

Rekindling Hope and Investing in the Future

***Report of the Social Cohesion Network to the
Policy Research Committee***

November 20, 1998



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Report to the Policy Research Committee outlines the progress made during the last 18 months in addressing the major research themes and issues established in the Social Cohesion Network's Research Workplan in March, 1997. The three themes and the questions we posed were:

1) *Faultlines*

Are multiple faultlines or fractures in the social fabric opening in Canadian society? If so, which are the most important ones and what are their potential consequences? What are the forces exacerbating or bridging them?

2) *Axes of Community Identification*

What are the axes of community identification and are they changing? What is the nature of membership in a community? Is it becoming more complex and do people now have multiple community attachments? Is the intensity of people's attachment to their community (or communities) changing?

3) *Implications of Changes in Social Cohesion*

Why should the federal government and the people of Canada be concerned about social cohesion? What are the social, economic, cultural and governance implications of changes in social cohesion within Canada?

This Report is entitled *Rekindling Hope and Investing in the Future* because we see public confidence in continued access to opportunity and investment in Canada's future social fabric as two key elements in strengthening social cohesion in Canada. The Network's working definition of social cohesion -- *the ongoing process of developing a community of shared values, shared challenges and equal opportunity within Canada, based on a sense of trust, hope and reciprocity among all Canadians* -- has been the subject of much discussion in a number of forums, appears to measure up well internationally, and forms the foundation of an emerging conceptual map on the subject.

Based upon preliminary trends identified by more than 20 departments and agencies with respect to the themes and issues identified in the *Social Cohesion Research Workplan* of March, 1997, and the studies reviewed in preparing this Report, the overall hope and recommendation of the Network is that the federal government as a whole begin to focus as much attention on societal health as it has recently and successfully on the fiscal health of the nation.

While we have only begun to explore some of the key issues -- particularly under Theme 3 -- a number of preliminary conclusions and informed inferences can be drawn. Principal among these are:

1. That ***social cohesion is becoming a central concern of governments around the world.*** While the Canadian federal government has spent considerable time and effort to define what it means by social cohesion, other jurisdictions may be further ahead in putting resources into action measures.
2. That ***social cohesion and economic growth are complementary, not contradictory, policy objectives.*** While the relationship of growth to inequality -- or market efficiency and competitiveness to concerns about equity -- has not been conclusively proven, preliminary evidence suggests that the negative impacts and economic penalties for diminished social cohesion are significant, if difficult to measure.
3. That ***this is no time for complacency -- social cohesion issues are more complex and require more sophisticated data analysis even as money and research resources remain scarce.*** Notwithstanding Canada's world-leading rank of #1 on the United Nations' Human Development Index, global forces continue to pose serious threats to social cohesion and to frustrate its ability to achieve social justice. Specifically, while we currently lack enough information to predict whether the demographic and social changes we have described will reinforce or



compound one another, the potential for doing so is clearly evident. For example, given our research, the emerging generational rift may compound the gender inequality that already exists with respect to income inequality, family issues and a wide range of social and health policy issues. The plight of Aboriginal peoples will require concerted attention across a number of fronts in a variety of urban and rural settings. Similarly, the plight of the economically and socially marginalized appears to be intensifying and is only partially masked by overall growth in the economy and incomplete statistics on phenomena like homelessness.

4. That ***Canadians are still proud of Canada but their ties to each other may be weakening.*** A recent international comparative study has shown that Canadians score high on national pride -- third among 23 countries on measures of pride in national achievements. Canadians have also traditionally been among the most generous of peoples. However, while levels of giving and volunteering are stable, hours volunteered by the "core" of volunteers -- the one-third of Canadians who are actively engaged -- is falling. Younger people are volunteering more, but appear to be more inclined to do so for job experience, rather than from a sense of civic obligation. And women, who are key income-earners and volunteers are also feeling the strain of increased obligations for caring for young and elderly family members. Combined with other trends, hopes for greater civic engagement on the part of Canadians may therefore run into time and motivation barriers in the future. With time, money and knowledge at a premium, it is likely that a sense of pride in Canada will increasingly depend on whether Canadians believe that the national community is one in which they are able to achieve some measure of economic, social and cultural well-being.
5. That ***"civil society" is becoming less civil, and uncertainty about the future, the danger of economic polarization and declining confidence in government is causing widespread anxiety among Canadians.*** This anxiety and cynicism can only partially be explained by economic forces. The root causes appear to be complex, also including such factors as social exclusion, cultural and environmental insecurity, and a growing distrust of many of society's major institutions. Survey research suggests, for example, that there is a growing rift between the "young and the restless" and the "mature and secure", and that while there has been a noticeable "decline of deference" to most forms of authority, Canadians also desire to see more civility in society.
6. That ***regaining citizens' trust and confidence in public institutions and in the political process is critical to strengthening the social fabric in Canada.*** One of the ironies uncovered in the course of our research on social cohesion is that Canadians rank number one in the world in terms of pride in our democracy, but at the same time score low on tests of civic knowledge. As we enter the new millennium, we need more informed public judgment among Canadians and more meaningful citizen involvement in the policy process at the earliest stages. Public officials and community leaders also need to learn more about cultivating and supporting capacity building to strengthen the quality of public judgment in local communities.
7. ***As this work progressed, it became clear that a cohesive society is not one where conflict is absent. Rather, cohesive societies find ways to reinforce a sense of community through the constructive management and resolution of conflict.*** At this point in time, it is virtually impossible to anticipate the medium to long-term structural impacts and interaction among various faultlines in Canadian society. But it seems increasingly clear that a large measure of their impact on the future health, security and sense of well-being of Canadians will be determined by the strength and success of its governance structures -- formal, informal, domestic and international, public, private, non-governmental and voluntary.
8. ***There are a number of important questions to which we still do not have an answer, including whether a sense of national identity is necessary for social cohesion.*** The sense that "we are all in this together" may be at the root of social cohesion, but we are far from understanding just what promotes this feeling and what may hinder it. It appears that inclusiveness may be a key to a healthy sense of national belonging, and there are some intriguing hints in the material examined so far that cohesive societies are those that are adept at reconciling multiple identities, but we are far from understanding the means by which this occurs. It would also appear that the federal government's role as an instrument of Canadian values may have played a stronger role than previously thought in reinforcing identity and belonging.



The Report concludes with a discussion of the next steps the Social Cohesion Network plans to take in addressing remaining research priorities, data gaps, future partnerships and collaborative initiatives, as well as outstanding resource issues. This document is an interim status report on a very large, complex body of multidisciplinary research outlined in the Social Cohesion Research Workplan of March 1997. We have only just begun to explore some of the key issues and dynamics, particularly under Theme 3 -- the implications of changes in social cohesion on Canada's social, economic, cultural and governance structures and sense of community. While the task of developing a horizontal research program on social cohesion now appears much larger than first imagined, we have made significant progress in the past 18 months or so.

Emphasis in the next phase of the Social Cohesion Network's research will be placed on three strategic objectives: (1) further mapping of the relationships and causal connections between social cohesion and a wide range of social, economic and cultural factors; (2) deepening our understanding of the concept by collecting a broader range and better types of data; and (3) deepening our knowledge-base and understanding of issues raised in connection with Theme 3 of the Social Cohesion Research Workplan. An extensive bibliography of the reference documents and research used is also included in this Report.

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INTRODUCTION

When the Social Cohesion Network established its Research Workplan in March 1997, it identified three major themes and 12 issue areas where significant gaps in our knowledge existed. The three themes and the questions we posed were:

1) **Faultlines**

Are multiple faultlines opening in Canadian society? If so, which are the most important ones and what are their consequences? What are the forces exacerbating or bridging them?

2) **Axes of community identification**

What are the axes of community identification and are they changing? What is the nature of membership in a community? Is it becoming more complex and do people now have multiple community attachments? Is the intensity of people's attachment to their community (or communities) changing?

3) **Implications of changes in social cohesion**

Why should the federal government and the people of Canada be concerned about social cohesion? What are the social, economic, cultural and governance implications of changes in social cohesion within the Canadian community?

More than 20 departments and agencies in the Social Cohesion Network set out to pool their knowledge in these theme areas to see what conclusions could be drawn about trends to the year 2005. About a dozen departments were active in conducting social cohesion research and providing input to this Report. It has been impossible to convey the full richness of this source material in the condensed format of this report, and the interested reader should consult the bibliography for reference information if he or she wishes to review individual source documents.

When the exercise began, we were largely unaware that the issues being investigated were also of concern to many other governments around the world. A year later, however, we have discovered that:

- Governments and academics in many countries and disciplines are struggling to develop conceptual frameworks and societal indicators that will adequately measure and explain current pressures on the social cohesion of nations.
- Widespread anxiety and cynicism among Canadians can only partially be explained by economic forces. The root causes appear to be complex, also including such factors as social exclusion, cultural and environmental insecurity, and a growing distrust of many of society's major institutions.
- Changes in social cohesion do have an impact on economic growth, but for the most part we lack the indicators to measure this impact precisely. Increases in indicators of social disintegration, such as suicide, family breakdown and crime over the past 35 to 40 years, even as GDP per capita and real income have grown, appear to suggest a negative relationship. However, a new and broader approach to economic growth and competitiveness, more mindful of these costs, could potentially transform this to a positive relationship.

While the task of developing a horizontal research program on social cohesion now appears much larger than first imagined, we have made significant progress in the past 18 months or so. We have made considerable progress in developing a conceptual map of the social cohesion terrain and are working to identify the types of indicators needed to measure changes in this terrain. We are also networking much

In the new world political era, the cultural resources that lead to social cohesion and the limits of that cohesion in our societies are of the utmost importance. It will be the primary task for societies to promote social cohesion as the basic source of economic development and ecological sensibility. The cultural foundations of society deserve our full attention as a basis of sustainable development.

Werner Weidenfeld in The Limits of Social Cohesion, Club of Rome, 1998



more with each other, through the Social Cohesion Network and its working groups, and with the academic community. This sharing has already resulted in a number of partnerships that will help us to address the social cohesion data gaps identified in our Research Workplan.

We have entitled this report *Rekindling Hope and Investing in the Future* because we see public confidence in continued access to opportunity and investment in Canada's social fabric as two key elements in strengthening social cohesion in Canada. Our working definition of social cohesion -- the ongoing process of developing a community of shared values, shared challenges and equal opportunity within Canada, based on a sense of trust, hope and reciprocity among all Canadians -- has been the subject of much discussion in a number of forums. While it does not contain key words, such as "social justice" and "pluralist society" which some feel are needed to adequately reflect collective goals and realities, it appears to measure up well internationally. Indeed, we have discovered that Canada is one of the few countries that has attempted to develop an explicit definition of social cohesion to guide the policy research process.

Discussions of our definition are ongoing. However, at this stage, we are more concerned that the needed policy research take place and that the federal government as a whole begin to focus as much attention on societal health as it has, in recent years, on fiscal health for, as Judith Maxwell of the Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN) has observed, "the fiscal and social deficits go hand in hand ... (And) the danger is that the process of cutting expenditures to reduce the fiscal deficit will destroy the good part of public services and make the social deficit even worse than it is now".



THEME 1 - FAULTLINES

In keeping with the Social Cohesion Research Workplan, two faultlines are of particular concern in the context of strengthening social cohesion in Canada: (1) those having to do with its increasing demographic and social diversity; and (2) the possible effects of economic and other types of potential polarization on the prospects of social cohesion. Generally, faultlines—or cleavages—are based upon differences (in economic and/or social circumstances, or in values, for example).

But not all differences (e.g. in levels of education) necessarily constitute a faultline. For the present purposes, faultlines can be considered to be measurable differences that risk creating tension and a sense of inequity with significant implications for public policy and governance. In this report, special effort has been made to address Aboriginal, gender, regional and rural/ urban faultlines, and measurable differences of this kind can and have been studied both quantitatively and qualitatively. The work highlighted in this Report to the Policy Research Committee reflects both methodologies depending on the nature of the issue being addressed and the current state of available data and knowledge. Several of the research studies discussed below also deploy an innovative, comparatively new methodology known as participatory action research.

Put at its crudest, the countries of the OECD world have reached a point at which the economic opportunities of their citizens lead to perverse choices. In order to remain competitive in growing world markets, they have to take measures that damage the cohesion of civil societies beyond repair.

Ralf Dahrendorf in "Economic Opportunity, Civil Society and Political Liberty", 1995

While a good deal of the research reported upon in this Report suggests the existence of multiple faultlines, in a number of cases, research also has identified and begun to analyze creative policies and programs designed to reduce the tension and sense of inequity that otherwise might emerge. Generally speaking, the extent to which different types of faultlines might reinforce or compound one another remains a question requiring further research and data, but where appropriate, we note the potential for several of them to do so below.

THE IMPACT OF DIVERSITY ON SOCIAL COHESION

Globalization, increased mobility, economic restructuring and changing demographics, among other forces, are making Canada an increasingly diverse society. Many aspects of this diversity are recognized throughout the world as one of Canada's greatest strengths and comparative advantages. For example, in the Report of



the Task Force on the Reorganization of Metropolitan Toronto, research and consultations with foreign governments, businesses and professional organizations confirmed Canada's reputation as one of the world's most successful multicultural, tolerant, law-abiding and civil societies—a society widely recognized for its high quality of life. This reputation figured prominently in many of their decisions to invest in Canada over other countries.

Canada finds itself challenged in a variety of ways by forms of diversity, demographic change and other faultlines that could weaken its social fabric and the basis of the caring, compassionate and tolerant community it has aspired to be if governments and citizens fail to respond effectively. Effective government and citizen responses to many of these faultlines will require new types of knowledge and a variety of new partnerships.

A good deal of the research completed or underway through the Social Cohesion Network has consciously pursued partnerships of many kinds to support this emerging challenge to governance and citizenship. The major findings of our research to date on the impact of various forms of diversity on social cohesion are presented in the sub-sections below.

Canada's social and demographic landscape is changing dramatically. This is true of its age structure with its potential to stimulate intergenerational conflict over issues of equity and entitlements; of its ethnic composition, with its many challenges to tolerance, effective citizenship and questions as to the access and equality of services and programs; and of increasingly fractured family structures, with all the dangers this poses in terms of child poverty, family violence and domestic abuse, and other types of crime, among other social relations. Many of these demographic shifts often interact with one another, as well as with other faultlines and types of potential polarization—gender relations, for example, and rural-urban cleavages. They therefore are particularly important, foundational points of departure for understanding the complex structural challenges confronting citizens and governments in strengthening social cohesion as we approach the new millennium.

a) Age Structure

In its portrait of the demographic situation in 1997, Statistics Canada reports that there has been a substantial decline in natural population growth since 1991. By 1996, natural growth accounted for only 47% of the total growth, while immigration accounted for 53%. By comparison, in the U.S., immigration accounts for only one-third of the total.

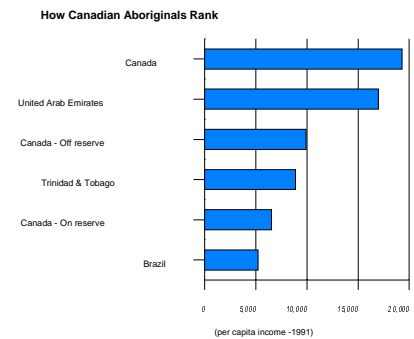
The population as a whole is also getting significantly older—with one notable exception to be discussed in more detail immediately below. While aging of the Canadian population is not a recent phenomenon, projections show that the number of those aged 65 and over will triple over the next 40 years, and that by 2030, this age group will represent fully 23% of the population. Since anti-aging gene therapies are expected to become commercially available this trend may even be understated. This aging of the general population has the potential to generate intergenerational conflict with younger Canadians who are facing higher unemployment rates (nearly double the country's rate), earn less than their parents, are more insecure about their job opportunities and conditions (underemployment), and are expected to be better educated.

