard in formulations of local government policy with regard to service delivery and access to facilities targeted to seniors. Further, the responsiveness of communities to the problems of migrants and the role of service groups and community organizations in facilitating place integration must also be considered. Ultimately, the outcome of the integration or disintegration of the person-place relationship concerns the formulation of migration intentions. In particular, it is important to understand the point at which integration is no longer considered feasible by an older adult and when a further migration move is thus likely (Cutchin, 2001). By moving, these older migrants indicate that they feel that their needs can be better met in another community.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Outcomes of Migrations of Older People: Regional Retirement Communities.



3.0 Context of the Present Study

3.1 Profile of the Study Area

Figure 2 presents the location of the province of Manitoba within Canada, while Figure 3 indicates that Manitoba's Southern Interlake region is located north of Winnipeg and bounded in the east by Lake Winnipeg (the eleventh largest freshwater lake in the world), and by Lake Manitoba in the west. In the vacation communities around the south basin of Lake Winnipeg, permanent residents are augmented each summer by both cottagers¹ and vacationers (Selwood, 1996). The beaches of Lake Winnipeg are within weekend or day-trip distance from Winnipeg and have developed as second home (cottage) destinations (Gill, 1996).

There are a number of popular resort communities located on the west shore of Lake Winnipeg (see Figure 3). Approximately one-half of the populations of the towns of Gimli (1,916 population), Winnipeg Beach (1,011 population), and Dunnottar (696 population) are comprised of persons age 55 years and over

¹ In North America, most buildings known as cottages are used for weekend or summer getaways by city dwellers. What Eastern Canadians refer to as "cottages" are generally referred to as "cabins" in most of North America. In much of Northern Ontario, New England, and upstate New York, the term "camp" is used.

(Statistics Canada 2012abc). Other popular resort communities include Sandy Hook, Arnes, and Camp Morton². It is also noteworthy that the three main study communities (i.e., Gimli, Winnipeg Beach and Dunnottar) offer some interesting contrasts in terms of their housing resources, social services, and infrastructure. In particular, a significant concentration of services is available in Gimli. Overall, the western shoreline of Lake Winnipeg has emerged as one of Manitoba's premier resort attractions based on its cultural and natural amenities, with particular emphasis on summer recreation opportunities.

4.0 Methods

4.1 Data Sources and Data Collection

The survey design and sampling procedures. In this study, an older migrant is defined as an individual who (i) had made a permanent move to the study area within the five-year period immediately prior to the survey, and (ii) was also 55 years of age (i.e., the 'young-old' who fall within the 'retirement transition' age cohort) or older at the time of the survey. An additional eligibility criterion is that the older migrant's place of origin is located outside the census division in which the destination community is located, thus excluding local movers from the survey. The entire sample of seniors includes 34 subjects. These respondents lived at various locations throughout the study area, although 19 were residents of Gimli and seven were residents of Winnipeg Beach.

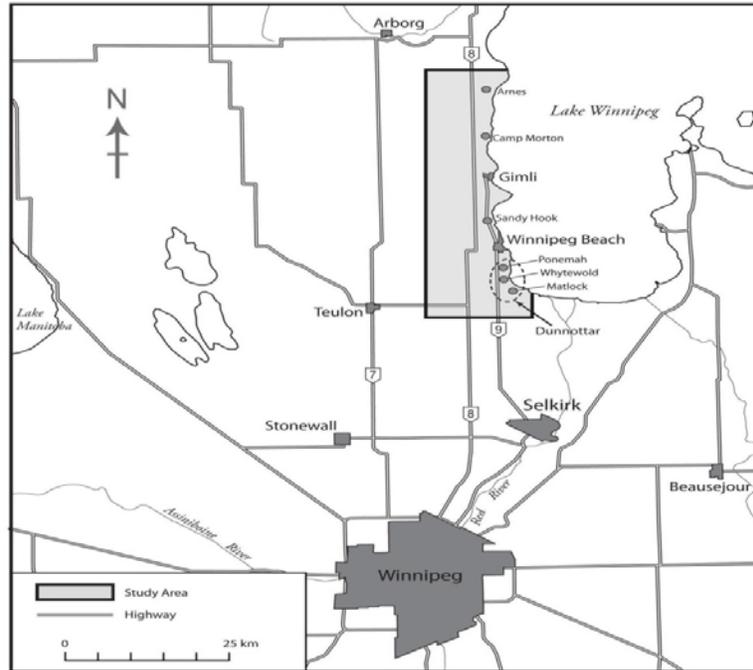
Figure 2: The Location of the Province of Manitoba within Canada.



