Mapping Social Cohesion:
The State of Canadian Research

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Executive Summary

Concerns about social cohesion currently top the policy agenda of a number of governmental and non-governmental institutions. With so many conversations going on simultaneously, it is not surprising that there is little consensus about definitions and about links to a family of related concepts. A map is needed. Clarification of where the discussion is and where it might go is the primary goal of this study.

This concept is often used by policy communities in both Canada and abroad when they speak of their fears and lack of certainty about how to proceed in these challenging times. The term "social cohesion" is used to describe a process more than a condition or end state, while it is seen as involving a sense of commitment, and desire or capacity to live together in some harmony.

The first part of this study argues that concerns about social cohesion are a product of our times. The paradigm shift in economic and social policy towards neo-liberalism has provoked serious social and political strains (e.g., rising poverty, declining population health) and a loss of confidence in public institutions. Increasing reliance on market forces and classical liberal ideology has provoked a widespread conversation among those who fear the high political, social and economic costs of ignoring social cohesion. They are engaged in reassessing the responsibilities of the major institutional complexes – the public, private and third sectors – of modern liberal democracies.

The last decade of the 20th century is not the first time that conversations about social cohesion have been widely heard. Part I describes the concept of social cohesion as being the focus of only one of three theoretical traditions that address the question of social order. Social scientists such as Émile Durkheim in 19th century France, and then the American Talcott Parsons, in the 1940s and 1950s, worried about social cohesion. They had competition then, as they do today, from classical liberals as well as from theorists of democracy coming from democratic socialism, Christian democracy and positive liberalism. The goal of this short discussion is simply to remind the reader that only some theoretical approaches identify social cohesion – defined as shared values and commitment to a

community – as the foundation stone of social order. Other traditions privilege other mechanisms and put the accent on institutional processes and conflicting interests more than on values.

Part II of the paper goes on to map social cohesion in two ways. First it breaks the concept into its constituent dimensions. These are:

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belonging / isolation
inclusion / exclusion
participation / non-involvement
recognition / rejection
legitimacy / illegitimacy.

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Next it maps the Canadian literature that addresses at least one of these dimensions. An initial sorting process finds marked differences in the focus of attention of the authors. Those who focus on the local community are frequently concerned with individuals – their health or their economic and social inclusion, while the literature focussed on the whole of society often asks questions about structures and institutions. For example, it asks how social cohesion affects economic performance. It also assesses the contribution of institutions to recognising and accommodating claims to difference and to promoting full citizenship, thereby fostering social cohesion.

A second sorting of the literature reveals different uses of related concepts that are often deployed in conversations about social cohesion. These are "social economy" (and the related concept of the "third sector") and "social capital." The paper describes the varying ways these concepts are defined and used in the Canadian literature, as a preparation for further discussion in the third part.

Part III of the paper maps gaps and spaces for a research agenda. It asks three fundamental questions, which are derived from the previous mapping exercise:

1. What fosters social cohesion?
2. Can a country accumulate social capital?
3. Cohesion of what and for whom?

The first question directs attention to forms of participation. The literature on the social economy is based on the theory that improving one dimension of social cohesion (inclusion) depends on coupling it with another dimension (participation in paid work). The two together will then generate stronger feelings of belonging and full citizenship. An alternative hypothesis, often suggested by those who focus on the third or voluntary sector, is that any form of participation is sufficient to generate feelings of belonging; levels of income or even inclusion are not determinants.

This first question, about fostering social cohesion, also reveals research gaps that need to be filled about the role of institutions, particularly state institutions, in managing value differences among Canadians. Value differences are inevitable in a modern pluralist society; they are not a problem in and of themselves. The literature

on social cohesion clearly indicates that problems arise when institutions, particularly public institutions, fail to manage conflicts over recognition, legitimacy of claims and do not provide sufficient space for democratic dialogue. Therefore, research is needed to measure our institutions' contribution to each dimension. Research is also needed to uncover the linkages between economic well-being and social cohesion.

The second question asks about social capital. The paper identifies a serious gap in the discussions. Most considerations of social capital, because of the definition of the concept itself (as the result of face-to-face contact), focus on the local community. The paper therefore asks two sub-questions requiring research: Does social capital aggregate? Is social capital useful in discussions of identities, particularly national identities?

The third question identifies a major research gap by asking whether too much attention to social cohesion may not blind us to other equally important matters such as social justice and equitable outcomes. Much more research is needed on whether processes considered to foster social cohesion also promote – or hinder – equity.

The paper ends by stressing that social cohesion has always been and remains a contested concept. Those who use it tend to see social order as the consequence of values more than interests, of consensus more than conflict, and of social practices more than political action. Other interpretations may have been displaced by enthusiasm for social cohesion but they remain as alternative voices in ongoing conversations. It is for this reason that Part III ends the paper on a note of concern about too enthusiastic an embrace of an agenda that fails to acknowledge continuing and legitimate claims for social justice and recognition, particularly in a multi-national and modern country such as Canada.

Foreword

Canadians are living a radical transformation in economy and society, constantly buffeted by the fallout from economic decisions made in distant corners of Asia and Russia. The turbulence gives rise to much anxiety about our ability to hang together as a country, about the evidence of polarizing family incomes, and about the capacity of Canadian institutions to respond. This anxiety has produced a wave of new literature and public debate about social cohesion, social capital, civil society, and community capacity.

After a CPRN Roundtable on Mapping Social Cohesion in December 1997, Jane Jenson, Professor of Political Science at the University of Montreal, agreed to write a paper mapping this emerging literature and outlining a research agenda for those who wish to make the fundamental ideas more operational. Her study cuts through the rhetoric and clarifies the deeper analytical foundations of the debate. It also opens up new pathways for CPRN and other researchers.

I wish to thank Jane Jenson, and her research assistant Denis Saint-Martin, for their thoughtful contribution to our thinking on these issues. I also thank Pauline O'Connor, who wrote the background paper for the Roundtable (available on request or from www.cprn.com), Suzanne Peters, Director of the Family Network of CPRN, and the virtual Advisory Committee, who provided advice throughout. We all appreciate the contribution of the project funders: Canadian Heritage, the Department of Justice Canada, and The Kahanoff Foundation Nonprofit Sector Research Initiative.

The combined effort of authors, advisors and funders has cleared away the underbrush and will help readers in many settings to focus energy on the kinds of questions that will inform public debate about how Canadians and their institutions adapt to this ongoing transformation.

Judith Maxwell
October 1998

Acknowledgments

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Introduction

Our new times are sometimes heady ones, full of excitement and hope. The forces of what we call globalization have brought new possibilities of economic well-being for many individuals, corporations and countries. For legions of others, however, these have been icy times, producing hypothermia rather than rejuvenating cold showers, to use Judith Maxwell's distinction (1996: 5). One legacy of this hypothermia is fear and uncertainty. People feel hostage to corporate downsizing, chronic unemployment, and a fraying social fabric. They fear for their children's future as well as their own. Nor do they lay the blame for mounting uncertainty and the sense of menace exclusively on themselves. They accept their own responsibility, to be sure, but also realise that no one, nor any family, is an island. Canadians understand that communities and countries are more than a simple grouping of individuals. These collectivities have their own lives and citizens worry about their futures too.

When people probe their concerns, they lay some of the blame on governments, both past and present, for insufficiently harbouring them from the winds of economic change, and social as well as political threats to the country's future. They do not assume that governments can provide such protection alone, of course. They expect private and co-operative action to be a part of the picture. Nevertheless, numerous studies uncover Canadians' belief that their governments *ought to be* instruments for achieving collective goals and securing Canada's future. They remain optimistic about democratic action (Peters, 1995: v and *passim*), counting on government policies to soothe the social costs of rapid change as well as to foster opportunities.

All of this said, any encounter with Canadians, whether at the hockey rink, in public hearings or via public opinion data, reveals there is little consensus about where problems come from. Nor do they agree about how to deal with fears and uncertainty about the future. Indeed, as soon as choices are put on the table, diverging priorities become evident. There are also some disturbing findings that mounting socio-economic differences – what Ekos Research Associates Inc. labels class divisions – in values are increasing while in some sectors of the population "cultural insecurity and nostalgia for 'Old Canada' are reducing tolerance and compassion" (1995: 17).[1] Our referendum campaigns and recent elections are only the most visible moments in which democratic discussion of what Canada should look like in the future have provoked worrying incivilities.

One reaction of the policy community has been to describe such patterns of fear, division and hostility, as well as the structural patterns underpinning them, as evidence of declining *social cohesion*. To invoke social cohesion in this way is not, however, to indicate what social cohesion is, nor to indicate why social cohesion might be considered a good.

Much clarification is needed before drawing any conclusions about the meaning of social cohesion and its contribution to collective well-being.

Therefore clarification is the primary goal of this paper. The strategy for creating some order in the discussion is the following. The first section of the paper, after providing a preliminary definition, contextualises the 1990s discussions of social cohesion by mapping the concept to scale, putting it into historical and contemporary perspective. The second section maps contemporary discussions of social cohesion, by disaggregating the concept into the five dimensions most frequently invoked by those who use it. It then delves further, by mapping the links between social cohesion and a variety of other different but closely aligned concepts, which are sometimes used along with or as substitutes for social cohesion. Finally, the last section proposes a map of the road ahead, by identifying some of the research gaps and questions which emerge from this overview.

Part I

Locating Social Cohesion

The international policy community has recently adopted the concept of social cohesion with enthusiasm, finding in it a way of discussing the interconnections among economic restructuring, social change and political action. Some examples: in Canada, Canadian Heritage put social cohesion at the centre of its 1996 *Canadian Identity, Culture and Values: Building a Cohesive Society*; the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) warns of the need to balance attention to economic restructuring with caution about societal cohesion, in order to sustain that very restructuring; the European Union's regional development programmes focus on generating economic and social cohesion; and the Dutch government invites social scientists to craft research projects to address its fears that social cohesion is declining in the Netherlands.

In these discussions, the focus is often on "deterioration." In a general way, the concept of social cohesion assumes there are certain societal-level conditions and processes that characterise a well-functioning society and that at this time these conditions may no longer be satisfied. If we examine, for the moment, Judith Maxwell's definition of social cohesion, the societal level of analysis is clear (1996: 13):

> Social cohesion involves building shared values and communities of interpretation, reducing disparities in wealth and income, and generally enabling people to have a sense that they are engaged in a common enterprise, facing shared challenges, and that they are members of the same community.

When these economic and political, as well as social, conditions are not met or when these processes are not functioning, citizens, groups and governments begin to sense that "things are falling apart" and "it's just not working."

It is important to acknowledge where conversations about social cohesion originate. They take place among those who sense an absence of some sort.[2] It is the vocabulary of those who judge that things are not going well. In many ways, then, it is a critical concept. This is not to say, however, that the notion of social cohesion implies a direction of change, the substance of change, or the amount of change that would "improve things." The concept can be invoked by those who call for a "return to the past" or it can be a call for progressive reform. This profound ambiguity makes a map essential.

Nonetheless, there is a correlation between the deployment of the concept of social cohesion in the policy community and the notion that the current moment of history is one of challenges coming from economic, social and technological changes (Canadian Heritage, 1995). This is clearly the perspective of the federal government's Policy Research Sub-Committee on Social Cohesion (PRSub-C). It identifies a variety of contemporary trends that are transforming the economies and societies of many countries, and especially that

group of economically advanced liberal democracies of which Canada is a member. It writes:

> The cohesiveness of societies is being affected by globalization, technological and demographic pressures, the implications of which we are only beginning to understand. The challenge for Canada and for other societies will be to identify opportunities presented by these changes and to recognize and develop strategies to address their potential negative consequences. (Policy Research Sub-Committee on Social Cohesion, 1997)

This perspective leads the Sub-Committee to search for the connections between what are termed "fault lines" of diversity and polarisation, including economic polarisation, and social cohesion.

As with any other challenge, this one brings both possibilities and dangers – Judith Maxwell's invigorating cold shower (a positive experience...) for some and hypothermia (a definite bad...) for others. That the former will be available only to those who can identify and seize them is the strong message of a recent publication of the Club of Rome: "the basic issue of social cohesion in our societies [is] the crucial challenge on a future-oriented agenda" (Berger, 1998: ix).

Despite lively conversation about social cohesion in policy circles, there is surprising little effort to say what it is. Any survey of the literature immediately reveals that there is no consensus about either the definition of social cohesion or its links to a whole family of concepts often used when discussing it.[3] Therefore, the next section documents the ways that social cohesion has been used in a selected number of policy documents, in order to draw some conclusions about its meaning.

I(A) What Do We Mean by Social Cohesion?

The strategy used here to establish the definitional boundaries is to interrogate four representative documents. Two are national-level and have emerged from government think tanks, one Canadian and one French. The third is a report of an international organisation, the OECD, of which Canada is a member and whose secretary-general is a Canadian. The fourth is a 1998 publication of the Club of Rome, an international voluntary association.

The federal Policy Research Sub-Committee on Social Cohesion actually provides one of the few explicit definitions (see Box 1). After considering alternatives, it eventually settled on defining social cohesion as "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."

In France, a working group of the Commissariat général du Plan followed the same strategy as the federal government's Sub-Committee, and undertook some useful definitional work. Social cohesion is not a condition. Rather, social cohesion is a set of social processes that help instill in individuals the

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Box 1

What Do We Mean by Social Cohesion?

For the Government of Canada's Policy Research Sub-Committee on Social Cohesion:

> social cohesion is "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."

For the working group of the Commissariat général du Plan of the French government:

> social cohesion is a set of social processes that help instill in individuals the sense of belonging to the same community and the feeling that they are recognised as members of that community.

Social Cohesion:

- a process
- a definition of who is in the community
- shared values

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sense of belonging to the same community and the feeling that they are recognised as members of that community (Plan, 1997: 16).

Such definitional efforts are rare, however. It is much more common to deploy the term rather than to define it, to treat it as if "it goes without saying."[4] For example, despite announcing that social cohesion is the challenge of the millennium, and that societies must promote social cohesion "as the basic source of economic development and ecological sensibility," the Club of Rome publication provides no definition of the concept.

