Webinar Series: Social Cohesion – What, when, and how?

The Social Cohesion Webinar Series is organized jointly by the World Bank and the Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik / German Development Institute (DIE). It provides a platform for dialogue among the growing community working on social cohesion issues in development cooperation policy, practice and research. The Webinar Series focuses on sharing, discussing and synthesizing the experience and knowledge on social cohesion.

Webinars take place every three months and are split into an input and a discussion part. Upcoming webinars are announced well in advance online at the Social Cohesion Hub.

In order to indicate your interest in the Seminar, please write a brief e-mail stating your name and affiliation to social_cohesion@die-gdi.de.

Chat protocol

Trust, identity, and cooperation. New models for defining and measuring social cohesion

Webinar, September 28, 2021; 9:00 – 10:15 am (GMT-4)

From Nik Myint to Everyone: 09:04 AM

welcome everybody to this seminar -- please post your thoughts and questions here

From Matthias Vollhardt to Everyone: 09:16 AM

Just as an FYI: we are all seeing the presenter's view (incl. notes)

From Nik Myint to Everyone: 09:31 AM

yes, the in group/out group problem is real. how to define "inclusive" identity?

From Thomas Columkill Garrity to Everyone: 09:31 AM

And a question to my FCV/Social Cohesion colleagues: Noting that Bretton Woods, NH (July 1944, just after D Day on June 6) was primarily to prevent another Weimar Republic:. Is there any Social research on WHEN a 'tipping point' (for social revolution) takes place .. i.e., when social and economic inequality get to the point where it breaks? (including in the US, a country with economic inequality). My father used to ask me: "Why doesn't the WB/IMF look forward, forecasting both Social AND Economic data, i.e., combining the long (economic) cycles of

Kondratieff with the (long) Social cycles of Fernand Braudel (French Annales School). At what point (French Revolution) do people grab pitch-forks and storm the Bastille?" ...

From Somayeh Mirashe to Everyone: 09:33 AM

dear Julia how we can see the distributional aspect in this model? as you may know babajanian in one of his articles published by die has said social cohesion has two aspects including relational dimension and distributional dimension

From Ganesh Seshan to Everyone: 09:34 AM

Identity might be more tied to religion than ethnicity. Can we ask similar questions about national identity vis-à-vis religious identity?

From Steffen Janus to Everyone: 09:36 AM

Do you see a relationship between economic cooperation, i.e. in local value chains, and social cohesion? Can a joined economic interest overcome differences in identity?

From Dominik Balthasar to Everyone: 09:37 AM

Thanks for the presentation. Great to hear that you hone in on a lean definition of social cohesion. Yet, many questions remain for me. One would be that if I understood correctly, you

seek to aply this measurement on a global scale. In this regard I would be curious to learn in how far social cohesion (and its measurement) was (not) context dependent, inhibiting such an endeavour from the outset? Many thanks, indeed, for any thoughts on this.

From Oyewole Simon Oginni to Everyone: 09:37 AM

Identity might be more than ethnicity in African context as people have attachment to more than one ethnic group and religion could play more role. Can gender be part of identity beyond its recognition on binary basis.

From Thomas Columkill Garrity to Everyone: 09:38 AM

(Steffen and I are asking the same question ...)

From Hakkı Onur Arıner to Everyone: 09:39 AM

Identities can keep being broken down into more specific categories, and different identities can for across categiroes. How do you decide which level to measure? E.g. belonging to an ethnic group is the level you measure, but what about women belonging to that group? Or women as a stronger identity across ethnicities? Or LGBTQI individuals across several identities?

From Dominik Balthasar to Everyone: 09:40 AM

On another note, it appears that you are focusing much on social attributes of individuals. Yet, social cohesion does not (merely) come about by means of "individual (non)cooperation", but also by means of group attributes, institutions governing wider social relationships, etc. Hence, I wonder in how far a focus on social attributes was sufficient, or whether one would not need to take broader social structures and characteristics into account...?

From Oyewole Simon Oginni to Everyone: 09:41 AM

In addition, CSO is not always active in local community except where particular intervention is required. CBOs could capture more than CSOs in this case. In some countries, identity is defined by the region they belong to, e.g. Southern Nigeria and Northern Nigeria, geopolitical identity.

From Helen Liu to Everyone: 09:42 AM

similar to what many are asking here, how does intersectionality factor into the definition and measurement of identity?

