Social Cohesion and Between-Group Relationships

Exploring Social Relationships and Connectedness The Friends of the Chair (FoC) Group on Social and Demographic Statistics

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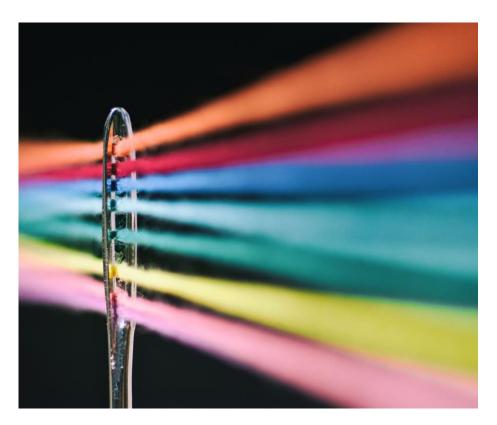
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What is social cohesion?



- Social cohesion has been described as fabric that knits society together.
- Social cohesion is a latent concept and can only be indirectly measured through constituent dimensions (e.g., trust, shared values).

Reference: MacIsaac, S. D. Wavrock and G. Schellenberg (2023) "What holds us together? Measuring dimensions of social cohesion in Canada." *Statistical Journal of the IAOS*. vol. 39. issue 3. pp. 589-604. https://doi.org/10.3233/SJI-230055

Why focus on between-group relationships?

- Numerous measures of relationships with individuals in one's own network (e.g., family, friends, coworkers, neighbours).
- Yet, few measures of relationships between groups, which could overlook between-group tensions.
- Affective distance, both within and between groups, can adversely impact social cohesion.

Within-group

Between-group







Timeline of UNECE CES work (2022 - 2024)



2022-2023

Scoping and concepts

In-depth review for UNECE CES



Between-group insights

International inventory of between-group measures



2024 (mid-June data release)

Filling data gaps – Survey Series on People and their Communities (SSPC) Wave 5

New thermometer questions on feelings towards those with similar/different political views, views on racism, and views on gender identity



Statistics Canada as chair



June 2023 to present

Statistics Canada study

Social cohesion dimensions and group sorting (2020 GSS)



September 2023

Analytical (e.g., unity) and methodological work (e.g., data quality)



Ongoing work





Summary

Key message: Important to consider relationships with other groups/individuals outside one's immediate network.

What do we need to know?

• Tensions/divisions and uniting factors among latent clusters of people.

Why do we need to measure between-group relationships?

• By limiting the scope to one's in-group, one risks overestimating cohesion.

