
Update No. 17 – June 22, 2001

Work and Social Cohesion

Résumés

Carmel Hannan. 1999. "**Beyond Networks: Social Cohesion and Unemployment Exit Rates.**" The Economics and Social Research Institute, Dublin, Ireland.
<http://netec.mcc.ac.uk/WoPEc/data/Papers/esILRdps028.html>

This paper provides new evidence on the role of social resource patterns in shaping an individual's chances of entry to the labour market. It links movements out of unemployment and into employment to constructed indicators of social cohesion. These are social participation, social support, and the social network. It was found that the duration in a particular status (unemployment or employment) has an influence on the probability of exit from that status. However, even after controlling for this and many other demographic and economic factors, the social network measure remained a significant influence on whether the unemployed found a job.

Respondents who have close friends who are employed are significantly more likely than those who do not to exit unemployment. Why is this the case? Previous research has shown that individuals who are more socially integrated have greater access to useful job information flows. In addition, this study has found that the unemployed who have close friends who are employed are significantly less likely to suffer psychological distress than those who do not. In this sense, policies that isolate the unemployed into ghettos (for example, public housing schemes) do great harm and may play a large role in keeping the unemployed in a state of unemployment.

Mike Burke and John Shields. 2001. "**Job-Poor Recovery: Social Cohesion and the Canadian Labour Market.**" Ryerson Social Reporting Network, Ryerson Polytechnic Institute.
<http://www.ryerson.ca/ORS/research/job.html>

Recent developments in the job market reveal a disturbing pattern characterized by job-poor growth. The kinds of jobs being created are undermining the foundation for middle-class life in Canadian society. The middle is being hollowed out and an hour glass labour market created. An hour glass labour market means that a segment of the workforce enjoys an important measure of employment security and sufficiency of market-based incomes, versus a larger and growing

element of the labour force, which faces insufficiencies in employment security and/or labour market earnings.

The source of the growing gap in the Canadian labour market is the deteriorating quality of employment. The Canadian labour market has undergone profound restructuring over the last three decades. Influenced by the forces of globalization, rapid technological change and a radically altered public policy environment, contemporary employment patterns have been restructured - away from full-time tenured forms of work in an economy featured by rising living standards and increased expectations, and towards flexible forms of employment in a just-in-time economy marked by growing levels of employment contingency, economic polarization and social exclusion. Rising levels of economic marginalization, polarization and increased market vulnerability are contributing to the erosion of Canadian social cohesion. The labour market, we must remember, is a social as well as an economic institution. Consequently, threats to the quality of the job stock result in social as well as economic deficits, especially in the context of a diminished publicly supported social safety net.

Joseph Rowntree Foundation. 1999. "**Social Cohesion and Urban Inclusion for Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods.**"

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/foundations/pdf/FO4109.pdf>

Four projects within the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's Area Regeneration Programme studied neighbourhoods in four different cities in the United Kingdom to consider the factors that contribute to social cohesion and a sense of local community within an area. The projects looked at what residents themselves felt about their neighbourhoods and the impact on the area of regeneration initiatives. They found that even though the neighbourhoods were defined as "disadvantaged areas," many factors contributed to a strong sense of belonging and mutual support.

The neighbourhoods studied do not lack social cohesion. Residents, irrespective of age, gender and ethnicity, had a strong commitment to their local area. There were strong bonds of reciprocity and mutual aid, particularly among older and more established residents. But there were also tensions between different groups of residents: particularly between older people and teenagers and between newcomers and established residents. Regeneration initiatives had sometimes reinforced existing divisions.

The physical environment is important for community morale and social interaction. These disadvantaged neighbourhoods lacked material resources and jobs. Most of the areas studied were physically isolated and in areas of industrial decline. In other words, many of the problems were those of poverty (in its broadest sense) rather than a lack of social cohesion.

What's New?

The Belgian Presidency of the European Union is organizing an international conference on "Housing: a Tool for Social Cohesion" on September 24-25, 2001 in the city of Liège (Belgium). Housing is often considered as a starting point for actions aimed at restoring or creating social networks or responding to normal societal expectations. Current experiments in this field are seeking as much to overcome the gap between housing supply and household demand as to encourage new forms of social and economic integration. What is the evaluation of these new experiments? How far can measures be transferred from one country to another? How far do they support progress in aiding access to housing, the upkeep of the property and good neighbourliness? The conference will address these questions and offer the various actors within housing (political decision makers, representatives of housing associations, housing experts, etc.) the opportunity of exchanging their views on innovative ideas and best practice in the field of access to housing and the strengthening of social cohesion. For those who want to know more about the conference:

<http://mrw.wallonie.be/dgatlp/Colloque/pages/main.htm>

The Association of European Economists recently issued a "Declaration for an Alternative Economic Policy in Europe." This declaration is the short version of a more comprehensive document entitled "Alternative Economic Policy Guidelines for Full Employment and Social Cohesion in Europe," prepared by a group of European economists at a conference in Brussels at the end of September 2001. Copies of the Declaration can be downloaded at:

http://www.barkhof.uni-bremen.de/kua/memo/europe/euomemo/declaration_Malcolm_2000.PDF

The Copenhagen Centre is holding an international conference on "Partnership and Social Responsibility in the New Economy" on June 27-29, 2001. To learn more about the conference:

<http://www.copenhagencentre.org>

Denise Helly, a senior researcher with the Institut national de la recherche scientifique (INRS) has recently produced a series of papers on social cohesion, identity and belonging. To know more contact:

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