

Social Cohesion Research Workplan

March 1997

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Executive Summary

Since it was formed in November 1996, the Policy Research Sub-committee on Social Cohesion has met three times to discuss longer-term policy research requirements, develop a research inventory and set the stage for the development of this *Social Cohesion Research Workplan*. The results of these consultations, which now involve 23 departments and agencies, are as follows:

A working definition

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

A research framework

< A research framework organized along three themes, incorporating 12 sub-issues with potential for horizontal work and outlining how knowledge gaps could be addressed (p. 6 to 15)

A research inventory

< A preliminary inventory of ongoing and planned research highlighting over 300 projects from numerous departments and agencies, as well as sources outside the federal government

Interdepartmental partnerships

< A data working group that will work with the interdepartmental group developing indicators for a secure and confident society to produce a set of social cohesion indicators

< A research working group to provide a forum for the development of partnerships and information exchange

Next steps

Developing the mechanisms required to encourage and support horizontal policy research efforts within the federal government will take time. Over the coming months, the following issues will be addressed:

- < identification of resources to fulfil many of the proposed research projects in this workplan, since research budgets in all departments are in a state of flux;
- < identification of relative priorities among the research themes and development of partnerships to carry out investigative work in the top priority areas agreed upon;
- < determination of how best to use an "evergreen" research inventory to promote communication and collaboration;
- < expansion of the network to include researchers outside the federal government and abroad and development of possible collaborative partnerships with academics and thinktanks.

Introduction

Worldwide, advanced societies are in the midst of a transformation from the industrial to the knowledge age. The impacts of this transformation are being felt at every level and in every sector of our economies and societies. 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.

Working Definition

The definition of social cohesion will evolve as our understanding increases. As a starting point, **“social cohesion”** is defined by the Sub-committee on 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.***

This working definition recognizes that cohesion is achieved by consensus, that partnership must be based on trust and that fairness should be the goal. Social cohesion is an objective toward which Canadians can continue to strive, not one that can be neatly accomplished for all time. It depends on the creation of an environment in which individuals can retain hope for their futures. It involves building communities, addressing pressure points, such as income inequalities, and adapting institutions and policies to a postmodern environment. The research plan addresses the major gaps in our knowledge of these areas.

The Research Plan

The Sub-committee on Social Cohesion was tasked by the interdepartmental Policy Research Committee with preparing a research plan that would investigate the state of social cohesion in Canada and encourage more horizontal coordination and communication of public policy research in this area. A research plan has been developed that:

- 1) establishes an effective framework for developing horizontal research themes and identifying gaps in our understanding;
- 2) encourages active collaboration among departments in issue areas where mutuality of policy interest is apparent (particularly where significant research gaps exist);
- 3) establishes links with the work of other Sub-committees;
- 4) promotes the sharing of information on research results on a regular basis;
- 5) develops linkages with external networks of researchers;
- 6) provides decision makers with a body of strategic, long-term, integrated research that will address major trends likely to have an impact on social cohesion in Canada to the year 2005.

This research plan describes the preliminary results of an inventory exercise intended to identify research relevant to social cohesion. It then outlines factors considered in developing the plan, identifies three major research themes and related knowledge gaps and proposes a strategic approach to deliver research results.

The Research Inventory

One of the first tasks of the Sub-committee was to develop a *Social Cohesion Research Inventory* of work, carried out by departments or others, that might be relevant to the social cohesion research

themes. Participating departments were able to identify over 300 projects, and it seems likely that there may be a significant amount of research being conducted outside the federal government that has not yet been captured. This research has been grouped within the Social Cohesion Research Framework. However, horizontal linkages between these lines of inquiry need to be nurtured. The Inventory demonstrates that:

- < research has not always been linked with work from other departments, think tanks or the academic community;
- < analysis of the effect of growing pressures on Canadian identity, social support systems and diverse communities is limited;
- < data snapshots exist, but longitudinal and international benchmarks are missing; and
- < information on the state of social cohesion in other countries is needed to determine whether they have experienced similar social changes and to learn from best practices.

