In November 2010, the *New York Times* published an article entitled “Defying Trend, Canada Lures More Migrants” (DeParle, 2010). Written from an American perspective, the article focused on Manitoba’s efforts to attract skilled immigrants and their families for permanent settlement. It described how Manitoba uses the powers transferred by the federal government—via the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP)—to achieve its objectives. The PNP allows provinces to directly select a limited number of immigrants for permanent immigration on their territory, primarily to respond to the province’s specific labour market needs. Identifying Manitoba as a new destination for skilled immigrants in Canada, the *New York Times* presented a snapshot of the changing face of Canada’s immigration and integration governance regime: since the 1990s, every province has gradually emerged as an actor in the governance of immigration and integration in Canada. Not only are provinces active in the provision of settlement and integration services, but they are now highly proactive in the attraction and selection of immigrants. These activities are also accompanied by a growing provincial mobilization regarding immigration in intergovernmental relations.

This new provincial stance on immigration and integration is visible in every province, even in those without a large immigrant population. For example, while receiving only 0.9 per cent of Canada’s total immigration...
in 2010 (Canada 2011a), Prince Edward Island nonetheless developed an official immigration strategy presenting immigration as “an important economic and social tool for future population growth and stability” (Prince Edward Island, 2010: i). Most of the other provinces—with the exception of Ontario—developed an official immigration policy statement between 1990 and 2010, often for the first time in their history. Between 1990 and 2010, the ten provinces signed different immigration agreements with the federal government. Since the second half of the 2000s, immigration has become part of provincial electoral agendas, as demonstrated by its presence in the platforms of most provincial parties across partisan spectrums.

This change is also visible in regard to political institutions and intergovernmental relations. For example, the role of the provinces in the governance of immigration was officially reiterated in the context of the revision of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act in the early 2000s. Intergovernmental institutions and practices have been amended to reflect this new reality through such measures as the creation of the forum of provincial and territorial ministers responsible for immigration, the introduction of co-direction practices of immigration Federal–Provincial–Territorial administrative committees in Ottawa in 2009 (interviews 11, 26), and the establishment of the “Federal–Provincial–Territorial Vision Action Plan” for immigration (Canada, 2012b). Immigration is now a constant feature on the agendas of the Council of the Federation’s annual meetings (Huras, 2013; Stephenson, 2012), of the Western premiers annual conference (Cruickshank, 2012) and of the Atlantic premiers annual conference (New Brunswick, 2011), next to economic development, labour market management, energy and health care issues.

Since immigration is a formally shared jurisdiction in the Canadian Constitution, these changes remain within the formal parameters of federalism in Canada. However, the increasing importance of provinces in the governance of Canada’s immigration and integration regime represents a break from past practices. While some provinces have historically been somewhat active in immigration (Biles, 2008: 150–51; Vineberg, 1987) the federal government has exercised quasi-dominance on the development and implementation of immigration and integration policies in Canada since the end of World War II. Beyond the historical relations between Quebec and Canada, the shared immigration jurisdiction did not result in joint governance practices. This informal division of responsibilities satisfied both Ottawa and the provinces (see Garcea, 1994; Hawkins, 1988, 1991; Vineberg, 2011). On the one hand, the federal government wanted to retain significant control over the management of this policy area for practical, ideological, and political reasons. On the other hand, provinces have long resisted the idea of becoming involved in immigration issues, fearing political and financial costs.
Abstract. Between 1990 and 2010, a gradual process of institutional change has affected Canada’s immigration and integration governance regime. The central characteristic of this process is the emergence of a new legitimate institutional group of actors: Canadian provinces. This change corresponds to a federalization of Canada’s immigration and integration governance regime. It is a break from the previous pattern of federal dominance and provincial avoidance. It is not the result of diminished federal intervention in immigration and cannot be explained by exogenous shocks. Current explanations of this evolution focus on federal decisions and have trouble explaining provincial mobilization. Using a mechanistic approach to the analysis of social processes and insights on gradual institutional changes, this article demonstrates that provinces have been the central agents bringing about the federalization of Canada’s immigration and integration governance regime between 1990 and 2010. Via a mechanism of province building centred on immigration, provinces have triggered and maintained in movement a decentralizing mechanism. The interactions of these two mechanisms, over time, gave rise to the federalization of immigration and integration in Canada.


The current situation breaks this pattern of federal dominance and provincial avoidance and sees provinces becoming autonomously active while at the same time contesting federal unilateral action. Institutions and practices have evolved to incrementally recognize the role of provinces in immigration and integration, albeit imperfectly. This considerable change is best described as a federalization of Canada’s immigration and integration governance regime. While the concept of federalization remains in development in political science (see Graefe and Bours, 2009; Lecours, 2013; Moreno and Obydenkova, 2013), it is used here to describe a process of gradual institutional change in the context of a specific institutional regime. It corresponds to the emergence of new institutional actors and/or to modifications to the status of actors who have a strong legitimacy inside an institutional or federal regime. Federalization is different from decentralization as a type of change, as it is not a zero-sum process
where authority, resources or capacities are simply transferred from one government to the other. Federalization, as a process of gradual institutional change, refers not to the displacement of authority but to an increase or a change in the number of actors able to act with authority and legitimacy inside an institutional regime.

Describing and analyzing Canada’s immigration and integration governance regime using the concept of federalization helps highlight crucial characteristics of the change that affect it since 1990. First, increased provincial activity and activism—as well as instruments and institutional changes favouring increased provincial output—was not followed by a general decrease of federal activities in immigration and integration governance. The situation has become best characterized by a superposition of governmental activities and by an increase of interactions between federal and provincial governments. Second, this change occurred gradually, over a 20-year period and, importantly, in the absence of an exogenous shock affecting the governance of immigration and integration in Canada. As such, the federalization aligns with the new patterns of institutional evolution put forth by institutionalists (Mahoney and Thelen, 2010; Streeck and Thelen, 2005).

This article considers this instance of gradual institutional change by asking how different governments have played a role in bringing about this change. In relation to existing accounts identifying decentralizing decisions from the federal government as the source of change, the article focuses on the missing piece explaining the process of federalization: the roles of provinces and the shape of their mobilization. Based on empirical research, the article demonstrates that over time, provincial governments have played a central role in bringing about the process of federalization via a new form of province building, centred on immigration. Due to their growing internal and external mobilization regarding immigration between 1990 and 2010, provinces have triggered and kept in motion the decentralization dynamics that supported the federalization process. Thus, the federalization of Canada’s immigration and integration governance regime is the result of the interaction of two mechanisms over time: a decentralizing mechanism and a mechanism of province building. This conclusion points to the changing position of provinces within Canadian federalism since the 1990s, and provides a key to understanding current policy changes affecting Canada’s immigration and integration governance regime.

