



Forum of Federations

THE GLOBAL NETWORK ON FEDERALISM

FEDERALISM AND ITS IMPACT ON IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION POLICIES

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Conference on “Immigrant Integration and Canadian Federalism:
Exploring the Issues”

Toronto, 28 January 2011

OUTLINE

- Overview of Forum of Federations project
- General observations
- Questions for further exploration/discussion



OVERVIEW OF PROJECT (1)

- Comparative study of the impact on federalism on immigrant integration (laws, policies, programs) in seven federal countries
- Three 'settler' federations: Canada, US, Australia
- Four others: Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, Spain
- Four are multi/bilingual in composition
- Leading scholar from each country preparing chapter according to 'template'
- Publication aimed for early 2012



OVERVIEW OF PROJECT (2)

- Immigrant integration conceived as two-way process that allows newcomers to become capable of participating in the economic, social and political/civic life of the host country
- Where subnational government are/have become more active in integration policies/programs, what factors explain this?
- Are there common patterns across the seven federations, or is variation the rule?



OVERVIEW OF PROJECT (3)

- Immigrant integration: a continuum with key points/phases
- Selection and naturalization – set points
- Economic, social and civic integration – medium to longer-term processes, can continue beyond naturalization
- Emphasis on trends and major policy changes over past 10 years or so



IMMIGRANT SELECTION

- Carried out by federal government alone in all countries studied except Canada and Australia
- Canada:
 - Quebec obtained selection role in 1970s, expanded/confirmed in 1991 accord
 - Other provincial/territorial governments have become active under Provincial Nominee Program
- Some subnational units issue residence/work permits (Spain)



NATURALIZATION

- Exclusive federal responsibility in all countries studied except Switzerland
- Switzerland:
 - Federal, canton and commune governments all play role
 - Rules (e.g. residence requirement) vary considerably
 - Approval/rejection occurs at canton or commune level, often through vote by local population
- Some subnational governments (e.g. Germany) play role in preparing candidates for naturalization
- No serious calls for devolution to subnational governments, even in most decentralized federations



SOCIAL AND CIVIC INTEGRATION

- Both federal and subnational governments are often active in providing settlement and integration programs, especially language training
- Federal government often funds subnational governments and/or NGOs to deliver services
 - US federal government has host of funding programs
 - Canada: transfers to Quebec, Man, BC for settlement services
- Education system plays significant (not always explicit) role in integration of immigrant children
 - Some requirements to be schooled in subnational language (Quebec, Catalonia)



INTEGRATION COURSES/TESTS

- Countries such as Netherlands and France began trend towards integration courses/tests, usually obligatory
- Courses have significant language training component along with some 'civics' learning
- Despite some hardening of views on immigration in most of the seven countries studied, no clear pattern on this:
 - Germany: uniform program administered by federal government
 - Belgium: obligatory program in Flanders, voluntary in Wallonia
 - Canada, US, Australia: no moves in this direction
- Concerns about knowledge of country, institutions, etc reflected in modified citizenship tests – Canada, US



Decentralization taking place in some but not all of the seven countries

- Canada (selection, settlement services), Spain (part of broader federalization process), Belgium
- Less clearly the case in US and Australia
 - Some US states and municipalities have passed measures intended to stem illegal migration – “attrition by enforcement”
- Shifts in responsibility not result of constitutional amendment
 - Canada: intergovernmental agreements between federal and individual provincial governments
 - Some efforts to capture respective roles in legislation or quasi-constitutional measures – e.g. Catalonia’s 2006 Statute of Autonomy



Subnational governments have greater role in linguistically divided countries

- Decentralizing trend (past 10-20 years) most evident in Canada, Belgium, Spain
- Asymmetry sometimes results:
 - Canada – Settlement services delivered by 3 of 10 provincial governments, variation in arrangements among the other 7
 - Spain – Catalonia most active autonomous community, immigrant integration closely linked to national affirmation
 - Belgium – Integration policies in Flanders more ‘directive’ than in Wallonia, Brussels
- Multilingual Switzerland already quite decentralized; recent policy changes often driven by direct democracy



QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE FURTHER

- Should the policy variation (selection, integration) emerging in some of the countries be a cause for concern - e.g. on equity grounds - or is this a 'normal' consequence of subnational units using the space federalism provides?
- What particular issues arise when claims for enhanced subnational role are closely tied to national/minority community affirmation?
- Do decentralization and diffusion of responsibilities make strict nationwide measures (e.g. on religious dress) less likely and/or lessen support for anti-immigrant political parties?