Source: Wikipedia, 2014.

² The population numbers of these smaller communities are not available. Rather, their numbers are embedded in the population counts of the larger rural municipality.

Figure 3: Southern Interlake Region of Manitoba, Winnipeg, and Location of the Study Area.



Source: Spina et al., 2013.

In the current study, a community leader is defined as an individual who directly or indirectly “impacts” the older population of the study area through the individual’s participation in groups and organizations specifically serving seniors, or through his/her broader decision-making power on issues impacting the wider community. Community leaders from any of the communities within the study area were deemed eligible for inclusion in the “community leader” sample, even though their influence may have extended beyond the boundaries of the study area. The community leader sample includes 10 subjects who held either paid or volunteer positions, or were elected to positions in local government.

Two non-probability sampling procedures were utilized in the present study: convenience sampling and snowball sampling. These procedures were combined to recruit samples of both older adults and community leaders. The entire interview period extended over three fall months (September – November) in order to include seasonal migrants who may not be available in the summer. Interviews were tape recorded and ethical approval to conduct all components of the field survey was granted by the University of Manitoba’s Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB) Protocol #J2005:085.

4.2 The Survey Stages

Three survey stages were completed by members of our samples: the main interview survey of older migrants, an interview survey of community leaders, and focus group interviews. The interviews were taped and subsequently transcribed for future analysis. Each survey was typically administered within a 45 – 60 minute period.

Stage one: Main interview survey of older migrants. The main interview survey elicited data on the experiences of the migrants after relocation to the new community. These data relate to the problems encountered in the new community, the respondent's perception of the new community, level of satisfaction with the new community, and current vacation patterns. Finally, the future migration intentions of the migrants were also elicited. A combination of structured questions, semi-structured questions, and unstructured questions were utilized in the main interview survey. The entire sample of 34 subjects completed the main interview survey.

Stage two: Interview survey of community leaders. The principal aim of the second survey stage was to elicit data from community leaders concerning (i) the role of larger institutional structures in influencing the mobility patterns of elderly migrants; and (ii) the integration of elderly migrants into the new communities. The main focus of the interview survey of community leaders concerned the perspectives of the community leaders on issues and policies impacting older people. Data were also gathered on the leaders' future plans for their community which could likely impact the elderly population. A sample of 10 community leaders was initially selected to complete the interview survey of community leaders.

Stage three: The focus group sessions. The final survey stage included two focus group sessions, each involving both elderly migrants and community leaders who completed either one of the first two survey stages. All of the elderly migrants and community leaders who participated in the first focus group session (comprised of three migrants and two community leaders) also participated in the second larger focus group session (comprised of seven migrants and four community leaders). Existing study participants were chosen on the basis of their willingness and availability to participate in the focus groups. The focus group sessions yielded data on problems in the community perceived by elderly migrants, the effects of the community on the integration and adjustment of the migrants, the greatest changes identified by migrants in their new community since their arrival, and factors influencing the likelihood of migrants leaving the community.

The interviews with community leaders and focus groups provided opportunities to explore how the external pressures created by a shifting elderly population base were being addressed through internal plans and initiatives. We ensured that the sessions were completed after approximately 60 - 90 minutes.

5.0 Results

The results of the analysis of data used to address our research objective are presented sequentially on the basis of two dominant themes which are identified in the conceptual framework (see Figure 1). The two themes are: (1) role of elder's experience in place integration; and (2) the role of institutional structures on migrant integration.