These are the ingredients for significant value differences among the increasingly “young and restless” and the broader society. Two recent studies in the Statistics Canada Canadian Social Trends series speak directly to these matters: “Getting Ahead in Life: Does Your Parents' Income Count?” and “Getting Ahead in Life: Does Your Parents' Education Count?”. Another four related papers are scheduled to appear in the near future dealing with student finances, skills of young workers, three-generation families, and demographic change and housing characteristics among young adults.

An aging society will present tremendous challenges to individuals, communities, and governments of all jurisdictions across virtually every field of personal choice, public policy and governance. Judith Maxwell recently provided a particularly telling example drawn from the social services and health sectors in the context of a larger discussion of rethinking the contract between the citizen and the state. Her lecture

Rethinking Government addressed two questions: What services should governments finance in the 1990s and beyond? and How can they do a better job of financing and delivering those services? Having noted that wide disparities of income and wealth exist among the elderly themselves, she goes on to point out that, at the same time, “the number of frail elderly (over the age of 75) is beginning to increase rapidly—the numbers are projected to increase from 1.3 million in 1992 to 2 million by 2001, an increase of almost 50 %.” Trends like these lead Maxwell to the conclusion that “it is very important to rethink the contract with the elderly now”.

There is one notable exception to the age structure of the general Canadian population, that of Aboriginal peoples. A study by the Four Directions Consulting Group of Winnipeg estimated that over 50% of the Aboriginal population is under 25 years of age. This trend is expected to continue in both the short and medium terms. This study also found that during the period from 1986 to 1991, migration of Aboriginal peoples resulted in net population increases on reserves and in large urban centres and net population decreases in rural and small urban centres; that the number of on-reserve children attending elementary or secondary schools is expected to increase by 250,000 students over the next fifteen years; and that the number of registered Indian post-secondary enrolments could increase by more than 19,000 during the same period.

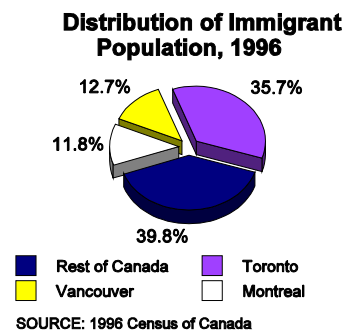


SOURCE: U.N. Human Development Report, INAC, October 1998

There are a wide range of policy implications for Aboriginal peoples and governments. A few examples of these implications in the area of health include: the number of registered Indian adults affected by diabetes is expected to increase from its 1995 level of about 30,000 to more than 50,000 by 2010, and the number of pharmacies on reserve is expected to increase by more than 50% over the next 15 years, while the number of dental services is expected to grow by 32 % in the same period. In the context of social welfare, the number of beneficiaries on reserve receiving social assistance is projected to grow from its current level of about 150,000 to about 250,000 by 2010. And if the goal is to achieve the average Canadian employment rate by 2010, annual on reserve employment growth will need to be four to five times the rate of job growth in the 1980s.

b) Ethnic and Cultural Composition

The ethnic and cultural make-up of Canada has become steadily more diverse over the past 40 years. According to Statistics Canada, immigrants represented 17.4% of the population in 1996, as compared to 15% in 1950 and 16% in 1986. And in Canada’s largest urban centres (e.g. Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal) so-called ethnic minorities make up anywhere from 30% to nearly 40% of the population already. Given the substantial decline in natural population growth, Canada’s reliance on immigrants to renew its sense of confidence and opportunity will continue to grow for the foreseeable future. A number of studies from the Social Cohesion Network research community have begun to document the challenges that such levels of immigration pose for the prospects of strengthening social cohesion in Canada.



SOURCE: 1996 Census of Canada

For example, a study by Miedema and Wachholz identified a number of barriers to the justice system for abused immigrant women. Focus groups were used to explore barriers to the criminal justice system and other justice-related services, as well as to develop policy recommendations related to access to the justice system and socio-legal education for abused immigrant women. Of the ten recommendations advanced, five are particularly significant for the federal government. They focus on the need for cultural sensitivity training, increased funding for legal aid, more support services for immigrant families in conflict, more information to immigrants about legal rights and issues surrounding woman abuse and educational strategies which target personnel working with immigrant and refugee communities.

The interaction of gender and immigrants also is the subject of another recent publication, "Gendering Immigration / Integration: Policy Research Workshop Proceedings and a Selective Review of Policy Research Literature 1987-1996". This publication documents the unanimous view of researchers and representatives of organizations concerned with immigrant women's issues that a gender dimension exists in virtually all immigration / integration policy research.

Another sophisticated quantitative study by Pendakur and Pendakur focuses on two questions pertaining to the economic impact of language knowledge: (1) interpreting language knowledge as a form of human capital, what economic costs and benefits are associated with such knowledge? and (2) interpreting language knowledge as a dimension of ethnicity, what economic costs and benefits are associated with such knowledge? Using a special three-city micro-data sample from the 1991 Census of Canada, the authors approach these questions by estimating earnings differentials associated with both majority and minority language knowledge for workers in Canada's three largest cities. They identify language-based earnings differentials by comparing workers who speak only majority languages with workers who speak both majority and minority languages, and by comparing workers who speak only majority languages with workers who speak minority languages, as well as English and French..

The authors find that majority language knowledge is associated with higher earnings, disadvantaging workers without adequate majority language skills. However, the authors found somewhat surprisingly that returns to language knowledge are quite different across Canada's three largest census metropolitan areas (CMAs). The authors note that "what may pay in one CMA may not pay in another, even if that language is the other official language. In all CMAs, knowing an official language is better than not knowing ...[one], and in Montreal and Toronto, being official language bilingual is better than being unilingual..., but in Vancouver, knowing both English and French does not increase earnings. Overall, it is apparent that the market for language knowledge, even official language knowledge is local". Surprisingly, non-official language knowledge rarely improves labour market outcomes and can, in many cases, result in income penalties. The authors found that language knowledge could be viewed as a dimension of ethnicity. Within this context, on the one hand, knowing a non-official language can act as a marker for differential treatment by the majority population. On the other hand, the larger the ethno-linguistic community, the less likely language speakers are to face a wage penalty. In this sense, the 'ethnic enclave' appears to provide some protection from market differentials.

Finally, the experiences of immigrants, ethnicity and comparative levels of literacy will also be the subject of several forthcoming studies in the Canadian Social Trends series from Statistics Canada.

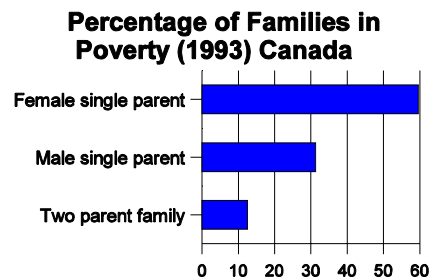
c) Family Structures

Family policy in industrialized countries like Canada typically has been based on a concept of the family as a male-headed household comprising two married adults of the opposite sex and their children. Modern publics seem increasingly prepared to accept the limited relevance of this concept to their daily lives. Higher divorce rates, more lone-parent and reconstituted families, increased social acceptance of "non-traditional" families, greater involvement of women in the paid workforce, as well as lower fertility and mortality rates all have shaken confidence in earlier norms of family life. These social changes have given rise to the often heated and polarizing debate about the role of "family values" and the "return to the traditional family" as solutions to the sense of insecurity and alienation that many Canadians experience in their daily lives. As commentators have pointed out for some time, globalization also has heightened this sense of insecurity and alienation within Canadian families as a new polarized employment structure—what the former Economic Council of Canada poignantly described as a world of Good Jobs, Bad Jobs (1990)—involving increasing reliance on non-standard jobs and a flexible workforce, has taken its toll on family life as well.

Bearing these broad transformations in mind, during the past 18 months the Social Cohesion Network has been particularly concerned with understanding the complex ways in which these and other social changes have affected Canadian families. The overall health and cohesiveness of a society is crucially dependent on the well-being of its children and the families and other social relationships that nurture and sustain them.

It should be underscored that it is women and children, and the elderly as noted above, who stand to suffer the most if governments and communities fail to adequately respond to family issues leading into the new millennium. Responsibility for child care and elder care in the home still rests primarily with women, women head most lone-parent families, and the unpaid work in the home overwhelmingly performed by women still is grossly under-valued in the context of pension credits, income tax, custody and divorce settlements, etc. When coupled with statistics on child poverty, violence against women and children, and related indicators there is considerable reason for concern with respect to the well-being of future generations of Canadians.

According to a 1996 report prepared for the Justice and Legal Affairs Committee's Environmental Scanning Working Group on *Trends Toward Polarization in Canadian Society*, of the nine richest countries in the world, Canada throughout the 1980s had the third worst child poverty rate (i.e. the percentage of those under 18 living in families with low incomes, or below the Stats Can low income cut-off) -- ranking behind only the United States and Australia. Rates of family poverty varied by marital status and gender.



SOURCE: Justice and Legal Affairs Committee's Environmental Scanning Working Group, 1996 report

With respect to violence against women and children, and more generally, family violence, the statistics are equally disturbing and worrisome. According to the 1993 *Violence Against Women Survey*, 29% or 2.7 million women who had ever been married or lived common law had been physically or sexually assaulted by their partner at some point during the relationship. And according to the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, there were over 40,000 cases of spousal assault in 1996, 89% involving female victims. The same statistical profile of family violence also estimates that over 2,300 women and 2,000 children stay in shelters or transition homes across Canada every day, almost 70% of whom are seeking refuge from an abusive husband or ex-husband. Victims of wife assaults are typically young, living common-law with a male spouse who experiences chronic unemployment and who has past experiences of witnessing abuse as a child. As noted below in the Theme 3 section, the social and economic costs of such violence against women and children are enormous.

Several studies conducted by members of the Social Cohesion Network's Interdepartmental Research Working Group provide greater insight into the complex interplay of changing family relations and some of the other faultlines in Canada today.

A forthcoming report commissioned by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, *Aboriginal Single Mothers*, builds on the currently existing data and information to show how all demographic, social and economic factors affecting Aboriginal women are interrelated. There are two and a half times more Aboriginal single mothers under the age of 25 than other Canadian single mothers. Families headed by Aboriginal single mothers are also larger and younger than families headed by other Canadian single mothers. As a group, Aboriginal women have lower levels of completed schooling than non-Aboriginal women, yet single mothers in both groups have the lowest levels. Aboriginal women tend to participate in the labour force less, are more likely to be unemployed, and earn less than non-Aboriginal women, and again, single mothers in both groups have higher unemployment rates, but do earn slightly more than non-single mothers when they work. Furthermore, Aboriginal single mothers do not receive much more in government transfer payments compared to non-Aboriginal women single mothers, despite having consistently and considerably lower average incomes than other Canadian women. Aboriginal women are more prone to pregnancy and birth complications compared to non-Aboriginal women, and are also more likely to contract diseases, die of accidents and violence, and to commit suicide than other Canadian women. Finally, nearly half of all single Aboriginal mothers live in a Census Metropolitan Area. Based on the reinforcing nature of much of their data, the authors conclude that the disparities between single Aboriginal mothers and other Canadian single mothers has less to do with the fact that these women are single mothers and more to do with the fact that they are Aboriginal.

Statistics Canada will also be releasing a series of papers in its *Canadian Social Trends* series in the near future which should supplement the INAC study of Aboriginal single mothers very nicely. Their topics will

include Aboriginal education, Aboriginal languages, employability of Aboriginal youth, concepts of Aboriginal population growth, and the geographical patterns of socio-economic well-being of First Nations communities in Canada.

A paper by Stout and Kipling of the Centre for Aboriginal Education, Research and Culture at Carleton University broadens the framework for understanding the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal women. It highlights their involvement in economic development initiatives and their political participation and leadership activities. It also identifies a number of important gaps in the literature, including the limited number of issues addressed, the under-representation of Métis women, non-status Indian women and Aboriginal women with disabilities, the narrow focus on one policy issue at a time and the tendency to pathologize Aboriginal women. The study also recommends a number of avenues for further research and policy development in areas such as self-government, economic development, barriers to education and employment, health throughout the life-course, and the responsiveness of the criminal justice system to issues of family violence.

A forthcoming study of women abuse in rural Ontario highlights the unique difficulties encountered by abused women in rural areas. The Ontario Rural Women Abuse Study (ORWAS) is a joint venture of the Department of Justice Canada and the Community Abuse Program of Rural Ontario (CAPRO). It epitomizes not only the types of partnership and collaborative research referred to earlier, but also underscores the potential of community-based participatory action research to broaden the framework of understanding and necessary linkages in this critical area of concern. The research team conducted qualitative in-depth interviews in their respective communities with women survivors of abuse. These interviews were complemented by focus groups with community residents and service providers, as well as key informant interviews with service providers and community leaders.

The study demonstrates that while marginalization and isolation often characterize the lives of abused women, the isolation experienced by rural women and their children is complicated by conditions of rurality (e.g. distance from services, limited transportation, small town, closely-knit social structures). In such an environment, patriarchal familial systems are reinforced as strong community ideals. Abuse is not constructively talked about in these sorts of communities. A rural ethic of self-sufficiency and pride often dictates how survivors want to be viewed in the community, as well as impedes them from asking for help and access to social assistance services. Often sheer distance and poor transportation prevents many abused women in rural areas from accessing immediate help or services. The need for more and better public education about legal rights, available sources of support and how to access services were repeatedly stressed.

Community residents and service providers stressed the importance of the coordination of services for women living with abuse. The now-defunct Social Planning Council originally performed such duties but was recently terminated due to funding cuts. If the results of a recent paper by Katherine Scott at the Centre for International Statistics at the Canadian Council on Social Development profiling the impact of the CHST on women receiving assistance are any indication, this condition is likely to get worse for abused women in rural areas.

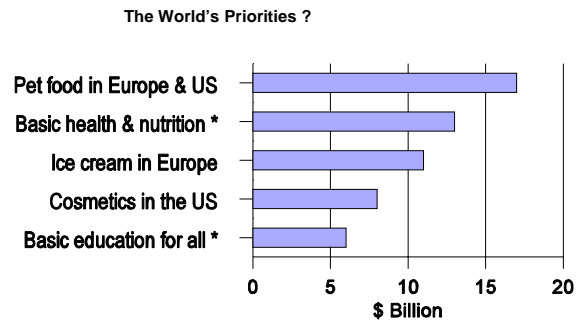
INEQUALITY, POLARIZATION AND SOCIAL COHESION

A second major focus of the Social Cohesion Network's Research Workplan has been to assess the potential effects of economic inequality and the polarization of the workforce and other aspects of society on the prospects for improving social cohesion in Canada. According to public opinion polling conducted for the Canada Information Office, poverty is a strong concern among all Canadians, with approximately 90% believing that the federal government should treat poverty as an important issue in the immediate future.

Between 1990 and 1993 (recession years in Canada), virtually all new job growth came in the managerial and professional occupations; almost all other sectors lost jobs. Thus, while the total population of Canada grew by 6.5% between 1989 and 1993, the low-income population grew by 35.8%. The percentage of

Canadians living below the low-income cut-off (LICO) increased from 16.8% in 1992 to 17.9% in 1993, up considerably from the 1989 low of 14%. And the percentage of households receiving social assistance rose from 7.4% to 10.6% between 1984 and 1993, while the child poverty rate reached a new high of 21.3% in 1993.

This situation has led some to call for a “regime shift” in thinking about social policy in Canada as we approach the new millennium--a shift as profound as the one that took place in the context of economic policy since the late 1980s. In her 1996 Eric Hansen Memorial Lecture at the University of Alberta, for example, Judith Maxwell contends that “if we stick to the old ways of thinking about social programs, while cutting back on social spending—the combined effects of economic and trade policies will polarize society into haves and have nots, and damage much of the social capital we have built over the post-war period”. There is “the potential to do great harm here”, Maxwell warns. Indeed, while Canada continues to rank first in the world on the U.N. Human Development Index (HDI), the most recent report criticizes Canada and France, the top two countries, for still having significant problems with poverty, specifically noting that “their progress in human development has been poorly distributed”. With respect to the newly added “human poverty index” of the HDI, Canada placed 10th and France seventh out of 17 rich nations -- ahead of the United States (17th) and Britain (15th), but behind Italy (fifth), Germany (third) and Sweden (first). Moreover, on a global scale, the report highlighted some interesting perspectives on spending priorities.