Following a review of the literature on changes to Canada’s immigration and integration governance regime, this article will position province building in the context of a mechanistic conception of causality. Next, the process of federalization will be traced by showing how province building and decentralization have interacted over time to generate change and
by demonstrating how provinces have triggered and kept in motion the dynamics leading to gradual institutional change.

**Explaining Federalization: A Work in Progress**

The growing literature on Canadian immigration and integration institutions and policies offers partial explanations for the gradual change that unfolded between 1990 and 2010, centred either on the role of provinces or federal decisions and policies. Federal-centred explanations represent the most important and diverse body of work, whereas contributions focusing on the provinces tend to be case studies and/or are evaluative in nature (see Dobrowolsky, 2012; Lewis, 2010).

Province-centred explanations, leaving aside the history leading to the signature of the current devolution agreement between Quebec and the federal government, can be divided in two groups: first, those focused on the impact of the provinces’ demands for selection tools, leading to the creation of the PNP (see Seidle, 2010a) via the leadership of Manitoba (see Clement, 2003); second, those focused on the evolution of provincial interests as a direct consequence of the signature of the immigration and integration devolution agreement with Quebec in 1991. In this context, authors present the creation of the PNP as a way to answer these demands, without having to sign immigration agreements similar to Quebec’s devolution agreement (see Banting, 2012: 265; Tolley et al., 2011a: 1–12).

Federal-centred explanations highlight three elements to account for the change between 1990 and 2010: the evolution of the state’s general philosophy of immigration management, the growing influence of neoliberalism and the effect of fiscal constraints on the federal government. In the first case, the evolution of the objectives of Canada’s immigration policies is presented as explaining the federal desire to transfer responsibilities to the provinces. Authors identify the shift from a short-term management model (responding to demands of the labour market) to a long-term management model (human capital model) as being central to the explanation. This change is said to have modified the role of the federal government in Canada’s immigration regime from one of direct management to one of steering. According to Green and Green (1999), during the course of this change the federal government proposed to the provinces to directly select a portion of newcomers for economic purposes. In addition, Tolley and her colleagues (2011b: 9) highlighted that a change in federal philosophy over “admissions technologies,” as it relates to a broader tolerance for in-Canada processing, has opened doors to greater provincial involvement.

Analysts who support the second explanation identify the growing influence of neoliberalism as the driving force for policy change. Both
the article by Abu Laban (2004) and the book by Abu Laban and Gabriel (2002) suggest that the influence of neoliberalism was especially evident in immigration and integration policies following the election of Jean Chrétien’s Liberals in 1993. In particular, Abu Laban (2004) notes that one of the features of the Chrétien era was the rise of a new discourse on newcomers’ economic integration rooted in neoliberalism that justified the transfer of responsibilities to provincial and local communities.

The third explanation cites the federal government deficit crisis of the 1990s as a source of change. Authors supporting this claim identify the process of settlement renewal (Canada, 1994b), part of the broader exercise of program review, as the force behind the signing of the British Columbia and Manitoba settlement transfer agreements (Banting, 2012: 267; Seidle, 2010b; Vineberg, 2011: 37–38, 2012: 43–47). Others, such as Dirks (1995: 97–98), highlight the fact that the sharing of costs related to immigrant integration with the provinces became a concern for the federal government as early as the 1980s.

Both the province-centred accounts and the federal-centred accounts are valid and empirically informative but ultimately incomplete. Province-centred accounts, while recognizing provincial demands as one of the sources of change, do not pay enough attention to what drove the development of provincial interest in immigration or simply cast it as a reaction to federal policies. Federal-centred accounts, conversely, fail to account empirically and analytically for the role of provinces in affecting federal interests, strategies and decisions over time. As a consequence, current perspectives fail to explain how federal and provincial interests and actions interacted over time to generate change.

These difficulties in accounting for the various ways actors’ relations have impacted the transformation of the regime are especially problematic because of the nature of the process of change. The federalization of immigration corresponds to a gradual process of institutional change. While recognizing the stasis bias of most institutions, current institutional theorists have become increasingly attentive to the ways institutions change incrementally over time (Mahoney and Thelen, 2010; Streeck and Thelen, 2005). Putting aside classical explanations of institutional changes—such as critical juncture or exogenous shocks—these authors argue that endogenous dynamics are crucial to an understanding of gradual institutional change. In particular, Mahoney and Thelen have demonstrated that actors within a given institutional regime are often the source of dynamics leading to considerable institutional evolution (2010: 1–37). Since institutions distribute resources and powers between actors to reflect power relations at a given point in time, actors in less advantaged positions—or actors facing new challenges—may act to revise this distribution inside the institutional regime (Mahoney and Thelen, 2010: 7–10). This can be done by a change in behaviour, a clear contestation of institutional practices, the
forging of alliances, the desertion of institutions or the autonomous implementation of small changes that can have cumulative impacts (Hacker, 2005; Streeck and Thelen, 2005: 1–39; van der Heijden, 2011). This theoretical perspective points to the importance of accounting empirically for the interaction between actors in a distributional context. It has been demonstrated as highly effective at explaining change and dynamism in federal institutional contexts (see Benz and Broschek, 2013; Papillon, 2011). For the current analysis, this perspective mandates specific attention to the role of provinces in bringing about federalization, as these were traditionally not dominant actors in Canada’s immigration and integration governance regime.

**Change: Mechanisms Interacting in Time**

Adopting this perspective on institutional change has epistemological and methodological consequences. Because of the nature of the processes they aim to explore, institutional accounts are not well served by hypothetico-deductive and variable-centred approaches to the study of social phenomena (Hall, 2003: 382–83). Instead of the discovery of general laws, analysts interested in institutional dynamics focus their work on the inductive and qualitative identification of social mechanisms. Doing so allows them to identify the building blocks of causal chains (Falleti and Lynch, 2008: 334) and to explain how specific mechanisms interact with contexts and with other mechanisms to produce a given result (Ancelovici and Jenson, 2012: 41; Mayntz, 2004: 241). The identification of social mechanisms, via inductive methodologies, allows institutionalists to go beyond the idiosyncratic identification of an actor’s interests, ideas and actions by also focusing on recurring patterns and, in the long run, producing theoretical insights about mechanisms and their functioning (Beach and Pedersen, 2012: 16–18; George and Bennett, 2004: 136).

