

# Defining and Measuring Social Cohesion

Jane Jenson



1 Social Policies in Small States Series



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*Jane Jenson*



COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT



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# Contents

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>Foreword</b>  | vii |
| <b>Introduction</b>  | 1   |
| <b>1 The Concept of Social Cohesion: Overview and Historical Perspective</b> | 3   |
| 1.1 Social cohesion as social inclusion                                      | 4   |
| 1.2 When social cohesion becomes social capital                              | 9   |
| 1.3 Social cohesion, institutions and governance                             | 12  |
| 1.4 Conclusions from the literature review                                   | 15  |
| <b>2 Indicators for Measuring Social Cohesion</b>                            | 17  |
| <b>3 Lessons and a Proposed Set of Indicators</b>                            | 21  |
| <b>Appendices</b>  |     |
| A The Council of Europe’s Strategy for Social Cohesion                       | 25  |
| B The European Union’s Indicators of Social Inclusion                        | 27  |
| <b>References</b>  | 31  |



# Foreword

During the 1960s and 1970s, increased interest was shown by some international organisations, such as the United Nations and the Commonwealth Secretariat, in small states, notably small islands, and the development challenges they faced during the decolonisation period. The Commonwealth Secretariat, with over a third of its members classified as small economies, is committed to the study of small states. The issue of their vulnerability, for example, was first given formal expression within the Commonwealth at the 1977 Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting in Barbados. Having noted the special characteristics of small states – in particular their reliance on trade, high dependence on capital inflows and, in some cases, their lack of natural resources – ministers urged the international community to adopt a more flexible approach to their requirements, as well as special measures to assist them. In response, the Secretariat designed a programme to assist in overcoming ‘the disadvantages of small size, isolation and scarce resources which severely limit the capacity of such countries to achieve their development objectives or to pursue their national interests in a wider international context’.

In 1983, with the political repercussions of the US invasion of Grenada still resonant, Commonwealth leaders meeting in New Delhi expressed their belief that the problems of small states ‘deserved consideration on a wider basis, including that of national security’. A Commonwealth Consultative Group was therefore commissioned to carry out such an examination. Its report, *Vulnerability: Small States in the Global Society*, published in 1985, was the first to highlight the inherent vulnerability of small states to external interference. In reasserting the vulnerability of and threats to small states, and outlining economic and foreign policy measures to mitigate these, the report was important in raising the political profile of small states in international forums.

Following this publication, the Ministerial Group on Small States was formed to continue the discussion of issues of importance to small states. At their second meeting in 1995, ministers recognised that the international context faced by small states had changed dramatically since the end of the cold war. This led to the creation of a Commonwealth advisory group of eminent persons whose report, *A Future for Small States: Overcoming Vulnerability*, was published in 1997.

In 1998 the Commonwealth Secretariat/World Bank Joint Task Force on Small States was formed. In 2000 the Task Force published its seminal report, *Small States: Meeting Challenges in the Global Economy*. The report concluded that addressing the challenges facing small states requires correct domestic policy, regional co-operation, assistance from multilateral and bilateral development institutions and improvements in the external environment. It highlighted four areas of special relevance to successful



development in small states: tackling volatility, vulnerability and natural disasters; transitioning to the changing global trade regime; strengthening capacity; and benefiting from the opportunities and coping with the challenges of globalisation. It recommended that an annual small states forum, where international donors could report on their activities in small states, be held in the wings of the IMF–World Bank meeting. Small states have garnered additional support and attention from international donors as a result, but more remains to be done: a 2005/06 review of the task force report established that small states are still vulnerable and continue to face a number of development challenges associated with their size.

In adopting Agenda 21, one of the key outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (more commonly known as the Rio Earth Summit) in 1992, the wider international community also recognised the special challenges that small island developing states (SIDS) face in planning for sustainable development. As a result, the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States took place in Barbados in 1994. The plan that emerged, the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA), is the principal international framework for addressing the special challenges and constraints faced by SIDS in their pursuit of sustainable development. The BPOA addresses 14 major themes, ranging from climate change through coastal and marine resources to tourism and human resources development.

The ten-year comprehensive review of the BPOA led to the adoption in January 2005 of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS, which includes 19 thematic areas, including climate change and sea level rise; natural and environmental disasters; and energy resources. The Mauritius Strategy notes that for its successful implementation, SIDS require effective human, institutional and technical capacity development; effective monitoring and co-ordination, including through SIDS regional organisations; and support from the international community, particularly through financial and technical backing.

Finally, Millennium Development Goal 8 (on developing a global partnership for development) specifically mentions the special needs of landlocked countries and small island developing states.

Yet despite this attention to small states, there are still major gaps in our understanding of their unique development process and experience. Insufficient study has been devoted to the social and economic issues facing small states. In particular, there is virtually no comparative research on social policy issues or on how social policies affect economic development. This paper, together with others in this series, attempts to fill this gap by taking a distinctive approach to social policy, which it sees as encompassing concerns about redistribution, production, reproduction and protection. The papers show how some small states have succeeded in improving their social indicators through appropriate social policies, how others are moving in the right direction and how some are falling behind or failing. We see that, despite their

inherent vulnerability, some small states have been successful precisely because of the complementary social and economic policies and strategies they have implemented. By looking at these countries in comparative perspective, we can draw interesting lessons on policy.

The papers in this series are outputs of the research project, *Social Policies in Small States*, led by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat from 2007 to 2009. Fourteen country studies were commissioned and their findings discussed at regional workshops in the Caribbean and Pacific. Four thematic papers framed and complemented the country level research. We hope that the findings of this research will be useful to scholars and policy-makers concerned with the social and economic development issues facing small states.

The research project was designed and co-ordinated by Naren Prasad with assistance from Nicola Hypher at UNRISD, in collaboration with Constance Vigilance at the Commonwealth Secretariat.

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# Introduction

The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development defines social policy as ‘public policies and institutions that aim to protect citizens from social contingencies and poverty, and ultimately to enable them to strive for their own life goals’, a definition that serves well here. The agency also recognises that ‘during the past three decades, such a view has been marginalised by policy approaches that emphasise safety nets and the targeting of vulnerable groups’.<sup>1</sup> As this paper will document, concerns about social cohesion come at a time of ‘after neoliberalism’, when social policy is being rethought (Jenson, 2007). Social policy is once again seen as a key underpinning of economic performance by many jurisdictions, from the local to the supranational and international, but there is little chance there will be a return to the practices of the *trente glorieuses*, the three decades of growth after 1945. This is the context for the following discussion of social cohesion and its impact on social development.

The paper is organised into three main sections. Part 1 examines the literature on social cohesion, and identifies three different ‘families’ of usage and the empirical grounding of each. Part 2 presents a range of indicators that have been used to measure social cohesion. They vary significantly, according to the definition of social cohesion used. Part 3 discusses the lessons to be drawn and puts forward some possible indicators for measuring social cohesion. Following the literature review and the lessons drawn, these indicators focus on the definition of social cohesion as social inclusion.



# The Concept of Social Cohesion: Overview and Historical Perspective

Social cohesion is a concept with a history. It is not simply an academic concept or a catch-all word meaning many things. Rather, it is what is helpfully termed a ‘quasi-concept’ – a hybrid operating within policy communities. Paul Bernard describes such a concept as:

... ‘hybrid’ because these constructions have two faces: they are, on the one hand, based, in part and selectively, on an analysis of the data of the situation, which allows them to be relatively realistic and to benefit from the aura of legitimacy conferred by the scientific method; and they maintain, on the other hand, a vagueness that makes them adaptable to various situations, flexible enough to follow the meanderings and necessities of political action from day to day. Bernard, 1999: 2

In his work on the diffusion of various concepts in the development community, Desmond McNeil terms such a concept an ‘idea’ and states:

... it is more than simply a slogan or ‘buzzword’ because it has some reputable intellectual basis, but it may nevertheless be found to be vulnerable on analytical and empirical grounds. What is special about such an idea is that it is able to operate in both academia and policy domains. McNeil, 2006: 335

In other words, both these authors stress the utility, if not the necessity, of concepts remaining ambiguous. There is a message here:

*The definition selected for the quasi-concept will have direct consequences for whether the UNRISD-Commonwealth Secretariat project on social policies in small states will be able to identify a link between social cohesion and social policy.*

Writing in 2002, Regina Berger-Schmitt decomposed the concept of social cohesion into two dimensions.

