
Update No. 22 – December 14, 2001

Social Cohesion and Urban Governance

Résumés

Vivien Lowndes and David Wilson. 2001. "Social Capital and Local Governance: Exploring the Institutional Design Variable." *Political Studies*, Vol. 49: 629-647.
<http://www.essex.ac.uk/ecpr/jointsessions/Copenhagen/papers/ws21/wilson.pdf>

This article takes a critical look at Robert Putnam's social capital thesis. It argues that it is too society-centric and that it undervalues state agency and associated political factors. The article explores the role of institutional design in explaining how governments can shape the development of social capital and its potential influence upon democratic performance. The authors used New Labour's program of 'Democratic Renewal' within British local government to assess the relevance of institutional design to arguments about social capital and democracy. The article suggests that prospects for the creation and mobilization of social capital may depend as much upon the process as the content of institutional design.

Ade Kearns and Ray Forrest. 2000. "Social Cohesion and Multilevel Urban Governance." *Urban Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 5-6: 995-1017.

This paper seeks to offer a systematic account of the links between the different dimensions of social cohesion and the various spatial scales by which policies may be formulated and implemented to address those dimensions. The paper begins by disaggregating the concept of social cohesion into its five constituent parts: common values and civic culture; social order and social control; social solidarity and reductions in wealth disparities; social networks and social capital; and territorial belonging and identity. The paper then moves on to explore the ways in which these five dimensions are being (or could be) pursued at intercity, city, city-region and neighbourhood levels. The various links between dimensions of social cohesion and levels of urban governance are both contradictory as well as complementary. In terms of social cohesion, governors of the urban system must confront the difficulties of reconciling what can be conflicting objectives within the social cohesion agenda.

Hans Thor Andersen and Ronald Van Kempen (eds). 2001. "Governing European Cities. Social Fragmentation, Social Exclusion and Urban Governance." Urban and Regional Planning and Development Series, Ashgate Publishing.

Current social and economic transformations, such as globalization and regionalization, have dramatically increased the spatial concentrations of "excluded" or deprived groups into specific neighbourhoods. The social fragmentation of cities into "included" and "excluded" areas has been put at the top of the agenda by many Western European cities. This volume provides a comprehensive examination of the problems of social fragmentation, social cohesion and social exclusion and analyzes whether policy directives, and particularly new forms of governance, can help solve these problems. Using a comparative analysis of a wide range of Western European countries it compares how and where social exclusion and social fragmentation occur and examines whether new policy approaches and new governance initiatives can indeed foster social cohesion.

What's New?

The last issue of Nexus' European counterpart, "Social Cohesion: Developments" is now available. "Developments" is a newsletter produced three times a year by the Council of Europe. This latest issue deals with the "new challenge of a social Europe."
http://www.coe.int/T/E/social_cohesion/Analysis_and_Research/Newsletters/PDF/Bulletin%20EN%20N%20B04-2.pdf

Notre Europe, an independent policy research unit founded in 1996 by Jacques Delors, has recently released a report looking at the impact of enlargement on the European social model, entitled "How to Enhance Economic and Social Cohesion in Europe After 2006?" You can get a copy of the report at: <http://www.notre-europe.asso.fr/Semi11-en.pdf>