

Positioning Paper

Housing, housing assistance and social cohesion

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1 INTRODUCTION

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 (Jenson 1998).

In recent years, policy makers in Australia and other countries, such as Canada, the UK and certain European countries, and in supranational organisations such as the European Union and the Organisation for Economic and Cultural Development (OECD) have expressed interest in social cohesion, an old concept which has been revived and recast in the light of current public policy concerns and issues. There has been over a decade of research and debate on issues such as 'loss of community' and 'decline in social capital' which indicate a fear that social cohesion has been declining and the threat that this appears to pose to social order.

The perception that social cohesion is diminishing has been heightened by some well-publicised civil disturbances both in Australia and overseas. These have included events in the northern English cities of Bradford, Burnley and Oldham in the northern summer of 2001 and widespread disturbances in outer suburban Paris and other French towns and cities in November 2005. In Australia, we have seen significant publicity given to civil disturbances in a number of locations in Sydney, such as Redfern (2004), Macquarie Fields (February 2005) and Cronulla (December 2005). Many of these events have occurred in, or close to, areas of social and private rental housing where residents are economically and socially disadvantaged and come from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

The immediate public policy response, couched in the language of 'law and order', has led to investigation of the ways in which police and other responsible agencies responded (Kennedy and McQueen 2005). Subsequent policy debate, however, has included consideration of whether there are other underlying reasons for these disturbances, including economic marginalisation, social disadvantage, and disengagement from participation in democratic institutions. This debate has often questioned whether the events are symptoms of underlying changes to the level of social cohesion (e.g. House of Commons 2004) and the extent to which public policy actions, including housing assistance, can strengthen or weaken social cohesion.

Whilst there is interest in, and debate about, social cohesion, there is little agreement about what it is, what a socially cohesive society would look like and how public policy actions could help sustain or improve social cohesion. There has also been some confusion about how social cohesion relates to other ideas including 'social capital', 'social inclusion/exclusion', 'community building' and 'community capacity'.

Housing policy makers and practitioners in Australia have drawn on some of these ideas, particularly social capital and community building, in developing and implementing community, urban or neighbourhood renewal programs to regenerate older public housing estates. State and local governments and local residents have been involved in projects to provide opportunities for people living in such areas to become economically active, build social networks, and participate more broadly in local organisations. There has been less attention to areas of low cost private rental housing which also have clusters of disadvantaged households, some of whom receive assistance from the Australian government via rent assistance payments (Hulse and Burke 2000).

There remain important questions, however, about whether, and how, housing systems and government housing assistance are related to social cohesion. Do

housing systems safeguard or undermine social cohesion? This is a question that has been addressed in a European context in a large comparative research project funded by the European Commission (Czasny 2004). Do aspects of tenure enhance or weaken social cohesion? For example, is there an association between higher rates of mobility associated with private rental and low levels of social cohesion? Do specific forms of housing assistance impact on social cohesion? For example, does the design and location of public housing estates or aspects of public housing management, such as allocations, affect social cohesion? Can housing assistance policy be developed in ways which assist in the strengthening of social cohesion? Assumptions about the answers to these questions lie at the heart of much present day housing policy and housing management practice – yet there is very little systematic evidence that addresses them, as indicated in a systematic review on the relationship between housing assistance and various types of ‘non-shelter’ outcomes (Bridge et al. 2003).

This Positioning Paper is the first report of a project funded by AHURI which fills a part of the gap in knowledge about the linkages between housing, housing assistance and social cohesion. It explores the relevance of the social cohesion concept for housing policy and practice in Australia, develops a conceptual framework for understanding these linkages, explores the indicators which have been used to measure some of these linkages, and indicates how the empirical part of the research will proceed. The paper is based on a review and reflection of relevant literature during the initial stages of the project. Later stages of the research will seek to identify empirically some of these linkages through an analysis of five Australian secondary data sets.

2 POLICY CONTEXT, AIMS AND METHODS

2.1 Policy context

Social cohesion has arrived on the political agenda in Australia. In a major speech to the National Press Club in January 2006, the Prime Minister stated:

In the 21st century, managing our social cohesion will remain the highest test of the Australian achievement. It demands the best Australian ideals of tolerance and decency, as well as the best Australian traditions of realism and of balance (Howard 2006).

The theme of the speech was an assessment of 'the Australian achievement' and the need for a 'sense of balance', including between economic development and social cohesion, between national identity and cultural diversity, and between rights and democratic responsibilities. This speech followed shortly after the events in Cronulla mentioned in the Introduction.

The Prime Minister's speech also includes references to trust, common values, social attitudes, commitment and tolerance. It comes after almost a decade in which the terminology used in Australian public policy has been increasingly prefaced by 'social' (e.g. social capital, social inclusion/exclusion) or 'community' (e.g. community building, community strengthening, community capacity), with other terminology indicating cooperative relationships between people (trust, reciprocity, networks, connectedness, mutuality, cooperation). This is in marked contrast to the period from about 1980 to the mid-1990s when terminology such as consumer choice and sovereignty, competition, competitive tendering, commercialisation and market efficiency provided the lexicon of public policy debate. This language had derived from economic rationalism and 'new public sector management' and had been used in housing policy and management, as in other areas of public policy. This trend can also be seen in health policy, education, law enforcement, social security, family policy, youth policy, care for the aged, and urban and regional development.

The extent to which this change in terminology represents a significant change in the framework for public policy in Australia is a matter of some contention. One view is that it represents a fundamental rethinking about the role of intermediate social institutions between families and governments and markets, such as 'community', as a consequence of some of the acknowledged limitations of economic rationalism and public sector management practices of the 1980s and 1990s (e.g. Adams and Hess 2001). This view suggests a rethinking of the relationships between governments, markets and what is often called 'civil society'. Another view is that the language of 'social', 'community' and 'cooperation' draws on communitarian ideology which generates a more positive view of government activities and programs whilst a commitment to underlying economic rationalism remains (e.g. Bryson and Mowbray 2005, Mowbray 2005).

Whichever view one adopts, there has been a proliferation in use of these terms both in public policy debate and in a burgeoning academic literature which has explored and developed some of the concepts on which this language is based. In this process, some old concepts from academic literature have been revived and reworked, e.g. social cohesion and social capital. Concepts which have been influential overseas have been appropriated and refined in an Australian context, e.g. 'social exclusion' from Europe and 'social capital' from the US. Other concepts have been given a contemporary reading, such as 'community building' and 'community capacity' rather than the earlier 'community development'.

Most of these terms are used in at least two different ways: firstly, in a policy context to indicate the aims of, and rationale for, certain public policy actions; and secondly, as analytical constructs to explain social, political and sometimes economic changes. Chan et al. (2006: 274-9) refer to two distinct discourses about social cohesion: an academic discourse and a policy discourse. The distinction between these usages is often not clear, a point made by Arthurson and Jacobs (2003) in their literature review exploring the relevance of the concept of social exclusion for Australian housing policy. Whilst policy makers may see these as policy terms, they often draw on academic literature. Similarly, academic researchers sometimes shift between using policy terminology and employing concepts which have explanatory value.

Over the past decade there has been a rapid increase in academic and policy research in Australia about 'communities', due to concerns about a 'decline' in community, policy objectives that draw on notions of individual and community 'self-reliance' as opposed to reliance on government provision of services and, at the neighbourhood level, to increased knowledge and concern about the impact of neighbourhood effects on the life chances of individuals, families and in particular children (Stone and Hughes 2002a). Much of the policy and research in this area has involved a concern with 'community', broadly defined, and policy makers have developed programs variously referred to as 'strengthening community', 'building community', or 'community capacity building' (Adams and Hess 2001, Bryson and Mowbray 2005). One of the best examples of such work is a review commissioned by the Australian government for the development and implementation of the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy 2000-04 (Black and Hughes 2001).

The national agenda is complemented by similar foci at state and territory levels, as well as local government level, where issues relating to community have similarly dominated ideas about social policy in recent years. Most state governments have embarked upon programs aimed at strengthening communities, some of which have an important housing focus such as Victoria's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and Queensland's Community Renewal and Urban Renewal Strategies.

Whilst social capital and community building have generated most interest among both policy makers and researchers in Australia, very little research or policy has used the social cohesion concept per se. However, there are signs of an emerging interest in social cohesion as an important concept for policy makers to understand and consider. This can be attributed both to a threat – a fear that social cohesion is weakening associated with some well publicised civil disturbances in Australia and elsewhere, as indicated previously – and to a developing appreciation that social cohesion may be important in ensuring individual, family and social wellbeing.

Social cohesion is an old concept which has been revived in new policy debates in European, Canadian and, more recently, UK social policy. It has been closely related to other concepts which have been in vogue in both public policy debates and academic literature such as social inclusion/exclusion and social capital (McCracken 1998, Berger-Schmitt 2000). Social cohesion has also been linked to issues of housing and urban regeneration and the neighbourhood (Forrest and Kearns 2001). Its relevance and applicability has not, however, been explored in an Australian context in relation to housing and housing assistance.

A systematic review by Bridge et al. (2003) for AHURI found that housing and housing assistance can affect a variety of 'non-shelter' outcomes such as health, education, participation in paid work and 'community viability and cohesion'. However, it also found that there is a dearth of Australian evidence on the links between housing assistance and social and economic outcomes, as well as a lack of conceptual understanding about how dimensions of housing assistance are linked to

non-shelter outcomes. This project aims to fill a specific gap in knowledge about the relationships between housing, housing assistance and social cohesion.

2.2 Project aims

The overall objective of the project is to improve our understanding of the linkages between housing, housing assistance and social cohesion, both conceptually and empirically.

The project will explore the dimensions of social cohesion and the ways in which housing assistance could influence housing circumstances in ways that might increase or diminish social cohesion. This conceptual work will consider the linkages between social cohesion and other related concepts such as social capital and social inclusion/exclusion. The project will also identify indicators of social cohesion that have been developed to assist governments and others to understand the role that housing and housing assistance plays in the lives of individuals, households and communities.

This work includes a conceptualisation of housing, housing assistance and social cohesion. Each of these concepts requires 'unpacking' and each needs to be understood in relation to the others. This is essential if governments are to understand which aspects of housing and housing assistance are likely to impact on social cohesion outcomes. While previous research (for example, Bridge et al. 2003) provides clues about how aspects of these concepts relate to one another empirically, there has as yet been no systematic attempt to present these concepts coherently in relation to one another.

The empirical component of the research explores which aspects of housing, such as size and type, connection with surrounding environs, density, tenure, neighbourhood and location, are associated with aspects of social cohesion in an Australian context. It will also involve an exploration of which aspects of housing assistance, such as public housing, community housing, rent assistance and schemes supporting home ownership, are associated with aspects of social cohesion, including family and community wellbeing. The analysis will draw on secondary analysis of existing survey data to inform governments about whether housing is related to social cohesion, and about which aspects of housing and housing assistance are likely to impact positively and/or negatively on social cohesion outcomes, and why. This will take account of other variables likely to affect social cohesion, as well as potential mediating factors such as the use of key services (for example, child care, health services).

In brief, the project has four primary aims:

- *Aim 1:* to develop a clear conceptual understanding of the relationship between housing, housing assistance and social cohesion, based on a review of Australian and international literature;
- *Aim 2:* to identify indicators of social cohesion useful for housing, urban and regional research, that can assist governments to understand the impact of various interventions;
- *Aim 3:* to examine empirically the relationship between *housing* and aspects of social cohesion, based on secondary analysis of existing survey data;
- *Aim 4:* to examine empirically the relationship between *housing assistance* and aspects of social cohesion, based on secondary analysis of existing survey data.

2.3 Research plan

The research plan comprises two main stages.

Stage 1: Literature review and conceptual analysis

The questions addressed in this stage were:

- What is social cohesion and how does it relate conceptually to housing and housing assistance?
- How has social cohesion been conceptualised, operationalised and measured in existing work, particularly as it relates to housing and urban and regional issues?
- What are key indicators of social cohesion that can be used in housing and urban and regional research, and can assist governments to understand the impact of various interventions?

The method for the first stage of the project was an extensive review of the Australian and international literature on social cohesion, in particular policy-related literature. The findings of this stage are reported on in this Positioning Paper.

Stage 2: Data analysis

The second stage of the research will draw upon the first to undertake empirical analyses of (i) the relationship between housing and social cohesion and (ii) the relationship between housing assistance and social cohesion. Questions to be addressed are:

- How do aspects of housing (tenure, density, size of dwelling, location) relate to indicators of social cohesion? How are these relationships mediated by the use of key services (such as child care and health services)?
- How do aspects of housing assistance (public housing, community housing, rent assistance and schemes supporting home ownership) relate to indicators of social cohesion? How are these relationships mediated by the use of key services (such as child care and health services)?

The empirical part of the research involves interrogation of five Australian secondary data sets to answer these questions. This multi-data method is required because each of the data sets has its particular advantages and limitations. This method also has significant methodological advantages. Most notable is the capacity to explore relationships in great depth while ensuring that risks to external validity are minimised. This can be achieved because the data sets are complementary. Data with detailed variables will enable full exploration of relationships, and data with larger samples will ensure that research findings can be generalised to other populations with confidence. That is, it will be possible to determine whether the same types of results are found across different types of data sets, using different samples and sampling techniques. This is important given the lack of other Australian research in this area. Details of the method for Stage 2, as well as the findings, will be discussed in detail in the Final Report of the project.

2.4 Structure of the Positioning Paper

This is the first report from the 'Housing, Housing Assistance and Social Cohesion' project and proceeds as follows. Chapter 3 conceptualises social cohesion in a public policy context and explores some of possible insights that the concept can offer for housing policy as well as some of its limitations. Chapter 4 examines available

research evidence on the relationships between housing, housing assistance and social cohesion, in particular focusing on work on disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Chapter 5 identifies potential indicators for empirical work to explore these relationships.

3 CONCEPTUALISING SOCIAL COHESION

In this chapter, we briefly review the origins of the social cohesion concept, explore what is meant by social cohesion, and consider how it relates to other concepts which have influenced public policy in recent years, notably social capital and social exclusion. We then explore the dimensions and scales of social cohesion, illustrating with examples from housing policy and practice where relevant. Finally we consider the potential and problems associated with the concept for public policy.

3.1 The origins of social cohesion in a public policy context

Social cohesion as an analytical concept is associated with the French sociologist Emile Durkheim (1964 [1893]) who, writing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was interested in the way in which social order and social stability were maintained in the face of enormous economic, social, political and technological change. Durkheim argued that increased specialisation in work, called 'the division of labour', and in social roles meant that people were no longer able to carry out tasks in a mechanical, routine, prescribed way. Instead specialisation created interdependencies between people who recognised that they had to develop cooperative relationships with others to carry out even the basic tasks of everyday living. This type of solidarity was 'organic' in that it was not imposed, mandatory or pre-ordained but developed spontaneously through a myriad of social relationships (Durkheim 1933 [1893]: book 1, ch. 3). The context for this work is important: Durkheim was seeking to explain contemporaneous changes but was also trying to distinguish the role of cooperative social relationships in contrast to the competitive behaviours which were integral to economic theory in order to establish sociology as a discipline distinct from economics (Birner and Ege 1999).

This idea of social cohesion based on the interweaving of cooperative social relationships, sometimes popularised as the 'social glue' or 'social fabric', has been much discussed and developed over the years (see Pahl 1991, Jenson 1998, Beauvais and Jenson 2002, Spoonley et al. 2005 for summaries of the literature). Interest in social cohesion amongst both academics and policy makers has waxed and waned since the time of Durkheim but has been most intense 'each time that economic turbulence and political adjustment has loosened the moorings of familiar patterns and practices' (Jenson 1998: 38).

The most recent wave of interest by policy makers can be traced to the first half of the 1990s in Canada and in supranational organisations concerned wholly or mainly with Europe, such as the Council of Europe, the European Union and the OECD. Neo-liberalism,¹ the dominant framework used by policy makers in North America, the UK and continental Europe at the time, drew heavily on neo-classical economics which had the advantage of providing policy makers with both established concepts and accepted means of measuring economic development. For researchers and policy makers concerned with social policy, this posed a problem: neo-liberalism posited that social development was dependent on economic development, that social policy provision by governments was a drain on economic performance, and that social programs provided disincentives for individuals to participate economically. The challenge then was to bring social issues to the fore in a way which provided a legitimate and alternative framework for discussion of social policy.