5.1 Role of Elder's Experience in Place Integration

An elder's personal experience in place includes any general problematic situations that he/she may encounter. In relation to the main interview survey, a number of problems may be encountered in the new communities after the move. Twelve

respondents felt that there were no problems in their community. With regard to the remaining twenty-two respondents, the most frequently reported problems included the inability to secure tradespeople to perform various jobs, and difficulties in accessing adequate medical attention. Other problems included an inefficient sewer system, flooding or the threat of flooding (cited by three respondents each), and unpaved roads (cited by two respondents). These results are consistent with a proposition by Wiseman and Roseman (1979) that factors exogenous to the individual, which all relate to the residential environment, may result in dissatisfaction with the current dwelling and neighborhood. In the focus group sessions, both elderly migrants and community leaders cited health care provision as being one of the main problems in the new communities. In addition, older adults who moved to the study area from the Winnipeg Census Metropolitan Area were more likely to convey greater dissatisfaction with the problems present in their community. Thus, the location of an older adults' most recent previous residence may predict positive or negative experiences with place. Further, those older adults who did not belong to a service group or organization were also more likely to identify problems in their new communities. Although problematic situations which negatively impact an older adults' level of satisfaction with their community represents a major input into the elder's place integration or disintegration (Cutchin, 2001), any problems cited by respondents did not affect the level of satisfaction with their communities or future migration plans.

Table 1 presents citations concerning the views and behavior of older adults with regard to service provision both within and outside their new communities. The data are based on the main interview survey of older migrants (Stage one). Interestingly, the propensity to make trips outside of one's community for services appears to be age-related, as nine of these 16 respondents were between the ages of 55 and 64. However, gaps in the provision of services did not affect levels of satisfaction of respondents with their communities or their future migration plans, which may be the result of the close proximity of these communities to nearby centers with sufficient services. Indeed, communities in closer proximity to larger centers can afford to offer fewer services, as individuals are able to access services in these centers. Communities in close proximity to larger centers can utilize this to their strategic advantage in order to attract and retain older adults. Ultimately, this process may contribute to the aging-in-place of older adults in their communities (Graff & Wiseman, 1978; Hanson & Emler, 2006).

The community change most cited by respondents was the construction and renovation of buildings, with 31 citations, followed by population growth and change (the in-migration of younger families into the study area), with 11 citations. Sarah (62 years old), a Gimli resident, recognized that the growth in the number of buildings and the population increase would create further pressure on Gimli's inadequate sewer system. Geoff (63 years old), a resident and realtor in Gimli, stated that the most significant change that he had seen was the construction of homes in response to the in-migration of older adults. In consequence, Geoff had mixed feelings about the construction boom in the area:

Well, you know, the good from a taxpayers' standpoint I guess...you broaden the base and you have more taxpayers contributing to the pot...but the same time why people moved out to Gimli in the first place was kind of the elite character of the town and the area. And my concern

is...if it gets overdeveloped then your gonna lose some of it.

Our discussions with Sarah and Geoff illustrate not only a recognition of changes in communities, but a critical analysis of impacts which may potentially influence future elderly migration to the study area and related migration outcomes. Consistent with results gleaned from the main questionnaire/interview survey of older migrants, participants of both focus groups (Stage three survey) voiced that the most significant changes seen in their community include the building and renovating of homes and buildings. Migrants generally viewed the identified changes as either “good” or “very good,” while very few cited the changes as “neither good nor bad.” Development in response to elderly migration has been observed in other locations. For example, Halseth (2003) found fringe development along south-eastern Vancouver Island was the result of the age-specific service needs of retirees, the dominant in-migrant group; while Bourne, et al. (2003) found that increased social diversity and the intense competition among builders for market share have resulted in entire residential subdivisions, designed for retirement, on the fringe of the Toronto urban region. Thus, our results are consistent with trends observed in other Canadian locations.