* Estimated additional annual cost to achieve universal access to basic social services in all developing countries.

Sources: Euromonitor 1997; UN 1997g; UNDP; UNFPA and UNICEF 1994; Worldwide Research, Advisory and Business Intelligence Service 1997

On the other hand, several recent studies have questioned the claim that greater income inequality and polarization of the workforce have occurred in recent times. In a comparative analysis of income inequality in Canada and the United States between 1974 and 1995, Wolfson and Murphy contend that a large proportion of Canadian families had absolutely higher purchasing power than their American counterparts, and that in both countries, individual earnings polarization fell over the period from 1985-1995. Further research into this issue will be required in order to reconcile such conflicting interpretations of the current state of income inequality and disposable family income in Canada, but there are several points worth bearing in mind in the context of social cohesion and other areas of concern to the Policy Research Committee.

First, there are two different notions of competitiveness. These alternatives may affect different normative and methodological stances taken with respect to the measurement of inequality and polarization.

The first notion of competitiveness is one of cost-minimization. This notion of competitiveness has a clear short-term focus on the survival of an enterprise in the current and next fiscal year. In this view, one of the first costs to be minimized is the wage bill. Corporate restructuring has led to dramatic increases in permanent lay-offs, a persistent trend toward non-standard work, and untold, uncounted costs of under-employment (especially among younger workers). While productivity appears to have increased in the short-run according to this notion, it remains far from clear that social wealth and human capital can (or have) increased at all under such a regime. Indeed, what seems clear to many is that such cost-minimization leads to growing economic insecurity for Canadians, and has produced a trend toward the polarization of jobs and income. Thus, beginning with their inaugural 1994 Rethinking Government project and running throughout subsequent iterations of the study, Ekos Research Associates have discerned a growing rift between the comfortable and the insecure segments of Canadian society on a variety of issues. The strength of this polarizing trend also are demonstrated in the dramatic divergence in real wage levels since 1974 identified by Morissette, Myles and Picot: real earnings of 25-30 year olds with full-time jobs have fallen 20% relative to workers over 30 years of age in this period.

The second notion of competitiveness focuses on the long-term success of a society in generating economic growth and well-being for its citizens. While costs are still important in this view, the dominant theme is one of investing in human and social capital. In this model, we see new compensation systems emerging in the workplace which stress pay for performance. According to this model, corporate and government strategies are preoccupied with creating a learning culture, indeed a continuous learning culture in which workers acquire technical knowledge, problem-solving skills, and the capacity to work autonomously. In such a context, building human and social capital is also recognized as a particularly challenging intergenerational issue deserving attention. According to Judith Maxwell, “there is a strong sense of building human and social capital which will serve the needs of the economy and of society not only in this fiscal year, but in generations to come”.

As noted above, further research and analysis is required to clarify how these different notions of competitiveness may affect alternative estimates and interpretations of income inequality and the potential for polarization of the workforce and other aspects of society. Several studies underway in support of the Social Cohesion Network’s research workplan have begun to address these concerns.

In a wide-ranging exploration of income inequality in the primary agriculture sector, Waithe, Zafiriou and Niekamp present data on the distribution of family income and various statistical measures of income inequality and polarization and their impact on different types of farms, provinces, etc. They note that income polarization has marginally increased for non-farm families during the last decade. But from an historical perspective, farm family income inequality has decreased dramatically between 1971 and 1995. Interestingly, in the agriculture sector, the sorts of age and gender issues driving earnings inequality in the general population appear to be less significant. Nonetheless, it is important to bear in mind that in 1995-96, federal support in the form of income support and stabilization, crop insurance, ad hoc programs, cost reductions, financing assistance, storage and freight totaled more than \$4 billion. Here, as in so many other contexts pertaining to income inequality and trends toward polarization, the extent and specific nature of government social transfers seems critical in assessing the overall structural income equality and potential polarization of the Canadian workforce.

In a related study by Vera-Toscano of the University of Aberdeen in Scotland, exploring the dynamics of income (particularly low-income) in rural and small town Canada (RST) as compared to large urban centres (LUC), several significant differences between the two sub-samples are evident. The extent of low-incomes is slightly lower in RSTs, while the proportion of high incomes is considerably higher in the LUCs. In the RSTs, low income also represents a vital link in the “cycle of deprivation/exclusion” as those experiencing low-income confront serious difficulties accessing a wide range of services and programs. The study also notes that most of what we know about conditions of disadvantage in rural areas is based upon static snapshots that have placed emphasis on counting the numbers of the poor or disadvantaged at a given point in time. In this context, Vera-Toscano contends that there has been little concern with exploring the processes and mechanisms of social exclusion and “the factors that can trigger entry or exit from situations of exclusion”. Here again, the extent and nature of social transfers seems critical to an overall assessment of the comparative income inequality and potential polarization of the workforce. Bearing this in mind, our Report now turns its attention to some of the axes of community identification which may help Canadians bridge a number of the faultlines sketched thus far.

THEME 2 - AXES OF COMMUNITY IDENTIFICATION

The Government of Canada is not alone in its concern about the implications of changing attachments to communities on the social cohesion of national societies. No less an authority than the Club of Rome, whose 1972 book *The Limits of Growth* transformed how we think about sustainable development, published a book in 1998 entitled *The Limits of Social Cohesion* that posed the following questions:

- How do we perceive our identity, both in individual and collective terms?
- How do pluralistic societies develop cultural and normative orientations?

- How can normative conflicts be solved in an acceptable constructive way?
- What holds a society together?

These questions are becoming relevant to governments around the world, as societies everywhere become more diverse and global forces exacerbate cleavages between haves and have-nots. Building a sense of community is now a key challenge for nation states and, as was noted by the OECD in a 1997 report, *Societal Cohesion and the Globalising Economy - What Does the Future Hold?*, may be a critical factor in their overall success :

... profound and unanticipated transformations are not a virtue *per se*. Nor are tests of human adaptability. Rather, it is safe to assume that most people prefer a world where life is characterised by stability, continuity, predictability, and secure access to material well-being. Societies with these attributes garner more easily the commitment and adherence that sustain societal cohesion over time.

The Social Cohesion Network has spent the past 18 months exploring various axes of community in Canada. As this work progressed, it became clear that a cohesive society is not one where conflict was absent. Rather, cohesive societies find ways to reinforce a sense of community through the constructive management and resolution of conflict. A healthy democratic process is, in fact, fundamental to both social and economic cohesion, but one of the initial messages emerging from research findings is this process may need to be strengthened. Another message -- not unexpected -- is that axes of community are changing, but governments have not yet developed the mechanisms to link these communities in ways that add up to a *national* sense of community. The following sub-sections describe the major findings of our research so far.

VALUES AND COMMUNITY

A recent international comparative study by Smith and Jarkko, based on the 1995 International Social Survey, has shown that Canadians score high on national pride -- third among 23 countries on measures of pride in national achievements. A similar result emerged from the 1990 World Values Survey, where Canada ranked third among 12 countries on the national pride scale, with just over 60% of respondents saying they were very proud to be Canadian. However, an analysis of these results by Professor Neil Nevitte of the University of Toronto found that levels of pride among francophone Canadians had shifted downward significantly between the 1981 and 1990 World Values Surveys -- from 52% to 39%.

The definition of who we are as a people has been a moving target for the last half century. The federal state and Canadian society have been caught up in a vortex of pressures between new identities emerging from below and struggling for recognition, and ...government attempts from above to refashion collectivities in the light of state purposes. The transformation in political identity and conceptions of community since the Second World War have already been immense, but the end is not yet in sight".

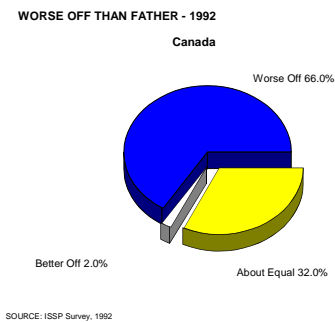
Alan C. Cairns, "The Canadian Constitutional Experiment" (1984), in D. E. Williams, ed., *Constitution, Government and Society in Canada*, 1988

Over the past year, the Canada Information Office (CIO) has been monitoring polling data on Canadian values, particularly as these pertain to attachment to the national community. Its analysis confirms lower levels of attachment to Canada among youth, particularly francophone youth. Studies reviewed by the CIO also highlighted the need to enhance civility across the diverse cultural and linguistic groups in Canada and to build trust between governments and citizens.

A series of questions posed to Canadians by the polling firm Angus Reid in September 1998 appeared to suggest that enhancing civility and promoting positive feelings about the country may be as simple as increasing contact between Canadians of different regions and cultures. The results of this poll (shown in the accompanying table) demonstrate that Canadians outside of Quebec who hear French spoken frequently and who have had contact with francophones express much more positive attitudes to official language education and use, as well as to feelings of national identity than those with less frequent interaction.

Impact of Contact with Francophones on Canadians Outside Quebec (Source: Angus Reid, September 1998)						
	Hear French spoken		Contact with Francophones		Visited Francophone community	
	Never	Weekly	None	Several	Never	4+ times
Having two official languages is important to my sense of what it means to be a Canadian	43%	72%	50%	73%	55%	71%
It's important that Canada's schools teach today's children to speak both English and French	57%	84%	68%	87%	70%	84%

An important component of attachment is the sense that individuals can achieve a certain level of well-being in their community. A study of the evolution of Canadian values during the 1980s and early 1990s, carried out by Jeannotte, Leuty and Aizlewood of the Department of Canadian Heritage, found that most Canadians continue to believe that hard work leads to success. At the same time there is decreasing optimism that such hard work will indeed contribute to improvements in one's life. This was particularly evident among rural and small-town Canadians, only 16% of whom felt hopeful about their chances of getting ahead in Canada, as compared to 39% of those living in cities. Overall, only a tiny fraction of Canadians (2%) thought they were better off than their fathers. Lower income Canadians were the least optimistic about their relative prosperity, but this feeling was also surprisingly strong among the middle-income group. The research team concluded that Canadians became less happy and satisfied over the decade of the 1980s, despite sustained economic growth during most of that period. A growing cleavage between the "haves" and "have nots" has emerged, and to a lesser extent between younger and older Canadians, with possibly negative implications for the continuing sense of Canada as a sharing and caring community.



CULTURE, INFORMATION AND COMMUNITIES

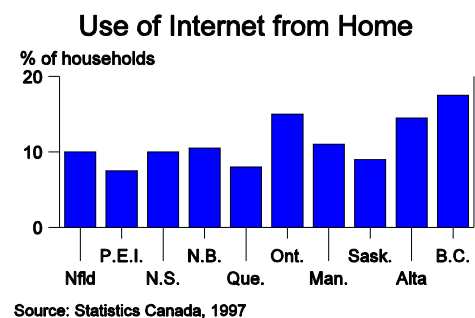
We form our images of ourselves through many avenues, but one of the principal means of building a sense of community in the 20th century has been through the mass media of books and magazines, sound recording, film and broadcasting. Between the mid-1930s and the early 1980s, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation/ Société Radio-Canada was one of the chief means by which Canadians developed and maintained a sense of national community, broadcasting in both official languages and in both television and radio. However, beginning in the 1970s and accelerating during the next two decades, technological developments such as satellite broadcasting and cable television increased the number and variety of broadcast programming available to Canadians. These changes coincided with rapid advances in information technology, particularly the Internet, which further expanded the quantity and variety of information potentially accessible to Canadians and diluted the messages conveyed by the national mass media. Today, Canadians potentially have access to hundreds of television channels and countless millions of Web sites and chat groups throughout the world.

This post-modern information environment corresponds with (or perhaps has created) a world trade regime that has opened borders and intensified exchanges of people, goods and services. Pressures to "think global" have created a class of what Robert Reich has called "symbolic analysts" -- well-educated and well-off individuals for whom national identities and borders are becoming meaningless and who are adept at manipulating information for profit. For those who do not fall into this class, the question of access to information and community identification has also become more complex. The fight to protect shrinking manufacturing bases and jobs often becomes intertwined with local or ethnic identities, which are sometimes more intense foci of symbolic loyalty than formal national identity. Even those who are not under immediate economic pressure have become more accustomed to thinking in terms of multiple identities -- with gender,

region, religion, nationality or profession the predominant identifier, depending upon which type of information channel they are using and in what type of social context they find themselves at any given moment.

One indicator of social cohesion is the level of participation in the cultural life of one's community. This includes consumption of cultural products through various media, but also citizens' level of involvement in cultural activities, either as spectator or participant. Through participation in the cultural life of their communities, citizens are exposed to a wealth of new opportunities for communication, understanding and action. A recent study published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has, for example, linked increased cultural activity to urban renewal, citing a number of cases in Britain and Western Europe where cultural initiatives have enhanced social cohesion, reduced criminal behaviour and stimulated innovative approaches to urban regeneration. Participants at a June 1998 colloquium sponsored by the Canadian Cultural Research Network underlined the need for a re-thinking of cultural policy which would revisit its traditional linkage to national identity and economic growth and re-emphasize its linkage to individual development, democratic citizenship and civil society.

The Social Cohesion Network shares many of the concerns of the Knowledge-based Economy / Society (KBE/S) pilot project with regard to access to information technology. Often, information access is key to both the economic and cultural well-being of individual citizens. In 1997, 36% of Canadian households had a computer and 13% had access to the Internet. But this new medium is beyond the reach of many Canadians, particularly women, certain ethnic groups, those with lower incomes and those living in rural and remote regions of the country, and may not be providing the type of information that Canadians need to feel part of the national community.



The Advisory Group on Accessibility to Digitized Content, which reported in 1997 to the Federal Digitization Task Force, developed an "Access, Use and Remuneration Continuum" that suggested two co-existing information models are necessary in a free, democratic and socially cohesive society. One considers the user as citizen who requires universal and free access to essential and key information (for example, on rights and obligations, health and public safety, Canadian heritage and cultural expression). The second model regards the user as consumer who requires optimal access to information for private or commercial use on a user-pay or cost recovery basis. The private sector will generally promote and reinforce the second model, but the first is primarily the domain of the public sector. As the sub-section on "Democracy and civic knowledge" suggests, information basic to Canadian citizenship and identity may be becoming lost in the flood of other messages washing over us.

During the past 18 months, many of the departments and agencies in the Social Cohesion Network have been participating in the Ekos Research Associates survey on *The Information Highway and the Canadian Communications Household*. They are also currently exploring with Statistics Canada the feasibility of a survey on *Citizen Access and Participation in Communication Technologies*. Combined results from these studies will help us to determine the demographics of users and non-users and whether Canadian content is adequately available on-line.

The Social Cohesion Research Plan has yielded a couple of studies that have explored public policy issues related to advanced communications technologies. Karim of the Department of Canadian Heritage looked at how digital technologies, such as the Internet and digital broadcast satellites, have enabled transnational ethnic groups to expand their communication activities to a global scale. He concluded that there is a need for research to better understand the effects that diasporic communities are having on nation states, particularly in light of the emergence of digital technologies and international deregulation in the communications sector. De Santis, also from Canadian Heritage, examined how countries are addressing offensive content on the Internet. She found several barriers to policy making in this area, including

difficulties in reconciling freedom of expression and the protection of human dignity, conflicting cultural attitudes and values with regard to controversial content, and many “virtual jurisdiction” problems that made it difficult to identify and prosecute offenders.

Research in this area is only just beginning, but will likely advance further as a result of a series of conferences on Information Society issues to be held by the KBE/S pilot project during the coming year.

