
Update No. 24 – February 15, 2002

Social Cohesion, Education and Banking

Résumés

Jan Vranken. 2001. "No Social Cohesion Without Social Exclusion?" Research Unit on Poverty, Social Exclusion and the City, University of Antwerp.

http://www.google.com/search?q=cache:vhdy2L_t2KEC:www.storstad.gov.se/urbanfutures/pdf/abstracts/abs_suf_vranken.pdf+social+cohesion&hl=en

The contemporary debate about social problems and policies is characterized by an unusual variety of concepts. Conceptual clarity remains one of the ways in which our knowledge of social reality can be fostered. Poverty is not social exclusion. Is social inclusion the opposite of social exclusion? Is it another word for integration? Can social inclusion (or integration) and social cohesion be mutually substituted? More problematic is that the concept of social inclusion nowadays is often seen as synonymous with social cohesion and vice versa. But social cohesion is not a synonym for social inclusion. There even is a good case to argue that social cohesion implies social exclusion. Whereas social inclusion refers to a vertical relationship, social cohesion is about a horizontal one. Social inclusion focuses on participation and integration of elements in a larger whole, such as persons in groups, and groups or individuals in societies. Social cohesion focuses on relations between the elements of a group (be it a primary group, a collective or class, or a society) that are at a comparatively comparable level. Social cohesion refers to the processes through which the (urban) social system is integrated. Therefore, it should not be identified with social inclusion, which refers to the relation between the whole and its elements. A high degree of social cohesion within a group or community even could mean that social inclusion of some groups or individuals becomes more difficult, as is the case in ethnically or religiously homogeneous societies.

Stephen P. Heyneman. 2001. "Measuring the Influence of Education on Social Cohesion." Paper presented to the Oxford International Conference on Education and Development, September.

http://orion.forumone.com/spgovern/files.fcgi/846_Education_and_Social_Cohesion.pdf

Social cohesion is said to be "high" when nearly all members of a society voluntarily play by the rules which govern interpersonal and political action, and when tolerance for differences is demonstrated in the day-to-day interactions across social groups within that society. But how does social cohesion occur? This paper summarizes the lessons from institutional economics by illustrating the four "organizational" pillars (social, economic, educational, political) contributing to social cohesion. It then tries to identify the mechanisms by which one pillar, education, is expected to make its particular contribution. Lastly, it proposes a model by which one might measure the effectiveness of the educational contribution to social cohesion. The model is specific to the United States, but it could be adapted to fit other contexts. If this model proves to be operational, then in the future we may have a way of answering the question of how well the school system is performing in its public function.

Christopher Guene and Edward Mayo (eds.). 2001. "Banking and Social Cohesion: Alternative Responses to a Global Market." New York: Paul & Company.

In many poor communities whole populations are without financial services of any kind. This book is about the alternatives, and they take many forms. While banks are not charities, in some countries charities are becoming banks. Elsewhere governments are working with banks to address issues of poverty and social cohesion. New forms of financial services are destined to play an important role within both developed and developing countries all over the world. Contributors to this book examine bank exclusion in the U.K.; how poor communities and small enterprises in the U.S. are excluded; the impact of new technology; and the causes of the finance gap. Examples are drawn from the North and South, the U.K., the U.S., Germany, and Italy's first ethical bank.

What's New?

On February 14-16, 2002, in Montreal, the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada will hold a conference on "Diagnostics & Solutions: Building Consensus for Health Care Reform in Canada." The conference will attempt to diagnose the real problems and discuss the real issues surrounding the future of Canada's health care system. To learn more:

<http://www.arts.mcgill.ca/programs/misc/health.htm>

On May 9-11, 2002, the University of Calgary, the Canadian Donner Foundation, the Centre for the Study of Public Affairs, and the Calgary Board of Education will be holding a conference on "School Choice: Public Education at a Crossroads" at the University of Calgary. The conference will examine policy issues related to school choice, such as diversity, equity, and social cohesion. For more information: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~school/papers.html>

The National Youth Agency, a research foundation based in London (U.K.), is organizing a Research Policy and Practice Forum in April 2002 that aims to address the issue of young people and social cohesion. To learn more: <http://www.nya.org.uk/researchPP-socialcohesion.htm>