Table 1. *Provision of Services: Citations of Older Adults (Stage 1 survey)*

Service concerns*	Number of citations
Provision of medical services	11
Provision of financial services	5
Range of retail services and services in general	4
	<i>Total citations = 20</i>
	<i>(14 respondents)</i>
Where services are obtained outside new community**	
Winnipeg	29
Selkirk	14
Gimli/Winnipeg Beach	13
Arborg	4
Steinbach	1
	<i>Total citation = 61</i>
	<i>(31 respondents)</i>
Services obtained outside of new community ***	
Medical Services	29
Miscellaneous	22
Groceries	21
Financial Services	14
Big box Stores (i.e. Walmart)	11
Furniture	9
Clothing	8
Restaurant	8
Entertainment	5
	<i>Total citations = 127</i>
	<i>(31 respondents)</i>

*20 respondents were satisfied with the provision of services in their community

**3 respondents did not obtain services outside of their community

***3 respondents did not obtain services outside of their community

Throughout all of the interview surveys, respondents stressed that the in-migration of younger families was more noticeable in recent years relative to the in-migration of older age cohorts. However, the absence of an affordable congregate living facility³ for older adults will influence the plans of seniors still living in their homes. For example, in one of the focus group sessions Brenda (60 years old), a resident of Winnipeg Beach, stated:

I think the only thing that would drive us away would be if, if we could not maintain our house anymore and there was no...affordable 55 plus for us to move into. That might be the only thing that might push us back to Winnipeg.

Respondents who completed the main interview survey of older migrants were generally satisfied with their move to the current community due to the general neighborhood/community environment (i.e., relaxing, peaceful and quiet nature of the community). Other factors cited included people in the community who were friendly and "like-minded." For example, Frank (57 years old), a resident of Gimli, stated:

Oh yes, yes, we love it here. Everyone's so friendly, it's a nice quiet community, you can walk down the street at 2 in the morning. You can, you always meet somebody, you know, it's one of those little Andy Griffith towns, you know, it's nice.

5.2 The Role of Institutional Structures on Migrant Integration

Consistent with a branch of literature that addresses the economic and social consequences of retiree concentrations in North America (Serow, 2003), we were interested in exploring the views of community leaders regarding the impact of the recent influx of older people on the study area. The greatest problems facing the elderly and their community that were cited by the community leaders are organized into three categories: (i) housing; (ii) health care; (iii) low-income seniors who were unable to utilize local recreational facilities.

In relation to the results of the community leaders' interview survey (Stage two survey), community leaders disclosed that they were certainly well aware of the movement of the elderly into their communities and their demands on local housing resources. As Michael, who held several voluntary positions in Winnipeg Beach pointed out:

A lot of these places we have cottages that have to be winterized...and what happens is these people coming into retirement, what we're getting is people that have a high income, tearing down, they're selling their houses in Winnipeg, tearing down the cottage or...home and building something new. Those things are happening and we're seeing that growth.

³ This type of older resident apartment typically offers hospitality services such as group meals, light housekeeping, social and recreational opportunities, and scheduled transportation to shopping and cultural activities.

Concern was expressed by community leaders about the lack of new affordable housing targeted to low-income seniors. Moreover, the overall high demand for housing in the study area (by both younger families and elders with changing needs as they age) was typically blamed for raising real estate prices throughout the study area. Tom stated that he felt that the influx of elderly into the study area could negatively impact the stereotype of Gimli: "...it could lead to the fact that Gimli will get the label as an old-person town...that could lead to young people not specifically wanting to be there." Other impacts of population growth cited by community leaders included the need for a higher capacity sewer system in Gimli and overcrowding at the "Gimli New Horizons 55+ Activity Centre."

Community leaders did not know the older migrants who participated in the focus groups. However, some older migrants knew each other, while some community leaders also knew each other. Participants interacted in a very friendly manner throughout the two focus groups. When discussing the potential impacts of the current influx of elderly into the study area in a focus group setting, Holly, a resident of Winnipeg Beach, expressed a view echoed by both seniors and community leaders throughout the data collection process, which was that at some point in the future they would have to leave their homes, but did not want to leave their current community. However, even if a new 55+ facility were to be built, combining both independent living with personal care services, it must be affordable for seniors currently residing in the community with low or modest incomes.