Social mechanisms are different from biological or physical mechanisms by the presence of human agency (individual or collective) in their appearance, progression and termination (Mayntz, 2004). Social mechanisms, as an umbrella term, can refer to societal and institutional dynamics as well as policy and political processes. The term “mechanism” is highly ambiguous and merits definition, from the outset. For increased precision, this article adopts Derek Beach and Rasmus Brun Pedersen’s definition of mechanism as a “theorized system that produces outcomes through the interaction of a series of parts that transmit causal forces from X to Y” (2012: 176; also Gerring, 2008). Mechanisms are composed of actors, their interests, their ideas and their actions (Beach and Pedersen, 2012: 39). By nature, mechanisms are non-determinant relational concepts, whereas variables are observable attributes of analytical units (Falleti and Lynch, 2009: 1147).
Using a mechanistic epistemological approach to analyze gradual institutional change presents two advantages. First, it helps identify mobilization patterns, which then support a broader contextualization of agents’ mobilization and interests. In the case of provinces and immigration, identifying a social mechanism of province building as the pattern of mobilization common to all provinces has helped situate provincial actions as a response to the repositioning of the federal state in matters of social citizenship, economic management and nation building since the 1990s. Second, by focusing on social mechanisms, analysts can take into account sequence and time in a more systematic way (Grzymala-Busse, 2011). Doing so allows for better tracing of actors’ interest and strategies as they evolve over mid-duration (10 to 20 years) and as they are affected by interactions at specific points during a given process of change.

Using this analytical perspective, this article proposes that two mechanisms and their interactions over time are at the foundation of the federalization process that unfolded between 1990 and 2010 in Canada. The first of these mechanisms is decentralizing. It is a mechanism created by governmental decisions regarding a “set of public policies that transfer responsibilities, resources, or authority [...] in the context of a specific type of state” (Falleti, 2005: 5). Instances of activity of the decentralizing mechanism have already been identified by literature on immigration and federalism in Canada, as demonstrated in the previous section.

Second, federalization is partially the product of a province-building mechanism, centred on immigration. Province building was first developed to explain the resilience of provinces and the growth of provincial states, despite the modernization of the Canadian state (Black and Cairns 1966). As a central “image” for Canadian political scientists (Young et al., 1984: 783–84), province building has been used to discuss federalism as well as provincial public policies and public administrations (see Cairns, 1992; Chorney and Hansen, 1985; McMillan and Norrie, 1980; Tomblin, 1990). Starting from the theoretical and analytical criticisms of Young and colleagues (1984), province building is defined here as a social mechanism which takes the form of an elite mobilization focused on the establishment of strategies to develop provincial societies (state, public administration, economy and population).

Following the study of previous instances of activities of the province-building mechanism, it is argued that evolving provincial contexts (such as economies and populations), as well as considerable shifts in the federal government’s activities or policies, are the backdrop of province building (Brodie, 1990; Stevenson, 1980). Because of these changes, provincial states are required to respond to emerging or unfilled needs, which reinforces the importance of provincial jurisdiction. These pressures also support provincial elites’ propensity to work toward increasing the size and capacity of the provincial state (Cairns, 1977: 705). The repositioning
of the provincial state, in this broader context, often takes the form of a province-building mechanism. Intergovernmental conflicts and/or competition can emerge in response to provincial mobilization and in relation to parallel repositioning of the federal state. These are not, however, inherent to this dynamic, and have taken different shapes over time (Elkins and Simeon 1980: 295–98).

In Canada, provincial mobilization regarding immigration has been studied using the notion of nation building (see Gagnon and Iacovino, 2007; Labelle and Rocher, 2004). As a mechanism centred on the economy and demography, province building in immigration is not concerned with belonging or identity, as is nation building (Linz, 1993). In the process of federalization, provinces have not centred their interventions on creating “provincial citizens” out of newcomers using “instruments for strengthening regional cultures and enhancing the significance of local communities in the lives of citizens” (Banting, 1995: 270–71). Instead, in province building centred on immigration, provincial governments present newcomers as a resource to maximize the development of provincial societies. This difference can be explained by the nature of forces that created pressures on provinces and that have supported the activation of the province building in immigration since the 1990s.

Global forces affecting Canada created the conditions for the repositioning of the provincial state and, within this process, for the identification of immigration as a resource. During the 1990s, both orders of government had to contend with increased external pressures stemming from globalization and the growth of continental integration (Robinson, 2003), the end of the transition to service and knowledge economies (Courchene, 2004), and an aging population. These conditions, combined with the influence of new neoliberal ideas, have strengthened both the historically instrumental relation between the Canadian state and economic immigration (Abu Laban and Gabriel, 2002: 62: Green and Green, 1999) and the rise of a discourse linking immigration and human capital (Abu Laban and Gabriel, 2002: 79).

For provinces, these shifts generated other pressures for change. On the one hand, from the late 1980s throughout the 1990s, provinces had to develop new modes of intervention in response to the breakdown of the Keynesian paradigm. Facing neoconservative and neoliberal pressures, provinces strived to maintain legitimacy via new types of relationships with citizens and economic actors. On the other hand, the slow economy of the 1990s aggravated the fiscal crisis the provinces were facing, and prompted the implementation of austerity measures, including privatization, cuts to benefits and the elimination or the reorganization of government agencies. These dynamics created considerable demands for a repositioning of the provincial state, which had to find new sources of legitimacy in a changing context. The responses to these pressures reinforced a general
trend of growing policy and intergovernmental capacities in provincial governments across Canada during the period of study (see Atkinson et al., 2013; Howlett and Wellstead, 2012; Inwood et al., 2011; McArthur, 2007).

During the same period, the federal government repositioned its actions in response to structural and ideological pressures (Boismenu and Graefe, 2004). Three elements are of particular importance in the process leading to the identification of immigration as a resource by provinces: the last phase of federal withdrawal from typical post-1945 methods of financing and developing social policy (see Banting, 2005); the modification and, in many instances, the devolution, of federal responsibilities in labour market policy starting in the 1990s (see Haddow and Klassen, 2006); and the repositioning of the federal government’s role in the support and development of Canada’s economy.

The impacts of these dynamics were felt differently in each of the ten provinces, but, remarkably, over a 20-year period all of them responded via mobilization and policy actions centred on immigration as a resource. The mechanism of province building centred on immigration is thus the pathway through which provinces impacted Canada’s immigration and integration governance regime between 1990 and 2010.

