

# **“Building a Policy-Oriented Research Partnership for Knowledge Mobilization and Knowledge Transfer: The Case of Metropolis Canada”**

*John Shields and Bryan Evans  
Department of Politics and Public Administration  
Ryerson University*

## **Abstract**

The aim of this paper is to examine government-university-community partnerships in the area of knowledge mobilization (KM) & knowledge transfer (KT) using the case of the Canadian Metropolis Project. The Metropolis Project in Canada began in 1995 with the goal of enhancing policy-oriented research capacity in the area of immigration and settlement and developing ways to better use this research in government decision-making. Funding for this partnership has recently been renewed for a third time. The longevity of this partnership and its recent renewal presents an opportunity to reflect critically on the nature of such partnerships. This paper is an attempt to identify some of the key themes, issues and challenges related to research partnerships, KM and KT. Also, with the aid of a case study, it aims to specify some of the possibilities and limitations of this kind of policy relevant knowledge mobilization. Special consideration will be placed on the context in which the demand for knowledge mobilization and knowledge transfer has emerged.

## **Key Concepts/Words:**

**Knowledge Mobilization; Knowledge Transfer, Research Partnerships; Public Policy; Community-based Research; Immigration and Settlement Policy; Policy Communities**

## 1. Introduction

Building partnerships between government and nongovernmental actors has become increasingly important in modern governance. The role that community-based organizations, in relationship with government, play in the provision and delivery of public goods/services has been extensive and the focus of considerable study (Banting 2000; Evans, Richmond and Shields 2005; Murray, Low and Waite 2006). This is also true for public-private partnerships where for-profit enterprises are engaged by the state to build and operate public infrastructure such as highways, hospitals and prisons, as well as to provide various services for government and the public (Wilson 2001; Selsky and Parker 2005; Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships 2006). By contrast, forging research partnerships between the state and nongovernmental actors has been rarer and rather neglected in terms of examination. This is an important for academic consideration, however, because it allows us to better understand the broader range of partnership relationships the state has been engaged in. It may also signal government's innovative attempts to strengthen areas of weakness in the state, in particular with respect to enhancing policy capacity.

This paper offers an examination of one ongoing initiative to construct a research partnership between the federal state, academics and community organizations for knowledge mobilization and knowledge transfer (accessible policy oriented research) for the purpose of enhancing policy knowledge capacity in the area of immigration, diversity and settlement. The Metropolis initiative has been the prime mechanism utilized to achieve this goal in Canada. In 1995, led by Citizenship Immigration and Canadian (CIC) with other federal departments of the national government in collaboration with the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), an arms length body of the Canadian state charged with funding social science and humanities academic research, initiated a project designed to support a number of Centres of Excellence across the country focused on policy relevant research in the area of immigration and settlement and its impact on major metropolitan centres in Canada. The stated goal of Metropolis Canada, in its initial phases, was "to improve policies for managing migration and cultural diversity in major cities by:

- Enhancing academic research capacity
- Focusing academic research on critical policy questions, options and delivery mechanisms
- Developing effective ways to use research in decision making" (Metropolis Canada Website, accessed February 2, 2005).

Four research Centres of Excellence based in Vancouver, the Prairie Provinces, Toronto and Montreal were established in 1996 (a fifth centre was added in 2004 in the Atlantic Provinces) for this purpose. In addition, CIC set up a National Metropolis Project Team situated in Ottawa and staffed by career public servants to act as a liaison with the research centres and to help facilitate this government-academic-community research partnership. The funding of the academic centres of excellence was provided by SSHRC and the federal government (each sharing half of the costs in Phase I and II of the project) but with the moneys flowing through SSHRC as an institutional research grant to host

universities in an effort to maintain a clear division of funding ‘independence’ from the federal policymakers themselves.

This form of relationship was designed to help direct research toward policy relevant immigration, diversity and settlement issues while preserving academic autonomy in defining the research questions and academic freedom for scholars to draw their own policy sensitive research conclusions. Metropolis is an attempt to balance research excellence with relevance (Frenk 1992, 1397).

## **2. Method/Approach**

A broad political economy framework is employed in this study. Political economy is “the study of the social relations, particularly the power relations, that mutually constitute the production, distribution, and consumption of resources” (Mosco 1996, 25). Consequently, political economy draws our attention to the structural location of the various actors and takes seriously the power relations embedded within the research partnership. It also compels us to address the range of interests and motivations that have served to bring these parties into the relationship and which shape and sustain the Metropolis enterprise. Only by identifying the material foundations of the partnership is it possible to fully understand the dynamic relationship and organizational structure of Metropolis. Moreover, the political economy framework assists us in situating the partnership within the larger political and socio-economic context in which Metropolis exists, allowing for a deeper understanding of this evolving relationship.

This work also makes use of a participant-observer and practitioner-oriented perspectives. Co-author John Shields is a Director with CERIS – The Ontario Metropolis Centre, and has been centrally involved with the Metropolis Project since its origins, at the Centre level, in 1996.<sup>1</sup> Co-author Bryan Evans brings the perspective of a policy practitioner having spent some sixteen years as a policy analyst and policy manager in the Ontario Government before moving to an academic appointment in the field of public administration and public policy. Consequently, the following analysis is based in part on a participant-observer approach and is informed by a policy practitioner perspective.

These different vantage points have naturally influenced our understanding of knowledge mobilization partnerships and knowledge transfer for policy effect. In particular, however, much of the knowledge and analysis of the Metropolis Project that follows is based on twelve years of participating in and observing the this initiative from inside and close up.

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<sup>1</sup> John Shields’ involvement with the Joint Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement – Toronto (CERIS) began at the grant writing stage and since that time he has continuously served in official capacities with the Centre as a member of the CERIS Governance Board, a Centre Economics Domain Leader and finally as Centre Director from Ryerson University.

## 2. Knowledge Mobilization and Knowledge Transfer

An important beginning point for our analysis is in clarifying the meaning of the core concepts, knowledge mobilization (KM) and knowledge transfer (KT). These concepts are relatively new formulations of a long standing challenge of how to gather together in user ready form and then to effectively and efficiently transfer information/knowledge about a topic or area of interest to end users who may be at some geographical or organizational distance from the generators of knowledge. The literature does not offer a consensus on the distinction between KM and KT, with the concepts often used interchangeably. The 2005 Knowledge Mobilization Symposium held in Banff, Alberta stated that: “Knowledge mobilization involves making knowledge readily accessible – and thereby useful to any number of individuals and groups in society – by developing ways in which groups can work together collaboratively to produce and share knowledge” (2005). We conceive KM as the stage in the process in which relevant knowledge is gathered together (mobilized) prior to formal transfer.

