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Researching Social Cohesion in Canada – Part II

Résumés

Social capital, social cohesion and population outcomes in Canada's First Nations communities.

Team leader: Paul C. Whitehead, University of Western Ontario. paulcw@julian.uwo.ca

This project is designed to increase our understanding of how problems of cohesiveness in First Nations communities can lead to differences in life expectancy, rates of infant mortality, levels of illness and other problems. Through a major linked database, the team will test new social understandings of the relationship between the factors that affect First Nations communities, such as variations in physical, human, and social capital (factors that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit in a community), and social cohesion. This research will focus on issues such as the relationship between community social cohesiveness and mortality, breast and cervical cancers, migration off reserves, suicide, alcoholism and interpersonal violence.

La région: creuset de cohésion sociale à l'ère de la mondialisation.

Team leader: Paul Y. Villeneuve, Université Laval. Paul.Villeneuve@crad.ulaval.ca

Globalization tends to polarize society and intensify disparities at the regional level. In this context, the researchers will seek to determine to what extent new information technologies can help forge new social links and counteract growing disparities. This research project will be carried out in the Québec City area and will comprise the following stages: examine the growth in social disparities over the last 25 years in terms of employment, income, level of education and housing; determine what percentage of the growth is due to globalization; and create social development and community empowerment tools based on the new information technologies and make them available on the Web.

Workers and social cohesion in a global era.

Team leader: Robert J. O'Brien, McMaster University. obrienr@mcmaster.ca

This research project is designed to discover how workers are coping with increasing competition (often resulting in greater work intensity, longer hours of work, lower compensation, a reduced social wage and increasing casualization of work) and its effects on social cohesion. The researchers will investigate workers' perceptions of their problems, the actions they have taken to address them, and the formal and informal institutions they use in dealing with them. The role of regulatory agencies that monitor and regulate competition will also be studied.

Victimization of Aboriginal People.

Team Leader: Raymond Corrado, Simon Fraser University. corrado@sfu.ca

This research program explores the consequences of the victimization of Aboriginals on- and off-reserves, and its impact on social cohesion. Victimization factors may include family violence, sexual abuse, high suicide rates, racism, discrimination, attraction to alcohol and drugs, high levels of unemployment, general crime victimization, and the pull of youth into crime cultures. The researchers will estimate the actual amount of Aboriginal victimization for people at different income levels in targeted cities and on reserves, and estimate the social costs of such victimization.

Citizens and constitutional rights in the information society.

Team Leader: David Taras, University of Calgary. dtaras@ucalgary.ca

This study will examine the impact of media reporting of key Supreme Court of Canada decisions since the 1990s on social cohesion in Canada. Media coverage (in both official languages) of judgments on Quebec secession, language legislation, Aboriginal rights, the nature of the family, and freedom of expression will be examined in detail. By studying how the media help to shape and define public perceptions of Supreme Court decisions, the project will increase understanding of how an allegiance to shared values and a shared understanding of the rights we have as citizens are transmitted.

Family transformation and social cohesion.

Team Leader: Roderic P. Beaujot, University of Western Ontario. rbeaujot@julian.uwo.ca

This study looks at the impact of family transformation on social cohesion. The team will investigate six areas: relationships between men and women; relationships between parents and children, with an emphasis on non-custodial and informal or step-parents; transmission of family behaviour and support between generations; family time and the sharing of household tasks; values associated with family and alternate family models; and the development of indicators of family changes related to social cohesion.

Fostering Social Cohesion: A Comparison of Policy Strategies.

Team Leader: Jane Jenson, Université de Montréal Jane.Jenson@umontreal.ca

This research project is based on the premise that social cohesion comes to the forefront of public debate at times of rapid social change, such as the current era of globalization. The research team theorizes that social cohesion in Canada after 1945 was promoted through a citizenship regime based on the figure of the 'citizen-worker.' The researchers speculate that this figure is now under stress because of labour market restructuring, which increases non-standard employment, income polarization and poverty. The researchers will also test the additional theory that the Canadian policy response has been to raise two new figures, 'the child' and 'the poor person,' as rallying points for social cohesion.

What's New?

The OECD is about to release a new study entitled "The Well-being of Nations: The Role of Human and Social Capital." The book, expected to be released this month, reviews the literature on human and social capital, draws out policy implications and makes proposals for further work. The Executive Summary of the forthcoming report is available at: <http://www.oecd.org/els/pdfs/EDSMINDOCA003.pdf>