Consistent with major problems cited by elderly migrants in the main interview survey, some community leaders identified the lack of medical practitioners as a serious issue throughout the entire study area. In turn, the heavy case load of community doctors prevents them from accepting new patients. Thus, residents of all ages in the study area must often travel to larger centers such as Winnipeg (approximately half an hour to one hour in terms of driving time), to visit appropriate health care professionals. Moreover, problems concerning shortages of medical practitioners specializing in the needs of seniors, medical equipment, and personal care homes were also cited.

When discussing the current provision of non-medical services in the area, limitations cited by community leaders included the lack of a retail outlet which specializes in seniors' aid equipment, personal care homes, and recreational facilities in the small communities (e.g., Dunnottar). In Winnipeg Beach, the absence of transportation and housing for seniors was noted. In addition, the inadequate clearing of snow from sidewalks, by the public works department, which creates a dangerous outdoor environment for older adults, was cited as a serious service failure in Gimli. More broadly, our results contribute to a substantial body of work focused on services for older adults in rural areas. For example, research has addressed mobility constraints impeding rural seniors' access to regionalized services (Ryser & Halseth, 2012), challenges to the provision of health care services (Forbes & Edge, 2009; Hanlon & Halseth, 2005), views concerning factors that affect the mental health of older adults and how well these factors were addressed in rural and midsize urban communities (Mcgee et al., 2004), and determinants of health service used by Canadian 55 or older, across a range of urban and rural areas of residence (McDonald & Conde, 2010).

Community leaders cited a number of persistent problems of a broader nature in

the communities, including: (i) the lack of an adequate sewer system; and (ii) a poorly run municipal government, although these were personal (subjective) assessments. It is notable that several elders likewise identified the lack of an adequate sewer system as one of the most serious problems in the study area. The majority of residents throughout the study area utilize a holding tank for the removal of their household waste. The general lack of development in the area (including the sewage issue) may not only have been hindered by the ongoing debate between cottage owners and permanent residents, but also by shortcomings of local government. As Tom noted in his interview survey for community leaders:

I think in Gimli...the biggest problem as I see it is that...our current municipal government is...is a little short on planning. If you're going to be successful in the future you need to plan in the present...they tend to...they tend to...to manage as opposed to govern. Good governance is policy making and having visions and plans, it's not reacting to day to day, just reacting to day to day issues, and, and that's where we seem to be, so I think we need a, a little more governance and planning.

Community leaders were involved in a number of projects to serve the elderly population in the study area. These initiatives addressed major concerns about the communities shared by both community leaders and the older migrant populations. They include the presentation of information by the RCMP (the federal, national, and parliamentary police force in Canada) geared towards improving the general safety of seniors in the area, the development of a recreation centre located in Winnipeg Beach, and the development of an affordable 28-unit, senior housing project in Winnipeg Beach. In addition to the senior housing complex, it should be noted that new condominiums were already being built in Gimli.

Community leaders were satisfied with, and stressed the contributions of service groups and organizations to communities. The volunteer base was cited as a particular strength and declining membership numbers as a weakness of these groups and organizations. In the main interview survey, 20 respondents indicated that they belonged to a service group or community organization. Most of these respondents belonged to the "Gimli New Horizons 55+ Activity Centre," and half of those individuals who belonged to a service group or community organization were between the ages of 55 and 64). The main reasons why respondents joined service groups or community organizations were to engage in group activities, meet people and enjoy the social interaction associated with membership, "get out of the house," volunteer, and help themselves get attached to the community.