We can interpret its content, however, by noting that social cohesion is usually mentioned when a set of problems are evoked. More specifically, there is usually assumed to be a package of threats. Such concerns caused the OECD to convene a major conference in December 1996, chaired by Donald J. Johnston, whose theme was "societal cohesion in the era of globalisation." In the resulting written report, the authors provide no definition of social cohesion but they do describe economic, social and technological turbulence associated with the market forces unleashed by globalization and structural adjustment policies that have created both economic growth-creating flexibility and "growing strains on the fabric of OECD societies." The link to social cohesion is their belief that, "... it is safe to assume that most people prefer a world where life is characterised by stability, continuity, predictability, and secure access to well-being. Societies with such attributes garner more easily the commitment and adherence that sustain societal cohesion over time" (OECD, 1997: 7).

The working group of the Plan also provided a history of the concept, so as to account for it being so much in the air. By the end of the 1980s this new concept had replaced an earlier one, that of *insertion*. The sense that "social cohesion is threatened" followed from recognition not simply that problems of poverty and exclusion exist, but also that *no ready solutions are to hand*:[5]

[Translation]
The first concept [insertion] indicated a willingness and a determination derived from the belief that

properly designed programmes could prepare each and everyone to find a place in society. The second [social cohesion] raises questions about our current grim realities. Why is it that we can no longer, as we could yesterday, live together in accordance with our common values? How can we reinvent for tomorrow our ability to live successfully together? (Plan, 1997: 13)

There are echoes of similar ideas across all four texts: the fear of deterioration, instability, and most generally a lack of certainty about how to proceed in these challenging times. In these four documents, the term "social cohesion" is used to describe a process more than a condition or end state. They all agree that social cohesion involves a sense of commitment, and desire or capacity to live together in some harmony. Finally, they call for a move beyond outmoded or already discarded categories, without losing the best of the past. As the Club of Rome succinctly puts it, "it would be futile to consider a 'rollback strategy' to be a sustainable option in any regard. The solution to the problem cannot be found in the restoration of the seemingly lost values of the past" (Berger, 1998: xv). This said, we might still ask what social cohesion replaces. It is evident that the definitions presented above treat equality as only one value among several and the version envisaged is the liberal concept of equality of opportunity. They mark a clear shift away from efforts to achieve social justice via the active promotion of equitable outcomes. The next section will argue that concerns about social cohesion are a product of our times, marking an adjustment to paradigm shifts in policy ideas and practices.

I(B) Why Now?
Structures and Ideas

Attention to social cohesion is a reaction to certain strategies of accommodation to conditions of international economic competition and restructuring that occurred in the 1980s and 1990s. The paradigm shift in economic and social policy towards neo-liberalism is now identified as having provoked serious **structural strains** in the realm of

the social and political. In its own *autocritique*, the OECD suggests, with what might seem surprising frankness, that the Organisation and its member governments share responsibility for social cohesion being on the agenda.

> For over a decade, OECD countries have been committed to a cluster of economic policies aimed at encouraging macroeconomic stabilization, structural adjustment, and the globalization of production and distribution. Although these policies have been generally successful in supporting economic growth, combatting inflation and reducing current-account imbalances, there is now pressure on many governments to take stock of the longer-term societal implications that are beginning to emerge. In part this is because of a growing political disenchantment arising from the increasing income polarisation, persistently high levels of unemployment, and widespread social exclusion that are manifesting themselves in varying ways across North America, Europe and the OECD Pacific. The diffusion of this malaise threatens to undermine both the drive towards greater economic flexibility and the policies that encourage strong competition, globalization and technological innovation. (OECD, 1997: Foreword)

There is real cause for concern. A careful monitoring of national and international statistics shows many trend lines going in the "wrong direction." They display (although not necessarily all of these in every country) mounting rates of income inequality and homelessness, street crime and other forms of lawlessness, intractably high rates of youth unemployment, intergenerational dependency on social assistance, climbing rates of child poverty and a disturbing slide of some basic indicators of population health. Such patterns of uneven and unequal distribution of income and well-being persist even when economic growth and wealth creation are back on track. [Pollsters find that the public's sense of insecurity is high, even where crime rates are in decline.]

Therefore, a growing number of concerned analysts are now reassessing basic perspectives on how to foster economic development and what constitutes economic "success." There is now a broad discussion of the dependence of economic growth on investments in healthy social relations, rather than treating social spending as simply a hostage to economic growth.[6] Studies now uncover the cross-national statistics which evidence a positive correlation between measures of economic and social well-being and equitable distributions of income as well as the negative economic consequences of social inequalities (for one overview of the literature, see Osberg, 1995; for a more recent one see, Novick, 1997; for the human security literature see Homer-Dixon, 1994, and Lonergan, 1996). Concerns about and a discourse on population health have become increasingly prevalent (Hayes and Dunn, 1998, give an excellent overview). Discussions of generational equity have taken off (Helliwell, 1998; Osberg, 1998). The agenda of economic development now includes, in other words, issues of social policy.

As the OECD quote also reveals, there is a political side to the equation. Disenchantment with politics and politicians, especially those whose policies are blamed for the negative social effects of restructuring, is on the rise. Public opinion polling as well as political behaviour display disturbing signs of anger (Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing, (1991). Citizens are less willing to defer to political elites; the Charlottetown referendum made this abundantly clear (Pal and Seidle, 1993). At the same time they hunger after more democratic involvement (Ekos Research Associates, 1995: 20; Peters, 1995: 12). There is a well grounded fear that failure to respond to these hopes will push more citizens into the arms of radical populists, with their Manichean world views, and of religious sectarians, who have already taken hold of the right wing in some places. Their politics is often one of intolerance and exclusion (Segal, 1997). The 1997 federal election campaign and the "incivility" o its political discourse showed that Canada is not exempt from such politics.[7]

All of these menacing signs in economic, social and political structures lead to basic questions about how to foster tolerant and democratic societies, and thereby to conversations about social cohesion.

As people attempt to start such conversations, however, they discover that they also face an **ideological** tidal wave.

Neo-liberalism – of which neo-conservatism is a subcategory – proposes a radically different vision of the role of collective action and the state than characterised the post-1945 consensus. Its harsh critiques shake the faith in policy practices that had been popular in the first postwar decades. As Hugh Segal (1997: 41) puts it:

> It is part and parcel of neoconservative and neo-liberal extremism and dishonesty in the '90s to diminish this reconstructive postwar consensus that broadly crossed party lines in the democracies and reflected a collective and individual will to build societies capable of far more than the Depression that in part led to World War II. Neoconservatives choose to simply call it all liberal spendthrift excess.[8]

Neo-liberalism privileges the market for distributing resources and power, seeks to limit the role of the state, and emphasises individual (and family) freedom as the core value. However, despite the market-based rhetoric – as Baroness Thatcher once said, "there is no such thing as society" – many neo-conservatives do have something to say about "civil society" (by which they mean voluntary associations). They recognise that social inequalities and polarisation are unfortunate – although they would term them necessary – consequences of accommodating to international competition. Because they reject democratic and state action as the appropriate way to address such social problems, the voluntary sector can be the *only* legitimate locale for realising collective goals.

This sector suddenly surfaces as the saviour. Thus Mrs Thatcher also proclaimed: "I believe the voluntary movement is at the heart of all our social welfare provision" (quoted in Hall, 1997: 18). Canadian neo-conservatives too "... emphasize their desire to minimize or even eliminate state provision of social welfare, hailing what they see as the moral superiority and less costly nature of charity and volunteer activity" (Browne, 1996: 2-3). Harvard University political sociologist Theda Skocpol

describes a similar pattern in the United States, where the right wing seeks to displace the state by evoking the language of civil society.[9]

It did not take long for the voluntary sector to begin to complain of all this new attention. The language of civil society is being used to mount an attack on civil society itself. First, governments' downsizing and off-loading to the voluntary sector is generating new, and not always positive, pressures (Hirshhorn, 1997: 1). The sector is being compelled to transform itself, frequently along the lines of market principles of the "new managerialism"; nonprofits have to become more like any ordinary firm, focussed on the bottom line rather than social projects or other parts of their mission. Second, as governments assign the voluntary sector the task of picking up after them, they are simultaneously making huge cuts in support for the sector itself, as part of the assault on "special interests" and advocacy work (Phillips, 1991). André Picard's Atkinson Fellowship study found, in case history after case history, the real costs of an absence of coherent vision and misunderstanding of the realities of the voluntary sector. "The first casualty of blindfolded cutbacks has been the infrastructure of compassion. Food banks find themselves unable to purchase vehicles that would allow them to pick up donations of food; hospitals are laying off their volunteer co-ordinators..." and thus volunteers no longer know what work needs to be done (*Toronto Star*, 15 November 1997, A:25).

This lack of meaningful reflection on civil society has generated reaction. For example, The Kahanoff Foundation dedicated its research funds to learning more about the voluntary sector. At the same time, social scientists returned to post-1945 history to teach the lesson that a symbiotic relationship, not a separation into distinct spheres, characterised the links between the voluntary and public sectors, even at the height of Keynesianism. They dismiss as a false dichotomy the notion that an active state and a healthy voluntary sector compete. Such studies have been done in Canada (Browne, 1996; Picard, 1997); the United States (Sirianni and Friedland credit the Johnson Administration's

Community Action programme with fostering new forms of civic action – cited in Harriss and de Renzio [1997: 925]) or the United Kingdom (Peter Hall [1997] documents in detail the British government's role in sustaining the social capital of the voluntary sector by means of direct subsidies and argues that this is one of the reasons that the decline in social capital, observed in the United States, has not been seen in Great Britain).

Overall, then, a corrective to the ideology of neo-liberalism is emerging out of some of the conversations about social cohesion in policy communities and among social scientists. There has been a lot of effort to identify another relationship among states, markets and communities. The social costs of relying on the market for so many decisions have provoked a widespread hunt – in the private sector as well as the public; on the right as well as the left of the political spectrum; in Canada as abroad – for innovative solutions to growing social and political problems. The many conversations about social cohesion fit here. They occur among those who fear the high political, social and economic costs of ignoring social cohesion. They seek to avoid such dangers by reassessing responsibilities of the major institutional complexes – the public, private and third sectors – of our modern liberal democracies. No less than the future of these democracies is at stake.

I(C) Mapping to Scale – Social Cohesion, Power and Democracy

This is not the first time that economic and social turbulence and structural adjustment have been accompanied by attention to social cohesion within policy communities. Indeed:

> cohesion and conflict are sub-categories of one of the most significant debates in sociology (and indeed philosophy), namely that on *social order*. The basic question is: in view of the constant competition between human beings for scarce resources, what makes it possible for people to live together peacefully in a civil society? (Cope et al., 1995: 39)[10]

This is, in other words, the same question that preoccupied the social contract philosophers, especially Thomas Hobbes, in the 17th century and many others since.

Beginning in the 19th century, each moment of rapid social change in which diversity threatened to overwhelm commonalties and restructuring menaced past political compromises (and the programmes and policies they generated), academics and policy networks turned to explicit discussions of social cohesion. At such times, blueprints for promoting social cohesion began to compete with other ideas about maintaining social order. Our times are not, therefore, the first time that classical market liberalism has been criticised for the way it theorises the creation of social order. Nor is this the first time that attention to cohesion has reordered public priorities away from the search for social justice, as well as reducing attention to values such as equality.

Here we have space and time for a quick glance at only two themes in these long-running debates. They deserve our attention, however, because they have resurfaced in current discussions of social cohesion. The first is the vision of what constitutes "society" and its social units; the second is the treatment of conflict.

Cohesion was the central concept of one of the "fathers" of sociology, Émile Durkheim (see Box 2). He is usually identified as the first to popularise the concept.[11] He wrote at the end of the 19th century, in a Europe that had been shaken for several decades by rapid social change associated with industrialisation, urbanisation, massive immigration and population movement across the Continent, and changing social (including gender) roles, and so on.[12] Durkheim identified in the complex division of labour (that is, diversity) of modernity the roots of interdependence, out of which shared principles and expectations could be fostered by well-functioning institutions such as formal state law and markets.

Durkheim's concept of interdependence was both a sociological and a political category. The

"dependants." A cohesive society depended on shared loyalties, which citizens owed to each other and ultimately to the state because they were bound in ties of interdependency (termed "of solidarity").

Solidarism developed as a direct response – and rejection – of 19th century liberalism, which focussed on individuals and their associations in market relations, and of class analyses (including social democracy), with their insistence on the social consequences of conflict as well as on class-based solidarity, and equality, including equality of condition. Solidarism was, then, more collective than liberalism but did not see conflict as inherent to society as did class analysis.[14]

If Durkheim was ultimately optimistic about social diversity and new institutions that could foster cohesion appropriate to modernity, the next wave of fundamental social change and political crisis, the 1930s, generated pessimism. Talcott Parsons, whose work shaped debates in political science and sociology in the 1950s, was also an activist intellectual. As Concordia University sociologist William Buxton writes of Parsons (1985: 4):

> ... aware of the inherent limitations of capitalism's ability to create the conditions necessary for social stability, his efforts were directed towards elaborating how a more integrated social order ... could be constituted. He saw the nation-state as the form of political, social and economic organization best able to provide the basis for bringing social order to capitalism. The capitalist nation-state was characterized by a state apparatus facing the problems of acting domestically and externally in the interests of the national collectivity, while at the same time providing the symbolic basis for mass loyalty and solidarity.