The Federalization Process: Provinces as Triggering and Maintaining Agents

In order to understand the activation of a specific social mechanism—province building—and its interactions with the decentralizing mechanism, this paper builds on provincial case studies. Using the theory building process-tracing method (Beach and Pedersen, 2012: 16–8) as part of a mid-duration sequential analysis of the period from 1990–2010 (Falleti, 2010: 20–22), the case studies served to document the operation of the province-building mechanism focused on immigration in each province, as well as its interactions with federal decisions, actions and policies. This research is supported by rich empirical material that includes official and archival documents from the provinces and the federal government (official publications, Hansards, private record, minutes, files, internal documents, and so forth), as well as 71 semi-directed elite interviews with public servants and political actors. This inductive methodology is adapted—both in terms of epistemology and ontology (Hall, 2003)—to the mechanistic approach used in this paper.

By focusing on contemporary provincial trajectories with immigration policy, it becomes possible to show that the decentralizing mechanism has been activated by federal decisions but also by the pressures created by provincial mobilization. As such, provinces, via province building centred on immigration, triggered the first movement of the decentralizing mechanism.
in immigration. This propelled the process of federalization. In turn, the
decentralizing mechanism contributed, over time, to thrust province build-
ing forward by providing financial, intellectual and political resources to
provincial actors. Once federalization started unfolding, the mobilization
of a constantly growing number of provinces to address immigration
created pressures that kept in motion the decentralizing mechanism until
2010.

Provinces as Triggering Agents: Quebec’s 1991 Immigration
Agreement

This section will review three snapshots about a slow-moving process
where the mechanisms have been activated and their workings intensified
between 1990 and 2010. Building on current explanations focused on
decentralization, it will demonstrate the importance of provincial mobiliz-
ation in bringing about gradual institutional changes to Canada’s contem-
porary immigration and integration governance regime.

Most accounts of immigration and federalism in Canada identify
Quebec’s mobilization—spurred by nationalism—as a source of asymme-
try in Canada’s immigration (see Banting, 2012; Black and Hagen, 1994;
Kostov, 2008). Indeed, the signing of the 1991 Canada-Quebec immigra-
tion agreement, as a response to the failure of the Meech Lake proposed
agreement (interviews 1 and 2; Garcea, 1991), represents a first trigger
that put in motion the federalization process.

While often presented as a result of competitive nation building
(Labelle and Rocher, 2004), Quebec’s mobilization and activities regard-
ing immigration in the late 1980s and the 1990s also displayed strong
characteristics of province building centred on immigration. Prior to the
signature of the agreement, the Bourassa government started investing
heavily in immigration, despite limited public finances (Black and
Hagen, 1994). Bourassa also piloted the production and implementation
of a new official policy orientation, most emblematically phrased in the
1990 policy statement, “L’énoncé de politique en matière d’immigration
et d’intégration: Au Québec pour bâtir ensemble” (Québec, 1990:1)
that presented immigration as an economic and demographic resource
for the province. Aiming to increase the number of immigrants in the
province, this new approach broke with previous Quebec governments’
position on immigration that focused on the mitigation of cultural and lin-
guistic risks associated with immigration. While still concerned with the
potential impact of immigration on the French language in the province
(interview 3), Quebec’s mobilization, starting under Bourassa aligned,
until recently, with features of contemporary province building in immi-
gration displayed by other provinces.
The 1991 Gagnon-Tremblay-McDougall agreement amounted to a complete devolution of immigration settlement services to the province and the transfer of a quasi-majority of the immigrant selection powers (Québec. Ministère des Communautés culturelles et de l’Immigration, 1991). The agreement included an ascending funding formula only partially linked to the annual number of landed immigrants (Becklumb, 2008). It was the last of a series of agreements that incrementally increased the province’s power and resources concerning immigration since the 1970s. In addition to giving Quebec the means to implement in quasi-autonomy its immigration objectives, this agreement had two central consequences for the federalization process: it created conditions that kept in motion the decentralization mechanism, and it laid foundations that changed other provincial governments’ interests in immigration and thus contributed to the activation of province building in several of them.

The 1991 agreement unsettled the balance between federal dominance and provincial avoidance by forcing the federal government to interact in new ways with provincial governments (interview 14). This, in turn, created the conditions that kept in motion the decentralization mechanism after the 1991 agreement. During negotiations with Quebec, some provinces, specifically Ontario and Manitoba (Venne, 1990), reacted quite negatively to the potential agreement. The fiscal and political criticisms of provinces, in addition to the general tense climate of intergovernmental relations in the early 1990s, led the Mulroney government to attempt the negotiation of immigration agreements with other provinces quickly after 1991 (interviews 2, 3).

While the federal government made an offer to each province, only four showed any interest in having an immigration agreement (interviews 2, 3). The ensuing negotiations with Manitoba, British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario all failed to yield agreements, albeit for different reasons (interview 9). During these negotiations, what became clear was that funding issues had become one of the central obstacles hindering the conclusion of immigration agreements (interview 2). Following the general stagnation of the economy and the pressures it created on provincial finances, provinces entered negotiations with financial expectations. These expectations were reinforced by federal actions; prior to the 1991 agreement, Ottawa had hinted at transfer increases for provinces regarding immigration (interviews 1, 2). The generosity of the ascending funding formula included in the 1991 Quebec agreement greatly limited federal flexibility and made a funding increase impossible (interview 1). Once it became clear that no funding increase could be attained via the conclusion of a new immigration agreement, most provinces lost interest in negotiating (interview 2).

Notwithstanding the failure to sign any other agreement over this period, the impacts of the federal government’s changing interests were crucial to the federalization process. In the absence of formal agreements,
the federal government started to reconsider its approach to provinces in the
governance of immigration. A senior-level public servant recalls this period
“precipitated the Department to being on the path of a whole new world of
federal-provincial relationships, faster than any other department” (interview 6). Forced to contend with limited fiscal means and provincial sensi-
tivity over symmetry and resource allocation, the federal government
started to incrementally include the provinces as partners in the achieve-
ment of its policy goals (see Canada, 1993; Canada, 1994a; Canada,
1995). This propelled a slow increase of provincial legitimacy in immigra-
tion and integration governance. This period also created a heritage of more
substantial exchange between governments in immigration, thereby hinting
at increased institutional opportunities for provincial influence on federal
policy. The constant threat of provincial dissatisfaction over federal-
provincial relations in immigration also meant a progressively more
attuned federal government. While the impacts of these changes on national
policy and intergovernmental relations remain debatable, these changing
attitudes and practices have kept in motion the decentralizing mechanism
spurred by the 1991 agreement.

In addition to this break in practices, this first decentralizing moment
had impacts on the interests of the other provinces regarding immigration
because of its distributional consequences. It was the impact of this trigger-
ing moment that laid the foundation for province building in other
provinces. The activation of the mechanism outside of Quebec did not
follow immediately from the 1991 agreement; provinces became interested
in immigration at different moments between 1990 and 2010. This period,
however, was when the resource-related dimension of immigration started
to appeal to several provincial governments.

