

The International Metropolis Project

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The International Metropolis Project is a set of co-ordinated activities carried out by a group of countries and international organizations who share the vision of strengthened immigration policy through applied academic research. The Metropolis partnership, now comprised of twenty countries and six international organizations representing a wide range of policy and academic interests, is sustained by the attractions of its core idea. There is no budget holding the membership together. It is rather the promise of more effective policy making, more socially meaningful research practices, and the excitement of international collaboration towards common goals that bring people to the Metropolis table to turn a vision into a concrete project. The underlying idea is that the members of Metropolis will work collaboratively on issues of immigration and integration, always with the goal of strengthening policy and thereby allowing societies to better manage the challenges and opportunities that immigration presents, especially to their cities. Ideally, this work involves teams of both researchers and policy-makers. Its current broad areas of interest are:

- Immigrant labour market and economic participation issues
- Immigrant spatial concentration and its social and economic determinants and consequences

- Immigrant mobility
 - Promoting societal cohesion
 - Cities and the nexus between integration and immigration policies
- The Metropolis approach to the relations between academic research and policy is to encourage joint initiatives to:
- Identify and articulate issues and problems for policy and research work;
 - Develop appropriate data and conduct international comparative research directly related to the policy issues identified as priorities by the Metropolis partnership;
 - Exchange experiences amongst the partnership regarding the effects of immigration, especially within our cities, and the effects of government and non-government interventions, especially those designed to facilitate immigrant integration; and
 - Exchange information about effective practices where these have been identified and explained on the basis of rigorous empirical research.

Metropolis encourages these joint initiatives by fostering a growing international network of researchers and policy makers, by convening events that provide opportunities for its members to hold informed discussions, to discover where potential for collaboration exists, and to plan accordingly. The Project has organized its activities on the premise that what is needed to strengthen policy through a greater role for social science is a willingness of parties on both sides to develop relationships that result in a mutual understanding of each others' institutional cultures, that result in mutual trust, that result in a desire to work together, and that result in enduring working relations. Contrary to strictly rationalist portrayals of the research-policy link, connecting the two is not primarily a matter of linking propositions or ideas. It is about linking people, some of whom have knowledge of facts, some of whom have ideas about what ought to be done and the authority to do it. Decisions do not result from an algorithmical coming together of ideas in logical space but are made in ways that are often, perhaps nearly always, epistemically messy or complex. But decisions are made and can be improved by incorporating researchers and their ideas into the decision process itself. In general, if research is to contribute most effec-

tively to policy, the researcher must carry out work in conjunction with the policy maker. Publishing books or papers and making them available to decision makers is rarely enough, even if the material is highly relevant and written in easily digestible language.

Having these two groups work together is not something that either is accustomed to, but it is our aim to lead the way towards a change in institutional culture whereby what seems such a rational thing to do is actually done, to base policy upon the best of empirical evidence. The key is to appeal to not only the rationality of the exercise but to the social realities facing those who conduct research -- what they can actually be expected to contribute -- and those responsible for policy -- how they can actually receive and incorporate the fruits of research in their work. And we at Metropolis work to make this an attractive prospect for both parties by organizing annual conferences with focused workshops and by encouraging international comparative research projects.

A current priority is to increase the utility of Metropolis activities for both policy making and research, and the vehicles we have selected to bring this about are to tighten the focus and increase the number of conference workshops and to introduce small inter-conference seminars on very specific topics hosted by different partner countries and organizations. The workshops and the seminars are organized by the Metropolis "constituents", those with a direct working interest in the issues chosen for discussion, policy and research professionals alike.

The first of the inter-conference seminars was held in Gothenburg, Sweden on May 25 and 26 on the topic of managing ethnically divided cities. Among the speakers at this seminar were Dr. Saskia Sassen (Columbia University), Dr. Anne Power (London School of Economics), Dr. Roger Andersson (Uppsala University), Dr. Ronald van Kempen (Utrecht University), and Dr. Maurice Blanc (Université de Nancy). One result of this meeting of researcher and policy maker was a decision to organize a follow-up workshop at the conference in Israel on this same topic.

The second inter-conference seminar will be held in Montreal, October 28 to 30 on the topic of barriers to employment faced by immigrants. This is being organized by the Quebec Ministry of Citi-

zen Relations and Immigration in conjunction with the Metropolis Team at Citizenship and Immigration Canada. It will involve discussions by policy makers and researchers from Quebec, Canada, France, the United States, Holland, Israel, and Sweden about economic, linguistic, and discrimination-related barriers. A third seminar is being organized for this fall by the Luso-American Foundation in Lisbon on labour market integration, and a fourth will be held in Dubrovnik in the spring of 1999 on issues facing specifically the children of immigrants.

The Third International Metropolis Conference

The first two conferences of the international project were held in Milan and Copenhagen; the third will take place in Israel in the city of Zichron Yaacov from November 30 to December 3, 1998. The primary focus of the plenary sessions will be on managing multi-ethnic cities and societies. There will be approximately fifteen workshops to discuss a variety of tightly focused issues of interest to both policy makers and researchers. Conference details can be found on the Metropolis website (www.international.metropolis.globalx.net).

How to Contact the International Metropolis Project

Additional information on the International Metropolis Projects is available on the website whose address is www.international.metropolis.globalx.net. Extensive information on the Canadian Metropolis Project is available at www.canada.metropolis.globalx.net. For other information, you can contact the International Secretariat through:

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