(1) The first dimension can be shortly denoted as the inequality dimension. It concerns the goal of promoting equal opportunities and reducing disparities and divisions within a society. This also includes the aspect of social exclusion.

(2) The second dimension can be shortly denoted as the social capital dimension. It concerns the goal of strengthening social relations, interactions and ties and embraces all aspects which are generally considered as the social capital of a society.

Berger-Schmitt, 2002: 404–405

These two dimensions are discussed in the following sections, with a third being added, that of social cohesion's relationship to institutions and governance.

## **1.1 Social cohesion as social inclusion**

The concept itself, and therefore the expectation of a relationship between social cohesion and social development, is relatively recent. In the mid-1990s in Europe and the broader world of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the concept of social cohesion made a dramatic comeback in the policy world of 'after neoliberalism' (Jenson, 2007). It appeared simultaneously in several key organisations, albeit in different versions and with some applications broader than others.<sup>2</sup> More recently, there has been an upsurge in the attention paid to it in Latin America (for example, ECLAC, 2007). Often, the concern was that social cohesion was under threat and policy steps must be taken to reinforce it.

### **The complex of social cohesion, social inclusion and social policy**

One of the first institutions to revive the concept was the OECD. Beginning in 1980, the OECD became the leader in diffusing a claim among its members and within policy communities that 'social policy in many countries creates obstacles to growth' (quoted in Deacon *et al.*, 1997: 71). By the early 1990s, however, concerns arose about stability and the limits of structural adjustment, both in the OECD countries and elsewhere. Social cohesion became a key word in policy discussion and warnings appeared of the need to balance attention to economic restructuring with caution about societal cohesion in order to sustain that restructuring. In 1996, the OECD high-level conference, *Beyond 2000: The New Social Policy Agenda*, concluded with a call to its members for a 'social investment approach for a future welfare state' and new social expenditures focused on areas where returns are maximised in the form of social cohesion and active participation in society and the labour market (OECD, 1997). Social cohesion in this context was not defined and one had to decrypt from its usage that essentially it meant social stability.

The European Union (EU) also declared that the economic and social cohesion of Europe was a main policy goal. This was confirmed in the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992 and reaffirmed when the Lisbon Agenda was announced in 2000.<sup>3</sup> For the EU, as well as for the OECD, social cohesion is something to strive towards, to be created via 'modernised' social policies, regional redistribution and new forms of governance involving both more active citizenship and mechanisms for identifying best practices. With the 2005 mid-term review and adjustment of the Lisbon Strategy the policy directions have been modified, but the overall goal remains.

At the same time, the Council of Europe launched what has become one of the most important efforts to use the concept to organise its work on social development, and it is in the Council's work that a clearer and more consensual meaning of social

cohesion as social inclusion began to take clearer shape. It is worth quoting the Council's understanding of the concept at length:

Social cohesion, as defined by the Directorate General of Social Cohesion of the Council of Europe, is a concept that includes values and principles which aim to ensure that all citizens, without discrimination and on an equal footing, have access to fundamental social and economic rights. Social cohesion is a flagship concept which constantly reminds us of the need to be collectively attentive to, and aware of, any kind of discrimination, inequality, marginality or exclusion.

The Council of Europe does not see social cohesion as being a homogenising concept that is only based on traditional forms of social integration, which nonetheless are important, such as: identity, the sharing of the same culture, adhering to the same values. It is a concept for an open and multicultural society.

The meaning of this concept can differ according to the socio-political environment in which it evolves. ...

From an operational point of view, a strategy of social cohesion refers to any kind of action which ensures that every citizen, every individual, can have within their community, the opportunity of access:

- to the means to secure their basic needs;
- to progress;
- to protection and legal rights;
- to dignity and social confidence.

Any insufficiency of access to any of these fields operates against social cohesion.

Council of Europe, 2001: 5

We see in this 2001 presentation two important characteristics of the concept of social cohesion. First, the experts are careful to avoid any suggestion that they are endorsing a more traditional vision of social cohesion, one which would demand 'homogeneity' of or consensus around values to the detriment of a respect for social diversity. The historical lineage of social cohesion as a concept, among authors concerned with social order, accounts for this caveat.<sup>4</sup>

Second, no real definition is provided. The same publication, presenting the *Strategy for Social Cohesion* adopted by the European Committee for Social Cohesion in 2000, states: 'it does not define social cohesion as such but seeks to identify some of the factors in social cohesion ...' (Council of Europe, 2001: 15). This strategy was meant to give rise to a number of policies, around which the Council of Europe would promote initiatives (see Appendix A). All these were in the domain of social policy and social development, and indeed this publication actually focused on *social exclusion*.

Such a focus follows directly from actions of the Council such as a 1998 recommendation of the Parliamentary Assembly which provided an analysis very close to



that of the OECD summarised above about the dangers to social cohesion of insufficient attention to social policy. Several of the recommendation's articles capture this logic:

7. Poverty and exclusion must not be the price to pay for economic growth and well-being. Today, social exclusion is no longer a marginal problem in Europe: it is a painful and dramatic reality for millions of people. ...

12. ... it is urgently necessary today to give fresh impetus to the fight against exclusion and to take up the challenge of strengthening social cohesion.

13. In particular, social cohesion means promoting a Europe of social rights, these being fundamental human rights on an equal footing with civil and political rights.<sup>5</sup>

This focus on ensuring social rights characterised the Council of Europe's notion of social cohesion through the early years of the decade and was shared by other governments. For example, as early as 1997 France's Commissariat général du Plan developed a definition of social cohesion: 'social cohesion is a set of social processes that help instil in individuals the sense of belonging to the same community and the feeling that they are recognised as members of that community' (quoted in Jenson, 1998: 4). The social processes considered by the French government over the last decade have been primarily those usually treated under the heading of social exclusion, poverty and inequality, and the methods proposed involve larger and/or redesigned social policies and programmes. Thus, the Plan de cohésion sociale (Plan for Social Cohesion Policy) put into place by the French government in 2004 involved new efforts and 20 programmes grouped under three headings: employment, housing and equal opportunities, particularly for children, women and immigrants.<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) recently defined social cohesion 'as the dialectical relationship between mechanisms of social inclusion/exclusion and people's reactions, perceptions and attitudes to the ways in which these mechanisms operate in producing a sense of belonging to society' (Tokman, 2007: 82). One result of the social and economic changes experienced by the countries of Latin America over the last decades has been an even larger informal sector and the concomitant limited nature of social protection coverage. Three concrete strategies to strengthen social cohesion are proposed, and these strategies share with the Council of Europe as well as with France a focus on employment and social rights as the route to increasing social cohesion (Tokman, 2007: 105–106):

The first is the incorporation of the informal sector into the modern sector. The starting-point is the acknowledgement of informal-sector workers' economic and social rights, so that they may be in a position to meet the obligations imposed by entry into the formal sector. Efforts should also be made gradually to introduce a minimum threshold of labour rights for informal-sector workers, as well as fiscal measures to promote them. The second

strategy is aimed at disguised employment relations or employment relations not foreseen in the legislation and that involve one or more enterprises. This would need to be developed in accordance with the provisions of three ILO instruments: Convention No. 177 and Recommendation No. 184 concerning home work, and Recommendation No. 198 on the employment relationship. Continuing deficiencies in national legislation regarding the attribution of responsibilities among the enterprises involved in subcontracting workers and products should be settled. The final strategy is based on the policies adopted by more advanced countries seeking to combine flexibility for enterprises with employment security for workers. It is advisable to bear in mind the lessons learned during the application of these policies, and to adapt them to the structural peculiarities of Latin American countries. It is vital to enhance employment security and social protection, for the public to have more favourable perceptions thereof. Each country can – and must – combine the two objectives according to their own particular needs, just as the developed countries do. The progress achieved in these areas, though modest in certain countries in the region, would certainly contribute to achieving the dual aim of a ‘flexicurity’ strategy.