A central consequence of this was the outbreak of variegated forms
of provincial mobilization over the distribution of funding for immigration.
The generosity of Quebec’s funding formula lead the other provinces to
demand an increase in transfers for services to immigrants. Perhaps most
illustrative of this is the use of the “fair share” metaphor by the Ontario
government following the signature of the Quebec agreement. While not
demanding equal immigrant selection powers, Bob Rae’s government
(NDP, 1990–1995) was adamant that the province was not receiving
enough money to care for its immigrants, as demonstrated by the following
statement made by the premier in the Ontario Legislative Assembly in 1994.

The Canada-Quebec immigration agreement guarantees Quebec a certain
amount of money. Quebec now gets about 35% of federal funding for
immigration, yet Quebec only receives 18% of the immigrants. For each
new immigrant in Quebec, the federal government spends $1,900; for
each new immigrant in Ontario it spends only $764. [...] The status quo
cannot continue. Canadians living in Ontario have the responsibility of

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sharing our wealth with other Canadians. We also have the right to a fair share of federal expenditure and understanding. We have not had that, and this must change. The announcement on Friday by the federal [government] ... is a direct offload to us, the province with the largest number of refugees and immigrants. It adds to Ontario’s financial burden. It was done with no discussion, no negotiation and no joint decision-making. (Rae, 1994: 1350–4000)

Despite a certain hiatus in the province’s interest in immigration under Mike Harris’ government (PC, 1995–2002), Ontario’s demands for changes to the distribution of financial resources for immigrant integration remained stable until the signing of the Canada Ontario Immigration Agreement in 2005 (Canada, 2005).5 While less publicly vocal, other provinces maintained analogous claims after the signing of the Quebec-Canada immigration agreement of 1991 (interview 2).

Provinces as Maintaining Agents: Settlement Renewal

In the presence of new dynamics affecting provincial and federal interests in immigration, federal decisions propelled the decentralizing mechanism even further. The second instance of the decentralizing mechanism at work—and of its increasing interaction with province building in immigration and integration—arose in the mid-1990s. Faced with a historical deficit, the Chrétien Liberal government (1993–2003) put in motion the process of program preview in order to help the federal government regain its fiscal viability (see Bourgon, 2009). As part of the exercise, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration (CIC) put forward the process of settlement renewal (Canada, 1994b) and concentrated most of its attention on settlement funding which, given its relatively recent existence, appeared easier to rationalize (interviews 15, 4). In addition to financial objectives, the process of settlement renewal rested on a political desire to rethink the division of responsibility for immigrant settlement and integration between the federal government and other stakeholders (interviews 4, 6). The process of settlement renewal lasted for over five years during which, a special team conducted consultations regarding government reorganizations, changes to public services and cost reduction measures in regions across Canada. Citizens, service providers, stakeholders, and occasionally provinces were consulted (interviews 4, 6). These consultations served as a backdrop for negotiations with the provinces regarding the possibility of transferring responsibilities for settlement.

Settlement renewal was only a partial success, in terms of settlement transfers. The federal government managed to sign agreements with Manitoba and British Columbia (interview 15). However, in other
provinces negotiators were faced with different reactions (interviews 6, 15). In Atlantic Canada, provinces feared costs and increased responsibilities and this was reinforced by the absence of a mechanism of province building in immigration (interviews 6, 14). As recalled by an analyst active in the consultations, the provincial response was clear: “[When we met with Atlantic Provinces], the reaction was ‘We don’t know anything about immigration!’ In the context of program review it was like ‘What, are you going to dump another thing on us?’ They did not have a single policy officer on these files” (interview 6). Alberta, and to a much lesser extent Saskatchewan, expressed interest in negotiating (interview 9), while Ontario maintained demands for a funding level comparable to Quebec’s allocation model as a central condition for its negotiations (interviews 7, 16), and remained fearful of the downloading of costs (interviews 16, 17). Overall, provincial positions remained firm and centred on the inequitable distribution of funding, causing negotiations to stall (interview 4). The paralysis led the federal government to offer a limited-time increase in funding to all provinces (interview 9; Vineberg, 2012: 45–46). This offer aided the federal government in establishing memoranda of understanding with six provinces and one territory.

As a result of the previous activities of the decentralizing mechanism, provincial interests in immigration, federalism and intergovernmental distribution were changing and the province-building mechanism was already active or about to be triggered in several jurisdictions. The activity of the province-building mechanism helps explain the variegated provincial responses to the federal offer for settlement decentralization starting in 1995. The final outcome of the federal government’s decentralizing efforts—which diverged starkly from its cost-cutting ambitions (interview 2)—also demonstrates the impact of changing provincial interests regarding immigration.

Manitoba’s and British Columbia’s favourable responses to the federal offer are a reflection of the activity of province building in immigration in these provinces, albeit with some differences. Manitoba’s strong engagement with province building in immigration since the early 1990s saw the province become an active claimant in regards to several issues related to immigration in intergovernmental relations. Having identified immigration as a central resource for the future of the province, the government demanded increased powers to maximize it. This identification caused the province to become one of the most active government participants during the settlement renewal’s consultation process (Manitoba, 1996: 45). Because Manitoba was already building institutions and developing policies and programs prior to the federal offer, the latter was not perceived as a danger of cost downloading, as in other provinces (interview 15). The opportunity to be responsible for integration services aligned with the central idea guiding Manitoba’s province building, that the province should take charge
of its immigration future (Manitoba Legislative Assembly, 1994; interview 3). As a member of the team responsible for activities surrounding settlement renewal emphasizes in the case of Manitoba, “their interest predated any offer from us” (interview 6). As another member recalls, at this point “for Manitoba it was very much about building their population and seeing this as a significant part of making Manitoba a more attractive destination” (interview 14). Developing and implementing integration services more responsive to the needs and realities of the province—creating a “made in Manitoba” approach—then became realistic through the acquisition of autonomy and resources (interview 10). The province-building mechanism in Manitoba kept in motion the decentralization mechanism and, more broadly, Manitoba’s experience with settlement and integration policies would influence other provinces’ interests and actions over time.