Thus social cohesion was revived for its potential to provide a 'macro' picture for social policy discussion which provided an alternative to the 'macro' picture for

¹ Known in Australia as economic rationalism.

economic policy discussion which centred on globalisation, competition and markets (Maxwell in Beauvais and Jenson 2002: i). It was a concept with some academic legitimacy since, as indicated above, it had been discussed by eminent social and political scientists for more than a hundred years, but was broad and flexible enough to encompass a range of issues and concerns. For researchers and policy makers, social cohesion provided an academically respectable frame of reference, a lens for examining issues of concern which were not central to economic policy debates, such as cultural diversity, social disadvantage, economic marginalisation and low rates of participation in social and political life by some groups. It also arguably marked a move away from a 'needs based' model of welfare and towards one which could incorporate ideas about rights, particularly the rights associated with citizenship, but potentially human rights more broadly.

3.2 What is social cohesion?

Despite more than a decade of subsequent debate by academics and policy makers about social cohesion, there is no single and uncontested definition (Beauvais and Jenson 2002: 1-2). Below we list some of the most commonly cited definitions of social cohesion and indicate their derivation and use:

- *'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 amongst all Canadians'*

This was a definition agreed upon by the Government of Canada Policy Research Sub-Committee on Social Cohesion 1996 (cited in Jenson 1998: 4) and is very widely quoted in Canadian and European policy literature.

- *'Social cohesion is viewed as a characteristic of a society dealing with the relations between societal units such as individuals, groups, associations as well as territorial units'*

A definition used by Berger-Schmitt (2000:2) in work for the European Commission, following the Canadian McCracken (1998: 3), is the one used by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2005: 40).²

- *'A socially cohesive society is one in which the members share common values, which enable them to identify common aims and objectives, and share a common set of moral principles and codes of behaviour through which to conduct their relations with one another'*

This definition was developed by UK academics Kearns and Forrest (2000: 997) and has been very influential in UK public policy.

- *'Social cohesion is the capacity of a society to ensure the welfare of its members, minimising disparities and avoiding polarisation. A cohesive society is a mutually supportive community of free individuals pursuing these common goals by democratic means'*

This is the current definition of the Council of Europe (2004: 1) and forms the basis of its Revised Strategy for Social Cohesion.

The earlier definitions emphasised the interdependence between members of a society, shared values and loyalties, and solidarity (Jenson 1998). In this sense, social cohesion is a 'bottom up' rather than a 'top down' phenomenon (Witten et al. 2003). It is sustained via a myriad of relationships between people and groups, many

² The AIHW is a research organisation responsible for regular reporting on the welfare of Australians.

of which relate to the mundane and routine connections of everyday life. In practical terms, 'social cohesion is about getting by and getting on at the more mundane level of everyday life' (Forrest and Kearns 2001: 2127). The Canadian definition, in particular, includes a strong normative element around the idea 'community'. The earlier definitions also encompass some of the elements of 'social capital', another concept which has been much used in policy debates in Australia and elsewhere, and which we discuss briefly later in this chapter.

More recent work on social cohesion, such as the above example from the Council of Europe, emphasises that a concern with shared values and solidarity has to be balanced with concern for addressing inequalities, including economic inequalities, and ensuring opportunities for all citizens to participate through democratic institutions and processes. Cooperative social relations are only one part of an overall picture which must also include addressing the negative effects of competitive markets for some people and managing diverse views and values, and sometimes conflict, through democratic processes and institutions (see also Beauvais and Jenson 2002). It also potentially embodies an emphasis on rights, whether those associated with citizenship or more universal human rights. This idea of social cohesion is essentially a 'top down' process and draws in part on the idea of social exclusion, which we will consider later.

Figure 1 illustrates the broad differences between a 'top down' and a 'bottom up' view of social cohesion, using the conventionally analytical distinction between structure (systems) and action (people).³ It is clear from the above discussion that some of the definitions of social cohesion cover more than one quadrant in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Social cohesion: 'Top down' and 'bottom up' processes

Social cohesion	Structure	Action
'Top down'	Commitment to reducing economic and other inequalities between groups and regions/areas Legal framework for human rights, equal opportunity and shared citizenship	Support for some redistribution of market allocation of resources and opportunities Norms about acceptable behaviours, tolerance of diversity, and values
'Bottom up'	Locally accessible processes to express differences and to manage conflict A diverse range of 'intermediate organisations' between citizens and governments	Participation in democratic processes at various levels Routines of daily life including participation in informal social networks and tolerance of others

In brief, there is still no universally recognised definition of social cohesion, and those that have been offered are at times contradictory and difficult to operationalise (Beauvais and Jenson 2002, Rajulton et al. 2003). This is perhaps not surprising as the definitions give different emphasis to economic, social, political and cultural elements, depending on the circumstances in which they were developed. For these reasons, Bernard (1999: 2) refers to social cohesion as a 'quasi concept', one that appears to be based on enough scientific data to appear reasonable enough to generate debate, but at the same time sufficiently vague to provide sufficient flexibility for policy makers to work with.

³ The distinction between structure and action is an analytical one for the purposes of illustrating some of the key facets of social cohesion as a 'top down' and 'bottom up' process. In practice, as many authors have pointed out, the relationship between structure and action is dynamic, not static.

3.3 How does social cohesion relate to social capital and social exclusion?

We cannot understand the development of the concept of social cohesion in contemporary public policy without first examining how it relates to other concepts which have been much used in recent years as a rationale for public policy actions in housing and other domains, most notably, social capital and social exclusion. Our purpose here is not to give a full account of academic and policy debates on social capital and social exclusion since these have been extensively covered elsewhere (e.g. Berger-Schmitt and Noll 2000, Foley and Edwards 1999, Winter 2000, Mayer 2003, Arthurson and Jacobs 2003, Johnson et al. 2003, Levitas 2005, Wilson 2006). It is to identify what policy makers have meant by social cohesion in comparison with social capital and social exclusion, and the implications for the types of public policy actions which are based on these concepts.

Like social cohesion, the concept of social capital was an older one with some claim to academic legitimacy and offered an alternative means of putting social issues back on the public policy agenda in an era of neo-liberalism (Winter 2000). At the start of the current wave of interest, the French sociologist Bourdieu (1986: 248) used the concept to refer to all of the resources (actual or potential) that are linked to possession of a network of social relationships. The idea was that in addition to resources that individuals themselves have such as education, called 'human capital', they can access the collective resources of groups of people, called 'social capital', through social networks. In other words, social capital is not produced by individuals but by groups of people through relationships within social networks.

Since that time, many writers have explored the idea of social capital (e.g. Coleman 1988, 1990, Narayan 1999, Woolcock 2000, Fine 2001), although it is the work of the American, Robert Putnam, which is the best known and has been most influential with policy makers, particularly in Australia and North America. His work began with a thesis that high levels of social capital indicated by membership of voluntary organisations were positively associated with a robust, participatory democracy, whilst low levels weakened participation in community and political life (Putnam 1993, 1995). This work generated a robust debate including many criticisms. In response, Putnam's thesis was subsequently expanded to include membership of informal networks as well as participation in voluntary associations (Putnam 1995) and an assertion that strong social networks have positive outcomes, such as better school performance, lower crime rates and better public health, for network members and also for non-members (Putnam 2000, 2004a). Whilst Putnam's work has been very influential with policy makers, his writing on social capital in many respects reflects a narrower view than Bourdieu and other writers (Berger-Schmitt and Noll 2000).

We have seen an explosion of academic work on social capital since 1993,⁴ and it has been widely used by policy makers as a rationale for policies and programs (Mayer 2003). From all this work, there are two related strands of understanding about social capital which concern social processes and outcomes. Firstly, social capital refers to social processes, the 'networks, together with shared norms, values and understandings which facilitate cooperation within or among groups', as used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics following a definition of the OECD (ABS 2004a: 2). In essence, this is about the importance of factors such as mutual support, reciprocity, trust and obligation which facilitate cooperation between people, the process by which they work together. In many respects, this reading of social capital

⁴ Halpern (2004) tracked the growth in scholarly articles on social capital between 1984 and 2003, showing their exponential growth following publication of Putnam's (1993) work.

can be linked back to Durkheim's ideas about trust, reciprocity and interdependence as functional necessities. Secondly, social capital involves individuals contributing to, and accessing, resources which are embedded in social networks, including social, economic, cultural, physical, knowledge and spiritual resources (following Bourdieu 1986). This strand of thinking is more about outcomes – the extent to which people are able to augment their own personal resources (human capital) through access to resources found in social networks. Stone (2001) suggests that there is also another dimension of social capital beyond processes and outcomes: the structure of networks in terms of size, type and membership.

A key development in this work has been an appreciation that different types of social networks produce different types of social capital (Narayan 1999, Woolcock 2000). These can be summarised as: informal personal networks involving strong ties with immediate family, friends and neighbours ('bonding' social capital); more distant and diverse networks involving weaker and less intensive ties outside of close personal networks ('bridging' social capital); and civic engagement ('linking' social capital) with more formal institutions such as local government and voluntary organisations (see also Putnam 1995, Li et al. 2003). Policy makers have used these three types of social capital as rationale for the development of policies and programs to strengthen the capacities of families and local neighbourhoods (bonding social capital), to connect 'isolated' groups or neighbourhoods with groups or people living in other neighbourhoods (bridging social capital) and to connect people with institutions such as work and education and training (linking social capital).

Ideas about the importance of each of these three types have influenced policy and research in Australia. For example, Black and Hughes (2001: 3-4) conceptualised community strengths as including nature capital, produced economic capital, human capital and social/institutional capital, with a particular emphasis on the latter. Considering social/institutional capital, the authors distinguish between what they describe as the *patterns* of social processes, and the *quality* of social processes – an approach which emphasises the importance of both the quantity and quality of relationships within a given community. This distinction is consistent with much social capital and related research which emphasises both the quantity (objective network characteristics) and quality (subjective self-report, perceptions) of relationships (Onyx and Bullen 2001, Narayan 1999, Stone 2001). Aspects of the quality of social processes which the authors describe include trust and trustworthiness, altruism and reciprocity, shared norms, ideals and purposes, a sense of community, tolerance of diversity and provision of equality of opportunity, as well as attitudes of self-reliance (capability) (Black and Hughes 2001: 4-5).

Social capital then shares some features with social cohesion to the extent that it focuses on people and the linkages between them. Both concepts emphasise common values, trust, norms and reciprocity which are associated with social connectedness and social networks. Some policy makers, and policy makers in some countries, have preferred to use social capital because it adapts a concept already familiar to policy makers in an era of neo-liberalism; the idea of capital in which individuals and governments can invest and subsequently draw upon. Thus Ostrom (1997: 172), in work for the World Bank, suggests that the various forms of capital (physical, financial, human and social) are complementary in terms of producing good social and economic outcomes. In other words, policy makers must invest in social capital as well as other forms or capital. A further strand in this argument has been that policy makers should act to promote high levels of social capital to ensure economic development (following McCracken 1998, Knack and Keefer 1997). In other words, high levels of social capital are not a consequence of economic development, but provide the foundation stone for it to occur.

The problem for policy makers is that high levels of social capital associated with robust social networks may have negative as well as virtuous aspects. In the Introduction, we referred to some well known examples of civil unrest associated with social housing estates. It is possible that strong networks based on family, friendship or neighbourhood can be a form of defence and protection against others, particularly those in authority such as the police (Portes 1998). Such strong networks may provide essential support to vulnerable people, on the one hand, or, on the other, develop into protective mechanisms such as vigilante groups which are usually seen as a threat to social order, sometimes called the 'dark side' of social capital. It is also possible that strongly defensive personal networks of 'people under siege' indicate a lack of trust in others, either generally or more specifically in institutions. Examples of civil unrest have occurred in areas where there are clusters of people who are economically marginalised and socially disadvantaged, raising questions about the processes of marginalisation that cannot be addressed using a social capital lens.

To grapple with some of these broader issues, policy makers have used a third concept, 'social exclusion', to identify groups who appear to be excluded from mainstream society and the processes by which they are excluded. The concept originated in France in the 1970s to refer to people on the margins of society who were excluded from the social insurance system (Silver 1994), and was broadened to refer to concerns that high levels of unemployment and homelessness were leading to a 'dual society' which risked undermining social cohesion (Blanc 1998). As with social capital and social cohesion, there has been an enormous literature on social exclusion since the early 1990s (e.g. Levitas 2005) which is beyond the scope of the current paper. Arthurson and Jacobs (2003: 5) argue that social exclusion has two interconnected features: it is a dynamic concept that focuses on the processes that cause inequality, and it refers to a multi-dimensional cluster of attributes.

The first of these features has been emphasised by the European Commission which has used the concept of social exclusion to re-brand its anti-poverty programs as a new approach to entrenched problems of poverty and social disadvantage. It emphasises an inclusive labour market as a means of promoting social cohesion, seeing 'being in employment as by far the most effective way of avoiding the risk of poverty and social exclusion' (European Commission 2004: 24). Exclusion from the labour market has direct financial effects but also entails exclusion from the networks established through work which may provide a sense of social solidarity and identity, thereby weakening social cohesion. The significance of the European Commission's use of social exclusion is that it recognises that economic disengagement can reduce the capacity of people to become involved in social networks and hence contribute to, and access, social capital.

The approach to social exclusion developed by the Blair government in the UK has had the most influence on public policy in Australia. This emphasises the second feature of social exclusion, its multi-dimensionality. The government's much-quoted definition of social exclusion as 'a shorthand label for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown' (Social Exclusion Unit 1998a: 1) clearly emphasises this multi-dimensionality. Social exclusion defined in this way encompasses some 'wicked' social problems which governments find difficult to deal with, such as homelessness, teen pregnancies, school truancy, suicide and youth unemployment, which appear to have multiple causation and which require 'joined up' solutions.

It should be noted that the Blair government's use of social exclusion has been critiqued as moving away from a broader concern with inequalities and the 'social rights' of citizenship to a narrower concern with social disadvantage and a desire to 'reintegrate' disadvantaged people into mainstream society. Levitas (2005: 28) argues that there have been three different discourses about social exclusion in the UK, with the government moving from one based on redistribution of resources to address inequalities to an inconsistent combination of two other discourses: a 'moral underclass' explanation of social problems, intertwined with a discourse based on the need for social integration.

In the UK, as elsewhere in Europe, there has also been a strong focus on the spatial consequences of social exclusion which has underpinned a national strategy on neighbourhood renewal, with many of the designated areas centred on public housing estates. This has had some influence on state and territory governments in Australia in the development of renewal strategies for public housing estates where there are increasing concentrations of people with multiple disadvantages.

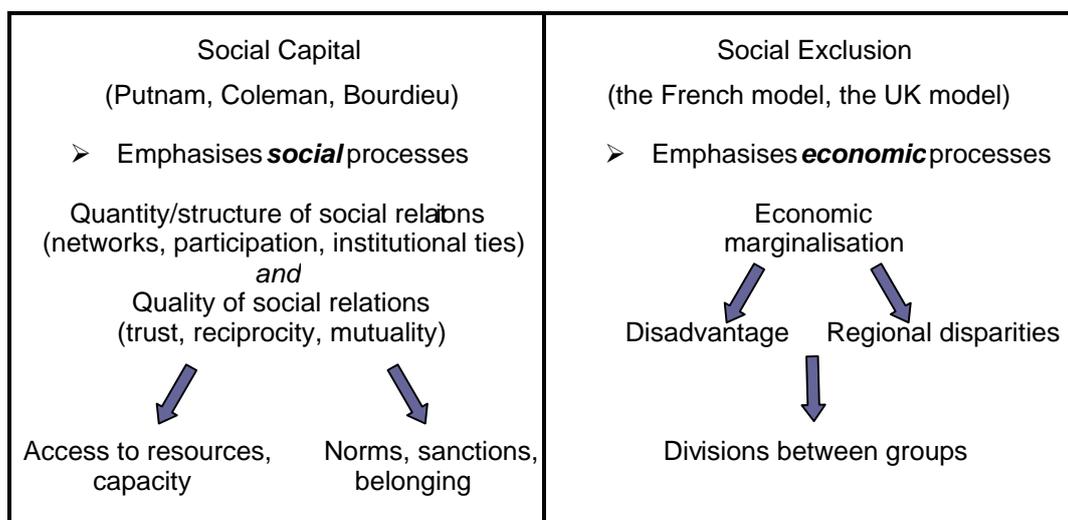
The South Australian government has also developed a Social Inclusion Initiative, following the Scottish use of terminology, which draws specifically on the concept of social exclusion as used in the UK to refer to social problems which by definition are often multi-dimensional and connected:

The Government's Social Inclusion Initiative is the cornerstone of a different way of tackling pressing social issues. It recognises that issues such as poor health, homelessness, crime rates and poverty are all interconnected and their causes stem from social exclusion (Premier of South Australia, cited in Social Inclusion Board 2005: 1).