This portrait shows us a Parsons fully aware of the dangers of excessive liberalism, and especially liberal theory, which he considered to have contributed to the political tragedies of Europe before 1945. Parsons argued for a functionalist approach, which could treat society as a system, composed of interdependent subsystems, held together by shared values reproduced by socialisation. The system, not

political philosophy of *solidarisme* had taken root in Third Republic France, and as an engaged intellectual Durkheim was one of its popularisers. *Solidarisme* was the political philosophy of what was termed at the time the *bourgeoisie populaire*. It rallied their political organisations and a growing corps of state experts, university-based social theorists and reforming Catholics influenced by *Rerum Novarum*. Society was described as composed of collectivities more than individuals, of families rather classes. Associative action in mutual societies (*mutualités*), autonomous unions and co-operatives was central to solidarism, as was the idea of the family as the basic social unit.[13] In this vision democracy was a secondary value. Co-operation and mutual action were what counted. Nor was there a great deal of attention given to altering social relations or redistributing power. There was enough influence from Catholicism to make hierarchy acceptable. Nor did using the family as the model of society direct much attention to equality; all families have "heads" and

the individual, counted most. In Parsonian functionalism, conflict was "dysfunctional," deviant and pathological; it sought the mechanisms fostering consensus. Politics could foster this consensus by managing the articulation and integration of demands, as structural-functionalists in political science taught us. Democracy was about stability much more than about change.[15]

Even with this schematic overview of the appearance of the concept of social cohesion at two earlier moments of multiplying diversity and economic uncertainty, we can make three remarks of relevance to current conversations. The first is that historically the concept surfaced just as people recognised disquieting effects of rapid social change. It is not surprising, then, that in this era of globalization eyes have turned again to issues of order, stability and cohesion. The second remark is that adherence to the concept of social cohesion, in both its Durkheimian and Parsonian manifestations, tended to result in a theoretical downplaying of democratic mechanisms for resolving conflict. Those concerned with social cohesion tended to turn to governments to foster consensus rather than to resolve conflict. In large part this is because such approaches focus more on values than on interests. A third remark is that contestation over causal mechanisms, levels of analyses, cross-theoretical linkages and so on quickly emerged. There was never complete agreement that social cohesion should be privileged over other values, nor even about what created such cohesion. For example, Parsons and his followers were – quite rightly – criticised for failing to recognise their own fear of change and, therefore, their discomfort with using democratic mechanisms, both traditional and experimental, for making change.

By the 1960s, even those working in the Parsonian tradition came to realise that consensus was not necessarily a requisite of cohesion and that conflict could be healthy. Despite being "adjusted," however, Parsonian thought (or Durkheimian approaches before it) could not accommodate everyone. Other social and political theories, with equally long pedigrees in politics and academe, continued to make

profoundly different assumptions about the fundamental units of society, about the nature of power and conflict, and, therefore, about what sort of glue held things together. They identified other mechanisms to foster social order. These differences have not disappeared. Indeed, they continue to characterise our conversations today.

The first group, already prefigured in my presentation of Durkheim and Parsons, is market liberals. They see society composed of individuals, with society's collective action and collective institutions being the summation of individual behaviours. Liberalism looks for social order as an unintended but real benefit of market and other individual transactions. The values promoted are individual choice, including the freedom to choose from as many viable options as possible. The mutual respect of individual rights, guaranteed by law and respect for law, as well as the actions of persons pursuing their own interests, economic or other, in parallel are expected to generate a well-functioning society. Without going into further details, we might summarise the core of the liberal position as being that a well-functioning society is generated as a by-product of private behaviours. Individual behaviour, especially in markets and voluntary associations, drives social order.

A clear example of the choices involved in thinking about options for fostering social order is provided by the OECD publication discussed above. The authors identified two scenarios for combining economic flexibility and societal cohesion. The first is individualistic and market-based. It would limit collective choice by dramatically reducing the role of government in all domains, by privatising social service delivery as well as fragmenting coverage, leaving expressions of social solidarity to charity and other private forms of expression. In this scenario, then, democratic institutions – the place *par excellence* where collective choices are made in liberal democracies – play no role in fostering social order; this responsibility belongs to markets and other private institutions, including families, churches, and so on. Well-functioning private institutions, such as families,

and friendship networks, help individuals to accumulate market capacity. A principle for this scenario is that it is best to expand flexibility by maximising individual choice.

Such a scenario is an attractive option with wide support; it promises to avoid many of the difficulties associated with the postwar welfare state, including regulation and bureaucratisation. It has become particularly popular in its Tocquevillian manifestations, that stress the positive contribution of private association. In essence, Alexis de Tocqueville (see Box 2) saw in the very young United States forms of democratic governance co-existing with a myriad of associations designed to achieve all sorts of non-political ends, whereas in France he observed centralised power and little democracy. From this correlation he hypothesised that voluntary action had "internal effects" on members, teaching them to be more co-operative, and "external" effects on the wider polity, by fostering social co-operation (Putnam, 1993: 89-91). A renaissance of Tocquevillianism underpins today's political beliefs about the benefits of private association.

Nonetheless, the OECD authors judge this scenario, even in a Tocquevillian form, to be risky, because "robust rates of economic growth will be essential to the success of this individualistic model ... if for some reason the productivity gains or macro-economic stability do not pan out, this scenario's chance of sustaining social cohesion could rapidly unravel" (OECD, 1997: 16). Others have criticised "Tocqueville romanticism." They say that it fails to note that even 19th century U.S. politics and governments fostered public institutions (public schools, petitions, post offices) in which much democratic dialogue actually occurred (and two of three of which are now in decline as a result of current state policies). Second, it fails to see that many of the classic examples of local activism were historically created from the centre, often with the support of the state. The Parent Teachers Association (PTA) is one such example (Skocpol, 1996: 23-4). The conclusion from such studies is that institutions matter, especially the institutions

of liberal democracy, and that "decentralisation fever" may involve losing the baby as well as the bath water.[16]

Perhaps influenced by such thinking, the authors of the OECD report proposed a second scenario, one that:

> depends heavily on collective – particularly public – institutions and shared values. ... in this social configuration rapid innovation and adaptability are supported by public institutions that diversify risk, service collective needs (market and non-market) and significantly intensify participatory democracy. Flexibility is delivered by altering the scale and relationship between individuals and their communities." (OECD, 1997: 17)

This scenario reinforces flexibility by redesigning mechanisms of collective choice; hence the emphasis on small-scale democracy and diversification. The interdependence of economic development (defined as adaptability and flexibility) and democratic institutions are central to this scenario. The causal arrow runs both ways; collective choices can create societal cohesion as much as private choices can affect democracy.

These two scenarios are useful because they present in a stark fashion the choices that political communities face as they seek to come to grips with current threats and try to reinvent ways of living together for the new times. One choice is to privatise the creation of social order, leaving it in the domain of markets and other private institutions and to individual values as classical liberalism proposes. The functioning of democracy thereby becomes a by-product of the operation of private institutions. The other choice is to reserve some, albeit not exclusive, responsibility for creating social order to the institutions of collective choice, that is to democratic institutions. In this situation, the auto-generation of new democratic institutions (the state reforming and monitoring itself) is central to fostering social order.

The Club of Rome came to a strong conclusion about the superiority of formal democratic forms.

Before reaching that conclusion, however, the group had to experience a real intellectual "discovery." The project had started with "a clear prejudice in favour of 'civil society institutions,' also known as 'intermediate' and 'mediating' institutions..." (Berger, 1998: 362-63). What they label their initial "Tocquevillian approach" was much tempered because in investigating cases of non-resolved or intensifying conflict, they sometimes found institutions of civil society deepening divisions rather than mediating them. The weight of the empirical analysis swamped the initial prejudice. In saving their analysis, they did not turn, as is often the case, towards the individual and the family but rather towards a reassessment of the macro-institutions, including governments, of modern society.

Attention to the power of public institutions, of course, moves us along to yet another tradition, and yet a third location on the "sustaining social order" map, that of versions of democratic socialism, post-1945 Christian democracy, and positive liberalism. All these, for different reasons, view social order as the result of an active government, capable of redis-tributing income, in a well-functioning, productive economy and in democratic public institutions dedicated to overseeing the whole. In the social policy thinking of post-1945 Western Europe and Canada, social order reposed on a guaranteed basic dose of economic equality and equity. This redistribution could come from social policy to be sure, via programmes to ensure opportunity (such as public schooling) and to cover the ordinary risks of life in an industrial society (insurance and pensions for unemployment, old age, child rearing, sickness, and so on). But the other major mechanism for organising an equitable and even egalitarian distribution was a full-employment economy, in which people earned enough to support themselves and their families. From this perspective, citizenship went far beyond nationality. It was also the expression of ties of social solidarity, located in citizens' rights to fundamental liberties, via civil rights, to democratic participation, via political rights, and to social and economic rights (Kymlicka and Norman, 1995: 285-86). From this perspective, public institutions had a central role to play, one that was exclusively theirs. It was through law and democratically arrived at collective choices that conflict among different

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Box 3

Three Theoretical Traditions

Social Cohesion Theories
   (examples: Durkheimian and Parsonian social theory, tories)

   Social order results from interdependence, shared loyalties and solidarities.

Classical Liberalism

   Social order results from private behaviour in private institutions such as markets.

   • **Tocquevillian Liberalism**
      (examples: Tocquevillian social and political theory, Putnamian social capital)

      Social order results from private behaviour in private institutions such as markets, families and social networks.

Democracy Theories
   (examples: social democracy, Christian democracy, positive liberalism)

   Social order – and change – results from active democratic government guaranteeing a basic measure of economic equality and equity.

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group and individual interests must be resolved. Private mechanisms of decision making were never eliminated, but neither could they substitute for democratic government when it came to making collective choices and achieving collective goals.

This brief inventory of theoretical approaches (see Box 3) is meant to be indicative, and never exhaustive. Other traditions and alternative authors might have been discussed. The goal of this short discussion is simply to remind us of two things. The first is that only some theoretical approaches identify social cohesion – defined as shared values and commitment to a community – as the foundation stone of social order. Other traditions privilege other mechanisms and put the accent on institutional processes and conflicting interests more than on values. The second is that just as democratic societies have always in the past debated how to achieve social order, we would expect to find such debates occurring in contemporary discussions. As the scenarios described by the OECD remind us, there are choices to be made. In particular, there are clear choices about what might have to be given up so as to advance the social cohesion agenda. In order to discuss these questions more thoroughly, it is worth returning t the definitional work begun above.

Part II

Mapping Social Cohesion

The first part of this section derives five dimensions of social cohesion from the same four texts introduced in Section I(A). The next part then turns to a larger map, displaying the use made of these five dimensions in much of the Canadian literature relevant to current conversations about social cohesion.

II(A) Five Dimensions of Social Cohesion

The four texts already presented in Section I(A) do not necessarily evoke all five dimensions, but the list of five exhausts the dimensions present in any text (see Box 4).

The first dimension is widely shared. Each text defines social cohesion in terms of values and collective identities. For the federal government's Policy Research Sub-Committee, a cohesive society is one in which citizens "share values." A sense of identity allows them to feel "committed" (for the

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> **Box 4**
>
> **Dimensions of Social Cohesion**
>
> | | | |
> |---|---|---|
> | belonging | .... | isolation |
> | inclusion | .... | exclusion |
> | participation | .... | non-involvement |
> | recognition | .... | rejection |
> | legitimacy | .... | illegitimacy |

OECD) and "part of the same community" (for the Plan). For the Club of Rome social cohesion is a cultural resource, by which is meant norms, values and social attitudes (Berger, 1998: x). The feeling of **belonging** is clearly a dimension of social cohesion in all four texts. A threat to social cohesion (*décohésion* for the Plan) is associated with feelings of isolation from the community.

A second shared element of the four is that social cohesion is related to economic institutions and especially one central institution of modern societies, that is, markets. One can ask about any institution, such as a market for example, who has access and who is excluded, who has effective opportunity and who is marginalised from full participation? The PRSub-C's definition includes equality of opportunity in a market society as a constitutive element of its definition, while the OECD and Plan's formulations clearly signal that widely shared market capacity, especially in labour markets, characterises cohesive situations. This is the dimension of **inclusion**. A threat to social cohesion is then associated with practices that result in exclusion.

For the OECD and the Plan very explicitly, and for the PRSub-C somewhat more indirectly, social cohesion requires involvement. The federal government's Workplan (Policy Research Sub-Committee on Social Cohesion, 1997: 6) draws a thread through social cohesion to governance practices,

such as partnerships and to increasing responsibility of the "third sector" for promoting cohesion (1997: 12). The OECD suggests, as we saw in the quote above, that cohesion problems may be signalled by political backlashes, provoked by "political disenchantment." In France, the Plan's study was engendered by Prime Minister Juppé's call to analyse social cohesion in institutional terms, related to reorganisation of the institutions of regional government, a reform that reduced the power of Paris and increased local responsibility. Indeed, the working group suggests that the local level is the key level for the production of social cohesion, implying a remake of our governing practices so that the "local" is acknowledged to be a fully functioning intermediary. This proposal to reform the relationship between the central government and local authorities will help foster an intelligent dialectical relationship between national unity and local diversity (Plan, 1997: 21). In these three texts we see the emergence of a third dimension, that of **participation** and that social cohesion may be the threatened by non-involvement.

The angle used by authors of the report to the Club of Rome to address social cohesion is somewhat different, and thereby incorporates two important dimensions hinted at but less developed in the documents of the Canadian federal government, the Plan and the OECD. These authors start from a vision of modern societies as inherently and inevitably pluralist in their value systems.[17] Such pluralism is a good, and tolerance of pluralism is a goal. Hence there is no rollback strategy to a "golden age" of homogenous communities.

Because conflict over access to resources of all sorts is inevitable, the collection focuses on a variety of "differences." Examples of conflicts are, *inter alia*, over definitions of national identity; over the relation between religion and the modern state; over the capacity of the society to adapt to other cultures; over the practical and moral scope of the welfare state; over the applicability of Western notions of human rights everywhere; over the public and legal status of issues of personal morality; and over the role of civil society as against the institutions of the state (Berger, 1998: xvi).

If the Club of Rome study is correct, that no modern society should aspire to a unified system of norms, then "pluralism becomes not just a fact but a virtue – to wit, the ideal of people with different beliefs and values living together in a state of civic peace" (Berger, 1998: 353). The necessary mediation of differences over power, resources and values is, according to this perspective, assured by institutions, whether formal or informal, public or private. In their detailed case studies of 11 countries the authors discovered that the same institutions, in different places or different times, may be mediators or may be promoters and aggravators of conflicts. The essential task for maintaining social cohesion is nurturing those institutions which contribute to, rather than undermine, practices of **recognition** of difference.

The publication of France's Plan made a similar point by incorporating the dimension of recognition – citizens' feeling that others accept them, and recognise their contributions – into its definition of social cohesion. Rejection and intolerance, or efforts to foster excessive unanimity, are likely to make national states less liveable.