DEMOCRACY AND CIVIC KNOWLEDGE

At a Public Policy Forum search conference on the public interest, held in September 1997, Professor James Tully of the University of Victoria characterized the “conversation” among citizens, public servants and elected officials as the life blood of democratic society. Yet, during both the welfare state era of the 1960s and 1970s and the neo-conservative era of the 1980s and 1990s, little attention has been paid to this democratic exchange. Indeed, one of the ironies uncovered in the course of our research on social cohesion is that Canadians rank number one in the world in terms of pride in our democracy (Smith and Jarkko), but at the same time score low on tests of civic knowledge.

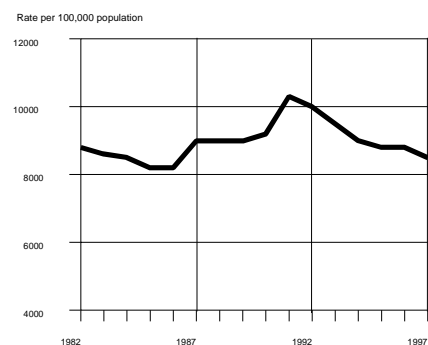
... international treaties such as NAFTA which seek to create common economic markets beg the question of a higher order membership in a continental economic and political unit, just as does the creation of a European common market. Hence, an appropriate education must recognize the need for a flexible citizenship created out of and respectful of multiple identities, or ways of belonging, and must allow for complex social interactions and participation.

Yvonne Hébert in “Citizenship Education: Yes, but How? - Towards a Pedagogy of Social Participation and Identity Formation”, 1997

A 1998 study of Canadian citizenship education by Sears, Clarke and Hughes of the University of New Brunswick noted a continued reluctance among teachers to engage students in critical, participatory approaches to civic education, perhaps as a result of a lack of clarity within the school system about what needs to be learned or how citizenship education should be taught. The fruits of this neglect have shown up recently in a few well-publicized studies. In 1997, the Dominion Institute found that 45% of Canadians surveyed could not pass the standard Citizenship Exam given to new immigrants. In 1998, only 50% of Canadians could pass the Institute’s “Canada Quiz” on Canadian history.

While there has been some criticism of the Dominion Institute’s findings as reflecting an elitist view of civic knowledge, other studies have confirmed the overall message. An assessment of the British Columbia social studies curriculum in 1996 by Bognar, Cassidy and Clark found a four to five per cent drop in student performance between 1989 and 1996. Students showed a limited understanding of questions relating to law, government, Canadian politics and history and were only marginally informed on the individual’s role in society, in the democratic process and in the function of law and government. They concluded that the possible long-term consequences of falling levels of civic knowledge would be an increasingly alienated citizenry -- less involved in community issues, less confident of democratic traditions and more inclined to socially dysfunctional behaviour.

Crime Rate, 1982 to 1997



SOURCE: Statistics Canada, The Daily, July 22, 1998

A series of studies by the Department of Justice found widespread lack of knowledge about crime and the criminal justice system. For example, a 1994 study by Roberts discovered numerous misconceptions about crime rates (most Canadians think that crime rates are much higher than they actually are). Many Canadians also appear to be ill-informed about the nature of legal rights. The perception that “crime is out of control” and that the courts are too lenient is leading the public to believe that more severe sentences will reduce crime rates, a belief that is not borne out by factual evidence or comparative studies of the American justice system.

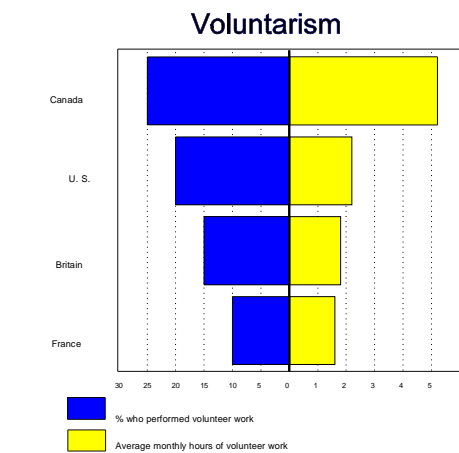


Lack of knowledge also has consequences for that most fundamental of citizen responsibilities -- the exercise of one's vote. A 1998 study of the attributes of Canadian citizenship by Nevitte used the 1993 Canadian Election Study to probe the statistical relationship between knowledge and voting. He found that interest in Canadian politics was growing, although there were still pockets of low interest among the young, the less well-educated, the unemployed, those with low incomes and francophones. Women, in particular, tended to say that they were well-informed about Canadian politics, yet were out-performed by men on a political knowledge test. In fact, only one in five who considered themselves well-informed about politics could pass the knowledge test in the 1993 Canadian Election Study. The study also found that those who were least interested and knowledgeable were also much less likely to vote.

The low levels of political literacy uncovered by Nevitte were confirmed by Ekos Research Associates in the 1998 survey on *Rethinking Citizen Engagement*. Political literacy was found to be higher in men and among older, better-off Canadians. Even though respondents rated being informed about politics and public issues as important, actual knowledge was found to be quite low. Additional research to explore these issues in more depth is being undertaken by the Citizenship Education Research Network, a newly-formed network of academics and practitioners in citizenship education.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Citizen participation and civic engagement can take many forms, ranging from voting to participation in political parties to involvement in community organizations. About 75% of respondents to both the 1997 Statistics Canada *National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating* and the Ekos citizen engagement survey reported voting in the 1997 federal election, although Elections Canada statistics indicate that actual voter turnout was 67%. Close to 80% said that they followed news and current affairs daily. Statistics Canada found that 19% of Canadians belonged to work-related organizations (such as unions and professional associations), 18% to sports-related organizations and 13% to religious organizations. Participation tended to be higher among Quebecers, the middle-aged, men, married people, those with higher educations and incomes, the employed and the actively religious.



Source: 1994 International Giving and Volunteering Survey

In comparison to other countries, Canadians are among the most generous of peoples. For example, the 1994 *International Survey of Giving and Volunteering* showed that 62% of all Canadians made donations, a larger percentage than in the United States and France. Canadians also made the largest average monthly donations (\$52.66) of any of the countries examined. Statistics Canada's *National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating* found that 88% of Canadians reported making donations in 1996-97. Levels of volunteering were up slightly since 1987, when a more limited survey was done, with about 31% of Canadians saying that they volunteered in 1997, as compared to 28% in 1987, although average number of volunteer hours declined from 191 to 164 during the decade. About half of all Canadians said that they were members of community organizations, while 71% reported that they helped friends and relatives directly rather than going through an organization.

Figures like these suggest that American concern about declines in civic participation may not be applicable in Canada. However, while suggesting a robust level of civic engagement, the Statistics Canada data also revealed that there are "pockets of involvement" in the community. The 31% of Canadians who volunteer also provide 62% of charitable donations and are more likely to help neighbours and relatives, belong to community organizations and vote. Those most likely to donate are older Canadians, women, those who are married and employed, and those with higher educations and incomes. Those most likely to volunteer are the young, women, those with higher educations and incomes, and those who are employed (particularly part-timers). The propensity to volunteer was also significantly higher among residents of the Prairies and

those who were actively religious. The principal motivations for volunteering were belief in the cause supported by the organization and the opportunity to use skills and experience. The principal barrier was lack of time.

Canadians are now intensifying the demand for more input into government policies and programs. The Ekos *Rethinking Civic Engagement* and *Rethinking Government* surveys showed a keen appetite among the general public for consultation on key public policy issues, such as health care, social programs and unemployment. The surveys also revealed striking differences between decision makers and the general public, with decision makers tending to view social programs as less important to the well-being of Canadian society and being less receptive to engaging citizens in the public policy decision making process.

In general, Canadians are skeptical about the level of influence that the average citizen can have on key public policies. This cynicism and lack of trust, which we will discuss in greater detail under Theme 3, is one of the barriers to greater citizen engagement with governments. Another barrier, as described above, may be the “democratic deficit”: low levels of civic knowledge among citizens exacerbated by lack of mechanisms through which governments can foster constructive engagement. Despite these problems, a few federal departments and agencies are experimenting with participatory research initiatives that are intended to engage citizens in studying and addressing priority issues in their communities. These include:

- Environment Canada’s Millennium Eco-Communities Initiative, Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative and Arctic Borderlands Ecological Cooperative
- The Canadian Rural Partnership, led by the Rural Secretariat, in which 23 federal departments and agencies are involved in a citizen engagement process through the Rural Dialogue
- the Law Commission of Canada
- the National Crime Prevention Council
- the Ontario Rural Women Abuse Study (discussed in some detail under Theme 1).

THE CARING COMMUNITY

One of the most disturbing new features of Canadian communities over the past decade or so has been the growing numbers of homeless, panhandlers and “squeegee kids” in the streets. A major concern of the Social Cohesion Network is the impact that increasingly visible numbers of “have-nots” are having on Canadian communities and on the attitudes and values of Canadian citizens.

A new perspective is required which does not discount the objective social damage, human, health, security, and financial costs of poverty and social exclusion in terms of violent crime, destruction of life and health or property lost through social disintegration or unemployment--societies cannot be safer or healthier than their poorest.

European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, Welfare in a Civil Society, Report for the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Social Affairs, Bratislava, June 28-July 2, 1993

A report completed for the Department of Justice by J. Ann Hewitt in 1994 concluded that we know very little about the extent or persistence of homelessness in Canada. The last national survey on this subject was carried out in 1987. In the 1991 Census, Statistics Canada attempted to count people in soup kitchens and in shelters, but the data quality was too poor to be released. Anecdotal evidence, however, suggests that the problem is growing. The UNICEF 1998 annual report, *Progress of Nations*, estimated that Canada has about 200,000 homeless people and noted that “Such concepts as the existence of a social contract, of community, of concern for the long-term good or even of public morality are discarded as people ignore the growing simultaneous presence of high levels of prosperity on the one hand and of homelessness on the other.” The Justice study suggested that the structural reasons for homelessness are complex, including such factors as racial discrimination and deinstitutionalization of psychiatric patients. It found that the primary cause of homelessness among women and youth was domestic violence. Among men, the primary causes were unemployment, alcoholism and jail release.

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) has done some research on this issue. Preliminary findings from CMHC’s ongoing study of youth housing issues suggest that homelessness is a



pressing concern, combined with other problems such as addiction, violence and low levels of schooling. The CMHC also intends to develop a profile of Aboriginal homelessness, as well as a series of scenarios in 1999 that will explore potential housing Aboriginal housing futures in the three major Prairie cities.

Homelessness is perhaps the most visible manifestation of what UNICEF has referred to as “the demonization of caring government”. In a Statistics Canada paper on *Parent-Child Exchanges of Supports and Intergenerational Equity*, Stone, Rosenthal and Connidis explored sociological motivations for care-giving and looked at the public-private balance within the caring community. They found that unpaid work and informal care-giving was more extensive than the formal supports of one generation to another (for example, through the pension system). In fact, they concluded that “Over the life course, private exchange of supports between parents and children is not balanced. It heavily favours the children.”

The fairness of this balance is currently an object of contention between those who favour a contraction of the welfare state, in the interest of current taxpayers and future generations, and those who fear the consequences for already stressed families. Stone, Rosenthal and Connidis suggest that “The psychic rewards that flow from the experience of social bonding, through offering reciprocal gifts of one’s time, goods, or services, promote the build-up of social cohesion at several levels -- inter-personal, familial and community”. On the other hand, research done for Status of Women Canada on the effects of the Canada Health and Social Transfer contends that diminished commitment to social programs by all levels of government has had significant negative impacts on women and children. These researchers argue that off-loading responsibility for ambulatory care on to families and short-changing child care programs, rather than strengthening social cohesion, may instead compromise many of the broad national goals of social policy, such as healthy children and improved quality of life for the elderly.

Research on the characteristics of caring communities in Canada has been lacking, but in terms of social cohesion, it is probably safe to say that the battle-lines are being drawn between the haves and the have-nots. While Canadian traditions of compassion are important, this is clearly one of those public policy areas where more than constructive consensus-building initiatives will be required to balance the interests of taxpayers and care-givers, home-owners and homeless, and current and future generations. Tangible investment also appears to be a necessary ingredient to ensure that social exclusion does not begin to erode social cohesion. This report now turns to the implications that not making such investment may have for the Canadian economy, Canadian identity and Canadian governance systems in the public, private and third sectors.



THEME 3 - IMPLICATIONS OF CHANGES IN SOCIAL COHESION

INTRODUCTION

In deciding how to tackle this theme, the *Social Cohesion Research Workplan* posed the blunt, but germane, question, “so what?”. Why should the Network be concerned about faultlines and about their potential impact on the Canadian community? As federal public servants, we naturally have an obligation to consider how rising levels of cynicism and mistrust may be affecting the effectiveness of governing institutions. But, as Canadians, our concern is much broader. We also wish to know if changes in social cohesion are having an impact on our country’s economic performance, whether there are linkages between a strong sense of national identity and social cohesion and whether feeling attached to one’s local community lessens or reinforces our sense of attachment to Canada.

... social cohesion does far more than fight against poverty: it not only implies specific social policies to combat unemployment and poverty while improving access to housing, healthcare and education, but it aims above all to restore the social link between the individual and the community, and the political link between citizens and the State.

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Fighting social exclusion and strengthening social cohesion in Europe, 1998

Our curiosity about these matters is not simply academic. Nation states that fail to maintain at least a minimum of trust and respect for their institutions may face increasing governance problems. Often, these



levels of trust are linked to the health of the economy and of the social fabric, and cannot be separated from how citizens view their personal prospects within the national community. And, while governments at all levels are democratically obligated to address these issues, they are far from alone in either diagnosing the problems or finding the solutions. The notion of civil society, which was a central concern of Theme 2, is also relevant here, since all citizens -- whether they be individual, corporate, third sector or governmental -- may need to assume more responsibility for promoting economic and social well-being.

The sense that “we are all in this together” may be at the root of social cohesion, but we are far from understanding just what promotes this feeling and what may hinder it. During the past 18 months, the Social Cohesion Network has concentrated most of its efforts on investigating and analyzing potential fractures or faultlines and on looking at how they might be affecting our sense of community. A few major initiatives have been launched under Theme 3, but may only start to yield results over the coming months. For the moment, we have concentrated on building our understanding in this area and in creating the research alliances needed to investigate the implications of changes in social cohesion more fully.

ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

Lars Osberg of Dalhousie University explored in a 1992 paper some of the ways in which economic policies may affect social cohesion. He noted that unemployment, especially if it persists over an extended period, leads to increased rates of social dysfunction, ranging from depression to family violence to substance abuse. Not only is productivity lost, but the increased dysfunction experienced by those involuntarily separated from the workforce can lead to increased demands on the welfare system or on the law enforcement and correctional systems.

The society and economy have to be seen as a sort of reciprocating engine, where economic growth reinforces social cohesion and where social cohesion contributes to economic growth.

Dick Stanley in “The Economic Consequences of Social Cohesion”, 1997

The exact extent of societal costs stemming from such dysfunction are notoriously difficult to estimate because of statistical inadequacies, but in a few instances hard figures are available. The Social Cohesion Network has been unable to find studies that have attempted to calculate the full costs of dysfunction and lack of social cohesion to the economy. However, a few studies have looked at specific social problems and attempted to quantify their impact.

For example, in a 1997 study, Eric Single of the Canadian Centre for Substance Abuse calculated that substance abuse cost Canadians more than \$18.4 billion in 1992 or about \$649 per capita. A 1998 study by the National Institute on Drug Abuse and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism estimated that the economic cost of alcohol and drug abuse in the United States in 1992 was \$246 billion or \$965 per capita. Graves, Hankivsky and Kingston-Ricchers of the Centre for Research on Violence Against Women estimated the annual partial costs of violence against women at nearly \$4.3 billion. These estimates are incomplete due to fragmentary or non-existent data in the relevant policy areas of social services, criminal justice, labour and health. Of the estimated costs, governments were responsible for 87.5%, while individuals were responsible for 11.5%.

Mark Cohen of the Owen Graduate School of Management has suggested that each youth diverted from a life of crime saves society more than a million dollars. The Canadian Council of Social Development has derived statistical evidence from the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth and the National Health Survey showing that children living in low income households have poorer health, lower scores on vocabulary and math tests and lower participation rates in sports, but has not been able to attach hard figures to this undeniably dysfunctional situation.

