The Provision of Services to New Immigrants in Canada: Characteristics of Government-Non-profit Partnerships

Agnes Meinhard
Ryerson University

Lucia Lo
York University

Ilene Hyman
Ryerson University

Acknowledgements

1. Introduction

Canada is one of a number of countries (e.g. Netherlands, Belgium, France, Germany and Ireland) in which the provision of social services is considered to be a partnership between government and nonprofit service providers, with government providing the money and the nonprofit organizations (NPOs) delivering the service. However, the Canadian model incorporates two significant features of the Anglo-Saxon model, as practiced in Great Britain, United States and Australia. First, many Canadian social service NPOs receive additional philanthropic support, some even relying exclusively on philanthropy; and second, many social service NPOs benefit from a large volunteer presence (Hall, Barr, Easwaramoorthy, Wojciech & Salamon, 2005).Overall, the social service sector receives 66% of their revenues from government sources - mostly from provincial governments (Barr et al., 2005).

Eight per cent of all Canadian social service organizations are immigrant-serving nonprofit organizations (ISOs) (Barr et al., 2005). Canada's system of integrating immigrants is a complex multilevel partnership among three levels of government and various organizations, predominantly Immigrant Serving Nonprofit Organizations (ISOs). At the jurisdictional level the partnerships are generally between the federal and provincial governments and these partnerships are detailed by formal agreements spanning a number of years. Each province and territory has separate agreements with the federal government. Whatever the agreements between the federal government and the provinces entail, the actual delivery of services is provided by immigrant serving organizations.

In this paper we examine the characteristics, relevance and constraints of cross-sector partnerships between government and immigrant serving organizations in the provision of services to new immigrants. In our examination, we focus on the question of whether these cross-sectoral relationships extend beyond mere contractual funding to a true, if rather asymmetric partnership.

2. Setting the Context

Throughout Canada's history, immigration has played a major role in building the country. At different periods of time Canada's economic needs spurred immigration. In the early years immigrants were basically on their own to build their new lives here in Canada. They relied on social connections through their churches, ethnic communities, and families for help. In 1922, the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society was the first formally incorporated organization established to help immigrants; it served as a model for subsequent faith-based and/or ethno-specific, immigrant agencies that sprang up in response to the influx of immigrants arriving after the Second World War. In every province, the voluntary sector provided immigrant aid services long before either provincial or federal departments became involved in settlement activities (Meinhard et al. 2012).

It was not until 1949, in response to the post-war wave of immigration, that the first federally funded settlement program was created. This led to the establishment, in 1950, of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration with a Citizenship Branch whose mandate was to support governmental and non-governmental agencies working to help newcomers adjust and integrate in Canada. In 1953 the federal government signed language-training agreements with the

provinces. Today a complex web of policies, programs and services provides assistance to newcomers in their journey towards integration and inclusion in Canadian society.

The current system had its start in the 1970s as part of a major philosophical shift in the conception of the role of government. Influenced by the ravages of the great depression and coming at a time of unparalleled economic growth following the end of WWII, the federal government and the provinces created a social welfare system in Canada that provided a safety net for all Canadians. It involved macro-level policies such as Social Insurance, Canada and Quebec Pension Plans and Medicare, as well a myriad of services for less fortunate Canadians, delivered mostly by nonprofit and voluntary organizations. This was the beginning of what has become to be known as a system of public-private partnerships for the delivery of social services to Canadians. It was also an exercise in nation building by ensuring a more equitable distribution of Canada's wealth through a system of transfer payments to the less prosperous provinces (Meinhard & Foster, 2002).

The spirit of partnership extended to the immigrant settlement and integration sector. Three core programs of the federal Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC): Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP, 1974); Host program (1984); and the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC, 1992), were delivered, by means of partnerships, directly between the federal government and ISOs, and indirectly through arrangements with provincial governments, who then partnered with ISOs.

In latter decades of the twentieth century, the federal government concluded official arrangements for immigration and settlement with all provinces (Vineberg, 2011). In all, there are five types of agreements. The stipulations within these agreements determine the extent of responsibility for both the type of immigrants arriving to the provinces and the settlement process. These agreements range from full provincial control of both (Quebec), to different aspects of shared control (Ontario, Manitoba and British Columbia) to full federal control of both (the rest of the provinces and territories). This involves transfers of payments from the federal government directly to ISOs to carry out their language and settlement programs, or indirectly through the provincial governments, who in-turn fund ISOs.

Regardless of the type of formal partnership agreements forged between the federal government and the various provinces and municipalities, the actual delivery of services to the immigrant is still carried out mostly by the nonprofit ISO sector with funding from government (federal, provincial, municipal) and also from private sources. As immigration increased and governments became more involved in the settlement of immigrants, the array of services for immigrants grew as well, and with it the numbers of organizations serving these immigrants. In many provinces, growth in numbers of immigrant serving organizations led to the creation of umbrella associations, whose purpose was to provide stronger representation of the settlement sector in dealings with various levels of government, or as the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI, nd) puts it "to act as a collective voice for the immigrant serving sector".

