

Who Invited Them to the Party?

Federal-Municipal Relations in Immigrant Settlement Policy

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Presentation Overview

- Project
- Context
- Framing Questions
- Overview of Settlement Policy Field
- Federal-Provincial Role
- Municipal Role
- Role of Social Forces
- Findings

The Project

- Findings from a research project on immigrant settlement policy in Canada (MQUP, forthcoming)
 - Intergovernmental relations
 - Role of “social forces” and non-governmental actors
 - Focuses on municipalities in 4 provinces: Ontario, British Columbia, Quebec and Nova Scotia
 - Case studies based on expert interviews and document review
- Part of a Major Collaborative Research Initiative on multi-level governance and public policy in municipalities (Robert Young, Principal Investigator)

Context

- Immigration a joint federal-provincial responsibility
- But immigrant settlement typically takes place in municipalities, which have a limited formal role
- Fiscal limitations too. Influenced by downloading and New Public Management
- Many municipalities pushing for a larger role and resources that would reflect this
- Patchwork of arrangements: negotiated by federal and provincial governments and sometimes municipalities

Framing Questions

- What is the structure of intergovernmental arrangements in settlement policy?
 - Relationship between federal and municipal governments?
 - Role of provincial governments?
 - Role of bureaucrats and politicians?
 - Evidence of collaboration (horizontal or vertical)?
 - Level and allocation of resources?
 - Role of New Public Management?
- Role of social forces and non-governmental actors?
- Examples of “good” public policy?

Overview of Policy Field

- Multiple levels of government involved
- “Settlement” not a single point in time: a continuum that includes pre-arrival, settlement & adaptation, integration and full citizenship
- Range of services provided across the continuum; differ depending on jurisdiction and immigrant
- Challenges include declining economic outcomes for newcomers (no longer “catch-up” to Canadian-born), new forms of migration including transnationalism

Federal-Provincial Role

- Immigration is constitutionally a joint federal-provincial jurisdiction
- First federal-provincial agreement signed in 1868: federal government responsible for recruitment, selection, admission and naturalization; provinces could recruit and settle if they wished
- Led to duplication of efforts, conflict. Federal government took on dominant role; provinces largely bowed out
- Reforms of 1960s and 1970s: points system, policy of official multiculturalism
- Increased immigration. More diverse. Piecemeal approach not working

Federal-Provincial Role (cont'd)

- *Immigration Act, 1976* committed to intergovernmental cooperation and involvement of NGOs in immigrant settlement. New era
- Canada-Quebec Accord in 1991. BC and Manitoba sign agreements in 1998, other provinces follow suit throughout late 90s and 2000s. Various provisions
- *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, 2001* confirmed collaborative nature of policy field
- Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA) in 2005 included a MOU with the City of Toronto

Municipal Role

- Even when federal and provincial governments have played dominant role, settlement has involved many actors
- Most immigrants go to Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver, but more municipalities are placing an emphasis on recruitment, especially to official language minority communities
- Municipal role enhanced by Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement; also by focus on “place-based” policy and “on-the-ground” delivery
- Integration challenges: more focus on role of cities and “street-level bureaucrats”

Role of Social Forces

- Range of non-governmental actors, including settlement service providers and ethnocultural organizations, as well as “mainstream” agencies with immigrant-specific programs
- Governments increasingly contract service provision out; competitive sector
- Non-governmental sector a peripheral policy player; vulnerable to funding cuts
- New Public Management and accountability requirements strain some organizations

Findings

- Policy is often the purview of federal and provincial governments while service delivery offloaded to service providers and municipalities (either alone or in collaboration)
- Many active municipalities, but lack of coordination between and among (multilevel *government* but not necessarily multilevel *governance*)
- Potential disconnect between selection policy and settlement policy
- Initiatives and funding vulnerable to changes in government

Findings (cont'd)

- Variations in policy field even within provinces
 - Intercultural relations vs. attraction & retention
 - “Diversity” framework vs. “meeting needs”
 - Embrace vs. skepticism
- Strategies often a function of local context
 - Political will
 - Demographics (e.g. Aboriginals, official language communities)
 - Metropolis vs. rural / smaller centres
 - Size and composition of newcomer population

Conclusions

- No template for federal-municipal relations; still somewhat embryonic, evolving. Policy action still largely at the federal-provincial level
- Need to reconcile the role of municipalities and social forces in *delivering* services with their relative absence from actual *policy-making*
- Some collaboration and coordination, but governance structure not fully formed
- Space for local responsiveness, municipal innovation, flexibility; the “street-level bureaucrat”
- Uncertain accountabilities and “adhocracy”; vulnerabilities include changes in political will, funding cuts

Comments or Questions?

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