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Partnership Research: A Mode of Production and Knowledge Transfer

Introduction

- Level of analysis
 - mutual recognition of needs, a definition of the shared problems, and a common search for solutions by the university and community sector
 - Inspired by the codification of contemporary research models such as “Mode 2” or “Triple Helix,”
 - research is gradually adopting a vision that is “more pertinent, closer to the users, more interdisciplinary, more collective”

From the classic model to action research

- basic research and applied research
- partnership research : new paradigm that promotes a transdisciplinary, heterogeneous, and ephemeral mode of knowledge production (Gibbons et al., 1994).
- Partnership research is a creative, methodological approach based on a “dynamic matching of expertise between academia and social settings”
- the barriers between the researchers and actors of the setting are, if not entirely eliminated, less pronounced

The revival of partnership-based action research

- “Science shops” are at the interface of science and society and aim to, with ambitious and direct research approaches, channel the focus of research organizations to the needs of the collectivity (Europe).
- Activities between society and university experienced a new vigour (USA)
- In Quebec, partnership research is strongly supported by the state, university as the most crucial resource of the new economy as well as one of the key actors of the innovation networks.

Action research in local development--the case of Quebec

- *The development of the collaboration between academia and the social economy in Quebec*
 - 1960 to 1980 and is distinguished by the thematic and sectorial works realized by committed activist researchers from various social movements, important organizations and associations were created by researchers and practitioners to stimulate the development of the collective economy.
 - 1980 to 2005, is characterized by government funding programs for new research structures at the federal and provincial levels. Research teams (1980s) and larger centres (1990s) were supported by the funding agencies.

New modes of financing

- public funds were subject to major reforms over the last decade
- the government adopted a key strategy which aims to encourage the economic and institutional actors to develop a national system of innovation

development

- Technopôle Angus in Montreal led to direct research collaborations between community actors (CDEC) and researchers of the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) with the goal to encourage industrial diversification for the borough and to create local jobs.
- The CDEC and UQAM set up a research team of researchers and community representatives that was to examine which local development models would be the most appropriate for the borough and the site targeted for Technopôle Angus—a brownfield of a former large locomotive manufacturing company.

A Final Report

- The report, based on the “industrial district” model, allowed to analyze the initiatives for converting or reconverting the local industrial zones and provided the actors with a new framework and proposed new avenues of action that could be applied to other experiences. Most importantly, however, the actors and researchers participated in all research stages and research results were applied immediately. Subsequently, the final report consisted of a summary of a body of knowledge that was, for the most part, already in application.

Conclusion

- Partnership researches offer pragmatic advantages
 - a) producing knowledge that is socially relevant
 - b) guaranteeing the immediate effect of the production/transfer process.
- sufficient level of trust between the academic and non-academic members of the research team
- flexible and open attitude to collective learning by the team members
- prevent the instrumentalization of research, researchers must strive to maintain their academic freedom, independence of thought, and freedom of action necessary for critical reflection on the research topic