3. Conceptions of Partnership

The term partnership is understood in many different ways, both in the academic literature and in the everyday vernacular. Although its ubiquitous use seems to indicate that there

is consensus about what it means, there is no common understanding, either in the literature or among the interviewees of this study. The definition that researchers use often depends on the focus and aims of their study.

'Partnership' is just one of many terms in the literature used to describe the phenomenon of cooperative relationships between organizations. Other commonly used terms are: inter-organizational collaborations, strategic alliances, social alliances, joint ventures, coalitions and networks. Regardless of the name, the principle underlying all these terms is the same, namely, that *two or more organizations are working together towards a goal that will yield mutual and third-party benefits*. Much of the literature in inter-organizational relations has focused on defining the nature of collaborations. There appears to be general agreement that collaboration goes beyond sharing information; it involves mutual obligations with respect to the use of organizational resources or coordination of services (Snavely & Tracy, 2000; Fosler, 2002). Because collaborations differ with respect to the intensity and/or formality of the relationship, most researchers discuss inter-organizational collaboration in terms of a continuum, rather than a single concept (Austin, 2000; Coston, 1998; Foster et al., 2006; Gray, 1989; Murray, 1998; Phillips & Graham, 2000; Wood & Gray, 1991). Examining collaborations between non-profits and for-profits, Austin (2000) observes that they range from purely philanthropic (giving money) to transactional (contracts for service, event sponsorship) to integrative (shared vision resulting in collective action). Rondinelli and London (2003) have a similar continuum with different labelling: arm's length, interactive, intensive.

Despite the increase in inter-organizational partnerships, almost half of all efforts fail (Dyer et al., 2001) because the factors necessary for successful collaboration are difficult to achieve. These have been identified as: shared vision and values; clear goals; good personal relationships; frequent interaction; expectation of mutual benefit; shared power and risk; and mutual trust (Austin, 2000; Huxham, 1993; Phillips & Graham, 2000; Rapp & Whitfield, 1999; Wilson & Charleton, 1993).

The difficulties in achieving these synergies are exacerbated in cross-sectoral partnerships (Googins & Rochlin, 2000; Milne et al., 1996). The most common of cross-sectoral collaborations are government-non-profit partnerships, a form of public-private partnership. Historically, as described above in "Setting the Context", in Canada the relationships between governments and the nonprofit sector were viewed as partnerships in nation building (Torjman, 1997), wherein the strengths of each sector were leveraged to best serve citizens' various social needs (Salamon, 1995; Rice & Prince, 2000). Governments are better at raising money than providing services, while nonprofit organizations were best at delivering services (Cho & Gillespie, 2006; Saidel, 1991). These partnerships were governed mainly through grants, which allowed maximum autonomy for nonprofit organizations (Rice & Prince, 2000). It has been argued that since the wave of devolution in the 1990s, what was once a true partnership in Canada has instead become a purely contractual agreement, where funds are provided for services rendered with heavy requirements for accountability (e.g. McBride & Shields, 1997).

Some recent articles have questioned whether relationships governed by contractual arrangements can be construed as partnerships (Gazley & Brudney, 2007). According to some definitions (e.g. Peters, 1998), partnerships are based on relationships between equals, that is, principal to principal, whereas contractual arrangements are between principal and agent. We contend that how these cross-sectoral relationships are viewed in research depends on two

interlocking considerations: the purpose of the research and the ensuing definition of partnership. The research reported in this paper is based on a macro-systems perspective that defines the entire Canadian immigrant settlement and integration program as a complex system of multi-level partnerships of which the human service delivery by the ISO sector is a very important part. The ISO sector as a whole is a partner in delivering services to the immigrants. The interviews for this research focused on both the micro and macro perspectives, i.e. both the individual relationship between government and a particular ISO, and the overall relationship between the public sectors (federal and provincial governments) and the private, nonprofit sector. Our conclusions are informed by this dual perspective.

As pointed out above, there are several different conceptions of partnership, and the definitions range from loose and informal arrangements to shared vision and collective action. For instance, Brinkerhoff (2002) suggests that true partnerships occur when two conditions are met: 1) mutuality, wherein the partnering organizations each have strong commitment to the goals and objectives of the partnership from which they stand to benefit equally; and 2) strong organizational identity, wherein each partner maintains its identity by ongoing commitment to its mission, core values and constituencies, and continues to reflect its sector of origin. Brinkerhoff asserts that when organizational identity is high but mutuality is low, the partnership is merely a contracting relationship. Using these two criteria as conditions for true partnerships does not automatically rule out cross-sectoral relationships based on contractual arrangements as Peters (1998) claims, nor does it rule out asymmetrical relationships where one partner is less powerful than the other as many claim. Both of Brinkerhoff's conditions can be met in contractual and asymmetrical relationships.

