

Social cohesion and inclusive social development in Latin America

A proposal for an era
of uncertainties

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This document was prepared by Carlos Maldonado Valera, Social Affairs Officer; María Luisa Marinho, Associate Social Affairs Officer; Claudia Robles, Social Affairs Officer; and Varinia Tromben, Social Affairs Officer, of the Social Development Division of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), in the framework of the knowledge for development project "Analysis of inclusion and social cohesion in Latin America and the Caribbean in the light of the extended social pillar of the 2030 Agenda", implemented by ECLAC and the Spanish Cooperation Training Centre in Santa Cruz de la Sierra (Plurinational State of Bolivia) of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) and financed by the INTERCOONECTA programme of AECID.

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Foreword

A little over a decade ago, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) proposed a conceptual and measurement-centred approach to social cohesion based on its own tradition of thought. At the time, the topic was in vogue in the academic and political spheres of the European Union, with the global social agenda situated halfway between the follow-up on the major United Nations development conferences of the 1990s and the framework of the Millennium Development Goals, and with the Washington Consensus in sharp decline as a public policy reference point. In that undertaking, ECLAC reformulated the concept of social cohesion from a Latin American perspective, which contributed to the renewal of a broader social and policy agenda in which inequality gaps, citizens' rights and democracy were central elements. ECLAC received significant support for the development of that proposal from the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID)—one of its long-standing strategic partners—on account of its shared interest in consolidating an ambitious, rights-focused social agenda.

Building on that valuable foundation, and continuing the collaboration between ECLAC and AECID, this Knowledge for Development project "Analysis of inclusion and social cohesion in Latin America and the Caribbean in light of the social pillar of the 2030 Agenda" has been prepared within the framework of the Spanish Cooperation Plan for Knowledge Transfer, Exchange and Management in Latin America and the Caribbean (INTERCOONECTA). The project took up the challenge of reopening the discussion of social cohesion in a very different global and regional context, albeit one with persistent challenges and bottlenecks inherited from the past. Primarily, new global points of reference have emerged, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, together with regional ones, such as the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development.

In adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, the countries of the world pledged to address the main obstacles facing humanity in its pursuit of a development model that combines social inclusion, economic growth and environmental sustainability. As a result, the fight against inequality, the eradication of poverty, the adoption of more sustainable production and consumption patterns and the building of fairer and more inclusive societies stand at the forefront in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in their targets and indicators.

With the adoption of the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development at the third session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2019, the

region's governments agreed, through their ministries for social development (or equivalent entities), to apply certain principles, strategic guidelines and measures in line with the 2030 Agenda in designing their social development policies and programmes. Emphasis was placed on the need to apply a rights-based approach, on a form of universalism that is sensitive to differences, on the construction of comprehensive and universal social protection systems and on social and labour inclusion policies with a solid institutional framework.

Latin America and the Caribbean have made significant social advances in recent decades. That notwithstanding, the region still faces numerous structural challenges: stagnated or rising levels of poverty and vulnerability; and persistent levels of inequality in all areas of well-being and rights, with considerable gaps determined by socioeconomic status, gender, ethnicity and race, stages of the life cycle, territorial location and migratory status. Historically, the region's inequality has been exacerbated and reproduced by a culture of privilege, whereby social hierarchies and the profound asymmetries that exist in power and access to opportunities are seen as natural. Today, these challenges have been magnified by the devastation caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and its aftermath, which have complicated the fulfilment of the SDGs both within the region and beyond and have profoundly affected people's lives and levels of well-being, against a regional backdrop that had already been accumulating unmet expectations and intense social unrest among the citizenry.

In a context in which the vast majority of its structural gaps are widening, the region still faces the colossal challenge of reducing its soaring inequalities, which are unjust, inefficient and undermine the social fabric. In addition to these difficulties, Latin America and the Caribbean is also experiencing a lack of public trust in institutions and a significant increase in new demands from social movements and demonstrations in several countries. Added to this are new contingencies and uncertainties, such as transformations in the world of work, different manifestations of violence, increasing and diversifying migration, the acceleration of climate change and the onslaught of natural disasters.

In this very complex scenario, the discussion on social cohesion is returning to the forefront, as this invisible matrix that allows the peaceful and voluntary coexistence of people is suffering tension, facing erosion and being questioned. At the same time, the cooperation and trust of citizens are essential if the current crisis is to be overcome: most obviously in the field of health, but also in what will be a social and economic reconstruction effort that must build resilience and sustainable development and that, if it is to work, must be able to convince people and unite their wills around a common cause.

With that in mind, this publication examines the concept of social cohesion in the light of an explicitly democratic and equality-oriented focus. On that basis, it also defines a framework for measuring and monitoring social cohesion in Latin America through comparable indicators that are already available. Finally, it identifies a number of priority public policy areas that are crucial if progress is to be made towards this model of social cohesion. We hope that these contributions allow social cohesion to serve as one of the essential points of reference in the design of public policies in pursuit of sustainable development with equality.

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Abstract

Social cohesion is born of the links that unite and identify people and that motivate them to participate in society and feel that they belong to it. A little over a decade ago, ECLAC developed a fruitful framework for conceptualizing and appraising social cohesion adapted to the Latin American and Caribbean region. This publication returns to that significant contribution and the discussion on social cohesion to address the region's pending debts in terms of well-being, equality and the effective enjoyment of rights, incorporating new global and regional reference points such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development, which aim to forge social development policies that "leave no one behind" and bolster the region's sustainable development. At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic and its grave consequences in all areas of social, economic and political life is a major disruptive factor that has further strained the foundations of social cohesion in our societies.

In the light of that complex panorama, this document reviews the concept of social cohesion and contributes new elements and proposals for defining a model of social cohesion based in democracy and oriented towards equality, together with a framework for measuring it at the regional level. It also identifies specific areas of public policy for promoting that model of social cohesion that would contribute to inclusive and sustainable social development. To that end, after a historical review of the different approaches and functions of the concept of social cohesion, including the focus adopted by ECLAC, it proposes strategic guidelines for formulating a model of democratic and equality-oriented social cohesion in the current context. A measurement framework is then derived from that proposal, offering an updated set of objective and subjective indicators in an attempt to identify the constituent and enabling elements of social cohesion in the region. Finally, it identifies the main areas of public policy that should be prioritized in order to encourage the development of a public agenda for social cohesion in the region.

Introduction

Social cohesion is a notion that has more than one meaning, and its scope and usefulness vary depending on whether it is seen as a concept for analysing social reality, a policy objective or a set of specific or desirable characteristics within a society. A little over a decade ago, ECLAC produced an important and profound work that developed an approach to social cohesion adapted to our region and that linked it to public policies and structural challenges for the development of Latin America, including a framework for its measurement (ECLAC, 2007a and 2010a). This occurred at a particular global and regional juncture, marked by multiple unknowns after the end of the Cold War and the recent return to democracy in the region that was, paradoxically, accompanied by the rise of the so-called neoliberal paradigm and that left large unaddressed debts in the areas of well-being, equality and the effective enjoyment of rights. In that context, the prospect of social cohesion —then also under development within the European Union— invited a questioning of the model in force in Latin America and calls for the construction of cohesive societies based on effective political, economic and social citizenship.

Based on that seminal work, the aims of the ECLAC-AECID project “Analysis of inclusion and social cohesion in Latin America and the Caribbean in light of the social pillar of the 2030 Agenda” include revisiting that discussion and emphasizing its implications in a regional and global context that has both changed rapidly and seen the emergence of new challenges for sustainable development. For the same reason, the context has new reference points, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development or, as regards social development policies, the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development, along with new tensions, conflicts and uncertainties caused by a series of epochal transformations, including the crisis of politics, evidence of the limits and unsustainability of the current development model and the need to make progress towards a care society in the face of phenomena such as climate change, environmental degradation and the role of new technologies in social and labour relations. The COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath in all areas of social, economic and political life is the most recent disruptive element in the set of tensions that challenge the possibility of democracy-based and equality-oriented social cohesion.

Against that backdrop, the objective of this document is to review the concept in the light of current reality and previous approaches, but incorporating new elements and proposals, in order to reorient the main dimensions towards a measurement framework and to identify some specific areas of public policy that are particularly critical for promoting social cohesion in the proposed terms and that can contribute to inclusive and sustainable social development. The main message —reinforced by the

COVID-19 pandemic, its aftermath and the need for a renewed role of the State—is that social cohesion must be one of the permanent, structural goals of public policy and that the possible effects of public action on it must be constantly monitored, while remaining aware of the substantial contributions that can be made by a social cohesion oriented towards equality in all areas of sustainable development. Accordingly, chapter I identifies the main conceptual elements of the discussion of social cohesion and inclusion, equality and inclusive social development undertaken by ECLAC since the mid-2000s and provides references to analyses conducted in the global literature, including how they are distinguished from other related concepts such as social inclusion, social capital or social integration. It also examines various frameworks for measuring social cohesion from within and outside the region in an attempt to identify shortcomings and successes.

Chapter II explains the motivations—primarily political, given the evidence of ongoing political and social fractures—that are driving the re-examination of these concepts in the current circumstances, and then restates the notion of social cohesion with a more developed value orientation, especially in light of the new reference points shaping the debate on sustainable development, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development. It contrasts the partly more auspicious historical background of the earlier discussions on social cohesion with the current political, economic, social, institutional and environmental context at the global, regional and local levels.

It also underscores the crisis of expectations between unsatisfied citizen demands and public responses which, together with the region's persistent inequalities, could lead to a scenario of growing unrest (as has already been identified in previous studies), instability and political polarization, as has been seen in some of the region's countries, and the loss of crucial opportunities for consolidating sustainable development and achieving greater equality in the region. In view of that, the imperative is to address the factors that explain deficits in social cohesion and to identify policies for responding to them, which requires a discussion on how to understand social cohesion in the current circumstances and how to promote national policies to strengthen it. Given the challenges of the present moment, an argument is made for an adjectivized social cohesion, since the goal is for it to be democratic, sustainable and able to respond to the old and new disruptive factors stressing it at the local, national and global levels.

Chapter III offers some strategic guidelines for measuring social cohesion in 19 Latin American and Caribbean countries. Specifically, it proposes an updated set of objective and subjective indicators to characterize the constitutive and enabling elements of social cohesion, grouped into several dimensions and subdimensions. At the country level, the proposal leads to a scoreboard of indicators that can, in each case, illustrate the most and least problematic areas for social cohesion. This framework allows comparisons to be made between countries, without limiting the analysis and discussion to a ranking of countries ordered hierarchically according to a single synthetic index.

Finally, chapter IV identifies the main areas of public policy that should be prioritized in order to encourage the development of a public agenda for social cohesion. To that end, it distinguishes between various policy themes and sectors, the most relevant elements of which will ultimately depend on the most acute social cohesion challenges in each national context. A brief conclusion offers some thoughts about possible future prospects, while remaining aware that uncertainty is a central and inescapable feature of our reality.

I. Evolution of the social cohesion concept: analytical foundations and related concepts¹

A. Origins and applications of a concept

The term “social cohesion” originates in fundamental questions about the elements that link people to each other and to society as a whole and that motivate them to be part of it. Those questions became crucial at the time of the Industrial Revolution, when countless social and economic changes radically challenged the traditional loyalties of individuals based on shared customs, religion, tradition and territory. At the end of the nineteenth century, in his text *The Social Division of Labour*, Émile Durkheim stated that pre-modern societies, in which there was a rudimentary division of labour, were dominated by what he called mechanical solidarity: the idea of a collective conscience, composed of ideas, values, norms and other concepts anchored in territory, tradition and shared experience (Durkheim, 2007).

As a result of a more complex social division of labour and an increasing interdependence between the functions performed by people within that division, Durkheim noted the emergence instead of an organic solidarity that does not depend on a shared collective consciousness, nor on other traditional factors that bound people to others, but rather is generated by the need to cooperate in response to interdependence in more complex societies. Institutions and social relations are what create links and, therefore, generate solidarity among individuals. According to Durkheim, one precondition for the existence of solidarity—whether mechanical or organic—is a moral dimension: in other words, a system of norms and values. Norms and values did not disappear with the advent of industrialization, but their basis in tradition and custom was challenged and they were transformed through new narratives. That view contrasted with other analyses, especially that of Marx, for whom specialization and the division of labour in the industrial age led to the formation of new conflicting social classes, whose position of dominance or domination (and worldview) derived from their relationship to the means of production. From that perspective, since conflict between social classes was at the forefront, the notion of social cohesion made little sense, notwithstanding the possible emergence of solidarity or class identity. Only in the final instance would the victory of the proletarian class over the others lead to a new peaceful phase of stability and equality (Aron, 1997).

¹ The authors are grateful to Catalina Cea and Javiera Muñoz for their significant support and contributions to this chapter.

Later political and social changes in industrial societies also led to shifts in how the concept was defined. While Durkheim was optimistic that industrial transformations modified the foundations for social cohesion but did not eliminate it, Talcott Parsons (1937) had a functionalist view: he saw society as a system composed of cultural, social and personality systems, where social cohesion emerged through the integration of individuals and their internalization of values and norms. Despite their weaknesses, he saw the nation State and the capitalist system as the form of political organization best placed to create social cohesion. The dynamics of that system and its continuity were paramount, as opposed to the individual, since the former generated the orientations and consensus necessary for the social integration of the latter. However, one thing that both Durkheim and Parsons had in common was that they saw cohesion as a product of interdependence and existing social ties and the shared norms and values that emerge from them (Jenson, 1998).

Other theoretical and political currents —such as social democracy, Christian democracy and positive liberalism— questioned the emphasis that these authors and many others placed on social interdependence and the values derived from it as generators of cohesion. Instead, they identified the State as the main actor that can, through the active promotion of well-being, justice and social rights, generate solidarity and identification among people in society. These ideas gained particular currency with the emergence of welfare states in Europe and some other Western countries after the Second World War, and later through the numerous social movements that arose from the 1960s onwards, such as the Civil Rights movement in the United States, feminism and numerous student movements. It was then that social cohesion also began to be problematized as a public policy issue (Jenson, 1998).

In Europe, with the desire to build closer integration among the countries of an expanding European Union, the concept of social cohesion was at the top of the political agenda, particularly after the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. In 1997, the European Council identified social cohesion as a priority in the region and an essential complement to the promotion of human rights and dignity. The difference is that this time the aim was not focused on a single country, but among the inhabitants of a linguistically, religiously and historically diverse region. Moreover, the legacy of an intermittent centuries-long state of war was compounded by significant migratory flows from outside Europe, further complicating the challenge of building a European solidarity or identity (Sojo, 2017b). Paradoxically, the notion of social cohesion was still thought of at the national level, as shown by the Laeken indicators devised for measuring it, but European policy focused its attention on reducing the disparities between countries and their various component territories.

The disruptive effect of certain current phenomena —especially migration, automation and digitization in the world of work, and nationalism and populism as responses to those tensions— have made social cohesion a cross-cutting concern in institutions, organizations and States with a wide ideological diversity. Although opinions of how greater unity should be generated differ, all recognize that the absence or weakness of social cohesion represents a threat to the existing social order. Even organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have expressed concern about the phenomenon over the past decade (Sojo, 2017a; OECD, 2011).

In Latin America, the term is beginning to be used and included more frequently in public policy debates, beyond academic circles, under the aegis of cooperation projects between the European Union and Latin America. Discussions have begun on how the concept could be both adapted to and useful in a context of very young democracies, high inequality and high social polarization. Specifically, at the Third Summit between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Guadalajara in 2004, social cohesion was for the first time explicitly included in a declaration as a cooperation priority between the two regions.

Within ECLAC, the discussion began in 2006 when, in collaboration with the European Commission's EUROsociAL project, the first seminar on the topic was organized in Panama City. The first publication was produced from the papers and presentations collected, in which several of the region's countries and various academics presented different national experiences and a range of conceptual approaches.

Then, with additional support from AECID, the first ECLAC conceptual document—*Inclusion and a sense of belonging in Latin America and the Caribbean*—was published in 2007, setting out the definition of social cohesion used up to that point. This document defines it as “the dialectic between instituted social inclusion and exclusion mechanisms and the responses, perceptions and attitudes of citizens towards the way these mechanisms operate”, and which translate into a sense of belonging to society (ECLAC, 2007a, pp. 18–19). Based on that conceptual definition, four ECLAC documents were published on the subject of social cohesion in the ensuing years, the most recent in 2011. This approach allowed the linking of dimensions of reality that usually ran on parallel tracks, such as social policy and the value of solidarity spread through society, synergies between social equality and the political legitimacy of democracy, the transmission of skills and capacities and the empowerment of citizens, socioeconomic and technological transformations and changes in social interaction and in collective subjectivity, the promotion of greater equality and greater recognition of diversity, and socioeconomic gaps and a sense of belonging (ECLAC, 2011b and 2010b).

B. Main substantive differences between various approaches to social cohesion

Social cohesion (or the lack of it) has been connected to many different processes and discussions, such as political polarization, social protection, vulnerability to poverty, economic volatility, inequality, quality of life and trust in institutions. Therefore, the different meanings given to the concept and its constituent elements by the various approaches, as well as the foundations for them, are important. Otherwise, and as indicated by Pornschlegel and Jürgensen (2019), the risk is for social cohesion to become an excessively broad catch-all term with no essence of its own, and for it to be confused with elements that have no clear interrelationship.

An exhaustive review of the literature allows an analysis of the different definitions of social cohesion (see annex, table 1) and their regrouping into three broad groups according to the constituent elements considered.² These are not mutually exclusive, as some approaches consider two or even all three of the following criteria:

- **Social cohesion as shared values and a sense of belonging:** This is the definition of the General Commissariat of Planning of France (Delevoye, 1997) and of Güemes (2019).³ This type of approach corresponds in part to the original proposal put forward by Durkheim and classical sociology. If common values and a sense of unity exist, social cohesion necessarily does so too. Approaches that emphasize the role of shared values and a sense of belonging as the foundations of social cohesion lead to two questions. First, whether an optimal or desirable level of social cohesion exists: in other words, at one point can one affirm the *sufficient* existence of shared values and a sense of belonging for a desirable level of social cohesion or for a type of cohesion characteristic of a society? Another important question is that, in the face of a diversity or plurality of different or possible values, is any set of values better than the others as the foundation for a society's harmonious existence? In other words, are all shared values that generate a strong sense of belonging equally valid or desirable? Finally, what is their origin and are they able to evolve towards alternative models and to deal with change?
- **Social cohesion as trust linked to the commitment and ability to work together:** This approach sees social cohesion as a quality that translates into a cooperative collective life, even when the values held by people are diverse. Interpersonal and institutional trust accompanies these approaches, either as a defining characteristic of social cohesion, or as

² The distinction between the first two had already been developed by the Council of Europe (Battaini-Dragoni and Dominioni, 2003).

³ For Delevoye (1997), these are social processes that help instil in individuals a feeling of community belonging and of their recognition as members thereof, whereas Güemes states that social cohesion “addresses the well-being of group members and shared values such as trust and equal opportunities in society” (Güemes, 2019, p. 13).

something that enables commitment and the ability to act collectively and cooperate. The basis of trust is, in turn, a matter for debate, as it can be linked to such different factors as, for example, the existence of the rule of law, the order and predictability of which confers trust in long-term social interactions, or to custom and tradition as accepted ways of ordering social interactions and which, as result, generate trust. The approaches of many international organizations consider that the plurality that characterizes twenty-first century societies is not, nor has it been, an impediment to building cohesive societies. The Economic Commission for Africa (2016) —which takes up the ideas of Porschlegel and Jürgensen (2019), the New Zealand Ministry of Social Development (Spoonley and others, 2005), Dragolov and others (2013), De Beer (2014), Janmaat (2011), Woolcock (2011), the World Bank (2012) and Stanley (2003)— defines social cohesion in that way.⁴ However, these approaches do not validate the necessity of a reduction in inequality per se, or the implementation of public policies in pursuit thereof, except to the extent that such a reduction improves levels of trust. They also raise the problem of the origin of that trust or capacity to act collectively and cooperatively and, therefore, of its durability, permanence or replicability in other contexts or in the face of new disruptive elements.

- **Social cohesion as the promotion of well-being and the reduction of gaps:** This third category includes the definitions of Barba Solano (2011), Cuéllar (2018), the European Committee for Social Cohesion (2000), the Club de Madrid (2009), the Inter-American Development Bank (Ferroni, Mateo Díaz and Payne, 2006), the Walloon Institute of Evaluation, Foresight and Statistics (2018), Cuéllar (2009) and the Council of Europe (Battaini-Dragoni and Dominioni, 2003). They contend that social cohesion implies, among other things, a decrease in inequality and the promotion of human rights, non-discrimination and tolerance. This approach is eminently prescriptive, since it relies on tools that make it possible to generate diminishing gaps and greater well-being. It also raises the possibility of social cohesion not existing in a society with a strong sense of belonging but where inequalities and gaps persist among its members. Thus, several possible forms of social cohesion could exist, but only some would be compatible with certain basic ideals that guide human coexistence.⁵

Mixed conceptualizations are also found, such as those developed by the Canadian Council on Social Cohesion (2000), OECD (2011) and UNDP (2016), which take up two of these features. The definition of the United Nations (2016), for example, interconnects the three elements, considering social cohesion as the absence of fractures or division within society and its capacity to manage such divisions through the ability to generate a sense of belonging and trust, to combat exclusion and marginalization and to offer its members the opportunity for upward mobility. It could therefore be said that these mixed approaches tend to consider a greater diversity of constituent elements and factors that shape social cohesion. Finally, it should be noted that for all the approaches, change —and, above all, contact with diversity— is a challenge. For example, and more specifically, the arrival of migratory flows with different behaviours, customs, cultures and traditions places strains on the existing status quo and poses the challenge of incorporating the diverse or the different into the processes that generate social cohesion. Something similar occurs internally: that is, the capacity to generate social cohesion in the presence of different collectives or territorial identities at the subnational level.

⁴ For example, for the World Bank (2012; Grootaert, Thierry and Van Bastelar, 2002), social cohesion implies a convergence between societal groups that provides a framework within which those groups can, at the very least, coexist peacefully.

⁵ The Committee equates social cohesion with a society's ability to ensure the well-being of all its members, minimize disparities and avoid polarization: a cohesive society is a mutually supportive community of free individuals pursuing those common goals through democratic means.

C. Some principles related to social cohesion: inclusion/exclusion, integration, social capital and cultural capital

The literature reveals a series of key terms that are generally related to the concept of social cohesion and, on occasions, confused with it. They are: inclusion, exclusion, integration, social capital and cultural capital.

1. Social inclusion

Social inclusion is a key principle related to social cohesion, and it orients the discussion towards the specific possibilities for full participation that society offers its members. According to Le Grand, Piachaud and Hills (2002), the term originates in the work of Max Weber who, at the end of the nineteenth century, said that social inclusion was the opposite of social exclusion, defining the latter as an attempt by one group to secure a privileged position at the expense of some other group. In the twentieth century, the term was taken up again in line with a public policy concern in France to identify the social protection system's "non-included" or "excluded" (Lenoir, 1974). Later, in the process of creating the European Economic Community and, subsequently, the European Economic Area, the concept was used to identify problems therein with a view to building greater social cohesion among the region's societies (Bachtler and Wren, 2006; Farole, Rodríguez-Pose and Storper, 2011).