Beyond social exclusion, researchers such as Richard Wilkinson of the University of Sussex, have attempted to link economic inequality to health outcomes. Wilkinson’s findings suggest that it is not the richest societies that have the best health, but those that have the smallest income differences between rich and poor. Several other studies, including one by Smith, Neaton, Wentworth, Stamler and Stamler of the University of



Bristol on mortality differences between black and white men in the United States, have confirmed that socioeconomic position is a major contributor to differences in death rates.

Since Paul Romer's endogenous growth model (1986) showed that there were increasing returns to knowledge, economists have come to realize that social structure and social processes contain important variables for explaining economic growth and productivity. Recent research undertaken as part of the Department of Canadian Heritage's academic research program has revealed that social cohesion is a force which can positively contribute to economic growth.

McCracken^{1*} of Informetrica Ltd. proposed that networks, which are fundamental properties of a society, are at the origin of much of the productivity of societies. The value of a network arises from the number of linkages, not the number of nodes. Since the number of linkages is much greater than the number of nodes, networks enhance productivity. Conversely, reducing the size of a network creates disproportionately large problems. McCracken has suggested that the breakdown of Canada's social compact has had serious negative consequences for the Canadian economy. With downsizing of corporations, declining real wages, government cutbacks of social insurance programs, abandonment of regional development and downloading of programs onto the provinces, this social compact was broken. As a result, the social stability and moral authority of the nation is now threatened, economic growth has slowed, and there has been a reduction in political support for free trade, capital mobility, open immigration and deregulation. McCracken cited recent evidence from comparative studies of countries around the world showing that trust and social cohesion are positively and significantly related to economic growth and prosperity.

Investment, both foreign and domestic, is encouraged by the presence of social cohesion. Stanley and Smeltzer* of the Department of Canadian Heritage have demonstrated that investors are attracted to a country because costs are low and productivity is high, that is, because they expect a high return on their investment. Their review of recent literature (including several empirical studies) suggests that social cohesion acts upon an economy to lower costs and increase productivity. Social cohesion increases amenity values in a country (safe streets, caring neighbourhoods) which can be traded off against salaries and can reduce the need for security and protection, both physical and legal, thus reducing overhead costs. It increases labour and political stability, meaning that there is less risk in making investments. Social cohesion also increases productivity. Socially cohesive employees are more enthusiastic, and social cohesion reduces social dysfunction, freeing workers to be fully productive. As knowledge workers become a larger and larger proportion of the workforce, these properties of social cohesion will become even more important.

Phipps* of Dalhousie University has looked at the effect of community and social cohesion on childhood. She examined economic outcomes from the child's point of view, that is measuring the overall well being and happiness of the child, and not relying on more traditional measures such as command over material resources which do not apply to childhood. She found that home and community stability and a wide network of nurturing relationships -- all elements of social cohesion -- play a crucial part in contributing to the well being of a child. These measures of well being are highly correlated with traditional adult economic success measures, such as starting salaries, lifetime income, ease of obtaining employment, etc.

Woolley* of Carleton University explored the characteristics of the of the voluntary sector and the economic motives for individual participation. She found that the largest categories of volunteer activity are religious groups and professional associations. She speculated about the ability of the voluntary sector to attract new participants needed to absorb the responsibilities and fulfil the expectations being placed upon it by the reduction in government services. This subject will be further explored as this preliminary research progresses.

Differing degrees of cohesion can have an impact on provision of economically critical services such as education. Friesen* of Simon Fraser University looked at trends in community social cohesion and found that community solidarity can be used as a tool for exclusion and as the basis for unequal distribution of services. For example, zoning in a community can limit access to the community school to only those classes

¹ The asterisks (*) indicate presentations made at the *Policy Research: Creating Linkages Conference* that will be published in the coming months.

that can afford to live in the neighbourhood. As a result, the community school can become effectively privatized. Among the policy solutions she explores are charter schools as a means of ensuring broad access to services.

Helliwell* of the University of British Columbia, using the World Values Study, compared the differing degrees of social cohesion in regions of Canada to see if they made a difference in income levels for the residents of those regions. While there appear to be differences in the degree of social cohesion in different regions of Canada, incomes have steadily converged over the past twenty years. This would appear to indicate that differences in social cohesion levels do not make much difference in levels of income. However, convergence of incomes is due to the effects of inter-regional income transfers in Canada and the lack of resistance to workers as they move to jobs in other parts of the country. He argued that these two phenomena are in fact aspects of social cohesion (ie. the political will in Canada to share wealth between richer and poorer regions, and tolerance toward migrants from one region to another). Convergence can therefore be shown to be evidence of a positive economic consequence of social cohesion.

Research into the economic consequences of social cohesion, both under the aegis of the Department of Canadian Heritage, and funded by SSHRC and other agencies, will continue in the next phase of the Network's workplan.

TRUST AND FUNCTIONING OF INSTITUTIONS

As alluded to earlier in this Report, concern about social cohesion in a society is ultimately a concern about the legitimacy of its institutions of governance, both formal and informal. When social dynamics like the faultlines discussed thus far exceed the capacity of its institutions -- governmental, non-governmental and private -- to achieve an adequate degree of consensus about future challenges, choices and changes appropriate to citizens' shared interests and concerns, a crisis of legitimacy can result and a sense that "things are falling apart" may become widespread. In such circumstances, the resulting fear for many is that unwanted but avoidable social and personal costs and suffering will occur. As Jane Jenson explains in her forthcoming CPRN study for the Social Cohesion Network, *Mapping Social Cohesion: The State of Canadian Research*:

The decline of deference ... presents a monumental challenge. How to restore faith in government? How to renew confidence in leaders and institutions, and to restore the depleted reservoirs of trust? And how to reverse a deeper slide into cynicism?

Neil Nevitte in The Decline of Deference - Canadian Value Change in Cross-national Perspective, 1996

"the concept has gained popularity as a way of maintaining social order each time that economic turbulence and political adjustment has loosened the moorings of familiar patterns and practices. At the end of the 19th century, in the 1930's and 1940's, and again today the concept of social cohesion appeals to social commentators who fear social turmoil associated with new forms of production, patterns of gender and other social relations, and population movement. At each of these times popular discourse expressed fears and uncertainty..."

In such times, a common response, among others, is to seek mechanisms and institutions which might foster a stronger sense of shared values and commitment to community or axes of community identification as reflected in the perspective adopted by the Policy Research Committee with respect to social cohesion. A critical challenge for all governments hoping to achieve greater senses of shared values and community is the degree of trust that exists between citizens and their public leaders. Unfortunately, for over a decade now, Canadians have rapidly lost respect for their public institutions and lack faith in their politicians. Strengthening social cohesion in such times will be especially challenging, requiring serious consideration of a variety of institutional issues and new partnerships including the very relationship between citizens and the state, the state and civil society, and the Canadian state to the international community.

To put the matter in some perspective, the phenomenon of declining trust in government is not unique, nor new, to Canada (see for example, D. Williams, 1991). A recent U.S. survey undertaken by the Washington Post, the Kaiser Family Foundation, and Harvard University found that only four percent of Americans have a

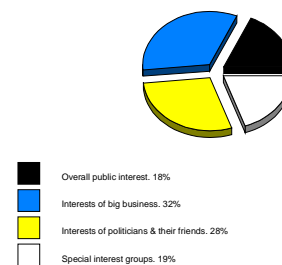


great deal of confidence in Congress, and the Clinton Administration was not far behind with only nine percent (cited in D. Zussman, 1997). Presumably, confidence in the Clinton Administration has slid considerably more in the wake of the Lewinsky affair. Interestingly, this trend is even more prevalent in countries which were previously part of the Eastern European Bloc. The Centre for the Study of Public Policy at the University of Strathclyde in Scotland recently conducted a 10 nation survey examining the degree to which people in selected new democracies had trust in a variety of institutions. In the six Eastern Bloc nations, the majority of respondents indicated low levels of trust in their governments, parliaments, and civil servants (see Rose and Haerpfer, 1997).

In Canada, David Zussman, Executive Director of the Public Management Research Centre, has tracked trust in government for more than a decade and recently noted that, despite a modest improvement in confidence levels since 1993, "the overall level of confidence in Canada's political leaders and governments remains decidedly low". For example, an Environics Research Group poll found that a strong majority of Canadians (67%) continue to have little or no confidence in their political leaders (Focus Canada, 95-4: 108). Low levels of trust also reach beyond our political leaders to touch upon public institutions and government. A POLLARA study found, for example that bankers elicit higher levels of trust (32%) than public servants (21%). For a number of years, as part of the *Rethinking Government* project, Ekos Research Associates also has tracked levels of trust for different occupations and professions.

Overall, the study suggests that attitudes towards government tend to be negative and cynical. Drawing upon a number of indicators, Ekos finds that these negative attitudes can be attributed to mistrust in government, a sense of declining ethics among today's leaders, an overall lack of focus on the public interest, and a conviction that governments are no longer effective or efficient. The findings in December 1996 suggested, for example, that Canadians continue to believe that governments are out of touch with average Canadians, with 74% of respondents indicating that governments have lost sight of the needs of average Canadians, a slight decrease from the February 1994 results of 76%.

Primary Focus of Federal Government



SOURCE: Ekos Research Associates Inc., 1998

Preliminary results from Phase IV of the same study, sponsored by several of the departments from the Social Cohesion Network, continue to confirm these trends with politicians still eliciting very low levels of trust; they are considered one of the least trusted occupational groups of all. However, more positively, the draft findings of August 1998 noted a steady rise in positive feelings toward governments with 40% agreeing that government is a positive force in their lives, compared to only 33% in February 1994. Older Canadians (58%), university graduates (43%) and the unemployed (47%) were more likely to hold this view. However, when compared with other institutions in terms of how well they serve the public interest, government was still perceived quite poorly, with only 44% indicating that government is good at serving the public interest, as compared to 77% who rated non-profit and volunteer organizations as good and 50% who rated the media and public employees as good. Younger (50%) and university educated (50%) respondents were the most likely to rate government's performance as good; the unemployed (33%) the least.

There can be little doubt, as Zussman and several others suggest, that in an effort to recapture the public's confidence governments must direct their efforts in full knowledge of how fundamentally our society has changed since the 1950s and 1960s, when respect, trust and confidence were at all time highs. As suggested throughout this Report, in the context of the knowledge-based economy, government increasingly must make a strong effort to explain its new role as facilitator, as an enabling partner with other sectors of society, and to act as a non-financial broker of ideas and unifying national projects. Factors such as these led one Canadian expert on public policy, Leslie Pal, to rightly remind us that "while this new age is largely defined by smaller governments that do less while letting markets do more, the demand for governance is, if anything, increasing". The Policy Research Initiative itself might be seen as a prime example of trying to assume such new responsibilities with respect to the development of medium-term horizontal policy on the basis of sound, systematic, empirical and qualitative research, analysis and data. Complicating matters further, these new roles and responsibilities of government need to be addressed in addition to its core

activities, as traditionally defined, of tax collector, arbitrator, protector of individual and collective rights, and distributor of wealth and income, many of which have also suffered as a result of low levels of trust and confidence in government and politicians.

In this context, it might be useful to recall the Hon. Paul Martin's first letter to Canadians, written in November, 1993, just after assuming responsibility as the new Minister of Finance:

"The underground economy is not all smugglers. It is hundreds of thousands of otherwise honest people who have withdrawn their consent to be governed, who have lost faith in government. That is why over the next four years, one of the most important things that we can do is to re-establish the credibility of government and, to do that, we must restore control over the nation's finances" (cited in J. Maxwell, 1994: 43).

To date, few researchers have attempted to assess the impact of low levels of trust and confidence on different levels and types of social cohesion, but clearly work in this area will be important as the Policy Research Committee and its partners outside government address various faultlines with appropriate policies and programs and strive to strengthen the axes of community identification in Canada.

IMPLICATIONS FOR IDENTITY

As mentioned in the discussion under Theme 2, Canadians are still proud of Canada but their ties to each other may be weakening. Is social cohesion necessary for a collective sense of national identity? This is a question to which we still do not have an answer. We have, however, reviewed some of the argumentation for and against the linkage of social cohesion to national identity, and have taken some preliminary steps to explore the empirical evidence in this area.

There is more to Canada than praising medicare, complaining about winter, and musing about whether Quebec is or is not a distinct society. And on some days, you wouldn't know there is more. I am ready to declare that my generation has failed in its responsibility to transmit a sense of nationhood to its children.

Peter Mansbridge in the First Annual Lecture in Canadian Studies, Mount Allison University, February 12, 1997

An influential contemporary thinker, Michael Ignatieff, suggested in a 1996 article in the periodical *Prospect*, that since modernity's core value is freedom rather than collective solidarity, feelings of belonging to community, nation and family rank much lower than in pre-modern societies. Commenting on the British Labour government's concept of a "stakeholder society" where a renewed commitment to state entitlements is intended to build a sense of "belonging to a successful national project", Ignatieff asked how a sense of well-being and a sense of belonging are connected. He concluded that we can make the direct connection only by privileging one kind of well-being over all others, namely the one which comes with a strong sense of civic and patriotic attachment. In his view, the many sites of belonging in a modern existence lead to constant conflicts of loyalty, with a national sentiment of belonging residing only in "a sense of inclusion in what is certain to be a sharply polarized debate about objectives and priorities".

The theme of cultural inclusion looms large in much of research on national identities that we have reviewed so far. As Francis Fukuyama has observed, the consolidation of democracy occurs at four levels: ideology, institutions, civil society and culture. The chief difficulties facing liberal democracies in the future are likely to occur in the spheres of civil society and culture, with the strength of civil society usually dependent upon the cultural approach to collective identity. Spectacular failures of democracy in places such as the Balkans, he contends, are the result of a failure to accommodate group-oriented pluralism and identities within institutions based on the principle of individual rights. Richard Simeon and Elaine Willis have reinforced this message, noting that growing disaffection with institutions in Canadian society can be explained not so much by their declining capacity and performance as by the tension between the increasingly diverse values and priorities of citizens and the pressures generated by global economic forces. In other words, our national institutions, many of which have served as the principal vehicles of Canadian identity, are becoming increasingly unable to meet contradictory demands.

The likelihood that in the future civil society will house new communal bonds and emotionally grounded collective identities is very high, according to Salvador Giner of Spain's Institute for Advanced Social Studies. Such "neotribalism", as he calls it, is an inevitable reaction to anonymous and rootless corporate structures that now pervade society. Juliana Roth of the University of Munich, in examining new identities in a unified Europe, has noted a growing sensitivity to and awareness of one's own culture within the new Europe, particularly within countries that were once within the Soviet bloc. In fact, the more Western economic and political models, information, ideas and images penetrate into East European countries, the stronger the desire for new national and local identities appears to grow. Peter Berger, in a study on mediating conflicts in pluralist societies, reviews a number of societies that have faced the challenge of coming to terms with their self-perception and reassuring their identity. Some were not successful, but those that were discovered ways of establishing communication between contending parties and of building shared experience so that, over time, trust and understanding could develop and social cohesion could be maintained.

Some researchers believe that the goal of social justice must figure prominently within any strategy to strengthen social cohesion. Greg Baeker of the University of Toronto has examined the tensions between liberal democracies' emphasis on individual rights and identities at the expense of group rights and identities. He points out that in Canada the rhetoric of national identity is inclusive and pluralistic, but the experience of many ethno-racial minorities is frequently of an exclusionary and monocultural society. For example, he cites Canada's "two-tiered" cultural system where the state-subsidized, predominantly Eurocentric, arts system is linked to national identity goals, but the various forms of non-subsidized popular culture (e.g. commercial and ethnic) are left to the marketplace or to the voluntary sector. He suggests that most calls for "shared values" or "common bonds" end up suppressing difference by excluding anyone who threatens the collective identity. Consequently, the Canadian challenge in his view is not one of renewing civil society or repairing fractured cohesion, but of envisioning a new civic realm where diversity is supported by more than rhetoric.