The final dimension relates to the crucial role of mediation, the heart of the Club of Rome's study. Its central finding is that the intermediation necessary for living with the value conflicts of a plural society does not happen at the level of individuals; it is the product of institutions, including the macro-institutions of a liberal democratic state. The French Plan makes a similar point when it argues that "social cohesion" is a collective construction ... it can not be reduced to an agglomeration of juxtaposed individuals (1997: 17). A range of *corps intermédiaires* – from advocacy groups and other non-governmental organisations to political parties and governmental bodies – assure the connections among individuals. Therefore, social cohesion depends at least in part on maintaining the **legitimacy** of those public and private institutions that act as mediators and maintain the spaces within which mediation can occur. Social cohesion can be threatened by rising tides of cynicism or negativity that question the representativity of intermediary institutions, for example, or sectarian forms of public

discourse that seek to close down debate and refuse to "grant standing" to different organised interests.

If the Club of Rome study focuses in most detail on the pluralism of values inevitably present within modern societies, these issues were never absent from the other three documents. The Canadian federal government signalled the importance of new patterns of diversity, labelling them one of the social "fault lines." The OECD feared political polarisation and excessive populism. An important lesson of the Club of Rome study is that such differences are not negative by definition; it is how they are managed that counts.

A second lesson to take from this very limited overview of policy-relevant discussions of social cohesion is that there is no single way of even defining it. Meanings depend on the problem being addressed and who is speaking. For some, the term social cohesion invokes primarily the capacity to construct a collective identity, a sense of belonging. At other times or in some circumstances, discussions zero in on a society's commitment and capacity to assure equality of opportunity by including all its citizens and reducing marginality. Social cohesion also appears in conversations about democracy, including patterns of participation, and about the need to maintain the legitimacy of representa-tive institutions such as advocacy groups, political parties, unions and governments. And finally, in modern plural, liberal democratic societies, where value conflicts are inherent and social choices are open, social cohesion is a concept sometimes em-ployed in conjunction with the society's capacity to mediate conflict over access to power and re-sources, to accept controversy over fundamental issues without trying to shut it down (see Box 5).

This section has "unpacked" the concept of social cohesion into its five dimensions. However, because these too are simply definitional, they do not identify the process(es) that lead to the develop-ment of feelings of belonging, inclusion, and so on. Such accounts can be found only in social and political theories; definitions do not suffice. We turn now to these theories and the family of concepts often evoked when these dimensions are considered.

II(B) Mapping Social Cohesion: A Matter of Scale

Table 1 is a representation of the Canadian literature that addresses at least one of the dimen-sions of social cohesion. The table results from a

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Box 5

Why Is It Necessary to "Unpack" the Concept of Social Cohesion?

There is no single way of understanding even the definitional dimensions of social cohesion. These often vary according to the problem being addressed and the individual or organisation speaking.

♦ For some, social cohesion means primarily the capacity to construct a collective identity, a sense of belonging.

♦ For others, the focus is a society's commitment and capacity to assure equality of opportunity by including all its citizens and reducing marginality.

♦ Social cohesion is also discussed in relation to democratic practices, including patterns of participation, and the legitimacy of representative institutions such as advocacy groups, political parties, unions and governments.

♦ In modern plural, liberal democratic societies, where value conflicts are inherent and social choices are open, social cohesion is sometimes interpreted in terms of society's capacity to mediate conflict over access to power and resources, to accept controversy without trying to shut it down.

Table 1
Five Dimensions of Social Cohesion

Level	Belonging	Inclusion	Involvement	Recognition	Legitimacy
Local community	Conference Board of Canada; White (1997); J. W. McConnell Family Foundation; Veenstra and Lomas (forthcoming); Bouchard et al. (1996).	The Atkinson Charitable Foundation; Lévesque and Ninacs (1997); Confédération des syndicats nationaux; Business Council on National Issues; Torjman (1997); Caledon Institute of Social Policy; Bouchard et al. (1996); McAll (1995); Paquette (1995).	Environment Canada; Business Council on National Issues; Helliwell (1996); Picard (1997); Veenstra and Lomas (forthcoming); Conference Board of Canada; Browne (1996); Caledon Institute of Social Policy; Conférence des syndicats nationaux; J. W. McConnell Family Foundation; Trillium Foundation; The Kahanoff Foundation; Kesselman et al. (1997); Lévesque and Ninacs (1997).	Vancouver Foundation; The Atkinson Charitable Foundation.	
Whole society	Canadian Heritage; Environment Canada; Taylor (1994); Kymlicka and Norman (1995); Jenson and Phillips (1996); Bourque and Duchastel (1996); Maxwell (1996); Noël (1996); Morris and Changfoot (1996); Phillips (1991).	Canadian Human Rights Commission; Breton et al. (1980); Osberg (1992); Kesselman et al. (1997); Bellemare and Poulin-Simon (1994); Noël (1996); Canadian Labour Congress; Maxwell (1996); Caledon Institute of Social Policy.	Stein et al. (1997); Kesselman et al. (1997); Phillips (1991); Picard (1997); Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing; Osberg (1992).	Canadian Heritage; Canadian Human Rights Commission; Taylor (1994); Breton et al. (1980); Stein et al. (1997); Kymlicka (forthcoming); Bourque and Duchastel (1996).	Breton et al. (1980); Kymlicka (forthcoming); Kesselman et al. (1997); Echenberg (1997); Stein et al. (1997); Jenson and Phillips (1996); Cameron et al. (1997); Canadian Labour Congress.

mapping exercise. It uses the five dimensions identified above, and then sorts by the space – the local community or the whole society – upon which attention is focussed.[18] As noted above, the popularity of the concept of social cohesion comes and goes, while other theories and concepts are readily available to discuss the creation and maintenance of social order. Indeed, until quite recently, social cohesion was not being widely employed in the social sciences; nor did foundations, think tanks, and other centres of intellectual work use it much. Therefore, the concepts reviewed in Part II derive from a variety of theoretical models. The goal of this section is to demonstrate the ways in which they address each of the dimensions of social cohesion, even when they do not necessarily share the same commitment to explanation in terms of values more than interests, of consensus more than conflict and of social practices more than political action.

A first glance at Table 1 alerts us to the fact that social cohesion is not just about national identity or pan-Canadian projects. Its dimensions also attract the attention of researchers and policy networks working only at the level of the local community. There are two reasons for this. First, much of the research or projects being mapped belong to foundations and institutes whose mandate directs them to foster community development or community capacity. The second reason is more analytical. As Leon Sheleff writes, "community life at the local level is the paradigm of social cohesion" (1997: 334). This statement is historically rooted; Émile Durkheim and the other 19th century sociologists advancing the concept worried about the impact of big structural change (industrialisation, for example) on bounded and often face-to-face communities.

When we disaggregate this body of research and these projects, and classify them according to the dimension(s) of social cohesion addressed, we note two things. First, the legitimacy and recognition cells are virtually empty for those interested primarily in the local community (row 1). Again, this is primarily the result of who is speaking. It is traditional to view the local community more as a site of consensus than one of conflict. Therefore,

the creation and maintenance of legitimate and mediating institutions, devoted to conflict resolution, are less of a preoccupation. It is perhaps more surprising that we identified so little attention to the recognition dimension.

The second observation is that this local community work is very much concerned with people's sense of **belonging** ... to the local community. When conversations about social cohesion (or at least one of its dimensions) occur in this literature, the community whose cohesion is at issue is the **local** one. Such a focus, defining the community in terms of face-to-face contact, is immediately obvious when the literature is examined more closely. For example, the Conference Board of Canada sponsored a paper to review "healthy community" initiatives. This paper makes a clear causal connection between health and belonging: people who feel they *belong in* a community and have personal support networks live healthier lives. The Trillium Foundation, with its project "Promoting Caring Communities," asserts that well-functioning communities respond to a hunger for belonging and connection as well as successfully integrate newcomers and the marginalised. It sees caring communities being achieved by promoting participation, which brings opportunities for face-to-face contact. The J. W. McConnell Family Foundation in its 1996 Annual Report described its support for projects that give "particular attention to preserving Canadians' sense of connectedness, our sense of community, of belonging and trust... More corrosive than the fear of change is the sense of powerlessness that comes from isolation and lack of involvement."

This group of projects raises an important question about cause and effect. Are the situations of individuals explainable primarily by their own behaviour, whether alone or with others? Or, is it more helpful to look at the actions of institutions, such as governments or the voluntary sector to understand community health? G. Veenstra and Jonathan Lomas take the second position in their work on regional health governing bodies.[19] They argue that individual traits, such as trust and commitment,

can be fostered by community institutions that value the common good and facilitate collaborative action. Communities may have to "purchase" social capital. They can improve governance by supporting programs that entice community members into participation and interaction. This research hypothesises that communities can – and indeed must – actively nurture their capacities for participation, interaction, association. One, among many expressions of this strategy, is the Caledon Institute of Social Policy's Social Partnership Project (supported by the Trillium Foundation), which funds small-scale, local initiatives focussed on community building.

Table 1 also maps a series of documents that are concerned with one or more dimensions of social cohesion at the level of the "whole community." Usually, this community is all of Canada, although it can also be a single province. This is the level at which the bulk of the discussion of social cohesion is occurring in the various departments and agencies of the federal government.[20] This is obviously, as it was for the non-governmental organisations mentioned above, a question of mandate. At this level, we also find a number of pan-Canadian organisations, such as the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) (1994) and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (Bellemare and Poulin-Simon, 1994), whose focus is also usually country-wide. Third, there is a set of studies by academics that focus on institutions such as citizenship, national identity, and multiculturalism. All of these are centred on the cohesion of the whole community, paying less attention to the local community.

One observation that stands out in Table 1 is that all the column cells have entries in this second row. When ones moves beyond the local community, the issues of legitimacy and recognition immediately emerge as crucial. The authors of these texts are frequently seeking to make the analytical and causal links between patterns of inclusion/exclusion or belonging and the recognition practices or legitimacy of institutions. In large part, the introduction of these dimensions is related to the fact that the issues under examination are those disputes about

differences which give rise to the normative conflicts identified by Berger (1998) and listed in Part I. For example, the "practical and moral scope of the welfare state" (Berger, 1998: xv) is clearly a debate taken on board here. The CLC's "Policy Statement: Towards Jobs, Security, Equality and Democracy" links exclusion and inequality to economic performance and democracy ("relatively equal societies tend to produce better economic results because they can draw on the talents of all, and because equality promotes co-operation"). A similar search for links across dimensions characterises those who focus on recognition practices within multinational communities and feelings of national belonging. The work of Charles Taylor and Will Kymlicka exemplifies such efforts. Havi Echenberg's (1997) paper for the Department of Justice Canada is located here, as is Janice Stein, David Cameron and Richard Simeon's C. D. Howe Institute paper (1997). The latter study brings the literature of conflict resolution to bear on the problem of "a conflict of identities that, if unsettled, will have enormously adverse consequences for the well-being of all." In other words, failure to address adequately the recognition dimension of social cohesion will have consequences for other dimensions (in particular legitimacy) and for economic well-being more generally.

We have noted that belonging was a key concept for the literature presented in the first row of Table 1, with the attachment being to the local, even face-to-face community. There is a group of literature in the second row of Table 1 that also highlights the dimension of belonging, via the concept of **citizenship**. Will Kymlicka and Wayne Norman's classic study presents this concept in ways that almost read like another way of talking about social cohesion. After reviewing the reasons for "citizenship" being on the agenda (welfare dependency and neo-conservative backlashes, environmental failures, increasing racial diversity, voter apathy), they write (1995: 284):[21]

> These events have made clear that the health and stability of a modern democracy depends not only on the justice of its "basic structure" but also on the

qualities of its citizens, for example, their sense of identity, and how they view potentially competing forms of national, regional, ethnic, or religious identities; their ability to tolerate and work together with others who are different from themselves; their desire to participate in the political process in order to promote the public good and hold public authorities accountable; their willingness to show self-restraint and exercise personal responsibility in their economic demands and in personal choices which affect their health and environment. Without citizens who possess these qualities, democracies become difficult to govern, even unstable.

Because of the centrality of T. H. Marshall to any citizenship conversation, the role of social institutions and social policy is central here. Marshall's vision – one shared by a wide range of political actors, it should be noted – was that "citizenship is essentially a matter of ensuring that everyone is treated as a full and equal member of society" (Kymlicka and Norman, 1995: 285) For many of those who use the concept of citizenship, belonging (that is, having the status of full citizen) includes attention to distributional questions, social justice, and equity. Only full citizens can be said to enjoy real equality of opportunity (Noël, 1996; Jenson and Phillips, 1996; and McAll, 1995).

This literature has a "niche advantage," with its discussions of identity. Much work provides empirical analyses of the structural and institutional factors affecting the belonging dimension of social cohesion (Bourque and Duchastel, 1996, for example), examining in particular the processes by which fragmentation as well as consensus have been constituted in postwar Canada. In other words, these analyses address the issue of where belonging comes from and the role of governmental institutions in fostering it. This provides a way of moving beyond the "snapshot" of public opinion polling as well as reminding us again that distributions of values are social constructions.

Martin Morris and Nadine Changfoot (1996) examine the ways in which economic policies have undermined the legitimacy as well as the capacity of state institutions, and weakened ties of belonging, this time with reference to the relationship between Quebec and the rest of Canada. They argue that commitment to Canada has been weakened by economic and social policy. This makes their work a nice parallel to arguments that social cohesion underpins economic performance.

A citizenship framework can be applied to other dimensions as well. Jenson and Phillips (1996), as much of the rest of Phillips' work, focuses on threats to the intermediate and advocacy institutions (including the voluntary sector) coming from the citizenship practices of populists who attack non-governmental organisations as "special interests" and fail to acknowledge adequately the necessary interrelationship of public and third sectors (see also Picard, 1997). Issues of belonging and participation are front and centre here, as is the focus on institutions. In a similar vein, Alain Noël (1996) uses a citizenship frame to discuss choices about social policy reform. He asks which reforms will contribute to fostering healthy citizen practices and which will hinder such development. Citizenship themes are also present in the community-level analyses. For example, the social economy discussion (which we will present in more detail below) pays attention to citizenship, in ways quite close to Noël's discussion of Quebec's social policy (see McAll, 1995, as well).[22]

There are two lacunae in the literature of the second row of Table 1. One is related to the dimension of participation. This gap is interesting, particularly because so much attention goes to this dimension in the local-level projects. There it is seen as constitutive of most everything else.[23] There is a long tradition in political science that sees involvement in politics – measured as voting and participation in parties, unions, or secondary associations – as constitutive of belongingness, particularly via the integration of immigrant groups. Yet, as Daiva Stasiulis' recent review shows, the literature in Canada on the political participation of immigrants, ethno-cultural, or visible minorities is thin indeed (1997). Nor is there much on other categories whose attachment – or lack thereof – to the institutions of liberal democracy might be considered to be important. Young people and poor people come immediately to mind.