Dickinson maintains that: “Knowledge Transfer consists of efforts to provide decision-makers with the best available research findings to use in making policy and providing services. Its goal is to improve the quality of policy and practice outcomes” (2007, 4). Kramer speaks to the interactive nature of KT describing it as: “The process by which a body of research knowledge is presented in multiple formats to practitioners and decision-makers. The ... parties are engaged in a sustained, intensive, interactive process that results in a transformation of the knowledge to the purposes of the organization” (2002, 221). For Zarinpoush and Gotib: “Knowledge transfer refers to the process by which knowledge is transferred to people and organizations that can benefit from it. [KT] ... is about reducing the gap between what is known and what is used” (nd). This part of the KT process is about knowledge exchange between academic and nonacademic stakeholders (Anisef, Rummens and Shields 2007, 10).

For its part, KT is not just a simple communications issue that can be accomplished by sending information in the form of a report or e-mail to a user since the knowledge that is to be mobilized is often complex, technical and discipline specific and hence not easily understood by the array of potential end users. Additionally, the knowledge to be accessed is not always in the form of readily available written documents but is often held more informally in the knowledge networks of community and government practitioners and academics. Making the knowledge policy relevant generally requires an ongoing dialogue with users to help transform and shape information for this purpose.

The issue of KM and KT has become even more challenging in the current period because societies are more complex than in the past. For example, organizational structures like state bureaucracies, educational institutions, and nongovernmental organizations have become very large. We also live in an information rich age where the problem is often too much information to manage rather than too little. Information overload is a common complaint and a serious challenge for information users. Attempts to assess and condense vast amounts of what is often discipline specific research, what has come to be called “data smog”, is particularly daunting for the non-researcher (Smith

2006, 77). It is within this general context that KM and KT have become increasingly significant.

In brief, KM and KT are initiatives designed to build ongoing and systematic exchange of social science knowledge between academic and non-academic stakeholders establishing networks, partnerships and infrastructure for knowledge creation, mobilization and exchange. There has been increased interest in policy circles on obtaining evidence and using it to better inform policy and practice (this is in part seen in movements toward the use of ‘best practices’ and ‘evidence-based decision/policy-making’). Knowledge making, if it is to be more relevant and applied is viewed as best done in partnerships – especially the joining of academics and practitioners linked to policy shops in government. According to Lomas:

The clearest message from evaluation of successful research utilization is that early and ongoing involvement of relevant decision makers in the conceptualization and conduct of a study is the best predictor of its utilization. Similarly, research centres with ongoing linkages to and an accepted role in a specific jurisdiction’s or organization’s decision making, have greater influence than those without such links. Apparently, familiarity breeds pertinence not contempt (2000a, 141).

Policy relevant research questions that can better shape research toward evidence-informed decision-making are more likely to occur in this context. Moreover, the transfer of knowledge is also seen as more effectively accomplished through knowledge networks, in part because such spaces open up the opportunity to share information, research outcomes, and to air disagreements, between a broader set of constituencies of interests bringing new insights to knowledge formation. It allows for a more engaged and dialectal formation of research questions and understanding of research results for immigration and settlement public policy, public administration and the service delivery.

### **3. The Increased Importance of KM & KT Today**

Geoff Mulgan, writing in 2005 after 7 years with Tony Blair’s Cabinet Office, concluded that “government must draw on independent knowledge” (Mulgan 2005, accessed online Feb. 28, 2008) as a means of creating a more strategic approach to policy problems. Quite simply there is now more evidence as to what will work. This knowledge is not found primarily in government but is widely distributed in universities, think tanks, community groups, and international organizations. Herein we encounter a problem in that traditional sources of academic dissemination for research findings have not been effective at reaching audiences beyond the scholarly community. This represents a KT ‘gap’ where potentially applied knowledge fails to be connected to the policy process and the end-users working in that domain. The standard academic written dissemination outlets have been peer reviewed academic journals and books which have long publishing timelines and which are written primarily for very narrow audiences or peers almost always in highly discipline specific language. If societal impacts are forthcoming from such exercises they take a considerable time to filter through the knowledge system.

There has, consequently, been a call by government and civil society that the academy become more relevant – value for public investment in academic scholarship should include, according to this logic, a greater contribution of the application of the knowledge created to addressing society’s problems and progress. Metropolis Canada has expressed the point in the following manner: “Over the past two decades we have seen greater expectations on the part of publicly-funded universities throughout the world to have their research put to use by the societies ... that support them. ... One frequent call to the social sciences is that their research have a clear application in policy development” (2006: 1). Within the academy as well there has been a search on the part of many for greater academic relevance to better addressing societal needs. The disconnect between much of the academic research and its timely application to the real world has been labelled the “relevance gap” (Smith 2006, 69). One way of framing the problem is the importance of striking, on the one hand, a balance between curiosity-driven research excellence and relevance, on the other (Frenk 1992, 1397).

It is also important to note in this regard a transformation that has taken place within SSHRC. SSHRC, as the primary granting council for social sciences and humanities research, has modified its mandate from an overriding focus on curiosity driven research for traditional academic journals to more strategic research financing of projects that address more socially relevant themes. As SSHRC describes it they have moved from a *research granting council* “preoccupied mainly with research production and training” to a *knowledge council* “also focused on systematically moving knowledge into active service for the broadest common good” (Wiggin 2005: 2; also see SSHRC 2004 & 2005).

A shift to a knowledge council orientation was viewed as an appropriate repositioning for SSHRC to address the realities of an “information economy”. For SSHRC this was also tactically important move in “an age of permanent fiscal crisis” (Osborne and Hutchinson 2004) to protect and expand its funding base by the federal government. SSHRC is in a better position to argue before government for enhanced resources when it is able to demonstrate its explicit societal relevance. In fact, SSHRC has seen its funding allocation from the federal budget go up rather significantly in recent years.<sup>2</sup> The movement by SSHRC to more grants awarded to policy-based work provided a powerful push/incentive factor in moving academic social science research to areas of specified policy concerns. This is an important mechanism for facilitating strategic mobilization of research knowledge toward specific fields of interest. Tellingly, in 2006 over \$21 million in SSHRC grants was targeted directly to KM grants (Fitzpatrick 2008, 10).

Finally, governments have become more willing to invest in knowledge mobilization initiatives in an effort to increase a diminished policy capacity in the state through the use of new ‘partnerships’. Such initiatives have been viewed as cost effective in an era of

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<sup>2</sup> Between the fiscal years 1995-1996 and 2007-2008 SSHRC’s total budget increased from \$91.6 million to \$312.7 million, nearly a three and one-half fold increase over a twelve year period (SSHRC various years).

government restraint with high value added potential.<sup>3</sup> A community partner in the Canadian Metropolis network expressed this point well: “Metropolis was conceived as an academic project, a way of harvesting academic talent of universities and apply their work to government policy concerns in a time of government downsizing” (as quoted in Legault, et. al., 2006, 7).