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples sponsored a number of studies and held hearings on various aspects of Aboriginal identity and its relationship to Canadian identity. Ten learning circles were held in six locations to clarify exactly what cultural identity consists of for Aboriginal people. Absolon and Winchester, summarizing the outcome of the learning circles, concluded that modern Aboriginal identity has been shaped on the positive side by relationships to the land and to the Creator and by strong bonds to family and community. On the negative side, Aboriginal peoples share experiences of oppression and suffering as a result of colonialism and racism. Tensions sometimes arise when expressions of Aboriginal identity come into contact with mainstream Canadian society, including government institutions. Positive and accurate historical accounts and images of Aboriginal reality by the education system and the media were judged by Aboriginal peoples themselves to be helpful in enhancing their own identity. However, life in urban areas was seen as diminishing Aboriginal identity unless special efforts are made to create a supportive and non-racist environment.

Jane Jenson of the Université de Montréal has attempted to sketch some researchable questions with regard to social cohesion and national identity. She asks, where collective national identity comes from? Is social capital -- defined as "trusting connectedness" the key? Or is commitment to an "imagined community" with common political projects and symbols sufficient? Echoing Baeker, she asks what kind of belongingness is needed to foster a common civic purpose, and ends her paper with a note of concern about too enthusiastic an embrace of a research agenda which fails to acknowledge continuing claims for social justice and diverse values.

It is critical to understand the role of both the mass media and of advanced information and communications technologies in promoting or eroding national identity. Members of the Social Cohesion Network will be working closely with the Knowledge-based Economy / Society pilot project to explore questions of technology and identity. In a report prepared for the Department of Canadian Heritage, Vincent Mosco of Carleton University has stated that national governments must confront the decline of national authority and the likelihood that identity and solidarity in a knowledge-based society will be based more on local or global concerns than on national ones. He proposes a research program that would pay more attention to what constitutes a community in a knowledge-based society and what happens to existing communities, including national communities, when fundamental changes take place in the media environment.

Empirical evidence on attachment and sense of belonging to Canada, which is generally used as a proxy for national identity, is relatively plentiful from various polling firms, but few researchers have attempted to examine this attachment in a comparative context or to track it over time. The World Values Survey found that Canadians' sense of attachment to nation rose from 30% of the population in 1981 to 40% in 1990. This was a higher percentage than in the United States (30%) or among several European nations (25%). However, Graves and Jansen of Ekos Research Associates found some support for the argument of commentators such as Richard Gwyn, who remarked that Canada was not a *nation-state*, but a *state-nation*, where the state has formed and shaped our national identity and character. When asked to rate their preferred values for society against their preferred values for the federal government, Canadians generally see these values as almost identical. With core societal values inextricably connected to the federal state, these findings suggest that the impact of federal retrenchment may be affecting not only programs but also Canadians' perception of their national identity and character.

IMPLICATIONS FOR GOVERNANCE

At this point in time, it is virtually impossible to anticipate the medium- to long-term structural impacts and possible interaction among and across the various faultlines and socio-economic indicators reported upon in this Report -- the ageing population, for example, or child poverty, family violence, the likelihood of economic polarization, rural/urban disparities, the specific needs and aspirations of women, Aboriginal peoples, and the disabled, etc. But it can be said with a fair degree of confidence that a large measure of their impact on the future health, security and sense of well-being of Canadians will be determined by the success of its governance structures both formal and informal. This is especially the case with respect to efforts to strengthen social cohesion. Many of the policy levers, policies and programs likely to lead to success still lie within the control, responsibility and accountability of Canadians themselves and their leaders.

Broad based disaffection with governments and institutions is rampant as they no longer seem capable of managing the growing sense of anxiety/insecurity evident in society, resulting in a general sense malaise in public life. The common factors driving this malaise are aging populations, labour market instability, rapid pluralism and public fiscal crises.

*Ekos Research Associates Inc. in Rethinking Government III
- Final Report, 1997*

As Leslie Pal recently noted, "globalization, increasing cultural diversity, the decline of deference, and the information revolution are virtually impossible to reverse". What is not so strongly determined for Canadians, is how we choose to define and govern ourselves, collectively and individually. As the recent Report of the Bertelsmann Foundation to the Club of Rome underscores so well, notwithstanding the various limits to social cohesion that may exist, societies do vary a great deal with respect to how their institutional orders alternately polarize or successfully mediate fundamental normative conflicts and value disputes involving citizenship, national identity, the tension between modernization and traditional structures of religion, family life, authority, and the like. One of the world's leading sociologists, Peter Berger, noted in its conclusion, "in terms of social order and the peaceful resolution of normative conflicts, there are both 'good' and 'bad' macro-institutions, both 'good' and 'bad' civil-society institutions". For example, taking a page from Canada's long history of regional equalization as a model for reinforcing a national sense of a cohesive community, the European Union's Structural and Cohesion Funds over the 2000-2006 period (amounting to approximately \$440 billion Canadian dollars) will be targeted toward three objectives: 1) aid to regions whose per capita GDP is less than 75% of the Union average; 2) aid to areas affected by change in the industrial, services or fisheries sectors, rural areas in serious decline and urban districts in difficulty; and 3) regions not covered by the first two objectives which need aid to modernize their systems of education, training and employment and to combat social exclusion.

Interest in and use of the term governance has risen dramatically since 1990. For example, a database search using the Public Affairs Information Service (PAIS) -- a CD-ROM bibliographic tool covering more than 16,000 journals and 8,000 monographs, indexed each year from 1972 through 1997--reveals that over 80% of the nearly 700 titles on the subject have been published since 1990. Of those articles and monographs, approximately 60% dealt with corporate governance, approximately 10% addressed issues of educational governance, and an additional 10% focused on issues of local and self-government.



Approximately 20 titles are identified as a governance issue from a political science or governmental perspective, with the preponderance of these focusing on the reform of public institutions in developing countries. Such varying levels of interest in different forms of governance suggests, among other things, a fundamental realignment in traditional relationships between citizens, the state and civil society in countries like Canada, and that the role of formal institutions of government is quite limited in terms of several significant challenges of governance.

In a recent paper completed on behalf of the new Law Commission of Canada, Tim Plumptre of the Institute of Governance (IOG) notes that, it is perhaps not an accident that the emergence of the word governance, virtually unknown except in a few obscure texts until the late 1980's, "coincides with the realization that government needed fixing". To date, there has been very little research associated with governance and alternative types of institutional arrangements. The fact that the Law Commission of Canada itself recently decided to include a very broad range of "governance relationships" as one of its four strategic themes for research augurs well for much needed new research and analysis into personal relationships and the law, and a wide range of other subjects. As the Social Cohesion Network enters its next phase of activities, it will be crucial for it to engage a broad range of issues and problems that address the question of which institutions -- governmental, non-governmental, and voluntary, domestic and international -- are best suited to bridge the faultlines evident in Canada today.

Moreover, while some use governance and government interchangeably, this would seem to be a mistake, especially in the context of understanding social cohesion and other challenging horizontal policy issues where it is precisely a matter of boundaries, different levels and forms of participation, limited resources, and shared roles and responsibilities that are at issue. Not all social cohesion issues are amenable to action by government. Another important element is the citizen to citizen relationship. This relationship is sometimes mediated by the third sector, but can also occur spontaneously, notably in emergency situations. A major challenge awaiting researchers, analysts and policy-makers with respect to governance in the context of social cohesion is to develop a conceptual framework clarifying the many different senses of meaning and application of the term itself.

A notable contribution in this area is nearing completion with considerable relevance to a broad range of subjects related to social cohesion. In May 1998, the Panel on Accountability and Governance in the Voluntary Sector, chaired by Ed Broadbent, released a discussion paper, *Helping Canadians Help Canadians: Improving Governance and Accountability in the Voluntary Sector*. The Panel's final report, due by the end of 1998, will deepen our appreciation of how crucial volunteering has been and continues to be to Canadian democracy while seeking to enhance the effectiveness and credibility of the voluntary sector in its ongoing role of strengthening civil society. Interestingly, from the vantage point of the Policy Research Committee's own experience, the paper begins with a discussion of the relationship between accountability and capacity. "Before we can consider how the accountability might be enhanced", *Helping Canadians Help Canadians* observes, "we need to look seriously at whether the capacity exists to support existing and new demands within the sector. In order to do their work, voluntary organizations need resources, infrastructures, skills and support".



NETWORKING AND PARTNERSHIPS

Over the past 18 months, besides holding regular meetings of the Network and its Research and Data Working Groups, the Social Cohesion Network has engaged in a number of specific networking activities and entered into several partnerships to expand its knowledge of the subject area. These activities can be grouped under the following headings:

In point of fact, what is measured implicitly anticipates the policy framework that is eventually put in place. The preliminary questions as to the choice of any indicator should be: 'What development, for whom and within what institutional structures?'

The Roskilde Symposium, *From Social Exclusion to Social Cohesion*, March 1995



- Conceptual issues
- Data gaps
- International exchanges
- Academic initiatives
- Interdepartmental collaborations on:
 - Citizen engagement and civic participation
 - Values and attitudes
 - Fault-line issues
 - Institutional issues

Much of the research reported upon has been the product of many creative collaborations—innovative horizontal partnerships between government researchers and statisticians with academe, with key stakeholders and the non-governmental community, with their counterparts in other Canadian and foreign jurisdictions, and with international scholarly and policy research networks.

CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

Mapping social cohesion

Shortly after the Network approved the *Social Cohesion Research Workplan*, the Departments of Canadian Heritage and Justice entered into a partnership with the Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN) to develop an analytical map of the different conceptions of social cohesion being used in Canadian research and a descriptive map of work planned or in progress on the various elements of social cohesion. Environment Canada and Human Resources Development Canada, as well as representatives from the think tank and academic sectors, are also serving on the advisory committee for this project. This research has yielded three maps, showing:

- a typology of social cohesion along five multi-dimensional lines:
 - 1) belonging / isolation
 - 2) inclusion / exclusion
 - 3) participation / non-involvement
 - 4) recognition / rejection
 - 5) legitimacy / illegitimacy
- how the typology is actually being used at the local community level and at the whole society level by different researchers and organizations in Canada
- where current debates about social cohesion are located in the context of theories about “how to create orderly societies” that have been developed since the 19th century.

This work has been showcased at the 1998 Policy Research Conference “Creating Linkages” and released through the CPRN publishing program.

Policy Research Search Conference

Several members of the Social Cohesion Network participated at a Policy Research Search Conference, which took place in April 1998 as part of a broader joint project aimed at improving relationships within the policy research community. The joint initiative as a whole, and the Search Conference in April, were co-organized by the CPRN and the Public Policy Forum (PPF) for the Policy Research Secretariat and the Treasury Board Secretariat. Human Resources Development Canada also sponsored the Search Conference. Overall, the objective of the conference was to improve the functioning of the policy research infrastructure in Canada.

Building on a discussion paper prepared by Kathy O'Hara for CPRN and the results of a Roundtable on the subject in January 1998, the conference brought together four key stakeholder groups -- academics, think tanks, government officials, and the voluntary and private sector -- to discuss a broad range of problems and challenges. These include: How do we ensure a shared understanding of problems across the community and a sense of ownership and responsibility for implementing solutions? How can the policy research community be mobilized to address the medium term, horizontal policy issues which the Policy Research Initiative (PRI) was created to examine?

DATA GAPS

Improved statistical information in support of social cohesion research

An interdepartmental data working group, composed of representatives from selected departments in the Social Cohesion Network, has cooperated with Statistics Canada to improve existing surveys and to make suggestions for new surveys. As a result of this Network initiative, Statistics Canada has agreed to increase the sample size of the General Social Survey and to increase the frequency of the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating. Both of these changes will provide better indicators to measure changes in social cohesion, particularly among sub-populations that are currently difficult to monitor.

The Social Cohesion interdepartmental data working group also worked with representatives from the Knowledge-based Economy / Society project to develop a proposal for a Statistics Canada survey on Citizen Access and Participation in Communication Technologies, which will be of use in the research workplans of both groups.

Social Cohesion Indicators Project

Statistics Canada and the Social Cohesion Network have formed a partnership to develop a set of preliminary social cohesion indicators. The project team will look at various definitions and perspectives on social cohesion using existing data sources. The team will also identify data gaps and suggest additional measures which might be constructed either through the analysis and manipulation of the existing data or through newly focused collections. They will assemble statistical series of readily available data elements for use as an initial set of social cohesion indicators. The initial set of indicators will be used to generate greater conceptual precision and a resource foundation on which solid indicators with policy applications can be constructed.

Economic Gender Equality Indicators

Status of Women Canada was commissioned by the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women to develop a set of benchmarks on women's economic lives, including income, unpaid work and education and job-related training. The Economic Gender Equality Indicators will contribute to the knowledge base for public policy analysis and will help fill a key social indicators gap.

Indicators of Sustainable Development

An interdepartmental working group, comprising Environment Canada, Natural Resources Canada, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Statistics Canada, have begun work toward developing better indicators on sustainable development. This work, which is long-term in nature, is focusing on a redefinition of a nation's wealth which would include not only economic assets, but also natural capital, social capital and human capital. Current emphasis is on natural capital, but it is hoped that the other elements of wealth will be incorporated into the group's workplan.

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGES

During the past 18 months, representatives of the Social Cohesion Network met at various times with officials of other governments and multilateral organizations to exchange information and to discuss potential cooperative research initiatives. These contacts have included representatives of:

- the Permanent Delegation of Canada to the OECD
- the Mission of Canada to the European Union
- the Advisory Unit to the Secretary General of the OECD (which has done considerable work since 1994 on social cohesion issues)
- the French Commissariat général du plan (which has published several reports on social cohesion and is interested in cooperating with Canada on issues related to social cohesion and youth)
- the Management of Social Transformations Unit at UNESCO headquarters in Paris (which is also working on the Metropolis research project on the impact of immigration on cities)
- the Research Unit on Culture and Work of the Work and Organization Research Centre in the

- Netherlands (which shares our interest in the World Values Survey)
- the Social Science Research Council of the Netherlands (which has a research program on social cohesion in a pluralist society and wishes to cooperate with Canada on peer review of applications in this area)
- the Ministries of the Interior and Justice in the Netherlands (which are attempting to develop indicators of social cohesion, particularly with regard to immigrants, the underclass, youth and inner city neighbourhoods)
- the Cellule de prospective of the European Commission (which is working with European academics to develop several social cohesion scenarios to guide future policy work).

Canadian Heritage is also collaborating with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade on an ongoing international comparative review of social cohesion issues of concern to governments around the world.

ACADEMIC INITIATIVES

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Strategic Research Program on Social Cohesion

As a result of collaboration with the Social Cohesion Research Network, the SSHRC has announced its intention to develop a strategic, multidisciplinary research program on social cohesion that will better integrate the knowledge generated through academic research into the policy agenda. The total amount of money available for the program is \$10 million over six years, beginning in 1999-2000, and the SSHRC will make an announcement on the program structure in late fall 1998.

The relationship between social cohesion and the economy

The Department of Canadian Heritage, which co-chairs the Social Cohesion Network, has entered into a partnership with several prominent Canadian academics to conduct research into the relationship between social cohesion and the economy. Dr. Lars Osberg of Dalhousie University is acting as overall editor of this project, the results of which were disseminated at the 1998 Policy Research Conference, "Creating Linkages" and may possibly be published or presented at other research fora.

Social cohesion and the rural economy

The Rural Secretariat of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada is collaborating with the University of Guelph, the University of Aberdeen and Statistics Canada to examine the dynamics of low income in rural and small-town Canada, as compared to large urban centres. Issues of social exclusion, which is a key element of the emerging conceptual framework for social cohesion research in Canada, are the focus of this work. The Rural Secretariat is also supporting the New Rural Economy Project of the Canadian Rural Restructuring Foundation.