For details of ongoing or proposed studies under each of the Research Themes described in this workplan, the interested reader is referred to the corresponding section of the attached *Research Inventory*.

Considerations

This research plan attempts to respect the guidelines for further collaboration outlined on page 356 of the October 1996 PRC Report on Growth, Human Development, Social Cohesion:

- < Departments need to keep a high level of autonomy in the determination of their policy research needs and in their capacity to allocate resources to those needs.
- < In setting up new interdepartmental mechanisms or tasks relating to research activities, care should be taken not to overly bureaucratize the process, so researchers can focus on their primary mission; the production of high quality, policy relevant research to inform decision-makers.
- < An important function of policy research must be the transformation of leading edge-theoretical and empirical research into recommendations for pragmatic policy initiatives.

Currently, many departments have limited capacity to pursue leading-edge, horizontal investigative work. Emphasis has, therefore, been placed on pooling intellectual resources, on networking among departments and with outside organizations and on the development of partnerships, both within and outside the federal government research community.

An attempt has been made to take both a broad and a "long view" of the challenges to social cohesion in Canada. Neither all of the answers, nor even all of the questions, will be found in the following pages. The research plan is merely a "roadmap" of the fundamental social changes that Canada will face over the coming decade. Like any roadmap, it furnishes basic information about the terrain, where communities fit within it and the connections between them.

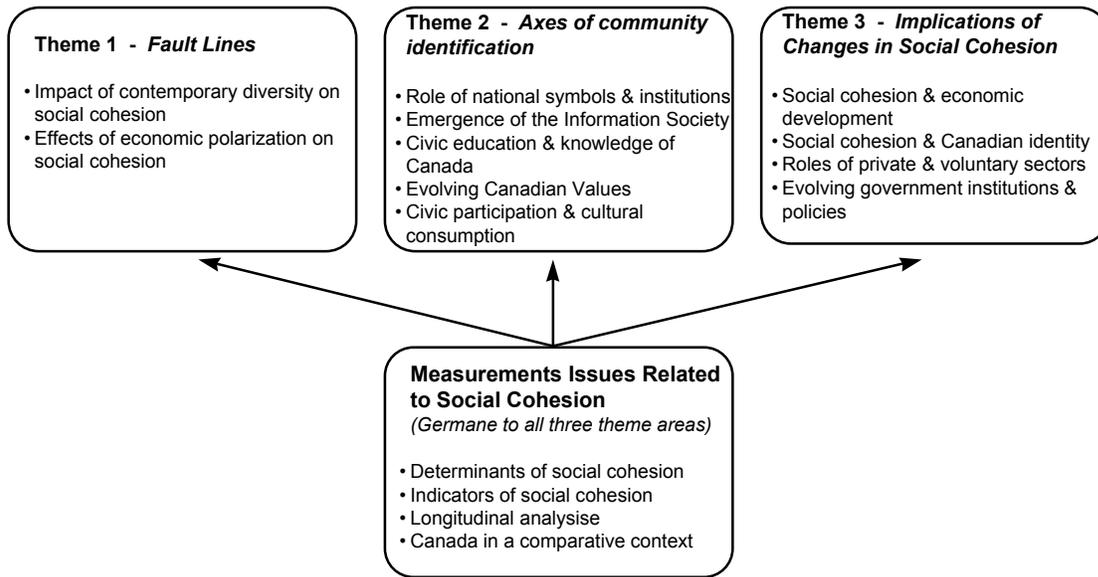
Research Themes and Knowledge Gaps

Three research themes and a major measurement issue have been identified. The relationship of these themes and issues is depicted in the graphic on the next page.

A major gap has been identified with regard to recognizing and measuring social cohesion. Social cohesion is likely to be the sum total of a variety of indicators that measure the extent to which Canadians share a sense of attachment and common purpose. However, we are currently unclear about which indicators should be in the social cohesion "basket". Nor do we know how much

weight should be assigned to each potential indicator. Better international comparative data in all these areas are also needed to determine where Canada and Canadians stand in relation to citizens and consumers in other countries. Development of a set of social cohesion indicators is essential to support work that will be carried out in the three research theme areas described below. Each of the research themes encompasses a number of sub-issues where significant gaps in our

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research knowledge exist. In general, research in each of the issue areas described in this paper will include:

- < effects of gender, age, regional and class differences and how they are / are not being bridged
- < international comparisons focusing on how Canada compares to other countries
- < trends over time to determine how cleavages are evolving.

