Preface

This is a collection of papers about immigrant settlement policy in Canada. We think that this is an intriguing area for students of public policy. It involves a complicated set of relations between governments – federal, provincial, regional, municipal, and, in some places, at the neighbourhood level. It also involves dense networks of organized interests that represent immigrants, ethnocultural communities, and individuals interested in refugees and other immigrants; some of these organizations actually deliver most services to immigrants to Canada. So it is interesting to analyze both this complex system of governance and also the policy outputs that it produces.

Immigrant settlement is also a very important policy area. It is crucial to Canada’s future development, as it has been central to the past evolution of the country. The current immigrant experience is often very different from that of the past, when coming to Canada entailed a permanent rupture with the home society and with family. Now many immigrants retain links with “home,” and they have alternative possible destinations, so policies about attracting and retaining immigrants are more important than ever. Part of the objective of the research reported here is to suggest how such policies can be improved.

This is a collection of research that stands alone and makes a significant contribution to our knowledge about immigrant settlement in Canada. It is also, however, part of a much larger project. For some time, many scholars have been working on aspects of research within the framework of this project – Multilevel Governance and Public Policy in Canadian Municipalities. The project has many components, but the bulk of the work has been done on policy
in various provinces and in municipalities of different sizes, as in the studies collected here. Very briefly stated, the objective of this work is to document what policies exist in a variety of fields and to explain their nature: first, as a function of the processes of intergovernmental relations through which they are shaped; second, as a function of how various “social forces,” or organized groups, are involved (or not) in the policy process. More information about the overall project is available at www.ppm-ppm.ca.

Here, various acknowledgments are in order. First, we wish to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for support through the Major Collaborative Research Initiatives program. The University of Western Ontario and other universities contributed generously to the project. In particular, Jim Davies and the Economic Policy Research Institute at Western supported the study of immigrant settlement in Ontario. We thank McGill-Queen’s University Press for its continued interest in our research and for assigning to us as editor the remarkable Carlotta Lemieux. We are indebted to two anonymous reviewers for suggestions that have improved the book. Andrea D’Souza worked with great diligence to compile the index. Finally, Kelly McCarthy has served as manager for the larger project. She coordinated various research meetings of the team, and she helped prepare this manuscript. We acknowledge her efforts with thanks.