

How the Food Processing Industry is Diversifying Rural Minnesota

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ABSTRACT

In this paper the authors argue that the diversification of rural Minnesota is largely the result of the restructuring of the food processing industry, and the subsequent recruitment of low wage laborers. They begin with a brief discussion of demographic changes in the state as a whole, and in rural Minnesota. This is followed by an analysis of the relationship between the location of food processing industries and the diversity of the population, using different measures of diversity. They conclude with a discussion of the benefits and challenges that “new diversity” poses for rural communities.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Katherine Fennelly is a professor at the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs of the University of Minnesota. Her research and outreach interests include leadership in the public sector, the human rights of immigrants and refugees in the United States, and the preparedness of communities and public institutions to adapt to demographic changes. Dr. Fennelly has been Dean of the University of Minnesota Extension Service, a faculty member and department head at the Pennsylvania State University, and a faculty member at Columbia University School of Public Health. She is bilingual in Spanish and English and has worked and traveled extensively throughout Latin America. Dr. Fennelly has served as a consultant to scores of organizations, ranging from the Kellogg Foundation to the Ministry of Health of Chile. She holds a certificate of studies from the University of Madrid, a master's of philosophy, a master's of health education and a doctorate in adult education from Columbia University.

Helga Leitner received her Ph.D. in Geography and Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Vienna, Austria. She is currently Professor of Geography at the University of Minnesota, and has held visiting lectureships at the University College, London, the University of Vienna, Munich and the University of Indonesia, Jakarta. She has published a book and numerous articles on immigrant incorporation into European cities, the politics of immigration and citizenship, as well as on issues of urban and regional development and sustainability in Europe and the US. Her current research with Katherine Fennelly investigates immigrant-host society relations and the immigrant experience in small town America.