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Update No. 9 – January 5, 2001

## **Researching Social Cohesion in Canada**

### **Résumés**

#### **The intersectionality of race and gender in social cohesion: An examination of factors influencing identity formation, experiences of violence, and integration of marginalized girls in Canadian society**

Team leader: Margaret A. Jackson, Simon Fraser University  
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This project will examine issues of social cohesion in the context of the experiences of girls and young women from recent and established immigrant and refugee communities. In particular, it will focus on the identify-formation and integration of these young women in their own cultural communities and in the larger society. A further aim is to explore the impact of government policies and legislation on the lives of these girls with respect to their human rights. Central to the research is a focus on how race and gender intersect in terms of marginalization and vulnerability to violence.

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#### **Social cohesion and life conditions in the Arctic**

Team leader: Gérard Duhaime, Université Laval  
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This research will identify the factors that contribute to the creation of social ties in contemporary Inuit society. It will also pinpoint a broad range of cultural, social and economic factors that explain the resilience of Inuit peoples and the social institutions that have enabled them to resist the globalizing forces driving economic, social and cultural homogenization. This survey of 14,000 Canadian Inuit will provide a broader and more detailed understanding of Arctic living conditions in order to improve the strategies used by policy makers in resource allocation.

## **Comparative international studies of social cohesion and globalization in Asia**

Team leader: Pitman B. Potter, University of British Columbia  
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This project will examine the essential role played by local conditions in the dynamics of social cohesion under globalization, resulting in social policy recommendations aimed at protecting social cohesion under such conditions. The research team will take a comparative international approach, using data from six countries, and will strengthen understanding of the policy requirements for building and protecting social cohesion in Asia and Canada.

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## **Left out: perspectives on social exclusion and social isolation in low-income populations**

Team leader: Miriam J. Stewart, Centre for Health Promotion Studies, University of Alberta  
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This study will increase understanding of social isolation and exclusion among the poor as perceived by the poor, the non-poor, and policy makers. The study will be conducted in Edmonton and Toronto, cities with high rates of poverty and homelessness. It will ask people living in poverty about their experiences and beliefs regarding isolation/belonging and inclusion/exclusion. Middle income people will also be interviewed about their beliefs and experiences regarding those living in poverty. Policy makers and consumer advocacy groups will be asked to recommend changes in programs and policies.

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## **Canadian social cohesion in international and cross-time perspective: evidence from the world values surveys**

Team leader: Neil H. Nevitte, University of Toronto  
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This project will analyze the World Values Surveys to determine stability and change in levels of social cohesion in Canada between 1981 and 2000. The researchers will attempt to answer questions such as: Have Canadians become more or less cohesive with respect to their associations, confidence in institutions and civil permissiveness, interpersonal trust, communal identifications, tolerance, family cohesion, and economic fairness? How do levels of social cohesion in Canada vary across gender, income, education, immigrants versus non-immigrants, language, age, race, ethnicity, marital status and employment status? What are the relationships among national pride, declining levels of insularity, and orientations towards continentalism?

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## **Rural adaption and social cohesion for sustainable development of the Prairies**

Team leader: David A. Gauthier, The University of Regina  
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In the rural areas of the Saskatchewan prairies, social cohesion has been dramatically impacted by economic instability, financial hardships, radical changes in family agriculture, high family

stress, rural out-migration, changes to rural infrastructure, and significant environmental effects on prairie ecosystems. This study will: increase understanding of social cohesion at regional and farm community levels; develop policy recommendations on community leadership, education and training, the role of women, the role of civil society community organizations, and environmental adaptation; and identify indicators of social cohesion that can be monitored to assess trends and impacts of activities.

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### **Transnationalism, citizenship and social cohesion: recent immigrants from Hong Kong to Canada**

Team leader: Audrey L. Kobayashi, Queen's University, Kingston  
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This research program is based on the premise that recent migration processes are prompting a crucial transformation of the concept of citizenship for both immigrants and the receiving society, and significantly affecting social cohesion locally, nationally and internationally. While ongoing ties to the source country are a common occurrence, globalization is intensifying a range of transnational activities, from economic and political connections to the restructuring of families. The research team will undertake two community-based studies of the largest group of recent arrivals to Canada, immigrants from Hong Kong to Toronto and Vancouver. Researchers will also explore how transnationalism is affected by forms of oppression, particularly race and gender, that counter social cohesion.

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### **Social cohesion in rural Canada**

Team leader: William C. Reimer, Concordia University

This project examines changes in social cohesion among five aspects of rural life: its economy, formal and informal services, social and political participation, communication infrastructure, and the capacity of communities to deal with social and economic stresses. The research will be conducted using national census and survey information, along with fieldwork in 24 rural sites, to identify changes in social cohesion over the last 30 years and to develop strategic options for rural Canada.

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### **The 'community resiliency project' in British Columbia: identifying the relationship between social capital and economic change**

Team leader: D. Ralph Matthews, University of British Columbia  
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Against the backdrop of economic crisis in British Columbia's coastal communities resulting from the depletion of traditional resources and reduced markets, this research project will identify the factors that influence community social and economic development. It will also examine the relationship between the social cohesion of resource-based, ethnically diverse communities and their ability to deal with negative economic changes. A particular focus will be

the extent to which social capital (those factors in a society that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit) in these communities may be able to buffer them from negative economic changes, as well as stimulate new economic growth.

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### **Exploring social cohesion in a globalizing era: strengthening Canada's environmental community through international reform**

Team leader: John J. Kirton, University of Toronto

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This research will identify feasible, effective ways for Canadians to participate more cohesively and directly in the international trade systems that affect our natural environment, food, health and safety. It will analyze the social and environmental impacts of existing trade liberalization on Canadians, and explore new strategies of regulation and risk assessment, environmental information, voluntary standards-setting, and participation in civil society. This will allow Canadians to participate in the World Trade Organization and North American Free Trade Agreement in a more unified and socially sustainable way.

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### **What's New?**

There are no events to report for this update, as people focus on holiday activities related to family cohesion. Happy New Year to All!