### **The complex of social inclusion, newcomers and social integration**

When the Council of Europe decided on a revised *Strategy for Social Cohesion* in 2004, the perspective had shifted slightly (Council of Europe, 2004: 3–4). Beyond the traditional social policy realm was attention to diversity (ethnic and/or religious) as a potential threat to social stability, and to democracy as a method for achieving social cohesion:

1. As understood by the Council of Europe, social cohesion is the capacity of a society to ensure the welfare of all its members, minimising disparities and avoiding polarisation. A cohesive society is a mutually supportive community of free individuals pursuing these common goals by democratic means.
2. All societies have to live with the strains and stresses caused by divisions and potential divisions. For example, there are in all societies disparities of wealth between richer and poorer people; when these disparities are excessive, or tending to increase, cohesion is put at risk. Again, no society is without ethnic and cultural diversity; the question is how to manage diversity so that it becomes a source of mutual enrichment rather than a factor of division and conflict. A cohesive society is one which has developed satisfactory ways of coping with these and other strains in an open and democratic manner. This means taking action to reduce inequalities and restore equity so that these various divisions remain manageable and do not grow so as to threaten the stability of society.
3. No society is fully cohesive. Social cohesion is an ideal to be striven for rather than a goal capable of being fully achieved. It constantly needs to be nurtured, improved and adapted. Each generation has to find afresh a manageable equilibrium of forces. This is a constantly shifting equilibrium which has to adapt to changes in the social and economic environment, in technology and in national and international political systems.
4. Social cohesion is not only a matter of combating social exclusion and poverty. It is also about creating solidarity in society such that exclusion will be minimised. At the same time, in so far as poverty and exclusion continue to exist, there is also a need to take

specific measures to help vulnerable members of society. A social cohesion strategy must therefore tackle exclusion by means of both prevention and cure.

5. During the twentieth century, Western European States came to accept responsibility for achieving a balance between economic growth and social justice. Despite the considerable variations from country to country, the European approach is sufficiently distinctive when compared with other world regions that it has often been referred to as the European social model. The European approach now faces a series of questions and strains, however. The challenge for Europe in the twenty-first century is to find ways of adapting these social policy achievements to changing needs and changing circumstances without losing their essential character.

6. Present-day Europeans are aware of a number of potential threats to social cohesion. For example, changing employment patterns and doubts about the sustainability of social security systems give many the feeling that their future welfare is becoming more uncertain. Social and crime problems in run-down areas of cities may make people feel less secure in their daily lives. Others again see growing multiculturalism as a threat to traditional identities. At the same time, new risks of poverty and exclusion are emerging, such as inadequate access to new information and communication technologies or to privatised utilities (water, electricity, etc.).

7. For these and other reasons, social cohesion is currently perceived by many as being at risk.

Awareness of the challenges of managing diversity has been one of the pillars of the Government of Canada's approach to social cohesion (Hulse and Stone, 2007: 110–112).

This concern about the link between social cohesion and diversity has emerged even more strongly in some countries, in ways that sometimes diverge from the Council of Europe's carefully balanced analysis. In Britain, at first little attention was paid to social cohesion; the preferred approach was one of analysing social exclusion, defined as a multidimensional complex of reasons for marginality. After the election of the Blair government in 1997, a Social Exclusion Unit was established to provide a broad overview of issues of marginality and social challenges. However, following the outbreak of civil disturbances in northern England in 2001, policy discourse identified 'insufficient' social (often termed community) cohesion as the danger (Hulse and Stone, 2007: 114). A number of government reports coalesced around the notion that there was a need to build a 'successfully integrated society' and increase 'community cohesion'. Strategies range from teaching citizenship in schools and English-language training to new immigration laws.<sup>7</sup> There are fears that immigration has produced a society too diverse to cohere and that it is undermining 'the common values that hold British society together' (Cheong *et al.*, 2007: 28). Social cohesion has become a key word in partisan as well as policy discourse.

In similar ways, social cohesion and immigration are closely linked in New Zealand's policy discourse (Hulse and Stone, 2007; Peace *et al.*, 2005); good immigra-

tion policies and effective integration are thought to generate social cohesion. The Netherlands, shaken by violent incidents in its multi-ethnic cities, has shifted its policy perspective from one of social citizenship to policy efforts to foster, in contrast, a strong sense of Dutch identity (Ossewaarde, 2007).

Some studies focus on social cohesion in cities and local communities. Kearns and Forrest (2000) present a good overview of this literature and in doing so provide a useful list of the five constituent elements they found in the ways the concept was used. These are: (i) common values and civic culture; (ii) social order and social control; (iii) social solidarity and reductions in disparities of wealth; (iv) social networks and social capital; (v) territorial belonging and identity. They examine the ways in which local, regional, national and supranational governments are promoting social cohesion at different levels of government. Their overview leads to the cautious conclusion:

A city can consist of socially cohesive but increasingly divided neighbourhoods. The stronger the ties which bind local communities, the greater may be the social, racial or religious conflict between them. The point is that social cohesion at the neighbourhood level is by no means unambiguously a good thing. It can be about discrimination and exclusion and about a majority imposing its will or value system on a minority. A city of neighbourhoods with a high degree of social cohesion could be a city with a high level of conflict within and between neighbourhoods. Similarly, a nation of highly cohesive cities with strong and distinct images could be one in which shared values and norms are relatively parochial and with wide intercity inequalities of lifestyles and living standards. Thus, the need for a simultaneous, multilevel perspective on social cohesion.

Kearns and Forrest, 2000: 1013

Subsequent studies of urban areas have made use of these dimensions (for example, Van Beckhoven and Van Kempen, 2006).

## 1.2 When social cohesion becomes social capital

In an earlier overview of the literature, we observed an increasing tendency to define social cohesion as social capital or to use the two as synonyms. As we said at that time, if an analysis sought to treat social cohesion as capable of 'doing' something, it would often 'treat social capital and social networks as the constitutive element' (Beauvais and Jenson, 2002: 14).<sup>8</sup> As a recent study for the UK's Joseph Rowntree Foundation put it: 'social capital ... is perceived as a key resource to ensure "system stability" defined in terms of social cohesion. With its notions of consensus and harmonious interaction by different groups, social capital is in some senses the practical tool to achieve social cohesion' (Zetter *et al.*, 2006: 22).

Robert Putnam summarises the concept of social capital as follows:

... the core insight of this approach is extremely simple: like tools (physical capital) and training (human capital), social networks have value. Networks have value, first, to the

people who are in the network. ... What makes social networks even more interesting, however, is that they also have implications for bystanders.

Putnam, 2007: 137–138<sup>9</sup>

Thus, the claim is that communities with high levels of social capital will not only provide resources to individuals, such as shared informal child care among mothers in low-income neighbourhoods (the example given by Brisson and Usher, 2007: 1) or higher levels of happiness (Helliwell, 2005), but also will have a collective resource leading, *inter alia*, to healthier societies (Kawachi *et al.*, 1997), better development outcomes (Narayan and Pritchett, 1999) or innovation (Kaasa, 2007).