The literature distinguishes between definitions that maintain that greater social inclusion means improving the conditions of participation of marginalized people in society but without explicitly mentioning issues such as poverty reduction, inequality and polarization (Ritzen and Woolcock, 2000; Schindlmayr, Huber and Zenelev, 2007; Di Nardo, Cortese and McAnaney, 2010), and those that do. This distinction is relevant since, if the economic aspect is not taken into account, inclusion would mean equalizing people's possibilities to participate in civil society groups and in the political system regardless of whether they live in poverty or not. On this point, Barba Solano (2011) classifies these two positions as normative and non-normative points of view.

The first sees the elimination of inequality, poverty and exclusion as a necessary condition for social inclusion (and for social cohesion). Here social cohesion and inclusion are understood not as shared values or the ability to work together, but rather as the promotion of well-being, which necessarily requires State intervention; in other words, it cannot be left —or at least not entirely— to either the market or other private institutions (Berger-Schmitt, 2002). On the contrary, it recognizes that if a non-normative vision of inclusion is adopted, we merely limit ourselves to having a cohesive, well-organized society with a high level of trust, all of which can be compatible with a subsidiary State and high levels of poverty and social inequality.

In accordance with the ECLAC and United Nations definitions of social inclusion (see table 1), this concept must be seen from a normative and multidimensional perspective, since meeting the 2030 Agenda requires that people see their objective material conditions improve and enjoy the greatest possible effective enjoyment of their rights. That requires reducing poverty and extreme poverty and guaranteeing people's access to such basic services as education, health, drinking water and electricity. Subjective conditions must also be improved: inequalities in access to these goods must be reduced and participation in social and political venues must be expanded, both of which are specifically addressed in SDGs 10 and 16, respectively. It must also be borne in mind that although the phenomenon of poverty is related to social inclusion and exclusion, the two are not synonymous. Nor does it imply only economic exclusion: political, social and cultural exclusion also come into play. Inclusion emphasizes the barriers that prevent people from participating in social life, and those impediments vary according to the national context. In order to foster inclusion, attention must also be paid to the different sources of exclusion faced by minority groups, such as women, Afrodescendants and indigenous peoples, migrants, children and adolescents, older persons, persons with disabilities and LGBTIQ persons.

Second, inclusion must be defined in terms of a specific geographical area with respect to inclusion in the enjoyment of certain rights, goods or essential generators of well-being: they make sense because they could be available to everyone. For example, uneven social inclusion at the local level—across cities or between different regions, for example— could lead to patterns of exclusion among people living outside those communities who do not share in those benefits.

Table 1
Definitions of social inclusion

World Bank (2013, p. 50)	The process of improving the terms for individuals and groups to take part in society [and also] the process of improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of people, disadvantaged on the basis of their identity, to take part in society.
ECLAC (2017a)	The realization of rights, social engagement, access to education, health and care, access to basic infrastructure services, and the availability of material resources such as income and housing. It requires a process of improving economic, social, cultural and political conditions for people's full participation in society, with both objective and perceived dimensions.
Commission of the European Communities (Di Nardo, Cortese and McAnaney, 2010, p. 1)	Social inclusion is a process which ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in the economic, social and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living and well-being that is considered normal in the society in which they live. It ensures they have greater participation in decision-making which affects their lives and that they can access their fundamental rights.
Hopenhayn (2006, p. 38)	Inclusion involves efforts to adapt the system in such a way that it can incorporate a range of actors and individuals in their capacity as such.
United Nations (2016, p. 20)	The process of improving the terms of participation in society for people who are disadvantaged on the basis of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic or other status, through enhanced opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights. Thus, social inclusion is both a process and a goal.
OECD (2011, p. 53)	Social inclusion is measured by such aspects of social exclusion as poverty, inequality and social polarization.
Schindlmayr, Huber and Zenelev (2007)	Political arena of social inclusion: implies that government entities proactively encourage and facilitate the active participation of citizens throughout the entire policy management and implementation process. One of its privileged aspects is mainstreaming: that is, a strategy that allows the concerns and experiences of excluded groups to be an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes.
Sen (2000)	It entails the incorporation of the excluded into mechanisms for building and transmitting capacities that allow the vicious circles of poverty to be reversed so that people can pursue their life plans in accordance with their own values.

Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of World Bank, *Inclusion Matters: The Foundation for Shared Prosperity—overview*, Washington, D.C., 2013; Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Linkages between the Social and Production Spheres: Gaps, Pillars and Challenges (LC/CDS.2/3)*, Santiago, 2017; L. Di Nardo, V. Cortese and D. McAnaney, *The European Social Fund and Social Inclusion*, Belgium, European Union, 2010; M. Hopenhayn, "Cohesión social: una perspectiva en proceso de elaboración", *Cohesión social en América Latina y el Caribe: una revisión perentoria de algunas de sus dimensiones (LC/W.120)*, A. Sojo and A. Uthoff (eds.), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2006; United Nations, *Leaving No One Behind: the Imperative of Inclusive Development. Report on the World Social Situation 2016 (ST/ESA/362)*, New York, 2016; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *Perspectives on Global Development 2012: Social Cohesion in a Shifting World*, Paris, 2011; T. Schindlmayr, B. Huber and S. Zenelev, "Inclusive policy processes", *DESA Discussion Paper*, 2007; and A. Sen, "Social exclusion: concept, application, and scrutiny", *Social Development Papers*, vol. 1, 2000.

Another issue to be analysed is whether inclusion is a means, an end or both. As can be seen on table 1, the World Bank (Ritzen and Woolcock, 2000) and the Commission of the European Communities (Di Nardo, Cortese and McAnaney, 2010) see social inclusion as a means. The other organizations do not specify that. The United Nations (2016) sees it as both a goal and a process. When it is a process, social inclusion must be pursued as an end in itself, and that would be desirable even if it does not bring about changes in economic structures, social behaviours or institutions, since it would lead to greater participation in social programmes and other social and political venues. This would be especially positive if it were to increase among marginalized groups. Social inclusion as a goal implies that it will only be

useful if it leads to desirable outcomes, such as less violence, higher economic growth, greater stability and other factors that positively influence social cohesion.

However, a multidimensional vision of social inclusion is needed, since its benefits are not limited only to obtaining certain results, but also to a change in social and power relations. Thus, social inclusion is not merely constrained to the economic arena: rather, it includes all areas in which people may be excluded or discriminated against. That is why inclusion must be seen as both a desirable outcome and a process that generates changes in subjectivities. It must also be borne in mind that inclusion is a continuum, not an absolute, as people may be included in some areas but excluded in others, and degrees of inclusion are variable.

Inclusion and social cohesion are not synonymous, but in most of the approaches identified they are closely linked. The former is often seen as a necessary but not sufficient condition for social cohesion, especially in that it improves people's participation in society and provides them with skills or opportunities that assure them a standard of living deemed appropriate in their country or society. In Latin America, for example, ECLAC (2017a) argues that people must enjoy at least two forms of inclusion—social and labour—as these are key areas for generating well-being and the effective enjoyment of rights.

It should be noted that if social cohesion is understood only in terms of a sense of belonging (or trust) based on common values, the link with social inclusion or inequality is less central, particularly if those common values based on tradition or custom admit, coexist with or promote large social and status disparities between individuals. In contrast, according to a view of social cohesion that is as democratic (Sojo, 2017a and 2017b) and equality-focused, social inclusion is a central principle that facilitates certain enabling mechanisms, such as egalitarian social ties and mechanisms for the redistribution of risk and participation, which in turn create conditions conducive to this type of social cohesion.

2. Social exclusion

Social exclusion is often posited in the literature as the opposite of social inclusion and, therefore, is not often explicitly defined. As can be seen on table 2, OECD (2011) only refers to social exclusion as something to be avoided if the aim is to generate greater inclusion and, consequently, more social cohesion. From the point of view of its implications for public policy, a distinction must be drawn between those approaches that see exclusion as an incidental outcome—that is, as an unforeseen or undesired effect of the social order—and those that instead detect within it an intentionality or logic linked to relations of power, exploitation and discrimination.

Popay and others (2008) define exclusion as a process driven by unequal power relations at different levels. The United Nations (2016) and Levitas and others (2007) maintain that exclusion is primarily the inability to participate in social life, which can be a result not only of the material dimension, but also due to feelings of inferiority or alienation even in the presence of favourable economic conditions. Poverty reduction or economic inclusion measures may therefore not be sufficient on their own to end social exclusion; further action in the field of non-discrimination may be needed, as indicated by Barba Solano (2011).

The United Nations (2016) draws an important distinction with regard to excluded persons and divides them into two groups. First, there are those excluded on the basis of one or more characteristics that determine their exclusion (or risk of exclusion), such as unemployment, living with a disability or by gender. Second, there are people whose exclusion arises from their territory, beliefs or shared values and who recognize themselves as part of a collective, such as people excluded on the basis of their ethnicity, religion or descent (indigenous peoples, for example). People in the second group may be more vulnerable, as mobilizing collectively may be more difficult since they may lack the physical proximity or greater interaction enjoyed by people in the first group. However, this can be modified through civil society actions, historical processes of recognition, the elimination of all forms of discrimination or public inclusion policies that generate greater interactions between people excluded on account of a particular attribute, condition or characteristic.

Table 2
Definitions of social exclusion

United Nations (2016, p. 18)	Social exclusion describes a state in which individuals are unable to participate fully in economic, social, political and cultural life, as well as the process leading to and sustaining such a state. Thus, social exclusion entails not only material deprivation but also lack of agency or control over important decisions as well as feelings of alienation and inferiority.
Levitas and others (2007, p. 9)	Social exclusion is a complex and multidimensional process. It involves the lack or denial of resources, rights, goods and services, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people in a society, whether in economic, social, cultural or political arenas. It affects both the quality of life of individuals and the equity and cohesion of society as a whole.
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2004, p. 2)	Social exclusion is what can happen when people suffer from a combination of linked problems, such as unemployment, inadequate skills, low income, poor housing, serious crime, poor health and family breakdown.
Popay and others (2008, p. 2)	Exclusion consists of dynamic, multidimensional processes driven by unequal power relationships interacting across four main dimensions—economic, political, social and cultural—and at different levels including individual, household, group, community, country and global levels. It results in a continuum of inclusion/exclusion characterized by unequal access to resources, capabilities and rights which leads to health inequalities.

Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of United Nations, *Leaving No One Behind: The Imperative of Inclusive Development. Report on the World Social Situation 2016* (ST/ESA/362), New York, 2016; R. Levitas and others, *The Multi-dimensional Analysis of Social Exclusion*, University of Bristol, 2007; Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, *The Social Exclusion Unit* (04SEU02049), London, 2004; and J. Popay and others, *Understanding and Tackling Social Exclusion: Final Report to the WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health from the Social Exclusion Knowledge Network*, Geneva, World Health Organization (WHO), 2008.

As noted by ECLAC in *The social inequality matrix in Latin America* (2016a), people face multiple sources of exclusion, both fortuitously and because of discrimination and mutually reinforcing asymmetrical power relations; this is the case with indigenous peoples, who, in addition to exclusion due to ethnic discrimination, often suffer exclusion due to their location in rural territories, gender identity—in the case of indigenous women and/or LGBTI people—and other factors. Thus, it is interesting to see exclusion as a continuum as Popay and others (2008) do, since it is a complex process in which not all people are affected in the same ways, nor with the same intensity or at the same times. In short, as with social inclusion, exclusion and social cohesion are related concepts where the presence of the former constitutes one of the many factors that make the latter impossible: the equality-seeking social cohesion of a group is impossible if broad sectors are excluded from collective life.

3. Social integration

Social integration also refers to the extent to which people participate in social life, but it supposes or emphasizes an individual and sometimes imposed adaptation to the requirements or channels offered by the social order. Integration is therefore frequently confused with inclusion, and on occasions they are used as synonyms, despite conceptual differences both subtle and significant. Hewitt de Alcántara (1995) points out that the definitions of social integration lie on a continuum, at one end of which it is seen as synonymous with social inclusion and, at the other end, it is closer to the concept of assimilation. The concept has therefore been questioned in the literature, as it runs the risk of conditioning participation in collective life to the imposition (or renunciation) of ways of being.

According to OECD (2011), UNDP (2016) and the World Bank (Ritzen and Woolcock, 2000), integration is not a constituent element of social cohesion, except when the concept is used as a synonym for inclusion. Table 3 shows that the United Nations (2016) does consider it a constitutive element, stating that an integrated society is “a society for all in which every individual, each with rights and responsibilities, has an active role to play” (p. 21). As regards criticisms of the concept of integration, Xanthaki (2016) argues

that in practice the term has been used as an argument to put greater pressure on minorities to adapt to existing national values and not to focus on States' obligation to recognize and accommodate greater cultural diversity.

Table 3
Definitions of social integration

Hopenhayn (2006, p. 38)	<i>Broad definition:</i> A shared system of efforts and rewards, which is equalizing in its opportunities and meritocratic in its rewards, and where education and work constitute the two privileged, although not exclusive, mechanisms.
	<i>Critical definition:</i> Associated with mechanisms of cultural homogenization or systemic rationalization, where the cost of incorporation into the dynamics of modernization is uprooting from cultures of origin or one-dimensional humanity.
	<i>Restricted definition:</i> The dynamic and multifactorial process that enables people to participate in at least the minimum level of well-being that is consistent with the development achieved in a given country. It sets integration against marginalization.
United Nations (2016, p. 21)	A society for all in which every individual, each with rights and responsibilities, has an active role to play.
Schindlmayr, Huber and Zelenev (2007)	Dynamics of societies that are stable, safe and just, based on the promotion and protection of all human rights, as well as on non-discrimination, tolerance, respect for diversity, equal opportunities, solidarity, security and participation of all, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons.

Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of M. Hopenhayn, "Cohesión social: una perspectiva en proceso de elaboración", *Cohesión social en América Latina y el Caribe: una revisión perentoria de algunas de sus dimensiones* (LC/W.120), A. Sojo and A. Uthoff (eds.), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2006; United Nations, *Leaving No One Behind: the Imperative of Inclusive Development. Report on the World Social Situation 2016* (ST/ESA/362), New York, 2016; and T. Schindlmayr, B. Huber and S. Zelenev, "Inclusive policy processes", *DESA Discussion Paper*, 2007.

Cernea (1995) takes issue with the notion that development programmes necessarily generate—or should generate—greater social integration. In reality, when social systems deny rights to women, LGBTI people, ethnic minorities or others, it may be desirable for society to go through a process of disintegration followed by its reintegration into a society with different values. He holds that despite being traumatic events, social integration, disintegration and reintegration are historical processes that have occurred frequently.

Therefore, in terms of public policy and the practical enforcement of measures aimed at generating integration, account must be taken of the different approaches to the term "integration", which range along a continuum from a meaning similar to that of inclusion to that of assimilation, which entails the disappearance of the differences of some and homogenization around a dominant and/or majority group. Accordingly, it is preferable to use the concept of social inclusion rather than integration, based on a difference-sensitive universalism that ties in better with the 2030 Agenda and the idea of social cohesion in pursuit of equality.

4. Social capital

A fourth term related to social cohesion is "social capital", used especially in those approaches that focus on trust as a constitutive element. As a social science concept, it originated in the 1970s and was developed by Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988), with the notion popularized by the works of Putnam (1993). International organizations such as UNDP (2000), IDB (2001), OECD (2011) and the World Bank (Grootaert, Thierry and Van Bastelar, 2002) have also created their own definitions of the term, which are outlined on table 4 below. One commonality found in the different definitions is that it includes social networks, norms and reciprocal ties that build trust, facilitate collective action and are a source of social cohesion.

Table 4
Definitions of social capital

Arriagada (2003, p. 566)	The social capital of a social group can be understood as the effective capacity to mobilize —productively and for the benefit of the group as a whole— the associative resources found in the different social networks to which the group’s members have access.
Inter-American Development Bank (2001)	Norms and networks that facilitate collective action and contribute to common benefit.
World Bank (Grootaert, Thierry and Van Bastelar, 2002, p. 2)	Institutions, relationships, attitudes and values that govern interactions among people and contribute to economic and social development.
Bourdieu (1986, p. 248)	The aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition. The totality of resources based on belonging to a group.
Coleman (1988)	The ability of people to work together for shared purposes in groups and organizations.
Coleman (1988, p. 97)	Social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single entity but a variety of different entities, with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structures, and they facilitate certain actions of actors —whether persons or corporate actors— within the structure. Like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that would not be attainable in its absence. Like physical capital and human capital, social capital is not completely fungible but may be specific to certain activities. A given form of social capital that is valuable in facilitating certain actions may be useless or even harmful for others.
De Beer (2014)	In terms of urban regeneration, social organization and its networks in different neighbourhoods are forms of social capital. Both bonding capital and bridging capital exist. Bonding capital is exclusive to a community: the networks of relationships within a group or community, the glue that holds them together. Bridging capital is that which creates links between different groups or neighbourhoods. In its absence, society will not be cohesive but specific communities will be; this occurs, for example, in contexts of high ethnic, religious, social or other conflict.
Gündoğdu and others (2019)	Social capital can be defined as the value that individuals, groups, communities or places can gain as a result of the “investment in social relations, bonding similar people together and bridging diverse people, with norms of reciprocity”. [...] It refers to the value that can be generated through networks of interacting nodes (e.g. individuals, places).
Hopenhayn (2006, p. 38)	The symbolic heritage of society in the management of norms, networks and ties, which make it possible to reinforce collective action, lay the foundations for reciprocity in dealings and create greater synergies through group agreement on common objectives.
OECD (2011)	Social capital is the networks, together with shared norms, values and understandings, that facilitate cooperation within or among groups. OECD proposes three main categories of social capital: (i) Bonds: links to people based on a sense of common identity, such as family, close friends and people with shared culture or ethnicity, (ii) Bridges: links that stretch beyond a shared sense of identity, to distant friends, colleagues and associates, and (iii) Linkages: connections of a more vertical nature to persons further up or lower down the social ladder.
UNDP (2000, p. 110)	Social capital is the combination of three components: (i) informal relationships of trust and cooperation, such as those that arise in the family and the neighbourhood and among work and study colleagues, (ii) formal membership of organizations of different kinds, and (iii) a society’s framework of institutions, norms and values that fosters or inhibits relationships of trust and civic engagement.
Putnam (1993, pp. 1–2)	Features of social organization, such as networks, norms and trust, that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. Social capital enhances the benefits of investment in physical and human capital.

Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of I. Arriagada, “Capital social: potencialidades y limitaciones analíticas de un concepto”, *Estudios Sociológicos*, vol. XXI, No. 3, 2003; Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), “Iniciativa Interamericana de Capital Social, Ética y Desarrollo”, 2001; C. V. Grootaert, B. Thierry and T. Van Bastelar, *Understanding and Measuring Social Capital: A Multidisciplinary Tool for Practitioners*, Washington, D.C., The World Bank, 2002; P. Bourdieu, *Forms of Capital*, 1986; J. S. Coleman, “Social capital in the creation of human capital”, *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 94, 1988; S. F. De Beer, “Demythologising social cohesion: Towards a practical theological vision”, *Verbum et Ecclesia*, vol. 35, No. 2, 6 August 2014; D. Gündoğdu and others, “The bridging and bonding structures of place-centric networks: Evidence from a developing country”, *PLOS ONE*, vol. 14, No. 9, 2019; M. Hopenhayn, “Cohesión social: una perspectiva en proceso de elaboración”, *Cohesión social en América Latina y el Caribe: una revisión perentoria de algunas de sus dimensiones* (LC/W.120), A. Sojo and A. Uthoff (eds.), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2006; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *Perspectives on Global Development 2012: Social Cohesion in a Shifting World*, Paris, 2011; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Informe sobre desarrollo humano en Chile 2000: más sociedad para gobernar el futuro*, Santiago, 2000; and R. Putnam, “The prosperous community: social capital and public life”, *The American Prospect*, vol. 4, No. 13, 1993.

There has been much debate in the literature as to whether or not the presence of greater social capital —i.e. greater connectedness among individuals, participation in community organizations and strong organizational structures— helps explain various positive outcomes, such as higher levels of economic development. In the absence of conclusive results, one central issue for social cohesion is the distinction between, first, social capital that emerges from personal ties between peers —that is, between those who already belong to the same community or social group— and that has been called “bonding social capital” and, second, social capital built through ties between people who belong to different communities or groups (or between different communities) in cultural, social, ethnic, racial, geographic and other terms, known as “bridging social capital” (Granovetter, 1973). The first kind, social capital among similar people who already belong to the same community or group (family, ethnic, religious, linguistic or other), is not necessarily a factor of cohesion at the societal level. On the contrary, it can generate patterns of exclusion and conflict between social groups or communities that identify with and support each other *inwardly* but not with respect to society as a whole. In contrast, bridging social capital —which builds bridges between different people or groups— can be a powerful factor in generating social cohesion across society.

Both academics and international and regional organizations have applied this distinction, concluding that from the point of view of social cohesion, the presence of bonding social capital that unifies individuals and groups at the local, community or specific social sectoral level is not sufficient without the presence of bridges of recognition, trust and cooperation between the diverse and different components that make up a society. In fact, in some contexts, an excess of the former and absence of the latter can be adverse to greater cohesion, because it causes people to interact only within limited venues and to be distrustful of institutions or people belonging to external groups (Portes, 1998). It can also foster social exclusion if, as a result of bonding social capital, some people gain privileged access to networks of contacts that provide them with greater advantages in areas such as education, health, work, prestige, resources and others, as indicated by the social inequality matrix. Any conceptualization or study of social capital should therefore also include that distinction, and that is a matter of particular relevance for Latin America and the Caribbean, where inequality has a cultural dimension (the culture of privilege) closely associated with the presence of actors organized in networks that are internally unified and externally exclusive.

5. Cultural capital

The concept of “cultural capital” is related to that of social capital and, therefore, also to that of social cohesion. It was originally developed by Bourdieu (1984), who defined it as a collection of both individual and collective rules, knowledge and tastes. Three manifestations of it have been identified: objectified, institutionalized and embodied (*incorporé*) cultural capital. The first refers to the means or goods of cultural expression, such as literature, painting, dance, monuments and so on. Institutionalized cultural capital refers to the titles or diplomas conferred on people to confirm or highlight that they possess a certain cultural capital, distinguishing them with respect to others and establishing a hierarchy among them. These diplomas may cover primary and secondary education, university or postgraduate degrees, specific training, among others. Finally, there is embodied cultural capital, which is linked to the body and embodied in people. People do not acquire this capital immediately; instead, it accumulates over time. Much of it is transmitted only gradually and unconsciously, especially through socialization in family, school, professional and social groups and the like.