In Canada, government and corporate sector partnerships with the non-profit sector have historically been characterized by inequality, with nonprofit organizations dependent on government or corporate partners for funding (Meinhard et al., 2003; Richmond and Shields, 2004). Although government-nonprofit partnerships with respect to individual organizations are still mostly funding relationships characterized by inequality (Meinhard et al., 2003; Evans, Richmond and Shields, 2005), new shared governance models between government and the nonprofit sector are currently being explored (Phillips, 2006, LaForest, 2005). Although these models differ, they are based on structural frameworks rather than just shared processes of interaction (Phillips, 2006). The strength of shared governance lies in the extent to which the state recognizes the autonomy of the voluntary sector without imposing its political will.

4. Methodology

This paper is based on a larger qualitative study investigating various aspects of the multilevel complex relationships involved in providing services to immigrants. Two main methods were used to gather information about the partnerships: a) semi-structured, key informant interviews with the various players involved in the partnerships, and b) two case studies of local initiatives which involved separate interviews and document analyses. In total, fifty-five individual key-informant interviews, and two focus group interviews with six and ten persons each, were conducted by our team of researchers. These included thirty interviews with ISO leaders from across Canada, ten interviews with regional federal officials from the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), fifteen interviews with provincial government officials, a focus group in Quebec, and a focus group with CIC officials at National Headquarters in Ottawa. Most of the

interviews were conducted over the telephone, although a fair number were done in person. Focus groups were done in person. The focus groups and interviews were digitally recorded and later transcribed professionally. As researchers from several universities were involved, ethics approval was obtained from each participating university. The findings presented in this article are derived from government and ISO interview data on perceptions of effective partnerships and partnership challenges. Each transcript was read and coded by separate members of the research team and a thematic analysis was conducted with consensus reached on the major themes.

5. Analysis of Government-ISO Partnerships

In the immigrant-serving sphere, the government has several programs: language learning, settlement and integration. According to the Canadian Government's web site, "The Settlement Program assists immigrants and refugees to overcome barriers specific to the newcomer experience (such as a lack of official language skills and limited knowledge of Canada) so that they can participate in social, cultural, civic and economic life in Canada. The program focuses on four areas: information and orientation; language training and skills development; labour market access; and welcoming communities. *Most services are designed and delivered by service provider organizations,* but certain services (such as some information provision), are delivered directly by CIC in Canada and overseas. (http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/grants-contributions-funding/) [emphasis ours]. ISOs provide a variety of other services, as well, that are funded from local and provincial governments and also non-governmental sources. Despite the contractual nature of the relationship, governments at all levels tend to view their relationship with ISOs as partnerships.

In this section we explore how government and ISO representatives describe their relationships with respect to six general themes: accountability and funding; asymmetry of the relationship; quality of the relationship; shared goals; effectiveness of the partnership; and satisfaction with the partnership. We acknowledge up front that these partnerships are based on contractual relations, and are asymmetrical, but using Brinkhoff's dual criteria of mutuality and independence, we claim that these relations still are partnerships because: a) despite differences in details, there is a shared vision with respect to settling new immigrants and helping create a diverse and multicultural Canada, under the recognition that neither sector can achieve these goals alone; and b) both partners continue to maintain their independence of operations.

5.1   Accountability and funding

Our analysis reveals that despite some nuanced differences, there is general agreement about what constitutes an "effective" partnership. Several themes were mentioned by both government and ISO informants: common goals, clear roles, good relationships, good communication and the need for flexibility. Tellingly, there were two unshared themes: government KIs stressed the importance of accountability- they insisted that governance and accountability were essential to protect the integrity of the partnership agreements and maintain consistency and standardization over jurisdictions,

> *...[services] have to be comparable across not only maybe agency to agency, but jurisdiction to jurisdiction in order to make some...broad sort of national comparison*   [Prov #7]

ISO KIs [e.g. ISO #14] on the other hand, stressed the importance of having an appropriate amount of time, enough personnel and financial resources to ensure the long term viability of the partnership, moving it beyond the talking stage to a point where action is being taken

In the eyes of the ISOs, the funding relationship, which is renewed on a yearly basis and is program specific rather than covering general operations, is the most problematic aspect of the partnership. From the government's perspective, it is seen as a means of leveraging accountability. However, it often places ISOs in a precarious situation, wondering whether funding will be renewed and if so, whether it will be on time

> *The government takes a lot of time with providing funding to agencies, not realizing that a not-for-profit doesn't actually have a bank account to carry wages for a month while they're deciding when they're going to sign their agreements or if they're going to sign their agreements* [ISO # 19].