The initiative has the specific objectives (amongst several) of reducing homelessness and improving access to services in areas with a concentration of disadvantaged households which are already the focus of urban renewal programs of the type referred to above. In a policy sense, this is closer to some of the European work (including the UK) than the other jurisdictions.

Thus, unlike social capital, which is primarily about people and the ways in which they relate together, social exclusion emphasises structures and the ways in which these impact on people. Figure 2 sums up some of the differences between the two concepts. It should be said that this is not a black and white distinction, but rather a matter of emphasis.

Figure 2: The concepts of social capital and social exclusion



Having reviewed the extensive academic and policy literature, we are of the view that, while social capital and social exclusion provide valuable insights to guide policy making, social cohesion is a broader concept which incorporates elements of both, a view supported by research for the European Commission:

The concept of social cohesion incorporates mainly two goal dimensions of societal development which may be related to each other but can be analytically distinguished. The first dimension concerns the reduction of disparities, inequalities, breaks and cleavages which have also been denoted as fault lines. The concept of social exclusion is covered by this dimension. The second dimension embraces all aspects which aim at strengthening social connections, ties and commitments to a community. This dimension includes the concept of social capital (Berger-Schmitt and Noll 2000: 15).

Putnam (2004b: 3) concurs with this. He sees social capital – networks and norms of reciprocity and trust – as a narrower and more tightly defined concept that calls attention to one crucial ingredient of social cohesion seen as ‘a just, equitable, tolerant and well integrated society’. He identifies a number of other factors that are relevant to social cohesion such as an effective welfare state and anti-discrimination policies. He concludes that social capital is best seen as an intermediate policy target that could contribute in moving towards a broader objective of social cohesion.

A socially cohesive society is one which offers opportunities to all its members to be included economically, socially and politically, and which enables and supports social connections between people. Social cohesion is, however, more than the sum of aspects of social capital and social exclusion; there is also arguably a third element which is primarily cultural which we discuss below.

3.4 The dimensions of social cohesion

While there are differences between the ways in which the social cohesion concept is both conceptualised and operationalised in different policy documents and research, and across different national and cultural contexts, common to much contemporary policy and research work is the notion that social cohesion is *multi-dimensional*. Our

review of the policy literature found a degree of agreement around two dimensions of social cohesion, strengthening social connectedness and reducing differences, cleavages and inequalities between groups of people and people living in different geographical areas.

Of these dimensions of social cohesion, Berger-Schmitt and Noll (2000: 15, 47) in their work for the European Commission saw the dimension of reducing disparities and cleavages as being most directly relevant to housing policy. Governments can develop policies to reduce regional differences in housing conditions, reduce inequalities in access to housing for people with different incomes or living with a disability, and address social exclusion on the basis of homelessness and inadequate housing. Housing is also seen more broadly as crucial to improving 'objective living conditions', a view shared by the Australian Institute for Health and Welfare in its conceptualisation of the links between social cohesion and welfare (AIHW 2005).

A third dimension of social cohesion emphasising shared values, common purpose and shared identity was evident in some of the work, although sometimes subsumed under the dimension of social connectedness. Our review indicates that this dimension refers to norms underlying the 'ties that bind' people and groups of people together, and which include values, sense of common purpose, shared identity and tolerance of diversity, norms that can be recognised as an explicit, cultural dimension of the social cohesion concept. The inclusion of this third dimension accords with some of the work undertaken in Canada in the late 1990s (e.g. O'Connor 1998, Woolley 1998) which has influenced recent thinking about social cohesion. There is also some dissent from this view, with Hong Kong researchers Chan et al. (2006: 292) arguing that social cohesion does not necessarily require or imply values such as tolerance or respect for diversity.

There are two further pieces of research that have been very influential. The first is also from Canada and combines five dimensions of social cohesion identified by Jenson (1998) with an additional one (equality/inequality) from Bernard (1999). Rajulton et al. (2003) suggest that these can be grouped into three domains: the economic, political and sociocultural. Within each there are specific dimensions of social cohesion, which are described as 'formal' and 'substantial', as in Table 1. In this schema, the inclusion/exclusion dimension refers to opportunities to participate in the economy and the extent of economic marginalisation, whilst equality/inequality is about material conditions. Legitimacy/illegitimacy refers to how well institutions represent all of the people, and participation/passivity relates citizen participation in governance and politics. Recognition/rejection refers to institutions and practices that support pluralism or undermine it, whilst belonging/isolation relates to shared values and a sense of being part of a community (Rajulton et al. 2003: 2). The work does not speculate on the possible links between housing policy and social cohesion.

Table 1: The Jenson/Bernard domains of social cohesion

Domain	Formal dimensions	Substantial dimensions
Economic	Inclusion/Exclusion	Equality/Inequality
Political	Legitimacy/Illegitimacy	Participation/Passivity
Sociocultural	Recognition/Rejection	Belonging/Isolation

Source: Rajulton et al. (2003: 2) adapted from Jenson (1998) and Bernard (1999)

The Jenson/Bernard articulation of the dimensions of social cohesion has been used widely, including in New Zealand, where the government has used these dimensions to articulate what social cohesion might look like in a society which is becoming more culturally diverse⁵ (Spoonley et al. 2005: 98-9). A key advantage of the Jenson/Bernard dimensions is that they provide guidance on what both high and low levels of social cohesion might look like. They have also been used successfully as a framework for developing indicators of social cohesion by Rajulton et al. (2003), who used data from the (Canadian) National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating to measure levels of social cohesion against these various dimensions and the degree of association between them.

The other influential attempt to tease out the dimensions of social cohesion comes from the UK in two papers by Kearns and Forrest (2000) and Forrest and Kearns (2001) in which five 'domains' of social cohesion are identified, as shown in Table 2. Three of these are similar to those discussed above ('common values and a civic culture', 'social solidarity and reductions in wealth disparities' and 'social networks and social capital'). Two additional dimensions are cited, however, both of which are potentially important to housing policy makers, namely, 'social order and social control' and 'place attachment and identity'.

Table 2: Forrest and Kearns' domains of social cohesion

Domains of social cohesion	Description
Common values and a civic culture	Common aims and objectives; common moral principles and codes of behaviour' support for political institutions and participation in politics
Social order and social control	Absence of general conflict and threats to existing order; absence of incivility; effective informal social control; tolerance; respect for difference; intergroup co-operation
Social solidarity and reduction in wealth disparities	Harmonious economic and social development and common standards; redistribution of public finances and of opportunities; equal access to services and welfare benefits; ready acknowledgement of social obligations and willingness to assist others
Social networks and social capital	High degree of social interaction within communities and families; civic engagement and associational activity; easy resolution of collective action problems
Place attachment and identity	Strong attachment to place; intertwining of personal and place identity

Source: Forrest and Kearns (2001: 2129)

Housing policy may be directly related to 'social order and social control' as the following examples indicate. Governments may choose to counter the effects of housing markets in segregating households by socioeconomic status by maintaining or increasing the supply of 'affordable housing' in high price areas or they may decide to use housing assistance of various types to reinforce market effects and concentrate households with multiple disadvantages in contained areas, in either case as a means of securing social order. They may promote widespread home ownership to give households a stake in their neighbourhood as a means of contributing to social order and/or encourage rental arrangements to facilitate a

⁵ The New Zealand definition omits the dimension added by Bernard (1999) of equality/inequality.

mobile and flexible workforce. Social housing providers may have policies that are specifically aimed at maintaining social order, such as anti-social behaviour strategies, 'swapping' housing units assigned to particular groups or specific uses, and allocations policies with a social control focus, such as local allocations plans that aim at reducing the number of families with teenagers on an estate.

There is also an argument that the location and type of social housing has a strong social control element. For example, the size of dwellings (generally no more than four bedrooms) determines the 'acceptable' size and composition of households offered social housing, which has the effect of splitting up some Indigenous and migrant/refugee extended families into 'manageable' units (Alexander 2005). Similarly, location may have social control objectives, whether this is the concentration of low income households in particular geographic areas that can be the subject of particular scrutiny by the police and related agencies, or strategies of social or tenure mix in redevelopment projects with the aim of introducing 'approved' life styles associated with higher income people, particularly home owners. In the US, McDonnell (1997) found that the greater the size of the African-American population, the more likely a city is to support the containment of this population in public housing. Where the percentage of African-Americans is lower, more use is made of housing vouchers which enable movement to lower-poverty areas because they are less threatening to suburban communities.⁶

Social housing management often explicitly regulates behaviours, for example, through prohibition of home working, restrictions on pet ownership and controls over taking in boarders and lodgers. Similarly, the management of 'anti-social behaviour' is explicitly aimed at social control. In the UK, where a general system of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders has been in place since 1998, this was seen largely as providing another tool for local authority housing managers to control such behaviour on public housing estates (Prior et al. 2006). In the US there is more explicit regulation of the behaviours of social housing tenants than in Australia, with clauses in tenancy agreements for public housing requiring that tenants agree to behave in certain ways or lose their housing, such as not using illegal substances or agreeing to participate in 'welfare to work' programs (Kleit and Rohe 2005).

The other 'new' dimension of social cohesion in the Forrest/Kearns work is place attachment and identity, encompassing the idea of intertwining personal and place identity. Kearns and Forrest (2000: 1001) highlight a general presumption that a sense of belonging and identity based on attachment to place contributes to social cohesion 'through their positive effects upon such things as common values and norms and a willingness to participate in social networks and build social capital'. This dimension of social cohesion potentially has significant implications for housing policy makers. It could be argued, for example, that policies based on tight targeting of social housing and allocation of households to properties within a broad area to meet immediate housing needs runs the danger of placing vulnerable households in unfamiliar environments. In these environments, people may feel little sense of belonging or attachment to place, which may weaken social relations in the area and contribute to a lack of social cohesion. Similarly, policies that promote turnover in social housing to make best use of a scarce resource may also have the effect of

⁶ The study found that this held true even when holding levels of poverty constant and including other controls (McDonnell 1997: 241). The findings suggest that in cities where there is a high percentage of poor African-American households, private developers and the real estate industry prefer to concentrate them in contained geographic areas. Housing vouchers, which provide the prospect of dispersal, are seen as a threat to real estate and rental housing market profitability elsewhere, even though some individual landlords profit financially.

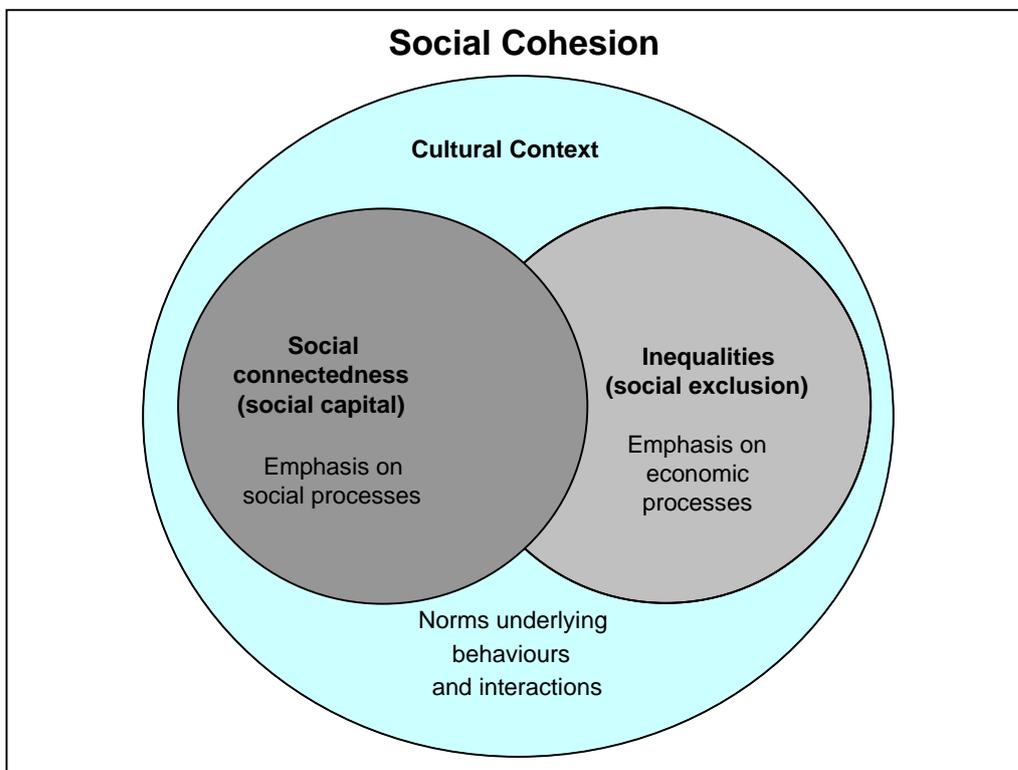
decreasing residential stability and impact adversely on belonging, place attachment and identity in ways that help weaken social cohesion.

Forrest and Kearns point out, however, that social cohesion which draws heavily on a strong attachment to place and a combining of personal and place identity also has its drawbacks. People may retreat into small and closed communities with strong internal bonds and solidarity but with limited links with other people and places. Such enclosed communities may make societal level cohesion more difficult to achieve and also lock their residents out of access to many types of resources which are not available within that community, thus compounding economic marginalisation and social disadvantage (Kearns and Forrest 2000: 1001-2).

Housing policy makers might consider whether current policies and programs exacerbate this effect, concentrating already disadvantaged households into enclosed and inward-looking communities in which there is little connection with the broader society, or whether their policies enable households to link across small local communities and/or have the choice of moving to other areas. The Forrest/Kearns work on social cohesion was quoted verbatim by the Independent Review Team (2001: 13-14) in the UK following the civil disturbances in the northern cities of Bradford, Burnley and Oldham in 2001, where the concern was about communities living parallel lives with little connection with each other in a way that was perceived as a threat to societal level social cohesion.

Our review indicates that there is broad, general agreement from the policy literature that social cohesion is multi-dimensional, although the number and categorisation of dimensions and the emphasis on particular dimensions does vary. For the purposes of our research, we view social cohesion schematically as illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Dimensions of social cohesion, showing social, economic and cultural domains



3.5 Scales of social cohesion

In addition to being multi-dimensional, social cohesion exists or operates at different social scales. Firstly, there are those which Csazny (2002: 3-4) describes as macro and micro levels:

- A *macro* level of cohesion is based on a particular mix of state, market and civil society regulating mechanisms which form the basic conditions for the solution of the social problems of the production and distribution of goods and services;
- A *micro* level of integration and cohesion on which the individual is integrated in a network of personal interactions within the framework of neighbourhood, friendship, family, membership, educational and work relationships.

These two levels themselves represent a simplification of the levels which can occur.⁷ The important point is that whilst they are analytically distinguished, they are not independent of each other: what happens at one level will affect another. For example, if there is too much fragmentation between state, market and parts of civil society, micro level cohesion may be jeopardised. Conversely, some fragmentation is necessary at the macro level to facilitate micro level networks and activity.

Black and Hughes (2001: 146) also reached the conclusion that communities work in various ways and that 'while there is a level at which all communities need social interaction in which there are qualities of trust, reciprocity and tolerance, and all communities need leadership, the ways in which these qualities are developed within communities and the forms of expression they take will vary greatly from one community to another'. In other words, there is no single template for governments to adopt. Similarly, McCracken (1998), who has been influential in guiding the usage of the concept in Canadian policy research, describes social cohesion as a characteristic of society concerned with the connections and relations between societal units such as individuals, groups, associations and/or territorial units. As well as the connections between each of these, each unit itself represents a level at which social cohesion might be considered.

Secondly, these different social scales are likely to have a distinct spatial basis, as highlighted by Kearns and Forrest (2000: 1002-13) who distinguish between three spatial scales: national or inter-urban, city or city-region, and neighbourhood. Social cohesion may be assessed at any or each of these scales, and policies aimed at increasing social cohesion, both directly or indirectly, will have a different focus at each and will be the responsibility of different levels of governance.

