

Government policy and Hutterite Colony diffusion: 1917 - 2003

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Abstract: Diffusion of Hutterites in North America has been profoundly affected by government policy. The initial migration to Canada was triggered by the United States' denial of conscientious objector status for Hutterites. Within Canada the pattern and pulse of colony diffusion responded to provincial law that reflected popular opinion at various times. For example, during the 1940s and 50s the province of Alberta restricted colony expansion, forcing new colonies to locate at least 40 miles from any existing colony. Manitoba and Saskatchewan employed similar measures to prevent concentrations of colonies. GIS was used to determine distances between mother and daughter colonies during periods when restrictive policies were and were not in effect. Various techniques are used to illustrate and assess how government policy and other factors such as land availability and price have influenced the geography of Hutterites in Canada.

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