Several ISO informants felt that multi-year core funding, in addition to project-specific funding, would improve the functioning of the partnership model. As described by one ISO representative,

> *The reality is that our immigrant integration strategies are so completely built on the backs of not-for-profits. That has been the case in the past. It will continue to be the case into the future. If we know this will be the case in the future, why don't agencies have multi-year funding and why don't agencies have the support they need to be strong to do the work.....as well as they can do it. Because quite frankly the government can't do the work that these agencies are doing. They're not on the ground. They're not able to* [ISO#19]

ISO informants felt that there is currently a "disconnect" in the funding practices of government and their expressed desire to offer more holistic support services.

> *Immigrant settlement in [the province] is growing rapidly and hasn't stopped and I don't think the funding is keeping up. .....the funders are not acknowledging the reality of what's going on on the ground level* [ISO#16]

> *The expected outcomes, and the support that are in place don't match* [ISO#17]

5.2   Asymmetry of the Partnership

These funding issues serve to highlight the asymmetry of the relationship between government and ISOs. Although both ISO and government KIs agree that good relationships are important to a successful partnership, one government KI questioned whether it was possible to have a truly equitable relationship with government.

> *It's very hard to have any semblance of real partnership, when one side holds all the strings* [Prov # 2].

Another claimed that partnerships are not

> *...we got the money and we damn well will tell you how to do it* [Prov #1]

Nevertheless, there was a general consensus among government KIs regarding the importance of an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust.

So it's a matter of ... respecting all partners involved, so that it is an open relationship that doesn't necessarily have, you know, a predominant one [partner]. [Fed #4]

Respect is created by actually being in contact with one another...giving feedback on the proposals even on the contracting stage, and a full understanding of what each other is trying to accomplish and in a respectful partnership way. [Prov #1]

Having an arrangement that is not hierarchical but that's more reciprocal....allows people from different sectors to be able to shape, what they would like to see [Prov #4]

Indeed, there was agreement by both federal [CIC focus group] and provincial government KIs [PROV #s 4 & 9] that partnering with ISOs enabled broader and more comprehensive services to be offered immigrants, not insignificantly because of their local proximity. Thus there was an acknowledgement of the important role of the ISOs, despite the hierarchical and unequal nature of the partnership.

Despite this conviction by government KIs, very few ISO representatives believed in the possibility of a true partnership with government players. They spoke more of a "limited" partnership in the sense that the money they receive helps them extend services to immigrants, but they questioned whether these relationships were partnerships.

Again, I don't know the extent to which there is a partnership between the government and uh immigrant settlement sort of agencies..... [ISO#19]

.....I am not sure that there is an actual effective partnership model..... [ISO#10]

Kindly, I think, [the] Canadian government['s] relationship with the immigrant servicing agencies is very much a one-way street [ISO#12]

We're not really sure there is a partnership [ISO#17]

I just wanted to point out that it is and it isn't a partnership....I wouldn't call the business relationship as a partnership. I think it's misleading to use that term for the business relationship with government [ISO#18]

5.3 Quality of Relationships

ISO informants also took issue with the dictatorial nature of their relationship with federal partners. As one respondent commented,

One of the things is Ottawa....there seems to be an attitude...negative and arrogant towards the ISO's.....And you know what, I think that's got to stop. They've got to recognize that there are other people who are reasonably smart and know something about settlement and once in a while listen to them. [ISO#11].

Several ISO KIs felt that they were being micro-managed, pointing out that the level of reporting required by government necessitated agencies to spend more time on administrative tasks.

[We]invest two times more into administration to be able to respond to the government questions, requirements, reporting, micromanaging and what not. [ISO #20]

There were other complaints about the relationship between government and ISOs. The ISO's main source of contact and engagement with the federal government is typically with an intermediary who is not perceived to hold any decision making power. As one ISO informant described,

The staff at both places [federal and provincial offices] are really, really good..... The problem is that they don't have power...to make changes [ISO#10]

Some ISO representatives expressed concern that government representatives, while well-trained and well-intentioned individuals, are not trained in social service delivery. As described by one ISO informant,

They still are not trained in what we do - they're trained to manage contracts, they're not trained to evaluate social service staffing models. But their job requires them to evaluate social service staffing models.....and frankly we often feel like we're training new staff because we've been in the sector a long time and they're just coming in and starting to learn it all over [ISO#18]

To add to this, the high frequency of staff turnover in the Federal Government, where agents are often reassigned to different ministries or different provinces, was a source of frustration for several of the ISOs [ISO #s 4, 11, 16, 18] and a cause of inefficiencies as corporate memory was wiped out with each change and relationships had to be built anew.