#### **4. Prioritizing Immigration and Settlement Research**

Immigration and settlement research has become a focus of KM and KT because of the importance that immigration has in public policy in Canada. However, it is significant to recognize that immigration and settlement is by no means the only area of policy interest to have been so privileged in Canada. Health and community care, social exclusion/inclusion, child poverty & homelessness, social capital & civil society, and the environment and global warming are among other areas that have also been prioritized by granting councils and government. The following factors are in particular what make immigration and settlement an area that policymakers are interested in finding more information about:

- Globalized economies have given greater emphasis to large labour force movement between national political boundaries.
- Increased competitiveness means that nations are engaged in a global search to attract high human capital assets.
- Demographic change (ageing national populations) has made immigrants important for population and labour force stability/growth.
- Immigration and national security have become increasingly closely tied.
- Canada is a country which is nearly alone in having explicitly placed immigration at the centre of its economic growth strategy.
- New immigrants to Canada have seen their economic performance decline in recent years causing concern about the potential emergence of a racialized underclass and raising questions more generally regarding the positive or negative economic and social benefit that newcomers bring. And;
- Canada as a settler society has always been a country of high immigration and, consequently, immigration policy has been a long standing central issue of policy concern/interest in the country. This is in part reflected in the support for multiculturalism equity/diversity initiatives in Canadian public policy

All these factors contribute to the prominence of immigration and settlement issues as important from a policy vantage point.

It must be noted that the movement toward KT/KM was first advanced in a substantive manner in the area of health in the 1990s. There are numerous KT initiatives in the health field of study and a growing body of literature analyzing this phenomenon. Moreover, a culture has emerged within the health disciplines which incorporate KT into its research

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<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that government still views these knowledge mobilization and transfer initiatives as being in the experimental stage and there is no clear indication that they have fully embraced them as of yet.

practices (Kramer 2002; Dickinson 2007). More generally for the social sciences, however, KT/KM is more recent and has not become normal practice within its research domains. The Metropolis initiative is in fact the most substantive institutionally-based experiment in KM/KT within the social sciences in Canada. The institutional linkage is important because while ad hoc approaches to academic-government research relationships can be beneficial in the end they are inherently “unreliable and unstable” (Dickinson 2007, 19).

## **5. Changing Roles for the State in the Policy Process**

In the 1980s and 1990s the dominant paradigm that guided government shifted in the West from one founded on Keynesian understandings about the role of the state in society to a neoliberal one. In a break from the past, Keynesianism adopted as a principle of the state’s role in society the “imperative to act” (Stilwell 2002: 258) for addressing economic and social problems. This approach embraced a belief in the capacity of the state to understand complex problems and devise activist policy solutions/remedies. Consequently there was a heavy investment in state capacity building, including substantive investment in internal policy capacity.

By contrast the neoliberal state shed its faith in the overarching capacity of the state as a hands-on policy engineer. In many respects the state (and certainly the activist state) came to be identified as one of the ‘problems’ and not the ‘solution’ to society’s problems. There was under this paradigm an emphasis on the creative force of the market and to some degree of independent civil society. This set the stage for a significant disinvestment in the state and its administrative structure, including its policy infrastructure (see for example: McBride and Shields 1997; Shields and Evans 1998, Shields 2003).<sup>4</sup>

An aspect of this change, following Osborne and Gaebler’s (1992) call to ‘re-invent government’, was a switch in the focus of the state from rowing (service delivery) to steering (management and policy). But even with a steering mandate the neoliberal state disinvested in in-house policy shops especially with respect to efforts directed around policy research.<sup>5</sup> The neoliberal idea was that the state should adopt a more laissez-faire approach and concentrate on government deregulation. In this regard Painter and Pierre observe:

An overarching objective in many countries is to ‘roll back the state’ and allow other actors to play a greater role. Given the preference for a minimal role by the

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<sup>4</sup> At the federal level, for example, between March 1995 to March 1997, just as the Metropolis Project was in its first years, on the basis of Program Review the federal public service was reduced by 13.8 percent falling “from 225,619 person years to 194,396 person-years” (Lewis 2003: 176). A 30,000 person reduction could not but adversely affect the policy research capacity of the federal government.

<sup>5</sup> In a 2006 survey of federal, provincial, and territorial deputy and assistant deputy ministers when asked the question, “I worry that my public service is losing its policy capacity,” 44.8% agreed with this statement and only 27.8% disagreed (Evans, Lum and Shields 2006). This is a strong indication that senior public service executives in Canada view the Canadian state’s policy capacity as under threat.



state, policy capacity is not a top priority, perhaps not even an issue worthy of inquiry, because it is typical of a state model of times past (2005: 1).

Part of the response to these developments was an attempt to draw upon policy relevant research from outside the state – research which in many respects was viewed as less self-interested than that emerging from the state bureaucracy itself. This position is in part a reflection of the influence of public choice theory in public administration and public policy. Public choice views society as composed of self-interested maximizing individuals (Buchanan 2003). This logic was extended to cover public servants who were also seen as fundamentally not guided by an ‘ethos of public service’ but rather by ‘narrow self-interest’ including the desire to expand their influence and control in public policy realm. Hence, there was an increased use and dependence on the work of think tanks, research institutes and foundations, academia, consultants and special political advisors as a way to counter the influence of an ‘entrenched policy bureaucracy’ and overcoming the so-called ‘Yes Minister’ syndrome (see: Savoie 1995).

As the neoliberal paradigm has waned, at least with respect to the more ideologically charged versions of neoliberalism, thinking about the state and policy capacity has continued to evolve. One development has been the emergence of the notion of ‘governance’ over ‘government’. Unlike government, governance extends beyond the simple workings of the machinery of the state. What government once did alone is now seen as being performed by a wide range of public, private, non-profit, national and/or international bodies (Hirst and Thompson 1996: 184). Some have even suggested that we are witnessing a change in the state’s role from that of *policy researcher* to that of *policy manager*. This also suggests that policy in the current period is being done much less from closed vertical policy silos and more from an open horizontal policy process.

While we must take with some caution the argument that we have moved from a model of ‘governing from the centre’ (Savoie 1999) to a notion of ‘shared governance’ (Pierre 2000), it does contain some reality. This is a transformation promoted by so-called the Third Way advocates and politicians (a post-neoliberal political development) – a trend more advanced in Europe than in North America. “Shared governance entails collaboration among a wide range of actors from the public, private and voluntary sectors, and a transformation of the state’s role from one of exercising direct control and operating through hierarchies to one of working through networks” (Phillips 2006: 3) – which embraces a more inclusive and collaborative model. This also suggests greater involvement of parties beyond the state in the policy setting and policymaking process. The role of KM and KT for policy affect would appear, under this model, to play a more central place for government.