The next section sets out the research themes and the sub-issues, identifies the knowledge gaps that need to be filled in each issue area, and outlines the proposed research workplan.

Research Theme I - Fault-lines

Are multiple fault-lines opening in Canadian society? If so, which are the most important ones and what are their consequences? What are the factors exacerbating or bridging fault-lines?

Factors such as globalization, increased mobility, changing demographics and economic restructuring are making Canada an increasingly diverse society. Departments are conducting considerable research on income disparities and social deficits within the Canadian population. However, while the specific policy requirements of individual departments may be addressed by research on individual groups, such as women, Aboriginal peoples or rural populations, the government as a whole is lacking overall evidence on whether growing cleavages within Canadian society are having a cumulative impact on social cohesion in Canada, as defined above. Currently, there is little information on the determinants of bonds or cleavages between groups, or on the

potential impact on social cohesion of Canada's increasingly dynamic society. The knowledge gaps and proposed research plans in these issue areas are described below.

Issue 1 - The impact of contemporary diversity on social cohesion

Diversity and the changing demographic composition of Canadian society are usually studied as problems and assumed to have negative impacts on social cohesion, but little research attention has been paid to the economically and socially enriching potential of such diversity. Research is needed to determine whether a diverse society is more attractive to foreign visitors and investors or gives Canada greater potential influence in the world. The economic, social and cultural contributions of Canada's diverse population to Canada's quality of life also require more study.

In addition, changing demographics have seldom been looked at through a social cohesion lens to determine how they might affect the sense of trust and reciprocity upon which a cohesive community is built. For example, it is unclear whether intergenerational conflict might result from current trends toward intergenerational inequity. There is only incomplete evidence on whether racism, sexism, discrimination and hate crime are growing or diminishing in Canada, and attitudes to diversity in all its forms are, for the most part, unknown. In most areas, information on how Canada compares with other countries is lacking. More research is also needed on the social impact of regional disparities, of possible gaps between rural and urban communities and of disparities within urban communities.

Research Questions

- < What are the benefits to social cohesion of a diverse society?
- < Are there inequities among groups which can potentially lead to conflict (e.g. current trends in intergenerational inequity, regional disparities, rural and urban gaps). What is the genesis of inequities and how do we prevent them from emerging?
- < What are the linkages between quality of life factors and a competitive society?
- < What emerging disparities or conflicts between groups can be identified for further study and prevention?

Proposed research

Extensive research is already being carried out by a number of departments on economic and social gaps between the rich and the poor, those working and those not working, men and women, Aboriginal peoples and the rest of society, visible minorities and "mainstream" Canada, and immigrants and the Canadian-born. Research will also be undertaken to examine the economic benefits of diversity and of quality of life factors, such as housing. The Sub-committee will discuss how the gaps identified above can be filled and determine how best to link the findings on various fault-lines to obtain a clearer picture of their cumulative impact on social cohesion.

Issue 2 - The effects of economic polarization on social cohesion

Is there an emerging, permanent underclass in Canada? And, if so, who is in it, how big is it, is it growing and what is its impact on social cohesion? Information gathered by HRDC suggests that the underclass (the poorest of the poor) may not be very large. However, there is a need to examine this class to determine if it is growing and if some groups are more susceptible to becoming part of it. The principal knowledge gap in this area concerns the impact of possible income polarization on social cohesion.

Many countries have homogenous social enclaves defined by factors such as ethnicity, age or income. As Canada is an increasingly diverse society, it is also important to understand the dynamics of social enclaves and the potential contributions or strains they represent for the community.