...you get these people [government agents] rotating one or two years, and they have no corporate memory, they don't seem to listen, and they don't seem to take advice or they certainly give Minister after Minister misinformation or bad advice. [ISO #11]

There was some concern on the part of the ISOs that one of the weaknesses of the partnerships was the slow responsiveness of government to emerging issues and trends, which of course affects the impact of their service. As one ISO KI noted,

Um, the government tends to be quite slow in its response to agency needs, to changing immigration needs, to changing sort of settlement patterns. And so everything is always lagging behind [ISO #19]

Government KIs felt that they needed flexibility to change partnerships, when necessary.

5.4   Shared Goals

All this notwithstanding, there was recognition by both government and ISO KIs that for the most part, they shared common goals, agreeing that newcomer integration is the main purpose of the partnership.

...the mandate of settlement services that CIC funds is closely aligned with what [we are] already doing. So in that regard, it fits very nicely into the framework of the [agency]'s vision. [ISO#8]

Partnership does not have to be 50-50, it can be 10 and 90 percent, however, still the goal has to be the same[ISO #12]

...it's a matter of all the partners involved, agreeing on what the purpose of that partnership is and how to get or how to achieve that purpose or that goal [Fed #4]

What is critical is agreement around what it is that we are wanting to achieve, what are the outcomes that we want to see, right? [Prov #9]

Some differences were expressed with respect to the how the goal should be accomplished and what the ultimate outcomes were. For example, ISO representatives reported a lack of common understanding as to the meaning of integration. They typically considered settlement and integration to be an ongoing long term process requiring long-term resources complemented by continuing programs [ISO # 1], while the government was more interested in funding short-term programs. On the other hand, government views integration as two-way street, where not only the immigrants have to move towards the host culture, but the host culture also moves towards the immigrants. Government complained that not all ISOs have adopted this concept of integration [CIC focus group].

5.5   Effectiveness of the Partnership

Concerning this subject there was general agreement that it is very difficult to determine how effective the partnership is in providing the immigrants the services they need. This is due to the lack of evaluative data, and even a lack of consensus with respect to what should be measured [FEDS #5 & #6]. Although ISO KIs agreed that evaluation measures were needed, they were unsure of how these could be measured, especially in terms of long-term impact. They also feared the additional burden this may be placing on them.

If we're going to move towards an outcomes based [evaluation]and there is going to be more reporting and more measurement of outcomes, who is going to produce those reports? [ISO #1]

5.6   Satisfaction

Lest the above paints a picture of dysfunctional partnerships, many ISOs and government KIs expressed overall satisfaction with their relationships, especially those with the provincial government.

We have rolled out some amazing programs. With the provinces, it's a wonderful relationship. It's very enriching and rewarding. [ISO #9]

...consistency in reporting, consistency in funding and a multiyear agreement....I think the implications of this new model in the settlement sector in [the province]

will be very, very substantial, ...It allows you to retain quality staff, which allows you to program and plan ahead, ...That has very, very.....positive implications for the quality of settlement services in particular. That ability to dream ahead and then actually realize yourself years into the future ..... [ISO#19]

Relations with the Federal government were viewed differently.

With the federal government, there are some unknowns. We don't really know them very well. We'd like to know them better [ISO#9]

The claim by one ISO informant that "*Ottawa is far away*" perhaps reflects a sense of distance that is more than geographic. However this is not necessarily the case with all federal-ISO partnerships. One federal official acknowledged that

Within our region we're very fortunate we have good relationships with our partners but it's because we talk because...the're formal structures, but we also have developed informal structures to communicate, to touch base so we know whether we're on the same track. [Fed #4]

6 Discussion

This article focuses on the individual bilateral relationships between government (either provincial or federal) and immigrant serving organizations. The myriad of these bilateral relationships form part of a comprehensive system partnerships to help new immigrants settle and integrate into Canadian society. The most pronounced finding stemming from our interviews is the doubt expressed by so many of the ISO KIs, and even by some government KIs, as to whether these relationships, displaying such an asymmetrical distribution of power, can be called partnerships at all. This reflects the views expressed in the literature that true partnerships should be symmetrical, thus ruling out contractual relationships because of the power discrepancies (Peters, 1998).

In conducting our interviews, we deliberately did not provide a definition of partnership. We conducted the interviews following the accepted Canadian narrative that social services are delivered by nonprofit and charitable agencies in partnership with government (Hall et al., 2005). Therefore, calling into question whether these were partnerships at all indicates a presupposition shared by many that partnerships should be symmetrical. In reality, there are many asymmetrical partnerships (Thibeaut & Kelley, 1959), and despite inequalities, they continue as long as there are no alternatives for the parties involved. In the case of the Canadian social welfare system, there is a dyadic dependency relationship between government and the nonprofit sector. Governments have long realized how inefficient they are in providing social services directly, so instead, they partner with nonprofit service providers to offer needed social services to Canadians. This partnership with the nonprofit sector expands their reach into local communities and neighbourhoods, which their bureaucratic apparatus cannot do (Rice & Prince, 2000). Their nonprofit partners on the other hand, welcome the financial aid that they receive to carry out their mission.

