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Trust, Culture and Nation. Social Capital in Denmark

The cultural prerequisites for the creation of social cohesion are examined with particular reference to Denmark, a nation that has been found to exhibit strong social cohesion. Culture is understood as a social order based on mainly informal norms. Of these, trust is vital in creating social cohesion. However, trust occurs only under specific conditions, and in this regard the Danish nation, understood as a cultural community, is of interest. There is in Denmark a strong civil society characterized by honesty, reliability, and mutuality, which historically is due to the existence of several civil movements. In contrast to the idea that society can be integrated through policy initia-

tives, it is proposed that social cohesion occurs precisely because of the existence of a certain culture. The different cultural elements that characterize a society with strong cohesion are investigated and an argument is presented as to how cohesion can be conserved.