Social Cohesion: Identification of Parameters Measurement

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Abstract

Social cohesion has a very strong interest in the stability of a country because it determines a (dynamic) equilibrium between the components of society and key incisive sense of justice and equality among the population (values of solidarity, equity, non-discrimination). Social cohesion is not a concept that has for purpose to be used in the speech relating to public policy, much more this concept responds to well-defined parameters, I would say within the economy, sociology as social structure requires: Economic and statistical data which stabilize and sociological data that can regulate the dynamism of vertical and horizontal flow.

Keywords: Classes, Public policies, social cohesion, society, structure.

INTRODUCTION

Trying to define social cohesion

The term “social cohesion” means the state of a society, group or organization where solidarity is strong and intense social ties. The term “social cohesion” was used for the first time in 1893 by the sociologist Émile Durkheim ((1858-1917) in his book “In the division of labor” to describe the functioning of a society where solidarity between individuals and the collective conscience occur:

“We are thus led to recognize a new reason why the division of labor a source of social cohesion. It not only makes solidarity individuals, as we have said so far, because it limits the activity each, but also because it increases the it increases the unity of the body, simply because it increases its life. At least in the normal state, it does not produce any of these effects without the other.”

Social cohesion promotes the integration of people, their commitment to the group and their participation in social life. Members share a common set of values and rules of conduct that are accepted by everyone. However, the existence of social conflict does not necessarily mean lack of social cohesion, but an increase in intra classes; Example of conflict between worker and entrepreneur, here social cohesion will increase in the inner of each of these classes.

There is another definition of the Council of Europe: “Social cohesion is the capacity of a society to ensure the well-being of all its members, minimizing disparities and avoiding marginalization.”

The paradigm shift in economic and social policies inspired by neoliberalism has caused serious social and political tensions (increasing poverty, deteriorating health status of the population) and a loss of confidence in public institutions. An accent more pronounced on market forces and the classical liberal ideology helped fuel a broad debate among those who fear the political costs, social and economic costs involved letting aside social cohesion. They engage in a reassessment of institutional responsibilities of key sets – Public, private and third sectors – liberal democracies modern.

Social cohesion has not become a subject of great debate for the first time during the last decade of the twentieth century. The concept of social cohesion was previously defined as one of three theoretical traditions concerned with the question of social order. Sociologists and political scientists as Emile Durkheim in France in the nineteenth century and, later, the American Talcott Parsons in the 40 and 50 are concerned with the question of social cohesion. They then underwent competition, as they still do today, classical liberals and democratic theorists from schools of social democracy,
Christian democracy and positive liberalism. This short analysis simply to remind that all the theoretical models do not consider social cohesion - defined as shared values and a sense of belonging to the community, as the cornerstone of the social order. Other traditions emphasize other mechanisms, focusing on institutional processes and conflicting interests rather than values.

**Characteristics of social cohesion**

Generally and always according to Durkheim, social cohesion develops on the basis of dynamic link contractual nature, such as:
- Merchants Links
- Policies Links
- Cultural Links

**Figure 1.** Geometric mapping of the social structure involving social mobility movements between different social classes. Gap: disparity between two different social classes. Thickness: geometric dimension to represent demographic importance.
It is true that the current situation tends to stratify increasingly modern society by developing several minors to links within the same class.

The society is a vibrant social structure, having a more or less acute pyramidal form; it evolves starting from its two main components: the individual and social class; it requires a harmonization that can guarantee a balance between individuals and the various classes where the individual is inserted.

Social cohesion has parameters defined as follows:
• Harmonization of wage differentials;
• Harmonization of intra-class cohesion;
• Positive osmosis (up) inter-classes;
• Reductions of segment mismatch (area including the persons excluded from osmosis to the highest class).

(Determinants of social cohesion

The main element of response lies in a psychological factor common to any individual: the possibility (or the hope and expectation) that each member belonging to a level of a class has to:
- Move to a higher level within the same class that he belongs (mobility intra-class);
- Move to a higher /lower class (mobility inter-class).

Mobility has a vertical movement upward (positive) and a vertical movement downward (negative). The harmonization of these ascending and descending flows demonstrates the ability of a social system to ensure osmosis upward (positive) to each member belonging to various levels that make up a class.

To summarize, what defines social cohesion is the capacity of a social system to:
• Maintain the absence of rigid / absolute borders between intra-classes and inter-classes;
• Ensure to each "actor" of the society, the opportunity to "climb" the social ladder and thus fit into the positive osmosis.

Social cohesion requires the harmonization of wages, rights, privileges and hopes among members of the same class level, between levels of the same class (intra-class); and between different social classes (inter-class).

CONCLUSION

They do not exist "exportable" models of society that could serve as paradigms. However, the success or failure of certain policies can teach us valuable useful lessons to develop our own models. They also prevent us from falling into errors committed in the past.

Beyond being a mean or a trendy concept, social cohesion is a guiding principle of public policy. The expected result is the creation of a "social fabric" and structuring of different groups and communities within a country. It promotes the consolidation of democratic institutions and the implementation of sustainable public policies that provide citizens opportunities; ensure their protection and allow them to develop their capacities. To finish, social cohesion aims to strengthen institutions and policies that can improve the social well-being and living conditions.

REFERENCES