Social and cultural capital can be mutually reinforcing and not in an equalizing sense. The stock of social capital —such as the number of ties or networks that a person possesses— can be traced to the common cultural capital of the members of such networks. Other approaches, such as those of Lamont and Lareau (1988), Dimaggio and Mohr (1996) and Katsillis and Rubinson (1990), maintain that cultural capital refers to the tastes and preferences of socially privileged groups: such tastes and preferences are developed precisely to distinguish them from the rest and underscore their dominant or privileged

position. Seen in those terms, cultural capital is a tool that can be used to exclude certain groups socially, particularly the disadvantaged, and therefore helps perpetuate discrimination and the culture of privilege. Table 5 summarizes some of the definitions of cultural capital used in the literature.

Table 5
Definitions of cultural capital

Berkes and Folke (1994, p. 3)	Factors that provide human societies with the means and adaptations to deal with the natural environment and to actively modify it.
Bourdieu (1984)	The arrangement of taste or consumption of specific cultural manifestations that mark people as members of specific classes. It consists of three elements: (i) embodied capital (<i>or habitus</i>): the system of enduring dispositions that form an individual's character and guide his or her actions and tastes, (ii) objectified capital: the forms of cultural expression, such as painting, writing and dance, that are symbolically transmissible to others, and (iii) institutionalized capital: academic qualifications that establish the worth of the holder of a given qualification.
Collins (1987, p. 47)	The stock of ideas and concepts acquired from previous encounters.
Dimaggio and Mohr (1996)	Cultural capital refers to prestigious tastes, objects or styles validated by centres of cultural authority, which maintain and disseminate societal standards of value and serve collectively to clarify and periodically revise the cultural currency.
Katsillis and Rubinson (1990, p. 270)	Cultural capital is defined as competence in a society's high-status culture, its behaviours, habits and attitudes. It is often considered an important mechanism in the reproduction of educational and social hierarchies.
Lamont and Lareau (1988, p. 156)	Institutionalized —i.e. widely shared, high status— cultural signals (attitudes, preferences, formal knowledge, behaviours, goods and credentials) that are used for social and cultural exclusion.
Throsby (1999)	An asset that contributes to cultural value or the stock of cultural value embodied in an asset. This stock can in turn give rise to a flow of goods and services over time: in other words, to products that can have a cultural and economic value. The asset can exist in tangible or intangible form. The stock of tangible cultural capital assets exists in buildings, structures, sites and places of cultural significance (commonly referred to as "cultural heritage") and works of art and artefacts existing as private property: paintings, sculptures and other objects. These assets give rise to a flow of services that can be consumed as private and/or public goods that enter final consumption immediately, and/or can contribute to the production of future goods and services, including new cultural capital. Intangible cultural capital, in contrast, comprises the set of ideas, practices, beliefs, traditions and values that serve to identify and unite a given group of people; however, the group can be determined, along with the stock of works of art existing in the public domain as public goods, such as literature and music.

Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of F. Berkes and C. Folke, "Linking social and ecological systems for resilience and sustainability", document prepared for the workshop Property Rights and the Performance of Natural Resource Systems, Stockholm, 29 August 1994; P. Bourdieu, *Distinction*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1984; R. Collins, "A micro-macro theory of intellectual creativity: the case of German idealist philosophy", *Sociological Theory*, vol. 5, No. 1, 1987; P. Dimaggio and J. Mohr, "The intergenerational transmission of cultural capital", *Research on Social Stratification and Mobility*, JAI Press 1996; J. Katsillis and R. Rubinson, "Cultural capital, student achievement, and educational reproduction: the case of Greece", *American Sociological Review*, vol. 55, No. 2, 1990; M. Lamont and A. Lareau, "Cultural capital: allusions, gaps and glissandos in recent theoretical developments", *Sociological Theory*, vol. 6, No. 2, 1988; and D. Throsby, "Cultural capital", *Journal of Cultural Economics*, New York, vol. 23, No. 1-2, 1999.

D. Overview of social cohesion metrics

The diversity of approaches to social cohesion at the conceptual level is reflected in the different methods used to measure it. In order to review the alternatives on which the measurement framework proposal developed in chapter III is based, this section reviews 15 existing proposals, with the aim of understanding how they operate according to different approaches. Those proposals are the following:

- One measurement system comes from the academic world: Bernard (2000).
- Two come from think tanks: Scanlon Monash Foundation (2013) and the Bertelsmann Stiftung *Social Cohesion Radar* (2013).

- Five are official country/regional measurements: the Walloon Region of Belgium (Walloon Institute of Evaluation, Foresight and Statistics, 2018); Canada (Canadian Council on Social Development, 2000); France (Ministry of Labour and Social Cohesion, 2005); New Zealand (Spoonley and others, 2005) and Chile (Ministry for Social Development and the Family, 2020).
- Eight come from international agencies: the two proposals by ECLAC (2007a and 2010a), those of the World Bank (Easterly, Ritzen and Woolcock, 2006; World Bank, 2013), the one from the OECD Development Centre (2011), that of the Economic Commission for Africa (2016), that of UNDP (2016) and the one proposed by the European Union (Atkinson, Marlier and Nolan, 2004).

For the purposes of the presentation, these measurement systems are catalogued according to the classification criteria previously set out (see, in particular, section II.B) for the evolution of the social cohesion concept. This classification regroups each measurement system based on three criteria of analysis, with mixed approaches that may meet two or all of them. As shown on table 6, the social cohesion measurement methods examined are classified according to whether social cohesion is understood to be (i) shared values and a sense of belonging, (ii) the commitment and ability to live and/or work together, (iii) the promotion of well-being and the reduction of gaps, and (iv) mixed approaches.

Table 6
Classification of measurement systems examined

Social cohesion as shared values and a sense of belonging	Social cohesion as the commitment and ability to live and/or work together	Social cohesion as the promotion of well-being and the reduction of gaps	Social cohesion through a mixed approach
Ministry of Labour and Social Cohesion of France, 2005	World Bank, 2013	ECLAC, 2007a	OECD, 2012
	Economic Commission for Africa, 2016	ECLAC, 2010a	UNDP, 2016
	Ministry of Social Development of New Zealand, 2005	Walloon Institute of Evaluation, Foresight and Statistics, 2018	Canadian Council on Social Development, 2002
	World Bank ((Easterly, Ritzen and Woolcock, 2006)	European Union (Atkinson, Marlier and Nolan, 2004)	
	<i>Social Cohesion Radar</i> (Dragolov and others, 2013)		
	Ministry for Social Development and the Family of Chile, 2020		
Scanlon Monash Foundation (Markus and others, 2013)			

Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion, *Mise en oeuvre du plan de cohésion sociale*, Paris, 2005; World Bank, *Inclusion Matters: the Foundation for Shared Prosperity—overview*, Washington, D.C., 2013; Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), *Social Cohesion in Eastern Africa*, Addis Ababa, 2016; P. Spoonley and others, "Social cohesion: a policy and indicator framework for assessing immigrant and host outcomes", *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand*, No. 24, Ministry of Social Development, 2005; Ministry for Social Development and the Family, *Informe final para Consejo Asesor para la Cohesión Social: Diagnóstico para una aproximación a la cohesión social en Chile y recomendaciones para fortalecer el aporte de la política social*, Santiago, 2020; Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Cohesión social: inclusión y sentido de pertenencia en América Latina y el Caribe* (LC/G.2335/REV.1), Santiago, 2007; Walloon Institute of Evaluation, Foresight and Statistics, *L'indicateur synthétique d'accès aux droits fondamentaux (ISADF) 2018, 2018*; W. Easterly, J. Ritzen and M. Woolcock, "Social cohesion, institutions, and growth", *Economics & Politics*, vol. 18, No. 2, 2006; G. Dragolov and others, *Social Cohesion Radar Measuring Common Ground: An international Comparison of Social Cohesion*, Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2013; A. Markus and others, *Mapping Social Cohesion 2013*, Caulfield East, Monash University, 2013; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *Perspectives on Global Development 2012: Social Cohesion in a Shifting World*, Paris, 2011; Canadian Council on Social Development, "Social cohesion in Canada: possible indicators", *Strategic Research and Analysis*, No. 543, 2000.

At the end of this section, table 7 provides a more detailed description of the concepts, dimensions and indicators of the different measurement frameworks analysed.

1. Measurements of social cohesion as shared values and a sense of belonging

The definition of social cohesion used by the French General Commissariat for Planning (1997)⁶ involves the development of a sense of belonging within the community. The metric therefore focuses on the inclusion processes necessary to strengthen the sense of community belonging. In 2005, France launched a Social Cohesion Plan to address the economic and social exclusion that leads individuals to feel marginalized from the community and threatens social cohesion (Ministry of Labour and Social Cohesion, 2005). The associated measurement method focuses on monitoring the scope of the policies proposed by the plan, with three dimensions based on the proposed policies: housing, equal opportunities and employment.⁷ The system comprises 52 objective indicators distributed over those three dimensions, which are intended to monitor the coverage of social inclusion policies during the plan's five-year duration.

2. Measurements of social cohesion as trust linked to the commitment and ability to live and work together

Six of the identified measurement methods define social cohesion through the existence of certain qualities (the commitment towards living and working together) within a society's social interactions that allow for the development of a harmonious life by encouraging collective action and the peaceful management of conflicts. These methods focus on identifying the elements that enable the development of those qualities.

The first is the measurement system developed by the **World Bank** in its *World Development Report 2013: Jobs*, which defines social cohesion as a quality that facilitates collective action.⁸ Social cohesion is understood as a desirable means of achieving economic growth. A cohesive society is one that incorporates certain qualities that favour a climate of collaboration and institutional stability. The World Bank offers a social cohesion metric with the aim of measuring the correlation between a society's unemployment rate, the interpersonal trust that exists among employed people and their participation in organizations. The argument on which it is based is that labour inclusion, as the enabling element of social cohesion, strengthens interpersonal trust between people, favouring participation in civic organizations and bodies and thereby creating a climate of trust and participation in society. This would result in the creation of an environment conducive to economic growth by reducing the costs of coordination and cooperation within society. The report therefore develops a method that addresses both the enabling element—in this case, the unemployment and labour participation rates—and the constituent elements of social cohesion characterized by interpersonal trust and participation in organizations (see table 7).

The second is the system developed by the **Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)**, which defines social cohesion as "a situation where a group of people interact in a way that advances the interests of all those involved. They act as a community" (ECA, 2016, p. vii). Social cohesion is understood as a series of qualities (interpersonal and institutional trust) that allow the peaceful inclusion of the plurality of visions existing within a society while avoiding conflict. The ECA metric aims to reveal the state of the indicators that promote the development of social cohesion and of those that measure the inherent qualities of cohesive societies. The indicators that promote social cohesion reviewed include objective and subjective indicators of poverty, inequality, educational enrolment, level of cultural difference, migration, unemployment, violence, demographic pressures and institutional capacity. Then, to measure the qualities of a cohesive society, subjective indicators of interpersonal and institutional trust are used. Finally, regional economic solidarity policies are promoted to strengthen the elements that facilitate the development of social cohesion.

⁶ The definition is: "A series of social processes that help instil in individuals a sense of community belonging and a feeling of recognition as community members" (Delevoeye, 1997, p. 16).

⁷ The selected dimensions are identified as social problems that threaten cohesion by creating a circle that reproduces inequality and poverty, thus preventing progress towards equality of opportunities (Ministry of Labour and Social Cohesion, 2004).

⁸ "Societies are cohesive when they have the capacity to manage collective decision-making peacefully" (World Bank, 2012, p. 330).

The third method is the one proposed by the **New Zealand Ministry of Social Development** (Spoonley and others, 2005), which drew on the definitions and objectives of the 2004 Immigration Settlement Strategy (which aims to strengthen immigrant settlement and foster social cohesion in the community).⁹ The Ministry of Social Development proposed a measurement system comprising two dimensions: **the conditions for social cohesion** (using objective and subjective indicators of inclusion, recognition of the other as an equal and institutional legitimacy, which measure the conditions necessary for immigrants to feel part of the community) and **the constituent elements of social cohesion** (objective and subjective indicators related to the perception of community belonging and to civic participation in formal and informal organizations). These indicators are applied to two population groups (local and immigrant communities) to identify the gaps that exist in the constituent elements of cohesion and in the conditions for the development of social cohesion and, through that, to determine the focus of policies.

In the fourth method, Easterly, Ritzen and Woolcock (2006) highlight “divisions” in society. Those divisions—whether on the grounds of income, ethnicity, politics, caste or language—represent vectors around which political cleavages can develop (Easterly, Ritzen and Woolcock, 2006, p. 4). The authors aim to identify the elements that facilitate joint institutional-level decision-making for the development of policies to promote countries’ economic growth. They argue that in less cohesive societies, there tend to be institutions with less room for action, due to a greater number of cleavages that hinder the implementation of reforms in pursuit of economic growth. At the same time, because the institutions do not have a common purpose, policies to address conflicts between different segments of society are not pursued, deepening those divisions. In light of the above, the operationalization of the concept proposes a direct measurement for social cohesion, taken as meaning interpersonal trust and civic participation, and, at the same time, addressing indirect measurements of social cohesion, represented by the Gini coefficient and ethnic heterogeneity.

The fifth proposal is the **Social Cohesion Radar** index, developed by the Bertelsmann Stiftung Foundation. It states that social cohesion “can be characterized by reliable social relations, a positive emotional connectedness of its members to the entity and a pronounced focus on the common good” (Dragolov and others, 2013, p. 13). The measurement system aims to provide an understanding of the variations in the different elements of social cohesion in 34 member countries of the European Union and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). To this end, three qualities that favour work and harmonious coexistence within a community are identified: social relations within society, connectedness with the country’s institutions and the orientation of the community towards the common good. The method uses subjective and objective indicators for these three elements, which are measured every three years. The social relations dimension includes subjective indicators related to social capital, such as interpersonal trust, the number of networks and the recognition of others as equals. The connectedness element measures the legitimacy of institutions in terms of trust, perceptions of distributive justice and identification with them. Finally, the common good component measures shared responsibility and civic participation among the members of a community (Dragolov and others, 2013). It uses subjective perception indicators and objective indicators of frequency of participation and number of friends. While this classification includes the measurement of indicators of a sense of belonging, it focuses on understanding the quality of interactions between individuals in a society that facilitate working and living together.¹⁰

⁹ It is argued that New Zealand will have a cohesive society when there is a “a climate of collaboration because all groups have a sense of belonging, participation, inclusion, recognition and legitimacy” (Spoonley and others, 2005, p. 21).

¹⁰ One recent experience from Latin America influenced by the *Social Cohesion Radar* is that of the Social Cohesion Advisory Council of Chile, which met throughout 2020 to advise the Ministry for Social Development and the Family on the development of a plan to strengthen the contribution of social policy to social cohesion. The Council’s final report presents a diagnostic study and recommendations, one of which specifically refers to the measurement and visibility of social cohesion in order to monitor its evolution over time. The diagnostic assessment published by the Council follows the guidelines of the *Social Cohesion Radar* (the three dimensions identified above) and consists of 44 indicators: equivalent to those developed by the *Social Cohesion Radar*, but available at the national level. See: *Final Report of the Social Cohesion Advisory Council: Diagnostic assessment for an approach to social cohesion in Chile and recommendations to strengthen the contribution of social policy* (Ministry for Social Development and the Family, 2020).

Finally comes the index developed by the **Scanlon Monash Foundation of Australia**, which aims to provide information to improve social cohesion in Australia and identify social or cultural barriers to population growth through immigration in a way that safeguards social harmony. The Foundation believes that a cohesive society is one in which people feel proud to belong to their country, actively participate in its social, political and economic life, feel included in social justice, enjoy equal opportunities, respect diversity, trust institutions and other people, and are satisfied with their lives. It identifies five elements that enable the qualities of a cohesive society to be measured: sense of belonging, social justice, participation, acceptance and rejection, and the value of life. For each of the elements, subjective indicators of perception and objective indicators of frequency are applied (Markus and others, 2013). This method has been implemented since 2007, and it was updated in 2013 to address attitudes towards multicultural communities; online and telephone interviews are conducted annually. From the derived results, an index by dimension is obtained in order to register annual variations and to detect any changes in perceptions of the social justice delivered by the State or any changes in tolerance towards diversity that could have a negative impact on levels of interpersonal trust, participation, satisfaction with the quality of life or sense of belonging.

3. Measurements of social cohesion as the promotion of well-being and reduction of gaps

Under this conception, social cohesion is defined by a society's capacity to challenge inequality, promote the reduction of social gaps and increase social well-being. This classification includes the two proposals developed by ECLAC (2007a; 2010a), which, on account of their importance, will be analysed in detail in chapter III.

Another method in this category is the one developed in **Belgium** by the Walloon Institute of Evaluation, Foresight and Statistics, which defines social cohesion as "the set of individual and collective processes that contribute to guaranteeing equality of opportunities and conditions for all, together with equity and access to fundamental rights and economic, social and cultural well-being; elements that, at the same time, develop a society with shared responsibility" (Walloon Institute of Evaluation, Foresight and Statistics, 2018, p. 3). The purpose of that definition is to identify the unequal enjoyment of rights, from a territorial perspective (between municipalities), as a threat to social cohesion. The Walloon Institute's measurement system uses a set of objective indicators, distributed among 14 dimensions corresponding to fundamental constitutional rights, to quantify the coverage of rights in the region's different municipalities, as factors that promote the development of social cohesion.

Finally, in seeking to reduce disparities at the regional level, another definition congruent with this trend is the one developed during the 1990s and 2000s by the European Union, which addressed social cohesion for the first time in the 2000 Lisbon Strategy: "The Union has today set itself a new strategic goal for the next decade: to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth, with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion" (Atkinson, Marlier and Nolan, 2004, p. 2). In that context, social cohesion is a desirable political objective as it leads to a redistribution of the benefits of socioeconomic development to reduce poverty among the member countries (Jenson, 2010). The development of a social cohesion metric began at the Laeken Summit in 2001, which proposed the development of 18 objective indicators to monitor progress with social inclusion in the areas of employment, income, health and education, in order to contribute to the follow-up of the objectives and decision-making process of the European Social Agenda. Significantly, this measurement system focuses on monitoring the state of social inclusion in member countries, using solely indicators of **results** on the factors of social cohesion and not the processes through which they are achieved (Atkinson, 2002). Finally, the indicators were amended in 2006: the current version includes 21 indicators, 12 of which are "primary" and 9 are "secondary" (Villatoro and others, 2007).

4. Mixed approaches

These measurement systems use mixed criteria in their conceptual definitions, as outlined below. In other words, they define a cohesive society as one in which, simultaneously, the gaps between its members are reduced and social interactions are characterized by elements such as trust, which favour collective action in favour of social justice and thereby create a sense of belonging in the community.

One approach in this category was put forward by the **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)** in its report *Perspectives on Global Development 2012: Social Cohesion in a Shifting World*. In that report, OECD says that a society is cohesive “if it works towards the well-being of all its members, fights exclusion and marginalization, creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, and offers its members the opportunity of upward social mobility” (OECD, 2011, p. 53). It seeks to identify the elements that strengthen and make up social cohesion by building the foundations of equitable societies with a sense of belonging, which is a necessary objective in the context of global transformations that threaten social cohesion. Social cohesion is seen as a means for inclusive growth, economic development and improving citizens’ quality of life. The measurement framework identifies the following constituent elements of social cohesion: social inclusion, measured by objective indicators of poverty, inequality and social polarization; social capital, measured by subjective and objective indicators of interpersonal trust and civic participation; and, finally, social mobility, measured by individuals’ perceptions of their ability to modify their position in society.

The second such method is the proposal for measuring social cohesion in Africa produced by the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2017)**. It defines social cohesion as consisting of two main dimensions: “First, reducing disparities, inequalities, and social exclusion; and second, strengthening social relations, interactions, and ties. It also involves tolerance of, and respect for diversity (in terms of religion, ethnicity, economic situation, political preferences, sexuality, gender and age)—both institutionally and individually” (UNDP, 2016, p. 7). To identify the elements that promote social cohesion in order to advance towards inclusive development, peaceful conflict management and regional integration, UNDP developed a measurement system that addresses the two factors that promote social cohesion: the first is the economic, political, social and cultural inclusion of all society’s members, and the second is the strengthening of social ties in society, which is achieved by promoting civic participation, shared values and a sense of belonging and by increasing the responsiveness of the State to the public. The system covers six dimensions and includes objective results indicators and subjective perception indicators that together total 49. The proposed dimensions are economic and social inclusion, sense of belonging, social relations, participation, legitimacy and security. The argument is that greater State guarantees in terms of representation, security and participation increase social and economic inclusion, as well as social ties and the sense of belonging to institutions and society, thereby strengthening their capacity to manage conflicts peacefully.

Finally, the measurement method developed by the **Canadian Council on Social Development (2000)** defines social cohesion as a “process of developing a community of shared values, shared challenges and equal opportunity [...] based on a sense of trust, hope and reciprocity among all Canadians” (Social Cohesion Research Workplan, 1997, cited in Canadian Council on Social Development, 2000, p. 4). Similarly, in its report *Social Cohesion in Canada: Possible Indicators*, the Canadian Council on Social Development states that social cohesion is expressed through the willingness to cooperate and participate in the community, creating a climate of cooperation, belonging and participation. However, it notes that this requires the existence of economic conditions that promote equal opportunities in order to promote interpersonal and institutional trust, fostering a sense of belonging and thus a willingness to cooperate. This method’s aim is to identify the conditions for development and elements of a cohesive society, and to identify the directions in which Canadian society is moving forward or backward. To that end it proposes a measurement system divided into two components. The first of these covers the **conditions for the development of a cohesive society**, identified through objective means and results indicators in three areas: economic

conditions, life expectancy and quality of life, the last of which includes the measurement of people's support networks. The second element comprises the **elements of a cohesive society**: objective and subjective outcome indicators related to the willingness to cooperate and participate in community activities (institutional and interpersonal trust, participation and sense of belonging) as well as to literacy rates. The last element is included by indicating the level and promotion of equal sharing of opportunities among society's members. Finally, it proposes policies for improving the country's economic conditions, quality of life and life expectancy, as well as for making improvements in infrastructure to encourage positive interactions between members of a society and thereby generate a willingness to cooperate in promoting reciprocity and literacy.

The summarized characteristics of all these measurement methods are shown on table 7, and the different definitions of social cohesion examined are presented below on table 8.

E. Measuring various concepts related to social cohesion

This section reviews how various concepts related to social cohesion are dealt with, which has implications for the conceptual and measurement proposal in the following chapters.

1. Social inclusion

Social inclusion is included in relation to different elements in social cohesion metrics. In the measurement method that defines social cohesion as shared values and a sense of belonging developed by the French Ministry of Labour and Social Cohesion (2005), social inclusion is considered fundamental for the development of a community sense of belonging, as it strengthens the perception of being recognized as an equal member and rights holder within it. For its measurement, 40 indicators are used to monitor the outcomes of social policies focused on the pillars of housing, equality of opportunities and employment. Similarly, social inclusion is seen as a necessary and sufficient condition in measurement systems that define *social cohesion as the promotion of well-being and reduction of gaps*. Among these, the Walloon Institute of Evaluation, Foresight and Statistics (2018) offers a method, within the framework of the 2020–2025 Social Cohesion Plan, that focuses on identifying the unequal enjoyment of rights in that region's different municipalities, considering a society to be cohesive when all its parts have equal access to fundamental rights. Along the same lines, at the 2001 Laeken Summit, the European Union proposed the development of 18 objective indicators to monitor progress in social inclusion in the areas of employment, income, health and education, in order to reduce gaps between and within States (Atkinson, 2002). Finally, this principle is found in many measurement systems, but they do not address inclusion as a necessary and sufficient element; instead, they see it only as a facilitating element that allows progress in the objective and subjective conditions of cohesion, as is the case with the mixed approaches of OECD (2011), the Canadian Council on Social Development (2000) and UNDP (2016).