Research Questions

- < What is the impact of an underclass on social cohesion?
- < What are the determinants of membership in the social underclass?
- < Are particular groups more vulnerable to income polarization? If so, why?
- < How do we prevent the emergence/growth of a social underclass?
- < What is the impact of social enclaves on social cohesion?
- < How do we ensure that the emergence of such enclaves serves to build strong attachment to communities and neighbourhoods and does not create cleavages or result in social alienation?

Proposed research

Research is proposed to determine if income-disadvantaged people are also information-poor, have low rates of civic and cultural participation and are losing their attachment to Canada. If this group is found to have a higher rate of social dysfunction than other groups in society (e.g. health, violence and crime problems), further research will focus on the consequences for social cohesion of diverting more societal resources from human capital development to defensive measures such as prisons, increased policing, addiction treatment, etc. Finally, the income dynamics of other classes (or groups within classes, such as women, the elderly, visible minority groups, Aboriginals) will be studied to determine whether income polarization is growing and, if so, where the greatest pressure points exist.

Using a variety of techniques (literature reviews, international comparative reviews, data linkage and analysis, and commissioned research on specific topics, such as the coping strategies of young Canadians in today's economy), this research will attempt to provide a picture of the impact on Canadian communities of income inequality. Linkages will be made with the workplan currently being proposed by the Sub-committee on Human Development.

Research Theme II - Axes of Community Identification

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

This area of research is at the heart of the social cohesion research plan because it will address the way that community attachments -- whether they be to a local, national or ethnic community -- are changing as Canada evolves into a knowledge-based society. There are many gaps in our knowledge in this area because Canada is currently in the midst of this transformation. If the fabric of society is truly becoming global, then the policy dynamics of maintaining a national community may be shifting to a new ground. In the past, the Canadian social fabric was maintained by a web of national institutions -- the railway, the postal service, the CBC, the justice and policing system -- that provided daily proof of membership in a national community. Fiscal restraint and global restructuring may be making these institutions less visible and altering the way Canadians define

their national community. To investigate how the dimensions of community are changing, the following research issues will be examined.

Issue 3 - Role of national symbols and institutions in promoting social cohesion

The symbolic order represents our national “myths” -- a sort of narrative shorthand that tells us what we hold in common and what we value as a national community. Recent studies suggest that traditional national symbols, such as the monarchy, the armed forces, the RCMP, the flag and the anthem, have less resonance with Canadians than emerging national symbols, such as our health care system, our environment and our Olympic athletes. These studies have also suggested that there is a need for a more inclusive approach to Canadian symbols to reflect a diverse contemporary Canadian society. Research is needed to determine what is at the root of the change in Canadians’ identification with symbols and how this affects social cohesion.

Research Questions

- < Is there a correlation between Canadians’ attachment to symbols and social cohesion?
- < If so, are the symbols inclusive? Does attachment to symbols vary among different groups within Canada?
- < How have Canadians’ attachments to various symbols evolved over time?
- < What fosters attachment to an institution making it a symbol?

Proposed research

As part of the ongoing research being carried out by the Deputy Ministers’ Committee on Identity and Attachment, data on symbols from several polling sources over the past 10 to 15 years will be analyzed. New research will be undertaken to illustrate how Canadians’ attachment to various symbols has changed over time and to investigate whether Canadian attachment to symbols varies according to emerging fault-lines, such as gender. The research will attempt to provide insight on future trends with regard to attachment to national symbols and institutions and to various demographic “pressure points” -- regions or groups that no longer subscribe to the “shared community of interpretation” represented by Canada’s national symbols and institutions. To address the knowledge gap on the role of national institutions in promoting a sense of national community, proposals will be developed to look at the impact that changes in the health care, justice and communications/transportation systems are having on social cohesion in Canada.

Issue 4 - Emergence of the Information Society and its impacts on social cohesion

A growing body of research suggests that new information technologies are fragmenting the traditional mass media audience and making it easier to link geographically-dispersed communities with common linguistic, cultural or civic interests. Research is needed to determine the impact that “Internet pluralism” is having on shared national communities of interpretation and on social and cultural values. The technology, if inclusive, may have a potentially positive impact on social cohesion, but this may be at the global rather than the national level. Research issues include the possible creation of separate classes of “information-rich” and “information-poor”, delineated by age, gender and other fault-lines, and the dissemination of socially corrosive content (such as child pornography and hate propaganda) via the Internet. The impact on the very definition of “Canadian content” and “Canadian creators” also requires further examination, since these technologies could generate millions of new content providers, who can create content at their desktops even in the smallest and most remote communities, and disseminate it to potentially large international audiences.

