



**Knowledge
Mobilization/Transfer,
Research
Partnerships, and
Policymaking: Some
Conceptual and
Practical
Considerations**

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The Study in Brief

Issue

**Building research
partnerships –
knowledge
mobilization and
knowledge transfer**

Overview

Building research partnerships between government, universities and community-based researchers for the purpose of knowledge mobilization (KM) and knowledge transfer (KT) of

timely policy relevant research has become an area of increased interest. The Metropolis Project, which is focused on immigration, diversity and settlement policy relevant research, is the leading example of such a partnership outside of the field of health. This study seeks to examine the value of such research partnerships, providing better understanding of their relationship to the contemporary policy process, and identifying the factors that help and hinder the construction and maintenance of such relationships.

Key Observations

Some key findings concerning research partnerships and factors that contribute to building successful ones include:

- 1) Early and ongoing involvement of decision-makers in KM/KT is critical to effective government utilization of research.
- 2) Research and decision-making are less of a product or event but are on-going social processes.
- 3) It must be recognized that academic-based research is only one type of evidence that informs government decision-making.
- 4) Government knowledge brokers should be the prime focus for KM and KT activities by academics and community researchers.
- 5) Research partnerships can only be sustained if the different cultures and interests of the partners are recognized and respected and where trust and equitable relationships are built into the partnering process.

Approach

This study is based on a literature review on knowledge mobilization, knowledge transfer and research partnering with government. This report looks at knowledge mobilization/transfer and research partnerships in the broader context of contemporary developments in Canadian society and governance. Insights from a participant observer and a policy practitioner vantage point are also reflected in the analysis.*

Policy Implications

Research partnerships are significant initiatives that can play an important role in mobilizing relevant research in readily useable forms for policy-makers. They can work to enhance state policy capacity which has been under increased challenge. Moreover, evidence-based policymaking is also strengthened when government has greater access to current rigorous policy relevant research findings thus helping to bridge the evidence-policy gap.

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The Study in Detail

Introduction

Collaborative research can be defined “as a deliberate set of interactions and processes designed specifically to bring together those who study societal problems and issues (researchers) with those who act on or within those societal problems and issues (decision-makers, practitioners, citizens)” (Editorial 2003, S2:1).

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 (Evans, Richmond and Shields 2005). 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, water and sewage facilities and prisons.

By contrast, forging research partnerships between the state and nongovernmental actors, such as universities, with the objective of informing policy deliberation and decision-making, has been rarer and a

rather neglected area of examination. This is an important area for consideration 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 policy capacity.

Increased interest in research partnering has been elevated by trends such as ‘evidence-based policymaking’ and developments in the health sciences focused on knowledge mobilization and knowledge transfer. The Metropolis Project is a prime example of a research partnership designed to mobilize and transfer relevant immigration research to government policy circles.

What is knowledge mobilization/knowledge transfer?

First, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of the core concepts *knowledge mobilization* (KM) and *knowledge transfer* (KT). These concepts are relatively new formulations seeking to address a long standing challenge. Succinctly, that challenge is how to assemble, in user ready form, information/knowledge addressing a specific area of interest and effectively and efficiently transfer this deliverable to end users, that is policy decision-makers. The

source of such knowledge is found in the academic sector, but importantly it is also located more informally in the community of practitioners in the nonprofit and government sectors.

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 of KM as that stage in the process where relevant knowledge is assembled (mobilized) as a prelude to formal transfer.

“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” (Zarinpoush and Gotlib nd).

With respect to knowledge 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). This part of the KT process is about knowledge exchange between academic and nonacademic stakeholders (Anisef, Rummens and Shields 2007, 10).

“Knowledge transfer is a practice or a process without one defined formula for success. On the contrary, one of the most strongly emerging principles is there is no cookie-cutter recipe, and that what works in one environment will not necessarily be appropriate for another” (Kramer 2002, 12).

KT is not to be reduced to a communications exercise entailing a simple and passive delivery of information in the form of a report or e-mail to a user. Mobilized knowledge is often complex, technical and discipline specific. The array of potential end users cannot be expected to suddenly

understand what has just landed in their in-basket, let alone what to do with it. A learning process is required.

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 and the issues they confront are arguably more complex than in the past. For example, organizational structures like state bureaucracies, educational institutions, and nongovernmental organizations have expanded in size and function and are called upon to address problems that are multi-layered and multi-sectored and so require horizontal strategies for resolution.

To state we live in an information rich age is a truism but the reality is that 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/

knowledge users.

