

SOCIAL COHESION IN EUROPE
SOCIAL COHESION AND INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS:
A FOCUS ON LUXEMBOURG

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THE QUESTION ADDRESSED

How far can intergenerational relations be considered as playing a role in social cohesion?

And so far what are the challenges of intergenerational relations in this context?



HOW TO DEFINE SOCIAL COHESION?

Many definitions but one consensus: social cohesion is a multidimensional concept.

"the capacity of a society to ensure the welfare of all its members, minimizing disparities and avoiding polarization. A cohesive society is a mutually supportive community of free individuals pursuing these common goals by democratic means" (COE, 2004, p.1).

- > equality, solidarity and liberty for each individual
- > in a democratic framework



HOW TO DEFINE A GENERATION?

Anthropology: family, the ranked descent within a lineage

Demography: age cohorts, age groups
'youth vs the elderly'

Sociology: people sharing a same period of history,
a social unit

-> interaction of all these status: identity



THE CONTRACT ACROSS GENERATIONS

The question of *contract across generations* is central at family level and society level

Many changes have affected it:

1. Extension of life course
2. Change in age structure of the population
3. Change in family structures and relationships



6 DIMENSIONS OF INTERGENERATIONAL SOLIDARITY

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. affectual solidarity | <i>(sentiments)</i> |
| 2. Associational solidarity | <i>(contacts)</i> |
| 3. consensual solidarity | <i>(norms and values)</i> |
| 4. functional solidarity | <i>(material support)</i> |
| 5. normative solidarity | <i>(family values)</i> |
| 6. structural solidarity | <i>(geographic proximity)</i> |

(Bengtson)



A HIGH LEVEL OF INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS IN EUROPE

- coexistence of 3 to 5 generations
- residential autonomy WITH solidarities (*'distant cohabitation'*)
- solidarity: social contacts and mutual support
- financial: private solidarity coming from the opposite direction of public solidarity (*from the oldest to the youngest*)
- private-public partnership in keeping the elderly at home
- forms of solidarity are varying across social classes
- a high level of financial transfers for migrants



THE CASE OF LUXEMBOURG (1/3)

Decrease of the households' size and change in the family structure (increase of the number of people living alone)

High level of associational solidarity: at least weekly contacts with parents (70% or more with parents living in LU; around 45-50% with parents living abroad)

High functional solidarity (providing and receiving), and particularly for the 25-34 years old, with parents abroad
And people who are living alone (single, lone parent, divorced) are more active than the others.

-> change and adaptation of the family



THE CASE OF LUXEMBOURG (2/3)

- 91% residents see family as very important in their life
- 83 % feel really concerned about the living conditions of their family members (all generations together)

When observing the baby-boomers:

- solidarity towards children, parents and grandchildren
- women are more active than men with aging parents
- financial transfers toward the young generations with high differences across social classes.



THE CASE OF LUXEMBOURG (3/3)

- The migratory context: (45% foreigners, among them 36% Portuguese)
 - Interaction between different types of welfare state impacts the solidarity between generations
 - Ex. A generous public system towards the elderly (pensions and care) in Luxembourg vs a less generous pension system with less services provided to the elderly in Portugal
- Different values and norms regarding filial obligations
 - > more intense financial solidarity toward the ascendants and less towards the descendents



THE FUTURE OF THE INTERGENERATIONAL CONTRACT IN LUX.?

a majority of residents in favour of the current contributory system

All ages concerned

But a difference regarding nationalities

Luxembourger: 64%

Portuguese: 48%

border countries: 74% (FR, DE, BE)



3 CHALLENGES FOR SOCIAL COHESION RELATED TO INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS

Social cohesion, intergenerational relations and gender

the provision of care for children and the elderly?

Social cohesion, intergenerational relations and migration

coordination of European social security systems?



3 CHALLENGES FOR SOCIAL COHESION RELATED TO INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS

Social cohesion, intergenerational relations and equality.

the type of solidarity and social classes

Financial transfers are reducing intergenerational inequalities but maintain or increase intragenerational inequalities.

What about the evolution of the welfare state in the current context of growing intra countries inequalities?
This will be shaped by policy makers.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

