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## **Still Pushing the Boundaries**

### **Résumés**

**Deborah Mitchell. 2000. "Globalization and Social Cohesion: Risks and Responsibilities." Conference on Social Security. Helsinki, 25-27 September 2000.**

<http://www.issa.int/pdf/helsinki2000/topic0/2mitchell.PDF>

In many OECD nations, we are now witnessing a period where "new deals" are being struck to replace the postwar Keynesian consensus that shaped the social policy directions of these nations over the latter half of the 20th century. The aim of this paper is to set out some of the critical issues that need to be considered by governments and social policy-makers during the process of negotiating these new deals, paying particular attention to how concerns about social cohesion can be incorporated into new social policy agendas.

The paper starts with a brief account of the constraints faced by governments in managing welfare reform that have built up since the 1980s. This discussion suggests that, in many countries, the ability of governments to respond to the impacts of globalization is limited by the need to take account of the perceptions of financial markets. At the same time, the active reshaping of Keynesian welfare states to forms that reflect the new social risks arising from globalization has been delayed by the need to deal with pre-existing social and demographic changes. A common political response to this dilemma was to "over-sell" the benefits of globalization to an uncertain electorate. As the unequal distribution of the costs and benefits incurred by entry to the global economy became increasingly apparent, this political over-sell has been at least as damaging to social cohesion as the actual direct impacts of globalization.

While the detailed design of social policies and programs to adapt to the changed economic environment remains an important on-going task for policy-makers, a more important step in restoring social cohesion is the development of a framework or vision around which political consensus can be established. The second part of the paper examines some of these alternative visions and considers the extent to which each offers solutions to the social dislocation brought about by high levels of unemployment, widening income disparities, persistent poverty and social exclusion. After consideration of these alternatives, the paper concludes that the responsibility for social cohesion still remains with government, although there are very different views of the role of government, especially as portrayed in current North American literature.

The third section of the paper looks to an alternative vision of government that counters the influence of "new paternalism" in welfare reform debates. Here, the work of Ulrich Beck and others on risk is presented as a starting point for the renegotiation of the role of government in social risk management. The application of the social risk management approach is then used to analyze changes in Australia's social policies to highlight what may be learned from adopting this approach.

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**Regina Berger-Schmitt. 2000. "Social Cohesion as an Aspect of the Quality of Societies: Concept and Measurement." EuReporting, Working Paper No.14, European System of Social Indicators. Mannheim.**

[http://www.social-science-geis.de/en/social\\_monitoring/social\\_indicators/EU\\_Reporting/pdf\\_files/paper14.pdf](http://www.social-science-geis.de/en/social_monitoring/social_indicators/EU_Reporting/pdf_files/paper14.pdf)

This paper seeks to clarify the meaning of social cohesion and its relationship to the concept of quality of life, and presents a proposal to operationalize and measure social cohesion. This proposal is part of a larger project whose objective is to develop a European system of social indicators. From a review of the literature on social cohesion, the paper identifies two main dimensions inherent in the concept: (1) the reduction of disparities, inequalities and social exclusion, and (2) the strengthening of social relations, interactions and ties.

Concerning the first dimension, examples of indicators for measuring social cohesion across various life domains include: regional disparities; equal opportunities for men and women in employment; inequalities between social strata in the state of health; and social exclusion from material goods measured by income poverty. The second dimension comprises all aspects which together constitute the social capital of a society. This includes the social relations available at the informal level of private networks and the more formal level of organizations; activities and engagement within private networks as well as within public realms; the quality of social relations; and the quality of societal institutions. For example, the perceived quality of such institutions can be measured by levels of trust and by satisfaction or approval rates. The paper sets out an extensive list of suggested indicators, but recognizes that future work will need to reduce their number and achieve a more parsimonious and manageable set of indicators.

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**Avigail Eisenberg. 2000. "Pluralism, Consociationalism, Group Differentiated Citizenship and the Problem of Social Cohesion." University of British Columbia, Centre for Research on Economic and Social Policy.**

<http://www.arts.ubc.ca/cresp/plurpap.pdf>

This paper compares the approach adopted to social cohesion by theories of post-war political pluralism, consociationalism, and group-differentiated citizenship. The main difference found is that group-differentiated citizenship aims at modifying the behaviour and attitudes of individual citizens, whereas consociationalism emphasizes elite collaboration, accommodation and measures to impede mass interaction. The paper then considers some explanations for why the theories differ along this and other dimensions, and how this difference is significant to contemporary attempts to integrate national minorities into larger political units.

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## What's New?

The Family Transformation and Social Cohesion research group led by Roderic Beaujot of the University of Western Ontario is going to hold its second workshop on June 14-15, 2001 at Les Suites Hotel in Ottawa. Lone parents, youth and fertility are among some the key topics to be discussed. For more information, contact Rod Beaujot at: [rbeaujot@uwo.ca](mailto:rbeaujot@uwo.ca)

The Research Group for "Fostering Social Cohesion: A Comparison of New Policy Strategies" is supported by a SSHRCC Strategic Grant in the social cohesion program. It will hold its first Workshop on June 21-22 in Montreal at the Université de Montréal. The group has invited a number of experts from outside the group to attend, as well as its international collaborators. This is a working session, but there are spaces for additional participants. If you are interested in attending, please contact Camille Boinot at: [juve2000@hotmail.com](mailto:juve2000@hotmail.com) There will be a \$30 registration fee, which includes lunch on both days of the meeting. The program for the Workshop as well as information about the research project and team, can be found at <http://www.fas.umontreal.ca/pol/cohesionsociale/>

The Council of Europe recently released "Diversity and Cohesion" – the first special issue of its electronic newsletter "Social Cohesion: Developments" – dealing with migration issues at the pan-European level. To download a copy of the document: <http://www..social.coe.int/en/cohesion/strategy/Unit/Newsletters/buleSpe1.pdf>

The last issue of "Culturelink" (April 2001) contains a dossier on "Social Cohesion and Culture: Contrasting some European and Canadian Approaches." Two of the papers included in the section are "Cultural Symbiosis: Cultural Participation and Cohesive Communities" by M. Sharon Jeannotte of Canadian Heritage, and "Social Cohesion and Cultural Policy in the Netherlands" by Eva Brinkman and Cas Smithuijsen. To read the introduction to the dossier on social cohesion contact: <http://www.culturelink.org/review/33/c133dos.html>