Research Questions

- < What lessons can be learned from the historical introduction of other transformative technologies?
- < How can new information technologies be used to foster social cohesion? (I.e. Can it provide a forum of dissemination and exchange among and within diverse communities?)
- < What is the participation rate in the information society? How is it changing?
- < How do we ensure universal accessibility?

Proposed research

While the economic and industrial challenges posed by new communications technologies have been extensively studied, their social and cultural impacts are currently little understood. To fill this gap, research is proposed to examine lessons learned from the historical introduction of other transformative technologies, develop measures of information society participation, explore and document the new forms of association and social awareness that are enabled by new communications technologies, examine changing roles in the content production chain and analyze issues of particular concern to Canadian policy makers, such as the extent of French-language content on the Information Highway.

Issue 5 - Civic education and knowledge of Canada

Existing evidence suggests that individuals in western societies are adopting multiple social identities and that these societies are becoming increasingly fragmented along identity lines. Decision makers in the United States and elsewhere are also beginning to pay increased attention to a perceived erosion of "social capital", which they are linking to a knowledge deficit around civic values. Despite a growing concern among Canadian studies scholars and other commentators regarding Canadians' lack of knowledge about themselves and about Canada's democratic institutions, there is surprisingly little empirical evidence about this perceived knowledge deficit. Information on school curricula is lacking, as well as empirical evidence that this trend is affecting Canadians' capacity for mutual understanding and their desire for a shared national future. Research is needed to determine with more precision the extent and nature of a possible knowledge and learning gap, whether it is affecting national identity, whether the current curriculum reflects the growing diversity of Canadian society and whether civic education and knowledge of Canadian history, society and social values do have the positive impact on social capital and social cohesion that many proponents ascribe to them.

Research Questions

- < Does civic education/knowledge foster national identity and social cohesion?
- < What are the most effective approaches to civic education?
- < What is the extent and nature of a possible knowledge and civic education gap?
- < Are there disparities in civic knowledge among different groups in Canada?
- < What are some best-practices, internationally, in facilitating civic education and participation?

Proposed research

Research is proposed to review the literature on teaching and learning about Canadian history and civics and to develop a longer-term research proposal to address the knowledge gaps emerging from that review. This may include participation in a major international survey.

Issue 6 - Evolving Canadian values

As Canadian society changes, so do the values of Canadians. The evolution of Canadian values over the past decade or fifteen years may provide clues as to the state of social cohesion within Canada and the possible directions that Canadian society will take in the coming decade. While

there is a wealth of international data, only limited attempts have been made to isolate and analyze the evolution of Canadian values in comparison to values in other countries or to suggest where we might stand internationally with regard to social cohesion, national identity and quality of life. Particular attention needs to be paid to any value "fault-lines" (e.g. region, gender, age, income, whether foreign or Canadian-born) and to psychographic clusters.

A major concern is the possibility of an "elite/public" value split. Polling data indicates that, among the elite, values such as compassion and caring for others are being replaced by more materialistic values. More information is needed on a possible divergence between the values of the general public and Canadian elites, on the effect this might be having on social cohesion, and on the possible consequences for Canada.

Research Questions

- < How are Canadians values evolving? What is the impact on social cohesion in Canada?
- < Is there a divergence between the values of the general public and those of the (political, economic, or social) elite?
- < How do we ensure that Canadian institutions remain reflective of current or evolving values?
- < What influences the evolution of Canadian values?
- < What influences Canadians' sense of hope for the future?