## **6. The Policy Process and Rational Decision-Making**

At its most basic level public policy is “a course of action or inaction chosen by public authorities to address a given problem or interrelated set of problems. ... The general character of public policy ... is that it is a guide to action, a plan, a framework, a course of action or inaction designed to deal with problems” (Pal 2001: 2, 5). Many models have been developed in an attempt to understand public policy and the public policy process (see for example: Hogwood and Gunn 1984; Howlett and Ramesh 1995). The definition of public policy and many of the approaches to its study suggest that policymaking is a thoroughly rational, logical and linear science. Moreover, there is also often the assumption that policy making is a “neutral endeavour” where evidence/research is gathered, assessed and applied to solve problems in a rather technocratic fashion (Goldberg 2006: 1). Hence, a general understanding has been that if only policymakers had the right or better information they would make optimal policy decisions.

There is no denying that there is an underlying rationality and logic behind how policy decisions come to be made and that academic study can help make sense out of this process. It is not, however, our intent to explore the policy process in detail here. The point to be made is simply that how policy comes to be made in the more popular understanding is not so straightforward and immediately rational, especially to those who stand somewhat outside the process itself.

Policymaking is as much an art as it is a science. Notwithstanding all the talk “about ‘evidence-base research’ and ‘academic knowledge transfer’ ...the reality is that policy does not get solicited or implemented within a rationalist framework that these kinds of concepts tend to imply” (Richmond 2006: 1). By its nature the process is highly political which alone adds a considerable degree of unpredictability and volatility to the enterprise defying the pure rationalist models of policymaking (Howlett 2002: 174-175). The involvement of politicians, bureaucrats, lobbyists and interest groups introduces a significant human element to this enterprise. From an NGO perspective Richmond’s observations in this regard are useful to consider: “it is ... useful to think of the initial process of soliciting policy input and in the later stages of setting and implementing policy recommendations as sharing the characteristics of being highly political, volatile, conjunctural, and ‘irrational’ in the traditional academic sense of scientific inquiry” (2006: 2). The policy process, especially at the policy decision-making stage, can also be very secretive and thus more difficult to determine what factors (or research) informed key decisions. Moreover, in order for significant changes in policy direction to occur generally “policy windows”<sup>6</sup> first need to open up – these do not occur very frequently – and in the absence of a policy window research rarely has much influence on policy decision-making. As Bunker reminds us: “Political and ideological commitments which bind top level political actors together are not hospitable to independent explorations of fundamentally new appreciations of the experienced world” (1978, 228). It is only when that world view comes into crisis that questioning becomes more acceptable and research which points in alternative directions can become influential. Researchers interested in informing policy need to be aware of “the distinction between rational and sensible decisions”. Those who “fail to acknowledge the influence of these political and

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<sup>6</sup> A policy window is described as “unpredictable opening in the policy process that create the possibility for influence over the direction and outcome of that process” (Pal 2006, 132).

institutional factors” (Lomas 2000a, 144) are bound to find the world of policymaking frustrating.

The complexity of the policymaking process has been expressed as one where there is “need to understand that there are many sorts of evidence, that sensible decisions may not reflect scientific rationality, and that context is all important, particularly with policies related to services and governance” (Black 2001, 277). Aside from academic evidence policy makers are informed by such sources as experience, anecdote and public opinion (Campbell, et. al. 2007, 7; Lomas 2000a, 143; Nutley, et. al. 2007).

The idea of rational policymaking received a boost with the emergence of evidence-based policymaking. This approach came to the fore in 1997 with the election of New Labour in Great Britain which promoted the policymaking philosophy of “what matters is what works” over explicitly politically driven policy orientations (Davies, et. al. 2000, 1). In the 1980s and 90s at the high point of conviction politics research in many areas of policy was very often ignored or dismissed (Nutley, et. al. 2003, 2).

The idea of rationally-based decision-making received a boost with the rise of evidence-based policymaking. This approach came to the fore in 1997 with the election of New Labour in Great Britain which promoted the philosophy of “what matters is what works” over explicitly politically driven policy orientations (Davies, et. al. 2000, 1).

Evidence-based policymaking can in part be seen as a reaction to the overly ideological policymaking of the Thatcher era. It maintains “that policy making should be better informed by research and evidence over the ideology and conviction approaches. ... It advocates that policy processes can be improved by forging stronger links between researchers and public policy decision makers and between research and practice (Althaus, Bridgman and Davis 2007, 67).

Evidence-based policymaking approaches have arguably brought more rationality into the policy decision-making process and with it a renewed interest in research. However, by its nature the policy process remains a highly political one with all the other influences which inform policymaking as noted above in play. Consequently, even in an environment more encouraging of the use of research the concept ‘evidence-based’ policymaking is misleading. It would be more accurate to speak in terms of ‘evidence-informed’, ‘evidence-influenced’ or ‘evidence-aware’ policymaking (Davies, et. al. 2000, 11). Those engaged in policy relevant research dissemination must be aware of the limits this kind of process imposes for the use of their work.

## **7. The Three Policy Communities**

With respect to research partnerships and KM/KT it is important to recognize the structure of the three basic communities involved in the policy process. The First Community consists of *policy decision-makers* (politicians and senior civil servants that actually formally make policy decisions). The Second Community are academics and others (think tanks, policy institutes, NGOs, etc.) who are engaged in the *creation of*

*knowledge and information.* The distance between these first two communities is rather wide. However, there is a Third Community that provides a bridge between the first two communities, consisting of the *knowledge brokers*. The knowledge brokers are “those who work in government and whose work is intended primarily to support the efforts of decision-makers” (Cohn 2006: 11).

Knowledge brokers are mid-level public service policy analysts and advisors inhabiting the various policy units located within each ministry. Typically it is at this level that the most direct engagement takes place with knowledge creators. In turn, it is this section of policy professionals who are directly engaged with developing policy background papers, briefing notes, house notes, and slide presentations for use by senior management. In other words, they are the first line of knowledge users and translators. Consequently, it is to this group that KT products should be directed and where ongoing and intensive researcher links to government need to be most concentrated.

The Metropolis Project has greatly strengthened the connections between the Second and Third Communities allowing for a better (although certainly not perfect) flow of distilled knowledge creation to decision-makers. Because of the way that knowledge is absorbed within government (which can be haphazardly and inconsistently) it is important, for maximum effect, that the linkages between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> communities be regular, strong and preferably institutionalized. This greatly opens up the possibilities that such policy research will actually make a difference.

This is particularly important because:

Knowledge utilization depends on disorderly interactions between researchers and users, rather than linear sequences beginning with the needs of researchers or the needs of users .... The more sustained and intense the interaction between researchers and users, the more likely utilization will occur (Landry and Amara, 2003: 195 as quoted in Cohn 2006: 15).