“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” (Lomas 2000, 141).

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 by establishing networks, partnerships and infrastructure for knowledge creation, mobilization and exchange. Within policy circles there has been increased interest in evidence-based policy development and decision-making. Knowledge creation, 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.

Policy relevant research questions that can better shape research toward evidence-informed decision-making are more likely to occur in a context of engagement. 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. Moreover, it allows for a more engaged and iterative formation of research questions and understanding of research results for public policy, public administration and service delivery.

Governments view KM/KT initiatives outside of the health fields as still being in the experimental stage.

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Why should government and the broader society be interested?

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 our central problem. The answer to our question above begins with the observation 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 dissemination outlets are peer reviewed academic journals and books which have lengthy publishing timelines and are written in discipline specific language primarily for narrow audiences. If societal impacts are forthcoming from such exercises, they take a considerable time to filter through the knowledge system.

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).

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" (Metropolis Canada 2006, 1).

Consequently, both government and civil society more generally have called upon the academic community to become more relevant to help in solving pressing problems. Something of a 'return on investment' philosophy has emerged. The idea being that public investment in academic scholarship should include a greater contribution of the knowledge created be applicable to addressing society's problems. Within the academic community as well many have searched for greater relevant application of their research in pursuit of addressing societal problems.

It is also important to note, in this respect, a transformation that has taken place within the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). As the primary granting council for social sciences and humanities research, SSHRC has modified its mandate from an overriding focus on curiosity driven research destined for

traditional academic journals, to a 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).

“Metropolis [a research partnership] was conceived as an academic project, a way of harvesting [the] academic talent of universities and applying their work to government policy concerns in a time of government downsizing” (Community participant as quoted in Legault, et. al., 2006, 7).

A movement to a knowledge council orientation was viewed as an appropriate repositioning for SSHRC to address the realities of an “information economy”. The shift 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.

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 government restraint, with high value added potential.

Making sense of the policymaking process.

In the 1980s and 1990s the dominant paradigm that guided government since the end of the Second World War shifted away from Keynesian understandings about the role of the state. Keynesianism framed the state’s role in society as the “imperative to act” (Stilwell 2002, 258) to address 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.

In the 1980s and 90s this model was largely supplanted by new perspectives and understandings, generally expressed by the term ‘neoliberalism’. By contrast, the neoliberal model shed its faith in government’s overarching capacity to act 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’ rather than the ‘solution’. The emphasis was

placed 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).

“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 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” (Painter and Pierre 2005, 1).

An expression 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, there is some evidence that in-house policy units have been losing capacity.* *

Part of the response to these developments included an attempt to draw upon policy relevant research from outside the public service – research which in many respects was viewed as less self-interested than that emerging from within the public service itself. This perspective reflects the

influence of public choice theory. Hence, there was a tendency toward drawing upon the work of think tanks, research institutes & foundations, universities, consultants and special political advisors as a way to counter the influence of an ‘entrenched policy bureaucracy’ so as to overcome the so-called ‘Yes Minister’ syndrome (see: Savoie 1995).

As the neoliberal governance model’s influence waned, thinking about policy capacity 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).

Bureaucratic hierarchies have given way to distributed networks. Some have even suggested that we are witnessing a change in the role of the public service 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.

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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), this idea does resonate to a certain extent.

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).

Shared governance is characterized by “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). It embraces a more inclusive and collaborative model. This also suggests greater involvement of actors beyond government in the policy setting and policymaking process.

A greater role for evidence-based policymaking over ideology/political

considerations in informing policy is marked by this trend. KM and KT, under this model, play a more central role in policymaking.

The policy process: Is it rational?

Many models have been developed in an attempt to understand public policy and the policy process (see for example: Hogwood and Gunn 1984; Howlett and Ramesh 1995). The definition of public policy and some 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 policymaking 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 more correct or better information they would make optimal policy decisions.

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).

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 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 the way policy comes to be made according to popular understanding is not so straightforward and immediately rational, especially to those who stand somewhat outside the process itself.

“... 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” (Richmond 2006, 2).

Policymaking is as much an art as it is a science.

Notwithstanding all the talk “about ‘evidence-based 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).

The complexity of the 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; and Lomas 2000, 143). As well, by its nature, the policy process is highly political which alone adds a considerable degree of unpredictability and volatility to the enterprise and thereby challenging the pure rationalist models of policymaking (Howlett 2002, 174-175). The involvement of politicians, public servants, lobbyists and interest groups introduces a significant human element to this enterprise.