In British Columbia, the decision to accept the federal offer predates the activation of the province-building mechanism in immigration but nonetheless laid its foundations. These foundations—the resource considerations of the province in regard to immigration—are seen in two ways following settlement renewal: a partial neutralization of the fears about the impact of immigrant integration-related costs for provincial finances and the growing importance of a discourse about the positive economic impact of effective immigrant integration for the present and future BC economy. BC’s already developed integration programs in the 1990s (interview 20) had the NDP government (1991–2001) convinced of the provincial comparative advantage to settlement services delivery. In 1997, the minister responsible for Multiculturalism, Human Rights, and Immigration, Ujjal Dosanjh, summed up the NDP’s reaction to the federal offer to the Legislative Assembly: “We believe that we can provide those services better” (Dosanjh, 1997: 2907). This position was supported, at that point, by the settlement services community of the province (interviews 15, 20, 28). As recalled by a public servant who was working for BC’s government in the 1990s:

> The term that we used back then was “made in BC.” We wanted a made-in-BC approach to settlement services. The thinking was that the provinces were better positioned [to deliver] education services, settlement services [...] and that [...] it made sense for the provinces to be doing it. So there was a sense that there [was a need to develop] a BC approach to all of this. (interview 29)

The importance of a BC-specific approach was reinforced by the potential impact, on provincial finances, of the growth of an immigration population that is not controlled by the province. While stating that “immigrants make a great deal of contribution to our economy,” Minister Dosanjh also outlined the issues facing BC: “Remember that at the end of the day we have very little say about who comes to British Columbia. [...] We in fact
end up meeting the needs of the immigrants that Ottawa decides to process overseas to come into this country, and we end up absorbing the ESL [English as a second language] needs and all of the other needs” (Dosanjh, 1996: 62–63). In the mid-1990s, gaining control over the settlement funding was a way to limit these issues, in the eyes of the BC NDP government.

At the same time, by incrementally making the BC government the locus of immigration intervention in the province, the transfer of responsibilities supported the growth of a discourse on the importance of immigrants for the BC economy and society. While clearly rejecting the idea of provincial immigration control (Dosanjh, 1998: 7876), the province demanded increased input on the content and administration of the federal immigrant selection program. Central to this demand was the idea that the province should be in a position of “meeting [its] needs through immigrants coming to this country with the skills and talents that [it] needs” (Dosanjh, 1996: 62–63). In the following years, this idea would spread to most political actors in the province, and this consensus would propel province building in immigration in British Columbia (interviews 30, 31, 32).

Even without most provinces accepting the responsibility for settlement, provincial responses to settlement renewal maintained in activity the decentralizing mechanism and, more broadly, reinforced the foundations of province building in other jurisdictions. In several provinces, the decentralizing mechanism supported the activation of province building by opening a discussion about a role for provincial governments in integrating immigrants. The consultation process resulted in provincial governments becoming sites and facilitators for the mobilization of stakeholders interested in immigration (interview 6). Finally, the increased funding transferred to provincial governments had the effect of a threshold-crossing force that made them consider intervention in immigration and integration as financially viable and even potentially profitable (interview 5). As a result, even before the activity of province building in immigration, provinces continued to pressure the federal administration for more funding, thereby keeping in motion the decentralizing mechanism.

**Provinces as Triggers and Maintainers: The Creation, Diffusion and Expansion of the Provincial Nominee Program**

The third snapshot of the decentralizing mechanism at work is the creation of the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP), as well as the diffusion and expansion of immigration agreements that followed. This episode demonstrates both the impact of provinces, outside of Quebec, in affecting institutional change and the growing influence of provincial mobilization on
federal policy. The provincial nominee category was officially created in 1996 by the federal government (Canada, 1996) and was the result of an experimentation period pushed by Manitoba’s demands for selection powers (interviews 10, 23, 24, 25) that also coincided with an increased awareness among federal actors of the need to foster a better geographic distribution of immigrants outside of the three central receiving centres, Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal (interview 33; Abu-Laban and Garber, 2005: 534–36). The program was also a response to the increasing dissatisfaction of several provinces with regard to the consequences—in terms of available human resources—of the federal immigrant selection model, now based on human capital (interviews 5, 9, 23, 24). As such, it demonstrates the incremental development of provincial attention to immigration as a resource for provincial societies and economies since the 1990s.

The program was first implemented by Manitoba in 1998, and gradually spread to other provinces. Following its own version of the “fair share” discourse, this time focusing on the distribution of immigration in Canada, the province started demanding increased selection powers early in the 1990s (Filmon, 1995). These powers were to be used to recruit industry-specific workers on a permanent basis. Manitoba’s requests were met with resistance from the federal government, who supported a federally dominated selection model and mistrusted provincial capacity to administer an immigration program with logic and integrity (interviews 8, 23, 34). Despite growing tensions, this resistance would be maintained until the mid-1990s (interview 2), when the federal government agreed to collaborate with Manitoba on a series of pilot projects for the selection of economic migrants in order to appease the increasingly vocal province (interviews 8, 35). This decision was then more of an ad-hoc response than a clear rethinking of the selection model by the federal administration (interview 23).

With the federal government’s approval, Manitoba experimented with different immigrant recruitment models as of the end of 1995. These intensified in 1996, following the signing of a memorandum on PNP (interviews 5, 8, 10, 35). Despite some hiccups, the experiment was deemed a success (interview 35). The previous activation of province building in immigration in Manitoba contributed to make these experiments successful, because of the existence of provincial investment in the public administration responsible for immigration and the presence of provincial programs supporting newcomers. The prior establishment of a political, economic and societal consensus on the importance of immigration for Manitoba also contributed greatly to its success.

Manitoba’s positive experience with the PNP has had the effect of partially curbing federal fears about the actual capacity of a province without a contemporary experience with large immigrant flows to manage an immigrant selection program. In addition, it strengthened the province’s claims for more selection powers and also furthered the working of the
province-building mechanism, galvanized by hard data and real experiences. Manitoba finally signed a complete agreement on the Provincial Nominee Program in 1998 (interview 35).

In this instance, province building in immigration triggered further decentralizing. It strongly influenced the federal government to create a new policy instrument giving provinces increased powers inside Canada’s immigration regime. Fearing distributional issues, the Chrétien government attempted to spread the PNP to other provinces via the signature of immigration agreements as soon as Manitoba started to experiment with its program. This new boost to the decentralizing mechanism, once again, was met with differing responses, as described by a federal public servant active in the creation of the program.

We got provincial representatives all into a room and said “What do you guys think about this? [Is this] something you would like?” And there was essentially a three-way split. There were provinces that said “Fantastic! We love this! This is really something we want to do!” There are others who said “No way! Immigration is a hot-button topic. […] There is more of a negative sense than positive in our jurisdiction because of the employment rate” and stuff like that. And then there were those who just said “We really don’t care one way or another. We’re not totally opposed to it but we don’t see ourselves being able to use it and take advantage of it. (interview 23)

Provincial responses varied according to the presence of an active mechanism of province building in immigration and, in some cases, lacklustre provincial enthusiasm was reinforced by the absence of funding attached to the program and the new agreements (interview 23). Notwithstanding this limited enthusiasm, all the provinces gradually entered into immigration agreements with the federal government between 1998 and 2007. With these agreements, provinces gained the capacity to implement their own PNP. However, following the coming into force of these immigration agreements, PNPs—outside of Manitoba—started slowly and recorded relatively small immigrant intakes. Despite the activity of the decentralizing mechanism, a provincial role in selection took several years to have a substantial effect on Canada’s immigration and integration governance regime. It would only be after the activation of province building in immigration that provinces would invest energies as well as financial and symbolic resources toward their PNP, affecting considerably the federalization process.