Social capital as a concept is no more clearly defined than social cohesion, nor is its intellectual lineage clear.<sup>10</sup> In a relatively recent review of the, primarily, economic literature on social capital, Durlauf and Fafchamps (2004: 61–62) state:<sup>11</sup>

One conclusion we draw from our survey is that the most successful theoretical work on social capital is that which ... models social capital as a form of social network structure and uses the presence of that structure to understand how individual outcomes are affected in equilibrium. From the empirical perspective, the role of networks in facilitating exchange is one of the most compelling empirical findings in the social capital literature ... . With respect to empirical work in general, social capital research has led to the development of a number of interesting data sets as well as the development of a number of provocative hypotheses, [but] much of the empirical literature is at best suggestive and at worst easy to discount. So while one can point to no end of studies in which a variable that is asserted to proxy for social capital has some effect on individuals or groups, it is very difficult to treat the finding as establishing a causal role for social capital.

Another similar review (Quibria, 2003) considers not only the confusion of definitions but also the debate about whether it is really a form of capital (Knorringa and van Staveren, 2007; see also Brisson and Usher, 2007: 2–3 for a review of this debate).

Immediately after social capital was (re)introduced<sup>12</sup> by Robert Putnam is his work on Italy and the USA, there were rapid-fire critiques of his early definition of social capital as always being a ‘positive’ thing: ‘social capital refers to features of social organisation such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit’ (Putnam *et al.*, 1993: 167). One criticism is that if social capital is indeed social it will therefore be inherently traversed by power relations. This comment has appeared in the economics literature (Knorringa and van Staveren (2007) analyse the state of play).<sup>13</sup> Such critiques led to conceptual refinements, introducing different forms of capital. A common typology distinguishes three forms of social capital: bonding, bridging and linking (Ferlander, 2007: 118).

Despite scepticism about the power of the empirical analyses, policy communities have pursued strategies to increase social capital. Several examples exist.

## Social capital as a tool for public policy

The Government of Canada's concerns about social cohesion in the late 1990s soon morphed into attention to social capital at the beginning of the new decade, and a major research initiative was launched in 2003. In the following quotation from the final report, we note immediately differences between thinking about social capital and that of social cohesion:

Family, friends, and acquaintances frequently constitute an important asset essential to the well-being of Canadians. When one is seeking support to make it through hard times, searching for a new job opportunity, or simply living a full and active life, it pays to know people. This is the simple idea behind the concept of social capital. A wide range of research illustrates the ways in which the availability and use of various social ties may make a difference to individual well-being. Policy Research Initiative, 2005: 1

The object is not to increase the well-being of Canada, but of Canadians. The role of the state is to allow individuals to develop, acquire and retain social capital, defined as 'the networks of social relations that may provide individuals and groups with access to resources and supports' (PRI, 2005: 6). These networks are the result of certain social determinants (such as age, gender and income) and can lead to certain results (in terms of health, income and participation). One of the results considered is social cohesion, with the observation being that some forms of social cohesion may be less positive than others (PRI, 2005: 8). The Policy Research Initiative (PRI) recommends that policy-makers should pay attention to three areas of policy: those targeting populations at risk of social exclusion; those supporting major life transitions; and those promoting community development efforts.

The bulk of the actual policy experiments (as opposed to recommendations about how to do it, such as those provided by the PRI) to promote social capital involve efforts to improve outcomes in poor or disadvantaged neighbourhoods or localities. The goals are to improve health,<sup>14</sup> safety, economic development, social development and so on (see, for example, Khan and Muir (2006: 8), who partially review the literature). Flint and Kearns (2006) report, for example, on reliance on registered social landlords in Scotland as a mechanism for developing social capital in deprived communities.

In other words, as with the efforts to foster social inclusion described above, the goal is to improve outcomes and overcome disadvantage, viewed as being the result not only of individual characteristics but also of neighbourhoods. Thus, in collaboration with the Institute for Research on Public Policy (IRPP), the London Borough of Camden carried out two surveys of social capital in the area, in 2002 and 2005. The notion of social capital underpinning the action research, as well as the policy strategy, is made clear in this extract:

There is a now an impressive body of research that testifies to the importance of active communities and a strong civil society for individual and communal well-being. In partic-

ular, it seems clear that social capital has an important contribution to make towards tackling poverty and disadvantage. Communities with strong networks, high levels of trust and well-established habits of co-operation and association are generally much better off than those without these things. ... Of course, government cannot simply invent social capital any more than it can invent money or employment. ... But that does not mean that government cannot do anything to strengthen civic culture. ... there are a range of steps that a local authority such as Camden can take – for instance, redesigning the public realm to encourage everyday interaction, supporting grassroots community associations, asking people to get involved, and supporting them when they do.

Khan and Muir, 2006: 1–2

Sometimes these efforts are developed in order to shift responsibility for support from public services to the community, in the general rethinking of the responsibility mix that has been happening over the last decades, including that of promoting both more active societies and more active citizenship (Geddes, 1998: 21; Franklin, 2007).

Immigrant communities have also been a focus of those using the concept of social capital. In a recent research report presented to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the authors examine the interaction between immigrants' social relationships in their community (their social capital), and the development of a stable and integrated society (social cohesion) at the local level. They find that attention to the patterns of social capital, distinguished by type, is useful but that:

In the end, the extent to which social cohesion characterises migrant communities depends less on the strength and variety of their social capital than on the prevailing immigration policy discourse, the backwash of hostility to asylum seekers and refugees and how this impacts on the migrant groups' perceptions of belonging, and the instrumentality of social cohesion policies implemented in the simplistic form of inclusive citizenship. From this perspective we suggest that the concept of social capital, premised on a notion of social cohesion and consensualism, is at best only partially relevant to the more contested political landscape and host community responses at the present time.

Zetter *et al.*, 2006: 25

### **1.3 Social cohesion, institutions and governance**

A third stream in the social cohesion literature is one which focuses on institutions and governance. Because this literature shares the concept of social cohesion with the other two literatures described in Sections 1.1 and 1.2, there is a certain amount of overlap. Indeed, we find one much-cited example in this literature closely related to the social capital approach and another closely (and institutionally) tied to the social cohesion as social inclusion focus.

Policy attention slid towards social capital in a frequently cited argument about social cohesion and development that emerged from the World Bank in 2000 (Easterly *et al.*, 2006).<sup>15</sup> The authors make a two-step argument. First, development outcomes (economic growth) depend on effective institutions. Second, effective

institutions are those with ‘room to manoeuvre’, which depends in turn on the level of social cohesion, because politicians will be able to realise their development projects without being undermined by political and other threats from competing elites or the population.

After some consideration of the most useful definition, the authors settle on defining ‘social cohesion as the nature and extent of social and economic divisions within society’ (Easterly *et al.*, 2006: 105). With this definition, the concept can be measured by three kinds of indicators: (1) ethnic diversity; (2) income distribution; (3) trust and other attitudes. Via a regression analysis the authors find that a correlation exists between economic outcomes and these indicators of social cohesion. They conclude that: ‘our findings support the two-stage hypothesis we outlined at the beginning: more social cohesion leads to better institutions, and that better institutions in turn lead to higher growth’ (Easterly *et al.*, 2006: 113) and that ‘together, these suggestive empirical results show that building social cohesion – through the construction and maintenance of high-quality institutions pursuing the common good, and through the lowering of economic (and other) divisions – has been, and remains, a vital task for countries wrestling with development’ (Easterly *et al.*, 2006: 111).

The policy implications are large, and so too is the need for a research agenda about how healthy institutions might be brought into being and maintained. But these authors end on a somewhat disappointing note with respect to the policy implications, pointing simply to the importance of education and arguing that the state ‘... can, in some cases, also actively help to create social cohesion by ensuring that public services are provided fairly and efficiently (i.e. treating all citizens equally), and by actively redressing overt forms of discrimination and other social barriers’ (Easterly *et al.*, 2006: 117). In such recommendations they join with proponents of ‘fostering social cohesion’ via social inclusion, such as the Council of Europe.