2. Social integration

As already noted, social integration is historically associated with the forced assimilation by individuals and minority groups of the norms and practices dominant in a sector or in society as a whole. This element has been addressed by measurement methods that define social cohesion as *trust linked to the commitment and ability to live and/or work together*. One example is the proposal of the New Zealand Ministry of Social Development (Spoonley and others, 2005), where integration is considered an antonym of social exclusion and refers to the assimilation of different cultural groups to government institutions as a whole. However, integration is not opposed to cultural diversity, but rather as the recognition of cultural richness; indicators are therefore included on the legislative recognition of cultural and linguistic diversity in the country's institutions and media. The argument used is that integration—defined as the recognition and inclusion of cultural diversity—is the initial step towards the developing a feeling of recognition as a

member of society, which favours the development of a climate of collaboration and participation within that society. In addition, the notion of integration is included in the mixed approaches of OECD (2011) and UNDP (2016), where it is understood as being synonymous with social inclusion.

3. Social capital

Social capital is addressed in two ways in those measurement methods that define social cohesion as *trust linked to the commitment and ability to live and/or work together*: (i) in terms of the relationship between interpersonal trust, social capital and social inclusion, and (ii) in terms of the role of social capital in developing a sense of belonging. An example of the former can be found in the World Bank's *World Development Report 2012*, where a correlation is observed between the unemployment rate and the inherent qualities of a society's social capital, which facilitates the peaceful resolution of conflicts and group tensions. This is due to the fact that interpersonal trust and civic participation are elements that are strengthened by the labour inclusion of individuals (World Bank, 2012). The second trend includes the method developed by the *Social Cohesion Radar* index, which establishes a measurement system based on the three qualities identified as enabling joint work and harmonious coexistence within a community: (i) social relations within society, (ii) connectedness with the country's institutions, and (iii) the community's orientation towards the common good (Dragolov and others, 2013). Finally, the Scanlon Monash Foundation of Australia identifies five elements that enable the qualities of a cohesive society to be measured: sense of belonging, social justice, participation, acceptance and rejection, and the value of life. In it, the perception that social justice is guaranteed by the State influences the levels of interpersonal trust, civic participation and positive predisposition in favour of the integration of diversity, which in turn has repercussions on personal satisfaction with the quality of life. All these elements have a positive influence on the sense of belonging (Markus and others, 2019).

4. Social ethics and social capital

Social ethics is mainly addressed by mixed approaches to social cohesion. In them, an association is established among social inclusion, social capital and social ethics, which is approached in terms of the presence of shared values of solidarity at the **social level** that can be incorporated at the **institutional level**, measuring their institutionalization through indicators of social mobility. Thus, OECD (2011) offers a framework that measures social inclusion (indicators of poverty, inequality and social polarization), social capital (indicators of interpersonal trust and civic participation) and, finally, social mobility (perception of being able to change one's position in society). The argument is that institutions are responsible for redistributing opportunities to encourage inclusion, mobility and social capital within a society and thereby for generating a sense of belonging to the whole. In turn, inclusion and social capital generate individual dispositions and preferences in favour of redistribution, represented by the willingness to pay taxes, and the process of aggregating individual preferences to the institutional level in favour of social mobility reinforces membership in and the solidity of the social contract, as individuals recognize themselves as beneficiaries and benefactors in it (OECD, 2011). Similarly, the Canadian Council on Social Development (2000) presents a measurement system focused on quantifying how economic conditions (life expectancy and quality of life) promote the willingness to cooperate and participate in community activities (through the development of institutional and interpersonal trust), thereby enabling mobility through the reduction of illiteracy rates (Canadian Council on Social Development, 2000). Finally, the method that defines *trust linked to the commitment and ability to live and/or work together* offered by Easterly, Ritzen and Woolcock (2006) states that social exclusion and low levels of social capital create fracture lines in contexts of ethnic heterogeneity, making it difficult to forge compacts at the institutional level. It therefore recommends policies to strengthen interpersonal trust and social inclusion in order to move towards a social contract focused on the common good.

5. Pending challenges: sense of belonging and orientation towards the common good

The notion of belonging is seen as fundamental to enable social cooperation, address the tendency towards fragmentation and bolster the economic, social, political and cultural inclusion of the different groups that make up society (ECLAC, 2007a). Measuring it, however, is a highly complex task in societies in which individualism is at the forefront, resulting in an ever-increasing diversity of identities and ways of being and thinking, which entails “a latent conflict between the general logic of citizenship—which is based on the individual—and the specific logic of belonging, which is linked to difference” (Sojo, 2009, p. 20).

Different identities and forms of social belonging are expressed and contrasted in the public arena. In such a situation, identity-based radicalization generates new demands for recognition and for participation in the construction of the social order. If they are not addressed, social coexistence is fragmented into a division between “them” and “us” (Calderón, 2012), or rather between “us” and “everyone else”. It is within the framework of the conflictive construction of the social order that the sense of belonging confronts the challenge of addressing the tensions between a common sense of belonging and different identities in the region (Hoppenhayn and Sojo, 2011).

In relation to this, new senses of belonging cannot be reconstructed, since “the diversity and social interdependence of one’s identities and belonging can be related to the possibility of altruism and involvement with justice, (...) and the reciprocal capacity of human beings to identify themselves over and above identities has to do with the accumulation of positive experiences in this area, for which policies of inclusion are fundamental” (Sojo, 2009, p. 8). Thus, the institutional framework must be at the service of recognition, legitimization and respect for differences, in order to build public arenas as venues for political participation, based on the values of tolerance, recognition and appreciation of interculturality. This process can in turn contribute to the establishment and promotion of a culture of equality that deactivates the assimilation of inequalities (ECLAC, 2020d). Therefore, the development of a feeling of belonging to a common collective project requires the subjects’ reciprocal recognition and a democratic organization that recognizes, values and promotes that social and cultural diversity, granting it legitimacy and participation in the construction of the political and social order through democratic means. As regards measuring it, finding comparable sources of information that allow the complexity of these social dynamics to be determined through objective and subjective indicators is clearly a major task. As will be seen, the goal is therefore to find indicators that together help identify some of those dynamics.

Table 7
Measurements of social cohesion

	Organization	Purpose	Definition	Measurement	Dimensions	Indicators
I. Measurement of social cohesion as shared values and a sense of belonging	Ministerio del Empleo, del Trabajo y de la Cohesión Social de Francia (2005)	Measuring forms of exclusion to strengthen a community's sense of belonging.	"A series of social processes that help instil in individuals a sense of community belonging."	Enabling elements	Three dimensions: 1. Employment 2. Access to housing 3. Equality of opportunities	Total indicators = 52 - Objective = 52 - Subjective = 0
II. Measurements of social cohesion as the commitment and ability to live and/or work together	World Bank (2013)	Studying the correlation between elements that favour cohesion and their own qualities.	"The capacity to manage collective decision-making peacefully, managing socioeconomic divisions within it."	Enabling and constituent elements	No dimensions proposed, reviews indicators separately.	Total indicators = 4 - Objective = 3 - Subjective = 1 (interpersonal trust)
	Ministry for Social Development and the Family (2020)	Identifying areas to channel social policy actions to strengthen social cohesion and the system.	"Social cohesion refers to the quality of interactions among the members of a community, defined in geographical terms, and is based on resilient social relations, a positive emotional connectedness to the community and a strong focus on the common good" (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2013).	Constituent elements of social cohesion	Three dimensions: Quality of social links Sense of belonging Focus on the common good	Total indicators = 44 - Objective = 8 - Subjective = 36
	Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) (2016)	Identifying the state of the elements of social cohesion in the region.	"A situation where a group of people interact in a way that advances the interests of all those involved. They act as a community. It is a multidimensional concept."	Enabling and constituent elements	- Poverty - Conflict, law and order - Humanitarian needs - Inequality - Trust - Labour market - Migration - Ethnic, religious and cultural differences - Demographic pressures - Substance abuse - Governance	Total indicadores = 35 - Subjetivos = 3 - Objetivos = 20

Table 7 (continued)

	Organization	Purpose	Definition	Measurement	Dimensions	Indicators
II. Measurements of social cohesion as the commitment and ability to live and/or work together	Ministry of Social Development of New Zealand (Spoonley and others, 2005)	Reviewing the gaps between the local and immigrant communities in conditions that promote a cohesive society and its component elements.	"New Zealand becomes an increasingly socially cohesive society with a climate of collaboration because all groups have a sense of belonging, participation, inclusion, recognition and legitimacy."	Enabling and constituent elements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Elements in the behaviour of a cohesive society: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sense of belonging - Participation Conditions for achieving a cohesive society: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inclusion - Recognition - Legitimacy 	Total indicators = 74 - Subjective = 17 - Objective = 57
	World Bank (Easterly, Ritzen and Woolcock, 2006)	Identifying the elements that facilitate joint decision-making at the institutional level (cohesion) for the development of policies that promote economic growth.	"The nature and extent of socioeconomic divisions in society."	Enabling and constituent elements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Direct indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Civic participation and organization membership - Trust Indirect indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Income inequality - Ethnic heterogeneity 	Total indicators = 4 - Objective = 3 - Subjective = 1
	<i>Social Cohesion Radar</i> (Dragolov and others, 2013)	Identifying variations over time in the constituent elements of social cohesion.	"The quality of interactions between members of a community who live and work together, their resilience, emotional connectedness and shared view of the common good."	Constituent elements of social cohesion	Three elements of social cohesion: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Social relations Connectedness Focus on the common good 	Total indicators = 59 - Objective = 15 - Subjective = 44
	Scanlon Monash Index (Markus and Dharmalingam, 2019)	Monitoring changes in public opinions about social cohesion that may require further analysis.	"A society in which all the component groups have a sense of belonging, recognition, legitimacy, participation and inclusion."	Constituent elements of social cohesion	Five domains of social cohesion <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sense of belonging Political participation Acceptance and rejection Social justice and equity Self-worth (satisfaction with present financial situation and indication of happiness during the previous year) 	Total indicadores = 18 - Objetivos = 4 - Subjetivos = 14

Table 7 (continued)

	Organization	Purpose	Definition	Measurement	Dimensions	Indicators
III. Measurements of social cohesion as the promotion of well-being and the reduction of gaps	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (2007a)	Identify individuals' perceptions of social justice and solidarity towards others to develop social consensus.	"Dialectic between instituted social inclusion and exclusion mechanisms and the responses, perceptions and attitudes of citizens towards the way these mechanisms operate."	Enabling and constituent elements of social cohesion	1. Gaps 2. Institutional framework 3. Sense of belonging	Total indicators = 35 - Objective = 24 - Subjective = 11
	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (2010a)	Restricting the measurement focus to institutional support to examine social compacts, without addressing social relations.	"Dialectic between instituted social inclusion and exclusion mechanisms and the responses, perceptions and attitudes of citizens towards the way these mechanisms operate."	Enabling and constituent elements of social cohesion	1. Gaps 2. Institutional capacity 3. Citizen support	Total indicators = 25 Objective = 19 - Subjective = 6
	Walloon Institute of Evaluation, Foresight and Statistics (2018)	Identifying disparities in the delivery of fundamental rights in the region's municipalities, in order to reduce gaps and strengthen social cohesion.	"Set of individual and collective processes that contribute to guaranteeing equality of opportunities and conditions for all, equity and access to fundamental rights and to economic, social and cultural well-being."	Enabling elements of social cohesion	Fourteen rights: 1. Decent income 2. Adequate food 3. Physical and mental health 4. Social protection 5. Education 6. Decent housing, energy and water 7. Healthy environment 8. Mobility 9. Work 10. Digital access, 11. Unrestricted respect for family and intimate life 12. Democratic citizen participation 13. Social and cultural life 14. Child protection	Total indicators = 47 - Objective = 47 - Subjective = 0
III. Measurements of social cohesion as the promotion of well-being and the reduction of gaps	European Union (Atkinson, Marlier and Nolan, 2004)	Monitoring indicators of social inclusion to implement redistributive policies, determine progress with objectives and progress towards social cohesion.	"The Union has today set itself a new strategic goal for the next decade: "to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth, with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion."	Enabling elements of social cohesion	1. Income 2. Employment 3. Education 4. Health	Total indicators = 21 - Objective = 21 (12 primary and 9 secondary) - Subjective = 0

Table 7 (concluded)

	Organization	Purpose	Definition	Measurement	Dimensions	Indicators
IV. Mixed measurements of social cohesion	OECD (2012)	Identifying the elements that create and strengthen social cohesion, by building the foundations for equitable societies with a sense of community and belonging, as a necessary objective in the context of global transformations.	"A society is 'cohesive' if it works towards the well-being of all its members, fights exclusion and marginalization, creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, and offers its members the opportunity of upward social mobility."	Constituent elements of social cohesion	Three elements: 1. Social inclusion 2. Social capital 3. Social mobility	Total indicators =7 - Objective = 5 - Subjective = 2
	UNDP (2016)	Identifying the elements that promote social cohesion to move towards inclusive development and peaceful conflict management.	"Social cohesion has two main dimensions: first, reducing disparities, inequalities, and social exclusion; and second, strengthening social relations, interactions, and ties."	Enabling and constituent elements of social cohesion	Six dimensions: 1. Inclusion 2. Belonging 3. Social relations 4. Political participation 5. Legitimacy 6. Security	Total indicators = 43 - Objective = 20 - Subjective = 23
	Canadian Council on Social Development (2000)	Identifying the conditions for development and elements of a cohesive society, and to identify the directions in which Canadian society is moving forward or backward.	"The ongoing process of developing a community of shared values, shared challenges and equal opportunity, based on a sense of trust, hope and reciprocity."	Enabling and constituent elements of social cohesion	Two components: 1. Conditions for a cohesive society: - Economic conditions - Living standards - Life expectancy 2. Intrinsic elements of a cohesive society: - Willingness to cooperate - Participation - Literacy	Total indicators: 29 - Objective = 24 - Subjective = 5

Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion, *Mise en oeuvre du plan de cohésion sociale*, Paris, 2005; World Bank, *Inclusion Matters: the Foundation for Shared Prosperity—overview*, Washington, D.C., 2013; Ministry for Social Development and the Family, *Informe final para Consejo Asesor para la Cohesión Social: diagnóstico para una aproximación a la cohesión social en Chile y recomendaciones para fortalecer el aporte de la política social*, Santiago, 2020; Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), *Social Cohesion in Eastern Africa*, Addis Ababa, 2016; P. Spoonley and others, "Social cohesion: a policy and indicator framework for assessing immigrant and host outcomes", *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand*, No. 24, Ministry of Social Development, 2005; W. Easterly, J. Ritzen and M. Woolcock, "Social cohesion, institutions, and growth", *Economics & Politics*, vol. 18, No. 2, 2006; Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Cohesión social: inclusión y sentido de pertenencia en América Latina y el Caribe* (LC/G.2335/REV.1), Santiago, 2007; Walloon Institute of Evaluation, Foresight and Statistics, *L'indicateur synthétique d'accès aux droits fondamentaux (ISADF) 2018, 2018*; Canadian Council on Social Development, "Social cohesion in Canada: possible indicators", *Strategic Research and Analysis*, No. 53, 2000; G. Dragolov and others, *Social Cohesion Radar Measuring Common Ground: An international Comparison of Social Cohesion*, Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2013; A. Markus and A. Dharmalingam, *Mapping Social Cohesion: The Scanlon Foundation Surveys 2019*, Victoria, Monash University, 2019; A. B. Atkinson, E. Marlier and B. Nolan, "Indicators and targets for social inclusion in the European Union", *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 42, No. 1, March 2004; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *Perspectives on Global Development 2012: Social Cohesion in a Shifting World*, Paris, 2011.

Table 8
Definitions of social cohesion

Organization or author	Definitions of social cohesion
Inter-American Development Bank (Ferroni, Mateo Díaz and Payne, 2006, p. 3)	A cumulative societal concept, social cohesion is the set of positive externalities accruing from social capital, in addition to the sum of factors promoting equity in the distribution of opportunities among individuals.
World Bank (Alexandre and others, 2012, p. 15)	Social cohesion describes the nature and quality of relationships among people and groups in society, including the State. The constituency of social cohesion is complex, but at its essence social cohesion implies a convergence across groups in society that provides a framework within which groups can, at a minimum, coexist peacefully. In this way, social cohesion offers a measure of predictability to interactions across people and groups, which in turn provides incentives for collective action. It is suggested that an essential element of building social cohesion is the ability to mobilize groups around a convergence across groups in society. Such convergence provides an overarching structure for collective life that helps ensure predictability and certainty, even if it does not guarantee that all groups will agree on all issues.
World Bank II (2012, p. 330)	Societies are cohesive when they have the capacity to manage collective decision-making peacefully. Jobs can contribute to social cohesion by nurturing trust in others beyond the group people belong to. They can also do so by fostering civic engagement.
World Bank III (Ritzen and Woolcock, 2000, p. 9)	Social cohesion is a state of affairs in which a group of people (delineated by a geographical region, like a country) demonstrate an aptitude for collaboration that produces a climate for change.
Barba Solano (2011, p. 71)	The concept of social cohesion refers to the nature (today we would speak of characteristics) of social ties that allow individuals to experience a feeling of social belonging (on various scales), to trust others (horizontal trust), to recognize the legitimacy of society and to trust its institutions. Social cohesion thus addresses the different principles that make social integration possible; in metaphorical terms it could be said that cohesion adjectivizes social integration. The concept of social cohesion is closely linked to that of social integration, but they are not synonymous. Types of social cohesion, besides changing over the course of history, may vary in different types of societies, they may be more or less effective, and they may or may not be democratic.
ECLAC (Hopenhayn, 2006, p. 39)	Social cohesion incorporates both the structural and subjective dimensions and can be understood as the dialectic between instituted social inclusion and exclusion mechanisms and the responses, perceptions and attitudes of citizens towards the way these mechanisms operate. As it is a dialectic, it is not restricted to a causal-linear relationship in which greater well-being generates greater disposition, but to the relationship in which the dynamics of social integration and inclusion and those of capital and ethics intersect with each other, whether in the form of vicious circles or virtuous ones. It can be both an end and a means. As an end, it invests social policies with content and substance, as such policies aim—both in their results and in their management and implementation—to reinforce both greater inclusion of the excluded and their greater presence in public policy. But it can also be a means: more cohesive societies provide a better institutional framework for economic growth, strengthen democratic governance and operate as a factor in attracting investments by presenting an environment of trust and clear rules. It also enables progress to be made in compacts among different actors in support of long-term policies.

Table 8 (continued)

Organization or author	Definitions of social cohesion
Club de Madrid (2009, p. 20)	Socially cohesive or “shared societies” are stable, safe and just, and are based on the promotion and protection of all human rights, as well as on non-discrimination, tolerance, respect for diversity, equality of opportunity, solidarity, security and participation of all people including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons. A shared society is at ease with itself and the diversity of its members’ cultural, religious and ethnic identities. It recognizes and values these identities and their interdependence as strengths, working creatively with each other and with the wider global community to solve common problems and to promote respect for human dignity and release human potential.
Centro de Estudios de Conflicto y Cohesión Social (COES) (Green and Janmaat, 2011, p. 19)	Social cohesion refers to the property by which whole societies, and the individuals within them, are bound together through the action of specific attitudes, behaviours, rules and institutions which rely on consensus rather than pure coercion.
Economic Commission for Africa (2016, p. vii)	The term “social cohesion” is used to refer to a situation where a group of people interact in a way that advances the interests of all those involved. They act as a community. It is a multidimensional concept involving a number of elements, including trust, equity, beliefs, acceptance of diversity, perceptions of fairness and respect. A cohesive neighbourhood is one that has a collective ability to manage the shifting array of tensions and disagreements among diverse communities. Social cohesion is both a means to an end and an end in itself. Cohesive societies are desirable. Yet cohesive societies are also conducive to achieving other desirable outcomes.
European Committee for Social Cohesion (2000, p. 11)	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 those common goals through democratic means. In a cohesive society people also accept mutual responsibility, so it is necessary to rebuild a societal sense of belonging and commitment to shared social goals. Social cohesion is an essential political concept for the fulfilment of the three fundamental values of the Council of Europe: human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The Council of Europe does not see social cohesion as a homogenizing concept based only on traditional forms. It is a concept for an open and multicultural society. The meaning of this concept may differ according to the social and political environment in which it evolves. From an operational point of view, a social cohesion strategy refers to any type of action that ensures that every citizen, every individual, can have the opportunity within their community to have access to the means to ensure their basic needs and progress, to legal protection and rights and to dignity and social trust. Any insufficiency of access to any of these areas works against social cohesion.
CONEVAL (Mora Salas, 2015, p. 117)	The existence of a structure of social ties and the willingness of individuals to maintain and renew them, the identification of individuals with the collective, and the presence of shared values. This definition emphasizes the possibilities for social union rather than the specific repertoire of experiences, goals, interests and values around which people are grouped at a particular historical moment. This means that cohesion is a phenomenon that can be registered at different levels of social life. In all these cases, social cohesion denotes an attribute of collectives, not of individuals.
Canadian Council on Social Development (2000)	Process of developing a community of shared values, shared challenges and equal opportunity [...] based on a sense of trust, hope and reciprocity among all Canadians.
Cuéllar (2018)	Social cohesion can be defined as a quality of societies that are committed to people’s well-being. It arises from a combination of historical factors, but can be influenced by public policy. Its construction implies equality of opportunities. It can also be defined through three components: (i) the willingness of the members of a society to cooperate with each other around a common project in order to survive and prosper, (ii) respect for the freedom of individuals, and (iii) the prevalence of individual freedoms, equality, tolerance and respect for the rule of law and human rights. It is a multidimensional concept that contains a relational and subjective aspect, an institutional one and one that is more focused on economic and social opportunities. Thus, what keeps societies cohesive is also a consequence of the achievement of specific social goals (greater employment, access to education and health, and so on) through public policies to promote equal opportunities, social stability and the common good. Social cohesion is a means to achieve these goals, but it is also an end that can be promoted through policies and programmes that seek to reduce social and economic gaps and to create conditions for the establishment of a social contract that will sustain long-term policies for greater equity and inclusion.