Between 1998 and 2010, outside of Manitoba and Québec, the foundations established by previous decentralizing episodes and evolving government interest supported the activation of the province-building mechanism in immigration. This activation was visible in all provinces
and points to changes in provincial labour market and economies, in addition to, in some cases, partisan shifts. In most cases, it was part of strategies put forth by provinces to respond to the impacts of the general repositioning of the federal state since the beginning of the 1990s. The engagement of province building in these provinces also coincided with changes to the tools traditionally used by provinces to maximize immigration as part of their economic strategies, for example business immigration programs (see Jones, 2004).

In addition, province building in immigration was supported by the increasing number of positive examples of provincial intervention in immigration coming from other provinces. For example, Manitoba’s experience was critical in sparking elite mobilization in Saskatchewan, as a provincial public servant recalled:

[The] thing that happened that really accentuated the interest at the political level was the success that Manitoba was having with its program. A neighbouring province was seen as having developed a program that was successful in bringing/attracting a number of people that had the support of the business community and was seen as having a real impact. [...] During that time, the provincial interest was growing (interview 22).

As mentioned by several informants, PNP experiences in other provinces also strongly influenced program design and implementation decisions (interview 37).

As in Quebec and Manitoba, the activation of province building in immigration was the result of the identification, by political elites, of immigrants as a resource for provincial societies. This 2006 declaration by Premier Ed Stelmach (PC, 2006–2011) in the Alberta legislative assembly illustrates this shift. “Another important area, Mr. Speaker, is gaining control of the tools to manage immigration policy. It could be as fundamental to Alberta’s future prosperity as the affirmation in 1929 of constitutional jurisdiction over natural resources has been to our present prosperity” (Stelmach, 2006)

Following this identification, provinces created new government machinery dedicated to immigration, implemented programs and put forth clear declarations about the role of immigration for their province. Often via official immigration strategies, newcomers were presented as a way for provincial governments to respond to contemporary and future challenges.

Immigrants enrich the social, cultural, and economic life of Nova Scotia. And now, more than ever, immigration is essential for building Nova Scotia’s future. We are facing a number of demographic and economic challenges—slow population growth, an aging population, low birthrate,
out-migration of our young people, urbanization, low immigration numbers—all of which may lead to labour shortages, slowing demand for goods and services, and increasing fiscal pressures in the years to come. (Nova Scotia, 2005: 1)

One of the central features of the activity of province building in immigration has been an attempt to increase the number of immigrants settling in a given province. This goal is central to most provincial immigration efforts (interviews 12, 18, 19, 21). For provinces, the main tool to achieve this objective has been the PNP. Between 2000 and 2010, several provinces more than doubled their PN intake and saw PNs becoming the main source of economic migration on their territory. For example, PNs accounted for 79.9 per cent of economic migration in Saskatchewan between 2000 and 2005, whereas they represented 94.7 per cent and 91.1 per cent of the same category in Prince Edward Island and Manitoba, respectively, over the same period. Across Canada, provincially selected newcomers reached a historic high, representing about 31 per cent of the total of economically selected immigrants in 2009 (including dependants and excluding immigrants selected by Quebec) (Canada, 2011b: 20–21).

The numerical and symbolic growth of PNPs, supported by the activation of province building centred on immigration, maintained in activity the decentralizing mechanism. Both in open intergovernmental forums as well as in the context of interadministrative relations, provinces voiced demands regarding the increase of nomination quotas for their jurisdiction (interviews 12, 14, 24, 25). According to a federal official, these pressures became constant and ever-growing: “All of them seem to want more of a say in selecting [...] All of them [...] think that immigration is a silver bullet to all their economic problems [...] If it was up to the provinces, they would get half a million a year” (interview 38). Provinces also attempted to have more input in the program and wanted to see it become more sophisticated. For example, over time, specific modalities for selecting foreign students and regarding the use of temporary foreign workers in specific provinces were created (interviews 11, 12, 13, 24, 38, 39). These demands became expressed bilaterally but also, increasingly, in regional and multilateral forays, such as the Council of the Federation. More recently, provinces and territories have established—with some support from the federal government—a provincial and territorial secretariat for collaboration on immigration. Using this horizontal institution, provinces and territories started to develop common strategies for their dealings with the federal government in immigration-related issues (interviews 26, 34).

Following the activation of province building in immigration, provinces started to act as maintainers of the federalization process. Provincial mobilization reinforced the immigration activities of other provinces by providing
knowledge, examples and symbolic resources (such as success stories). The continuing pressure for further decentralizing changed the face of immigration in Canada by giving provinces a greater role in immigrant selection and, more broadly, by confirming their legitimacy as institutional actors in Canada’s immigration and integration governance regime. Despite growing federal concerns over provincial selection and the impact it had on Ottawa’s own immigrant selection programs, it had trouble escaping provincial demands about provincial nominee programs that dominated intergovernmental and interadministrative relations over immigration (interviews 12, 13, 14, 24, 25, 38, 39).

Reacting to Federalization

The decentralizing mechanism remained active, maintained by province building in immigration, up to the early formal federal attempts at regaining more autonomy and independence in the governance of Canada’s immigration regime after 2010. First, the federal government limited the annual growth of PNPs nationally, thereby increasing intergovernmental tensions and creating interprovincial pressures about the allocation of annual selection quotas (interviews 12, 23, 32, 38). Second, focusing on program integrity and transparency, the federal government forced the temporary closure of PNPs where fraud was suspected. It also started to implement general limits to provincial selection criteria, for example by forcing a minimum language requirement for PNs or by cancelling family/community type selection streams (interviews 14; 24; Hall 2012; Canada 2012c). While these changes have somewhat limited the exponential growth of PNs, they have not resulted in a substantial decrease of provincially selected immigrants.

The central federal attempts at limiting the impacts of the federalization of Canada’s immigration and integration governance regime came after 2010. On April 12, 2012, then Citizenship, Immigration, and Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney announced that the government would not renew the bilateral agreements with Manitoba and British Columbia that mandated the transfer of responsibility for settlement services to the provinces (Canada, 2012a). In the following months, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) also announced changes to its regional offices, limiting its presence in several provinces (see CBC 2012).