The OECD was a second locale for promoting the link between institutions, governance and social cohesion.<sup>16</sup> Simultaneously with the identification of the social policy/social cohesion link described in Section 1.1, came attention to the locations in which social cohesion most needed attention. As the then-Secretary General wrote:

Complementarity among macro-economic, structural and territorial policies is important for several reasons:

- structural economic changes depend for maximum success on stimulation of regional and local entrepreneurship and innovation;
- central government policies rely on dynamic communities in which business, public authorities and civic society can establish new partnerships and follow approaches adapted to their circumstances;
- dynamic communities can strengthen social cohesion by, for example, facilitating ‘welfare to work’ policies to integrate the unemployed and excluded, and by pioneering new forms of democratic participation.

Johnston, 1998: 4



Work by the Territorial Development Policy Committee (as part of the OECD's Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate) addresses the themes of metropolitan governance and urban competitiveness, as well as their interdependence. It was a major locale (although by no means the only one) that led to what has been termed the 'new conventional wisdom'.

Sometimes termed the competitiveness-cohesion-governance problematic (Buck *et al.*, 2005), in this view, shared by academics and policy-makers, 'success' in the world of 'after-neoliberalism' depends on a combination of economic competitiveness, social cohesion and responsive governance. This position is based on a stance also visible in policy perspectives of the EU at least since 2000 – that economic performance depends on good social policy, including policies promoting territorial, social and economic cohesion (Beauvais and Jenson, 2002: 21; European Commission, 2004; Turok, 2006: 353).

Identifying what are described as the threats of market volatility and segmentation, as well as rising individualism and declining civility, there has been a turn to what might for our purposes be labelled a policy paradigm based on the following policy logic:

The key idea that has emerged to link these concerns is that *social cohesion improves economic performance*. This is a more positive way of saying that social division and fragmentation undermine long-term economic success. Communities that pull together may be able to reverse the tide of urban decline creating a stable environment, restoring confidence and assisting each other. A strong social fabric comprising active civil institutions, connected communities and common values is said by some commentators to function better economically. Different elements of society contribute to the collective endeavour through some shared sense of purpose, mutual support or simply agreed norms and rules of behaviour. This helps to limit selfish practices, conflict and instability, and generally improves the durability of economic relationships. Turok, 2006: 355

In cities, beyond a focus on labour market activity (see the quotation from Johnston above), a good deal of attention has gone to the negative effects of crime, both on attracting talent and on business performance. Therefore, the capacities of local institutions that control, limit and discourage crime are important. Another focus is on education and training and the relationship to social cohesion. Lastly, social networks' links to business performance are identified as key, and these networks can be institutionalised via either private or public action or both.<sup>17</sup>

Once again, as we have seen with the literature on social capital, there is a good deal of scepticism about the *effects* of social cohesion and the direction of causation.<sup>18</sup> In other words, there is little consensus that social cohesion can *do something* at the level of the community, city or country.

Looked at in detail and in the light of available evidence, the new conventional wisdom that social cohesion is causally connected to economic competitiveness at the level of the

city looks less convincing. The impact of social circumstances on economic performance appears weaker than the effects of economic change on social conditions. Economic success seems to support some forms of cohesion (particularly social inclusion, equality and stability) provided it is broad-based enough to create a range of jobs relevant to the resident population. Narrowly focused growth that excludes sections of the population from improvements in well-being may increase inequality, insecurity and social stress. Given the lack of substantial research on the subject, these are not definitive or universal conclusions, but rather a challenge to policy-makers, advisers and researchers to go beyond superficial generalisations and platitudes about cohesion being the key ...

Turok, 2006: 364–365

Ian Gordon sounds a similar warning about the caution that must be exercised.

The notion of ‘social cohesion’ – as a shorthand way of indicating all the various respects in which social relations within particular places can (increasingly) make a difference to their economic performance – may be more of an obstacle than a help ... There is a real temptation (within a new conventional wisdom about policy for cities) to see this as actually representing some single kind of quality which places can develop in order to simultaneously remedy the shortcomings of markets in terms of both social outcomes and economic performance ... To recognise the relevance for economic as well as social goals of issues falling under the umbrella of ‘social cohesion’ (or of social capital or inclusion) is then only an entry point to understanding the issues that have to be faced and the kind of actions that do (or do not) have a potential to advance these goals.

Gordon, 2006: 368–369

## **1.4 Conclusions from the literature review**

With these warnings in mind, what might we conclude from the last decade of explicit attention to social cohesion (and social capital)?

First, it is important to note that for a significant body of the literature and the policy discussions, social cohesion is a property of a society (whether defined as a city, country or Europe). It is not an individual characteristic. Social cohesion is something to be ‘encouraged’, ‘fostered’ or ‘protected’.

It is an end product, one that results from good policy for social development. Threats to social cohesion come from bad policy (insufficient attention to social rights or economic inclusion, for example) or from policy which is too unidimensional. Sometimes the single dimension is described as ‘too many’ rights for newcomers and insufficient attention to promoting common values, and sometimes the unidimensionality is described as ‘insufficient’ attention to diversity. In other words, the actual interventions prescribed vary, especially with respect to dealing with immigration and/or diversity.

The policy conclusions that emerge from this body of literature is that social policy may need to be redesigned for new times if social development is to be achieved. As the result of social changes of a big sort (for example globalisation and migration

flows; restructured labour markets; families and demography; and income polarisation) or the fall-out of ideological preferences (whether too much Keynesianism or too much neoliberalism), there is a need for new policy strategies. Indeed, some call for a new social architecture and forms of social protection in order to rebuild cohesion and confront new social risks (Esping-Andersen *et al.*, 2002; Jenson, 2004; Tokman, 2007). There is not, as yet, a consensus on what this design should be, or whether it will work to overcome threats such as social exclusion and marginality.<sup>19</sup>

The measurement implications that follow from this body of literature are that a focus on indicators of social capital is likely to be difficult to achieve and is of marginal utility for the research question of the UNRISD-Commonwealth Secretariat project.

Second, when social cohesion is defined as social capital, the policy implications are different. At the outset, it must be recognised that a good deal of this literature now focuses on outcomes at the level of the individual or on health. The finding is that individuals who live and work in networks are not only healthier than others, but also happier. Moreover, there is strong evidence that social capital is *correlated with* certain positive outcomes, but causation is not established.<sup>20</sup> Even important research initiatives, such as that to measure social capital in the Borough of Camden, end with the call for more research. In the concluding paragraph, the authors say: 'If the science of social capital is as yet underdeveloped, then there is little by way of established practice, nor any clear responsibility for engineering improvement. ... The challenge now will be for the council to think creatively about ways to promote community cohesion that will take account of the complexity and changing nature of social capital' (Khan and Muir, 2006: 43). Another much-cited study also ends with a call for a research agenda (Easterly *et al.*, 2006).

The measurement implications that follow from this body of literature are that a focus on indicators of social capital is likely to be difficult to achieve and of marginal utility for the research question of this project.