This gives emphases to the importance of researcher engagement with the third community to maximize policy relevant knowledge transmission. KM/KT, as the foregoing discussion of ‘players’ implies, is above all a social process. The purpose is to assist in the practical matter of improving policy formulation so that the best and widest scope of research on a given issue/ problem can inform the policy development. And this objective is not an end-point deliverable, but rather a process of iterative engagement between the different actors. The Metropolis Project is a working example of such a research partnership.

## **8. The Role of Community Based Organizations in KM/KT**

Building ‘partnerships’ with community-based organizations (CBOs) has come to be seen as increasingly important by universities and governments. At a basic level the value of CBOs to knowledge mobilization and knowledge transfer is their organic/grounded connection to the communities that are directly affected by the policies and programs

which are the object of interest. In the area of immigration, for example, CBOs are charged with the delivery of a large proportion of the settlement services offered to newcomers, most often funded by government contracts (Richmond and Shields 2004 & 2005). CBOs are also engaged in various types of advocacy and educational activities for immigrant communities. CBOs are, consequently, on the frontline of where policy and programming meet affected communities and as such CBOs are in a unique position to understand and translate the impacts of policy and programming on, for example, immigrant populations from a community perspective. As well, the CBO role as service deliverers means that many of these organizations are in a strategic location to assess the effectiveness of policy and programming from a frontline deliverer/community practitioner vantage point.

CBOs are involved to various degrees in research in the field. Through community reports & newsletters, action research projects, advocacy activities, submissions to commissions & government bodies, sponsored community-based research initiatives, service contract proposals & evaluation reports, and the like, considerable grounded information/research and analysis is created by CBOs. This so-called 'grey literature' produced by the CBO community has grown incredibly rapidly over the last number of years. The growth of this literature is especially remarkable given the context of government downloading of service delivery and the magnification of under addressed social problems that has increased the work burden of the community sector to near crisis proportions (Shields and Evans 1998; Evans and Shields 2002; Evans, Richmond and Shields 2005). This grey literature is now commonly accepted as making a valuable contribution to our understanding of policy relevant issues and questions by the broader policy community. In addition to a more formally written set of documents, in the form of grey literature, vast amounts of analytically useful information are held more tacitly in the 'person knowledge banks' of CBO employees and volunteers. Moreover, community-based researchers are increasingly part of research teams with academics engaged in more traditional, although policy and practices relevant, scholarly activity. Much of Metropolis-based research and publishing is reflective of this collaborative model of study. The involvement of CBOs in research networks adds substantively to knowledge mobilization and transfer.

CBOs are both physically and socially/emotionally close to the communities they service and there are generally high levels of trust between them. CBOs have a level of involvement with these populations which does not exist elsewhere. One of the strategic advantages of academic and government 'partnering' with CBOs is the unprecedented access to grassroots populations for in-depth study that this opens up. The 'lived experience' of these populations is able to be accessed in a manner that was rarely possible before. New and innovative knowledge generation/research relevant to policy concerns has been able to be fostered because of these 'partnerships'. Much of this work, although certainly not all, is qualitative in orientation. Moreover, because of the closeness of CBOs to their communities, partnerships with CBOs also provide important new communication pathways in terms of knowledge dissemination to these grass-roots communities.

## 9. The Meaning of Partnership

The idea of partnership in its most recent form as a central organizing principle of government emerged as part of New Public Management reform of public administration in the late 1980s and 1990s (Newman 2002, Shields and Evans 1998). The general idea is that the state should not act alone but in ‘partnership’ with civil society actors in the process of governance. The practice of partnering has been especially popular between government and nonprofit agencies for the delivery of publicly supported services. Provision of settlement services for newcomers in Canada is a prime example of this practice (Richmond and Shields 2005).

Erskine has described partnership in the area of social policy in the following manner:

An increasingly popular form of organization for the delivery of services, the development and planning of activities or the implementation of a programme or project based upon a formal agreement among a number of agencies to achieve a common purpose (2002: 175).

As the description above suggests, much of the partnering arrangements to date have been involved with service delivery and other formal relationships involving programs and projects. The formal agreements and partnerships for service delivery almost always involve a financial relationship between government and third parties. In fact service contracts have come to define these ‘partnerships’ as contractually driven, with government funders narrowly determining the terms and conditions of the contracts. In this sense these relationships are not equal partnerships between parties of similar bargaining power but a business relationship. In this business deal there is a buyer who issues a contract for services and sellers of services who competitively bid on contracts (generally nonprofit agencies). Consequently, these relationships are by definition one-way contractual ones with government in control.<sup>7</sup>

The knowledge mobilization and knowledge transfer ‘research partnership’ also has an important contractual/financial element to it but these relationships tend to be far less symmetrical in terms of power and control by government. The case of the Metropolis Project illustrates how these kinds of partnerships often unfold.

In the case of the Metropolis Initiative the initial call in 1995 for proposals to establish research Centres of Excellence in Canada focused on policy-oriented immigration and settlement study issued by SSHRC (an arms length government research funding agency for the social sciences and humanities) in collaboration with CIC and other federal government departments. The direct state bureaucratic interest was mediated by SSHRC which had an established set of research expectations and operating procedures which were modified to fit this new ‘partnership’ initiative.

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<sup>7</sup> For an examination of the changing nature of government and nonprofit sector relations with regard to service delivery see Evans, Richmond and Shields (2005).

Unlike other directly contracted research projects with academics that the state sometimes engages where the dimensions of the research undertaken is tightly proscribed – although, of course, research outcomes remain under the control of the contracted researcher – the Metropolis initiative is more open ended with far greater scope for the researchers engaged in the initiative to shape the nature and scope of the research undertaken as long as it is directed toward the broad mandate and Memorandums of Understanding of the initiative. In short, research autonomy is enshrined in this model, although overall research outcomes are regularly evaluated by both SSHRC and CIC, ensuring ‘accountability’ (i.e., that the Centre’s are accountable in terms of meeting the goals and expectations of the research grant). Moreover, any subsequent funding renewals are subject to renegotiation among the key players with resulting modification of the research mandate to bring it ‘better in tune’ with the various interests of the partners and in particular the funders.<sup>8</sup>

The 1995 call for proposals went out to universities across Canada, but, implicitly at least, targeted to those institutions of higher learning found in the largest immigrant-receiving cities in the country. These universities were compelled to form their own cross-university alliances with a clustering of key immigrant researchers and younger faculty who were positioned to move into the area of immigration research. A core grouping of researchers was mobilized that would be capable of rapidly expanding the base of immigration and settlement scholarship in Canada. These groupings of cross university immigration researchers, with the explicit support of their universities, would submit proposals to SSHRC in a bid to host a Centre. The universities involved in the bids were required to commit significant resources of their own to make their bids competitive. At the same time some of the major community organizations involved with immigrant communities in their metropolitan areas and regions were also drawn into respective university alliances and asked to be contributing partner institutions.