Applying this logic to housing-related issues or policy concerns, at a macro level, housing policy might both reflect greater or lesser social cohesion within a society and contribute to it. For example, rates of home ownership, or the capacity of groups to gain access to home ownership in equal percentages, can indicate how equitable and inclusive a country such as Australia is. Patterns of home ownership themselves might indicate levels of residential stability, likelihood of participation in public life and a stronger or weaker sense of community cooperation and trust across the population as a whole or among particular groups.

⁷ Despite his focus on macro and micro levels of integration, Csazny himself notes that this is a false binary. In reality, there are myriad levels and processes that exist between these levels of social interaction.

Housing policy might be geared to increasing the macro level of social cohesion, for example, to enable groups with lower rates of home ownership to achieve this if they wish to do so, such as specific programs for Indigenous households or those from particular cultural backgrounds. In another example, policies might be developed to help address regional disparities in access to decent and affordable housing, including home ownership. Kearns and Forrest (2000: 1003) suggest that, in addressing social cohesion at the macro scale, governments are most likely to focus on common values and social solidarity and wealth disparities. In Australia, these are epitomised by presenting home ownership as 'The Great Australian Dream' and by attempts from time to time to link housing policy with policy on regional development. To avoid confusion, we refer to this scale of social cohesion henceforth as 'societal cohesion'.

At a meso (or middle) level, we can look at social cohesion at the scale of the town or city, sometimes including its hinterland. Kearns and Forrest (2000: 1006) suggest that the dimensions which are most often addressed at this scale relate to the maintenance of social order, particularly social control in urban centres, improvement of civic culture and development of a strong local identity and attachment to place. The Independent Review Team (2001: 70), using the work of Kearns and Forrest, referred to this as 'community cohesion' which they indicated was about 'helping micro communities to gel or mesh into an integrated whole'. The main threat to this type of cohesion, at least in the aftermath of well publicised civil disturbances, was seen as residential segregation, particularly where based on ethnicity. The housing system was considered to have played a part in this, including the 'flight' of home owners from these areas due to fears about their property values and general environment. In some cases, the Independent Review Team considered that housing policies had exacerbated this segregation, for example, through discriminatory allocation policies in social housing.

In an Australian context, we have seen similar fears about a lessening of social control in urban areas stemming from some of the civil disturbances mentioned in the Introduction, although governance of towns and cities is considerably more fragmented than in the UK. Thus housing policies that may impact on the social order, civic culture and place attachment dimensions of social cohesion are the responsibility of state governments, sometimes in partnership with local governments and others. Some of the possible areas where housing policy might assist are in ameliorating social-spatial polarisation brought about through market forces, for example, through development of social housing in high amenity areas, urban regeneration projects which provide for a mix of housing affordable to different income groups, and use of planning powers to facilitate affordable housing in a range of different areas.

While social cohesion can be conceptualised at various scales, it is the neighbourhood which has been the focus of much recent policy and research attention, particularly with regard to housing. Rajulton et al. (2003) consider social relations at a neighbourhood level and argue that this level of measurement of social cohesion is appropriate since 'communities are where people live, share, and engage in day-to-day activities' (Rajulton et al. 2003: 3). Social cohesion at a micro level takes place around individual household units and includes family life, household affairs and neighbourhood or local community relations. Kearns and Forrest (2000: 1010) suggest that in the UK the focus at this level has been on social networks/ social capital, and on social order and control, in particular tackling crime and anti-social behaviour in disadvantaged areas. We examine this further in the next chapter.

3.6 Social cohesion as a public policy concept: An assessment

Social cohesion has become an increasingly important concept in public policy and one that governments have invoked in various countries and in a range of circumstances. As we have seen, it is a concept which is hard to define precisely, to operationalise, and to measure progress towards its achievement. In part, this is because interest often stems from a generalised fear that social cohesion is weakening, rather than an attempt to identify what a socially cohesive society would look like in any detail and how public policy might contribute to this (Jenson 1998).

Despite these difficulties, social cohesion has increasingly been seen in policy and research terms as having significant value for understanding both the micro and macro processes within a society within a single framework, as well as accounting for social and economic conditions. Understanding social cohesion in this way provides an opportunity for looking at some of the 'big picture' issues, including those of interest to housing policy makers, as well as issues at other levels, such as the processes that lead to some neighbourhoods becoming disadvantaged.

The latest wave of interest in social cohesion has occurred in the context of attempts to rethink the relationships between markets, governments and what is variously referred to as 'civil society' or 'community' which comprises other types of social relationships. Social cohesion (encompassing social capital) has been important in drawing attention to the benefits that cooperative social relationships can deliver for individuals, families and communities, and has been influential in countries such as Australia and the US where neo-liberal ideas remain dominant. Social cohesion (encompassing social exclusion) has been useful as a framing concept for thinking through the complexity of policy issues, in particular, a connection between economic and social inequalities, and in dealing with interactivity and complexity. It has been used in this way in European institutions and in the UK when single focus policies appear not to work as well as they should. Social cohesion has also been of value in promoting discussion about cultural values and political ideas about ensuring equality of opportunity, tolerating diversity and managing conflict in multicultural societies such as Canada (Beauvais and Jenson 2002). It provides an over-arching framework, and a language, for discussing social progress and the ways in which public policy can contribute to this.

The chapter has also indicated some of the possible problems in using social cohesion as a policy concept. It is ambiguous in political terms and can be used by politicians from a variety of standpoints, although the policy literature indicates a fear that it will be 'hijacked' by populist conservatives in ways that reduce tolerance of different cultural backgrounds and lifestyles and undermine the capacity of democratic institutions to deal with differences and to manage conflict. There is a danger that emphasis on the cultural dimension of social cohesion, shared values and commitment to community draws attention from other ways of looking at the cleavages and differences, such as social justice, inequality and discrimination⁸ (Jenson 1998, Beauvais and Jenson 2002). A final point of reservation in the literature is that an emphasis on social cohesion may deflect attention from the power relations that may create, maintain or extend inequalities.

In Chapter 4, we explore how various aspects of housing and housing assistance relate to social cohesion, before considering how to measure these relationships in Chapter 5.

⁸ This is also a criticism that has been made of the social capital concept (Fine 2001).

4 HOUSING, HOUSING ASSISTANCE AND SOCIAL COHESION: AN EXPLORATION

In this chapter, we explore some of the potential linkages between housing, housing assistance and social cohesion based on a review of relevant research from Australia and overseas. Specific research in these linkages has been limited, with the exception of a long and rich tradition of research into neighbourhoods within housing and urban studies. It is not possible to present a fully comprehensive and exhaustive review of these linkages; our purpose here is to consider the insights offered by sometimes disparate research strands and to identify variables worthy of investigation. It is also worth noting that our review deals specifically with a 'housing' subset of a larger literature about changing discourses of welfare, particularly a European literature about social inclusion, social connectedness, citizenship and human rights, which is beyond the scope of this AHURI funded study.

4.1 Housing systems and social cohesion

There are very few studies which directly address questions about the relationship between housing systems more broadly and social cohesion.⁹ One such pioneering study is 'The Importance of Housing Systems in Safeguarding Social Cohesion in Europe' or SOCOHO project, which conceptualises the role that the housing system plays in relation to other systems, such as labour markets, in weakening or strengthening macro level societal cohesion and gives some examples as follows. The housing system can increase or compensate for deficits in cohesion which are grounded in other components of the social structure. Housing structures which result in low housing costs for low income households can work directly against tendencies towards economic exclusion. Those which favour the formation of social cohesion at the lowest level of interaction (neighbourhoods) may compensate for weak societal level cohesion. Those which improve opportunities for housing mobility thereby increase the social and economic flexibility of households and their ability to be included in economy and society (Czasny 2002: 13-14, 2004).

Consideration of the role of housing systems in weakening or strengthening social cohesion is in its infancy in Australia. Berry (2003: 413) asserts that 'a lack of affordable housing has negative consequences for the competitiveness and efficiency of the Australian economy and for the maintenance of social cohesion in society'. He argues that low rates of housing affordability have led to the residualisation of many low income earners, including the working poor, with low income private tenants most severely affected. The consequences of this include: increasing social segregation, resulting in the creation of homogenous enclaves of rich and poor in metropolitan areas; greater socioeconomic divisions between city and country; and a vicious cycle of multiple disadvantage in marginalised areas, leading to social exclusion and increased intergenerational unemployment and disengagement (Berry 2003: 414).

Berry identifies several mechanisms for the link between low rates of affordable housing and social cohesion. These include a process of decline and segregation whereby low income unemployed residents remain trapped in suburbs which become increasingly undesirable, as other residents move out. In a related process, Berry (2003: 417) suggests the lack of social cohesion that accompanies such processes leads to a further decline in economic investment and activity in those same areas,

⁹ Those that do, refer mainly to the inequalities dimension of social cohesion, treating aspects of housing as indicators of inequalities without further exploration of how housing and social cohesion interact (see Chapter 5).

leading to further exclusion and fragmentation. He also points to research indicating the complex web of social problems that often relate to insecure housing, such as increased risk of homelessness, substance abuse and mental illness, as well as poorer educational and employment outcomes for those in housing difficulty. Ultimately, he argues, the cost is borne not only by individuals and families, but also by communities through lack of cohesion and by governments through the need for greater fiscal intervention.

Understanding the linkages between housing systems and social cohesion also involves the private housing sector which determines the size, type, cost and location of most housing in Australia and similar countries, but there are even fewer attempts to consider how this sector reflects, or affects, levels of social cohesion. An exception is a study in central Scotland which found that new private house building can play a significant role in promoting competition and economic vibrancy within cities, but that the social cohesion outcomes for residents are mixed. Bramley and Morgan (2003: 468) found that private estate schemes often produce areas that are 'not very "mixed and balanced"' and could not be said to promote integration very much'. In terms of cohesion, they focus in particular upon the two indicators of neighbourhood attachment and its corollary, residential mobility.

These few examples highlight how little we know about the linkages between housing systems and broader economic and social structures in ways that may affect social cohesion at different scales. As well as highlighting the complexity of potential interactions between housing, place and social cohesion, they indicate that some of the housing variables that are of interest in these relationships are tenure, residential mobility, attachment to neighbourhood, affordability and location.

4.2 Housing, housing assistance and the inequalities dimension of social cohesion

Where housing has been considered in policy debates about social cohesion, this has usually been in the context of the inequalities dimension of social cohesion (e.g. Somerville 1998, Arthurson and Jacobs 2003). At a policy level, for example, the Canadian government, which has been a leader in considering social cohesion, has given only limited attention to housing and housing assistance¹⁰ and this has centred on lack of access to adequate housing and homelessness as an extreme form of social exclusion and points to the housing stress faced by vulnerable groups such as Aboriginal peoples, lone parents, older renters and recent migrants (Government of Canada Policy Research Initiative 2005: 8-12).

4.2.1 Poverty and homelessness

We have known for the last 30 years that there is a relationship between housing tenure and poverty in Australia, such that the poorest households are found predominantly in private rental housing and social housing, as identified in key federal government inquiries, notably the Commission of Inquiry into Poverty (1975) and the National Housing Strategy (1991). Indeed, the primary rationale for government housing assistance, whether this is public housing, community housing or rent assistance for private renters, is its contribution to addressing the problem of poverty which persists in an increasingly affluent society. Equally, government

¹⁰ This reflects the Canadian federal government's withdrawal from housing assistance programs from the early 1990s. Only recently has the federal government re-entered this area, with funding for programs aimed at addressing homelessness and negotiation of Affordable Housing Agreements with the provinces and territories that commit the federal government to some capital funding (Hulse 2003).

support for home ownership has been premised on the belief that this tenure ensures social inclusion and insurance against economic hardship, particularly in old age (Castles 1998). The homelessness strategies of various levels of government are aimed at the most extreme level of poverty. There have been many studies that seek to quantify poverty, some of which give attention to housing, but fewer that explore the lived experiences of poor people, such as Peel (2003) who interviewed residents of three disadvantaged areas largely associated with older public housing estates.

We saw in the previous chapter that social exclusion arguably has provided a more complex reading of an older concern with poverty. It draws attention to the multi-dimensionality of disadvantage, including disparities between groups of people and areas, as well as to the processes that contribute to, and sustain, disadvantage. From this perspective, homelessness can be seen as the most extreme form of social exclusion. Blanc (1998: 790) makes the point, however, that whilst homelessness is the ultimate indicator of social exclusion in housing terms, the provision of housing assistance does not in and of itself lead to or equal social cohesion. Rather, social cohesion in relation to homelessness also requires a commitment on the part of local communities and institutions to genuine inclusion of all people. Paugam (1995), from a French perspective, conceptualises this relationship as the most extreme point in a cycle of precariousness and ultimate disaffiliation from society. From a similar perspective, poor quality housing is also seen as an indicator of neighbourhood exclusion or 'risk of exclusion' in both UK (Social Exclusion Unit 1998b) and European (Kristensen 1995) policy research.

There is a concern, however, that use of the social cohesion concept by governments as rationale for different approaches to homelessness may focus on social control rather than the reduction of the inequalities dimension of social cohesion, and there may be tension between them which may ultimately have negative rather than positive consequences. For example, a study of the effects of policies and programs to address street homelessness in England argues that, after initially providing housing and other services to 'street homeless' people, the emphasis of government action has become more coercive, with those still on the streets now regarded as an 'anti-social behaviour' problem to be moved on. The authors argue that this change represents a move from mitigating social exclusion to a social control perspective using the rhetoric of social cohesion (Fitzpatrick and Jones 2005: 403-4). Similar concerns have been expressed in Canada (e.g. Beauvais and Jenson 2002).

4.2.2 Processes of social exclusion: The case of neighbourhoods

An advantage of the social exclusion literature is that it moves beyond quantifying poverty and describing its effects. Instead there is a strong argument that structural processes have contributed to social exclusion, including labour market changes, greater polarisation in employment opportunities and incomes, lack of opportunities for Indigenous peoples and those from diverse cultural backgrounds and, in some regional and rural areas, a withdrawal of government and private sector services. Disadvantaged groups and neighbourhoods are seen as a consequence, rather than a cause of, a lack of societal level cohesion. Consideration of the contribution made by housing has examined whether housing market changes in conjunction with labour market changes have combined to reinforce processes of social-spatial polarisation (Murie and Musterd 2004), and whether and how the provision and management of social housing has contributed to the formation of disadvantaged neighbourhoods (Morrison 2003).

Empirical studies, mostly from Europe, have investigated the processes which lead to some neighbourhoods becoming disadvantaged. For example, a study funded by the European Commission (NEHOM or Neighbourhood Housing Models) examined 26 disadvantaged neighbourhoods across Europe and found three aspects which, when intertwined, helped shape neighbourhood dynamics. Firstly, the housing tenure profile determined the ways in which people came to live in an area (market forces or bureaucratic allocations), which affected the commitment of residents to a neighbourhood and their feelings of belonging and empowerment. Secondly, cultural identity and the way in which this was built up on ethnic and age divisions and length of residency affected feelings of solidarity, social identity and consensus within the area. Thirdly, turnover of households affected levels of social engagement, sense of belonging and the overall stability of the area (Morrison 2003: 132).

These findings raise questions for housing policy makers, such as: the effects on social cohesion of bureaucratic allocation systems that may offer little choice or control over housing; largely unspoken questions about policy responses to the concentration of an ethnic group or groups within a neighbourhood as a consequence of either housing market choices and/or allocations systems in social housing; and the ways in which housing assistance might contribute to churning of tenancies which could affect the stability of a neighbourhood.

A further comparative study of the neighbourhood dimension of social exclusion across eleven European cities cautions that neighbourhoods are dynamic places undergoing change. It found that the dynamics of disadvantaged neighbourhoods, which appear in terms of available social and economic indicators to be similar, differ substantially in ways that cannot be explained by location, welfare regimes or economic buoyancy (Murie and Musterd 2004: 1451, 1455). In other words, disadvantaged neighbourhoods differ in terms of their history, economic situation and neighbourhood dynamics, which means that a 'template' approach to area improvement programs is unlikely to be effective. The implication for housing policy makers is that neighbourhood improvement strategies must be based on a detailed understanding of the particular characteristics and dynamics of a disadvantaged neighbourhood in the context of its area or region.

4.2.3 Housing assistance and non-shelter outcomes

There is also a recent strand of research in Australia and elsewhere that links housing and housing assistance with non-shelter outcomes, many of which could be considered to be aspects of social exclusion beyond financial disadvantage (Bridge et al. 2003).