## Indicators for Measuring Social Cohesion

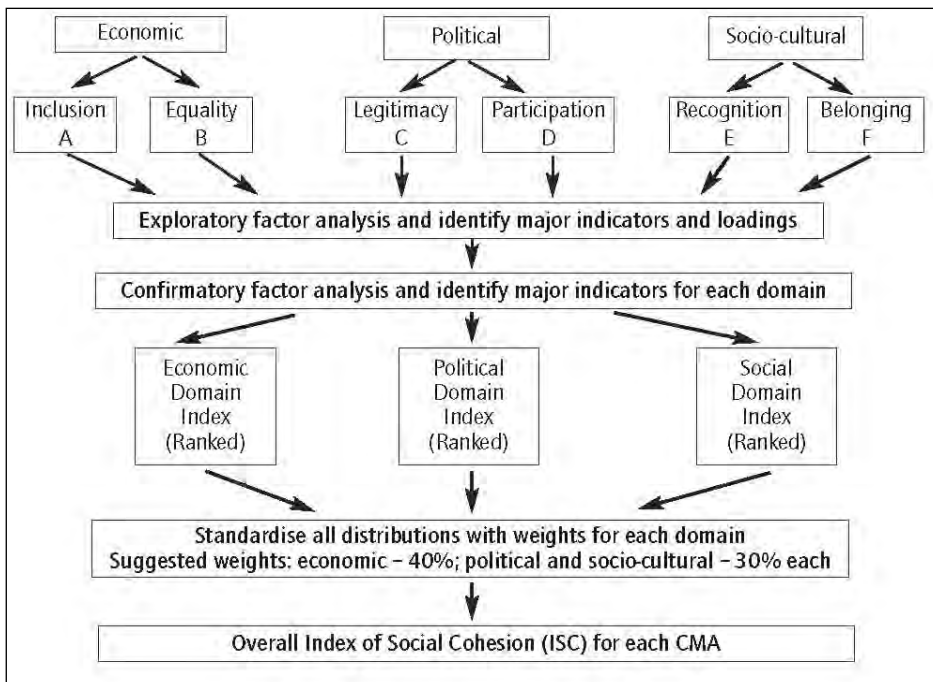
In their recent review of the policy literature on social cohesion Kath Hulse and Wendy Stone conclude that:

... the policy concept of social cohesion has been invoked, albeit reluctantly in some cases, in public policy debates in North America, Europe and Australasia .... It is clear that there is no one definition as a policy concept and, as yet, no agreed upon indicators, despite determined development work by a number of authors ... Hulse and Stone, 2007: 117

Given that there is no agreement, this section canvasses a number of publications that have proposed indicators of social cohesion, defined as social inclusion and, to a lesser extent, as social capital.

Several studies have tried to get a good measure of social cohesion by concentrating on a single country. This strategy has the advantage, in a data-rich case such as Canada, of identifying good indicators for a concept with a complicated definition. For example, in order to make comparisons within Canada across census metropolitan areas (CMAs), Fernando Rajulton *et al.* (2007: 464) developed a multi-dimensional measure of social cohesion, based on six dimensions adapted from Jenson (1998).

**Figure 1. A Multi-dimensional measure of social cohesion**



Drawing on the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating (NSGVP) they created an overall index that drew heavily on a measure of participation but also included measures of economic distribution (Rajulton *et al.*, 2007: 468).

While some of the variables were easily measured from public sources, a significant number of the belonging and participation measures depended on having a comprehensive survey of political and civic behaviour such as the NSGVP, a tool which is not available in many countries, as the authors of the next example found.

Robin Peace and colleagues in New Zealand undertook a literature review and then summarised the indicators used internationally:

In most projects of the Council for Europe and the EU, the key indicators are:

- demography
- inclusion in the labour market
- employment/training
- social benefits
- housing
- education
- participation in social, cultural and political life.

These are often accompanied by indicators of racism and discrimination, reflecting the European concern with extreme and institutionalised forms of racism and discrimination. These indicators typically include the following:

- data on racism and discriminatory acts
- data on racially violent crimes and harassment
- number of complaints of discrimination and convictions
- data on patterns of discrimination in government
- data on direct and indirect discrimination.

Peace *et al.*, 2005: 15–16

William Easterly *et al.* (2006: 106ff) used a somewhat similar set of indicators for their multi-case analysis examining the correlation between social cohesion and economic growth. They began by enumerating the most common direct measures of social cohesion:

- memberships rates of organisations and civic participation;
- measures of trust – constructed from the percentage of respondents in each country replying ‘most people can be trusted’, in the World Values Survey;<sup>21</sup>
- measures of income distribution – the Gini coefficient and share of income of the middle 60 per cent of the population;

- ethnic heterogeneity, measured by an ‘ethno-linguistic fractionalisation index’, calculating the probability that two randomly selected persons from a given country will not belong to the same ethno-linguistic group.

They had to drop the first measure, however, because of lack of data. There were simply not enough surveys of these rates to allow them to carry out their comparative and quantitative analysis. Therefore, their analysis actually only used trust (which was available for some cases), the two measures of distribution and the ‘ethno-linguistic fractionalisation index’.

In her work on measuring social cohesion across the EU, Regina Berger-Schmitt (2002: 413–414) provided a set of indicators to measure the two dimensions she identified as underpinning the concept – inequality and social capital.<sup>22</sup>

The inequality dimension covers the following issues:

- regional disparities
- equal opportunities for
  - women and men
  - generations
  - social strata
  - disabled
  - citizenship groups
- social exclusion

The social capital dimension includes the following components:

- social relations and activities within primary social groups and associations
- quality of social relations
- quality of societal institutions<sup>23</sup>

The EU has done an immense amount of work on developing indicators appropriate to its commitment to social inclusion announced in the Maastricht Treaty and confirmed in 2000 by the Lisbon Agenda.<sup>24</sup> These indicators cover income, employment, education and health (the indicators, as summarised by ECLAC for its own work, are presented in Appendix B).

For its part, ECLAC is working on developing indicators of social cohesion in Latin America and the Caribbean, summarised in Figure 2 (ECLAC, 2007: 39).

The emphasis on disparities is evident when the precise measures are discussed, as well as in the labels themselves. For example, the education indicator is broken down into four measures:

1. The net preschool enrolment rate is the percentage of boys and girls in the relevant age group who are enrolled in preschool. Universal, quality preschool education is an effective tool in combating future (or inherited) inequalities.
2. The percentage of persons over 15 years of age who have not completed primary education. The lack of a primary (basic) education is a very serious obstacle to individuals' productive integration into the labour market.
3. The percentage of persons over 20 years of age who have not completed their secondary education.
4. State expenditure per student in the public education system compared to upper middle class family expenditure per student is suggested as a secondary indicator. This indicator would register disparities between different social strata with regard to the quality of education.

ECLAC, 2007: 41

**Figure 2. System of social cohesion indicators: components and factors**

| <b>Indicators</b>       |                              |                            |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Gaps</b>             | <b>Institutions</b>          | <b>Belonging</b>           |
| • Income inequality     | • Effectiveness of democracy | • Multiculturalism         |
| • Poverty and indigence | • State institutions         | • Trust                    |
| • Employment            | • Market institutions        | • Participation            |
| • Education             | • Family                     | • Expectations of mobility |
| • Health                |                              | • Social solidarity        |
| • Housing               |                              |                            |
| • Pensions              |                              |                            |
| • Digital divide        |                              |                            |

The notion is clearly that greater social cohesion is based on access to social rights in an equitable and/or egalitarian fashion. The same assumption underpins the EU's social indicators and those proposed by some academics.

We note that most indicators of social cohesion measure gaps. The emphasis is on disparities, usually defined in terms in equitable or egalitarian access to services, income and well-being.

## Lessons and a Proposed Set of Indicators

From this overview of the definition and measurement of social cohesion, we see clearly that it has served as a quasi-concept, one with academic credentials certainly (and surrounded by much academic debate), but also one which serves an important function in policy discourse. As such, it is not different from other concepts in the development and other literatures, such as that on social capital.<sup>25</sup>

Reviewing the attention that has been paid to the quasi-concept provides a number of lessons.

One is that in many countries the focus on social cohesion emerged from a recognition that classic neoliberalism had hit a political and ideational wall and was generating negative outcomes such as high levels of poverty. Social cohesion, as a macro-goal to be maintained or fostered, appeared as a consensual substitute across a range of policy communities.

There is abundant empirical evidence that more egalitarian societies and settings, in part sustained by equality-seeking social policies, are correlated with positive outcomes such as good health, child development and labour market adjustments in the face of structural challenges. Therefore, social cohesion has been mobilised as a quasi-concept by those who seek to protect and advance social inclusion.