Proposed research

A series of projects will be undertaken to develop a values profile of Canadians over time focusing on such areas as national identification, tolerance, civic participation, trust in institutions and attitudes toward family and community; to disaggregate the data by fault-line; to compare Canada to other advanced, postindustrial countries using the same value lines and, if possible, the same disaggregations; to compare the Canadian value profile to that of the five highest immigration source countries and to determine whether "dropouts from the top" (elite members who score low on civic values) are having an impact on social cohesion in Canada.

Issue 7 - Effects of current social and demographic trends on civic participation and cultural consumption

Some research has been carried out, particularly in the United States, on the perceived general decline in civic participation. Canadian research is needed to determine if trends in time allocated to work, leisure and community participation are having an effect on social cohesion. Demographically, little is known as to whether an aging population, increasing demands on time (especially among women), changes in family structure, increased immigration from third world countries and marginalization of Aboriginal peoples are likely to affect civic participation and consumption of Canadian cultural products. More contextual information is also needed to compare Canada's civic participation rates with those of other countries and to determine whether declining rates are a cross-national phenomenon or a uniquely North American concern. Consumption and participation statistics for cultural products over time (whether or not these are Canadian products) are inadequate (except perhaps in broadcasting) and do not demonstrate whether Canadians are increasing or decreasing their engagement in the cultural life of their local or national communities.

Research Questions

- < What is the profile of civic participation in Canada?
- < What proportion of time is devoted to volunteer activity, civic participation and cultural consumption? How is this changing?
- < How does Canada's civic and cultural activity compare with other countries?

Proposed research

Research is proposed to develop a better profile of civic participation in Canada through domestic studies of diversity and cultural participation. A national survey of volunteering, participating and giving, and a series of questions on the next General Social Survey in 1998, will focus on time devoted to volunteer activity, civic participation and consumption of cultural products, as well as the dynamics of an individual's social network. International comparative studies will also be undertaken to review cultural participation and consumption data in other countries and to determine if increasing diversity in those countries is changing traditional behaviour.

Research Theme III - Implications of Changes in Social Cohesion

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

While it is important to examine possible emerging fault-lines in Canadian society and the impact that these fault-lines may be having on our sense of community and shared purpose, it is also necessary to pose the research equivalent of the question "so what?". The inter-relationship between social cohesion, the social and economic welfare of Canadians and identity is critical to this question. As economies restructure and globalize, the role that nation states can play in reinforcing social cohesion is evolving. Changing relationships among citizens and between citizens and their communities raises a number of governance issues. The private sector and the third sector are increasingly being asked to assume more responsibility for promoting social cohesion, but little is known about their relative strengths and weaknesses as agents of cohesion or about their capacity to assume a more active role. The following issue areas have been identified as priorities for further research.

Issue 8 - Relationship between social cohesion and economic development

Traditional economics have focused on the relationship between capital and labour to explain economic growth. More recently, endogenous growth models have suggested that variables such as social capital, investment in education, adequate health care, gender equity and income equity and environmental quality may better account for a country's economic progress. More evidence is needed to understand the relationship between the above variables and economic progress. While endogenous growth models suggest the strong role of social cohesion variables in contributing to economic growth, the reverse situation -- that economic prosperity contributes to social cohesion -- may also apply.

Research Questions

- < Are there alternative endogenous growth models (theoretical or empirical) which are suited to the examination of social cohesion and how it relates to economic growth?
- < How can these theories be tested against current Canadian economic trends and conditions?
- < What are the linkages between social cohesion and economic growth?

Proposed research

Research is proposed to examine the theoretical and empirical literature on endogenous growth, develop an accessible overview of the findings most relevant to social cohesion and design and implement a longer-term research plan that will test these theories and empirical findings against current Canadian economic trends and conditions. This is an area where partnerships with leading

endogenous growth theorists, both in Canada and abroad, will likely be required to design and implement the longer-term research plan. Survey data being assembled by the Sub-committee on Human Development (for example, the Survey of Income and Labour Dynamics) may prove useful in investigating the linkages between social cohesion and economic growth. Cooperation with the Sub-committee on Growth may also be useful in the development and testing of theories in a Canadian context.