Mullins and Western (2001) in work for AHURI examined the strength of association between tenure and receipt or non-receipt of government housing assistance (which is tenure specific in Australia) with nine non-shelter outcomes. The findings suggest that the socioeconomic profile of households in different tenures differs markedly, such that it is difficult to pinpoint the positive impact of government housing assistance per se. Public housing tenants and low income private renters in receipt of government rent assistance had the poorest non-shelter outcomes in eight of the nine aspects studied (crime, poverty, social exclusion, perceived wellbeing, anomie, health, education and work force participation), although the study could not say whether these groups would have been even worse off if they had not received such housing assistance. However, public housing tenants had the best outcomes in terms of 'community', measured by the number of ties within the local area. The authors assert that the presence of strong communities on public housing estates might well be a product of disadvantage which confines day-to-day living to the local area (Mullins and Western 2001: 4).

In further research for AHURI, Phibbs and Young (2005) interviewed a sample of low income households before and after moving into public housing to investigate whether this change in tenure and conditions affected a number of non-shelter outcomes. The findings indicate that public housing can have a positive impact on the non-financial aspects of disadvantage. Overall, the most striking outcomes were the reduction in parental stress associated with more secure, affordable housing, as well as the relative speed with which children's educational outcomes appeared to improve following the move. Findings about the impact on participation in paid work were, however, more mixed (Phibbs and Young 2005: 3). The linkages between housing, housing assistance and economic participation are currently being explored by an AHURI Collaborative Research Venture (Wood and Ong 2005).

In summary, the three strands of research discussed briefly above appear relevant to explorations of the linkages between housing, housing assistance and the inequalities dimension of social cohesion. A number of variables have been highlighted, including tenure, specific type of housing assistance, length of residence, residential mobility, access to housing through market or bureaucratic mechanisms, and neighbourhood attachment.

4.3 Housing, housing assistance and the social connectedness dimension of social cohesion

Housing and housing assistance also appear to be linked to the social connectedness dimension of social cohesion, although the mechanisms by which this occurs are often not spelt out, with the exception of work on social connectedness in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

4.3.1 Social connectedness and disadvantaged neighbourhoods

Social cohesion is often seen as a 'bottom up' process, in which the social relations of neighbourhoods are the 'building blocks' of social cohesion (Morrison 2003: 116), a perspective that has been given new life by the explosion of interest in social capital discussed in the previous chapter. Using this perspective, disadvantaged neighbourhoods are those which are likely to be characterised by low levels of social capital as expressed in residents having low levels of social interaction with others within and outside the neighbourhood, feelings of isolation and lack of belonging, lack of trust in other people and institutions, and low levels of attachment to place (Forrest and Kearns 2001: 2128). This in turn can set in train a cumulative decline in social capital and hence further disadvantages as described by Morrison (2003: 119):

Networks disrupt and weaken, population turnover erodes familiarity and trust, the community disengages, and there is a general sense of disillusionment. Declining social capital hence results in hostile interaction among the local residents and a general disaffection with local circumstances rather than a willingness to engage in cooperative action with each other. There is an overall lack of qualities of self-help, mutuality and trust.

An alternative view of local social relations in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, as found in the Australian study by Mullins and Western (2001) discussed in the previous section, suggests that there are often strong social networks between family, friends and neighbours as a means of dealing with the practical aspects of disadvantage, exclusion and stigma. In this sense, neighbours and 'neighbouring' may be more important for the poor and elderly who are more tied to location than other groups who may have more diffuse networks across neighbourhoods (Forrest and Kearns 2001: 2130-1). Thus, strong social relations within the neighbourhood may be a response to social exclusion where people find difficulty in establishing or

maintaining other networks or participating more formally for a variety of quite practical reasons, such as lack of mobility associated with ill health or a disability or insufficient income to run a car or use public transport regularly.

On the other hand, as discussed above, strongly defensive personal networks of 'people under siege' may indicate a lack of trust in others, either generally or more specifically in institutions, an area explored by writers on social capital (e.g. Fukuyama 1999). Some of the commentary about the civil disturbances referred to in the Introduction suggests that these have occurred when neighbourhoods become 'defensive', such that residents support each other against 'outsiders', whether surrounding residents or representatives of institutions that symbolise social control, such as the police. This is often portrayed as a threat to social order and social cohesion at the town/city and societal levels. We thus see an apparent paradox in which social networks within disadvantaged neighbourhoods are regarded as a threat to social cohesion because they are seen as both too weak and too strong.

Empirical research suggests that either of these is too simple a picture. To quote two recent examples, a UK study of six different types of neighbourhoods in one city found that people living in the poorest neighbourhoods were no more or less likely to have strong local connections than those in more affluent ones, although residents of the worst-off neighbourhoods were more likely to express feelings of loneliness and isolation, largely because they lacked the material resources to participate in various activities (Middleton et al. 2005: 1735). A study of two disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Victoria with a high percentage of social housing found that residents sometimes had strong ties within the neighbourhood, but they specifically excluded 'no-hopers' or 'ferals' who 'made for vexing neighbours: their tempers were easily aroused, noisy arguments kept people awake at night, and unkept houses and yards were a source of annoyance' (Warr 2005: 297). Empirical research suggests, therefore, that the social relations of neighbourhood are contingent on a range of factors including the history of the neighbourhood and its place in the economy of the surrounding area (Muire and Musterd 2004: 1451).

Of increasing importance is the view that whilst low income people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods may not be distinguishable from higher income people in terms of intra-neighbourhood networks, they have fewer and weaker connections with others outside of the neighbourhood ('bridging' and 'linking' social capital, in the terminology of social capital). According to this view, residents in disadvantaged neighbourhoods are increasingly enclosed within their neighbourhood and disengaged from 'horizontal ties' with people in other neighbourhoods and 'vertical ties' with a cross-section of the population through lack of participation in economic, social and political institutions, for example, through being unemployed (Middleton et al. 2005: 1716). There is a risk, however, that identifying a lack of 'weak ties' with diverse networks merely describes disadvantage, including an imbalance in power relations and a lack of material and other resources, due to social exclusion. Studies of more formal civic participation (e.g. Li et al. 2003, Middleton et al. 2005) support this view, indicating that linking capital in particular is associated with people with higher economic and social status and higher levels of education.

Whilst people living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods may be disconnected from boarder social networks and organisations and economically disengaged, there is also some evidence that the importance of intra-neighbourhood ties is declining, circumstances that create 'perfect conditions for the development of informal and illegal activities as the only perceived option' (Morlicchio 2001, cited in Murie and Musterd 2004: 1449). Such activities may include the 'cash economy' in informal services such as child minding, as well as illegal activities such as dealing in drugs.

Although anecdotes abound among social housing practitioners and residents, there is very little research evidence due to the practical difficulties in conducting research.

Policy makers who view social cohesion as a 'bottom up' process have developed policies and programs that aim at nurturing and 'mending' local social relations so neighbourhood 'building blocks' are in place that would support city and societal level cohesion. In terms of housing policy, these are often area-based approaches such as: tenant and resident participation in neighbourhood activities and, sometimes, decision making; development of strategies to bridge the gap between a social housing estate and surrounding residents, including physical redesign and housing management reforms; and initiatives to link residents of disadvantaged neighbourhoods with institutions such as employer groups and local councils.

Policy makers and researchers have paid little attention to neighbourhoods that are not deemed to be disadvantaged, with the exception of a small but growing literature on 'gated communities' comprising higher income people who live in neighbourhoods bounded by physical and often electronic barriers (Atkinson and Flint 2004, Atkinson and Blandy 2005). Residents of these neighbourhoods are by definition more likely to be connected to the labour market than residents of disadvantaged neighbourhoods, but in terms of social connections may have little contact with others living in their immediate neighbourhood. This type of self-withdrawal into homogenous areas may limit opportunities for local social engagement and the local social networks that contribute to social cohesion, but is not usually seen as a problem for public policy.¹¹

4.3.2 *Other perspectives*

Beyond the studies of disadvantaged neighbourhoods, other types of studies have looked at the linkages between housing, housing assistance and social capital and community strengthening. In an earlier AHURI research project, Hugman and Sotiri (2001) undertook a review of the policy and academic literature to determine the links between housing attributes and social capital. The review was carried out at a time when the social capital concept was closely linked to emerging notions of 'community strengths', at least in Australian government policy, and reflects this policy focus.

From a review of eight case studies from Australia and overseas, four key findings emerged. Firstly, the central importance of participatory practices in housing management and policy development, the implication being that social capital only develops if those who are involved in community issues are also involved in other aspects of community life arising from co-location of residence. In other words, shared life as the basis for social capital must be both social and spatial. Secondly, social capital can develop from the physical regeneration of neighbourhoods: it is a necessary but not sufficient condition in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Thirdly, social relations within a neighbourhood are as important as the physical dimensions of housing in the achievement of stronger social relations, and these are interdependent with housing. Fourthly, social capital alone cannot lead to stronger communities; it must be part of an ongoing system of support from government for community resources and infrastructure (Hugman and Sotiri 2001: 23-4).

In another AHURI project, Farrar et al. (2003) examined the potential impact of community housing on 'community strengthening'. The research sought the views of tenants, housing providers and policy makers, finding that there may be untapped potential within the community housing sector to facilitate social connectedness.

¹¹ Manzi and Smith-Bowers (2005) put forward an alternative view that 'gating' does not necessarily contribute to increased spatial/social segregation which may weaken social cohesion. They argue that it may, on the contrary, foster social cohesion across income and tenure groups by developing collective solutions to issues such as security.

Overall, the study concluded that: there is considerable scope for better linkages between community building initiatives and community housing agencies; and that whilst policy makers accepted the potential role of community housing in contributing to stronger communities, there were some qualifications. Key among these was the small size of community housing relative to the community around it. It was felt community housing could be particularly effective in rural areas and in terms of mitigating exclusion in high price city neighbourhoods.

There is some relevant overseas literature with a housing focus beyond the social relations of disadvantaged neighbourhoods. For example, in a UK study, Perren et al. (2004) investigate the influence of socioeconomic resources, including home ownership, gender and household composition on neighbourly relationships in later life. The study takes a political economy perspective, investigating the extent to which material resources in particular affect neighbouring. The findings generally support the idea that owning one's home increases the levels of neighbourhood interaction in a local area, in this case amongst older residents, although some of the specific findings confounded expectations. Compared with renters, home owners were less likely to speak with their neighbours at least three days a week, but were more likely than renters to have either done a favour for a neighbour in the previous six months (provision of practical support) or to have received a favour from a neighbour in the same period (Perren et al. 2004: 977). Perhaps surprisingly, men were found to have more regular social interaction with neighbours than women, and to have both done and received more neighbourhood favours than women overall.

Phillipson et al. (1999) covered similar ground, finding that long-term residence is a strong predictor of higher levels of neighbourhood support among elderly residents across three local areas in the UK. Results from this study also indicate that neighbourhood interaction is gendered. However, in contrast with Perren et al. (2004), it shows women have a high level of neighbourhood involvement and often also act as 'neighbourhood gatekeepers', particularly in later life.

There has also been some work on the ways in which management of private housing developments may impact on social connectedness and sense of community. In a qualitative study of two planned housing estates on Sydney's south-west fringe, Gwyther (2005) explores the relationship between master planned communities and various aspects of 'community', including social capital. The study involved a three month period of observation of the community development arm of each developer with regard to the estates, as well as a series of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with residents, local government planning officers and planner-developers, supported by a resident survey in each estate (Gwyther 2005: 62).

Results indicate that residents are motivated to live in the estates by perceived threats associated with public housing enclaves, including crime, incivility and consequent effects on property values, the perceived undermining of a 'common way of life' by new non-English-speaking migrant groups, and the 'economic failure' of Sydney's middle-ring suburbs. Other motives include housing as a wealth creation strategy, the security promised by the 'good neighbourhood', and the expectation of certainty and trust produced by a socially compatible, status oriented, like-minded resident population (Gwyther 2005: 65). Gwyther observed differences in community outcomes between the estates. In an estate in a less affluent area, clusters of strong neighbouring were apparent between some proximal neighbours (bonding social capital), although other ties were weak. In the more affluent estate, where social interaction was facilitated through a strong social compact including wider neighbourhood events and rituals, social interaction included network formation among near neighbours, as well as broader social interaction across the estate.

In summary, these rather disparate strands of research, which are relevant to exploration of the linkages between housing, housing assistance and the social connectedness dimension of social cohesion, suggest some possible variables that may be considered in the empirical part of the research: housing type and density, tenure, mobility, as well as housing delivery and housing management practices.

4.4 Housing, housing assistance and the cultural dimension of social cohesion

The third key dimension of social cohesion identified in Chapter 3 referred to the cultural norms and values underlying commonly accepted behaviours and practices. In this regard, one of the tenets of housing policies in Australia and similar countries is that neighbourhood diversity is beneficial in sustaining social cohesion, whilst neighbourhood homogeneity, particularly in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, can pose a threat to social cohesion.

There is a substantial literature on disadvantaged neighbourhoods which indicates that housing policy and housing assistance potentially have important roles in contributing to, or ameliorating, spatially concentrated disadvantage. One feature of such areas is often low housing prices, either because they are kept below market levels in various types of social housing or because they reflect perceptions of the area in terms of stigma, access to employment and services, and availability of amenities. The question for housing policy makers is, then, how to respond to such areas, balancing provision of affordable housing with a concern with social cohesion. Here we examine two concepts that have been at the heart of debates about housing assistance and social cohesion: 'deconcentrating poverty' which has been used as a rationale for housing assistance programs which encourage residential mobility, particularly in the US, and 'social mix' which has been used as a rationale for place based improvement programs, particularly in the UK and Australia.

4.4.1 'Deconcentrating poverty': A question of culture?

The question for housing policy makers is: Does 'concentration' of households in disadvantaged neighbourhoods lead to more adverse outcomes for residents than if they lived in other types of neighbourhood? Most importantly, if so, why does this effect occur; is it about cultural norms that underlie behaviours or is it about a compounding of material disadvantages and lack of opportunities? To what extent do either or both of these weaken social cohesion?

In the US there has been extensive debate about, and research into, the 'area effects' thesis which proposes that living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods is strongly associated not only with adverse outcomes for individuals and families but also poses a threat to social order. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, there were heated policy debates about the spatial concentration of poverty in certain inner city neighbourhoods, in which the controversial term 'urban underclass' was coined to refer to people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods who engaged in behaviours which were seen as a threat to broader society (e.g. Auletta 1982). The behaviours were those which were 'at variance with those of mainstream America (such as joblessness, welfare dependency, unwed parenting, criminal or uncivil behaviour, and dropping out of high school)' (Ricketts and Sawhill 1988: 317). The 'underclass' argument was essentially about African-Americans living in urban 'ghettos', and expressed a fear that a lack of positive role models meant that disapproved behaviours would spread to children and teenagers, posing a long-term threat to social order and social cohesion (Glasgow 1980).

A number of policies were introduced to address the 'cultural problem' of the 'urban underclass', including tax incentives designed to 'make work pay', changes to the welfare system that strictly limited duration on benefits and required many people to find paid, work and a substantial reconfiguration of housing policies to 'deconcentrate' its members. Housing policies that have been designed to effect residential mobility include provision of housing choice vouchers, sometimes allied with counselling and other programs, to encourage low income people to move to lower-poverty areas (Jargowsky and Yang 2006: 67). This change in policy focus was accompanied by extensive research into the effects of residential mobility for low income households in the US (reviewed in Ellen and Turner 1997, Turner and Williams 1998). Many studies documented improved outcomes for those who move to lower-poverty neighbourhoods, including children's schooling, although whether this is due to the positive effect of higher income role models on the behaviours of residents in the new neighbourhood or some other factor, such as better resourced schools, is less clear.

A recent review of the effects of this combination of economic, welfare and housing policies to deconcentrate poverty argues that 'the changes experienced in inner city neighbourhoods are nothing short of profound' (Jargowsky and Yang 2006: 67), with a sharp drop in areas of concentrated poverty. However, controversy about the area effects thesis remains. Some critics see structural economic factors as much more important than cultural ones (e.g. Jargowsky 1997). It is also unclear whether there is a critical level of concentration of poor households before area effects come into play (Galster et al. 2000). This is an important question raised, using different terminology, by people living near sites which are designated for social housing, and one which governments struggle to answer.