On a sector-to-sector basis, this can actually be seen as a symmetrical relationship; save a revolutionary upheaval, neither sector can provide these services without the crucial inputs of the other. However, the nonprofit voluntary sector has historically lacked a common voice and unified representation (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2009). This is true as well of the ISO sector, even though there are some umbrella organizations representing individual ISOs. Therefore the government contracts with individual agencies, giving it immeasurable control. If unhappy with a certain nonprofit partner, it has many alternatives to choose from. Nonprofit organizations are not totally powerless. At present, the negotiating power of ISOs is limited because of government's vast supply of alternatives, and their own meager options. Individual ISOs, unable to negotiate more equal partnerships can opt out of the funding relationship by diversifying their resources, thus reducing their dependence on government. Some of our key informants have done just that, in order to continue to fulfill their missions (Meinhard et al. 2012).

Thus, despite the questioning by many of our informants as to whether the relationship between government and ISOs is a real partnership, our answer would be "yes', since according to our most general definition, both sides and third parties (the immigrants) benefit from the relationship. It would be difficult for the government to provide such universal and comprehensive services alone. And most individual ISOs would be hard-pressed to get enough funding for the services they offer, and their scope would be narrower and more specific. This indeed is the situation in the United States, where some ethnic immigrants are better served than others by their representative NPOs, depending on the general wealth of the ethnic communities that they represent (De Leon, Maronick, De Vita & Boris, 2009). The question, therefore, is not whether these arrangements are partnerships, as so many of our respondents questioned, but rather why they are unequal and how they can become more balanced. More importantly, are these partnerships effective in integrating new immigrants?

6.1   Why are the Current Bilateral Partnerships Unequal?

While the funding relationship inherently dictates some power imbalance, there is more to the lack of symmetry in government-ISO partnerships than the "control of the purse-strings", as one of our respondents stated. Mary Foster and her colleagues found ample examples of equal partnerships in funding relationships (Foster, Meinhard, Berger, & Krpn 2009). Relationships are enhanced and more egalitarian when both goals and the means to attain them are shared, regardless of who holds the purse strings (Najam, 2000). Our interviews reveal that although the general goal - aiding new immigrants to settle and integrate - may be shared, the overlap is not complete. The government wants to do what is best for Canada, not only from the perspective of the immigrant, but also from an economic and accountability perspective. It is most concerned about national/regional economic development. ISOs, actually working with the immigrants, are more focused on personal development. They see integration as an ongoing long-term holistic process that leads to social wellbeing.

Nor is there a shared understanding of the means to attain the goals. Governments relate settlement integration to fiscal success and their programs and policies reflect that; the three-year cut-off for eligibility for immigrant services and the focus on economic integration over cultural and social integration. The settlement sector sees integration as an ongoing long-term holistic process that should involve many community players. Their divergence hinges on short-term output versus long-term outcome.

6.2   How to Achieve a More Balanced Partnership

Is it possible to bring the goals into greater alignment? Existing research and practice reveals a variety of enabling conditions, design features, process dynamics, and facilitative leadership that allows productive multi-level collaborative governance (Ansell and Gash, 2007). Specifically there are several things that can improve the partnership, as our interviews revealed.

- Multi-year agreements with consistent funding and reporting mechanisms. This relieves the pressure of annual contract renewal angst and opens the way for partners to more closely align their goals and explore longer-term programs.
- A revisioning of accountability. Government KIs believe that governance and accountability are essential to protect the integrity of the partnership agreements. Unfortunately some ISO KIs suspect that the short-term funding practices of government are actually a means of control to hold the organizations accountable, and suggest that accountability can be achieved even with long term funding. ISOs clearly understand the government's need for reporting, however they object to the demanding requirements that divert their meager resources from the task at hand.
- Leveraging areas of agreement as a basis of improving other aspects of the relationship. Government understands that their current reporting requirements contribute little towards understanding or evaluating the partnerships agreements. Both partners would like to see some kind of standardization in terms of partnership agreements, funding, program and service delivery, and reporting across all regions of the country. They also agree that it is essential to measure outcomes rather than outputs. The dialogue on national standards has been a step towards a common understanding of effective partnership in integrating immigrants.