Issue 9 - Interaction between social cohesion and Canadian identity

The reinforcement of Canadian identity has long been a concern of the federal government. Numerous past studies of Canadian values have focused on Canada as a caring and mutually supportive society with entrenched commitments to equalization of regional disparities, promotion of equal opportunity and the accommodation of diversity. A number of think tanks have suggested that changing concepts of Canadian identity may be altering the nature of our social union. Further research is required to answer the following questions.

Research Questions

- < What are the linkages between a strong sense of identity and social cohesion?
- < How are changes in values affecting on Canadians' attachment to their communities and their country?
- < What are the international trends in promoting national identity?
- < What are the determinants of attachment and belonging? (e.g. gender, age, regional or other differences)
- < Are the major elements of Canadian identity changing and how are these trends affecting attachment to community and country?

Proposed research

Research is proposed that would examine international trends in promotion of national identity, carry out several state of the art reviews on the determinants of attachment and belonging, examine perceived threats to social cohesion in other countries and describe measures being taken to counteract such threats. The research plan would aim to synthesize the results of values, symbols and Information Society studies (described above) to determine if the major elements of Canadian identity are changing and if these trends are affecting attachment to communities and to Canada.

Issue 10 - The roles of the private and voluntary sectors in building social capital

Due to the reduction of government expenditures in a number of areas, both the private and third sectors are being expected to play greater roles in building social capital and promoting social cohesion. Evidence of declining deference to authority underlines the potential importance of this shift. Studies are needed to identify best-practice models for good corporate citizenship and to examine trends within the Canadian corporate community toward civic participation, labour force diversification and sponsorship of charitable activities. Studies are also needed to assess the capacity of the non-profit sector to assume greater responsibility for government service delivery and, more generally, to increase its role in building social cohesion.

Research Questions

- < What are best practice models for good corporate citizenship in Canada and abroad?
- < How have other countries approached the issues of corporate citizenship and the role of the voluntary sector?
- < What demands are being placed on the third sector and what is its capacity to respond?
- < What are the gaps in the current framework of support to the non-profit sector and what are the likely trends to the year 2005?

Proposed research

Research is proposed to identify best-practice models for good corporate citizenship in both Canada and abroad and explore innovative policy models and approaches that other governments are using to encourage the private sector in areas such as the practice of environmental citizenship by corporations. Work will also be undertaken to synthesize available data on the fiscal and organizational health of the Canadian non-profit sector, identify specific gaps in the current framework of support to the non-profit sector and identify likely trends to the year 2005.

Partnerships among several departments, such as Human Resources Development Canada, Industry Canada, Canadian Heritage, Health Canada, Revenue Canada, Environment Canada and possibly other orders of government, will be explored. Depending on the availability of resources, a survey may be undertaken to examine the increasing demands being put on the third sector. The departmental consortium may also explore the possibility of working with a social policy thinktank to analyze the findings of any major survey.

Issue 11 - Evolving government institutions and policies to support social cohesion

Promoting social cohesion is an inherently horizontal undertaking, involving a wide range of departments at federal, provincial and local levels, as well as the non-government sector. The allocation of responsibilities is not always clear, and resource levels vary. More research is required on models of partnership, collaboration and, possibly, shared governance to support a greater sense of common purpose and shared opportunity among Canadians. A gap has also been identified with regard to research on the effectiveness of alternative policy measures in some domains (such as social programs and environmental sustainability).

While many of the arguments in favour of new governance models are couched in terms of improving the flexibility of service delivery and of increasing the opportunity for citizen participation, democratic governance requires that there be adequate mechanisms for monitoring and external review of service providers. This is particularly difficult to accomplish when organizations are outside the government infrastructure. Models of accountability for third-party delivery of government-mandated social and cultural programs are needed, particularly as these apply to expenditure of public funds and adherence to a range of social cohesion policies (such as bilingualism and promotion of diversity).

Research Questions

- < What models of partnership, collaboration and shared governance support a greater sense of common purpose and shared opportunity among Canadians?
- < What is the effectiveness of alternative policy measures such as environmental sustainability?
- < What models of accountability for third-party delivery of government-mandated social and cultural programs are most effective, particularly as these apply to the expenditure of public funds and adherence to policies such as bilingualism?