Clearly, however, while CIC and SSHRC valued the added bonus of community ‘partners’, they viewed the main partnership as being with the academic communities involved with the Centres. It was the academics who after all were seen as providing the real research weight for the project in this configuration.<sup>9</sup> Hence, in this sense, the allied community organizations became second tier partners for the funders. This understanding of the situation was also the perception of many of the community-based participants in Metropolis as well and it is reflected in the following sentiment drawn from this group in their evaluation of the Metropolis Project. For example, one community member expressed the widely held CBO view that: “The purpose of NGO involvement is to help

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<sup>8</sup> This can narrow, to some degree the range of policy-relevant topic for exploration and some might even argue introducing an element of ‘relative research autonomy’ to the partnership.

<sup>9</sup> The reality of the research mandate of Metropolis and the relatively privileged position that this placed the academic partners into is recognized by the by the community sector. As a community focused report notes, SSHRC sets very high academic standards “that NGOs do not have the capacity to fulfill (Legault, et. al., 2006: 12)”, at least not independently. Government demands for research ‘quality’ are also such that academic work is heavily advantaged. For example, community-based action research is generally seen to be too value charged to meet the ‘objectivity standards’ required of research necessary for government policymaking.

academics do better research; the NGO involvement is not a goal in itself, but a means to an end, a subordinate goal. This is felt.” (as quoted in Legault, et. al., 2006: 11). Significantly many of the academics see the community organizations, if not in completely equal research partnership positions, as very important and hence the community’s role in research is acknowledged and structurally recognized in significant ways in the institutions governing the Centres and their research. Nonetheless, the community sector, while believing the Metropolis Initiative to be valuable to be a participant in, do not by-and-large see it as an equal partnership (see: Legault, et. al., 2006).

Overall, it is fair to state that partnership in the Metropolis Initiative is far deeper and more meaningful than that found in the service contract relationships that the state often holds with third parties. This partnership involves real give and take among the parties. Nonetheless, the strategic and structural positioning of the three main partners (funders, academics and community) has resulted in an uneven and tiered set of partnering relationships between the parties.

## **10. Embedded Interests and the ‘Research Partnership’**

It is important to recognize that the various groups that are involved in knowledge mobilization and knowledge transfer initiatives bring different interests, needs, resources and power and influence to the table. This raises the question as to what motivating factors and what institutional differences operate to, on the one hand, build synergies that facilitate common goals, or, on the other hand, work to divide the interests of these groups and strain relations. While an exhaustive examination of these interests and relations is not possible a sketch of the evolving position of key players/partners in the Metropolis Project outlines the importance of interests in building research partnerships.

### ***Funders:***

*SSHRC:* As a funder SSHRC has had perhaps the most purposely distanced relationship in the Metropolis Project. This positioning can be explained on the basis of SSHRC’s structural position as an ‘arms length academic funder’.<sup>10</sup> SSHRC’s role in promoting academic scholarship in the social sciences and humanities has followed rules that involve the organization establishing various funding streams/programs for which it invites qualified applicants and then arranges for independent nationally based peer review adjudications.<sup>11</sup> While SSHRC also provides programs that support academic

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<sup>10</sup> SSHRC describes its organization in the following way: “The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) is an arm's-length federal agency that promotes and supports university-based research and training in the social sciences and humanities. Created by an act of Parliament in 1977, SSHRC is governed by a 22-member Council that reports to Parliament through the Minister of Industry” (SSHRC website).

<sup>11</sup> The peer review process is described as follows by SSHRC: “SSHRC grants and fellowships are awarded through an independent, national, peer-review process designed to ensure excellence. Peer review is universally recognized as the most objective and effective way to allocate public research funds” (SSHRC website).



publications and conferences, this again takes place through “arms length funding” instruments. This distancing is important in order for SSHRC to ensure its objectivity in awarding grants, i.e., that funding decisions are based on academic merit. More direct forms of engagement by SSHRC in research initiatives might easily be seen as compromising this position.

As noted previously, SSHRC values the Metropolis initiative on a number of grounds. First, it sees it as being highly successful at meeting its specified objects and in particular in generating significant quality academic research for relatively modest investment by SSHRC. The success of Metropolis in this regard has been confirmed through numerous very positive external peer reviews of the project and its renewal for a third phase. Significantly, no other Centres of Excellence funded through SSHRC have been successfully renewed for a third term.

Second, The Metropolis Initiative fits very well into the revised mandate of SSHRC to become a Knowledge Council and hence for SSHRC supported research to be more easily positioned for use toward societal good (SSHRC 2004 & 2005). Metropolis is seen as the leading example of movement in this direction. Moreover, internationally when academics and government officials are approached regarding what they know about SSHRC and its ongoing research, the Metropolis Project is by far the most visible presence for SSHRC on this stage.<sup>12</sup> In short, Metropolis has provided SSHRC with prominent and positive international exposure.

Lastly, partnering with the Federal Government on what has been mutually viewed as an important project brings strategic advantages to SSHRC. SSHRC gets to concretely demonstrate to its funder, the Government of Canada, the relevance of its programming and SSHRC-based work is able to maintain a high profile in the eyes of government policymakers. In an era of “fiscalized politics” (Lewis 2003) where government funding is constantly under review, guided by such measures as value for dollars, SSHRC’s ability to show societal relevance in a concrete fashion is critical in the battle for scarce dollars.

SSHRC’s mandate means that it remains committed to fostering primary research, graduate student training, as well as knowledge mobilization and knowledge transfer. Metropolis is engaged at high levels in all these activities. Peer reviewed publication, as an academic funder, is an important outcome for SSHRC. As well, SSHRC is interested in strengthening the pan-Canadian dimensions of Metropolis research and in extending the research scope and reach in a more cross national as well as international directions (SSHRC 2006).

*The Canadian Government:* In contrast to SSHRC the federal public service partners might best be described as ‘fully engaged funders’. These funders, for example, help organize conferences and seminars and are active participants in these events; they eagerly connect researchers to policymakers, arrange for knowledge dissemination publications among many other activities. They are most interested in research that can

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<sup>12</sup> This observation is based on various personal conversations with SSHRC officials.

directly inform policymaking and government programming and evaluation in the area of immigration, diversity and settlement in the more immediate and near future time frames. Because government administrations face definitive time boundaries the need for research to be timely is strongly felt from this quarter. While the initial research focus from of Metropolis was centred on the impact of immigration and settlement on large urban centres, which by their very nature tended toward more localized studies, increasingly the federal government partners have become more interested in pan-Canadian research. Because the policy mandate of the federal state is national – federal policy – their concern is understandable but it did shift the original focus of the initiative. It also has research cost implications, as nationally based studies are generally more expensive to conduct than are more localized ones.