Thus the strategy of using housing policies to move poor households out of disadvantaged neighbourhoods to change behaviours remains controversial and has been viewed with some suspicion in Europe. There is very limited research outside of the US to indicate whether such households have worse outcomes because of their area of residence and, if so, what causes this. One notable exception is a study comparing evidence from both disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Scotland. The study is important in that it provides greater conceptual clarity by separating out different types of area effects, postulates how each of these might result in anticipated direct and indirect outcomes, and then uses this framework for empirical investigation (Atkinson and Kintrea 2001: 2281). The research findings suggest some support for the idea of area effects, particularly in respect of employment and the reputation of the area, although there are a number of qualifications about the method used in this exploratory study. Another study in the Netherlands, however, found that moving from welfare benefits into work was little affected by whether a person was living in a disadvantaged neighbourhood (Musterd et al. 2003). Further research is clearly required, including an understanding of the impact of national and cultural contexts on the nature of such effects.

4.4.2 Regeneration of disadvantaged neighbourhoods: Housing tenure and social mix

In contrast to US housing policies which have placed great emphasis on dispersing poor households to non-disadvantaged neighbourhoods,¹² Australia (Wood 2003), the UK (Martin and Wilkinson 2003) and some European countries such as the Netherlands (Musterd et al. 2003) have focused on regenerating disadvantaged

¹² In the US, in addition to housing assistance programs intended to move people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods, there has also been substantial effort to regenerate and redevelop older public housing estates (called HOPE VI).

neighbourhoods through housing and tenure diversification. A variety of economic and social benefits have been put forward, including reduction of stigma, less churning of residents leading to greater stability, more educated and employed residents providing role models for others, a boost for local businesses, and a better functioning housing market. In particular, housing and tenure mix is expected to reduce social exclusion and increase social capital, leading to an increase in social cohesion (Kleinhans 2004). However, as Tunstall (2003: 156) has pointed out for the UK, 'support for mixed tenure has become more widespread and unquestioning that rationales are not always explicit and can be somewhat intangible'.

Many of the positive effects of tenure mix depend on an increase in home owners and, to a lesser extent, private tenants in a neighbourhood, usually accompanied by a decrease in social housing tenants. As a consequence of the different socioeconomic profile of households in different tenures, the effects rely heavily on a change in the social composition of the neighbourhood's residents, or 'social mix'. Indeed, Tunstall (2003: 158) suggests that 'tenure mix' is now promoted as a euphemism for 'social mix'. Thus the idea of tenure mix as a means of regenerating disadvantaged neighbourhoods through introducing higher income earners, particularly home owners, appears to be a more acceptable way for policy makers to talk about social mix, which has echoes of social engineering.

Wood (2003) challenges the assumption underlying tenure mix and neighbourhood regeneration strategies in UK and Australian housing policies: that social and economic problems are reinforced by the spatial concentration of disadvantaged households and that the logical solution is to increase social capital and social cohesion through tenure diversification. In reviewing recent research evidence, Wood questions the effectiveness of this strategy as well as the underlying policy logics driving it. He argues that while the idea of social mix has become mainstream – even an orthodoxy – in Australia, there has been 'a noticeable lack of clarity about what the policy is supposed to achieve and little evidence cited by policy makers in support of the assertions that have been made' (Wood 2003: 49), a view also expressed in a review for AHURI by Randolph and Wood (2004)

Wood (2003) also argues that there has been a failure of policy makers to take note of studies which question the assertions implicit in tenure diversification. A range of studies reviewed by Wood indicate, for example, that: new 'tenure mixed' estates are not typically characterised by inclusive social networks (Jupp 1999); that owners have different social networks to renters, often spending more time away from estates and using facilities less (Atkinson and Kintrea 2001); that regeneration can increase polarisation and segregation of groups, such as where new residents are excluded by longer-term residents (Wood and Vamplew 1999); or that, where areas are regenerated, some can remain vibrant whereas others face rapid decline, causing increased segregation of neighbourhoods and social exclusion of residual residents (Wood and Vamplew 1999).

Arthurson (2002) also points to the lack of evidence about the purported benefits of neighbourhood regeneration strategies based on tenure mix. Her own empirical research of six case study estates found that, for the most part, these were aimed at introducing a 'more balanced' social mix, with the underlying expectation that this would help create more cohesive and sustainable communities. However, she documents adverse effects of this, such as decreasing access to social housing, breaking up existing communities on estates, 'moving problems around' and diluting the accountability of governments for disadvantage through dispersing poor households.

Neighbourhood regeneration programs based on tenure mix imply that current *residents* rather than *residences* are a big part of the problem to be addressed. Often little is known about the fate of residents who have to move out of such areas as a consequence of regeneration, a point made in the US about very low income tenants relocated from public housing regeneration projects (Popkin et al. 2004: 27). In Australia, Hulse et al. (2004) and the Minto Resident Action Group (2005), after researching the effects of public housing redevelopment projects, are critical of social mix as a key objective, pointing out that the effect is to disrupt the social relations of neighbourhood and to displace low income households from high amenity neighbourhoods to accommodate a higher income group. The paradox is that, if redevelopment does succeed in increasing the socioeconomic diversity of households on the site, this will contribute to a lessening of diversity in the area as a whole, particularly in gentrified inner city areas (Hulse et al. 2004: 147).

In addition to mixed evidence about the extent to which both government and non-government initiatives can facilitate tenurial and/or social mix within estates or neighbourhoods, our review of the literature also raises questions about the extent to which neighbourhood diversity does facilitate social cohesion. Much contemporary housing and neighbourhood policy rests on the assumptions that increased diversity acts to strengthen social cohesion by facilitating interaction across diverse groups of people within local areas (in social capital terms, increasing 'bridging' ties). At odds with this assumption, and perhaps somewhat controversially, we found a growing volume of research indicating that people like being near people 'like themselves'.

One study suggests that neighbourhood homogeneity may be preferred by residents, regardless of tenure. In this study, Parkes et al. (2002) explore the factors that cause residential dissatisfaction with neighbourhoods. Focusing on social renters and home owners, the most extensive of the logistic regression models employed by the authors indicated that levels of neighbourhood satisfaction for each of the tenure groups are affected by tenure share. For social renters, expected levels of satisfaction with neighbourhood increased where social housing was a majority tenure in the area, and decreased where it was in the minority. For owner occupiers, in contrast, findings indicated a greater level of dissatisfaction in areas with a majority of social housing. Overall, in more affluent areas, social renters are more dissatisfied than owners, but in poorer and predominantly renter areas, owner occupiers are more dissatisfied than social renters (Parkes et al. 2002: 2433-4). It is equally plausible to argue that more mixed neighbourhoods will engender more conflicts and tensions, and that homogenous communities may exhibit higher levels of social cohesion (Goodchild and Cole 2001).

Hence, it is not clear whether social/spatial homogeneity in neighbourhoods is a 'threat' to social cohesion. This point has been made in a critique of the UK government's 'community cohesion' strategy developed in response to the civil disturbances in northern English cities in 2001:

In response, government has invoked the community cohesion agenda in an attempt to prevent further harm to the fabric of society by promoting shared identities, values and principles through social interaction born out of residential integration (Robinson 2005: 1418).

This work also questions the extent to which housing policy actions could in any case be effective in enabling residential integration at a neighbourhood level and point to the dilemmas faced by social housing agencies in this regard. Housing managers have been trying to promote 'sustainable' neighbourhoods, in which residents are

socially connected and mutually supportive, the very type of neighbourhoods that are problematised by the UK government's cohesion agenda (Robinson 2005: 1423, see also Goodchild and Cole 2001).

In summary, a review of research relevant to the cultural dimension of social cohesion suggests that the linkages between housing, housing assistance and neighbourhood diversity or homogeneity are complex and difficult to unravel. Some of the variables which appear important for further investigation are tenure mix, social mix, length of residence, and housing and neighbourhood satisfaction, as well as the homogeneity of the local area and levels of tolerance of diversity within it.

4.5 Summary

The housing system and housing policies and programs have not been central to debates about social cohesion at a macro scale. This appears to be due to a historical disconnect between housing and other areas of social policy and because housing is often a responsibility of lower levels of government than those undertaking work on social cohesion. Where housing has been considered, it has often been as one facet of social exclusion; indeed, poor housing outcomes are often seen as one indicator of social exclusion.

Research and policy attention has been focused on the micro scale, on neighbourhoods which intertwine spatial and social processes. This has drawn on, and generated further effort in, research into neighbourhoods including issues of identity, belonging, attachment to place, social solidarity, and social order and control that can be considered under the umbrella concept of social cohesion. The most extensive literature is on disadvantaged neighbourhoods, usually within cities, and has included consideration of the role of housing and housing assistance in contributing to, or compounding, residential segregation and spatial polarisation based on socioeconomic status and cultural background. This work has used ideas about social exclusion and social capital but has increasingly referred to social cohesion, as indicated by the responses to the civil disturbances in a number of countries, discussed previously in this paper. There has been little debate about the linkages between other aspects of housing and social cohesion, for example, housing size and type, housing design, housing tenure, housing costs, residential mobility, urban form and location.

5 INDICATORS OF SOCIAL COHESION: A HOUSING PERSPECTIVE

Thus far, we have presented a conceptualisation of the social cohesion concept as well as a discussion of the ways in which it may be enhanced or hindered by housing policies, including housing assistance strategies. We now turn our attention towards empirical analysis of these issues. Specifically, we outline some of the complexities involved in empirical analysis of social cohesion, including social cohesion in relation to housing, before briefly reviewing existing measurement approaches to social cohesion and identifying potential indicators of use for the analysis of social cohesion, housing and housing assistance in the Australian context.

Indicators of the type we identify here will be included in the next stage of the present research, in which the relationship between social cohesion and aspects of housing, housing assistance and neighbourhood will be analysed empirically through secondary analysis of survey data. It is anticipated that such an analysis will assist in determining which of the various social cohesion and housing variables hold most 'promise' for future analyses of housing and social cohesion.

5.1 Current approaches to social cohesion measurement and the development of indicators

By 'indicator' we mean a measure or variable that represents the concept of social cohesion and enables the concept to be investigated empirically. As de Vaus (2002) sets out, in order to undertake survey (or other) research, concepts must be translated into a form in which they are measurable. As he suggests, in order to do this, concepts must first be clarified, and their dimensions identified. Despite the current popularity of the concept of social cohesion in European and Canadian policy contexts, there is as yet no generally agreed set of indicators used to measure or investigate social cohesion. In part this may be due to the inherent complexities of the concept (that it is, for example, multi-dimensional and multi-scaled), and in part the lack of agreement about indicators may be due to the different types of uses of the concept across nation states and locations, meaning that different aspects of the concept are emphasised from one use to the next.

As with other social science concepts, the way in which social cohesion is measured relates directly to the way it is conceptualised and defined. Numerous definitions and ways of interpreting social cohesion currently exist. As set out in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, our conceptualisation of the concept is influenced by contemporary European and Canadian policy related research, and in particular by the work of Berger-Schmitt (2000) and Berger-Schmitt and Noll (2000) in the European context and by Jenson (1998) and Beauvais and Jenson (2002) from the Canadian perspective. Our understanding is also influenced by the way the concept has been related to neighbourhood and housing issues, most notably by UK authors Forrest and Kearns (Forrest and Kearns 1999, 2001, Kearns and Forrest 2000).

Despite the conceptual work that these and other authors have undertaken, there has been surprisingly little empirical research into social cohesion using a suite of indicators. Much of the social cohesion literature reports on one or other aspect of the concept, rarely providing an account of more than one of its dimensions empirically. In the European context, Berger-Schmitt (2000) and Berger-Schmitt and Noll (2000) have usefully reviewed varying approaches to the measurement of social cohesion and have developed a series of measures that might serve as indicators to be used across Europe. This work provides a detailed discussion of a host of potential indicators of the concept, and as such represents something of an

exception in social cohesion literature. We consider the Berger-Schmitt and Noll review before describing other developments in this field.

5.1.1 *The European approach to social cohesion indicators*

The EuReporting project, from which Berger-Schmitt (2000) and Berger-Schmitt and Noll (2000) report, aims to identify a set of indicators of social cohesion which includes only the most meaningful (statistically powerful) measures which are able to provide comparison across time and nation states. As the first major step towards identifying this set of indicators, the authors outline fourteen life domains they believe represent quality of life, and describe possible indicators of social cohesion against each of these. In this framework, social cohesion is divided into inequality or social exclusion aspects, and social connectedness or social capital aspects. These two aspects described as ‘goal dimensions’. The authors identify specific variables or measures that could be used to indicate each goal dimension across each life quality domain (resulting in a very large volume of potential indicators).

The goal dimensions (the policy outcomes being addressed) of the concept of social cohesion Berger-Schmitt and Noll describe include the following:

Table 3: Berger-Schmitt and Noll’s ‘goal dimensions’ of social cohesion

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction of disparities and inequalities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Regional disparities ○ Equal opportunities/inequalities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - women and men - generations - social strata - disabled - races - citizenship groups ○ Social exclusion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening social connections and ties (social capital) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Availability of social relations ○ Social and political activities and engagement ○ Quality of social relations (e.g. shared values, conflicts, solidarity) ○ Trust in institutions ○ European-specific concerns (e.g. European identity)

Source: Berger-Schmitt and Noll (2000: 38)

Examples of indicators which relate these goal dimensions to one of the fourteen aspects of quality of life which the authors identify, in this case, social and political participation and integration aspect of quality of life, are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Examples of Berger-Schmitt and Noll’s indicators of social cohesion

Goal dimensions	Measurement dimensions
Reduction of disparities/inequalities	Equal opportunities/inequalities regarding social and political participation and integration of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - women and men - generations - social strata - disabled people - citizenship groups Social exclusion; social isolation
Strengthening social connections and ties – social capital	Availability of social relations (personal relations outside the family, informal networks, membership in associations) Social and political activities and engagement (frequency of contacts, support in informal networks, volunteering, political engagement) Quality of social relations (extent of trust, feelings of belonging, shared values, solidarity, conflicts, attitudes towards population groups, loneliness) Trust in institutions, political institutions
Social structure – values and attitudes	Political orientation Subjective importance of religion

Source: Berger-Schmitt and Noll (2000: 50)

While providing examples of the types of measures that might be included in an overall suite of social cohesion indicators, the measures and domains identified by the authors are extensive (the above table representing one of fourteen sets of measurement they include in their schema), include various other concepts (such as quality of life and sustainability) and therefore do not provide a ready ‘tool kit’ for other researchers to use.

What is helpful for the purposes of the present research is the explicit inclusion of various types of measures of two of the three dimensions of social cohesion we identify: social connectedness/social capital and social exclusion/inequalities. As Table 4 shows, measures of the connectedness/social capital dimension of social cohesion include a focus on each of personal relations, networks and membership in associations as well as political associations – indicating the usefulness of a broad approach to social connectedness measurement, as in the case of measuring social capital. In relation to inequalities/social exclusion, the approach taken by Berger-Schmitt and Noll also appears broad, encompassing a focus on inequalities as well as on key types of power differences within society, including those between the sexes, generations, classes and various types of citizenship groups.

While the authors do not clearly distinguish between the level or scale of analysis explicitly within their measurement schema, it is also of use to our current research that examples of both micro and macro indicators are identified by Berger-Schmitt and Noll as being useful in terms of social cohesion measurement. The measures included relating to social connectedness/social capital tend to focus on the circumstances of individuals/households in relation to interactions with others, with associations or with structures/institutions, and therefore enable analysis primarily at a micro level. However, the measures relating to inequalities might equally be applied

to either micro or macro levels of analysis, for example, by including the experiences of discrimination or difference between individuals using individual/household level data or by using these same measures to document differences between groups' access to resources at a national level.

Additionally, although the authors do not include a focus on cultural/values explicitly, the measurement framework set out above does provide insights into how this aspect of social cohesion might be measured. Items such as 'quality of social relations' as well as 'trust in institutions, political institutions' (all of which are typically associated with social capital measurement) can inform our understanding of the nature of the culture and norms within a given society or context.

5.1.2 Australian developments: Indicators of social cohesion

Despite the relative dearth of research as yet undertaken on social cohesion in the Australian context, national statistical and research organisations have sought for some years to develop concepts and indicators to measure social wellbeing. This signals an appreciation that established measures of economic performance reflect only part of the story about the wellbeing of the population. Thus there has been a slow but gradual increase in interest in social cohesion for its potential to provide an organising framework for measuring social, rather than economic, progress.