Proposed research

Research is proposed that would examine alternative intergovernmental and intragovernmental models of partnership and shared governance within the social, cultural, environmental and natural resource domains and identify strengths, weaknesses and key success factors of these models. While some work is being carried out to examine models of accountability in specific areas, such as sport, a more extensive workplan in this area will have to be developed.

Issue 12 - Measurement Issues Related to Social Cohesion

Because social cohesion is a relatively new research area in Canada, existing data has not been looked at from this perspective. Experience in other countries may be instructive. There may also be a need to collect new data to fill gaps. It will be important to examine trends over time, as well as international comparative data wherever possible.

Research Questions

- < What quantifiable measures of social cohesion exist?
- < What indicators should be used to measure social cohesion?
- < How does social cohesion in Canada compare with other countries?

Proposed research

A number of sources may provide the potential base for the development of a set of indicators to measure social cohesion in Canada:

- < Statistics Canada has a wealth of social statistics on various aspects of the lives of Canadians.
- < The PRC Sub-committee on Human Development is developing a set of quality of life indicators that may provide insight on various social cohesion issues, such as prevalence of crime and time use.
- < A current horizontal exercise is underway within the federal government to develop a set of indicators on a "secure and confident" society" that would serve to monitor the federal government's performance.
- < Human Resources Development Canada is engaged in a number of surveys to determine trends in wealth and income.
- < A large database of polling data on Canadian attitudes and values exists within several departments.

A working group on social cohesion data will be formed to foster interdepartmental partnerships focused on the development of a set of social cohesion indicators that would be useful for policy research and policy development in all three Research Theme areas.

Next steps

Mechanisms to support horizontal research may take some time to put in place and will require a reorientation of both resources and intellectual mindsets, which are now generally stove-piped within individual departments or portfolios. **Recognizing the cross-cutting nature of certain issues, such as social cohesion, It is recommended that resources be designated at the centre to support high-priority horizontal policy research efforts involving several departments. This is particularly important in cases where seed money is required to "jump-start" initiatives requiring participation and support from several departments.** One or two "foundation" projects in the realm of social cohesion that would benefit from such a horizontal approach will be proposed in the coming months. One of these may be a survey (currently in the pilot phase) of the voluntary sector or a survey of tolerance (currently available in draft).

This research plan emphasizes **planning and coordination, communication and cooperation**. While this is not a resource-intensive proposal, it should be recognized that certain networking basics, such as the posting of research inventories and reports on a World Wide Web site, will require resources from the centre for technical and translation support.

Planning and coordination

The Sub-committee will aim to meet three times during 1997-98:

- < in Spring 1997 to communicate the results of the deliberations of CCDM (Policy) on the proposed Policy Research Committee workplan;
- < in Fall 1997 to prepare for the fall planning cycle and to monitor the implementation of the Social Cohesion Research Workplan;
- < in Spring 1998 to prepare a progress report for CCDM (Policy) and to plan further research.

Informal working groups on research and data infrastructure that were established during the course of developing this plan will be maintained. They will provide opportunities for the development of partnerships and for information exchange in specific issue areas identified in this workplan. The research and data infrastructure working groups will report regularly to the Sub-committee to ensure cross-fertilization of ideas and exchange of views between the policy and research communities concerned with social cohesion issues.

Communication

Mechanisms are proposed for discussion to promote interdepartmental communication of research priorities and results:

- < a World Wide Web site to disseminate research reports and provide a forum for exchange of research perspectives between government and the external research community (will require resources from the centre);
- < a seminar series involving both government and external researchers focused on specific research/policy issues in the area of social cohesion;
- < a refined research inventory to promote information exchange and networking within the government research community and as a means of involving the external research community in areas of mutual interest.

Cooperation

The following measures are proposed to increase cooperation among various research communities:

- < establishment of contacts with Canadian and international academic networks;
- < establishment of joint government / academic / thinktank networks in issue areas where they do not already exist;
- < initiation of contact with international organizations, such as the Council of Europe and the OECD, on social cohesion research theme areas.