Table 8 (continued)

Organization or author	Definitions of social cohesion
De Beer (2014)	A cohesive society is one that unifies its members despite the differences that may exist among them and that displays high levels of collective action, interdependence, acceptance, inclusiveness and so on. It comprises seven elements: (i) <i>shalom</i> or wholeness, (ii) the household of God, (iii) a spirituality of the table, (iv) embodied engagements, (v) deconstructing or constructing multiple narratives, (vi) imagining preferred realities, and (vii) healing fractures in the city and society
Dragolov and others (2013)	The term social cohesion refers to how members of a community, defined in geographical terms, live and work together. A cohesive society is characterized by three central features: resilient social relationships, a positive emotional connection among its members and the community, and a focus on the common good. Social relations, in that context, are the horizontal network that exists between individuals and groups within society. Connectedness refers to the positive links between people and their country and its institutions. Finally, a focus on the common good is reflected in the actions and attitudes of members of society that demonstrate responsibility for each other and for the wider community (Dragolov and others, 2013).
Easterly, Ritzen and Woolcock (2006, pp. 4–5)	Social cohesion is defined as the nature and extent of social and economic divisions within society. Those divisions—whether by income, ethnicity, political party, caste, language or other demographic variable— represent vectors around which politically salient societal cleavages can (though not inevitably or “naturally”) develop. Socially cohesive societies are not necessarily demographically homogenous, but rather ones that have fewer potential and/or actual leverage points for individuals, groups or events to expose and exacerbate social fault lines, and ones that find ways to harness the potential residing in their societal diversity.
Commissariat General du Plan of France (Delevoye, 1997)	A series of social processes that help instil in individuals a sense of community belonging and a feeling of recognition as community members.
Scanlon Monash Foundation (Markus and Dharmalingam, 2008, p. 26)	A cohesive society is one where people identify with Australia, feel a sense of belonging and pride in being Australian, participate actively in political, economic and civic life, feel included in terms of social justice and equality of opportunity, respect minorities and value diversity, have trust in others and confidence in public institutions, and feel satisfied with their lives and optimistic about the future. This definition directs attention to a process, a continuous working towards social harmony, rather than a point in time at which social cohesion may be said to have been attained.
Gómez Sabaini (2006, pp. 9–10)	“Social cohesion” is understood as the set of positive externalities generated by social capital plus the sum of factors that promote balance in the distribution of opportunities among individuals. The existence of social cohesion is not limited to the availability of social capital, nor is it limited only to issues of inequality and exclusion; instead, it cumulatively and jointly requires social capital with positive externalities plus a reasonable level of security.
Güemes (2019, p. 13)	In minimal terms, social cohesion refers to the well-being of group members and shared values such as trust and equal opportunities in society. For social cohesion to exist, individuals must have reasons to want to belong to society, and its laws, regulations, norms and public values must allow them to integrate. If the person encounters inequality, lack of representation, or deep-seated conflict, his or her personal desire to remain in the group is likely to fade.
German Development Institute (Burchi, Strupat and Von Schiller, 2020, p. 18)	Social cohesion refers to both the vertical and the horizontal relations among members of society and the state as characterized by a set of attitudes and norms that includes trust, an inclusive identity and cooperation for the common good.
Walloon Institute of Evaluation, Foresight and Statistics (Reginster and Ruyters, 2019, p. 1)	The set of individual and collective processes that contribute to guaranteeing equality of opportunities and conditions for all, equity and access to fundamental rights and to economic, social and cultural well-being, and that, at the same time, develop a society with shared responsibility.

Table 8 (continued)

Organization or author	Definitions of social cohesion
International IDEA (Cuéllar, 2009, pp.4–5)	Social cohesion is a social process which aims to consolidate plurality of citizenship by reducing inequality and promoting space for political and judicial accountability for injustice. It is the meeting point of social democracy and political democracy. A cohesive society is a prerequisite for political democracy and social stability.
Janmaat (2011, p. 63)	The property that keeps societies from falling apart. Social cohesion is a characteristic of a society, not of a community or other sub-State entity. The entity that represents society is the State, as it is still the prime policymaker and frame of reference for most citizens.
Ministry of Social Development of New Zealand (Spoonley and others, 2005)	A society is socially cohesive when there is a climate of collaboration, because all its constituent groups have a sense of belonging, participation, inclusion, recognition and legitimacy. Social cohesion is not unidirectional but interactive.
United Nations (2016, p. 21)	The absence of fractures or divisions within society and the ability to manage such divisions. A cohesive society creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, fights exclusion and marginalization and offers its members the opportunity of upward mobility.
National Research Council (2014, p. 38)	Social cohesion refers to the extent to which groups and communities cooperate, communicate to foster understanding, participate in activities and organizations and collaborate to respond to challenges (e.g. a natural disaster or disease outbreak). Because actions and attitudes may integrate people or separate them, research on social cohesion also considers social cleavage between opposing groups that are each cohesive around their positions.
OECD (2011)	"A society is 'cohesive' if it works towards the well-being of all its members, fights exclusion and marginalization, creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, and offers its members the opportunity of upward social mobility." Social cohesion must be looked at through three different, but equally important lenses: social inclusion, social capital and social mobility. Social cohesion is both a means to development and an end in itself and is shaped by a society's preferences, history and culture. The OECD concept of social cohesion is different from narrower ones that highlight the bonding nature of networks and institutions that shape collective action. The definition of social cohesion adopted can also be understood in the context of Rawls' (1971) notion of a "well-ordered society".
UNDP (McLean, 2009, p. 14)	Social cohesion is an elusive concept, easier to recognize by its absence than by any definition. A lack of social cohesion results in increased social tension, violent crime, targeting of minorities, human rights violations, and, ultimately, violent conflict. Social cohesion is about tolerance of, and respect for, diversity (in terms of religion, ethnicity, economic situation, political preferences, sexuality, gender and age), both institutionally and individually. While the meaning of social cohesion is contested, there are two principal dimensions to it: the reduction of disparities, inequalities and social exclusion, and the strengthening of social relations, interactions and ties. It is important to consider both dimensions in order to get a comprehensive picture of the social cohesion of a society. For example, a homogenous and cohesive community with strong ties could discriminate against and exclude people from other social backgrounds.
UNDP (2016, p. 33)	This definition positions social cohesion as an outcome, or a 'dependent variable', and in essence posits that societies characterized by low levels of inequality and strong relationships between people are more likely to be cohesive. Cohesive societies are achieved by: (i) reducing disparities, inequalities and social exclusion, in which exclusion can be political, economic, social and cultural, and (ii) strengthening social relations, interactions, and ties that require the development of social capital. This can be achieved through supporting social networks; developing a common sense of belonging, a shared future vision, and a focus on what different social groups have in common; encouraging participation and active engagement; building trust between people and in institutions; fostering understanding and respect for others, and for the value of diversity; and increasing the responsiveness of a State to its citizenry.

Table 8 (concluded)

Organization or author	Definitions of social cohesion
Sojo (2018)	It refers to the conflictive and contentious dialectic between the established mechanisms of social inclusion and exclusion, and the responses, perceptions and dispositions of the citizenry in the face of their definition and the way in which they operate. The modified concept distinguishes between two areas: the sphere of politics and policies on the one hand, and that of the microsocial space on the other. By postulating a close relationship and interaction between the components, the original duality of the ECLAC definition (mechanisms + responses) is transformed into a triad (mechanisms + responses + social link) and, as developed in the reflection on the distinction between politics and policies, the contentious nature of this interaction is accentuated.
Stanley (2003, p. 9)	Social cohesion is the aggregate of the dispositions of a population of individuals to cooperate with each other, without coercion, in the complex set of social relations that individuals need to complete their life projects. A socially cohesive society is thus a population that has sufficient social cohesion to sustain that complex set of social relations beyond at least the average lifespan of the individuals in the population. Note that this definition says nothing about shared values, conformity or even social order. Social cohesion does not depend on social equality, uniform values or opinions or on everyone aligning with the same values, beliefs or lives.
Woolcock (2011, p. 10)	Woolcock defines social cohesion as the capacity of societies—and not merely of groups and networks—to manage collective problems peacefully.

Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of M. Ferroni, M. Mateo Díaz and J. M. Payne, *Social Cohesion and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean: Analysis, Action, and Coordination*, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), 2006; M. Alexandre and others, *Societal Dynamics and Fragility: Engaging Societies in Responding to Fragile Situations*, Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2012; World Bank, *World Development Report 2013: Jobs*, Washington, D.C., 2012; J. Ritzen and M. Woolcock, *Social Cohesion, Public Policy, and Economic Growth: Implications for Countries in Transition*, Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2000; C. Barba Solano, "Revisión teórica del concepto de cohesión social: hacia una perspectiva normativa para América Latina", *Perspectivas críticas sobre la cohesión social: desigualdades y tentativas fallidas de integración social en América Latina*, Latin American Social Sciences Council (CLACSO), 2011; M. 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II. Towards a normative approach to social cohesion: historical context and central elements

Rethinking the concept of social cohesion in light of the different approaches in the current context demands attention to several critical factors. First of all, a historical perspective that gives meaning to the characteristics of the current context is needed, together with an identification of the major social, economic, environmental and technological changes under way, the magnitude of which may even lead to the configuration of a new social order. That perspective, together with a historical overview of the concept of social cohesion within the framework of the region's successive development paradigms and reference points, will be addressed in the first part of this chapter. The second section presents the central elements for a normative approach to social cohesion oriented towards equality and life in democracy, which allows the interconnection of the components required for progress towards a project based on equality, recognition of identities and full inclusion.

A. Social cohesion at the current historical juncture

The following paragraphs present a brief review of how the notion of social cohesion has gained relevance in discussions in Latin America and Europe at different times in the historical and political context since the start of the twenty-first century. To that end, some analytical and historical milestones are addressed, including the end of the Cold War and the advent of unequal globalization, and the tensions generated by disparities in well-being. As will be seen, discussions on social cohesion in Latin America gained strength two decades ago as part of the further development of democracy and at times and places where expressions of dissatisfaction were already being felt. At the present time, this discussion is gaining renewed attention in a context characterized by the questioning of structural inequalities, distrust of the political and economic order, new social movements and demands for participation (gender equality, indigenous peoples, environmental protection and climate change), political crises and inter-ethnic tensions old and new.

This is taking place against a regional backdrop in which the progress with well-being, social and labour inclusion and lower inequality made over the last decade is reversing or stagnating, in the context of a less vigorous economic situation and political cycles that are not necessarily conducive to the

reforms needed to reverse the current situation. Finally, at the global level, there has been an increased questioning and weakening of multilateralism and cooperation, accompanied by a prolonged migration crisis. Against that backdrop the COVID-19 pandemic arrived, straining the aforementioned precarious balances and prompting a response that was pre-eminently national rather than international. The deep social and economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has only aggravated this situation and the sense of uncertainty. The risk of societies moving from high socioeconomic fragmentation to high political fragmentation and radicalization has tended to grow. Reflection on social cohesion is thus becoming more of a priority than ever.

1. Twists and turns of social cohesion in the global debate

As seen in the previous chapter, reflection on social cohesion responds to a recurring concern that emerged in the nineteenth century as a result of a series of processes questioning the traditional social order. Industrialization, urbanization, sustained scientific and technological progress and other factors related to societal modernization were beginning to deplete the traditional sources of political and social legitimacy, and, as will be seen below, that process has continued into the present, hand in hand with old and new disruptive factors, such as technological change. With the weakening of the value of religion, custom and tradition, and the questioning of coercion, a sociological and philosophical question arose: what new identity processes and what loyalties were the basis for the *de facto* new social order, but also, from a value-based and normative point of view—that is, from the point of view of what ought to be—on what principles and expectations should links among people and between people and the community be based.

Several answers to these questions took shape during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and not always in a peaceful way or with the idea of achieving coexistence among equals. Nationalism constituted a powerful mobilizer of identities and feelings of belonging, often defined by opposition to other groups and appealing to supposed manifest destinies or supposed cultural, military, economic or ethnic-racial superiorities. In its most radical version, the fascist and totalitarian regimes of the first half of the twentieth century sought to consolidate, by authoritarian and even genocidal means, strongly cohesive societies by cancelling out various external and internal enemies and submitting to supreme leaders who supposedly embodied the national will and the single code of values that was to be followed.

Thus, the twentieth century saw several answers to these questions emerge, along with various more or less optimistic notions about the *progress* or destiny of humanity, whether it be abundance and prosperity through industrialization and world trade, socialist revolution in one and eventually all countries, or the realization and predominance of one nation over all others (Furet, 2003). Each of these promised some vision of the common good, a sense of belonging and strengthened social cohesion in some sense, whether through the prospect of an egalitarian, classless society, a nation united around a great leader and its exceptionalism or national superiority, or the image of a capitalist society of free, prosperous and independent individuals.¹¹ In the aftermath of the Second World War, the predominant proposals followed those guidelines, with two rival models and multiple variants and hybridizations: very broadly speaking, real socialism centred on state ownership of the means of production, and post-war capitalism marked by the construction of welfare states in the central economies and, in the peripheral world, by developmentalist statism as the engine of progress (Chavance, 2003). The existence of a communist counter-model in the Soviet Union and in other parts of the world also facilitated promotion of an ambitious redistributive agenda in the countries of the Western camp with the tacit support of conservative sectors and parties that would otherwise have been reluctant to lend their support, at least in accordance with their ideological frameworks.

¹¹ As noted by Furet (2003), fascism and communism scorned liberal democracy, which was seen as the sidekick of a rapacious, corrupt and decadent capitalism. They also shared such notions as the emphasis on revolution to break with the status quo, one-party systems and the dictatorship of the party and its leadership on behalf of the people. In the case of fascism, Polanyi also identifies anti-capitalist demagoguery, criticism of the party system and open disloyalty to the democratic regime among its features (Polanyi, 2001, p. 347).

From the 1970s onwards, the political and ideological programme of neoliberalism in the West—adopted in Chile in the mid-1970s, in the United Kingdom from 1979 onwards and in the United States after 1980—offered a new policy model as an alternative to the apparent inefficiency of the predominant Keynesian model (Peters, Pierre and King, 2005; Harvey, 2007). Thus, through Chile's involvement, the Latin American region had early experience with this model. This project transcends the purely economic sphere and entails a particular vision of the State, well-being and the common good. It posits a social cohesion centred on extreme individualism, where all citizens, through their effort and inventiveness, are responsible for their own circumstances and relative position within the social order.

Unlike classical liberalism and its *laissez-faire*, under the neoliberal programme²² the State must actively generate and guarantee the conditions for the existence and proper functioning of the market which, through free pricing and economic freedom, is seen as an "impersonal mechanism, wherein all individuals decide on the best guarantee of freedom and welfare for themselves" (Escalante Gonzalbo, 2019, p. 31). Thus, guaranteeing economic freedom and the free functioning of the market is the primary mission of public policy, *in extremis*, above other freedoms, rights and priorities. And to that end, the privatization of all other economic and social activities is in principle always more efficient and beneficial for the whole. The emphasis on these elements and their implementation at different levels in the region led, in the 2000s, to an examination of social cohesion with the specific goal of highlighting some of the undesirable effects of this form of liberalism.

From this perspective, inequality is no longer a problem of social cohesion since it is the spontaneous result of the functioning of the market, which rewards deserving efforts, resources and talents and creates the individual incentive to improve one's lot. As a corollary, neoliberalism tends to hold that those who benefit less from the established order, by definition, will seek to obtain gains in other ways, especially by appealing to the State, and will question the model's results as unjust. Hence the notion of isolating economics from politics as much as possible: for example, by prescribing and limiting the scope of decision-making by governments (even elected ones) to macroeconomic balances. The assimilation of inequality into the public debate, even its legitimization, the hegemony of meritocracy, the discrediting of the public sector as inefficient or corrupt and the need to refrain from interfering in the functioning of the economy were ultimately an important part of the neoliberal agenda's cultural victory. Accordingly, as noted by Piketty, "inequality is not economic or technological: it is ideological and political" (Piketty, 2019, p. 21; Atkinson, 2015). Another effect of this model's hegemony was the emptying of democratic politics of real economic content during the 1980s and 1990s, as will be seen below (Escalante Gonzalbo, 2017).

After the Berlin Wall fell, the disappearance of the bipolar world and the consequent hegemony of the capitalist model gave way to a new phase in world history which, for the most optimistic, was to be one of universal progress, based on the benefits of a globalization that would be the engine of economic prosperity and integration. In that there were no other paradigms to rival the triumphant model, there was even talk of the end of history: a phase in which capitalism and liberal democracy would be the world's sole reference points (Fukuyama, 1992). Moreover, during the 1980s, the neoliberal agenda was adopted in several developed economies. It was also spread to developing countries as the major global financial institutions conditioned international credits to reforms. Following the debt crisis, neoliberalism gained global currency and many developing countries began to adopt important aspects of the programme, starting with privatizations and efforts to secure fiscal and inflationary balance at the expense of other economic or social objectives in what was broadly known as the Washington Consensus. The resounding failure of real socialism gave way in the 1990s to what could be described as the hegemony of the neoliberal

²² The group of intellectuals, economists and journalists who first came up with the programme (and the name) had witnessed the rise of communism, fascism and state interventionism. First meeting in 1938, and headed by figures such as Friedrich Hayek and Ludwig von Mises, this group tried to renew the old crisis-struck liberalism on a new philosophical, economic and political foundation at the Lippmann colloquium held in Paris in 1938; this event later led to the founding of the Mont Pelerin Society in 1947, which still exists today. See [online] <https://www.montpelerin.org/statement-of-aims/>. From the 1950s onwards, this programme was widely disseminated by personalities such as Hayek himself and Milton Friedman (Escalante Gonzalbo, 2019).

model or, at least, to a set of particularly resilient ideas (Schmidt, 2016). From that perspective of an eminently individualistic vision of society, concerns about social cohesion made little sense.

But, beyond economics, this fact influenced central notions about the common good. In its most extreme version, the neoliberal model assumes that individuals are selfish and maximizing, legitimizes inequality as a non-problematic but inevitable and desirable outcome and as an incentive to individual effort, stigmatizes the excluded strata as “losers” or poorly informed decision-makers and limits the functions and duties of public policy (i.e. the State) to facilitating, in all areas, the proper functioning of the market, including the traditional public realms of welfare and rights, such as education, health and social security (Paugam and Duvoux, 2010). It thus promises a society of individuals liberated in all spheres from the interference of the State, and “free” to define and pursue their own individual life projects, whatever they may be. As a corollary, it also demands that citizens be responsible for their own conditions, so that the arena for collective solidarity is limited to an optional individual alternative (charity) and not as a collective or moral imperative, since in this social and economic order, each person holds the position he or she should or deserves.

As noted by Piketty, with its struggle between two rival models, the Cold War contributed to a paralysis of reflection on the future of capitalism, “which was only reinforced by the anti-communist euphoria that followed the fall of the Wall, almost until the great recession of 2008” (Piketty, 2019, p. 51). Indeed, that great recession—the worst economic contraction since the crisis of the 1930s (not counting the recession caused by the COVID-19 crisis of 2020)—called into question several of the central assumptions of the neoliberal agenda, starting with the deregulation of financial markets and, in general, the notion that the free functioning of markets would lead to an economic order without the major collapses experienced in the past. At the same time, the climate crisis and discussions on the unsustainability of the predominant style of consumption and production were added to the questioning of the neoliberal model, to the extent that currently the issue of the environmental crisis is, as will be explained below, one of the factors disrupting sustainable development and social cohesion.

Contrary to most optimistic forecasts, the new world order very soon demonstrated that it was full of old and new problems, starting with a globalization characterized by environmental imbalances and recurrent economic crises, with persistent poverty and inequalities and with the continued presence of multiple divisions and conflicts around such issues as the nation, religion and democracy. At that time, social cohesion as a concept driving a new policy agenda was already the subject of debate in Europe and Latin America. First, as seen in chapter I, in 2000 the Council of Europe put forward the notion of social cohesion as a society’s capacity to ensure the well-being of all its members, minimize disparities and prevent polarization: a cohesive society is a mutually supportive community of free individuals pursuing common goals by democratic means. As stated by Tironi and Sorj (2007, p. 109), it was precisely the work carried out in the framework of the European Union that gave the concept its contemporary use in the first decade of the century, aiming to safeguard “the values, ideas and institutions from which what has been called the ‘European social model’ originate, as well as to define desirable future aspirations for the nations that form part of the Union or wish to join it”. This concept is based on the reference to social rights and is understood as the result of a political project with a strong role for the State. The juncture when that formulation appeared was closely linked to a time of particular uncertainty on account of globalization processes, the emergence of neoliberalism, transformations in the family, migration and other factors. That approach already reflected the concern to confront inequalities in those European democracies, many of them new, in the process of joining the European Union, shortly after the dramatic and brutal outcome of the war in Yugoslavia, and in the major political and social tensions linked to intra- and extracontinental migration in the framework of the creation and consolidation of the European common market (Rodríguez Guerra, 2016).

Parallel to the progress of European construction, an attempt was made to build social citizenship, and progress was made in territorial matters through the cohesion funds introduced in 1994, which seek to reduce socioeconomic disparities and promote sustainable development by supporting less economically

advanced territories, as well as in the definition of common standards for labour and non-discrimination matters, particularly under the aegis of the European Court of Justice and the Charter of Fundamental Rights adopted under the Treaty of Nice (2000). Nevertheless, the domains of social policy and social protection remain an area of national competence (and legitimization), which is one of the challenges in moving towards a supranational citizenship and sense of belonging (Ferrera, 2009).

Another challenge for rethinking social cohesion in the global context is related to sustainability, or rather to the unsustainability of the current development model and to the difficulty of defining new social, economic, political and environmental alternatives that are simultaneously attractive, universal and feasible. As Latour (2017) explains, until the end of the twentieth century, several visions or models coexisted, from both the right and the left, centred on ideals of progress, modernity and emancipation. The debate was structured in favour or against the proposed ways of attaining this modernity. For example, in contrast to a past seen as backward and parochial and characterized by injustice and traditions, the vision was to move towards a classless world society, or to a form of globalization with growth, stability or well-being for all. The public debate was thus structured either in favour of or against those ideals or, alternatively, in reaction to these models; in addition, conservative movements advocating a return to the past, to tradition and to the local were also found. All those models assumed that the material bases of that progress were unlimited and posed no restriction to indefinite progress towards one or another of those futures.

In the 1970s, however, with the emergence of the first environmental movements, it became increasingly apparent that none of those futures is either feasible or desirable given the finite nature of the planet's resources and the fragility of its environmental and climatic balances. Henceforth, all projects and alternatives must take this constraint into account: our confinement on a fragile planet with limited resources.³³ Moreover, the idea of social cohesion is strongly related to the need to guarantee coexistence today and in the future, in a stronger intertemporal relationship between old and new generations. At the same time, even when the reference point for belonging in many cases remains the nation State, the transition towards sustainability brings with it the reference point of belonging to the whole, to the species. This global interdependence with respect to the (in)sustainability of future life thus redefines the ideas of belonging, of the common good, of coordinated actions and of equality between present and future generations. Faced with this, the most seductive, comfortable and even attractive temptation from a short-term viewpoint is not to recognize these planetary limits and to try to make the most of the status quo while that is still possible. Internally, this path is undertaken at the expense of—or at least without taking into account—the future of broad sectors of the population, especially the most vulnerable; externally, it acknowledges no responsibility for global environmental and climate problems, and avoids engaging with other countries to address and assume the shared costs of moving towards sustainability. Beyond negationism, the current great challenge is precisely to define a new way forward for development, coexistence and social, economic and environmental sustainability (Latour, 2017). In response to this, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted in 2015 as a global framework of reference to attempt to address the existential challenge of (un)sustainability.