6.3   Effectiveness of the Current Partnership Arrangement in Integrating New Immigrants

The dangers of the misalignment of goals between the partners (short term labour-market integration vs long-term social and cultural integration) are currently being manifested in Europe in the behaviour of disaffected second-generation youth. In 2005 Ted Richmond and John Shields claimed that "the 'Canadian Model' of immigrant settlement service delivery…. is a system in crisis" (Richmond & Shields, 2005:513). They argued that the problem lies not in the immediate, first-stage settlement provisions, but rather in the lack of longer-term inclusionary integration strategies. The implementation of the needed longer-term strategies is hampered not only by a lack of forward-looking policy, but also by the funding practices of the government (Richmond & Shields, 2005). This is clearly echoed in our interviews with the ISO KIs when they complain about the short-term perspective taken by government, and the program specific funding formulas that prevent them from providing broader and more inclusionary services. The paucity of changes since that article was written suggests a lack of fundamental communication between the partners.

To end on a positive note, although in this paper we focused on bilateral cross-sector relations, our broader study revealed that, perhaps in response to this conundrum, self-organizing, emergent multi-sector partnerships are evolving at the community level to welcome new immigrants and address long-term goals of creating an atmosphere of inclusiveness.

7 Summary and Conclusions

There is consensus between government and ISO KIs regarding the difficulty to assess community needs, program success and share best practices. Both government officials and ISO representatives agree that common goals, clearly defined roles, and open and regular communication are essential elements. Despite this, there is a misalignment in terms of goals and the way in which to achieve them. To the settlement sector, equal power, proper and consistent funding, and trust are other important elements of an effective partnership which, they think, should also be dynamic, flexible and responsive to emerging issues and trends. Yet to the federal government, governance and accountability remain essential means to protect the integrity of partnership agreements. The federal government admits they currently do not have the mechanism to measure effective partnership. In their view, current measures like reporting on the number of partners, meetings, clients and so on do not contribute towards understanding or evaluating the integrity of any partnership agreement. While ISO's believe in the need for consistent reporting, they find it more important to measure program outcomes. To them, an assessment of the collective outcomes of the settlement sector will offer insight into whether the partnership model is working. Multi-year funding agreements, re-visioning of accountability measures and leveraging areas of current agreement were suggested as steps that might balance the partnership.

This study has important implications for theory as well. As demonstrated in our literature review, inter-organizational relations can take many forms and partnership is defined in many ways. Perhaps the most effective way of looking at these collaborations is along a continuum as suggested by Austin (2000) and Rondinelli and London (2003).The idea voiced by Peters (1998) that true partnerships can only occur in a principal to principal relationship where power is equally distributed may be an elusive goal for government-nonprofit relationships, where the government has control of the financial resources. Our respondents talked about "limited partnerships", ones which recognize the asymmetry in contractual relations, but ones which still fulfill the key aspect of collaborations, which is the ability to attain common goals *vis a vis* a third party more effectively and efficiently together than each partner doing it alone. Additionally, cross-sectoral partnerships can also be viewed from a macro sector to sector basis, encompassing the myriad of individual relationships. From this perspective, in the case of the Canadian model of integrating immigrants the sector to sector partnership fulfills the conditions of true partnerships (high mutuality and high independence) as defined by Brinkhoff (2002).

References

Ansell, C. & Gash, A. (2007). Collaborative governance in theory and practice. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, 18*, 543-571.

Austin, J.E. (2000). Strategic collaboration between nonprofits and businesses. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly 29*(1), 69-97

Barr, C., Brownlee, B., Lasby, D. & Gumulka, G. (2005). *Understanding the Capacity of Social Service Organizations.* Toronto: Imagine Canada. Available at:
http://www.imaginecanada.ca/sites/default/files/www/en/library/misc/understanding_capacity_social_services_orgs.pdf

Brinkerhoff, J.M. (2002). Government-nonprofit partnership: A defining framework. *Public Administration and Development, 22,* 19-30.

Browne, P.L. (1996). *Love in a cold world? The voluntary sector in the age of cuts*. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

Cho S, & Gillespie D.F. (2006). A Conceptual Model Exploring the Dynamics of Government-Nonprofit Service Delivery. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 35*(3): 493-509

Coston, J.M. (1998). A model and typology of government-NGO relationships. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly 27*(3), 358-382

De Leon, E., Maronick, M., De Vita, C. & Boris, E.T. (2009). Community-based Organizations and Immigrant Integration in the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Area. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute.
DOI: 10.1177/0899764006295997

Dyer, J., Kale, P., & Singh, H. (2001). How to make strategic alliances work. Sloan Management Review, 42(4), 37– 43.

Milne, G.R., Iyer, E.S. & Gooding-Williams, S. (1996). Environmental organization alliance relationships within and across nonprofit, business, and government sectors. Journal of Public Policy & Marketing 15, 203-215Employment and Social Development Canada, 2009

Evans, B. & Shields, J. (1998). *Reinventing the State: Public Administration 'Reform' in Canada.* Halifax: Fernwood Publishing.

Fosler, R. S. (2002). *Working better together: How government, business, and nonprofit organizations can achieve public purposes through cross-sector collaboration, alliances, and partnerships.* Washington, DC: Independent Sector.