Women's issues

Status of Women Canada has been generous in sharing with other members of the Social Cohesion Network policy research papers on women's issues commissioned from the academic community over the past year. Many of these studies have been mentioned above in the sub-section on Theme 1. Subject matter has been diverse, dealing with access to justice for abused immigrant women and sexual harassment victims, the impact of the Canada Health and Social Transfer on women and children, literature reviews on policy issues affecting Aboriginal and immigrant women and guides to assist in finding data on women.

Canadian Cultural Research Network (CCRN)

With support from members of the Social Cohesion Network, the CCRN held its founding meeting and first colloquium at the June 1998 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences. The objective of the colloquium -- "Cultural Policies and Cultural Practices: Exploring Linkages Between Culture and Social Change" -- was to encourage the academic community to explore a broader definition of culture. Such a definition would broaden analysis of global issues that are creating an "open world" of intercultural exchanges and would include elements of culture that promote sustainable development, harmony and inclusiveness in diverse societies.

Citizen Education Research Network

In Spring 1998, with support from the Multiculturalism Directorate of the Department of Canadian Heritage, about 40 academics, government and third sector officials met at the University of Calgary to brainstorm on the issue of citizenship education. As a result of that meeting, the Citizen Education Research Network was formed. Since then, its members have begun to draft an agenda for research on citizen education in Canada which is intended to assist in the development of strategies, policies and practices to facilitate the full and active participation of diverse communities in Canadian society. The four research themes to be pursued are: 1) citizenship conceptions and contexts, 2) citizenship practices, 3) citizenship values and 4) citizenship skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours.

Conference on Teaching and Learning History

The McGill Institute for the Study of Canada is organizing a conference on teaching and learning history, which is scheduled to take place in January 1999. Members of the Social Cohesion Network will be active in organizing the conference, which is intended to share experience, debate issues, explore insights and suggest future strategies to improve theory and practice in this area.

Relationship between social cohesion and the law

In November 1997, the Co-chair of the Social Cohesion Network, Thea Herman, initiated a dialogue with the Council of Canadian Law Deans to explore potential areas of shared concern and interest with respect to the relationship between social cohesion and the law. In particular, the Department of Justice invited the Law Deans to reflect on potential new partnerships between the Canadian legal academic community and Justice in support of the mandate and objectives of the PRI. A pilot project has been initiated in which selected Canadian law faculties will develop the core curriculum of an advanced legal theory and/or legal policy course in which one or another of the faultlines and axes of community identification will be featured. Results from these first attempts to build stronger linkages between Justice and the legal academic community should become available in 1999.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL COLLABORATIONS

Citizen engagement and civic participation

Several departments and agencies in the Social Cohesion Network are partners in the Ekos Research Associates study on *Rethinking Citizen Engagement*. This study, which includes two survey waves, almost 20 focus groups and a September 1998 search conference, is intended to provide the federal government with information on more effective mechanisms for engaging citizens in public policy issues.

Network members were also active over the year in providing suggestions and support for speakers in the Privy Council Office / Canadian Centre for Management Development Citizen Engagement Seminar Series, which will continue in fall and winter 1998-99.

As mentioned in the sub-section on Theme 2, Statistics Canada, Canadian Heritage, Human Resources Development Canada, Health Canada, the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, Volunteer Canada and the Kahanoff Foundation formed a partnership to design and administer the *National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating*. This survey, released in fall 1998, furnished much-needed information on the civic participation of Canadians and will provide strategic intelligence for both public policy makers and the voluntary, "third" sector.

Values and attitudes

Statistics Canada, Canadian Heritage, Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Privy Council Office are collaborating to support the pilot phase of the *World Values Survey 1999* in partnership with Dr. Neil Nevitte of the University of Toronto. This survey, in which Canada participated in 1981 and 1990, is one of the few instruments that provides comparable empirical measures of value shifts over time. The final 1999 survey is expected to produce an invaluable picture, over nearly two full decades, of changes in Canadians' deeply held beliefs about fairness, tolerance, personal ambitions and family values.



Faultline issues

Numerous bilateral or multilateral partnerships are being developed among departments on “faultline” issues elaborated in the *Social Cohesion Research Workplan*. Some examples include:

- a collaboration between Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and Canadian Heritage on a millennium research project looking at the contributions of Aboriginal peoples to Canadian identity and culture
- a collaboration between Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and Status of Women Canada focusing on disparities between Aboriginal single mothers and other single mothers
- a partnership between Canadian Heritage and the Public Service Commission to study promotion rates of the four designated employment equity groups within the federal public service (women, Aboriginals, visible minorities and persons with disabilities) to determine if these differ from other groups
- a collaboration on urban Aboriginal research issues, led by Statistics Canada and the Privy Council Office, to encourage joint research and sharing of results
- a partnership between Citizenship and Immigration, Canadian Heritage, Human Resources Development, Industry, CMHC and six western-most provinces to track the labour market behaviour of immigrants
- a collaboration between Environment Canada and Transport Canada on the medium- to long-term social dimensions of environmentally sustainable transportation
- a partnership between Environment Canada, Health Canada and the Canadian Institute on Child Health to generate new knowledge about the implications of environmental contaminants for the health of children
- a partnership between the Rural Secretariat, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Statistics Canada, in collaboration with an Interdepartmental Sub-committee on Rural Research, to produce working papers on issues such as rural youth, population, migration and employment trends in rural and small-town Canada, small business establishments in small communities.

While this is only a partial list, it illustrates the increasing willingness of federal departments to adopt a horizontal approach to research on cross-cutting issues that may be having a negative effect on social cohesion.

Institutional issues

Rethinking Government Project

Several departments and agencies in the Social Cohesion Network are also partners in the Ekos Research Associates study, *Rethinking Government IV*. This study, which includes three survey waves of the general public, five focus groups, and an additional survey of top government and economic decision makers, is intended to provide the federal government with information on a broad range of issues. These include Canadians’ views of public institutions; their sense of economic and personal security; and their attitudes toward immigration, the public service, alternative service delivery, national unity and identity, crime and justice matters. For the first time, the *Rethinking Government* study also includes a five-factor social capital index, a direct response to recent interest in the area of social cohesion.



CONCLUSIONS / GAPS AND NEXT STEPS

CONCLUSIONS AND GAPS

What are some of the lessons we have learned from our analysis of these varied and complex findings? As stated at the beginning of this report, we have only just begun to explore some of the key issues, particularly under Theme 3. Nevertheless, we feel that we can draw some inferences from our research that are more than “educated guesses”, if not definitive conclusions.

... the real challenge for conversations about social cohesion is to identify the mechanisms and institutions needed to create a balance between social justice and social cohesion. Such mechanisms and institutions are ones which continue to value and promote equality of opportunity and fairness across all dimensions of diversity, while fostering the capacity to act together.

Jane Jenson, Researching Social Cohesion in Contemporary Canada, 1998

Social cohesion is becoming a central concern of governments around the world

Canada is not alone in its concern about the state of the social fabric. Consultations with other governments and with multilateral organizations, such as the OECD and the European Union, have shown that both significant intellectual and monetary resources are being devoted to analyzing and acting upon problems linked to social cohesion. While the Canadian federal government has spent considerable time and effort to define what it means by social cohesion, other jurisdictions may be further ahead in putting resources into action measures. For example, the Council of Europe has established a European Committee on Social Cohesion that will be submitting a strategy and workplan in 1999. The Council has instructed the managers of its Social Development Fund to produce specific proposals in support of the Council’s work on social cohesion and has also established a specialized unit within its bureaucracy to monitor, compare and handle issues related to social cohesion.

The governments of France and the Netherlands are undertaking research in the area of social cohesion and have indicated a desire to work with the Social Cohesion Network to improve their understanding of the issues and to share knowledge and expertise. Such cooperation would appear to be advantageous for all parties and will be pursued.

Social cohesion issues are more complex and require more sophisticated data analysis even as money and research resources remain scarce.

Advanced systems of information and communications technologies (ICTs) have clearly altered the way governments respond to citizens' needs, develop new policies and go about program and service delivery. As the Clerk of the Privy Council, Jocelyne Bourgon, noted several years ago in the *Third Annual Report to the Prime Minister on the Public Service of Canada* (1995), governments confront an increasingly media-saturated environment in which unprecedented volumes of information and data are transmitted more rapidly and more widely than ever before. As noted in a paper by the Department of Justice entitled *Strategic Issues and the Canadian Justice System*, citizens and journalists, policy experts and academics, advocacy coalitions, special interest groups, subversives and criminals, among others, "can routinely know instantaneously--literally around the clock--what is happening throughout the world. Small wonder that the sheer flow of information sometimes outpaces governments' ability to assimilate and address it".

At the same time, as noted above, globalization and the forces of the information society also carry the potential to fragment our sense of certain shared values while strengthening more particular identities based on distinguishing characteristics such as race, gender, religion, region, income and ethnicity. This makes it considerably more difficult for policy makers and community leaders to develop long-term policies and programs on the basis of a shared framework of national values, leading some commentators to talk about the emergence of "constitutional minoritarianism " and a concomitant fragmentation of Canadian citizenship (see, e.g. A. Cairns, 1995). These are serious structural challenges with which the Social Cohesion Network, and the KBE/S Pilot Project, will need to contend with imagination and vision.



Related to these impacts of ICTs on government is the fact that they also profoundly compressing--or "squashing" as a recent article in *The Economist* put it--the daily experiences of most people with respect to public issues and political events. As *The Economist* notes, most peoples' "political moments" consist of little more than a few seconds: a TV soundbite, a poster glimpsed in passing through a car window, a phone call from a pollster demanding views from us on everything from the Somalia Inquiry, immigration policy and youth crime while "you are trying to feed the two-year old" (August 22, 1998: 21).

This effect of ICTs on the daily lives of citizens also poses serious challenges to those wishing to strengthen the social fabric and shared sense of trust, hope and reciprocity, as an essential aspect of a well-functioning democracy is the capacity for deliberation and informed discussion. As Marc Landry expressed the challenge: "citizenship cannot be taken for granted in the modern state, but instead must be nurtured by good policy design". And considerations like these have led other commentators to question the role that public opinion plays in a democratic society given the "culture of technical control" within which such instruments have traditionally been designed and applied. In his highly influential work, *Coming to Public Judgment: Making Democracy Work in a Complex World*, for example, Daniel Yankelovich thus contends that "the key to successful self-governance in our Age of Information is to create a new balance between [the] public and experts". While many new governmental initiatives, including the Policy Research Initiative, have taken great strides to strike such a new balance, numerous obstacles to doing so still remain, and there is a pressing need here -- as in several other areas of concern to the Social Cohesion Network -- not to be complacent.

Broadly speaking there are two sources of social change: the push of problems and the pull of ideals. Many of the faultlines or cleavages discussed in this report will present serious problems for Canadians in the absence of thoughtful, well-informed responses by governments, citizens, and communities. We currently lack enough information to predict whether the demographic or social changes we have described will reinforce or compound each other. But there is an urgent need for further research into the linkages and interaction among them -- research, for example, into the linkages that exist between public legal education and information needs of Aboriginal peoples or abused immigrant women.

Given the research we have reviewed, we believe that the generational rift may compound the gender inequality that already exists with respect to income inequality, family issues, and a wide range of social and health policy issues. Obviously, the plight of Aboriginal peoples will require concerted attention on a number of fronts, not simply related to one issue for one Aboriginal group in one part of the country, but addressed to needs across a broad spectrum of status, non-status, Métis and Inuit located in a variety of rural and urban settings.

In some areas, we do not have conclusive proof, but are beginning to suspect that cleavages are growing. For example, the plight of the economically and socially marginalized appears to be intensifying and is only partially masked by overall growth in the economy and incomplete statistics on such phenomena as homelessness. We also know next to nothing about what is happening to the so-called middle class in the midst of this emerging polarization. As the bedrock of Canadian society, are the middle classes losing hope and faith, as well as economic ground? And how is that affecting social cohesion in Canada? While in some faultline areas we have a surfeit of data (albeit imperfectly analyzed), here we simply lack solid information that would help us to guide policy development.

As well as the data limitations noted above, most departments and agencies participating in the Social Cohesion Network still lack dedicated resources for horizontal policy research. While most participants are making heroic efforts to crawl out of their research "stove-pipes", in reality most of their resources, both human and monetary, continue to be devoted to departmental mandates. Horizontal cooperation, therefore, continues to take place at the expense or on top of already-heavy vertical policy research agendas.

Pathologies and paradoxes: things are not always what they seem

None of the faultlines or axes of community identification discussed in this Report exist in isolation, as discrete variables or phenomena. Rather, they co-exist in times of great social and economic turbulence, and also simultaneously make competing claims on increasingly scarce public and civic resources. They also often interact with each other -- or are recursive phenomena, as methodologists would put the matter -- in unpredictable ways. This places issues of culture, values, governance and institutions at the centre of many discussions of social cohesion and of strengthening the ties that bind Canadians to their national community. A world of such multiple, interrelated and interacting phenomena often produces paradoxical, indeed sometimes contradictory, trends and indicators.

We have already pointed out in the section on “Democracy and civic knowledge” that Canadians rank number one in the world in terms of pride in our democracy, yet score low on tests of civic knowledge. Overall, levels of civic knowledge appear to be falling, particularly among young people. Therefore, while on one hand we may conclude that Canadian democracy is healthy, on the other hand, we would have to ask ourselves, “for how long?”. Further research will be undertaken in this area to develop a clearer picture of what civic knowledge is necessary for a healthy “democratic conversation”.

A related paradox has emerged in the context of democracy and the disenchantment with governments. Recent history and research suggests that when large numbers of citizens become dissatisfied with the workings of their government, they call for more democracy. The more citizens call for democracy, the more they get. The more they get, the more dissatisfied they become with the workings of their governments. The more they become dissatisfied with the workings of their governments, the more they call for democracy. This cycle seems to endlessly repeat itself in a variety of jurisdictions -- as a recent discussion in the *Atlantic Monthly* highlights so well (January, 1997: 56).

Such a development should not really come as a surprise to policy makers and students of public policy, for as Daniel Bell has argued for some time, the global order itself is caught in the throes of a major period of contradiction and reconfiguration: while the international economy and ICTs have increasingly become integrated, many polities are fragmenting. And underlying virtually all the diverse manifestations of such fragmentation lies an even deeper structural problem: as Bell has noted “the nation-state is becoming too small for the big problems of life, and too big for the small problems of life”. Small wonder, that governments have often been forced to respond to this process “accordion-like, expanding and contracting at particular moments”.

Information appears to be a key factor in creating a healthier economic, civic and cultural community, but little research attention has yet been paid to key questions such as who has access to this information and what type of information is available to whom. For example, we were provided with some fascinating information by Industry Canada on Aboriginal entrepreneurs which showed that entrepreneurial activity is growing strongly across all Aboriginal groups, especially among the Métis, Aboriginal youth and Aboriginal women. Yet this same report indicated that only 6% of Aboriginal businesses are connected to the Internet, as compared to about 31% of the general business community, and that “a major barrier to starting or expanding a business is lack of information -- especially information written for and by Aboriginal people and firms”. This was being written at about the same time that another report, prepared for Status of Women Canada by Stout and Kipling, concluded that most of the research literature on Aboriginal women tended to be piecemeal and narrowly issue-oriented, pathologizing the research subjects and providing little insight into effective strategies -- such as, for example, promoting successful entrepreneurialism among Aboriginal women.

We were struck again and again over the course of this analysis by the need for creative exchanges at the policy research level between economic and social departments and agencies which would look at “problems” with wider policy focus. Often, it would appear that “pathologies” may be situations where solutions are as simple as providing better access to training, business information and opportunities or social and cultural resources.

Canadians are still proud of Canada but their ties to each other may be weakening.

Canadians appear to be losing faith in their economic futures and growing numbers are being forced into the streets, where they are overstraining an already-burdened voluntary sector and diminishing the quality of urban life in many communities. The question that our research has as yet been unable to answer is whether this trend is inevitably downward and whether it is having an impact on traditional Canadian values of compassion and sharing. With time, money and knowledge at a premium, it is likely that a sense of national community will increasingly depend on whether Canadians believe that this community is one in which they are able to achieve some measure of economic, social and cultural well-being.