Lastly, at the intersection of major trends in demographic change (particularly ageing and lower fertility), shifting gender roles and the world of work (jobs with increasingly precarious benefits, stability and pay) and the particularly extensive and persistent gaps in the region's social protection systems, the redefinition of care also challenges the notion of social cohesion in new ways. The importance of care for the sustainability of life means not only determining under what conditions and standards those who cannot take care of themselves—a universal condition at different moments of the life cycle—will be cared for, but also how to collectively define new public goods through a consensus that requires solidarity and empathy to achieve a new joint responsibility between the State, the market and families (ECLAC, 2020f).

³³ The 2030 Agenda seeks to incorporate this constraint through several SDGs directly related to the environment—particularly SDG 12, "Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns"—as well as through the principle of its indivisibility and the interdependence between the social, economic and environmental spheres.

2. The concept of social cohesion in Latin America

In the mid-2000s, ECLAC returned its attention to notion of social cohesion. It was one of the many ways in which it contributed to overcoming the post-Cold War economic and political model and the Washington Consensus. In contrast to the latter, ECLAC (2010a and 2007a) sought to broaden the region's agenda towards a more extensive notion of citizenship (both social and economic) in line with global instruments relating to economic, social and cultural rights, the ECLAC analytical tradition and the region's own characteristics and challenges, especially its high levels of inequality (ECLAC, 2010a and 2007a). It also identified other challenges: insufficient and volatile levels of growth, restrictions and precariousness in the world of work and the crisis of its collective actors (trade unions), the disconnect between material and symbolic assets that limited the material realization of people's aspirations and, as an age-old characteristic of incomplete citizenship, the denial of the other.¹⁴ In light of this, the definition of social cohesion as "the dialectic between instituted social inclusion and exclusion mechanisms and the responses, perceptions and attitudes of citizens towards the way these mechanisms operate" allowed for a more comprehensive analysis of social, economic and political realities while broadening the policy agenda beyond the narrow confines of the neoliberal programme (ECLAC, 2007a, p. 12). Instead, it postulated the construction of an effective sense of belonging to society based on full ownership of political, social and economic rights, and the need to examine dimensions such as social and economic gaps, institutions and people's subjective sense of belonging and, to that end, it defined various quantitative and qualitative indicators (ECLAC, 2007a and 2010a).

This proposal expanded the social agenda to issues and dimensions that were not included at the time in the Millennium Development Goals framework but that would later be covered by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially social and economic gaps and the central role of institutions in sustainable development. Also worthy of note was the interconnection of this conceptual framework with the one on social protection that was being strongly promoted at the same time, in the understanding that, without progress in guarantees of well-being that would make it possible to address at least in part the serious inequalities in access to social protection in Latin American and Caribbean societies, progress with social cohesion would not be possible (ECLAC, 2010a, 2007a and 2006). This discussion was also linked to the proposal that ECLAC had been making since the early 2000s for the construction of broad social and fiscal compacts to address the structural deficits in the region's development and which, in its formulation, once again called for the necessary expansion of social protection and of social cohesion itself as an objective of the compact (ECLAC, 2006; Machinea and Uthoff, 2005).

The concept of social cohesion is also challenged by the redefinition of the notions of citizenship and rights, especially in a context of multiple and persistent inequalities and discrimination. Thus, since the 1960s, the human rights agenda and the struggle for their recognition have broadened in scope and content beyond the formal recognition of individual civil and political rights. Partly associated with the affirmation of values not related to the material conditions of life emphasized by autonomy and self-expression, the new agenda of multiculturalism and identities has brought issues of gender, culture and ethnicity to the fore. This is not only a struggle for social and political recognition but, above all, against discriminations and violence that had historically remained invisible since they were seen as non-problematic. Numerous factors underlie this change, which has to do with designing societies that transcend the restrictions related to material survival (Inglehart, 2018), as well as with profound social, demographic and economic changes, starting with the world of work. One example is gender inequality and the questioning of traditional practices and values linked to the roles of men and women in society. In particular, the gender equality agenda has triggered a profound and more egalitarian redefinition of models of coexistence at all levels, from the previously 'private' sphere of family dynamics to the functioning of the economy and the distribution of and access to political power in our societies.

Another aspect of this shift in the concept of social cohesion is the redefinition of national and/or cultural belonging to a State: from a model centred on single, homogeneous identities imposed on the

¹⁴ This will be addressed below in connection with the persistent culture of privilege and inequality in the region.

individual, towards the recognition of multiple identity loyalties—individual and collective alike—linked to culture, language or territory, and the need to move towards interculturality, especially with regard to the situation of indigenous peoples and Afrodescendent populations. In Latin America, historical discrimination against indigenous peoples and people of African descent remained a largely unresolved issue until the end of the twentieth century. The place of those population groups in society even tended to be seen as a challenge to *national* social cohesion from the traditional view of a nation as a collective of culturally and even racially homogeneous individuals.¹⁵

This problem is also related to new challenges to coexistence and social cohesion. For example, the increased and diversified migratory flows that characterized the last decades of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first have made migration an issue everywhere, with discrimination, exploitation and violence towards migrants expressing new tensions and identity conflicts. The region is experiencing an absolute and relative increase in intraregional migration flows, which poses a new challenge for social and economic inclusion and a realignment of the sense of national belonging (ECLAC, 2019b). The common denominator of this challenge is ensuring the dignity, rights and well-being of all people in their diversity, which is an unresolved challenge in the current context. The issue of ethnic diversity has played a central role in discussions on social cohesion in various regions (Green and Janmaat, 2011; Jenson, 2010; Schiefer and Van der Noll, 2017) and it has accompanied political processes that have sought to find answers to growing tensions or demands for long-term recognition. The way it has been tackled has not been uniform and has included views that highlight the difficulties of consolidating increasing levels of social cohesion in multicultural societies (Chan, To and Chan, 2006), essentially regarding the creation of values and a shared sense of belonging, together with those that argue that ethnic diversity cannot be seen as an obstacle to social cohesion and that, on the contrary, recognition is a fundamental dimension of social cohesion (ECLAC, 2007a; Jenson, 2010). Interculturality—understood as a cross-cutting approach to public policy that seeks to consolidate venues for dialogue under equal conditions leading to the reformulation of positions in the social structure—can contribute to this.¹⁶

At the same time, the difficulties and viability of life under democracy and its (in)capacity to generate redistribution, greater equality and well-being, as elements conducive to *democratic* social cohesion and oriented towards equality, constitute another of the great pending challenges. Paradoxically, Latin America recovered its democracy during a complex historical moment, marked by the hegemony of the neoliberal model. Partly because of this, limited redistributive tensions arose and, in contrast, in one way or another, there was a widespread expectation in the early years that integration into the new globalized world through trade and investment would generate high levels of growth, which in turn would bring higher levels of well-being to the population as a whole. Moreover, there were cases and periods in which growth did indeed return, after the initial costly macroeconomic adjustments of the lost decade, resulting in a significant reduction in poverty levels (ECLAC, 2019b) despite recurrent global and regional crises (1995, 1998, 2002, 2008) that interrupted the periods of expansion. In addition, there was a sustained cycle of global demand for commodities at the beginning of the twenty-first century, from which most countries in the region benefited, especially in South America. This new extractivism—which “degrades the environment but provides resources for social integration policies and productive diversification or resources to strengthen the market” (Calderón and Castells, 2019, p. 72)—had come to an end by 2014 with the conclusion of the commodities supercycle, considerably limiting future growth levels.

Politically, from 2000 onwards, there was a growing demand for change and a questioning of the model inherited from the Washington Consensus. This led to successive changes in the region’s governing coalitions from the 2000s onwards, which came to be known as the “pink tide”. As noted by Weyland, Madrid and Hunter (2010), one common feature of these experiences was the acceptance of capitalism and democracy as the models available for achieving greater development (at least initially), but they differed considerably in their approaches to the degree of State involvement in the economy, the role of social

¹⁵ In several countries, the response was the construction of a national myth around the blending of the races which, in practice, implied the assimilation of indigenous peoples’ ethnic, racial, territorial and linguistic particularities into the dominant group.

¹⁶ For the issue of interculturality and bilingual intercultural education in Latin America, see Corbetta and others (2018).

protection and the degree of preference for liberal or participatory forms of democracy (Weyland, 2004; Weyland, Madrid and Hunter, 2010). The more moderate experiences (Brazil, Chile, El Salvador and Uruguay, for example) maintained the central position of the development model and macroeconomic stability and sought to expand social protection systems through incremental institutional changes. In contrast, the more radical experiences worked to introduce more accelerated changes by nationalizing certain sectors, large direct social support schemes, agrarian reforms and the public promotion of new industries (for example, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Ecuador, Honduras or the Plurinational State of Bolivia) within the framework of more direct models of democracy, making use of plebiscites, referendums and constituent assemblies to consolidate in the medium term a governing majority with few counterweights. These cases were also defined by having at their centre charismatic figures who cultivated direct contact with the people in discourse and practice, a feature reminiscent of the populist experiences of the mid-twentieth century, as well as of those of the new wave that has also been present in other latitudes.¹⁷

In its diversity of variants, the new wave of post-2010 populism seen in many countries is both a symptom of polarization and a challenge to social cohesion. As Algan and others (2019) state, the current wave brings together various contemporary political, economic and cultural elements. The post-industrial and globalized society has largely fragmented traditional common social venues: the development of services and new forms of work comes hand in hand with increasing social loneliness. In general, the economic anxiety and uncertainty, discontent, loss of legitimacy and demands for greater justice that have accompanied globalization are fertile ground for populist narratives, which may appeal to nativist (anti-minority) or class agendas, or both (Rodrik, 2018). The new populist wave is fed by mistrust of the globalized economy, traditional parties, liberal democracy and even public policies that favour the *others*: primarily migrants, but also the most vulnerable groups who have benefited from targeted social policies in the absence of a true welfare state with a universal vocation. Due to the above, these tensions, together with the crisis of legitimacy and distrust in democratic institutions, can paradoxically lead to socially conservative governments that are highly critical of social policies and in favour of reinstating the market agenda in all areas of the economy. The fear and uncertainty associated with the COVID-19 pandemic are also among the factors that can fuel leadership models of this kind, in that as they deny or downplay its importance, they also call for avoiding the excessive disruption of economies and employment caused by health and epidemiological containment measures.

In any case, the difficulties in deepening democracy in Latin America are marked by widespread social unrest and growing distrust of the established order: not of the idea of democracy per se, but of its current functioning, and the perception that it is incapable of responding to the demands of the citizenry and to social and economic problems (Luna, 2020). Moreover, inequality not only manifests itself in multiple dimensions of well-being and the enjoyment of rights (education, health, work, income, social protection and others) around various structuring axes (socioeconomic level, age, gender, territory, ethnicity, race and migratory status, among others) in what ECLAC has called a matrix of social inequality; it also rests on cultural foundations—the culture of privilege—that naturalize it and are difficult to dismantle (ECLAC, 2016a; UNDP, 2017). The recognition of those who are different as equals continues to be one of the main obstacles to democratic coexistence and to equality-based social cohesion.

The impact of new technologies in all areas also brings new issues to the debate on social cohesion, starting with sociability and interpersonal relationships. These not only occur increasingly frequently in a non-face-to-face manner, but also through and mediated by virtual environments, where the

¹⁷ Historically, following the 1929 crisis, twentieth-century Latin America was the stage for experiences that were predominantly categorized as populist or popular nationalisms. At the time, in the context of bids for industrialization at the expense of the previously predominant agroexport oligarchies, these experiences questioned the previous liberal regimes and incorporated new social sectors into electoral, trade union and political mobilization and into social security. They also questioned the oligarchic character of the formal democracies inherited from the nineteenth century, where the vast majority of the population was excluded in practice, with elitist, authoritarian and/or personality-based regimes erected in their place. They eventually polarized societies and, in most cases, were followed by authoritarian attempts at regression, typically through various forms of military coups d'état (Vilas, 1994).

algorithmization of the communicational exchange has enormous consequences. One effect is the increased risk of confrontations and an atomization of self-referential groups, which can lead to the absence of a minimum common understanding or shared reading of reality, and where everyone relates to each other within their own “imagined” forum or community. Moreover, the control over these environments by de facto powers is generating new forms of manipulation that combine with the traditional dynamics of polarization to hinder the construction of shared views regarding the common good.

For its part, the digitalization of economies and of social and political life, in addition to generating new social gaps in connectivity, user capacities and access to devices and platforms, also invests the problem of social cohesion with a new nuance, as it raises the question of the effect of non-presence on coexistence, in a rebalancing exercise where “digital life” is increasingly part of collective existence. This framework of global intercommunication and constant immediacy leads to an acceleration of historical and political time. For example, any local or specific event that “goes viral” can challenge society as a whole, translating immediately into abrupt and emotionally charged positions, additional pressure on the authorities and political leverage. Public action, institutions and justice systems have a very limited capacity to respond to this, even in the medium and long terms, which generates distrust and unease among citizens. These phenomena associated with technological and scientific progress have a centrifugal logic that in principle has little in common with the idea of social cohesion driven by a centripetal logic. In that context, how can “irreducible and lasting minimums” that do not rapidly become obsolete be defined to unite and identify people?

3. The COVID 19 crisis: a “global social shock” accelerating change and exacerbating imbalances and tensions

The recent global crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and its health, economic, social and—in some cases— political effects are causing turmoil across all societies. In that it affects almost all people in all countries at the same time, this global emergency has upset practically all aspects of social life in every society, with an intensity capable of accelerating great changes and, at the same time, of generating them. The economic impact of the measures taken to mitigate contagion (quarantine, physical isolation and confinement) initially resulted in mass unemployment (ECLAC, 2020a, 2020b and 2020c). From the point of view of social cohesion, the pandemic has made all people vulnerable to contagion and disease, although with different levels of risk: the most intense impact has been felt by the older population, those with health preconditions and the generally poorer and more vulnerable sectors, such as informal workers, people with disabilities, people of African descent, indigenous peoples and migrants (ECLAC/PAHO, 2020), highlighting again the deep inequalities that exist in the world today (ECLAC, 2020c). The acceleration of scientific research and its concrete translation into access to new vaccines and medicines have also generated new gaps between social groups and countries. The magnitude of the impact of the social and economic crisis on development is of a size that could jeopardize the achievements accumulated over years, even decades (ECLAC, 2020a), leading to substantive changes in the structures, expectations and certainties of a large part of the population and adding to the problems already visible under an exclusionary development model with multiple expressions of inequality (ECLAC, 2019a and 2016a).

Meanwhile, the distrust and questions asked about how governments have handled the pandemic, or the impotence and anguish created by hunger and the absence of measures to ensure people a minimum level of well-being—especially those who are poor or highly vulnerable to poverty—are leading to social protests and greater unrest than was already accumulating in the region (ECLAC, 2021b). In turn, attempts to control the spread of the health, economic and social crisis will require the involvement of all society's stakeholders, even though the State remains an indispensable vector of the common good. In this, the health crisis intertwines disease—private life in its most extreme expression—with the responsibility of the State to ensure the survival of the collective: the epitome of abstraction (Lazar, Pantin and Ragot, 2020, p. 11). Acting in favour of a shared sense of belonging is therefore more urgent than ever. In this regard, the emergency has very concretely demonstrated the economic and social interdependence of

individuals—indeed, the very definition of society according to Elias (1997)—and the systemic importance of social solidarity and trust. Both are central to social cohesion, but they have been overshadowed in recent debates about sustainable development.

This is, however, very paradoxical at a time when the possibilities for collective action are severely constrained by the restrictions on face-to-face interaction under the necessary confinement measures, with meetings mainly confined to virtual platforms that are not easily accessible due to the digital divides that prevail in the region (ECLAC, 2020f). The pandemic has accelerated and magnified the scope of the changes arising from the adoption of new technologies in the world of work, forcing collaboration in networks, dialogue with more actors, the adoption of new organizational models from the digital realm and the rise of virtual interaction over face-to-face social interaction, and even the substitution of the latter by the former. This calls for a rethinking of social cohesion and some of its components—such as universal guarantees for the population’s well-being and sense of belonging—given the critical juncture created by the pandemic and its persistent structural problems and uncertain repercussions, and for it to be considered an opportunity to renew the foundations of the current social contract.

In sum, the current historical moment in Latin America poses numerous challenges to progress towards greater degrees of democratic social cohesion (Sojo, 2018). Accordingly, an urgent review of the concept of social cohesion is needed in order to analyse its current situation in the countries and to link that analysis and reflection with the construction of social compacts for equality at a key moment in the region’s history.

4. New normative reference points to place Latin America’s recent discussions on social cohesion in context

As noted in the previous section, by focusing on the dynamics between the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion and also incorporating the subjective positioning of people with respect to those phenomena, the definition of social cohesion adopted by ECLAC (2007a) offered an approach to social cohesion as a process, one that was applicable to very different contexts and times while identifying certain social minimums to which society should aspire. This definition also avoided normatively constraining the analysis of social cohesion towards one value system or another (ECLAC, 2007a). Partly because of this, the recent work of Sojo (2017a, 2017b, and 2018) reframes the definition to distinguish between the realm of politics and policies on the one hand, and that of the microsocial space on the other. With regard to the former, social cohesion is defined as the conflictive and contentious dialectic between the established mechanisms of social inclusion and exclusion, and the public’s responses, perceptions and willingness in response to how those mechanisms operate. Regarding the second aspect, Sojo (2018, 2017a and 2017b) highlights the role of the social bond that people establish and develop with each other when living together in a given society or community, and their treatment of each other in terms of reciprocity and recognition or denial.

This definition provides a very useful approach to social cohesion as a social and political process, as well for relating it to multiple structural problems in Latin American and Caribbean societies. Nevertheless, the specificities of the current historical moment, the risks that setbacks in social matters pose for social cohesion, the worsening of various aspects of inequality and the deterioration of interpersonal and institutional trust demand the consideration of other points of reference. This highlights the need to move towards a definition that provides additional guidelines so that countries can understand the link between social cohesion and public policies in areas crucial to its strengthening, given that “social cohesion assumes different characteristics in each society and historical moment” (Tironi and Sorj, 2007, p. 105).

Before embarking on an analysis of its components, the following paragraphs set out approaches that are considered necessary reference points for a renewed approach to social cohesion in Latin America and to policies for strengthening it, which, in addition to examining how it works, define guidelines on how and to what purposes social cohesion should be oriented in the current context.

(a) The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

In 2015, the 193 member countries of the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which constitutes a true civilizational consensus (ECLAC, 2018a) and calls for the construction of more inclusive, supportive and cohesive societies through a universal agenda that places the dignity and equality of people, respect for the environment, human rights, and “prosperity, peace and partnerships” (ECLAC, 2018a) at the centre. This agenda posits the need to move towards sustainable development, initially defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (United Nations, 1987). This translates into a style of development based on the indivisibility and interdependence of the economic, social and environmental dimensions: sustainable progress in any one of these dimensions cannot be made unilaterally; the impact that actions generate must be considered with a multidimensional focus.¹⁸

The agenda also establishes the principle of leaving no one behind, which implies prioritizing the needs of the most vulnerable and resolutely fighting inequalities. This principle is enshrined in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in the special consideration given to the situation of population groups that have traditionally been subject to inequality and discrimination, such as women, children and adolescents, people living in poverty, indigenous peoples, people of African descent, people with disabilities, rural populations and migrants.

Finally, the agenda calls for participation and action by all society’s sectors and actors. In order to fulfil the acquired commitments and make the transition to a sustainable development model, the involvement of States’ different sectors and institutions and of civil society, academia and the private sector is required.

(b) Equality as a strategic development target, the culture of equality and the social inequality matrix in Latin America

ECLAC has identified equality as a guiding principle and strategic target for development (ECLAC, 2010b), with equality of rights as a condition of citizenship the guiding principle (Bárcena and Prado, 2016). In addition to equality of rights, there is also equality of means, of capacities, of reciprocal recognition and relational equality (Bárcena and Prado, 2016). From that perspective, progress in reducing structural heterogeneity, productive development, access to rights and the strengthening of human capacities is essential for achieving equality in the region (Bárcena and Prado, 2016; ECLAC, 2012s). This implies recognizing, first, the role that a highly heterogeneous and undiversified production structure has historically played in the region’s inequality (ECLAC, 2010b, 2012a, 2014 and 2016b). Second, it also involves examining the role played by the culture of privilege, inherited from the colonial and slave-owning past, which is reproduced through institutions, practices and values (ECLAC, 2016a and 2018a). Overcoming this culture—which assimilates and reproduces social hierarchies and inequalities—requires progress with a culture of equal rights through such mechanisms as policies and institutions, citizen participation, the eradication of all forms of racism and discrimination and the recognition and appreciation of differences (ECLAC, 2016a). This document argues that strengthening the culture of equality is fundamental to building a sense of belonging and achieving increasing levels of social cohesion in the region.

ECLAC has already drawn attention to the persistence of a matrix of social inequality in Latin America which, although it is based on this production structure, includes a set of structuring axes that are interlinked, intertwined and mutually reinforcing, and that contribute to the reproduction of inequalities in various areas of the enjoyment of rights, including—in addition to socioeconomic status—gender, ethnicity and race, life cycle and territory (ECLAC, 2016a). Other factors such as disability, immigration status, sexual orientation and gender identity can also be added (ECLAC, 2019a).

¹⁸ The agenda provides a highly valuable minimum global consensus in light of the new limitations imposed by the Earth’s finite resources and the harmful effects of human action on planetary life balances.

These axes manifest themselves in the various areas of social development and the enjoyment of human rights, such as education, health, decent work, social protection and venues for participation. The structural gaps to which they give rise pose a barrier to social cohesion, as discussed in this document.

(c) The Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development

At the third session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Mexico City in October 2019, the participating countries unanimously adopted the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development, which aims to support the implementation of the social dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the region, especially in areas covered by the mandates assigned to ministries of social development and equivalent entities, taking into account the achievements, opportunities and critical issues of inclusive social development in the region (ECLAC, 2020b). This is a technical and political instrument that sets out lines of action along four axes: universal and comprehensive social protection systems, policies for social and labour inclusion, strengthened social institutions and regional cooperation and integration, with an emphasis on promoting South-South cooperation. In line with the 2030 Agenda's focus on leaving no one behind, the regional agenda pays special attention to those who have traditionally faced discrimination and exclusion: children and adolescents, older persons, youth, women, indigenous peoples, populations of African descent, persons with disabilities, people living in disadvantaged areas, LGBTI people, migrants, populations affected by disasters and climate change and those displaced by conflict in their territories.

This agenda is guided by the perspective of inclusive social development which, based on a conception of inclusion centred on the realization of rights, the full participation of people in society and access to key policies for well-being (ECLAC, 2017b), has been defined as "the capacity of States to ensure the full exercise of people's social, economic and cultural rights, consolidate spaces for participation and recognition, and eradicate gaps in access to spheres that are fundamental for well-being, taking into account social inequalities and the axes that structure them from the perspective of universalism that is sensitive to differences" (ECLAC, 2018a, p. 77). This definition emphasizes citizens' access to levels of well-being that guarantee the exercise of their rights and addresses inequalities in access to the dimensions of well-being through mechanisms for overcoming discriminatory practices, the recognition of identities and social participation. All these can be considered basic elements for advancing towards a cohesive society, given the close link between inclusion and social cohesion.