There is also a whole intellectual ‘industry’ in which social cohesion is defined as social capital, thereby generating another quasi-concept. Here there are ongoing debates about causality (do high-performing social settings generate social capital rather than depend on it?); about forms of social capital (what are the effects of bonding, bridging or linking?); and about whether policies can generate social activity (are there successful mechanisms for fostering networks and active participation?).

The greatest difficulty in using this notion of social cohesion for the UNRISD-Commonwealth Secretariat project seems to be one of measurement, as well as the focus on individual-level outcomes. If there is consensus across the literature, it is that social capital depends on trust in some form. Measurements of trust come from survey rather than behavioural data and therefore their availability is limited. In addition, when networks and participation are defined as the key component of social capital, there are difficulties in obtaining data. Empirical analysis has already fallen prey to these limits for cross-national comparisons.

Following this review of the literature on social cohesion and its indicators, I propose the adoption of three types of indicators. With the exception of some of the later measures, they should all be available from World Bank or International Labour Organization (ILO) databases.

A first set of indicators, 1 to 5, seeks basic measures of social disparities. Gaps are indicated by inequality in access to economic resources, as well as basic social services.



**1. *Social cohesion as social inclusion – indicated by access to financial resources, measured in three ways:***

- The *Gini coefficient*, which is a measure of inequality of income distribution or inequality of wealth distribution.
- Measures of income shares, including
  - the share of middle 60 per cent of the population
  - income share held by highest 10 per cent
  - income share held by highest 20 per cent
  - income share held by lowest 10 per cent
  - income share held by lowest 20 per cent.
- Measures of poverty:
  - percentage of population meeting the poverty headcount ratio at \$1 a day
  - percentage of population meeting the poverty headcount ratio at \$2 a day
  - percentage of population at national poverty line.

These poverty measures should be provided for minorities and immigrant groups, as appropriate to each small state.

**2. *Social cohesion as social inclusion – indicated by access to economic activity***

- Unemployment rate (percentage of total labour force)
  - youth unemployment (percentage of total labour force aged 15–24)
  - female unemployment (percentage of total female labour force)
  - minority (minorities) unemployment rate. This measure may not be appropriate to all small states. It should also, if possible, be analysed by sex and for youth
  - immigrant unemployment rate. This measure may not be appropriate to all small states. It should also, if possible, be analysed by sex and for youth.
- Employment in the informal economy, as a percentage of total employment – the ratio between the number of persons employed in the informal economy and the total number of employed persons.

**3. *Social cohesion as social inclusion – indicated by access to education and human capital***

- Literacy rate, adult total (percentage of people aged 15 and above)
  - adult female (percentage of females aged 15 and above)
  - adult male (percentage of males aged 15 and above).
- Percentage of population over 15 who have not completed primary education.
  - male and female as well as total rates.

- Percentage of population over 20 who have not completed secondary education.
  - male and female as well as total rates.
- Percentage of children of secondary school age enrolled in secondary education.
- Percentage of population aged 18–24 in tertiary education.

The measures should be provided for minorities and immigrant groups, as appropriate to each small state.

#### **4. *Social cohesion as social inclusion – indicated by access to health***

- Life expectancy at birth, in years
  - total
  - for males and females
  - for minorities.
- Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)
  - total
  - for minorities.
- Mortality rate, under fives (per 1,000)
  - total
  - for minorities.
- Births attended by skilled health staff (percentage of total)
  - total
  - for minorities.

#### **5. *Social cohesion as social inclusion – indicated by access to technology***

- Percentage of households with access to broadband internet.

A second type of indicator measures cultural and ethnic homogeneity, relating to the diversity dimension of social cohesion important for some analysts. More diversity is taken to be an indicator of less social cohesion.

#### **6. *Social cohesion as cultural and ethnic homogeneity***

- Percentage of foreign born in the population.
- Ethnic fractionalisation – an index measuring the probability that two randomly selected people will not belong to the same ethno-linguistic group.
- Country is officially bi- or multilingual (0 or 1).

A third set of indicators of social cohesion, 7 and 8, focuses on participation and belonging. While measures of electoral participation can be obtained, the other indicators are unlikely to be available.

## 7. *Social cohesion as trust*

- Questions about trust from public opinion surveys. The usual source is the World Values Survey, which provides comparable questions and data management. No small states are included. See <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>

## 8. *Social cohesion as participation and solidarity*

- Electoral participation – percentage of eligible voters participating in national elections.
- Rate of participation in voluntary associations – percentage of people who are members of a voluntary association. For comparative analysis these data are usually found in the World Values Survey (and therefore once again do not include small states).
- Charitable giving – percentage of population making a charitable gift.

## Appendix A

### The Council of Europe's Strategy for Social Cohesion

On 12 May 2000, the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS) adopted its Strategy for Social Cohesion. This document, approved by the Committee of Ministers on 13 July, represents a statement of intent setting out a precise agenda for the Council in the social field for the coming years.

It does not define social cohesion as such but seeks to identify some of the factors in social cohesion, such as:

- setting up mechanisms and institutions which will prevent the factors of division (such as an excessive gap between rich and poor or the multiple forms of discrimination) from becoming so acute as to endanger social harmony;
- the importance of decent and adequately remunerated employment;
- measures to combat poverty and social exclusion, particularly in areas such as housing, health, education and training, employment and income distribution and social services;
- strengthening social security systems;
- developing policies for families, with particular emphasis on children and the elderly;
- partnership with civil society bodies, in particular trade unions, employers' representatives and NGOs.

*Accordingly, social cohesion policies should:*

- help to revitalise the economy and capitalise on the contribution made by the two sides of industry and other interested bodies, particularly by creating employment, stimulating enterprise and ensuring employment opportunities for all;
- meet people's basic needs and promote access to social rights within the universal spirit of the Council of Europe's many conventions and recommendations, particularly in the fields of employment, education, health, social protection and housing;
- acknowledge human dignity by focusing policies on the individual and guaranteeing human rights in Europe;
- establish forums and procedures enabling the underprivileged and those whose rights are insufficiently upheld to make themselves heard;

- develop an integrated approach bringing together all the relevant fields of action.

The Council of Europe will be carrying out four types of activities: standard-setting activities and monitoring of the application of legal instruments; policy development; projects in member states; and research and analysis. The Strategy for Social Cohesion will naturally evolve as time goes by and as more experience is gained in this new approach by the Council of Europe.

Source: Council of Europe, 2001

## Appendix B

# The European Union's Indicators of Social Inclusion

### LAEKEN INDICATORS OF SOCIAL COHESION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

| Thematic area/indicator   | Breakdowns by:    |                   |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|
|   | Age               | Sex               |
| <b>Primary indicators</b>   |                   |                   |
| <b>Income</b>   |                   |                   |
| 1. Low income rate after transfers threshold set at 60% of median national equivalised income   | Yes               | Yes               |
| 1a. Low income rate after transfers with breakdowns by household type   | By household type | By household type |
| 1b. Low income rate after transfers by work intensity of household members  | No                | No                |
| 1c. Low income rate after transfers with breakdowns by most frequent activity states  | Yes               | Yes               |
| 1d. Low income rate after transfers with breakdowns by housing tenure status  | Yes               | Yes               |
| 2. Low income threshold (illustrative values)   | No                | No                |
| 3. Distribution of income (quintile 5/quintile 1)   | No                | No                |
| 4. Persistence of low income (based on threshold of 60% of median national equivalised income)  | Yes               | Yes               |
| 5. Relative median low-income gap (difference between the median income of persons below the low-income threshold and the threshold of 60% of median national equivalised income) | Yes               | Yes               |
| <b>Employment</b>   |                   |                   |
| 6. Regional cohesion (dispersion of regional employment rates)  | No                | Yes               |
| 7. Long-term unemployment rate (percentage of EAP that has been unemployed for at least 12 months)  | Yes               | Yes               |
| 8a. Children (aged 0–17) living in jobless households   | No                | No                |
| 8b. Adults (aged 18–59) living in jobless households  | No                | Yes               |
| <b>Education</b>  |                   |                   |
| 9. Early school leavers not in education or training  | No                | Yes               |
| 10. Fifteen-year-old students with low reading literacy scores  | No                | Yes               |
| <b>Health</b>   |                   |                   |
| 11. Life expectancy at birth  | No                | Yes               |
| <b>Employment</b>   |                   |                   |
| 12. Immigrant employment gap  | Desirable         | Yes               |

