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Update No. 30 – August 16, 2002

## **Social Cohesion and Culture**

### **Résumés**

**Fisher, Rod. 2002. “Social Cohesion in the United Kingdom: A Case Report.” *Canadian Journal of Communication*, Vol. 27, No. 2-3.**

[http://www.cjc-online.ca/toc\\_index.php3?status=3&jpage=1](http://www.cjc-online.ca/toc_index.php3?status=3&jpage=1)

Social cohesion is defined in, and adapted to, social policy-making in numerous ways. This paper attempts to clarify the definition with regard to the policy-making decisions of the United Kingdom government. In doing so, it brings to light the efforts of the 1998 Social Exclusion Unit government program that focussed on recognizing how poverty grows in individual neighbourhoods, pointing out why neighbourhoods decline and how this could be prevented. The second phase of the program was to establish Policy Action Teams to fast-track policy thinking – including areas such as arts and sports – on the most serious issues within these neighbourhoods. From the Teams’ reports, an interdisciplinary approach to social cohesion policy-making evolved. The paper also cites an attempt to benchmark the social impacts of the arts.

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**Smithuijsen, Cas, and Eva Brinkman. 2002. “Social Cohesion and Cultural Policy in the Netherlands.” *Canadian Journal of Communication*, Vol. 27, No. 2-3. [http://www.cjc-online.ca/toc\\_index.php3?status=3&jpage=1](http://www.cjc-online.ca/toc_index.php3?status=3&jpage=1)**

The deterioration of social cohesion throughout the Netherlands has caused the government to take action toward improving social conditions within schools, neighbourhoods, villages, and cities. This article looks at how Dutch government initiatives, through education and lifelong learning, are providing the social tools for citizens to empower themselves. Three case studies are brought to light, demonstrating how cultural policy can be linked with art-directed policy and how social cohesion can be achieved through this method. The paper concludes with an analysis comparing traditional and new cultural policy terms, and questions whether or not the two can be integrated successfully.

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**Helly, Denise. 2002. “Les limites de la notion de cohésion sociale.” *The Tocqueville Review/La Revue Tocqueville*, Vol. XXIII, No. 1.**

Since the early 1990s, OECD member states have been actively engaged in developing a new discourse focussing on the rejuvenation of the sense of the common good, the sense of community, democratization and social responsibility. This discourse is based on the idea that social cohesion is being eroded by multiple factors such as global economic integration, changing labour markets and growing inequalities. To better understand the notion of social cohesion as deployed by governments since the 1990s, this article examines the three key concepts on which this notion is founded: political conflict, social capital and belonging. The author argues that politics needs to be seen as a process of continuing conflicts and struggles that serve to unveil and challenge the always unequal distribution of economic, cultural and symbolic resources. But to the extent that the idea of social cohesion ignores or distrusts conflicts, it delegitimizes social struggles and is thus unhelpful for equality.

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## **What's New?**

The Forum on New Social Responsibility in a Globalising World: The Role of the State, the Market and Civil Society will take place on October 2-3, 2002 in Strasbourg, France at the Council of Europe and at the European Parliament. For further information consult the Council's Web site: [http://www.coe.int/T/E/Social\\_cohesion](http://www.coe.int/T/E/Social_cohesion)