A second lacuna is the virtual absence, in the dimensions of inclusion or belonging, of projects that take up issues of systemic discrimination and resulting exclusion. Of course, many of those who focus on economic exclusion (whether at the level of the local community or the whole society) continue to see employment and other forms of resource distribution as the result of social structural processes. However, in the past, there were also interpretations of other social relations – such as those of race, sex, language, poverty – that attributed patterns of distribution of resources and power to systemic discriminations, such as racism and sexism. They also identified a political project of overcoming the resulting inequities through political action and government policy. The concept of systemic discrimination is rarely present in the literature reviewed here. Perhaps it needs to be incorporated.

There are two observations to make about this discovery that the dimensions addressed vary by level of community. The first and most banal is simply that the issues addressed are not necessarily always the same. The literature on local communities is frequently concerned with individuals – their health (as we have seen) or their economic and social inclusion (as we will soon see). The line of causality frequently runs from community action to individual characteristics. The literature focussed on the whole society often asks questions about big structures (for example, how does social cohesion affect economic performance [Maxwell, 1996; Osberg, 1995; and Bellemare and Poulin-Simon, 1994]) or about institutions' contributing to or hindering accommodation of diversity (for example, Breton et al., 1980; Stein et al., 1997; and the citizenship literature discussed above).

Second, an even larger issue arises, which will be addressed in Part III. As we will see below, we simply do not know whether any of the cohesion being built out of face-to-face contact and intimacy in these local communities is available to be transferred "upward," to the pan-Canadian community. While the data on population health and healthy communities clearly show local cohesion and soli-

daristic communities help individuals – and local communities – is there any evidence that such cohesion transfers? Might it not, under some circumstances, even hinder the fostering of senses of "common challenges" and "common values"? This will be considered below.

II(C) Mapping Inclusion: What Is the Social Economy?

There is another aspect of Table 1 that is striking and worth discussing in more detail. It shows one dimension is very heavily populated, that of participation. This is because there is a large group of literature that, as we have seen above, argues that involvement, especially in voluntary work and charitable giving, helps foster belonging. However, a second reason for the popularity of the cell is the link which some people make to the dimension of inclusion. The result is that the first row of Table 1 actually contains two quite different ways of understanding participation in the local community, with divergent ways of conceptualising the role of the voluntary and third sectors and routes to inclusion. Therefore, this section will first describe in some detail the literature on the *économie sociale*, which presents this alternative, and then compare it to other ways of thinking about the third sector.[24]

The concept of the **social economy** (here I am using it as the translation of *économie sociale* as used in Quebec) is proposed as a bridge between social and economic policy. The key dimension is inclusion. While this term can be used with reference to any discussion of access and integration, a growing body of literature on the social economy makes a link between community development and inclusion of the economically excluded or marginalised. This literature has ties to an expanding international intellectual community, active at the intersection of governmental, third-sector and academic research. Pierre Rosanvallon's *La nouvelle question sociale : Repenser l'Etat-providence*, Jean-Louis Laville's, *L'économie solidaire* and especially Jeremy Rifkin's *The End of Work* are central non-Canadian texts in this discussion,

attracting the approval or approbation of policy-makers and the media throughout Europe as well as in Quebec. The question is also very much on the political agenda of the think tanks and agencies seeking to solve Europe's unemployment problems without dismantling the "European model of soci-ety" – this is Jacques Delors' term – and succumbing to U.S.-style income polarisation and social disarray coupled with low levels of unemployment.[25] Thus the future of work, and whether employment will serve as the social bond *par excellence* in the future, is central to this discussion.

Definitions of the social economy vary, but the one developed by the Social Economy Task Force [*chantier* – headed by Nancy Neamtan], which was set up to prepare for Quebec's October 1996 Socio-economic Summit, summarises the concept well (Lévesque and Ninacs, 1997: 6).[26] This summary is found in Box 6.

The social economy is a concept embedded in a particular reading of history that can be summarised as follows: After 1945, the countries of Western Europe and Canada constructed an economic system that was Fordist, based on mass production and mass consumption. The welfare state was bureaucratised, hierarchical and used centralised forms of service delivery. These also reflected Fordist princi-ples of organisation; indeed the state mimicked the large, centralised and hierarchical firm. This economic and political system entered into crisis, thereby creating the problems of high unemploy-ment and expensive social spending, and also lead-ing to mounting social exclusion. The category of the "excluded" refers to more than unemployment. It means those people who have lost touch with mainstream society. Their capacity to participate fully is severely limited and perhaps even destroyed altogether.[27] The long-term unemployed, the second and third-generation welfare recipient, the high-school drop-out, and other categories of people living in deep poverty – and their children – are the typical figure represented in this discussion of so-cial exclusion.

This situation is not simply a negative one, however. For those who see the social economy as

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Box 6

The Social Economy

... the social economy is made up of association-based economic initiatives founded on solidarity, autonomy and citizenship, as embodied in the following five principles:

1) a primary service to members or the com-munity rather than accumulating profit;

2) autonomous management (as distinguished from public programs);

3) democratic decision-making process;

4) primacy of persons and work over capital and redistribution of profits;

5) operations based on the principle of par-ticipation, empowerment, and individual and collective accountability.

(Lévesque and Ninacs, 1997: 6)

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the centrepiece of a future social project, there is also space to move beyond the limits of the tradi-tional welfare state, without losing the values which it originally expressed. Greater recognition of and support for the social economy is seen as a way to create jobs, but even more as a way of promoting social solidarity, democracy and citizenship, that is belonging (McAll, 1995). The concept of citizen-ship is frequently invoked here because almost by definition the excluded are not full citizens in the Marshallian sense (McAll, 1995; Boismenu and Jenson, 1996; and Noël, 1996).

Some of the institutions of the social economy are, of course, familiar to anyone with even a nodding acquaintance with the "third sector," either as places where a huge amount of economic activity occurs (Picard, 1997; Hirshhorn, 1997) or as impor-tant institutions for the delivery of services. The difference between the concepts of the social econ-omy and the third sector or voluntary sector comes in the way that those using it construct the links across identity, inclusion, and belonging and the relationships between public, private and third sec-tors. In particular, the state maintains an important

role, which is not always the case for those looking at the voluntary sector.

In essence, the recent wave of social economy literature that addresses social cohesion starts from the premise that in contemporary societies individual identities are still fashioned from relationships to economic activity, even if all sorts of pluralism are characteristic of modern society. Thus the Report of the Comité d'orientation et de concertation sur l'économie sociale, says that one of the best ways to ensure social cohesion is to create jobs. Economic exclusion – for more than a temporary period of unemployment – leaves people fragile, isolated, and apathetic. The Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN) (1995: 5) summarises the argument:

> [Translation]
> Economic exclusion leads to social exclusion, loss of identity, lack of social recognition and moral misery. The excluded, bereft of human dignity,... are barred from participating in decisions made in their neighbourhood, their city or town, their region, their country.

Therefore, the concept of social economy evokes not only the issue of social solidarity (helping the disadvantaged and preparing for the future by focussing on children) but also a direct political dimension. Full citizenship and democracy demand that everyone have the same capacity for engaging in decision processes that affect their own lives. That capacity is undermined by the apathy and loss of dignity which economic exclusion may foster. The definitions of democracy and participation that are used are not limited to political democracy. They evoke expanded democratic decision making in economic institutions, and particularly in the firms of the social economy.

In this literature, inclusion means bringing people into contact with a *recognised* form of economic activity. This means, in other words, moving beyond social welfare as a mechanism of income support, as well as beyond poverty. It means creating new firms or enlarging the reach of existing ones so as to provide services that the for-profit sector can not or will not provide, and doing so in

ways that enhance democracy and workers' involvement. These include new social services (home care; child care; collective kitchens; etc.) but also programmes in culture, housing, new technologies, natural resource processing and environmental protection, as listed by the Working Group on the Social Economy in its report to Quebec's Socio-economic Summit in October 1996 (Lévesque and Ninacs, 1997: 16).

For many proponents, the social economy also means moving more service delivery out of the informal economy. There are two motives for this call for formalisation. One is simply to shrink the black market, which has costs for the state and turns individuals who are already engaged in various forms of exchange relationships into criminals (and therefore not recognised for the services they are providing). The second important theme is that much that is "informal" is actually a manifestation of social inequality and even exploitation. Here the focus is often on "caring work," where a huge amount of labour is still provided informally in the family or friendship networks by women who often have no choice, and are often under great stress either because they have to participate in the paid labour force as well, or because they are forced to exit it (and lose the income) because they must do caring work. This attention to formalisation arises from the fact that those activists who use the concept of the social economy are located in particular places. First, it is a health as much as an employment initiative. Most involved from the state and parastate sector are the Conseil du statut de la femme, the Conseil de la santé et du bien-être and the Regroupement des intervenants communautaires de Centres locaux des services communautaires (CLSC). The neighbourhood CLSC is the key provider of community health care. Other major players include the departments and agencies responsible for community and regional development, such as the secrétariat au Développement des régions and the secrétariat à l'Action communautaire. In communities, it is the local development associations, women's groups, churches and other parts of the social economy (*caisses populaires*, for example) and the unions, especially the CSN, that

are the most active partners in social economy initiatives.[28]

For those who promote the social economy, it is through the expansion of the social economies of these communities that democracy will be fostered. There is a clear preference for decentralising some power and responsibility, which previously was exercised at the centre, by the public sector, towards local communities and towards firms and their workers (Confédération des syndicats nationaux, 1995; Paquette, 1995). Studies are cited that demonstrate that successful local development depends on local, democratically controlled, non-profit intermediary organisations. Here we see again the link to economic growth and development which is crucial to much of the literature on social cohesion and a focus on the local community, which we find in much of the literature dealing with the voluntary and third sectors.

There are also, however, some major differences between those using the concept of social economy with its focus on inclusion, and the other literature dealing with the voluntary sector. The first and most obvious is that for the first group, inclusion, feelings of belonging, and participation – three dimensions of social cohesion, in other words – are primarily if not exclusively the product of economic activity, especially paid work. While the importance of having sufficient income and some form of economic autonomy is never ignored in the second literature, it is usually only one of several factors that contribute to feelings of belonging, and its absence is only one factor that might undermine cohesion. For example, for the Trillium Foundation, "Promoting Caring Communities" involves satisfying a hunger for belonging and connection, and integrating newcomers and the marginalised. Thus one of the five capacities of successful communities is "neighbourliness," and among its projects are those that re-create a "sense of place" via activities in parks, on front porches, etc. (White, 1997: 4-5). It sees caring communities being achieved by promoting involvement, which brings opportunities for face-to-face contact. The accent here is much more on patterns of interaction and of personal invest-

ment in activities that are not necessarily directly economic, such as volunteering or informal meetings with neighbours. Therefore, when this literature looks for threats to social cohesion, it tends to focus on different problem areas and different institutions.

A second difference is that, in the social economy literature, while volunteers' contributions remain important, there is a good deal of scepticism about the "advantages of the informal." Reflecting their deep roots in the health and caring professions, the promoters of social projects with substantial social economy components are fearful of reinscribing gender and class inequalities in this new *gadget* (Paquette, 1995). Therefore, they rarely see solidarity and feelings of belonging arising only from active community contacts. Rather it is the capacity to strengthen one's identity through a recognised contribution that is crucial.

In part, this difference may arise from the fact that the social economy literature comes from the political and academic work of those focussed on the already marginalised, the poorest groups in society. The need for community development initiatives arises when the usual economic mechanisms are not working, and when poverty and exclusion are on the increase. The central figures represented as benefiting from a successful implantation of the social economy are the poor single mother on welfare, the young high school dropout or the family living in a community abandoned by a major employer. Indeed, exploding attention to the possibilities of the social economy is often dated from the March for Bread and Roses (*Pain et roses*) organised by the Fédération des femmes du Québec (FFQ) in June 1995. The prescription for the problem is work, democratically organised, so that they can re-forge a personal identity and re-link with society as a whole. In this way they will become active citizens (Bouchard, Labrie and Noël, 1996).

In contrast, the literature focussed on volunteerism and community building tends to represent another cast of central figures. These are the working women who no longer have the time for voluntary work, the stressed-out parents who let the hockey

league slide or those living in urban anonymity and hungry for neighbourhood ties. The prescription for their problems is institutions that can re-knit the lost forms of contact or generate new ones.[29]

Some consequences for a research agenda of these differences in the location of the discussions of the social economy and the voluntary sectors and third sectors will be raised again in Part III.

II(D) Mapping Social Capital: What Is It?

Throughout the materials included in Table 1, we find widespread use made of the concept of social capital. The substantive definitions of social capital vary widely, however. For example, Julie White of the Trillium Foundation defines social capital as the "space between the individual and the state. In that space is the community, social agencies, informal and formal activities such as sports clubs, volunteering, caring for neighbours and so on" (1997). The large SSHRC-funded study centred at the University of British Columbia and headed by J. R. Kesselman (1997), recognises the disciplinary – and we would add, other – differences in the use of the concept, but says "the core of the concept is the density and quality of ties among persons and households." Finally, Lars Osberg gets to social capital by expanding the factors of production from physical capital and human capital to include environmental assets (something others have done too) and social capital. By the latter he means, "the social institutions that create and sustain such traits as honesty, law abidingness and nurturance of the young" (1998: 132; see also Echenberg, 1997, who raises the judicial costs of social injustice).