Similarly, the Regional Agenda is guided by a set of principles with a strong connection to social cohesion and, in addition to the normative target of the rights-based approach, its aims include people's empowerment and autonomy, decent living conditions and progressive well-being, and a redistributive and solidarity-based logic with financial sustainability. In particular, the principle of difference-sensitive universalism¹⁹ points to the need for policies to be geared both towards universal access to social services and to overcoming gaps and inequalities, while leaving no one behind. This implies breaking down barriers to access for individuals and populations facing different types of inequality, discrimination and exclusion by means of affirmative action or policies, overcoming the culture of privilege and making progress in recognizing diverse identities and demands. As discussed below, this dual dimension of recognition and redistribution is a necessary part of a new understanding of social cohesion and its foundations, and of policies to strengthen it.

B. Core elements for a normative approach to equality-oriented social cohesion

This section aims to identify the key elements of a concept of social cohesion to complement the previous definition by ECLAC (2007a) with a normative character that facilitates the identification of public policies to strengthen it, taking into account the challenges associated with the current historical

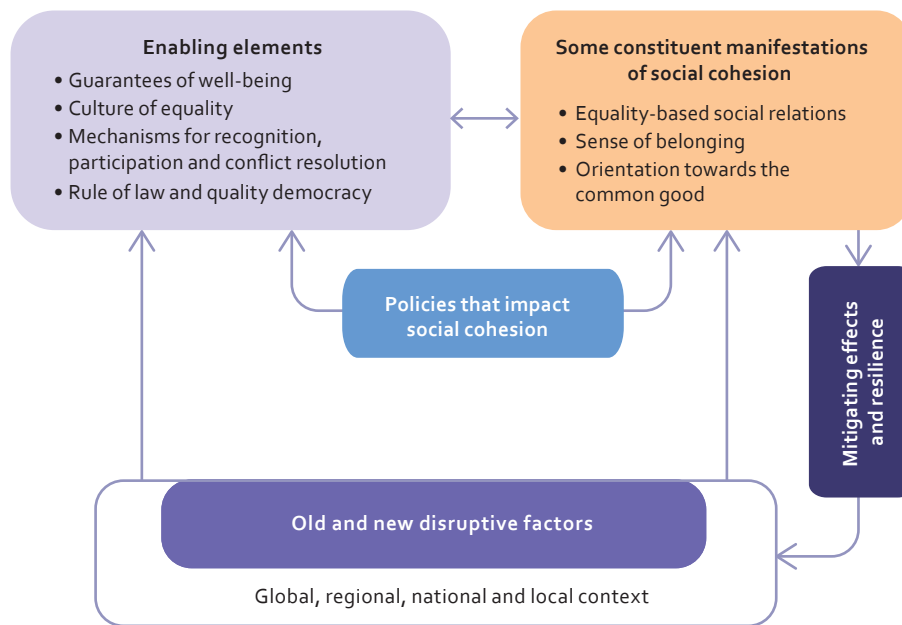
¹⁹ See Habermas (1998), cited in ECLAC (2016a) and Hopenhayn (2001).

scenario. For this reason, its unit of analysis is a country or nation State, in the understanding that this level is where the main public policies are implemented and that the interlocutors in the discussion are the governments and other social, economic and political actors that participate in their discussion, preparation and implementation. This does not imply that the concept ignores either the substantive role of civil society, in addition to the State, in the characteristics of social cohesion; or, alternatively, the pluricultural nature of the vast majority of Latin American countries, which in some cases has led to the recognition of a plurinational society, as in the case of the Plurinational State of Bolivia. Instead, the focus is on finding an order within the framework of the State in which diverse identities can find a place and coexist peacefully. Nor does it imply ignoring local territorial or cultural identities in people's sense of belonging: depending on the case, these can either cement or, alternatively, challenge social cohesion at the national level. On the contrary, the concept must account for the conditions existing in a society and its State structure to allow the coexistence, recognition and appreciation of diverse identities in pursuit of a common goal. Another aim is to address social cohesion by adjectivizing it beyond the process and normatively orienting it towards equality and people's rights, in a world with finite resources and threatened sustainability.

In this way, it is suggested that social cohesion can be understood as *the capacity of a society and its democratic institutions to promote equality-based social relations and to generate a sense of belonging and an orientation towards the common good in a way that is perceived as legitimate by its members*. That capacity refers to the generation of three specific manifestations of social cohesion—equality-based social relations, a sense of belonging and an orientation towards the common good—and requires the existence of various enabling elements: guarantees of well-being, the active promotion of a culture of equality, mechanisms for reducing inequalities, recognition, participation, the peaceful resolution of conflicts and adaptation to change, in the framework of the rule of law and robust democracy.²⁰ This proposal is related to the definition of social cohesion previously proposed by ECLAC (2007a). This additional approach alludes both to the instituted mechanisms of social inclusion and to the behaviours and dispositions of the citizenry, through the perceived legitimacy of these mechanisms and the sense of belonging, which are central elements of the previous approach. This new proposal, however, adds the dimension of equality-based social relations, in the belief that relational dynamics are essential in addressing the concept in all its dimensions. In addition, a more explicit normative orientation is added, the aim of which is to guide the formulation of public policies to allow the strengthening of social cohesion by including, as a dimension, the orientation towards the common good. In this approach, the facilitating and constituent elements of social cohesion are constantly strained and challenged by various new and old disruptive factors at the local, national and global levels. In between lies the possibility of the intermediation of various policies that can act on these facilitating elements and manifestations. At the same time, however, social cohesion also has mitigating and resilience effects for society insofar as it helps deal with disruptive factors. Diagram 1 summarizes the proposed analytical model, and its components will be described in the following sections.

²⁰ This definition, while reflecting the conceptual heritage of the discussions undertaken by ECLAC over the past decade, (ECLAC, 2007a and 2007b; Hopenhayn and Sojo, 2011), is also based on elements found present in the definitions of social cohesion offered by the Council of Europe (2003), which describes it as “the capacity of a society to ensure the welfare of all its members, minimizing disparities and avoiding polarization” (Battaini-Dragoni and Dominiononi, 2003), and by Tironi and Sorj (2007), who understand social cohesion as “the dynamic capacity of a democratic society to absorb change and social conflict by means of a legitimate structure for distributing its material and symbolic resources, in socioeconomic (well-being), sociopolitical (rights) and sociocultural (recognition) terms, through the combined action of allocation mechanisms such as the State, the market, the family, civil society and community networks” (pp. 118–119).

Diagram 1
Analytical outline of democratic and equality-oriented social cohesion



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

1. Core elements of the definition: an equality-oriented approach

The proposed definition of social cohesion takes on board three component elements: (i) relationships of equality, (ii) the sense of belonging and its relationship to trust, and (iii) orientation towards the common good.²¹ Several conceptual considerations can be derived from these elements: (iv) the allusion to a capacity for its active promotion within both society and its democratic institutions, (v) social cohesion as a process and its relative level, (vi) social cohesion and its relationship to conflict, (vii) the relationship between social cohesion, inequality and exclusion, and (viii) the systemic feedback between greater social cohesion and a society's capacity to mitigate various disruptive factors.

The first part of this definition refers to **equality-based social relations**. Interdependence and strong social ties hold a central place as wellsprings of solidarity and cohesion in the seminal work of Émile Durkheim (1897). Social relations are at the heart of social cohesion since they represent a concept that entails coexistence and interactions, the factors that bind people together, both to other individuals and in groups (Chan, To and Chan, 2006; Dragolov and others, 2013; UNDP, 2009 and 2016; Schiefer and Van der Noll, 2017). Although the various definitions emphasize different aspects of social cohesion, in general they share a cross-cutting mention of networks, ties, trust, reciprocity and common norms or values.

In several of the approaches, this expression of social cohesion is associated with social capital, a widely debated phenomenon in the literature.²² However, in the present proposal, the social links *between equals* in a cohesive society precede the notion of social capital as instrumental relations at the service of the accumulation of resources that can be mobilized to undertake determined actions.

²¹ It should be noted that the first two dimensions figure, either explicitly or implicitly, in several of the formulations highlighted in chapter II. For example, Schiefer and Van der Noll (2017) identify social relations, a sense of belonging and an orientation towards the common good as essential aspects of social cohesion.

²² Among the classical definitions is that of Bourdieu, one of the first theoreticians to use the term, for whom social capital is the "aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 248), while Putnam defines it as the "features of social organization, such as networks, norms and trust, that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" (Putnam, 1993, pp. 1–2).

As well as referring to belonging to social networks of trust or reciprocity, equality-based social relations imply a set of characteristic qualities that are present in social interactions and ties and that are diametrically opposed to attitudes (and perceptions, on the part of those who experience them) of exclusion and discrimination. In essence, the assumption is that links are forged between individuals who *a priori* recognize each other as similar and equal, regardless of the circumstances, attributes and characteristics of each. Thus, it is proposed that equality-based social relations are governed by attitudes of solidarity²³—in other words, by “the preparedness to share resources with others through personal contributions to those in struggle or in need and through taxation and redistribution organized by the State” (Stjernø, 2005, p. 298)—or allude to a sense of social interdependence and of common identities and values (Green and Janmaat, 2011). They are also characterized by respect for diversity and non-discrimination, including an orientation towards equal treatment, together with interpersonal trust and reciprocity. Understood by ECLAC (2007a, p. 94) as the “perception that others, individually or collectively, are capable of behaving with solidarity towards each individual”, this encourages a reciprocity of treatment and expectations of the behaviour of others. Thus, and in line with the definition given by the *Social Cohesion Radar* (Dragolov and others, 2013), social relations are qualified: they aim at social cohesion in terms of the quality of interactions between members of a community and resilient social relationships, which generate a positive emotional connection.

In a cohesive society based on democratic institutions, equality-based social relations develop both among those who belong to the same community, territory or group—that is, among those who share the same values, social and cultural affinities—and among those who do not share those commonalities: in other words, both among “us” and in relation to the “other”. Thus, one of the main challenges of a cohesive society is to maintain and strengthen social bonds of trust, collaboration or willingness to work together, and solidarity among those with different identities, as well as to renew such bonds in the face of new challenges under the common and shared logic of a culture of equality based on rights. This is particularly relevant in national and regional contexts marked by a trend towards growing diversity, seen in the migration experienced within Latin American countries, as well as by deep-rooted cultures of privilege (ECLAC, 2018a). This aspect of the definition of social cohesion is close to those that understand it as the commitment and ability to work together, even when the values people hold are different (Economic Commission for Africa, 2016; Pornschlegel and Jürgensen, 2019; Dragolov and others, 2013; De Beer, 2014; Woolcock, 2011; World Bank, 2012; Stanley, 2003). Equality-based relationships also involve the principle of mutual recognition (see, for example, Jenson, 1998), as well as overcoming all forms of discrimination as a precondition for social cohesion.

Similarly, in the face of multiple disruptive factors with centrifugal and exclusionary effects, equality-based social relations presuppose the existence of active processes tending towards constant social inclusion and, therefore, the improvement of economic, social, cultural and political conditions so that everyone, especially the most disadvantaged, can participate in society (ECLAC, 2017a). In other words, it is not possible to speak of equality-based social relations in contexts where social exclusion prevails or where certain people or population groups are systematically deprived of rights, resources and/or recognition, since that exclusion prevents them from actively participating in the different dimensions of society (United Nations, 2016) and denotes the presence of mechanisms of discrimination and inequalities, as well as the absence of solidarity.

The second constituent element in the proposed definition is the **sense of belonging**, referring to the linkages and identification of people with respect to society and its component institutions and groups. It includes the micro, meso and macro levels. At the micro level, the sense of belonging has relational (interactions), affective and cognitive aspects that are strongly related to people’s immediate social environment (values, attitudes, identities, perceptions and feelings) and interrelated (ECLAC, 2007a). It responds to self-identification, but its development is strongly tied to the historical moment and to

²³ The definition of cohesion coined by the Council of Europe (COE, 2005) considers loyalty and reciprocal solidarity among its characteristics—a cohesive society would be a community of mutual support—along with others such as the strength of social relations and trust among individuals in a society (see Fonseca, Lukosch and Brazier, 2019).

the inertia of the interactions that take place in society (ECLAC, 2012b). At the meso level, the sense of belonging responds in a complementary way to multiple referents, such as socioprofessional categories, sectors of activity and the territory or region of origin. Politically, the sense of belonging at the level of regional and/or ethnic referents has often coexisted with the national referent, often in a contradictory and conflictive manner as in the case of the indigenous groups found in many countries of the region. Thus, the ability to move towards societies with increasing levels of interculturality that foster dialogue, common understanding and the construction of agreements for coexistence represents a positive factor for cohesion in societies marked by cultural and territorial diversity.

Since the second half of the nineteenth century, one important component of identification for people at the macro level has been the nation State from which they originate and/or in which they live. However, this may interact—to a lesser or greater degree, depending on the context—with very diverse identities and loyalties of an ethnic, linguistic, racial, economic and/or regional nature (ECLAC, 2012b), which may or may not be contradictory and, therefore, are not mutually exclusive. As has been amply shown, the cultural diversity that may arise in a society as a result of migratory processes, for example, does not necessarily undermine the possibility of building mutual support and solidarity between communities (Banting and Kymlicka, 2006; Galabuzi and Teelucksingh, 2010). This approach highlights the importance of the dynamics of recognition, social participation and redistribution in undertaking dynamic processes for the construction of social compacts and, thus, to cement greater levels of social cohesion (see, for example, Martínez Franzoni and Sánchez-Ancochea, 2020).

In addition, this dimension is closely linked to the legitimacy associated with the way in which a society is organized on the basis of a **shared orientation towards the common good**, the third element in the proposed definition. This involves adherence to prevailing shared values and, more broadly, a society's capacity to distribute, in a way that is perceived as fair, access to the various means that guarantee people's well-being and rights. In contrast, as Durkheim noted, *anomie* arises in conditions of instability that derive from the breakdown of standards, values and rules, as well as from the absence of purposes and ideals. In the wording proposed here, the willingness both to be part of a society (the feeling of unity) and to orient action towards shared objectives²⁴ or towards the collective good are at the heart of the formation of a sense of belonging and, for that reason, the dimensions are mutually intertwined. This can be expressed as accepting "to live in a collective order that will bring both benefits and individual sacrifices" (Tironi and Sorj, 2007).

Attention must also be paid to the role of trust in building a sense of belonging and an orientation towards the common good. Trust can be understood in terms of the predictability assigned to certain responses to behaviour and the management of uncertainty. According to Warren (1999), from an instrumental point of view, trust always involves an assessment, at least implicitly, in which a person accepts to be vulnerable to the actions of others by conferring them discretionary power over something (a good, a decision or an interpersonal relationship) in exchange for the benefits that cooperation produces. By trusting, a certain level of risk is accepted in terms of potential harm if a betrayal occurs and the other party reneges on their part. When social interactions are repeated in a positive and reciprocal way, the perceived risk of being betrayed or disappointed tends to be lower, to the point that bonds of trust can even be forged between strangers.

At the interpersonal level, trust is also linked to the possibility of building relationships based on shared values and shared courses of action. In the case of trust in institutions, the legitimacy associated with their capacity to provide frameworks of meaning, rules and regulations is fundamental: not only for the functioning of democracy, but also for consolidating a sense of belonging to a given society.²⁵ In any of these cases, the belief in a third party with the authority to sanction inappropriate behaviour (usually

²⁴ For example, the definition given by the Council of Europe (COE, 2005) states that a cohesive society is one where free individuals, who are part of a community, pursue common goals through democratic means.

²⁵ As noted by Güemes (2019), there is empirical evidence on the correlations that exist between strong and vigorous democracies and high levels of trust, between the effectiveness of the State and the exercise of governance and the existence of social and institutional trust, and between levels of trust and social well-being and happiness.

the State, but also the community as in the case of indigenous peoples) is a key element (Güemes, 2019). The existence of trust facilitates and permeates the building of a sense of belonging. At the same time, trust is more feasible when the parties share deeply rooted lifeworlds,²⁶ on which inequality can have a considerable destabilizing effect (Habermas, 1987). Thus, in the approach presented here, trust in institutions is understood as an important indicator for consolidating a sense of belonging to society at the national level.

Likewise, reflection on this manifestation of social cohesion further underscores its eminently political character (COE, 2000) and its high sensitivity to the existence within societies of a project aimed at its subsistence and durability. The presence of shared social objectives that are known, accepted and legitimized by a society's members—together with the perception that the current distribution of material, political and symbolic resources is aimed at achieving those objectives, resulting in a greater degree of social cohesion—depends on a degree of political consensus regarding a project of this magnitude and its translation into concrete political values that, in turn, guide individual action. Thus, as indicated by Green and Janmaat (2011), social cohesion relies more on consensus than on coercion, since it appeals to the voluntary and spontaneous cooperation of people without the need to be forced to do so, particularly when the aim is to contribute to the common good. However, it should be noted that the orientation towards the common good does not refer to a given, immutable order or project; instead, it undergoes constant deliberation and redefinition (a process that can even be conflictive), hand in hand with public debate, and in response to the challenges and difficulties of each historical moment. The role of agency and actors appears here, transcending an approach to social cohesion as functional to a certain order, and, in contrast, highlighting its nature as a collective process under construction.

In short, both the sense of belonging and the orientation towards the common good reflect the set of shared perceptions, beliefs, values and attitudes that express the will to form part of a community of destiny with mechanisms that guarantee a distribution of resources that safeguard public goods with guaranteed minimum levels of well-being for all.²⁷ At the same time, given that equality-based social relations presuppose the recognition of others as equals, they contribute to cementing the idea that what benefits the whole can in principle be recognized as positive from an individual perspective, and vice versa. In this way, a virtuous relationship develops between equality-based social relations, a sense of belonging and an orientation towards the common good.

Fourth, while not strictly an expression of social cohesion, it should be noted that the proposed approach emphasizes the capacity of society and its democratic institutions to actively promote it. This perspective assumes that although States play a central role in generating the conditions that allow the development of equality-based social relations and a sense of belonging with a strong orientation towards the common good, society as a whole and its different actors, through the construction and improvement of democratic institutions, also play an undeniable role. Thus, social cohesion reflects an "interconnection between the roles of the State, the market, families, civil society and community relations" (Tironi and Sorj, 2007, p. 120).

Fifth, this approach to social cohesion based in democracy is conceived of as a state or situation at a given moment and, at the same time, as a process that can be forged over time. Thus, it posits that social cohesion should not be explained in isolation from its social and political context. This perspective therefore overcomes the dilemma of whether social cohesion should be approached as a process or an outcome by looking at it from a dynamic of constant change and adaptation. Along the same lines, social cohesion can be seen as contingent: in other words, subject to variations and setbacks, as societies can present high, medium or low levels of social cohesion (Schieffer, Möllering and Daniel, 2012).

²⁶ Jürgen Habermas defines a lifeworld as "the transcendental site where speaker and hearer meet, where they can reciprocally raise claims that their utterances fit the world (objective, social or subjective), and where they can criticize and confirm those validity claims, settle their disagreements and arrive at agreements" (1987, p. 179).

²⁷ For a discussion of this, see Salvat (2004).

Sixth, this proposal assumes that achieving social cohesion oriented towards equality and based on democracy in no way implies the absence of conflict; rather, it addresses the way in which conflicts are processed and resolved by a society, as shown in several of the earlier approaches (see, for example, COE, 2001 and 2005; United Nations, 2016). It thus includes the need for mechanisms to address and resolve past, present and future conflicts and to ensure peaceful coexistence. Conflict management is also central to a society's ability to cope with change in general, as the emergence of multiple disruptive elements—such as economic, political or health crises, disasters, the advent of new technologies and other events—alters existing balances and has unequal effects on people, generating conflicts, tensions and new demands that require a response.

Seventh, the proposed notion is based on the assumption that the different forms of inequality and social exclusion have a negative impact on social cohesion, and that their persistence over time and deepening can make it unattainable. Under the approach outlined here, objective elements such as inequality gaps in multiple spheres, together with their subjective perceptions, play a leading role in a society's levels of social cohesion. One substantive dimension of its strength is precisely the strength of the equality-based relationships that allow the emergence of a sense of common belonging, or as Güemes (2019) says, "feeling part of the same moral community with a shared destiny (which does not mean cultural homogeneity) generates the solidarity that is essential for the construction of social trust and social cohesion".²⁸

Finally, it enshrines the systemic feedback between greater social cohesion and a society's ability to cope with change and mitigate the disintegrative effects of various disruptive factors. Many of the conflicts and tensions inherent in collective life are rooted in the various disruptive factors described below. These constantly challenge previous arrangements and create new needs, aspirations, rivalries and dilemmas, which in turn generate asymmetrical gains (or losses) in well-being. In particular, these factors generate new inequalities and differentiated possibilities for the effective enjoyment of rights. In response, equality-oriented social cohesion helps mitigate their negative effects and contribute to resolving their causes. At the very least, it should generate greater adaptive capacity and resilience on the part of society.

2. Enabling elements and disruptive factors

The approach to the concept of equality-oriented social cohesion emphasizes its being understood as a process that can be activated on either a permanent or a temporary basis in pursuit of the well-being of individuals and society as a whole. This view identifies a series of elements that influence the level of social cohesion that a society achieves and that can form part of a longer-term collective project. The following analysis seeks to characterize these elements and their various components.

As shown on diagram 1, a society's degree of social cohesion is strongly influenced by a set of mechanisms that operate as *enabling elements*, which facilitate the emergence of equality-based social relations and a collective sense of belonging oriented towards the common good. These are elements which, while they do not define other possible forms of social cohesion, do create the conditions necessary for the development of democratic social cohesion geared towards equality. *Public policies* can play a major role in strengthening these enabling elements, as well as in strengthening social cohesion directly, as will be discussed in chapter IV. Finally, a series of *disruptive factors* can be identified. Specific to each context, they add to and magnify the dynamics of social exclusion and can affect social cohesion; they also have destabilizing effects of different degrees, which is where the enabling elements will play a key role.

²⁸ Several studies have indicated that inequality negatively influences economic growth and leads to lower investment in public education and other goods that impact the development of people's skills and productivity (Cingano, 2014; Rothstein, 2011; Bjørnskov, 2008). Competition for unequal and scarce resources also impacts the further erosion of social cohesion, through unfair competition, disrespect for rules and violence (Jordahl, 2007). Inequality hinders the construction of a sense of community and concern for the problems of others (Rothstein and Uslaner, 2005; Delhey and Newton, 2005; OECD, 2019), which is accentuated by residential segregation and the use of private services (Kearns and others, 2014). This does not imply that certain critical junctures, caused by the occurrence of disruptive factors (see section 3.C.2), do not impact social cohesion, even in equality-based societies, but it is to be expected that such societies will be in a better position to cope.

(a) Enabling elements of equality-oriented social cohesion

Enabling elements are essential in strengthening equality-based relations, a sense of belonging and a focus on the common good. They include the existence of universal guarantees of well-being for citizens; the culture of equality; mechanisms for recognizing, managing and resolving conflicts; and the rule of law and quality democracy.