Foster, M., Meinhard, A. Berger, I. & Krpn, P. (2009). Corporate Philanthropy in the Canadian Context: From Damage Control to Improving Society. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 38,* 441-466.

Gazley, B. & Brudney, J.L. (2007). The purpose (and perils) of government-nonprofit partnership. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 36*(3), 389-415.

Gray, B. (1989). *Collaborating: Finding common ground for multiparty problems*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Hall, M.H., Barr, C.W., Eswaramoorthy, M., Sokolowski, S.W. & Salamon, L.M. (2005). *The Canadian Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector in Comparative Perspective.* Toronto: Imagine Canada. Available at: http://sectorsource.ca/sites/default/files/resources/files/jhu_report_en.pdf

Huxham, C. (1993). Collaborative capability: An intra-organizational perspective on collaborative advantage. *Public Money & Management 13* (3), 21-29.

McBride, S. & Shields, J. (1997). *Dismantling a nation: The transition to corporate rule in Canada.* Halifax: Fernwood Publishing.

Meinhard, A. & Foster M. (2003). Differences in the response of women's voluntary organizations to shifts in Canadian public policy. Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 32 (3), 366-396.

Evans, B., Richmond, T. & Shields, J. (2005) Structuring neoliberal governance: The nonprofit sector, emerging new modes of control and the marketisation of service delivery. *Policy and Society 24* (1), 73-97

Meinhard, A. & Foster, M. (2002). Responses of Canada's voluntary organizations to shifts in social policy: A provincial perspective. ISTR Conference Working Papers, Vol. III. 2002. Available at: http://www.jhu.edu/~istr/conferences/capetown/volume/meinhard.pdf

Meinhard, A. et al. (2012). Immigrant Integration and Inclusion: Investigating the Canadian Partnership Model from a Complex-Systems Perspective. Report presented to Citizenship and Immigration Canada, February 29, 2012.

Murray, V.V. (1998). Interorganizational collaborations in the nonprofit sector. In J.M. Shafirtz (Ed.), *International Encyclopaedia of Public Policy and Administration 2,*   1192-1196).

OCASI (nd). http://www.ocasi.org/index.php

Peters, B. G. (1998). "With a little help from our friends": Public-private partnerships as institutions and instruments. In J. Pierre (Ed.), *Partnerships in urban governance* (pp. 11-33). New York: St. Martin's.

Phillips, S.D. (2006). The intersection of governance and citizenship in Canada. *IRPP Policy Matters, 7*(4), 1-31.

 Laforest, R. (2005). *The Politics of Governance in Canada: Building New Relations Between the State and Voluntary Sector Organizations Across Scales*. Ph.D. dissertation, Carleton University, Ottawa

Phillips, S.D. & Graham, K.A. (2000). Hand-in-hand: When accountability meets collaboration in the voluntary sector. In K. Banting (Ed.). *The nonprofit sector in Canada: Roles and relationships* (pp. 149-190). Kingston & Montreal: School of Policy Studies, Queen's University.

Rapp, C.A. & Whitfield, C.M. (1999). Neighborhood-based services: Organizational change and integration prospects. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership 9*(3), 261-276

Reckert, J. 1993. *Public Funds, Private Provision: The Role of the Voluntary Sector.* Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

Rice, J. J. & Prince, M. J. 2000. *Changing Politics of Canadian Social Policy.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Richmond, T. & Shields, J. (2005). NGO-government relations and immigrant services: Contradictions and challenges. *Journal of International Migration and Integration, 6*(3-4), 513-526.

Saidel, J. R. (1991). Resource interdependence: The relationship between state agencies and nonprofit organizations. *Public Administration Review, 51*(6), 543-553.

Saidel, J. R. (1994). The dynamics of interdependence between public agencies and nonprofit organizations. *Research in Public Administration, 3,* 210-229.

Salamon, L.M. 1995. *Partners in Public Service: Government-Nonprofit Relations in the Modern Welfare State.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Snavely, A. & Tracy, M.B. (2000). Collaboration among rural nonprofit organizations. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership, 11*(2), 154-165.

Cho, S. & Gillespie, D.F. (2006). A conceptual model exploring the dynamics of government–nonprofit service delivery. Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 35(3), 493-509.

Thibeaut, J.W. & Kelley, H.H. (1959). *The Social Psychology of Groups.* New York: Wiley.

Torjman, S. (1997). *Civil Society: Reclaiming Our Humanity*. Ottawa: Caledon Institute of Social Policy

Vineberg, R. (2011). *Integration and Inclusion of Newcomers and Minorities across Canada*. McGill-Queens University Press.

Wilson, A. & Charleton, K. (1996). *Making Partnerships Work*. London: J. Roundtree Foundation.

Wood, D.J. & Gray, B. (1991). Toward a comprehensive theory of collaboration. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science 27*(2), 139-162.