| Thematic area/indicator  | Breakdowns by: |     |
|--|----------------|-----|
|  | Age            | Sex |
| <b>Secondary indicators</b>  |                |     |
| <b>Income</b>  |                |     |
| 13. Dispersion around the low-income threshold   | Yes            | Yes |
| 14. Low-income rate anchored at a moment in time   | Yes            | Yes |
| 15. Low-income rate before transfers, by sex   | Yes            | Yes |
| 16. Gini coefficient   | No             | No  |
| 17. Persistence of low income (below 50% of median income)   | Yes            | Yes |
| 18. Women at risk of poverty   | Yes            | Yes |
| <b>Employment</b>  |                |     |
| 19. Long-term unemployment share   | Yes            | Yes |
| 20. Very long-term unemployment rate (at least 24 months, as a percentage of the working population) | Yes            | Yes |
| <b>Education</b>   |                |     |
| 21. Persons with low educational attainment  | Yes            | Yes |

Source: ECLAC, 2007: 36

## Notes

- 1 At <http://www.unrisd.org/>; see the pages for social policy and development.
- 2 Two recent articles provide useful overviews of the multiple definitions of the concept and comparisons of its use in different policy settings (Hulse and Stone, 2007; Chan *et al.*, 2006). Definitional distinctions were also an important theme in Beauvais and Jenson (2002), Jenson (1998) and Peace *et al.* (2005: 3–6).
- 3 The Treaty of Maastricht states that the objective of the Union is to ‘promote economic and social progress which is balanced and sustainable, in particular through the creation of an area without internal frontiers, through the strengthening of economic and social cohesion and through the establishment of economic and monetary union ...’. The treatment of social cohesion by Berger-Schmitt (2002), particularly the equality dimension, reflects an effort to develop measures for assessing the achievement of these goals, as is the work on social inclusion described in, *inter alia.*, Marlier *et al.* (2006) and ECLAC (2007: chapter 2).
- 4 For this lineage see the discussions in Jenson (1998: 8ff.) and Chan *et al.* (2006: 275–77). See also Rajulton *et al.* (2007), who make an explicit link back to Durkheim.
- 5 Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1355 (1998).
- 6 See [www.cohesionsociale.gouv.fr/plan-cohesion-sociale/presentation/70.html](http://www.cohesionsociale.gouv.fr/plan-cohesion-sociale/presentation/70.html), consulted 12 September 2007.
- 7 Cheong *et al.* (2007: 26ff.) provide an overview as well as references to the government reports.
- 8 Forrest and Kearns (2001) provide a useful review of how the two concepts have come to intersect in considerations of national level and neighbourhood level variables. The standard reference to the ‘value’ of networks is to Lin (2001: 19), who considers social capital to be an ‘investment in social relations with expected returns in the marketplace’.
- 9 The standard reference to the ‘value’ of networks is to Lin (2001: 19), who considers social capital to be an ‘investment in social relations with expected returns in the marketplace’.
- 10 It is interesting to note a certain ambiguity about where social capital fits in the history of ideas (Jenson, 1998; Ferlander, 2007: 115). Initial work on democracy in Italy (Putnam *et al.*, 1993) was explicitly Tocquevillian in its gestures towards the ‘founding fathers’ and simultaneously liberal. However, over time, the Durkheimian roots and concerns about social order have been claimed (for example, Helliwell, 2005: 1, which references Durkheim’s work on suicide) or identified (Bevort and Lallemt, 2006).
- 11 A more up-beat assessment is provided by John Helliwell (2005), who also reviews the literature and finds a strong causal link, but his dependent variable is individual well-being. Thus, individuals with higher levels of social capital – defined as ‘... trust in their neighbourhoods, their workplaces, their public services and their public servants’ (Helliwell, 2005: 11) – reported higher levels of subjective well-being. This literature on individuals and their well-being, also being worked on by the OECD (for example, Boarini *et al.*, 2006), is not discussed here.
- 12 The standard history is that both Pierre Bourdieu and James Coleman used the concept well before Robert Putnam (for example Bevort and Lallemt, 2006). But economists also find the origins of social capital in research on networks in labour markets (an overview is in Durlauf and Fafchamps, 2004).
- 13 Political scientists and sociologists, such as Margaret Levi and Sidney Tarrow, discussed the possible negative consequences of social capital very quickly after the book on Italy appeared (see Jenson, 1998).
- 14 As Sara Ferlander says (2007: 116), ‘in none of the outcomes is the importance of social connectedness so well established as in the case of health and well-being’. For a recent overview of the links between social capital and health outcomes see *Health Policy Research*, No. 12, September 2006. This is an issue of Health Canada’s bulletin, entitled ‘Social Capital and Health: Maximizing the Benefits’, available at: [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/sr-sr/pubs/hpr-rpms/bull/2006-capital-social-capital/index\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/sr-sr/pubs/hpr-rpms/bull/2006-capital-social-capital/index_e.html).
- 15 While the academic version of the argument was only published in 2006, it first appeared as a speech by the Bank’s Vice-President for Development Policy in 2000 (Beauvais and Jenson, 2002: 14) and as a World Bank working paper the same year (Ritzen *et al.*, 2000).
- 16 This is a quite general phenomenon, seen across several countries in Europe and North America (Flint and Kearns, 2006; Bradford, 2002).
- 17 A recent review of all these arguments is provided in the whole of OECD (2006) as well as Turok (2006) and Gordon (2006).
- 18 In this literature, as in that in which social cohesion is defined simply as social capital, there is recognition that social cohesion is not always ‘good’. It may lead to exclusion, to closed communities and so on.
- 19 For example, in its report on the Plan de cohésion sociale [social cohesion policy] put into place by



- government in 2004, the French ministry can report on how well its goals for housing and job creation have been met, but not on how 'social cohesion' has been created (France, 2005).
- 20 In particular, the work reported by the OECD on social cohesion and cities tends either to find little relationship – cities with high crime rates are also cities, like London, with high rates of in-migration, tourism and so on (Turok, 2006: 359) – or that the causality runs from economic performance to social cohesion.
  - 21 There is a large literature on how to measure trust. One popular source of measures is the public opinion survey (often the European or World Values Surveys or a specific national survey) that simply asks how much people trust each other or institutions. This simple measure has been rejected by others, who insist on operationalising differences among kinds of trust (for example, Nooteboom (2007: 46)). Appropriate attention to these theoretical and methodological points would render much of the existing and available data on levels of trust – which is already very limited – inadequate for cross-national comparison of small states.
  - 22 This work was done in a broader context of developing a European System of Social Indicators. See . See <http://www.gesis.org/en/services/data/social-indicators/eusi/>
  - 23 Here the measure of 'institutional quality' is not an objective one, as in Easterly *et al.* (2006), but an attitudinal one, drawn from surveys (Berger-Schmitt, 2002: 421).
  - 24 This work gave rise to a set of indicators agreed at the Laeken Summit in 2001. Committees on social indicators and expert groups have been at work since then, giving rise most recently to the publication by Marlier *et al.* (2006), based on work done for the Luxembourg Presidency in 2005.
  - 25 McNeil (2006) analyses three such quasi-concepts: social capital, the informal sector and sustainable development.

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