Most notably, the Australian Bureau of Statistics has recently developed indicators of what it terms 'Australia's progress'. One of the key measures is 'family, community and social cohesion'. Within this work it defines social cohesion as 'the social ties and community commitments that bind people together' (ABS 2004: 2), referring explicitly to the work of Berger-Schmitt and Noll (2000) for the European Commission, discussed earlier in this chapter, but omitting some of its richness in terms of cleavages and differences, and cultural components. The ABS acknowledges that both social exclusion and social capital are closely related to the concept of social cohesion, although this is not reflected in their definition.

The ABS conceptualises social cohesion as being the sum of, or derived from, well-functioning family and community life, described as follows:

People's relationships and bonds with one another – be it their family, friends or the wider community – together with their shared values contribute to social cohesion. The family unit takes on a large part of the burden of caring for people in need of support, and the vast range of services provided within communities by groups, clubs and charitable organisations are a crucial adjunct to the institutionalised care provided by governments. Families are responsible for providing guidance on social values which helps to form the basis of a civil society. Day-to-day interactions between people in a community build trust and reciprocity (ABS 2004: 1).

The ABS (2004: 1) argues that there is no single indicator of social cohesion that is able to capture all important aspects of social cohesion, and that a host of indicators are therefore required to 'paint a picture of the way our families and communities function, and the cohesiveness of Australian society'. The types of indicators are influenced by work on social capital: family functioning, people's contacts with family and friends (including social participation, trust and reciprocity), community support such as volunteering, and occasions where support is broken such as suicide. In terms of the latter, the ABS considers that 'homelessness might be seen as an indicator of poor social cohesion' (ABS 2004: 1-17). This work does not specifically consider the spatial elements of social cohesion, unlike in Europe and the UK, nor

does it refer to the process of social exclusion or the debates about values and identity which have featured in social cohesion debates elsewhere.

From a different perspective, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has identified social cohesion as one of three components of national welfare, the others being 'healthy living' and 'autonomy and participation' (AIHW 2005: 4). Shelter/housing is seen as a basic human need that is essential to the 'welfare component' of healthy living. The AIHW's definition of social cohesion is clearly shaped by the Canadian and European work discussed earlier in this paper:

'the connections and relations between societal units such as individuals, groups (and) associations' (Berger-Schmitt and Noll 2000: 2, following McCracken 1998); it is the 'glue' that holds communities together. Cohesiveness is created from connections based on a shared sense of belonging and attachment, similar values, trust and a sense of 'social solidarity' (AIHW 2005: 40).

The AIHW (2005: 40) considers that implicit within social cohesion is the concept of social capital and sees an increasing focus on both concepts, 'primarily to gauge elements essential for building and sustaining community strength'.

The factors contributing to social cohesion are said to be fourfold and again derive mainly from a social capital perspective: family formation and functioning, social and support networks, trust and community, and civic engagement (AIHW 2005: 6). This emphasis corresponds quite closely with the work of the ABS discussed above. The AIHW acknowledges that strong social capital can exclude or discriminate against others and, following Berger-Schmitt (2000), that for societies to be truly cohesive, they must also have the purpose of reducing existing disparities and inequalities and prevent the establishment of social exclusion.

5.1.3 Indicators of social cohesion emphasising housing and neighbourhood issues

What is lacking from the Berger-Schmitt and Noll measurement framework – or, indeed the national Australian research endeavours – is a focus on neighbourhoods and housing issues. As discussed previously, another conceptualisation of social cohesion with a stronger emphasis upon the neighbourhood is that developed by Forrest and Kearns (2001: 2129) and Kearns and Forrest (2000). These authors also understand social cohesion in a multi-dimensional way, with similarities to the work of both Berger-Schmitt and Noll and Jenson. While they do not focus on indicators per se, the descriptions of each dimension they provide can be seen as relating to measurable aspects of social cohesion. The authors include 'place attachment and identity' as one of the domains of social cohesion. They describe this domain in terms of 'strong attachment to place' and 'intertwining of personal and place identity' (Forrest and Kearns 2001: 2129), each of which could be seen as an indicator of this aspect of social cohesion.

It is important to acknowledge at this point that the concept of neighbourhood can be defined in various ways. These include, firstly, neighbourhood as a geographic area comprising a number of dwellings or streets, for example, for the purposes of census data collection. Secondly, neighbourhoods can be seen as administrative units, for example, for the implementation of programs such as Neighbourhood Watch or neighbourhood renewal. Thirdly, neighbourhoods are socially constructed by residents, for example, as the places in which the majority of day to day experiences occur, in which case they will vary in a way that is meaningful to individuals. Fourthly, neighbourhood can be the label applied to groups of dwellings and their residents by

others, for example, in the designation of a group of residents as living in areas which are disadvantaged and stigmatised. Finally, neighbourhood can indicate a form of shared identity and belonging. In the empirical part of the project, it will be important to understand the definition and meaning of neighbourhood in the secondary data sets used.

On the whole, however, examples of empirical research relating to social cohesion which include a focus on housing issues are relatively few and far between. Housing measures are typically included in analysis as indicators of the inequalities dimension of social cohesion if they are included in analysis at all, as discussed below. Furthermore, few of the studies which explore housing issues in relation to social cohesion provide a comprehensive approach to measurement and analysis.

Examples of how place and/or housing is included in social cohesion-related research include:

Factors associated with residential dissatisfaction with neighbourhoods (Parkes et al. 2002)

Individual background variables and neighbourhood satisfaction:

- *Respondent type*: age, sex, ethnic group, dependent children, economic status, income, length of residence, relatives in area
- *Dwelling*: accommodation type, tenure
- *Area*: ACORN (index category, which provides a typology of areas from 'thriving' to 'striving'. This is based on census data and sociodemographic characteristics – types are based on differences in resources (income and class) and also reflect degree of urbanisation, stage of life cycle, tenure and accommodation type and ethnic composition)

Residential perceptions and neighbourhood satisfaction:

- *Housing satisfaction*: positive, negative
- *Access*: supermarket, post office, corner shop
- *Negative social*: crime, neighbours, how safe feel in accommodation
- *Positive social*: people in area friendly, community spirit
- *Environmental*: general appearance of area, leisure facilities, noise
- *Facilities*: schools, public transport, street lighting

Indicators of social cohesion used in analysis of private house building (Bramley and Morgan 2003)

- Neighbourhood attachment
- Residential mobility

Indicators of socially excluded neighbourhoods (Morrison 2003)

- Housing tenure
- Housing quality
- Population diversity (extent of ethnic diversity, young people)
- Poverty
- Mobility rates of the area

- Household type (e.g. young families, elderly)
- Levels of anti-social behaviour
- Level of social fragmentation
- Level of segregation/polarisation

While these are only a handful of studies mentioned, the approach taken within them is typical of much of the social cohesion literature in terms of its treatment of housing and neighbourhood issues. Many focus upon the objective or subjective assessment of neighbourhood quality, while others include items such as housing mobility and attachment to the neighbourhood. Few include a specific focus upon both housing and neighbourhood issues and, where housing is included, typically few measures are used. Overall, while such studies provide insights into some aspects of the relationships between social cohesion and housing/neighbourhood, what is needed in order to better understand these dynamics are detailed housing measures which 'unpack' various aspects of housing, housing assistance and neighbourhood effects, along with a comprehensive suite of social cohesion indicators.

5.1.4 Summary: No single measurement approach

In summary, while various detailed efforts have been undertaken to identify indicators of social cohesion, the indicators not yet represent a universally agreed suite, as the definitions of social cohesion, national contexts and purposes of research vary significantly. Previous research does, however, provide us with guidance about the types of measures that might be included in such a suite. In keeping with our own conceptualisation of social cohesion, this research identifies the need for indicators of social connectedness at personal, group, political and structural levels, as well as inequalities experienced by individuals/households and between groups within society. Indicators of cultural norms are also essential for understanding the interactions between groups and how these are experienced. Our own approach also points to the need to distinguish between various levels of measurement in any measurement framework (micro to macro), as well as, for the purposes of the present research, including a particular focus on housing and neighbourhood issues.

5.2 Clarifying the relationship between housing and social cohesion in measurement terms

As we discussed in Chapter 4, there are numerous ways in which housing, housing assistance and social cohesion may be related, which have received relatively little attention in contemporary social cohesion literature. Our discussion raised questions about the particular role of housing policy and housing assistance in relation to social cohesion and described what some of the possible relationship(s) between social cohesion, housing and housing assistance may be. As well as having implications for policy, understanding the potential relationships between these concepts has implications for the way measures of housing and housing assistance are treated in our empirical work, particularly in relation to indicators of social cohesion. In particular, the discussion in Chapter 4 – and our approach throughout this research – assumes that housing and housing assistance are separate concepts from that of social cohesion, and that there can be a relationship between the two.

This approach is distinct from much of the empirically based contemporary social cohesion literature in which housing and various experiences of housing assistance are typically included in analysis/frameworks as measures of social cohesion. Generally, where housing measures are included in analysis/measurement frameworks in existing research, they are included as indicators of the exclusion/

inequalities dimension of the social cohesion concept. Table 5, for example, shows the way housing and neighbourhood measures are included in a framework of social cohesion indicators by Berger-Schmitt and Noll.

Table 5: Potential housing indicators as they relate to improved living conditions and social cohesion in Europe

Goal dimensions	Measurement dimensions
Improvement of objective living conditions	Age of housing stock Level of supply Size of dwellings Equipment of dwellings Security Housing costs Quality of environs
Enhancement of subjective wellbeing	Perception of housing conditions Perception of quality of environs
Reduction of disparities/inequalities	Regional disparities of housing conditions Equal opportunities/inequalities regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - disabled people - social strata Social exclusion, homelessness, poor housing conditions
Preservation of natural capital	Area used for settlement

Source: Berger-Schmitt and Noll (2000: 47)

Within the social cohesion literature, there is rarely any consideration given to questions such as what the interaction of these measures may be with other aspects of exclusion nor to what the empirical relationships between housing variables and the social or cultural dimensions of social cohesion are. For example, relatively little attention is given to differential access to different forms and types of housing for different 'ethnic' groups.

We argue that, while it may be useful to include housing and neighbourhood measures in a comprehensive set of social cohesion indicators, for the purposes of understanding the relationship between these measures, treating housing and housing assistance measures separately from social cohesion can enable more thorough examination of what the relationships between housing related variables and the various dimensions of social cohesion may be. That is, it is possible to examine empirically the relationship between housing and neighbourhood and other aspects of social cohesion, despite the fact that measures of housing and neighbourhood are frequently included in empirical frameworks as indicators of one aspect of social cohesion. This clearly will be a challenging task.

This approach enables analysis of the relationships between housing and neighbourhood and other aspects of social cohesion which remain relatively unexplored in existing research, such as the relationship between housing and social connectedness. Another advantage of this approach is that processes, such as the provision of various types of housing assistance, can be considered in relation to other aspects of social cohesion. For example, while housing variables are typically included in social cohesion research as indicators of inequalities, of interest to the present project are also questions such as whether the provision of public housing or

rent assistance serve to increase aspects of social cohesion (for example, aspects of the social connectedness dimension of social cohesion, such as neighbourhood attachment). Given this focus, the present research also attempts to include a comprehensive set of housing and neighbourhood measures.

5.3 Social cohesion: Challenges for empirical research

While our review of existing studies has not uncovered a ready set of empirical tools for the analysis of social cohesion, it has illuminated some of the complexities and methodological issues involved in the study of social cohesion, including in relation to housing policy and assistance, as well as providing clues about the types of measures we might use in analysis of social cohesion, as discussed above.

Determining issues of cause and effect is key among the methodological issues facing researchers of social cohesion. We discuss this, and other empirical challenges, below.

5.3.1 Determining directionality: Issues of cause and effect

The review of the policy literature, summarised in the previous chapter, found that social cohesion is sometimes treated as a cause of social and economic outcomes and at other times as a consequence of these outcomes; in technical terms, as either an independent or dependent variable. A Canadian review of the literature reached the same conclusion and identified specific examples from the literature of patterns of causality (Beauvais and Jenson 2002: 22). We will not attempt to replicate that work here but rather look at the implications of questions of causality for public policy, particularly housing policy.

If social cohesion is an independent variable, high levels of social cohesion could contribute to a variety of positive social and economic outcomes, although whether this was the case would need to be tested empirically. For example, we could investigate whether social cohesion contributed to fewer problems of law and order, less homelessness, higher rates of economic participation, more involvement in community affairs, and better health outcomes. Conversely, low levels of social cohesion could be expected to produce negative outcomes in these areas. Studies that emphasise the social capital component of social cohesion increasingly treat social cohesion as an independent variable, as do those that refer to the importance of shared values and identity. For example, high levels of social capital are thought to lead to low levels of neighbourhood crime. Within the social cohesion framework, public policy makers who subscribe to this view are likely to develop policies and programs directly aimed at maintaining or increasing levels of social cohesion, such as encouragement of social networks of different types, support for programs involving volunteers, strengthening the role of voluntary associations in the delivery of services, strategies to build or strengthen community capacity, and measures to promote shared values.

If social cohesion is a dependent variable, changes in levels of social cohesion are expected to occur as a consequence of social, economic and political factors. The Canadian review cited above found that factors such as globalisation, new technologies, an increase in cultural diversity from migration and refugee programs, and a change in the composition of some local communities can weaken social cohesion (Beauvais and Jenson 2002). The policy implications of this include support for strategic interventions by governments to improve education, health and housing outcomes, provide support for early childhood development, broker quality jobs, and promote equal opportunity as a means of strengthening social cohesion. The European Union's Social Policy Agenda and the Council of Europe's Social Cohesion Strategy see investment in health, education and social protection – the core

components of the so-called 'European social model' – as fostering social cohesion. This approach is most closely associated with, although not restricted to, the social exclusion component of social cohesion.

What are the implications of these two views of social cohesion for housing policy? Where social cohesion is seen as an independent variable, housing policies and programs would seek to increase levels of social cohesion, or to reverse a perceived weakening of social cohesion, as a means of achieving other more specific objectives. One example is urban or community renewal programs for older public housing estates that emphasise the building of social relationships and social capital in order to achieve some specific outcomes such as (re)connecting residents with jobs or education and training, reducing turnover and promoting residential stability, and reducing stigma and increasing pride in the neighbourhood. Likewise, tenant participation programs may focus on building trust, cooperation and mutual support among residents of social housing, and with surrounding residents, as a necessary step to achieving outcomes such as more successful tenancies, a safer environment, better connection to services and facilities, and more sustainable neighbourhoods.

On the other hand, viewing social cohesion as a dependent variable can also provide the rationale for a variety of housing policies and programs. These might include measures to prevent or address homelessness, local allocations plans in social housing, anti-social behaviour strategies, means of improving access to housing by Indigenous and other disadvantaged households, and measures to address regional differences or disparities in housing outcomes. These measures are important in terms of immediate housing outcomes and also in their subsequent effect on levels of social cohesion. It is clear from the government reviews following the civil disturbances referred to in the Introduction that governments are looking for changes to housing policies and programs that might increase social cohesion.

In recent work on social cohesion, there is a growing appreciation that the direction of causality can be difficult to determine. Often what has been established is a correlation (association) between an aspect of social cohesion and a specific social or economic variable, and it is possible that the causality can go in both directions. The conceptualisation by the AIHW (2005: 4-6) provides an interesting example in this respect. It posits a two-way relationship between social cohesion and two sets of factors: 'influential factors' such as a person's characteristics and the features of the physical and social environment in which they live, and 'interventions' which refer to formal services, financial assistance and other assistance that contribute to welfare. Thus causality is bi-directional rather than uni-directional. In empirical work, difficulties in attributing causality are compounded by the relative dearth of temporal data available.

Whether lack of clarity about causality is a problem for policy makers using the social cohesion concept depends on what they want the concept to do. If they want to measure the impact of an individual public policy action precisely on the level of social cohesion or vice-versa, it is a problem. It is not such a problem if social cohesion is primarily a framing concept for thinking through the complexity of policy issues, in which case correlation (a demonstrated association between two variables) is an important finding (Beauvais and Jenson 2002: 20). In this exploratory study, we are primarily looking at correlations in the first instance.