These are three different notions, and this section examines each individually. The first definition focuses on collective activities, that is, the institutionalised as well as informal actions in which organised groups as well as individuals engage. Social capital is therefore characteristic of a space or place. In addition to referring to Jane Jacobs' *The*

Economy of Cities (1994), White cites Rosabeth Moss Kanter's argument that successful communities have a glue (social capital), which attracts. This glue is composed of, for example, cultural amenities, safety, health care, and sociability. In this view, social capital is almost "infrastructural." The actions of governments as well as nonprofits and for-profit firms, via their investments, will help to determine whether a local community is well or poorly endowed with social capital. Just as a community can have more or less financial capital, or more or less human capital, it can have more or less social capital.[30]

This conceptualisation of social capital is close to the concept of civil society, as employed, for example, by Sherri Torjman, who writes that a civil society should strive to achieve three goals: "build and strengthen caring communities; ensure economic security, and promote social investment by directing resources towards the well-being and positive development of people" (1997: 2). A civil society is one in which investments have been and are made in maintaining community infrastructure and services. Thus a civil society is again a place, a space between the individual and the state, which is well or poorly endowed with identifiable qualities. Like Veenstra and Lomas, White and Torjman do not think that either social capital or civil society is sustained by individuals alone. The qualities of this space depend in good part on the actions of governments as well as other actors (including, of course, foundations). Their conceptualisations make it possible and even logical to speak of "investing" directly in social capital. The challenge is to identify where to put the money. Direct investments in facilities, events, and programmes, as well as safety, are examples frequently invoked.

The second definition of social capital, the one presented by the Kesselman team, for example, measures the embeddedness of individuals and households in social networks. Individuals and their connections become the focus of analysis. For Robert Putnam, whose work has influenced so many using this definition, social capital "refers to features of social organization, such as networks,

norms, and trust" (Putnam, 1993: 167). This definition leads him to his famous statement: "good government in Italy is a by-product of singing groups and soccer clubs" (1993: 176). Norm-generating networks create trust among participants, and trust supposedly spills over into economic success and good government. Putnam operationalises social capital – defined as networks, norms and trust – as civic engagement and individuals' sentiments of trust. This allows him, in discussing the United States, to say "America's stock of social capital has been shrinking for more than a quarter of a century," because membership in voluntary associations, time spent in these associations, and voluntary activities, as well as public opinion measures of "trust" are all moving downward (1995: 3-4).[31] These indicators directly measure only one element of social capital, that of the individuals' feelings of trust. Membership rates are a surrogate for "networks and norms."

John Helliwell's comparison of Canadian provinces and U.S. states adopts Putnam's operationalisation of social capital, and then seeks a correlation between public opinion measures of interpersonal trust and economic performance. He concludes that "in neither country was there evidence that per capita economic growth was faster in regions marked by high levels of trust" (1996: 17; 20). Explanations for rapid regional convergence of per capita incomes would have to be explained by other variables, perhaps government tax and transfers, for example (1996: 16). Helliwell points to the limitations of the data as a possible reason for the failure to uncover a correlation. Other studies have had similar difficulties in finding the correlation, however.[32]

Following this definition of social capital to the letter makes it impossible to invest in social capital directly; one can only hope that a range of activities, described as "civic engagement," will in the long run generate networks, norms and trust, which will later be used for positive benefits. This involves a lot of "ifs." Moreover, commentators have pointed out that there are many examples of engagement and trust that meet the Putnamiam definition

but are hardly "good." Margaret Levi (1996) gives the example of the Mafia, but almost any example of close ties based on trust (however enforced) used to commit crimes or reinforce advantage would do.

Lars Osberg provides a third way of conceptualising social capital. He focuses on institutions, which can be either private or public (for example, families caring for children or high quality public child care). For Osberg, inadequate attention to the social environment will allow it to deteriorate, just as the physical environment can deteriorate (Osberg, 1992: 230). The precise definition of social capital he is using is not completely clear because Osberg reasons by example, but he can be reread in terms of our dimensions. Inclusion is important: unemployment and poverty hinder adequate nurturing of the next generation, create stress, which leads to illness (and further exclusion and non-involvement), and puts whole communities at risk and unable to act together. Perhaps the cruellest fate of all, for Osberg, is that a deteriorated social environment can lead to its victims being treated as second-class citizens: "but since it is the combination of vulnerability and stress that determines which individuals are heavily affected by economic events, their misfortune is explained away by some *as due to personal moral deficiency* (1992: 232, emphasis added).

Despite her references to Putnam, Judith Maxwell seems to use a definition of social capital close to Osberg's. She asserts that social cohesion (as defined above) is the outcome of robust social capital. It might result from shared hardships (but we hardly want to foster war and depression in order to increase social cohesion), shared ethnic and religious ties or ideology (which Canada does not have) or, "social institutions which help build consensus." This definition then allows her to say:

Canada has a lot of social capital (created in the postwar period) inherited from the past. A key component of that social capital is the set of implicit guarantees embedded in the social safety net. There is also a complex web of social interaction and community investment ... Neighbourhoods have traditions.... But, as people are marginalized by unemployment

and poverty, as they are displaced from wider family and neighbourhood connections, social capital is eroded. (1996: 14-5).[33]

This analysis crosses the dimensions of belonging, inclusion and participation, with strong gestures in the direction of legitimacy. If state action in the social realm were to be totally delegitimated, Maxwell's position would be that social capital and thus economic performance would be harmed because social cohesion would be weakened.

Even this rapid presentation of some of the material in Table 1 demonstrates yet again that definitions, within the family of concepts, are never unanimously shared. These differences must be kept in mind as we shift to Part III and its considerations of the research agenda.

Part III

Mapping Gaps and Spaces

This section of the study revisits in a more systematic way some of the questions that are left unanswered, even after the detailed consideration of the literature mapped in Table 1 and discussed in Part II. In the policy world, choices must always be made about where to invest effort and attention as well as dollars. Therefore, it is crucial to move beyond unexamined assumptions or partial research findings. The goal of this final section is to formulate a limited set of general questions, which might orient research to produce results that could then inform the organising principles of policy as well as spending decisions. The section is divided into three subsections and each is treated separately. Readers should note from the beginning that they are not easily disaggregated, however. Overlap and conversations across questions is inevitable and perhaps even desirable.

1. What fosters social cohesion?
2. Can a country accumulate social capital?
3. Cohesion of what and for whom?

III(A) What Fosters Social Cohesion?

As has been mentioned several times already, the concept of social cohesion *per se* has not attracted a huge amount of attention in the social scientific literature. Indeed, Part II was based on the premise that it would only be by examining a

family of related concepts that we would be able to understand conversations about the dimensions of social cohesion that are currently taking place. Nonetheless, it does seem appropriate at this stage to ask what we do know, and what we might know by following through on a research agenda. The measuring stick used is the definition of social cohesion adopted by the federal government's PRSub-C, in which social cohesion is:

> 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.

The dimensions examined are the five elaborated above: belonging/isolation; inclusion/exclusion; participation/non-involvement; recognition/rejection; legitimacy/illegitimacy.

Is All Participation Equal?

This set of researchable questions follows from the comparison already presented of the social economy approach and the literature which addresses the voluntary or third sectors [see Part II(C)]. One issue left unresolved by that comparison is whether any form of community involvement will have the same effects as inclusion through work and democratic participation in the workplaces of the nonprofit sector. The literature on the social economy hypothesises that improving

one dimension of social cohesion (inclusion) depends on coupling it with another dimension (participation). The two together will then generate stronger feelings of belonging and citizenship. An alternative hypothesis is that any form of participation is sufficient to generate feelings of belonging; levels of income or even inclusion are not determinants. As Box 7 indicates, a concrete effort to assess these two propositions might involve assessing the differences between programmes that seek to engage individuals in any form of community lie in order to re-knit the ties of cohesion as compared to those which insist that reengagement must include meaningful employment. Which is more successful? Do we need to choose? Answers to these questions could be found through empirical analysis (see Box 7 for a proposed research agenda).

A second difference between the two literatures is the way they address the "informal work." Both agree such participation is a major and even increasing part of community life, particularly as social policymakers off-load service delivery to families and the nonprofit sector. Work on the "voluntary sector" tends to view such contributions in a very positive light, whereas the social economy literature is much more sceptical about "informal" participation. More analysis is needed of who is

doing what, and whether systemic inequalities related to gender, class and other differences exist. It would identify the real work that this sector does (some of which is paid; much of which is not) and help to identify ways to ensure equality of opportunity in both the contributions and burdens of informal work.[34]

The Role of Institutions in Recognising Diversity and Developing a Community of Shared Values

The definition of social cohesion that serves as the measuring stick in this paper puts shared values and hopes at its centre. In the literature there is substantial evidence that the simple existence of diversity of values, cultures and identities does not constitute a problem, however. Indeed many people argue that pluralism of values is the hallmark of modern society. Therefore, the fact that Canada is a multinational country of immigration does not, in itself, account for the existence of conflict, whether political or social, organised around national and cultural claims. Any problem for social cohesion arises only when the recognition of diversity and rejection of difference occurs in ways that reduce feelings of belonging or discourage participation.

One of the clearest statements of this argument is found in a relatively early study that directly employs the concept of social cohesion. *Cultural Boundaries and the Cohesion of Canada* (1980) focuses on three axes of diversity (ethnic; linguistic; native/non-native). Breton et al. remind us that "language and ethnicity do not *by themselves* have any relevance for societal cohesion. The mere fact of ethnic and linguistic diversity is not a source of disunity" (1980: 9-10).

Therefore, the assumption that social cohesion depends on "shared values" requires some attention. Breton et al. are properly sceptical about the place of common values in the causal chain:

> But to what extent a common culture and ideology
> are necessary is still very much an open question.
> The importance of shared culture may vary from

Box 7

Is All Participation Equal?

A Research Agenda:

1. Do programmes that seek to engage individuals in any form of community life re-knit the belonging dimension of cohesion as much as those which insist that re-engagement must include meaningful and recognised economic activity?

2. How can participation in the informal work of a community be organised so that it does not undermine equality of opportunity and reinforce long-standing patterns of systemic discrimination?

3. Is participation in informal work by the nonprofit sectors and families being restructured in ways that will foster a sense of hope and reciprocity?

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one society to another. The virtual absence of a common culture and the weakness of common ideologies have been seen as a particular problem in Canada. Yet there is very little systematic study of this dimension or of its consequences. Thus, most studies repeat speculation. (1980: 13)

If "sharing" is theorised as central to several of the dimensions of social cohesion, more research is needed. It is not enough to demonstrate that values differ, that there is diversity in views of Canada, of Canadians, of history, of the future. This is normal. It is not enough even to track how these differences vary across time and space. We must know more precisely the consequences of these differences *for social cohesion*. This means knowing which values must be shared and which can differ without threatening the capacity to engage in "developing a community." Are, for example, shared political values (a common commitment to the existence of a country, to political forms, especially democracy) sufficient? Does sharing symbols matter or not? Is a sense of "Canadian" identity even necessary? Can several identities (Cree and Canadian; Quebecker and Canadian) co-exist without posing a threat to social cohesion?

While much research has been accumulated since Breton et al. wrote, and choices of how to name oneself have been tracked (for example, *inter alia,* Ekos Research Associates, 1995), "repeated speculation" has increased too. Political debates about "loyalty," "about being Canadian," about hierarchies of allegiances as well as over whether to recognise Canada's deep diversity (Taylor, 1994) have not helped to clarify this matter one iota. Therefore, this item remains on the agenda. The *consequences* in terms of social cohesion of "sharing" or "not sharing" particular values remain murky.

In order to avoid simply repeating speculation, Breton et al. turned to an analysis of processes that might increase the "degree of cohesion [which] has to do with the extent of such mutually satisfactory accommodations and the resolution of the conflicts that emerge from time to time" (1980: 3). Their findings about causation are clear. A cohesive society is one in which accommodation of conflict is well

managed. Social cohesion will be at risk only if differences are mobilised, becoming grounds for conflicting claims, *and* management of those claims is fumbled. Thus social cohesion is fostered by conflict management of mobilised differences (or cleavages) of all sorts – cultural, linguistic and economic.

More recent literature has found the same patterns. For example, as early as 1994 Diane Bellemare and Lise Poulin-Simon warned of the potential negative consequences of certain institutional choices about economic policy for the belonging as well as the inclusion dimensions: "To conclude, endemic unemployment increases social pathologies, income disparities, and problems of dependency and economic insecurity, contributes to social division and the erosion of social cohesion" (1994: 12). The same year, Thomas Homer-Dixon wrote: "... recent research shows that environmental scarcity can cause widespread social disorder and violence in poor societies. ...These situations directly challenge the national security interests of developed countries, including Canada" (1994: 7). Since then they have been joined by some other economists interested in this causal pattern, but unfortunately there is still only a minority who connect considerations of employment policies and income security directly to social cohesion. More could be done.

Institutions are central both because they are the locale for managing diversity and because their actual design will affect their capacity to contribute to cohesion. As Breton et al. write:

Frequently the occasions for the most intense conflicts concern precisely the ways in which institutions will be shaped in order to accommodate ... diversity. The shaping of institutions involves issues of power, social recognition, and status, as well as the distribution of scarce resources." (1980: 13)

The identification of institutions and patterns of institutional behaviour that can manage politically mobilised diversity is too large a blank in the current research. The major finding of the Club of Rome's empirical analysis is relevant here. Its conclusion echoes that of Breton et al.:

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. ... In the case of institutions, it is not enough to ask whether they are "macro" or "intermediate"; one must also ask what ideas they "carry" and what interests they represent." (Berger, 1998: 363)

All of this leads to the conclusion that we need more attention to institutions, their practices and ideas. Ultimately, research must be able to distinguish among institutions, identifying those which are performing well because their practices are fostering participation, successfully recognising and mediating difference, etc. (see Box 8 for a proposed research agenda).

In particular, given the fact that development of equality of opportunity is an integral part of the definition of social cohesion, we need work on the legitimacy of macro institutions of representation – political parties but also interest groups and social movements – that mediate between needs and outcomes. These institutions are especially important for groups and categories of the population without the personal resources to represent themselves directly to governments and in communities, and to participate in conversations about policy priorities. Research findings tracking the role of advocacy groups in taking second-class citizens – women, Aboriginal peoples, the poor, gays and lesbians, the disabled – towards full citizenship all call out for further research on the forms of advocacy best suited to protecting democracy. Which institutions provide, and are seen to be legitimately providing, the space for this conversation to occur and for mediating conflicts over ends and means. We can also ask whether sufficient institutional space exists, or whether governments, parties, and others have effectively closed down discussion about priorities and collective choices in order to get on with their own projects.

What Does Social Cohesion Do?

The relevance of paying attention to institutions and their choices is also evident if the concern is the consequences *of* social cohesion. The bulk of the research reviewed here, as the quotes from Bellemare and Poulin-Simon and Homer-Dixon cited just above illustrate so well, treats social cohesion as a dependent variable. It asks, as this section has been doing, what fosters social cohesion?