When asked whether local service groups and community organizations helped migrants integrate into the community, 15 of the respondents to the main interview survey who participated in these organizations replied in the affirmative, while five felt that they did not help them integrate. Those whose last previous residence was not located in Winnipeg were more likely to join a service group and community organization and were more likely to feel that they had integrated into their community. These groups and organizations appear to facilitate the development of place ties between migrants and their communities. No fewer than 32 respondents in the main interview survey stated that their future migration plans had not changed since the time of their move. A clear majority of the respondents had no future intentions of moving away from the study area although migrants

generally felt that to live in the study area they had to be relatively healthy. Thus, projects to serve the elderly population and the contributions of service groups and organizations to communities shed light on how the various institutional structures have prevented elders from spinning out of the place integration cycle and ultimately leaving the community to relocate elsewhere (Cutchin, 2001).

6.0 Discussion

In this study, we used the results from two sets of interview surveys and two focus group sessions to address our research objective concerning the outcomes of the moves of older migrants to small Prairie lakeshore communities. Our analysis involved the use of data that were presented sequentially on the basis of two dominant themes. Overall, the results reveal that all of the migrants were generally satisfied with their move to the destination community. This high level of migrant satisfaction may be viewed as an indicator of a lack of disintegration of the person-place relationship (Cutchin, 2001). It would appear that the trade-off of losing some convenience related to the limited provision of goods and services in the new community was balanced by a perceived higher quality and pace of life. Nevertheless, an older resident may decide to move for personal reasons and yet have positive place experiences. In common with the findings of Haas and Serow (1993), only a small group of migrants perceived a time in the future when they might have to leave the region to find suitable housing and enjoy better access to such services as medical facilities and public transportation. While the exigencies of late life will no doubt eventually cause further moves by individuals who had not originally planned to leave the study area, the present communities will likely have to accommodate the demands of the majority of these aging migrants. These impacts have been reflected in the relationship between migration and community development (Halseth, 2003; Bourne et al., 2003).

Whereas previous work (Spina et al., 2013) focused on the relationship between place ties and moves to small regional retirement communities on the Canadian prairies, this study extends the scope of previous work on elderly regional retirement migration by explicitly focusing on the subsequent migrant-community relationship. In broad terms, our findings suggest that community leaders and elderly migrants are in general agreement about issues facing new migrants to the area. These outcomes are in part shaped by the macro-environment of the destination community. It is notable that both older migrants and community leaders indicated that the most significant changes witnessed in their communities included the building and renovating of homes and other structures. These changes may be a reflection of the changing demographic profile of the area, with the built environment changing dramatically as local communities respond to the influx of elderly migrants. These changes are expected to become more complex and pronounced with the demographic restructuring of North American society and increased levels of migration to regional retirement destinations.

The increasing population of elderly residents in the study area was apparent to community decision-makers. This represents one of several overlapping phases of population development identified by Rowles and Watkins (1994), where small communities experience temporary changes in their demographic, economic, environmental, infrastructural, social and political characteristics as a result of the arrival of elderly migrants. One result may be communities responding with

initiatives to attract additional migrants (Rowles & Watkins, 1994; Jauhiainen, 2009). In addition, the development of new concerns regarding controlled growth versus overcrowding and the ability of the community to cope with increasing numbers of elderly migrants who are aging-in-place (Rowles & Watkins, 1994) may occur.

The results of our research demonstrate the importance of both individual and contextual inputs into the outcomes of elderly migration moves to small Prairie lakeshore communities. The results also affirm that policy directed to the sustainability of these communities should focus on the issues that migrants consider problematic in order to facilitate their integration into the retirement communities, thus producing positive migration outcomes. Our results support recently growing evidence of the relationship between successful ageing and built environments (Garvin, 2011), the ongoing work of the World Health Organization (World Health Organization, 2007) addressing how becoming an age-friendly community is an effective policy approach to responding to the challenges and opportunities associated with demographic ageing, and the Public Health Agency of Canada (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2008) creating awareness of the importance of healthy ageing.

As Dahms (1996) so aptly concluded, concentrations of older persons in rural areas present both challenges and opportunities for smaller communities. Small communities need to understand the implications of an ageing population's migration to their small-town environment. Small communities must also determine how they will deal with the changes that may be necessary in the future to accommodate this population and retain retired migrants. This study has attempted to highlight some of these problem areas for small regional retirement communities on the Canadian prairies.

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