Government policymakers also have a strong preference for empirical studies. Quantitative data is seen as more ‘objective’, ‘evidence-based’, and translatable into usable policy language, hence this kind of research is more valuable for senior policy bureaucrats and political decision-makers. For public servants charged with managing and directing the Metropolis Initiative from the Federal Government’s end the imperative of readily translatable policy impact at the pan-Canadian level of the research is an overriding priority. However, their definition of policy relevant is open to contestation and is often seen as too narrowly cast by other elements of the partnership. To date this has been a ‘constructive and creative tension’ within the Metropolis Project in Canada.

In terms of funding decision-makers within government at the department level (especially CIC) there is a tendency toward making assessments of such initiatives based upon rather narrow and instrumental criteria. The focus tends to be on how the project’s research outcomes meaningfully impact on the research needs of the state, especially with respect to current government initiatives & desired directions, state programming and legislation. In a climate of ‘measurement for results’ there can be a tendency to try to count ‘meaningful’ research outcomes. A more nuanced and holistic basis for assessment (the plane upon which such projects inevitability rest) can be discounted and viewed, if seen at all, as a second order of business. As a player that provides one half of the grant money for the Centres, this partner has significant influence that it uses to shape the direction of the Metropolis research mandate toward what it sees as more directly usable policy relevant research and publishing that has a pan-Canadian orientation or use. From this vantage point academic peer reviewed and theoretically driven work may be one product of the initiative but it is one that is not always fully valued by federal funders.

### **Academics and Universities:**

The academic component of the partnership provides the research engine for the initiative. Funding for Centres of Excellence was planned to mobilize into research clusters established immigration and settlement researchers and encourage new scholars and graduate students to enter the field. Additionally, the intent was to encourage a shift in the focus of such research toward a policy-oriented direction. Metropolis, as indicated through various SSHRC reviews, has been successful in accomplishing these goals. The academic community, especially those attached to universities partnered with the five Centres of Excellence, eagerly took advantage of the Metropolis research opportunities.

The advantages for academics and universities of Metropolis are obvious. Core funding support delivered through SSHRC<sup>13</sup> is greatly coveted by university administrations as it enhances their research profiles and their ability to secure additional resources. Funding also is valued by individual academics as research grants and other kinds of support provided through the Centres enhance publishing opportunities which is the primary grounds upon which academic promotion and reputations are based. The Metropolis partnership also opened up opportunities for academic researchers to gain improved access to government, immigrant communities and CBOs allowing research to be pushed in new directions.

Metropolis did pose its share of challenges for the sector as well. Academic and inter-university rivalries have been a tradition in the higher education sector and certainly there were some examples of this most especially in the early stages of the initiative. Significantly these kinds of tensions eased considerably as academics from different backgrounds and universities with their own unique cultures and traditions began to work closely together and come to understand and respect the strength that the differences brought to the research partnership. Individual university self interest fostered by years of institutionally patterned competition gave way to co-operation as the value of strategic clustering demonstrated rewards in terms of successful research funding and publications. In the case of CERIS – The Ontario Metropolis Centre, for example, the establishment of the Centre served to establish a regularized set of communications between the three partnering universities at the highest levels (Ryerson University, University of Toronto and York University). CERIS came to be used as the model for how these Toronto universities could co-operate for mutual benefit.

In the case of academic partnering with the community there was a good deal of learning that also happened. Their cultures were quite different and this often resulted in tensions concerning such fundamental issues as what partnership means, how resources should be shared, and in which ways communities could be involved in the research enterprise. As the parties worked together and began to better understand each other perspectives and interests these tensions eased and solid working relationships founded on trust emerged that have been beneficial to each of the parties (Legault, et. al. 2006: 6). Differences remain but these are now part of an ongoing dialogue.

It is important to note that, structurally, universities' core mandate is research while for the community sector research is just one of many activities that may be engaged in, and in fact if, under financial stress, it is often one of the first areas to be cut, however reluctantly, by CBOs. Consequently, the centrality of academics in the Metropolis Project

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<sup>13</sup> The fact that funding is in SSHRC dollars is important as core academic granting dollars are credited more highly than other kinds of research financing and give universities access to additional research funding resources. It is important to note that both SSHRC and federal funding contributions are processed through the academic funding agency and counted as SSHRC dollars. In the five year Phase II funding period ending in 2007, for example, each Center receive \$1,703,696 with the exception of the Atlantic Centre which received \$1,066,275 since it was established after the start of Phase II (SSHRC 2006: 6). Credit for this funding is shared between the partnering universities at each of the Centres.

over the lesser importance of the value added by community partners has largely been taken as a given.

### **Community:**

As noted in previous sections of this paper, the community sector/CBOs had the least concrete resources and consequently influence to bring to the partnership and there is general awareness within the sector of the limitations that this imposes for them. CBOs have an interest in seeing immigration and settlement issues and research elevated in public profile and status with government and universities. In fact this is seen by the community as one of the important accomplishments of Metropolis. As one community spokesman noted: “Metropolis put immigration into the centre of the table, they were not afraid to talk about immigration” (as quoted in Legault, et. al. 2006: 2). Another commented that: “It has been a great success from the point of view of putting immigrant research on the map in Canada. Some research is even unique because some researchers are new, young and close to the community” (as quoted in Legault, et. al. 2006: 5). The experience and observations from the community on the ground, of conditions and practices associated with immigration and settlement, were largely able to be validated by the research (Legault, et. al. 2006: 5) which also helped to legitimate many of the concerns long expressed by the community sector as well as support the value of their work with this population.

Research in the fields of immigration and settlement is often useful to CBOs for grant and service contract applications,<sup>14</sup> as well as for community educational initiatives and advocacy purposes. Partnering with academics in research projects can also be beneficial in terms of knowledge generation, resources (as limited as these may be) brought to the community through research grants, and the ability through research and knowledge dissemination via conferences, for example, to build connections with governments, academics and other CBOs.

It is clear that those CBOs involved with Metropolis have been able to develop a high quality of relationships with many academic researchers and the various Centres of Excellence. “There is a great deal of good will towards the Metropolis initiative and it is acknowledged that a lot of time, attention and effort have been invested to successfully blend three distinct cultural groupings (government, academia and community sector)” (Legault, et. al. 2006: 6). These relationships as noted above are seen as beneficial. The ongoing struggle for the community sector remains the goal of enhancing their position in the partnership including moving toward a fuller role in all aspects of the research and dissemination agenda of Metropolis.