From Ilan Chabay to All Panelists: 09:43 AM

Hi Julia, Thanks for a fascinating presentation that raises many important points and questions. I would like suggest that it is helpful to collect and analyze narratives for understanding the factors in play in communities or regions which influence behaviors. By narratives, I mean those purposeful forms of communication in communities that express visions for the future or social identities. Behavior , including SoCo, is strongly affected by the interaction between social identity and group intention (vision) narratives. We are in the process of developing this approach through legacy media and in digital media in KLASICA as information of qualitative value in itself, but also as a basis for modeling of social dynamics. I would appreciate your thoughts on narratives in this context of SoCo.

From Mahi ElAttar to Everyone: 09:44 AM

Will it be possible to compare these indicators with those from countries that are more "glued together"? Can we infer where is the tipping point, as many have asked already?

From Oyewole Simon Oginni to Everyone: 09:44 AM

What is your position on domestication of legal instruments such as UN Res 2250 and 13250 on social cohesion across localities and countries?

From Oyewole Simon Oginni to Everyone: 09:49 AM

Last point, due to colonial history, some might be inclined to a nation within a nation-state, yet, they promote positive peace.

From Staffan I. Lindberg to All Panelists: 09:52 AM

Thanks for presenting the great promises this program projects - I can think of several, but with your in-depth knowledge of the data: In your opinion, what is the most promising avenue for research/new knowledge, and the one you think people might think of but that this data should not be used to investigate (or potentially its weakest point)?

From Daniel Nowack to Everyone: 09:53 AM

Concerning 'inclusive identity': We, too, think and conceptualized social identity as complex and cutting across different (social) categorizations (e.g. as possible to be broken down into different categories, and that in any societal context, including the context of African societies, identity can be more than just ethnicity). Yet, for the measurement based on Afrobarometer data, we

were (so far) dependent on the 'ethnic identity' item as it provided data for the most survey rounds and countries. However, the way we conceptualised it, it is more complex and broader than we were able to measure (Daniel Nowack, DIE/GDI 'Social Cohesion Team')

From Charlotte Fiedler to All Panelists: 09:57 AM

I am happy to come in with a response on the many questions on the measurement of identity

From Naila Ahmed to All Panelists: 09:58 AM

Naila here. Quick Question on the practical nature of gathering data. How realistic is it for us to measure social cohesion given that it's so fluid and I agree with Jose that migration and displacement is key to also capture. Also what are your thoughts on capturing data on regional dynamics which in many FCV countries influences social cohesion dynamics.

From Andrew Kaiser-Tedesco to All Panelists: 10:00 AM

If panelists were given a €100m in pure research funding tomorrow, how much money would go to which part of the research agenda and why? And if, like Jose, you think observational data is the best investment, what kind of data and why?

From Oyewole Simon Oginni to Everyone: 10:03 AM

How can we define identity in post-colonial society where methodological nationalism is still contested? How can we incorporate this as intervening variable or make it an outlier? How do Afrobarometer collect the data and who collect the data? Data are collected based on a particular worldview. Under what condition these data were collected?

From Bala Menon to All Panelists: 10:05 AM

Nik, taking off from where you just finished on qns. There is caution to be applied in reading too much into data at times. Things to consider (in addition to your list): (i) homogenous vs, heterogenous (societal/institutional), (ii) understanding episodical movements / short term volatility vs. long term shifts. Particular relevant in FCV contexts, federal and diverse countries, etc.

From Bala Menon to All Panelists: 10:08 AM

We found these distinctions when we were dealing with transitional situations - e.g. Nepal during the first Constituent Assembly period, Yemen during National Dialog, several other MNA countries progressively during and after the post Arab Spring period. Several other cases. Case in point: Yemen vs Tunisia over time.

From Ilan Chabay to All Panelists: 10:09 AM

It would be very interesting to assess social identities from observed narratives in the particular context of interest. We see a part of this in responses to news accounts after an event (natural hazard, political coup, etc) and in digital media intense and rapid exchanges.

From Bala Menon to All Panelists: 10:13 AM

In the end, as Jose noted, quality of data - both collection and analysis - over time matters.

A second point is regarding practical applications. How to 'effectively' use this in (i) improvements in programming (immediate), (ii) improvements in policy, (iii) improvements in institutions, and finally, (iv) improvements in society (long term/generational).

From Taies Nezam to Everyone: 10:14 AM

Did julia say that social cohesion goes down with development, while jose believes it goes up with gdp, hdi, etc.?

Ah, so it is a U shaped curve?

From Charlotte Fiedler to All Panelists: 10:14 AM

yes, that is what the data so far suggests, but it is preliminary

From Oyewole Simon Oginni to Everyone: 10:14 AM

Maybe we could also look at temporality of identity in which event and time play a great role. Maybe practice of future also influence identity. Interesting work. My research focuses on conflict-affected region in the Lake Chad Basin, this topic is important for reintegration and reconcilation process - healing process.