The reactions of provincial governments and of the immigration and settlement sector to these decisions have been strong in both provincial and national venues (see interviews 10, 26; Hall, 2012; Rabson, 2012). The federal decision to re-centralize the administration of settlement appears as an effort to break free from provincial pressures for increased funding and power, as province building has maintained the mechanism...
of decentralization, independent of federal interests. By attempting a drastic change, the federal government aimed at regaining room to manoeuver within Canada’s immigration and integration governance regime. Limiting provincial autonomy in immigrant selection—via a strengthened regulatory environment for the PNP—can also be seen as federal attempt to limit the growing allegiance of employers and economic actors depending on immigrant human capital toward their provincial governments. Because of the central role of provincial government in triggering and maintaining the dynamics leading to decentralization, a reassertion of federal authority in immigrant selection, settlement and integration might be more politically complex than previously believed and could have trickle-down effects in other policy domains such as social and health transfers, human resources and economic development.

Conclusion

Focusing on the central process of gradual institutional change affecting the governance of immigration and integration in Canada since the 1990s—federalization—this article has demonstrated the crucial role of provincial mobilization in bringing about this evolution. Complementing existing explanations, a process-tracing analysis of federalization has demonstrated that provinces have acted as both triggering and maintaining agents of change between 1990 and 2010. This demonstration highlights the importance of mobilizing frameworks that allow for the dynamic consideration of both agents and structures when explaining change in general institutional setting (see Mahoney and Thelen, 2010; Streeck and Thelen, 2005) and in federal regimes (see Benz and Broschek, 2013). In the Canadian context, because of changes in the overall governance of the federation since the 1990s, this means developing a perspective that is definitely province centred.

To do so, this article has proposed that, in the case of the governance of immigration and integration, provincial political and institutional agency has taken the form of a province-building mechanism. Successively identifying immigration as a central resource for provincial society and economy, provinces broke from their previous stance on the matter (competitive nation building, avoidance or passivity). Doing so, they started building institutions, independently developing policies addressing immigration-related issues, diffusing new ideas about the provincial role in immigration and gathering societal support for this role. In addition to this internal mobilization, and as part of the province-building mechanism, provincial governments began demanding more powers and increased resources to manage immigration independently and to their advantage. These demands have triggered and kept in motion the decentralizing mechanism.
At the same time, the provinces’ internal and external mobilization have been affected by the decentralizing mechanism. Federal decentralizing has impacted the resources and power distribution within Canada’s immigration and integration governance regime. It has also created new symbolic and instrumental avenues for provincial action inside the regime.

The process of federalization can only be fully explained when considering the interaction, over time, of these two mechanisms. Province building in immigration helps make sense of federal decisions to decentralize powers and resources to provinces, even in the absence of a clear policy “rationale” (Banting, 2012). Decentralizing partially explains the evolution of provincial interests and actions in regard to immigration. Decentralizing and province building separately cannot explain the outcome of the change. As demonstrated in the case of settlement renewal and of the PNP, decentralization did not have a substantial impact on provincial actions and interests in the absence of province building. The interaction of the mechanisms, via feedback and social learning, helps understand the maintenance of the process of change over a significant period of time. In the institutional context of Canada’s immigration and integration governance regime, mechanistic approaches allow for a better consideration of actors’ changing interests and actions by identifying patterns of mobilization and interaction and by linking them to larger contextual changes.

More broadly, analyzing this change in terms of gradual institutional change—because it brings to light distributional consequences of dynamic institutional arrangement—helps explain current reforms and predicts future dynamics within Canada’s immigration and integration governance regime. The decision to recentralize immigrant settlement, the attempts to limit the growth of PNP, the increased regulations and the redesign of CIC regional office, while all responding to specific policy rationales, also point to a change in the decentralizing mechanism since 2010. These federal changes herald a new phase of institutional dynamism in which the federal government aims to limit the role of provinces. These decisions demonstrate that while federalization did not necessarily limit federal powers—as indicated by the unilateralism of these decisions—they at least increased the political consequences of decisions, because of the presence of a new set of legitimate institutional actors. The decision to recentralize elements of Canada’s immigration and integration governance regime could then be seen as an effort to clear the path for future reforms of integration and settlement programs by limiting the number of actors seen as having an explicit stake in the matter.

Efforts to halt the decentralizing mechanism will not necessarily stop province building in immigration. It might, however, affect the shape and intensity of the mechanism in some provinces. Based on previous instances of province building, increased federal-provincial conflicts over immigration and integration are to be expected. Provinces remain convinced that
immigration is a central component to their economic development and now, because of their increased capacities, their claims have a greater legitimacy (interviews 10, 40). In addition, experiences with immigration and integration have made provinces more aware of the costs and consequences of immigration on their areas of jurisdictions (see Sousa, 2012). In the near future, federal decisions over immigration could thus be received with demands for measures that alleviate these consequences, as has been the case in other federations (Joppke and Seidle, 2012) such as Germany (see Guiraudon, 1999) or the United States (Newton and Adam, 2009). Finally, following insights on policy development in federal contexts, provinces could also decide to innovate in the face of federal unilateralism, at least within the context of their jurisdictional capacities, as was the case in the past in Canada (see Pierson, 1995). In this case, placing province building in the larger context of fiscal federalism, economy and social changes could yield stronger analysis and predictions.

Notes

1 As part of the PNP, an individual must apply directly to a specific provincial government. The province, using criteria developed independently, decides if the applicant should be recommended for immigration. If positively recommended, applications are then revised by the federal administration to ensure compliance with general criteria defined in Canada’s Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. This revision is, first and foremost, technical; between 2005 and 2009, 96 per cent of provincial recommendations were approved by the federal government (Canada, 2011b: 20).

2 Ontario only published its first-ever immigration strategy in 2012 (Ontario, 2012).

3 Appendix A—available online—presents a detailed list of the 40 interviews (of the 71 conducted for this project) cited in this article.


5 And to a large extent, were maintained even after that (interviews 7, 16, 17, 27; Biles et al., 2011; CBC, 2011; Seidle, 2010a).

6 Saskatchewan signed the first real PNP-related agreement a couple of days before Manitoba signed its formal agreement in 1998 (interviews 9; 22).

7 Ontario is an exception to this movement. The province entered an agreement in 2005, following a partial resolution of the funding issues put in place after the Quebec-Canada immigration agreement. While the agreement included an annex for the creation of the PNP, the province was still highly resistant to the idea of a provincial role in immigrant selection (interview 17, 27, 36).

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