## **11. Metropolis: An Experiment in Research Collaboration**

As noted, the Canadian Metropolis Project is a forum for undertaking KM/KT respecting population migration, diversity, and immigrant integration. The stated goal is to directly

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<sup>14</sup> For example, a CBO worker observed that: “We are using the research to advance our own agenda. In our funding proposals we cite the research done by Metropolis” (as quoted in Legault, et. al. 2006: 5).

link research in these areas as a means to improve public policy for managing migration and diversity by: 1) enhancing academic research capacity; 2) focusing academic research on critical policy questions, options and delivery mechanisms; and 3) developing effective ways to use research in decision-making (Metropolis Canada Website, accessed February 2, 2008).

Overall, the Metropolis research partnership has been much deeper and more meaningful than that found in the more typical service contract relationships that the state often holds with third parties. This partnership involves real give and take among the parties and thus constitutes a true partnership relationship. Nonetheless, the strategic and structural positioning of the three main partners (funders, academics and community) has resulted in an uneven and tiered set of partnering relationships between the parties (see Shields 2007b) with academics being more senior partners compared to CBOs, for example.

In concrete terms, the KM/KT process embodied in the work of Metropolis entails a number of avenues through which research networking and transfer occurs. The Centres of Excellence are the engines driving the process, as it is within these structures that the KM/KT axiom that the “more sustained and intense the interaction between researchers and users, the more likely utilization will occur” (Landry, Lamari and Amara, 2003, 195 as cited in Cohn 2006, 15) is actualized. Here a multi-layered range of networking and dissemination activities are carried out.

Networking opportunities are also presented through the organization of national, international and graduate student conferences, focused forums held in Ottawa and the regions, and through less ambitious day long research retreats and forums. Dissemination of research is carried forward through the publication of Working Papers, magazines, seminars, bulletins, and publication of a Metropolis academic periodical, the *Journal of International Migration and Integration*. In addition, more traditional academic modes of dissemination such as publication in scholarly books and journals and presentations at academic conferences occur outside of the Metropolis framework. Moreover, each regionally-based research centre organizes its KM/KT activities around specified research domains. National priority leaders for six domains identified by federal funders are charged with facilitating a pan-Canadian orientation to the centres’ work and with promoting this work with federal partners.

The construction of such an elaborate structure by Metropolis has made it “something of an experimental site for how research gleaned at the academic and community level can be more effectively transmitted into the tightly knit realm of actual policy-making” (Shields 2007a). It must be noted that the movement toward KM/KT was first advanced in health research in the 1990s. Consequently there are numerous KT initiatives in health related research endeavours and a growing body of literature analyzing this phenomenon. Moreover, a culture has emerged within the health disciplines which incorporate KT into their research practices (Kramer 2002; Dickinson 2007). More generally for the social sciences, however, KM/KT is more recent and has yet to become normal practice within its broad research domains. The Metropolis initiative is in fact the most substantive institutionally-based experiment in KM/KT within the social sciences in Canada. The

institutional linkage is important because it builds institutional coherence and stability into the academic/community-government research relationships (Dickinson 2007, 19).

## **12. Conclusion: Challenges and Opportunities**

KM/KT, and the working example Metropolis presents, are important to the process of building toward a more strategic and evidence-based model of policy development. Political considerations are necessarily central to the policy process (Donald 2001, 278) but the promise of KM/KT is to ensure that the best information and knowledge available on a given issue of policy relevance can be presented and evaluated within the political context.

Political criteria, however, are often less a factor than other obstacles which can impede academic-practitioner partnerships. Smith identified five such obstructions: *Time frame*: the lag between problem identification and completion of quality research on the problem; *Resources*: the lack of sufficient resources to effectively research the problem area; *Accessibility*: research may focus on more obscure areas of study. Also research may be inconclusive and/or researchers may disagree on evidence and conclusions; *Jargon*: academic language and writing styles that are inaccessible to non-academics; and, *Resentment*: practitioners may believe their knowledge and contribution are not sufficiently valued by academics thus hindering the development of trust in the relationship between academic and government officials (2006, 72-3).

In addition to these challenges, the building of research partnerships composed of diverse communities of researchers and government also confronts other issues. Shifting political priorities as a result of unforeseen issues, changes in government, or even a rotation of senior ministers, can result in 'hot' issues suddenly either being added to or falling off the agenda. Moreover, governments operate within a culture of secrecy with respect to policy development and decision-making. The result is that there may be less than full inclusion of non-governmental researchers. And, there are rather different intellectual cultures separating the spheres of academic researchers and decision-makers. As Smith again observes, "(s)cholars and practitioners do 'think differently' because of the requirements of their environments and purposes. Their incentive structures and values are structured in a manner that encourages such differences" (2006, 159-60). These differences are structural in nature and must be recognized, valued and meaningfully incorporated into the operating mechanisms of the research partnership.

With respect to the question of measuring the KM/KT impact of Metropolis, challenges are raised. In terms of KM there has clearly been a large increase in the volume of studies on immigration, diversity and settlement in Canada since the start of Metropolis in 1996. Much of this work has been conducted by Metropolis-affiliated researchers and available as Working Papers on Metropolis Centre websites. However, the effectiveness of KT on policy decision-makers is far more difficult to determine. Studies indicate that linking researchers to users, as in the case of Metropolis, enhances government uptake (Landry, et. al. 2003, 203). Given the closed nature of much of policymaking and the fact that tracking evidence used in policy determination is not possible in the way that the

influence of scholarship is in academic publishing through, for example, the use citation indexes, means that the impact is assessed largely by the grounded impressions/findings of knowledge brokers and policymakers in government itself. The general assessment of Metropolis Project insiders is that Metropolis research has made a difference but the extent of the difference remains an open question. However, one hard statistic that is revealing is that the network of websites constituting Metropolis Canada received just fewer than 15 million visits between April 2007 and March 2008 with most visitors accessing Working Papers and other immigration research products (Kara 2008). This is an impressive KT achievement.

There are real opportunities in research partnerships that can be exploited to the benefit of all participants, and most importantly society as a whole. The Metropolis case provides something of a template as to how these partnerships can be constructed and managed. The achievements and limitations of this working experiment in research partnering is worthy of study. It offers valuable lessons for forging even deeper and more meaningful institutionalized KM/KT relationships.

As noted above, KM/KT is a process, not an end-state. The challenges identified are all amenable to resolution as long as all the parties are aware of such challenges and are prepared to work through them. Building trust between the various participants is key, and trust can only occur where there is opportunity to work and learn collaboratively. Through the process of engagement, the research partners learn about their different styles, cultures and personalities, for that matter. As with anything human, it is far from perfect but as Metropolis amply demonstrates, it certainly can be successful. Above all, sustaining a durable and productive research partnership requires that all parties are dealt with equitably and with respect. Identifying and building upon the areas in which each partner's mutual self-interest intersects is especially fruitful for constructing creative and enduring partnerships.

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