Our research has not been able to prove conclusively that levels of civic engagement have eroded beyond repair or that civic participation levels have fallen drastically. On the other hand, some “early warning signals” suggest that we should not be complacent. While levels of giving and volunteering are stable, hours volunteered by the “core” of volunteers -- the one-third of Canadians who are actively engaged -- is falling. Younger people are volunteering more but they appear to have somewhat different motivations than do older volunteers. They tend to volunteer in order to improve job opportunities and use their skills and abilities. They are less likely to volunteer because of the cause of the organization or because of a traditional sense of religious duty or belief. Women, who are both key breadwinners and volunteers, are also feeling the strain of increased obligations for caring for young and elderly family members. Hopes of greater civic engagement on the part of Canadians may therefore run into both time and motivation barriers if these trends continue.

The Network is also aware that we still know little about the health of the third sector itself and its ability to take on more responsibilities for societal well-being. We hope that research on this subject, due later this fall, will begin to answer these questions.

This is no time for complacency - Global forces continue to pose serious threats to social cohesion and to frustrate society's ability to achieve social justice

As noted above, notwithstanding its rank as world leader on the U.N. Human Development Index, Canada ranks tenth out of the 17 richest countries on human poverty. In this context, it is especially important to bear in mind that the data used in most of the studies highlighted in this report date from before the introduction of the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST) and the serious fiscal downsizing undertaken by all levels of government in Canada since 1994. Preliminary research on the repercussions of the CHST with respect to individuals receiving social assistance and other disadvantaged groups strongly suggest that its impact will accentuate existing trends toward poverty and polarization within the workforce (see, for example, the studies by Scott; Day and Brodsky; Doherty, Friendly, and Oloman; and Echenberg, as referenced in the bibliography). We lack, for the most part, the indicators needed to determine the impact of fiscal restraint measures on such key social cohesion measures as income inequality and homelessness. The Network will be seeking out and analyzing this information in the coming months.

Everywhere, on all fronts of human existence, all people face the challenge of change. Technology transforms their workplaces. Globalization alters the structures in which they work ... These are powerful impulses of economic change that leave people feeling powerless and insecure about their future. ... The possibilities of our new world may be infinite, but for many millions of our citizens, it is the dangers that are more real.
The Rt. Hon. Tony Blair, Excerpts from a statement at the World Trade Organization Summit, May 1998

“Civil society” is becoming less civil, and uncertainty about the future, economic polarization and declining confidence in government is causing widespread anxiety among Canadians.

As noted above, some of the research on evolving Canadian values carried out by Network members seems to suggest a growing rift between the “young and the restless” and the “mature and secure”. Other survey research has documented the “decline of deference” and the desire of Canadians to see more civility in Canadian society. We are not convinced that increased civility will be the outcome of improved citizen engagement - - another of the paradoxes referred to earlier in these

A civil society seeks to achieve three major objectives. It builds and strengthens caring communities. It ensures economic security. It promotes social investment by directing resources towards the well-being and positive development of people.
Sheri Torjman in Civil Society: Reclaiming our Humanity, 1997



conclusions. However, a cohesive society is not one without conflict: it may instead be one where conflicts are handled constructively through the democratic process. From a policy research point of view, we are more concerned about a possible diminishment in the collective Canadian will to engage in the "democratic conversation", particularly by those at the bottom and those at the top.

Are the most educated and wealthiest Canadians less inclined to share with those in the middle and at the bottom? Are those in the middle becoming more concerned about holding on to what they have at the expense of traditional notions of civic engagement or distributive justice? Have the poor lost hope and given up on the political and social system? Are declining levels of trust in government linked to the economic consequences of globalization? These are questions to which we intend to seek answers in the next phase of our research.

Social cohesion and economic growth are complementary, not contradictory, policy objectives

We know that there are economic penalties for diminished social cohesion. However, at the moment, we do not know how big they are. The 1998 United Nations Human Development Index suggests that inequality hinders growth and cites the fact that in the developing world, the ratio of the incomes of the richest 20% to the poorest 20% of the population exceeds 10 to 1 in 29 countries, 15 to 1 in 17 countries and 20 to 1 in nine. In developed countries, the relationship of growth to inequality has not been conclusively proven, but preliminary evidence suggests that the negative impacts of social cohesion on Canadian society are significant, if difficult to measure. This problem will be pursued by the Network in its research in the coming months.

Regaining citizens' trust and confidence in public institutions and in the political process is critical to strengthening the social fabric in Canada

For democracy in a pluralistic society like Canada to flourish, it is no longer enough to simply get out the vote; effective, good governance requires more. As a number of studies referred to in this Report suggest, as we enter the new millennium, we need more informed public judgment and more meaningful citizen involvement in the policy process at the earliest stages. Public officials and community leaders also need to learn more about cultivating and supporting capacity building with respect to strengthening the quality of public judgment in local communities. To quote Yankelovich again: "the public is not magically endowed with good judgment. Good judgment is something that must be worked at all the time with great skill and effort. It does not exist automatically; it must be created".

In this light, a major challenge awaiting researchers, analysts and policy makers with respect to governance and capacity building -- both within government itself and at the local, community level -- is to develop a conceptual framework clarifying the meaning and applications of the notion of governance itself. For example, since its inception in 1990, the Institute of Governance has collected more than twenty definitions of the term, and the list continues to expand. Tim Plumpre of the IOG proposes a "reasonably robust" definition as follows: "Governance comprises those institutions, processes and traditions which determine how power is exercised, how decisions are taken and how citizens are accorded voice on issues of public concern". As a result of its consultations on its new mandate and research priorities, the Law Commission of Canada has advanced the view that governance has to do with the institutions, processes and traditions for dealing with issues of public interest. And a new textbook on policy analysis, *Beyond Policy Analysis: Public Issue Management in Turbulent Times*, by Professor Leslie Pal of Carleton University, at one and the same time stresses the fact that the world of governance is changing in fundamental and irreversible ways while remaining seemingly content to define governance more simply and traditionally as "our systems of public policy and administration".

Clearly, something akin to the broader "mapping social cohesion" exercise by Professor Jane Jenson for the CPRN and the Social Cohesion Network would seem important and timely to pursue in the context of governance issues and further institutional analysis in the months ahead, especially as it is important to understand how current institutions -- public, private and third sector -- function to mediate or exacerbate normative conflicts associated with the faultlines and axes of identification outlined in this Report.

According to many analysts and commentators, ultimately what should interest us the most about governance are the results it yields. We need to understand the causal relationships between different types of governance and social and economic outcomes. If agreement can be reached about desired outcomes (and appropriate indicators), differences of opinion over what form of governance is preferable are likely to be more constructive.

Finally, in the next phase of its work, the Social Cohesion Network will attempt to find the necessary time and resources to analyze and integrate the tremendous amount of research that already has been done on issues of governance by previous Royal Commissions, Commissions of Inquiry, and related vehicles of public introspection and dialogue. For example, issues of representation and effectiveness were at the heart of the recently-concluded Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, and of the Lortie Commission on campaign party financing and electoral reform in the mid-1990's, among many others. The research, analysis and recommendations from these and a host of other inquiries offer a wealth of relevant insight and perspective into the challenges of governance and institutional reform as Canada strives to strengthen its social cohesion heading into a new millennium characterized by turbulent social and economic change and an increasing diversity or pluralism of beliefs and values.

Is a collective sense of national identity necessary for social cohesion? This is a question to which we still do not have an answer.

One of the key issues that will require further research attention is the relationship between social cohesion and national identity. Are lower levels of trust in government affecting our attachment to Canada? Or are the key variables more related to the instruments of globalization, such as the mass media, the increasing pervasiveness of information technology and the post-modern diversity of our society? At this stage of our inquiries, we have more questions than answers.

It appears that inclusiveness may be a key to a healthy sense of national belonging, but we have yet to undertake the necessary research to assess the relative effectiveness of both traditional one-way instruments of identity (such as the mass media and the schools) and newer types of interactive tools (such as the Internet and participative democracy) in fostering closer national ties. A few researchers have also made the troubling observation that some policies Canada has counted upon to foster national identity, such as cultural policies, may not be as inclusive as they could be.

There are some intriguing hints in the material examined so far that cohesive societies are those that are adept at reconciling and multiple identities, but we are far from understanding the means by which this occurs. It would also appear that the federal government's role as an instrument of Canadian values may have played a stronger role than previously thought in reinforcing identity and belonging. There are signs, however, that this role is becoming more difficult in a climate of increasingly diverse and conflicting values where global economic forces are limiting governments' ability to act in ways that promote the well-being of their citizens. Research on the various ways that Canadians are linked and interconnected will be pursued by the Network in the coming months with a view of getting a clearer picture of both the forces that promote identity and those that diminish it.

Policy choices can make a significant difference

There are many encouraging initiatives and new programs underway to address or bridge a number of the social and demographic faultlines outlined above. However, until we know a good deal more about the effectiveness and impacts of such initiatives and programs in reducing the sense of tension and inequity in Canadian society, we still have a great deal more to learn about the prospects of social cohesion in the new millennium.

As previously noted, governments possess significant latitude in the choice of policy instruments and programs -- and the underlying values which sustain them -- in addressing the complex challenges to social cohesion in societies like Canada. To give one further example, with respect to ethnocultural relations and immigration policies, in his penetrating analysis of the emergence of culture and values as sources of competitive advantage among industrialized nations, Hamish McRae notes in *The World in 2020* that, having virtually stopped immigration in the last decade, the Britain of 2020 will "in ethnic terms not be so

different from the Britain of 1990". Given its established traditions of welcoming immigrants and integrating them into the national community, McRae and others are optimistic about Britain's prospects for more harmonious ethnocultural relations within the next generation. Germany, by contrast, has accepted far more foreigners and has had much greater difficulty integrating them given its past.

To date, the Canadian record in such matters has been comparatively impressive. Notwithstanding significant levels of immigration and a good deal of rhetoric and commentary to the contrary, evidence compiled by Reitz and Breton, Harles, Kymlicka and others suggests that the rate of integration of immigrants from cultural minorities into Canadian society has improved since the 1970's when an official federal policy of multiculturalism was instituted. Having said that, ethnocultural and visible minorities -- including Aboriginal peoples -- continue to experience serious obstacles with respect to receiving equal treatment and access in a variety of areas. A recent study for the Department of Justice by Julian Roberts, for example, notes that hate crimes and hate-motivated violence are among the most under-reported forms of criminality in the country, and indeed throughout the Western industrialized world. Here, again, while Canada can be proud of its achievements to date with respect to the integration of recent immigrants, this is no time for complacency as we approach the new millennium.

NEXT STEPS

Much of what the Social Cohesion Network intends to do next has been mentioned earlier in this report. However, to recap, the Network intends to pursue the following initiatives in the coming months:

1) *Testing and expanding upon the conceptual framework for social cohesion research*

- Building on the conceptual framework for social cohesion developed in partnership with CPRN and discussing it with stakeholders at every opportunity
- Exploring the interlinkages between age, gender, ethnicity, and geographic cleavages, with particular attention to their horizontal policy and program implications and the conceptual challenges they pose in the development of a set of social cohesion indicators
- Revalidating our working definition of social cohesion

2) *Deepening understanding of social cohesion issues*

- Filling the data gaps, particularly with regard to better and more up-to-date social cohesion indicators using a variety of data vehicles including enhancements to Statistics Canada's General Social Survey
- Increasing our understanding of the measures that other countries and international institutions are taking to address issues related to social cohesion
- Understanding the aids and impediments to higher levels of civic engagement, particularly citizen to government engagement
- Developing a clearer picture of current levels of civic knowledge and investigating the best means of decreasing the democratic deficit
- Understanding more clearly the linkages between access to information (particularly Canadian information) and social, economic and cultural well-being
- Exploring the links between cultural policy, citizenship and social cohesion
- Exploring the role of institutions within civil society, including national associations, in representing and mediating differences and assessing the contribution of such processes to governance and social cohesion

3) *Intensifying research on Theme 3 - Implications of changes in social cohesion*

- Investigating the determinants of national identity and attachment
- Publishing and disseminating results of research on the linkage between economic development and social cohesion
- Investigating how shifts in social cohesion are affecting governance in Canada

- Exploring governance issues with other institutions, such as third sector organizations and the private sector
- Undertaking case studies of successful new governance initiatives (for example, new instruments for environment and sustainable development policy)
- Exploring how the nature of political community in Canada and its relation to integration may be changing, as reflected in patterns of communication/linkages among Canadians, trends in civic participation and shifts in identity, belonging and values.

Partnership and networking initiatives

The Social Cohesion Network will be undertaking numerous collaborations between departments and with international and academic contacts, as outlined in the section on "Networking and Partnerships". While all of these initiatives are important, the following will have broad usefulness for all Network members:

- international collaborations with government officials from France and the Netherlands to understand social cohesion issues involving diversity and youth
- interdepartmental consultations with Statistics Canada to develop a "basket" of social cohesion indicators that can be used for a broad range of policy purposes
- interdepartmental and academic collaboration on the 1999 World Values Survey, which will provide both longitudinal (from 1981 to 1999) and international comparative data useful for a variety of policy purposes
- collaboration with the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council to establish a strategic research program that will encourage the academic community to study the types of horizontal issues that are critical to strengthening social cohesion in Canada
- interdepartmental and third sector collaboration to gain a better picture of marginalization in rural communities across Canada
- linkages with the Metropolis research initiative on immigrants in urban areas underway at five research centres in Canada and in several other countries.

Resources

The Clerk of the Privy Council observed in her 1998 Report to the Prime Minister that "the complexity of public policy issues ... heightens the need for a medium- to long-term investment in the policy research and development process". Resources devoted to the Policy Research Initiative have in the past few months tended to go toward establishing the infrastructure to promote networking and collaboration. This has had largely positive results, but in the next phase of this initiative increased attention needs to be paid to providing adequate resources within departments for substantive investigation of the horizontal issues the Clerk had in mind when she wrote the above words.

To this end, departments, including those in the Social Cohesion Network, were asked to strengthen their horizontal policy capacities and encouraged to identify increased resources for policy research in their 1999-2000 Business Plans. There continues to be a significant imbalance between research resources devoted to socio-cultural, as opposed to economic, issues. Serious questions with regard to social cohesion in Canada, as described in this report, will require that adequate resources are targeted toward filling data gaps and assessing, analyzing and synthesizing work done both within and outside government. Over the first 18 months, a great deal has been accomplished with few resources. A major challenge for the Network will be to find sufficient funds to carry this research forward.

Summation

At the end of its first 18 months of existence, the Social Cohesion Network can point to a number of accomplishments. First, we have succeeded in stimulating discussion among decision makers about the issue of social cohesion -- particularly about the growing numbers of people in Canadian society who are failing to benefit from global economic restructuring. Second, we have made a start in developing a conceptual framework for social cohesion research and have begun work on an ambitious research workplan. Third, we have made considerable progress in opening the lines of communication between departments and academics doing research on issues relevant to social cohesion. Four, a number of

partnerships have been established among departments, think tanks and academics to deepen our understanding of the complex interrelationships that add up to a cohesive society.

In the next 18 months, we intend to make further progress, particularly with regard to the interaction among various faultlines and the issues included under Theme 3 of the *Social Cohesion Research Workplan*. We are convinced that changes in social cohesion will, at one and the same time, have particularly negative consequences for certain segments of the population, as well as broader implications for economic growth, Canadian identity and governance structures in the public, private and third sectors. However, at the moment, we do not have conclusive evidence about either the direction or intensity of these changes. In many cases, we still lack necessary data to untangle the web of causality, and it will be a priority in the next 18 months to ensure that more adequate social cohesion indicators are made available to researchers. In our next report -- which will appropriately enough be at the dawn of the millennium -- we hope to be able to cite research that begins to address these gaps.





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