Box 8

**The Role of Institutions in Recognising Diversity and
Developing a Community of Shared Values**

A Research Agenda:

1. What are the consequences, if any, of existing differences in values? Which differences matter and which are the inevitable – even desirable – manifestation of Canada's multinational and polyethnic history?

2. Which values must be shared and which can differ without threatening the capacity to engage in "developing a community"?

3. Which kind of institutional practices reinforce each of the dimensions of social cohesion? Which practices, if any, weaken social cohesion?

4. Do public institutions of representation have the capacity to mediate conflicts of value and recognise the contributions of all citizens, no matter their ethnic, cultural or socio-economic circumstances?

5. Does sufficient institutional space exist for participation, or have governments, parties, and others effectively closed down discussion about priorities and collective choices in order to get on with their own projects?

The goal is to account for variation on one or more dimensions of social cohesion, either by reference to another dimension or to another variable.

But the causal arrow might be shifted and we might ask a different question. It becomes: What does social cohesion do? Why would anyone want to guarantee its existence?

In such questions, social cohesion is an **independent variable**. These questions are particularly important for those working on one or more dimensions in the first row of Table 1. While much valuable work is being done, more information is still needed and the research results need to be better integrated with policy concerns. With attention focussed on the local community, many studies in the first row of Table 1 are interested in the consequences of social cohesion *for* something. One dependent variable is individuals' or families' "health," in the broadest sense. Sometimes it is literally their health; sometimes it is an abstract measure of health, including economic well-being. In other cases, economic performance is the dependent variable. In such analyses, one or more of the dimensions of social cohesion is always the independent variable (Maxwell, 1996, for example). Just as we saw above, while questions are beginning to be raised, more work on the structural connections is still needed (see Box 9).

III(B) Can a Country Accumulate Social Capital?

The existence of several definitions of social capital has already been established; there is no need to revisit that territory. Therefore, the answer to the question posed here obviously depends upon which of the definitions is being employed. When social capital is defined, as it is by Osberg and Maxwell, as a set of institutions, then it is obviously the case that a country can have social capital. As we quoted above, "Canada has a lot of social capital ... [whose] key component ... is the set of implicit guarantees embedded in the social safety net"

Box 9

What Does Social Cohesion Do?

A Research Agenda:

1. What impact, if any, is there of one or more of the dimensions of social cohesion on individuals' health and well-being?

2. What impact, if any, is there of one or more of the dimensions of social cohesion on economic performance?

(Maxwell, 1996: 14-15). Thus, for those who use this definition, it is country-wide institutions that make social capital happen, by making "insurance" available, spreading risk, and maintaining infrastructure. While local communities and even neighbourhoods are important, they are lodged within the larger framework of institutions and policy. Alone they can neither generate all the social capital needed nor aggregate social capital to the level of the whole community.

This perspective on social capital is very close to that discussed in the previous section and reinforces the importance of paying attention to institutions. It is best researched by focussing on the research questions raised about institutions and their practices and those about social cohesion as an independent variable.

Does Social Capital Aggregate?

However, the more common definitions of social capital in circulation present the matter differently. This literature, based as it is on either Jacobs' or Putnam's approaches, considers social capital to be located in specific and limited networks. Thus Jane Jacobs speaks of the social capital of cities, while Robert Putnam finds the roots of contemporary success of northern Italian regions in the patterns of civic engagement in medieval city states. In both these definitions, social capital is space-bound. Even those who use the concept of social economy have begun to find some utility in the Putnamian

concept because it fits well with their focus on community development. For example, Lévesque and Ninacs deploy the concept of social capital, as defined by James Coleman (with hints of Pierre Bourdieu).[35] For them, social capital is "the sum of mutual social debts that individuals and organizations contract in their non-commercial and non-monetary activities" (1997: 17). They assert that it is a community resource that can be used to reach objectives that would not otherwise be possible.[36]

There is often an assumption, as yet untested, that there is a spillover effect from the local to the national. For example, both Sherri Torjman (civil society "reinforces the fabric of communities and the entire nation by fostering a spirit of collective responsibility" [1997: 16]) and most of those using the concept of social economy explicitly assume that building cohesive local communities will result in cohesion of the national community. (For example, Favreau and Laville [1996: 3] found that in the 1990s, with the crisis of employment and the Welfare State, ... national spaces have tended to give way to local spaces.... In contrast to earlier times, the society fragmented by the current crisis is putting itself back together from the bottom up, starting from local communities.) Is this assumption empirically valid?

As Box 10 does, we might ask: Does social capital located in local communities aggregate to

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Box 10

Does Social Capital Aggregate?

A Research Agenda:

1. Does social capital constructed in local communities aggregate to the level of the country or even the province?

2. Does a collection of strong and cohesive communities necessarily mean that the whole society is more cohesive? Might social capital be a "club good," inducing communities to keep their social capital for themselves, by excluding others, drawing tight boundaries, and defining certain types of social and political behaviour as illegitimate?

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the level of the country or even the province? Another way of phrasing this is to ask whether a collection of communities, each of which has its own social capital, will necessarily result in a society that is cohesive? If, as Peter Hall suggests, social capital is a "club good," and therefore valuable only if it is kept within the limits of the group, might not communities seek to keep their social capital for themselves, by excluding others, drawing tight boundaries, and defining certain types of social and political behaviour as illegitimate? Further research is needed. (See Box 10 for a proposed research agenda.)

Social Capital and National Identity

Closer examination of the concept of social capital reveals the very reason why it is so often tied to local communities and their networks. For Coleman, Bourdieu, and now Putnam, creation of social capital requires contact among individuals and in small groups.[37] They have – literally – to be in touch. Trust develops because one knows the other person, or at least knows someone who can vouch for the other person. The community need not, of course, be linked to a specific geographic area; there are obviously communities – business networks, movement activists, intellectuals, for example – that are "de-territorialised." Nonetheless, they are networks that function via face-to-face or person-to-person contact and they are limited in their membership. Not everyone can participate. Putnam is adamant about the necessity of such direct contact:

> Sending a check to a political action committee (PAC) is an act of political participation, but it does not embody or create social capital. Bowling in a league or having coffee with a friend embodies and creates social capital, though these are not acts of political participation. ... The growth of 'mailing list' organizations, like the American Association of Retired People or the Sierra Club, although highly significant in political (and commercial) terms, is not really a counter-example to the supposed decline in social connectedness, however, since these are not really associations in which members meet one another. Their members' ties are to common

symbols and ideologies, but not to each other. (1995: 10)

Unfortunately, countries – and even most urban communities, one might add – are precisely communities that are held together by such common symbols and ideologies. They can never be face-to-face networks. This characteristic of nations has been termed an imagined community by Benedict Anderson. Writing of the nation, he says:

It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. ... The nation is imagined as *limited* because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. ... Finally it is imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. (1991: 6-7)

This conceptualisation of how large communities work (in contrast to small local ones) fits well with the themes important to those hoeing the second row of Table 1. Kymlicka's concern with national identity fits here. Others focus on patterns of inclusion and exclusion – Anderson's boundaries – which set down the limits of citizenship, distin-

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Box 11

Social Capital and National Identity

A Research Agenda:

1. Where does a collective national identity – a sense of belonging – come from? Is social capital – that is, trusting connectedness – the key or is commitment to an "imagined community" with common political projects sufficient?

2. Can a sense of national belonging be generated via successes on the dimensions of social cohesion – such as inclusion, recognition and legitimacy – or is there no cross-dimension spillover?

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guishing not only the passport holder from the non-national but also those entitled to full citizenship and therefore fair treatment and equality of opportunity (Echenberg, 1997; Noël, 1996; and Jenson and Phillips, 1996).

These perspectives push us towards researchable questions. Where does a collective national identity come from? Is social capital – that is, trusting connectedness – the key or is commitment to an "imagined community" with common political projects sufficient? What kind of belongingness is needed to foster a common civic purpose? (See Box 11 for a proposed research agenda.)

III(C) Cohesion of What and for Whom?

Part I of this paper argues that one of the major issues for the cohesion of modern societies is the capacity to recognise and mediate politicised diversity. Normative conflicts organised around class, ethnic, religious, linguistic and national claims are the familiar stuff of everyday politics. Conversations about social cohesion must be able to speak to these conflicts in terms that are familiar and convincing to several generations of Canadians raised to value equitable results and pluralism. In such discussions, the issue of scale is central. Who is included within the boundary of the community? How large is it? Should we speak of social cohesion in the singular or the plural. Most troubling of all is the following seemingly silly but nonetheless perfectly legitimate question: When is social cohesion a threat to social cohesion? Box 12 raises three researchable questions that address this conundrum.

If social cohesion is of necessity characteristic of a community, the matter of borders and limits is always present. Cohesion depends on establishing the boundary between members of the community and those who are not. These boundaries can reflect any number of decision rules, only some of which meet other tests of a liberal democratic society. As Julie White of the Trillium Foundation notes, "like 'the little girl, with the little curl' in the old poem,

communities, when they are good, are very, very good. And when they are bad, they are horrid" (1997). Communities are not only "bad" when they lack internal ties, when there is not sufficient interpersonal contact and caring. They may be very, very bad if they are exclusive and only inward looking. Cohesive communities can suffer from too much "bonding." One can be made only too aware that one is "not from the neighbourhood" and therefore an object of suspicion, that one is not "from the old gang" and therefore an outsider. Therefore, the first question that arises is whether the decision to increase social cohesion by stressing the need to share values may not actually reduce the space for viable compromise. More concretely, can citizens' identities be both varied and multiple, without threatening social cohesion or is adherence to one national vision necessary?

Another danger is that social cohesion becomes too limited a focus, if one is concerned about total community health. It is also necessary to be sensitive to **permeability** or the capacity to be open. Permeability can be thought of as openness to the outside, the willingness to recognise legitimate difference. Historically, practices that foster openness have been much less prevalent than those that foster cohesion. The stranger is too common a figure in traditional communities, just as is the outcast. Networks organised around exclusivity have been the bane of social reformers for at least a century. Modern history can be read as a long series of struggles to supplant the exclusiveness of private networks based on family and wealth. The goal of a wide variety of political movements was to install norms of equity, justice, and non-discrimination as the rules of economic, political and social discourse. The long battle for universal suffrage fought by progressive social reformers in the 19th and early 20th centuries is an example here. Their goal was to construct a polity in which the political power of numbers would balance the economic power of wealth. But the need for such struggles is not something only of the distant past. Whether we think of racially segregated neighbourhoods, the no-Jews-allowed private clubs, or even the taverns and beer parlours (not to mention the myriad of other institutions) that did not admit women until recently, we realise that we are only one short generation away from forms of social organisation that were highly cohesive and highly inequitable. As the Canadian Human Rights Commission, in its paper "Social Justice, Social Cohesion and the Role of the Human Rights Commission" wrote about post-1945 Canada (1997: 2):

> anti-Semitism was socially acceptable.... Women were subject to discriminatory family and property laws... Aboriginal people were ignored... Yet there are those who will conjure up the image of postwar Canada as a time of great social cohesion; when everyone saluted the Red Ensign, sang God Save the Queen at school and tuned their radios to 'Hockey Night in Canada'. There was only one problem: this vision of social cohesion excluded almost everyone who was not British in origin, Christian in religion and male in gender.

Therefore, 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 that continue to value and promote equality of opportunity and fairness across all dimensions of diversity, while fostering the capacity to act together.

Another important question: Whose belongingness is being maximised? In discussions of the participation dimension of social cohesion, particularly as it relates to involvement in voluntary associations, the person described as benefiting from the involvement is frequently the service *provider*, or the volunteer. The accent is on the benefits of being active in one's community, rather than staying home watching television or being too overwhelmed by work and stress to participate. Nonetheless, for many activities, especially those providing services (whether via contracts from governments or to replace public services that have been cut), there is another person involved. This is the recipient of the charity or the service. We have perhaps forgotten too soon that much of the struggle in the late 19th century by social reformers of many kinds was to escape from the arbitrariness and invidious comparisons involved in charitable provision of social welfare, to escape Lady Bountiful and her moralising judgements. The goal was to transform everyone, even those in need, into full citizens. We can thus ask, for example, whether food banks increase the sense of belonging and involvement of the recipients as much as they do the volunteer on the other side of the counter? Is becoming the object of do-goodism a fair or a just substitute for the citizenship right to *claim* a service from even the surliest of government employees? We are reminded here not only of the struggles of social reformers to create fair and just distributional outcomes delivered in ways that respect the recipients' dignity. We should also be reminded of Max Weber's reflections on bureaucracy. Despite his fears of the "iron cage," he also recognised that regularised rules and norms executed according to law were likely to deliver more predictable and fairer results than those based on other forms of authority, whether moral or religious.

Concluding Remarks:
A Concept of and for Our Times?

The metaphor that motivates this study is one of "mapping." The intent is to set some boundaries around the concept of social cohesion and to map some of the terrain for further research. Maps are useful because they help us find our way. While we may sometimes study them to remind ourselves where we have already been, their real purpose is to get us from one place to another. Therefore, the mapping exercise carried out in this paper had a limited set of goals. One was to locate social cohesion within contemporary conversations about successors to Keynesianism and postwar thinking about political and social equality and equitable outcomes. A second was to identify the relationship between the increasingly popular concept of social cohesion and a number of related concepts. The final goal was to identify a set of researchable questions so that future conversation might move beyond those "conducted at the level of impressions" (Osberg, 1992: 233).

Even if this paper is judged to have successfully achieved its goals, it can not aspire to closing the discussion. This is the beginning, not the end of serious consideration of a concept that remains ambiguous.

Social cohesion is an ambiguous concept because it can be used by those seeking to accomplish a variety of things. It is sometimes deployed in right-wing and populist politics by those who long for the "good old days" when life seemed easier, safer, and less threatening. But social cohesion can also be used by those who fear the consequences of excessively marketised visions of the future. There is no question that those within Canada and much of the international policy community who evoke "social cohesion" do so because they fear the results of structural adjustments that ignore social and political needs. They are decidedly facing the future, not the past.

This strategy too is ambiguous, although it is perhaps necessary. Highlighting the search for social cohesion necessarily displaces other possible ways of defining the problem, such as ones stressing social injustice, lack of equitable outcomes or systemic discrimination. Downplaying such themes not only may mean that those who continue to prefer the more familiar concepts may find themselves

deprived – perhaps quite unintentionally – of voice. It also may mean that space will be opened up for those who speak of social cohesion so as to justify calls for the return to a supposedly more golden but decidedly less just past.