The policy process, especially at the policy decision-making stage, is also very enclosed, even secretive and it is 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” 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. However, accessible research can have important impacts once such windows open and

consequently policy advisors need to be able to draw upon readily available studies and networks of knowledge to address such policy needs. Hence, those engaged in policy relevant research dissemination must be aware of the limits this kind of process imposes for their work.

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).

The main players.

There are three basic communities involved in the knowledge mobilization/transfer process. The first community consists of *policy decision-makers* (politicians and senior public servants engaged directly in making policy decisions). The second community consists of university-based researchers as well as researchers and analysts attached to think tanks, policy institutes, NGOs, etc. All such researchers 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. This third community we term *knowledge brokers*. The knowledge brokers

are composed of “those who work in government and whose work is intended primarily to support the efforts of decision-makers” (Cohn 2006, 11).

Inside government there are knowledge or policy brokers who are able to filter useable knowledge to decision-makers. Academia also has its own ‘honest knowledge brokers’ or ‘trust agents’. This is the peer review agency that ensures that research being published meets rigorous scientific/academic standards. It is important not to lose sight of this important quality check in the drive for relevance (Smith 2006, 78).

These 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.

Key elements of the KM/KT process.

KM/KT is, as the foregoing discussion of ‘players’ implies, 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.

Metropolis: An experiment in research collaboration.

The Metropolis Project is an international forum for undertaking comparative research respecting population migration, diversity, and immigrant integration into major cities. The stated goal is to directly 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).

Metropolis Canada is structured as a partnership between all levels of government, university-based researchers,

and community organizations. These are organized as five Centres of Excellence located in the Atlantic provinces, Montreal, Toronto, the Prairie provinces, and Vancouver.

Funding for the Centres of Excellence is provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) and an amalgam of federal government departments and agencies led by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. The funding to the Centres has flowed through SSHRC as an institutional research grant to the host universities in an effort to maintain a clear division of funding ‘independence’ from the federal government. This type 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.

“Researchers need to appreciate that decision making is not so much an event as it is a diffuse, haphazard, and somewhat volatile process. Similarly, decision makers need to recognize that research, too, is more a process than a product” (Lomas 2000, 140).

Metropolis is an attempt to balance curiosity-driven research excellence with relevance (Frenk 1992, 1397).

Overall, it is fair to say the Metropolis research partnership is far 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. 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).

“Effective knowledge transfer of policy- and practice-relevant research findings ... requires the building of partnership networks and infrastructure that permit, facilitate and support ongoing, systematic, timely exchange of social science knowledge between academic and non-academic stakeholders” (Anisef, Rummens and Shields 2007, 11).

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 International Metropolis Project has become 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 2007b).

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 incorporates KT into its 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 while ad hoc approaches to academic-government research relationships can be beneficial, in the end they are inherently

“unreliable and unstable”
(Dickinson 2007, 19).

Conclusion: Challenges and opportunities.

KM/KT, and the working example Metropolis presents, are essential 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 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.

“Policy decisions are almost always made in the context of money, power, and precedent, and these factors will therefore usually affect the decision” (Donald 2001, 278).

Political criteria, however, are often less a factor than other obstacles which 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.

Within the government practitioner world there is often a drive for “better, faster and cheaper”, but there are inevitable trade offs that must be made for such calculations (Smith 2006, 77).

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 KM/KT relationships.

As noted above, KM/KT is a process, not an end-state. The challenges identified here 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.

“Policy research, analysis, formulation and evaluation are essentially intellectual exercises because policy knowledge is invariably limited and uncertain to some degree. Therefore it is not primarily technical in character, even though the ultimate objective is applied knowledge and not knowledge for its own sake. To say it is as much art as science is to say that it entails judgement being applied to an intellectual endeavour” (Aucoin and Bakvis 2005, 192).

NOTES

* This study 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. 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.

** 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.

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- Royal Canadian Mounted Police
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- Statistics Canada



About Metropolis

Launched in 1996, the **Metropolis Project** aims to improve policies for managing migration and diversity by focusing scholarly attention on critical issues. It involves policymakers, researchers, and NGOs in all project initiatives.

Metropolis' goals are to:

- Enhance academic research capacity;
- Focus academic research on critical policy issues and policy options;
- Develop ways to facilitate the use of research in decision-making.

Structured as a partnership, the project has both Canadian and international components. **Metropolis** encourages communication between interested stakeholders at the annual national and international conferences and at workshops, seminars, and roundtables organized by project members.

Find out more at:

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