5.3.2 Other methodological issues

As well as issues of establishing cause and effect in social cohesion research, there are other empirical challenges to note. The first of these is an issue many of the empirical studies of social cohesion grapple with. It is that any given indicator can

indicate either the presence or lack of social cohesion. For example, the indicator 'housing quality' might indicate high levels of social cohesion, where quality is high, or low levels of social cohesion, where quality in a neighbourhood is low. Similarly, particular levels of, for example, residential mobility rates, indicate high or low levels of social cohesion. In and of itself, this point is relatively unproblematic. However, this aspect of social cohesion research does raise difficulties in interpretation of results. For example, how much of any given indicator of social cohesion is 'enough'? The answer appears to depend on the specific context.

Related to this first point is the fact that there appears to be widespread agreement in the empirical literature that the levels of any of these indicators vary across communities, and that it is the combination of various levels and amounts of indicators that will be informative about the presence or lack of social cohesion in a particular community. This is because cultures and patterns of interaction may vary from one community to the next, yet each may have relatively high or low overall levels of cohesion. This aspect of social cohesion measurement implies there is a degree of local knowledge or assessment that needs to be taken into account in determining the degree of social cohesion in any given locality or community, and that place-based approaches can be useful in social cohesion research.¹³

A potentially more contentious issue identified in a number of studies relates to difficulties associated with determining whether social cohesion is 'positive' or 'negative'. In particular, where group solidarity is being measured, positive social cohesion is thought to occur where there are shared norms and high levels of social interaction but which are not undertaken at the expense of other relationships. Some authors identify social cohesion as being more 'negative' where groups or individuals are excluded from otherwise socially cohesive groupings. The ABS (2004: 2) is among those to identify this issue:

While views about ideal levels of social cohesion vary, for some aspects of social cohesion there is likely to be a general agreement that change in a particular direction is good or bad. For instance, most would agree that decreases in the suicide rate, in the incidence of drug-induced deaths, or in the level of homelessness, represent improvements. But for many other aspects of social cohesion, the choice and interpretation of indicators may be problematic.

This issue is highly analogous to difficulties involved in social capital research, referred to previously in this paper. Within the literature, debates have taken place about social capital being conceptualised as either a 'group good' (having whole-of-community benefits, see for example Cox 1995) or about social capital benefiting group members to the exclusion or detriment of others (the 'dark side' of social capital; see Portes 1998).¹⁴ Again, this points to the need for a high level of 'on the ground' knowledge in some circumstances and to a high level of care required in the interpretation of results. It also relates to the question posed by Wood (2003): How will policy makers know a good social cohesion outcome when they see one?

¹³ The implication of this is that local community-based research methodologies are also a useful way to understand social cohesion. The present study is designed with survey analysis as a core component rather than a local area approach; however, within the survey methodology, as much information as possible about local areas or residents' perceptions of the local area needs to be included in analysis.

¹⁴ Much of the literature refers to the idea that social cohesion is characterised by connections which are based on exclusivity or which are 'too strong' can lead to fragmentation of communities. In social capital terms, this can be conceptualised as having too much 'bonding' social capital at the expense of 'bridging' and 'linking' ties (Narayan 1999, Stone and Hughes 2002b).

A further issue raised in previous empirical investigations of social cohesion is demonstrated in the work of Parkes et al. (2002) and Rajulton et al. (2003). Both point to the need for subjective indicators in community research. In each case they investigate aspects of social cohesion using analysis of large-scale survey data including both objective and perception measures, and in each case results indicate the importance of the subjective measures as being powerful predictors of cohesion/ community satisfaction. Examples of 'subjective' items include resident reports of housing satisfaction, neighbourhood dissatisfaction and perceptions of noise, friendliness, community spirit, school quality and crime (Parkes et al. 2002: 2413).

Finally, while most studies identify the need for multiple indicators of social cohesion, given its multi-dimensional nature, the relationship between them is rarely explored or conceptualised in detail. A number of the existing empirical studies recognise that many of these indicators are highly correlated and interrelated, yet there is very little discussion or exploration about what the nature of the causal relationships are or might be. An exception is found in the work of Paugam (1995) who shows how various indicators of social exclusion are correlated, as well as how they relate to one another over time. Some work has also been undertaken more specifically into the multi-dimensional nature of social capital (e.g. Onyx and Bullen 2001). One of the challenges here is the degree to which indicators of the different domains of social cohesion are independent of each other or interrelated and, to the extent that they are interrelated, whether the cumulative as well individual associations can be identified and measured. Analysis of the relationship between various social cohesion indicators – most notably, between housing and housing assistance and (other) aspects of social cohesion – will be undertaken in the next stage of the research.

5.4 Summary: Moving towards a set of indicators for measuring social cohesion, housing and housing assistance

The review of indicators, above, and discussion of social cohesion throughout this paper provides guidance about measuring social cohesion. Consistent with our conceptualisation of the concept, indicators identified for use in the present project reflect the notion that social cohesion:

- Comprises both a social connection (social capital) dimension as well as an inequalities (social exclusion) dimension;
- Varies by and is affected by values and cultural contexts;
- Can exist at different levels or 'social scales', from micro levels of interaction (for example, within families and among friendship networks, neighbourhood relations) through to macro levels (nation states, international relations);¹⁵
- Can be meaningfully investigated at the neighbourhood level (reflecting the housing and neighbourhood focus of the present project).

In addition, as discussed above:

- Aspects of housing and housing assistance can be seen as indicators of social cohesion (as in some existing work) but can also be treated as conceptually distinct from social cohesion in order to investigate the relationships between the various concepts (the approach taken here).

¹⁵ The focus of the present research is upon the micro level, as previously discussed.

Following these guidelines, we have identified a series of potential indicators of social cohesion and measures of them using examples drawn from existing sources of survey data of use for social cohesion research. These indicators and measures reflect the three dimensions of social cohesion we have identified throughout this paper: social connectedness/social capital, inequalities/social exclusion, and cultural norms/values. Examples are attached at Appendix A. The items included there are in many senses exploratory only, given that – as discussed above – there is no agreed suite of indicators which adequately captures the various dimensions and scales of social cohesion. We have also detailed a series of measures of housing and housing assistance which is also attached at Appendix A.

The relationships between the housing and social cohesion measures we have identified here will be explored in the empirical work that forms the next stage of this research. However, it is important at this stage to reiterate some of the complexities and potential limitations of the forthcoming analysis. These include the fact that no ready set of tested, agreed measures of social cohesion exists; the need to explicitly separate housing measures from measures of various dimensions of social cohesion in order to explore the relationship between concepts; difficulties inherent in attributing change in various aspects of a concept as complex and multi-faceted as social cohesion to housing circumstances and assistance; as well as difficulties involved in attributing causality and understanding the temporal dimensions of change. As discussed earlier, despite numerous accounts of how social cohesion operates conceptually, very little research has attempted to systematically explore its empirical operation. As such, the analysis to be undertaken in the next stage of this research will represent a useful addition to understand how housing, housing assistance and social cohesion interact in the lives of individuals, households and neighbourhoods, even if results are ultimately limited by the complexities inherent to this type of research.

6 CONCLUSION

There is an emerging interest in social cohesion in Australia, partly in response to a number of civil disturbances here and overseas which have prompted concerns that social cohesion is weakening. The questions for policy makers are whether, and to what extent, public policy actions weaken, maintain or strengthen social cohesion. These questions are particularly pertinent to housing policy since some of the disturbances have been associated with areas of social or low rent private housing in which the residents are disadvantaged based on various criteria including income, education and health status.

In this paper we have looked at social cohesion as a policy concept, whilst acknowledging its long credentials in academic debates about social theory. Viewed in this way, social cohesion is a complex concept. Firstly, it is multi-dimensional, comprising at least three dimensions: reducing inequalities, disparities and cleavages (drawing heavily on ideas about social exclusion); improving social connectedness (including ideas about social capital); and a cultural dimension which refers to the norms underlying common values, shared understandings about behaviours and identity. Secondly, and relatedly, social cohesion can be examined at different social scales: the macro or societal level, the micro scale of personal interactions, or any point in between. These different social scales often have a distinct spatial basis, for example, at the level of country, city or neighbourhood, and social cohesion can be examined at each of these social/spatial scales. Notwithstanding these complexities, the concept of social cohesion provides a means of understanding both the macro and micro level processes within a society within a single framework which accommodates economic, social and cultural factors.

Housing systems and housing policy have not been central to debates about social cohesion in Australia or elsewhere. This appears to be due to a historical disconnect between housing and other areas of social policy and because housing is often the responsibility of lower levels of government than those undertaking work on social cohesion. In consequence, there has been little work which specifically looks at the relationships between housing, housing assistance and social cohesion. In lieu of this, we explored some quite disparate strands of research that might generate some insights about these linkages. The richest strand is a long tradition of research into neighbourhoods, particularly disadvantaged neighbourhoods, which provides ways of exploring the different dimensions of social cohesion at a neighbourhood scale. Our review suggested that there appear to be important connections between social cohesion and aspects of housing (including size and type, density, tenure and location, housing delivery and management practices) and aspects of housing assistance (including neighbourhood homogeneity or diversity, residential mobility, residential stability, and (dis)satisfaction with neighbourhood).

Finally, we looked at attempts to develop indicators of social cohesion both in Australia and overseas, finding that housing and experiences of housing assistance are typically included as indicators, usually in the inequalities dimension. There is rarely any consideration of the interaction of these housing measures with other measures of the inequalities dimension or of the empirical relationships between housing variables and the social and cultural dimensions of social cohesion. We argue that, to explore the connections between housing, housing assistance and social cohesion empirically, it is important to treat housing and housing assistance as conceptually distinct from social cohesion to enable a more thorough examination of the associations between housing related variables and the various dimensions of social cohesion, including the social connectedness and cultural dimensions. This

approach will be used in the empirical part of the project and we will present the findings in the Final Report of this project.

APPENDIX A: POTENTIAL INDICATORS OF SOCIAL COHESION, HOUSING AND HOUSING ASSISTANCE

The following tables set out the types of indicators that will be used in future analysis within the present research. Indicators are set out against each of the core dimension of social cohesion being measured, as well as by the 'level' of social interaction that is reflected. Table A.1 details indicators and measures of the social connectedness/social capital dimension of social cohesion, indicators of the inequalities/social exclusion dimension are detailed within Table A.2, and Table A.3 sets out potential indicators and measures of the cultural values/norms dimension of the concept. Table A.4 includes housing and housing assistance measures likely to be included in our future analysis.

The survey items included in the tables are examples of variables drawn from data sets that will be utilised in future analysis, used here to show the types of measures that could be used in relation to each indicator/dimension.¹⁶ Various measures included in the tables may represent more than one dimension of social cohesion within our framework (for example, 'trust' is a core measure of social capital/social connectedness, but also reflects the values/diversity dimension of social cohesion). It is possible that the relationships between the measures, as well as which dimensions they best represent, will be clarified via statistical analysis.

¹⁶ It is proposed that five secondary sources of data will be used in the analysis of social cohesion within the present research. These are: General Social Survey (ABS 2002), Household, Income and Labour Dynamics Australia Survey (HILDA) (FaCS, Melbourne Institute 2005), Families, Social Capital and Citizenship Survey (Australian Institute of Family Studies 2001), Entering Rental Housing Survey (Swinburne ISR 2003), and Sole Parents, Social Wellbeing and Housing Assistance (Swinburne ISR 2002).

Table A.1: Indicators of the social connectedness/social capital dimension of social cohesion, showing scales of analysis and example measures

Dimension of social cohesion	Level/scale of analysis	Indicator	Measurement example
Social connectedness/ social capital	Micro	Availability of personal networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Had contact with family or friends living outside the household in last week (GSS, ABS 2002)
	Micro	Availability of social support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could ask for small favours from persons living outside the household (GSS, ABS 2002) • Able to get support in time of crisis from persons living outside the household (GSS, ABS 2002)
	Micro	Reciprocity/social support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided support to other relatives living outside the household (GSS, ABS, 2002)
	Micro	Involvement in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participated in organised sport or physical recreational activities (various) in last 12 months (GSS, ABS 2002) • Undertook voluntary work in last 12 months (GSS, ABS 2002) • Group involvement in last 12 months (AIFS 2001) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children or parenting groups Sporting, recreation or hobby groups Trade unions, professional/technical associations Political parties Environmental, human rights, community etc Arts, culture, educational Self-help/support groups • Other groups, formal or informal
	Micro	Geographic proximity of personal networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of friends living in same neighbourhood, within 30 minutes, within two hours, more than two hours away (AIFS 2001) • Number of family members living in same neighbourhood, within 30 minutes, within two hours, more than two hours away (AIFS 2001)

Dimension of social cohesion	Level/scale of analysis	Indicator	Measurement example
Social connectedness/ social capital	Micro	Engagement in neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of neighbours known (AIFS 2001)
	Micro	Neighbourhood attachment/affinity	Agree/disagree: (AIFS 2001) I feel a strong sense of identity with my neighbourhood. I am well informed about local affairs. I am satisfied with the safety of my neighbourhood.
	Macro	Societal trust/reciprocity	Agree/disagree: (AIFS 2001) Generally speaking, most people can be trusted. Generally speaking, most of the time people try to be helpful.
	Macro	Legitimacy of institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence in organisations (AIFS 2001) Legal system Churches Police force Media Trade unions Federal government State government Local government Public service Big business

Table A.2: Indicators of the inequalities/social exclusion dimension of social cohesion, showing scales of analysis and example measures

Dimension of social cohesion	Level/scale of analysis	Indicator	Measurement example
Inequalities/ social exclusion	Micro	Financial stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial stress (GSS, ABS 2002) Unable to raise \$2,000 within a week for something important Had at least one cash flow problem in last 12 months Took at least one dis-saving action in last 12 months)
	Micro	Consumer debt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consumer debt (no consumer debt; less than \$5,000; \$5,000 and over) (GSS, ABS 2002)
	Micro	Health status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-assessed health status (excellent to poor) (GSS, ABS 2002)
	Micro	Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability or long-term health condition (GSS, ABS 2002)
	Micro	Financial capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income (GSS, ABS 2002)
	Micro	Labour force attachment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Labour force status (GSS, ABS 2002)
	Micro		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main source of household income (GSS, ABS 2002)
	Micro		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time that government support has been main source of income (GSS, ABS 2002)
	Micro	Education/human capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education (GSS, ABS 2002)
	Micro	Access to services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulty accessing transport (GSS, ABS 2002)
	Micro	Housing status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spells of homelessness (HILDA 2005)
	Micro	Safety of housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feel safe/unsafe at home alone after dark (ABS GSS 2002)
	Micro	Safety of neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree/disagree: (AIFS 2001) I am satisfied with the safety of my neighbourhood.
	Micro	Advantage/disadvantage of neighbourhood/local area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEIFA (ABS GSS 2002) composite indices of advantage/ disadvantage within post code areas, including housing status, employment, etc)
Macro	Unemployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unemployment rates among various groups (HILDA 2005) (ABS GSS 2002) 	

Table A.3: Indicators of the cultural/values dimension of social cohesion, showing scales of analysis and example measures

Dimension of social cohesion	Level/scale of analysis	Indicator	Measurement example
Cultural norms/ values	Micro	Personal values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree/disagree: (AIFS 2001) Generally speaking, I can trust my family, friends to act in my best interests
	Micro	Neighbourhood culture/norms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree/disagree: (AIFS 2001) Generally speaking, most people in my neighbourhood can be trusted People around here are really willing to help each other out People around here share the same values
	Macro	Societal trust/reciprocity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree/disagree: (AIFS 2001) Generally speaking, most people can be trusted Generally speaking, most of the time people try to be helpful
	Macro	Tolerance of diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree/disagree: (AIFS 2001) Having people from many different ethnic and cultural backgrounds makes Australia a better place

Table A.4: Indicators of housing and housing assistance

Concept	Indicator	Measurement example
Housing	Housing tenure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing tenure Owner without a mortgage Owner with a mortgage Renter – public (state or territory housing authority) Renter – private (other landlord types) Other
	Housing equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity in dwelling (GSS, ABS 2002)
	Housing satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing satisfaction – self-report
	Housing quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing quality (objective)
	Housing density	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of dwellings within geographical boundary
	Overcrowding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of bedrooms for family members
	Housing stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of housing in relation to income (25%, 30%)
	Housing exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of housing discrimination (e.g. real estate agents, housing authorities)
Housing assistance	Assisted security of tenure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renting from state/territory housing authority
	Assisted security of tenure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community housing tenant
	Assistance with housing costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receipt of rent assistance

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