This paper begins, in Part I, by describing the reasons why social cohesion is a concept of our times. It also reminds the reader that this is not the first time social cohesion has seized the attention of policy communities. 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 1930s and 1940s, 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, that "things were falling apart." In response, some – but always only some – analysts sought mechanisms and institutions that might foster shared values and commitment to community.

The distinguishing characteristic of the concept of social cohesion is the theoretical proposition that shared values must underpin processes of social ordering. Other theoretical traditions ground social order in the functioning of markets and other institutions or in collective choice arrived at democratically. At each of these moments of economic and political turbulence, other theoretical approaches have proffered competing diagnoses of the troubles and sought to promote alternative solutions, other ways of thinking about conflict and consensus as well as democracy.

Many of the concepts reviewed in Part II derived from such alternative theoretical traditions. Authors are more comfortable with concepts such as social capital, citizenship, and social economy because these are key concepts for other models of social ordering, such as Tocquevillian liberalism or theories of democracy. Each of these concepts may speak to one or more of the five dimensions of

social cohesion, but they frame the issues quite differently. Nonetheless, in most cases, as history teaches, the policies actually implemented will be choices made out of compromises across theoretical perspectives.

Therefore, a first general conclusion of this paper is that social cohesion remains a contested concept. Those who use it demonstrate an analytical proclivity for seeing social order as the consequence of values more than interests, of consensus more than conflict and of social practices more than political action. Other ways of seeing may have been displaced by enthusiasm for social cohesion but they remain as alternative voices in on-going conversations. It is for this reason that Part III ends the paper on a note of concern about too enthusiastic an embrace of an agenda that fails to acknowledge continuing claims for social justice and diverse values, particularly in a multinational and modern country such as Canada.

Given the centrality of shared values to all definitions of social cohesion, this paper has, in a variety of ways, addressed the matter of values. It starts from the assumption, made by many social and political theorists, that value diversity – what we might term pluralism – is the hallmark of modernity. Therefore, differences in values and conflicts over fundamental cultural preferences are unavoidable; they are simply normal. The paper then builds from the analysis of many authors who show that diversity in and of itself is not the problem. Trouble arises when institutions fail to manage conflicts about values. The paper finds in the literature a particular stress on institutions, and especially democratic public institutions, as the location in which successful management of value conflicts.

As noted several times throughout the paper, traditionally those who have embraced the concept of social cohesion tended to downplay the idea of conflict. Therefore, they were severely criticised for paying insufficient attention to processes and institutions for managing conflict. Even today, none of the five dimensions identified as constitutive of social cohesion necessarily incorporates attention to

conflict management. However, many of those whose work is described in Part II, and especially that which treats the dimensions of inclusion and legitimacy, do address it explicitly. It is for this reason that Part III particularly raises questions about institutions and value pluralism. The result is that a second general conclusion of this paper is that the incorporation of concerns about conflict management by institutions, especially public institutions, is the major challenge for current conversations about social cohesion.

Ultimately, however, the decisions about improving and sustaining social cohesion come down to the kinds of choices that, as Part I demonstrates, policymakers and social reformers have been debating for almost a century and a half. Now we live in an economy more information-based than industrial, more open to the winds of global forces than ever, and in many cases suffering from the hypothermia caused when neo-liberal ideology and threats to national sovereignty started to dismantle parts of the house around us.[38] That is why we must now again have such a basic – albeit crucial – conversation about the ties that bind. The dilemmas are the same now at the end of the 20th century as they were at the end of the 19th. Will we prosper more by letting private institutions, such as markets and the family, take full responsibility for distribution for us and for future generations or do we need to act collectively to ensure a fair future for all. Is social order the result of socialisation, of individual and private initiative, or of well functioning institutions of democratically arrived at collective action? This study can not answer these questions of course, depending as they do on fundamental principles. Nonetheless, it has made an effort to map the controversies, if only to make it clear that very few answers are readily to hand. Its goal has been to move us a bit more along the road to answering this question: How can we reinvent our ability to live successfully together?

Notes

1 Despite her overall findings of relatively high levels of agreement on core values, Suzanne Peters also identified differences in priorities and appreciation of vulnerability between groups of recipients of social services and randomly constituted focus groups (1995: 2).

2 As Steven Vertovec writes in his literature review for the Second International Metropolis Conference: "It is increasingly the case that social cohesion is only invoked by its absence ... that is, while we are rarely presented with views of what a high degree of social cohesion might look like, we are bombarded with descriptions of the lack of social cohesion in contemporary society. Moreover, it is indications of social *in*-cohesion to which policy makers often refer and about which researchers mostly collect data" (1997: 46).

3 For such a survey see O'Connor (1998).

4 Such lack of attention to definitions is very common, according to at least two recent literature reviews (Cope et al., 1995: 38-39; Vertovec, 1997: 45).

5 For a review essay describing the European francophone discussions about *insertion* and *exclusion* see Jean-Noël Chopart (1995).

6 See, for one example, Vertovec (1997: 45) who gives a list of international organisations, governmental and non-governmental, which link social cohesion to social inclusion. Judith Maxwell made a similar point in her Hanson Lecture (1996). On December 15, 1997, *Business Week* devoted a section to "the economic value of social bonds." The

"development community" is having a similar discussion. See, for example, Bhalla and Lapeyre (1997), who claim there is now consensus that social exclusion is blocking development success.

7 France's turmoil after the 1998 regional elections and the *Front national* (FN) vote provides another example of the dangers of radical populism, and the consequences of not dealing quickly with the discourse of racism. As we do here, Maréchal (1998) ties the rise of the FN to a crisis of legitimacy in political institutions and high rates of economic and social exclusion.

8 For a similar description of the ideological and policy convergence underpinning post-war Fordisms and their welfare states, see Jenson (1989).

9 She quotes Newt Gingrich's call to replace the welfare state with "volunteerism and spiritual renewal," Arianna Huffington's advocacy group, the Center for Effective Compassion, and the Heritage Foundation's renamed journal, *Policy Review: The Journal of American Citizenship*, which describes its mission as "applied Tocqueville." As she also says, the Clinton Democrats and Tony Blair's New Labour were not far behind in seeking the roots of renewal in civil society (1996: 20). Similar shifts in Canada are described in Phillips (1991) and Browne (1996).

10 Indeed, the Club of Rome study employs almost exactly these terms when it writes: "a comparative effort now lies ahead for our societies to make clear that there are not only limits to growth but also limits to the social cohesion on which our survival as

human beings in peaceful societal circumstances depends" (Berger, 1998: p. x).

11 Another "historic sociologist" frequently cited with reference to social cohesion is the German Ferdinand Tonniës who made a distinction between the traditional solidarity of G*emeinschaft* (characterised by dense, individualised networks, bonds of sentiment, identity and person-to-person relations and maintained by informal networks of family and communal ties) and that of *Gesellschaft* (characterised by impersonal relationships and heterogeneous identification and depending upon formal authority for its maintenance).

12 Realising that "mechanical solidarity" fostered in small communities was no longer a viable option, Durkheim proposed the notion of "organic solidarity" as the grounding for modern cohesion.

13 This description is taken from Hayward (1961), as summarised in Jenson (1995).

14 Some readers may note parallels between parts of solidarism and traditional conservatism. There are also echoes of solidarism in the social economy discussion, which has also emerged from Catholic – or better to say, ex-Catholic – milieux.

15 Hegemonic approaches to political science in the 1950s and 1960s, including structural-functionalism (with its focus on political culture in the work of Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba), systems theory (in the work of David Easton), and theories of political behaviour (which highlighted intergenerational socialisation and transmission of party identification) were all indebted to Parsonian categories.

16 The term "decentralisation fever" comes from the development literature where it is described as:

> ... the uncritical acceptance of the view that decentralization and participation necessarily make for better government (because they bring government spatially closer and make it more receptive to pressures from citizens, increase the amounts of and the quality of information that are available and make for greater flexibility and responsiveness in the delivery of services).

The term is Judith Tendler's, developed out of her work on Brazil, and frequently cited in Harriss and de Renzio (1997: 928 and *passim*).

17 The classification of the contemporary period as a **modern** one – rather than post-modern – is correct. For a well-developed argument about why we are still in modernity, see Létourneau (1996: Introduction).

18 The literature discussed in this section is based primarily, but not exclusively, on the materials collected for the first wave of this project and reported in O'Connor (1998). Additions have been made to fill out gaps, but this paper does not pretend to be a complete literature review.

19 In part, Veenstra and Lomas, as well as the Kesselman team (1997) base their work on an insight. It is that "ever since Durkheim's study of suicide, numerous epidemiological studies have shown" the importance for individuals of being embedded in personal face-to-face networks. "Socially isolated people die at two to three times the rate of well connected people, presumably reflecting the former's limited access to sources of emotional support, institutional support, etc." (Kawachi and Kennedy, 1997: 1038).

20 Environment Canada's projects involving community-based consultation are something of an exception here. They explicitly focus on work in the local community.

21 This is a reprinted version of the paper originally published in *Ethics* in 1994.

22 This link is made in Boismenu and Jenson (1996).

23 An exception here is much of the work of the Lortie Commission (Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing, 1991). That commission was primarily concerned about the large societal consequences of crucial institutions – its focus was on political parties – failing to seek to foster meaningful political debate and civil discourse. Unfortunately, its work was too quickly shelved, perhaps because it challenged the parties to reform themselves and to understand their responsibilities for a healthy political life.

24 The *économie sociale* literature needs to be presented in more detail because it was not covered in O'Connor (1998).

25 For example, at the Luxembourg Summit in November 1997, the European Union endorsed putting more resources into the nonprofit sector, as a

place where the need for jobs and the production of needed services could coincide. See also Maréchal (1998).

26 This is a modified version of the definition developed by Defourney for the Walloon Council for the Social Economy in Belgium. The Quebec group added the fifth dimension. For another definition, and references to additional European literature see Quarter (1992) and Lévesque and Ninacs (1997), who supply a range of definitions from the literature.

27 For an overview of the issues and debates in Quebec and Europe, see issue #34 of *Lien Social et Politiques – RIAC*, autumn 1995, *Y-a-t-il vraiment des exclus ? L'exclusion en débat*. The article by Gauthier (1995) comparing the concept of *exclusion* in Quebec literature to similar concepts in North American English-language social science is particularly useful.

28 The CSN sees the social economy as having job creation possibilities, although it is also aware that there is a risk that the government may use the social economy (and its less well paid and often part-time and sometimes volunteer jobs) as a cheap solution to the high costs of social services. Therefore, scepticism and caution are also part of the discussion.

29 These differences in perspective are real and reflect the theoretical traditions and perspectives out of which each arises. It is not worth exaggerating such divergence, however. The Caledon Institute's *Sustainable Social Policy and Community Development* (1996) does have a chapter on the Canadian Women's Foundation, whose belief is "that economic independence is a key route to empowerment and equality for women," and others do similar work.

30 This definition of social capital is also close to the one used by Canadian Heritage in its 1996 challenge paper, where it says that "past investments in social capital have made Canada 'number one' in the world" (September 9, 1996). Julie White makes a similar statement about Toronto being named #1 by *Fortune Magazine* "by virtue of its social capital" (1997).

31 There are many who question this empirical statement, while others take issue with the concept more generally. For an excellent overview of the debate and issues see Harriss and de Renzio (1997).

32 For example, S. Knack and P. Keefer (1997), writing in the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, report on their analysis of the World Value Survey data for 29 countries. They found that rates of membership in formal groups is associated with neither levels of trust nor economic performance. Rather the correlates of civic norms and trust are high levels of national income, political institutions that limit executive power, high levels of education and ethnic homogeneity. They conclude, then, that "promoting horizontal associations through encouraging the formation of and participation in groups may be counterproductive."

33 In effect, Maxwell and Osberg are agreeing with many of Putnam's critics that social capital results in large part from the actions of formal, public institutions, and it is not apolitical at all. See, for example, similar descriptions of the importance of political institutions (including political parties) in generating northern Italy's social capital (Tarrow, 1996, and especially all the Italian literature that empirically demonstrates this point sufficiently to raise doubts about the direction of causality purported to exist in Putnam's correlation). Skocpol (1996: 23-24) makes a similar point, as does much of the literature cited in Harriss and de Renzio (1997).

34 This agenda is engaged already by, *inter alia*, Kahanoff and CPRN research projects, the results of which are not all in. Status of Women Canada is also sponsoring research on unpaid work.

35 In a recent article, one of France's best known sociologists, Pierre Bourdieu (1998), wrote of social capital as the last bulwark against and the source of resistance to a complete domination of the values of neo-liberalism, at the expense of anything that might constitute a collective or social project.

36 There is growing dispute about whether Putnamian social capital is a collective resource at all, as he says it is. Knack and Keefer (1997) emphasise that groups can capture private benefits at the expense of society. They label as "Olson effects" the rent-seeking behaviour of groups, and then argue that this may contribute to the lack of correlation between membership levels and trust and economic performance. For his part, Peter A. Hall draws the conclusion that social capital is less a community good, as Putnam would have it, than a "club good." He writes (1997: 29):

Although we normally think of social capital as something which benefits all of society, by virtue of its social character, those benefits may not be evenly distributed; and, if it is uneven, the growth of social capital may even have some negative effects, as in Britain where it has tended to reinforce class differences at a time when those were otherwise being eroded. While supporting at least some observations about the positive benefits of social capital, then, this study suggests that we must not forget that, in this as in other cases of social organization, some may be organized 'in' and others 'out' by the same set of developments.

37　Coleman and Bourdieu both located social capital primarily in families and small communities. It was a *resource* available to families and communities to assure that the next generation would accede to its proper social position. Thus, for Bourdieu, social capital was a major factor explaining the reproduction of bourgeois society.

38　Both Peters (1995) and Segal (1997) see the current period as one of remodelling the house. The metaphor is an apt one, and more appropriate than "home"-like references. Houses can shelter many unrelated and only basically civil persons, who agree to certain house rules. Homes require more cosiness and shared values.

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CPRN Funding Sources

CPRN projects are funded by a mix of federal, provincial, foundation and corporate sponsors.

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