As previously noted, the association between social cohesion and a society's capacity to **ensure a basic level of well-being for its members** is present in a significant number of the definitions examined.²⁹ They explicitly or implicitly refer to various mechanisms that aim to reduce existing inequalities and close gaps in access to social services, or that seek to guarantee or initiate a dialogue on an adequate standard of living and the way in which risks will be protected against. As noted by Filgueira (2014, p. 13), "among the multiple bases that allow for the construction of common identities and normative frameworks are those related to the collective protection from risk and the collective promotion of well-being [...] The capacity of the system to integrate individuals into a common normative framework largely depends on the degree to which these same individuals perceive that the fact of belonging to a joint system of interaction, cooperation, negotiation and conflict also entitles them to enjoy, at least partially, the protection and social opportunities in the face of different risks and possibilities that this system of interaction generates and distributes."

As an enabling element for the development of social cohesion, this point refers to the necessary pre-existing or ongoing dialogue on the guarantees of well-being that can be safeguarded in a society, considering the contributions, support and cooperation of all its members, and the specific situations they are intended to address. This harks back the idea of the need to build a social compact based on rights in this area (ECLAC, 2014), which can account for the way in which resources, opportunities and protection against risks are distributed in a society, thus providing a level of security that is key to strengthening the sense of belonging in an increasingly uncertain world. Another aim is to safeguard the realization of rights, particularly through social guarantees (Gacitúa-Mairó, Norton and Georgieva, 2009), which is a key issue for the equality and social inclusion of all population groups. In turn, this dimension of the realization of rights in conjunction with social guarantees imposes obligations first and foremost on the State (Abramovich, 2006).

A second enabler of social cohesion is the progress that can be made in societies with a **culture of equality**; that is, one that recognizes equal rights through policies and institutions deployed in pursuit of equality. Within that framework, equality is understood as a central orientation for action and social relations. This implies the active promotion by the State (but also its internalization and appropriation by society's different actors) of the fight against racism and all forms of discrimination, advocating for the full inclusion of traditionally discriminated groups and populations and for reciprocity in treatment; active citizen participation in the framework of a democratic culture and institutional structure that has lower tolerance for the persistence of privileges, considers them ethically inadmissible and sanctions them; the promotion of policies that seek to guarantee effective equality of rights, non-discrimination and a greater presence of the State; and the adoption of progressive tax structures and an expansive social policy that undermine the advance of the culture of privilege and instead promote greater social well-being (ECLAC, 2018a and 2019c). The culture of equality opposes the culture of privilege, which is based on a value system that reinforces and reproduces a hierarchical order that is assumed to be immutable and is based on racial or ethnic status, economic position, political affiliation or heritage (ECLAC, 2018b); the culture of equality thus makes it easier for those who make up a society or community to recognize each other as equals and freely decide to embark on a common project.

Third, mechanisms for conflict recognition, participation and resolution also provide important conditions for equality-oriented social cohesion, as they tend to generate avenues for the inclusion of historically discriminated sectors while creating the conditions for progress towards a culture of equality.

²⁹ See, for example, Barba Solano (2011), Cuéllar (2018), European Committee for Social Cohesion (2000), Club de Madrid (2009), Inter-American Development Bank (Ferroni, Mateo Díaz and Payne, 2006), Cuéllar (2009) and Council of Europe (Battaini-Dragoni and Dominioni, 2003).

The **recognition** and appreciation of differences, attending to the diverse needs and inequality gaps that more intensely affect certain populations, is a key element for social cohesion. This is particularly relevant in the context of increasingly complex societies that must face unresolved issues with respecting and ensuring the exercise of the rights of indigenous peoples and Afrodescendent populations, together with the demographic changes associated with growing intraregional migration (ECLAC, 2019a). However, this recognition is equally essential as regards the demands of the feminist, sexual diversity and disability movements, among others associated with identity policies (Modood, 2007). In turn, as Fraser and Honneth (2003) state, it must be understood that recognition and redistribution policies are closely linked and that, therefore, mechanisms for recognition have close ties with those that seek to enforce guarantees of well-being.

Following the principle of difference-sensitive universalism, it is necessary to recognize the different identities and axes that structure social inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean, in order to overcome the gaps and inequalities that certain social populations persistently suffer. Thus, a cohesive society must have mechanisms for recognizing diversity through which it can implement public policies aimed at ensuring well-being for all, reducing inequalities and resolving conflicts and changes in such a way that all people consider it legitimate. This aspect is emphasized in the Club de Madrid's understanding of social cohesion (2009, p. 20), which states that a cohesive society "is based on [...] respect for diversity and [...] is at ease with itself and the diversity of its members' cultural, religious and ethnic identities".

Together with the implementation of measures to overcome inequality and ensure the recognition of diversity, a cohesive society must consider **mechanisms that guarantee participation** by all people equally in political, social and economic processes, as a central aspect for their social inclusion and the consolidation of a sense of belonging. This element is strongly related to mechanisms for recognition, since in order to ensure that different actors participate actively in the various aspects of social life, it is first necessary to recognize who those actors are and identify their peculiarities, so that participation mechanisms appropriate to that diversity can be designed. As stated by UNDP (2016, p. 33), one of the factors in achieving a cohesive society is "encouraging participation and active engagement", while the literature offers different approaches to the link between participation and a sense of belonging, solidarity and a willingness to work together towards common goals (Schiefer and Van der Noll, 2016).³⁰

It should be noted that although involvement and participation in organizations, commissions or thematic and religious groups contribute to the internal social cohesion of those groups in that they strengthen equality-based social relations between similar people, social cohesion at the country level demands ensuring and promoting participation in formal political life, i.e. active citizenship as a means of participation in decision-making. The continuum towards greater involvement in political life features electoral participation and participation in the political associations characteristic of representative democracy, as well as the range of mechanisms offered by participatory democracy. Overall, the aim is to strengthen the dimension of equality-based relations "among different people" through political participation as the axis of the collective definition of the common good.

Social cohesion also requires the presence of **mechanisms for peaceful conflict resolution**. As noted above, the assumption is not that a cohesive society is free of conflicts, but rather that it processes them peacefully. This requires institutions with the capacity to carry out such a process, seeking to avoid violence and confrontation and highlighting the importance of the orientation to the common good. Democratic institutions provide multiple forums and avenues for processing conflict: on the one hand, by giving expression to the diversity of competing interests and positions, but also, on the other, by facilitating decision-making according to certain rules, procedures and public deliberation. The functionality of those institutions is not inherently guaranteed, however, as numerous phenomena, such as co-optation or corruption, often limit this capacity for conciliation and conflict resolution.

³⁰ This participation is a part of the very definition of the common good insofar as its contents cannot be given, but are built historically and collectively.

This issue is particularly relevant for the Latin American region, where violence has been normalized and, in various forms, is widespread in the region's different countries (ECLAC, 2019b). Moreover, the reasons that motivate social unrest arise not only from the existence of conflicts within a society, but also from the State's incapacity to manage them (UNDP, 2012, p. 16). It is therefore essential that States are able—and/or pressured by citizens—to identify the tensions and conflicts that exist and to strengthen institutions with the capacity and autonomy to process them. This requires that institutions have sufficient autonomy so that they are not taken over by the interests of specific groups: something that is particularly likely in societies with high levels of economic inequality and in economies with low capital mobility, as in the case of natural resource extraction (Boix, 2003). In contrast, the creation of additional mechanisms for dialogue and consultation with the most excluded and least empowered sectors is an enormously important instrument for advancing towards social cohesion in the terms proposed.

Finally, social cohesion requires that society's members respect and legitimize the way in which societies and their institutions promote equality-based social relations, expressed in the **rule of law and functional democratic institutions**. The rule of law has been defined by the United Nations (2004) as a principle of governance whereby all persons, institutions and public and private entities, including the State itself, are subject to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced and independently adjudicated, and are consistent with international human rights norms and standards. In addition, measures are required to ensure respect for the principles of the rule of law, equality before the law, accountability before the law, fairness in the enforcement of the law, the separation of powers, participation in decision-making, legality, non-arbitrariness, and procedural and legal transparency. This aspect is central to building trust in institutions, as it makes their functioning more predictable, transparent and independent of particular interests (Przeworski and Maravall, 2003).³¹ This is closely related to the consolidation of functional democratic institutions. Along with the rule of law, the essential dimensions include the holding of free and competitive elections and the responsiveness of decision-makers to the demands and expectations of the citizenry. In this regard, steady improvements are expected, but it is difficult to establish quantitative degrees or minimums, although there is a large literature on the quality of liberal democracy as a guide. This is characterized, qualitatively, by providing its citizens with high degrees of individual freedom, political equality and citizen oversight over public policies, as well as over policymakers, through the legitimate and legal functioning of stable institutions (Diamond and Morlino, 2005).

A **quality democracy** also assumes that public policies are subject to public discussion and that decision-making, rather than arbitrary, is subject to certain mechanisms of horizontal accountability (by bodies with a formal mandate to exercise oversight, such as public comptrollers) and vertical accountability (by civil society, citizen mobilizations and the electorate itself). Thus, accountability mechanisms have the crucial task of institutionalizing a constant distrust of governmental bodies and decision-makers. Their presence and effectiveness therefore allow people to trust them (or to distrust them less) (Schedler, 2007; O'Donnell, 2003). These characteristics are fundamental to promoting relations of equality and a sense of belonging oriented towards the common good, as they imply the primacy of equality of all before the law, and the rule of law over positions of power that may be held by policymakers or other actors with greater resources (De la Fuente, Kneuer and Morlino, 2020).

(b) Some manifestations of equality-oriented social cohesion

Democratic and equality-oriented social cohesion presupposes certain constituent elements that are manifest or expressed: i.e., they can be observed through various social phenomena. Some of the general expressions of this approach will be described below, as they are part of the concept and/or "process" of social cohesion.³²

³¹ This does not intrinsically prevent certain groups from indirectly influencing the processes of political decision-making and law-making by, for example, financing electoral campaigns or controlling certain media outlets.

³² The following chapter will address the methodological discussion on the implementation and measurement of social cohesion through these expressions.

One of the main expressions of social cohesion is **decent treatment** among the members of a society. In broad terms, this involves affirming the dignity of the “other”: the recognition of being part of a community of equals in citizenship rights and the expectation of reciprocity in treatment (ECLAC, 2018a). This implies that equality and reciprocity are present in the interactions that take place among people and between people and institutions that are part of the same society, from economic transactions and access to justice, to labour, educational and health relations, thus contributing to equality-based social relations.

A second fundamental expression of social cohesion is the presence of a **dense social fabric**. The concept of social fabric involves understanding the community as a web of social relations that is an asset for individuals and society, in that its connections expand the options and opportunities for improving the quality of life and for creating venues for cooperation (UNDP, 2013). Those societies that are structured around this approach—that is, where decisions and actions use the idea of community as an asset, emphasizing the importance of cooperation among their members—have a dense or strong social fabric and, therefore, have a high level of social cohesion, since it strengthens the sense of belonging to the community.³³

Third, a society’s social cohesion can be expressed through its members’ **adhesion to a common project**. This concept is closely related to the orientation towards the common good; commitment to a common project is related to the responsibility shared by the other members of the community and by the community as a whole,³⁴ and it can be manifested in different ways, especially by the rejection of inequality and the presence of high levels of tax morale. A cohesive society can be expected to display an **aversion to inequality**, understood as a preference for a redistributive structure that favours more egalitarian outcomes over those that generate limited benefits for some groups with more unequal overall outcomes. This assessment may be based on the perceived impact of income distribution at the individual level, taking on the character of comparative preference, and/or it may be situated beyond the effect this may have on current or future individual well-being, constituting a normative assessment of which distribution is more just or ethically justifiable (Alesina and Giuliano, 2011; Clark and D’Ambrosio, 2015; Burone and Leites, 2019). In turn, a positive willingness to pay taxes can be expected in a cohesive society. **Tax morale**, defined as the intrinsic motivation to pay taxes (OECD, 2019), is related to different factors central to social cohesion: trust in the national government, adherence to the fiscal compact, perceptions of corruption, quality public services, support for democracy and the belief that income redistribution is essential and that paying taxes is therefore vital as a way to support people living in poverty (Torgler, 2005; Heinemann and Hennighausen, 2010; OECD, 2019; Burchi, Strupat and Von Schiller, 2020). Thus, tax morale constitutes an additional expression of social cohesion that is strongly related to the orientation to the common good.

Linked to this aspect are the partial validity of the rule of law and a dysfunctional democracy as vectors of citizen unrest in the region. Indeed, one of the worrying indicators of low social cohesion in the region is a growing disaffection and distrust towards democracy and its main actors (such as political parties), largely because of their poor performance in making its fundamental precepts a reality (such as the enjoyment of rights or effective equality before the law) and also because of their limited capacity to generate change and process new social demands. As a positive expression of democratic social cohesion, a society should maintain a certain level of confidence in the capacity of the democratic regime (and its actors) to reform itself to correct imbalances and to process and reconcile the diverse demands of the citizenry. A useful definition of functional, quality democratic institutions focuses on three complementary elements: the effective level of freedom and equality enjoyed by citizens; the respect afforded to the

³³ Returning to the discussion in the previous chapter, the notion of a dense social fabric linked to equality-oriented social cohesion alludes above all to the notion of bridging social capital between different people or groups, rather than to a social capital that only unifies individuals and groups that are similar at the territorial, community or specific social category level, in opposition to different individuals or groups (bonding social capital).

³⁴ This idea is based on what Dragolov and others (2013) call a focus on the common good.

rules that the community adopts and imposes on itself, and the level of regular accountability of power to the public (rule of law); and responsiveness to the demands of citizens, associations and communities (De la Fuente, Kneuer and Morlino, 2020, p. 29).

C. Factors that can disrupt social cohesion: a wide range of global phenomena, some particularly problematic in the Latin American context

Social cohesion and its enabling elements cannot be considered in isolation from the political, economic, institutional and environmental phenomena that constantly challenge and stress it at the national, regional or global levels. Furthermore, this approach includes adaptation to change as a central challenge for social cohesion, in that changes exacerbate conflicts or generate new ones. The current context is marked by a dizzying pace in the arrival of changes in technology, in the world of work and in social and environmental matters (ECLAC, 2018a), and these are compounded by the redefinition of the economic, political and social scenarios caused by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Added to this is the climate crisis and the urgent need to modify lifestyles, both in terms of consumption and production patterns and in terms of behaviour (ECLAC, 2018a). The COVID-19 pandemic is the most recent disruptive factor and forms part of several latent global health risks. It must therefore be kept in mind that a society's social cohesion can be significantly affected at any time by the occurrence of these disruptive factors, because they alter or question the enabling elements of social cohesion and its expressions.

Similarly, the characteristics of each society and the features of the context in which social cohesion is analysed will also have a direct impact on its evolution and its strength or weakness. These factors and disruptive elements can alter the prevailing balances and dynamics in all areas, generating groups of people or sectors that are benefited or harmed to lesser or greater extents and, therefore, new needs and demands; they can change the resources and possible alternatives of actors, from individuals to the State itself; and they can alter the collective perspective (or narrative) of social reality at a given moment, creating new tensions and conflicts in the face of previously accepted issues or dynamics. Table 9 shows some of the main global disruptive factors, including some of particular relevance to the region.

Table 9
Major global disruptive factors for social cohesion in Latin America

Global disruptive factors	Global disruptive factors with particular impact in the Latin American context ^a
Economic crises and volatility	Poverty and inequality
Health crises and risks	Culture of privilege
Climate crisis and natural disasters	Weak social institutions
Changes in the world of work	Inadequate social investment
Digital and technological revolution	Violence
New flows of human mobility and migration	Cultural changes in gender roles and family structures
Populism and nationalism	Identity and recognition demands

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

^a The main tool used to identify these elements are the critical obstacles identified by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Critical obstacles to inclusive social development in Latin America and the Caribbean: background for a regional agenda* (LC/CDS.3/3), Santiago, 2019.

Disruptive factors respond to global trends in a world characterized by growing uncertainties and economic, social, epidemiological and environmental imbalances, causing real tectonic shifts (ECLAC, 2016b and 2018b). An example of this is economic volatility and crises, which can lead to a significant slowdown in the economy or even to its abrupt contraction, as has been seen at the regional level (ECLAC, 2019a and 2019b), and which is predicted to be even more severe in the current context

(ECLAC, 2020a). Another example are health crises, such as the one being experienced globally as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, which is generating serious social and economic impacts with direct repercussions on expectations for community and State responses. Crises of this kind, together with the climate crisis, can entail a deterioration in living conditions, both in objective material terms and in people's subjective impressions, and this can have important repercussions on the social cohesion of societies, especially those that confront such crises with high levels of inequality and gaps in the exercise of social, economic and cultural rights.

In addition, other changes that may affect social cohesion include the fourth industrial revolution or the digital revolution, which implies an increase in the intensity of communications mediated through virtual channels, and the profound changes that are on the horizon in the world of work as a result of increased technologies in the workplace, the risk of automation and changes in the skills demanded by the job market (Autor, 2015; Frey and Osborne, 2017; ECLAC, 2018a; Weller, Gontero and Campbell, 2019; OECD, 2019).

This is compounding by the emerging trend towards an increase in populist leadership and forms of government and the resurgence of nationalism, a phenomenon that has been observed in various parts of the world and which, in Latin America, is associated with a nationalist sentiment that favours the well-being of the native population and to a certain extent expresses, rather than the manifestation of a collective aspiration, a strong individual frustration (Algan and others, 2019). This could lead to xenophobia and rejection of immigration, as seen in Europe and the United States.

In addition to these factors, there are some other contextual elements that, while they can be observed in other regions, are considered to be particularly noteworthy characteristics of Latin America. These include deeply rooted poverty and vulnerability to it, structural inequalities, different forms of violence, recent migration trends and the emergence and strengthening of demands based on identity politics (ECLAC, 2020b and 2019c). In many cases, it can be seen that these characteristics are the opposite of the enabling elements of social cohesion identified above. Such is the case, for example, with poverty and inequality, which are persistent and structural elements in the region's countries that operate in the opposite direction to the guarantees of well-being, or the clear contrast between the prevailing culture of privilege in Latin America and the culture of equality required for cohesive societies. These are not emerging or new elements in the region: they are rooted in its structure, so efforts to replace them with factors that allow for the consolidation of social cohesion should be greater than those applied to address other characteristics of the context.

However, other more recent elements can be identified that weaken or erode social cohesion without the mediating action of public policies. These include trends associated with international migration: the increase of migratory flows within the region is a notable trend with major political, economic, social and cultural repercussions (ECLAC, 2019b). Building social relations of peaceful coexistence, appreciating and recognizing diversity and the social and labour inclusion of migrants are all central challenges for the social cohesion of the region's countries, especially those most affected as receivers of intraregional migratory flows. Such flows are a phenomenon that must be addressed with dedication and with a rights-based approach at the centre of the response. In particular, migration very specifically highlights the way in which a society adapts and reacts to contact with difference insofar as migrants often have different cultural, linguistic, ethnic or religious attributes and other characteristics that are not necessarily seen as compatible with those of the host society. Added to this is the growing presence of phenomena involving the vindication of the rights of given communities and populations and the development of identity politics in the region. The protagonists of this are a series of social actors both old and new: the feminist movement, indigenous peoples and Afrodescendent populations, the LGBTI population and people with disabilities, among others. These phenomena have a range of implications for social cohesion and people's sense of belonging. These claims highlight the historical exclusion of collectives and population groups—some even majority ones—that were left out of, for example, the elements of identity that founded the first post-colonial national identities, as in the case of indigenous

and Afrodescendent peoples (Dabène, 2017). But these demands also respond to the emergence of new collectives and identities, as in the case of the LGBTI community, appealing to a broadening and diversification of individual identity and citizenship.

As regards **violence**, Latin America and the Caribbean is the most violent region in the world, with a homicide rate five times higher than the global average (22.1 and 4.4 homicides per 100,000 people, respectively). The threats it poses are felt with particular intensity by children, youth, women, indigenous and Afrodescendent people, migrants and the LGBTI population (ECLAC, 2019c and 2018b). A culture of violence persists, with models of social behaviour where diversity has low levels of acceptance and appreciation, leading to aggression towards historically discriminated populations (Trucco and Inostroza, 2017). Social violence, especially that associated with organized crime, has multiple adverse effects on social cohesion, as it undermines interpersonal trust and trust in institutions, magnifies the dysfunctionality of the rule of law and can even alter the functioning of democracies when, through bribery or intimidation, it attempts to influence electoral processes and/or co-opt positions within the apparatus of the State in order to secure impunity.

Social cohesion is also affected by other types of violence. These include symbolic and cultural violence, which manifests itself in the arena of values and has an impact on people's identities and sense of belonging to their community. In this case, the violent acts are not necessarily physical but are focused on generating moral damage for other people and denying them recognition. An excess of symbolic or cultural violence can develop into forms of structural violence: in other words, violence that negatively affects access to social, economic and cultural opportunities for the individuals or groups attacked (Campero, 2019).

Interactions between all these factors and the characteristics of the region's context exacerbates the complexity and nature of the challenges to social cohesion. Mobilizing responses to counter crises with a widespread impact on societies is critical; citizens' perceptions of a shared response oriented to the common good, shared protection and security, and the well-being of all can be crucial. Certainly, this will have an impact on a society's level of resilience, which can be understood as "the ability of a system, community or society exposed to a hazard to resist, absorb, adapt to and recover from its effects in a timely and effective manner, including the preservation and restoration of its basic structures and functions" (UNDRR, n/d). Social cohesion plays a crucial role in the resilience of societies. One key element is the capacity of societies to respond to conflict, which has already been identified as one of the enabling elements of social cohesion.

As this chapter has indicated, in the face of a historical juncture full of old and new challenges for the sustainability and existence of societies, social cohesion must be thought of in terms of equality. As has been shown, this entails analysing, measuring and consolidating various enabling factors and constituent elements so progress can be made towards that model of social cohesion and, at the same time, the capacity to face those challenges peacefully and democratically can be strengthened. It is on the basis of those elements that a measurement framework adapted to this approach will be developed in chapter III, while chapter IV will outline some policy sectors of particular interest in raising social cohesion within public policymaking.

III. Measuring social cohesion: a proposal for monitoring and policies

A. Introduction³⁵

The development of a new measurement structure for social cohesion is intended to update the previous approach developed by ECLAC by incorporating the thematic reorientations discussed in previous chapters and the new sources of information that have become available. The challenges in moving towards a coherent system of indicators include not only taking on board the progress made in this area and portraying the multiple realities that coexist within the region, but also ensuring that it is relevant for portraying the state of social cohesion in the countries in accordance with the established definitions and components and that it can serve as a point of reference for the design and identification of public policies targeting this issue.

This chapter is divided into four parts. First, it reviews the various social cohesion metrics developed by ECLAC and identifies the challenges that still remain, before attempting to respond to some of them on the basis of progress made in the relevant literature. It then presents a new regional measurement method, developed in line with the approach to social cohesion set out in the previous chapter. That framework is shown in the form of a dashboard, structured according to various analytically relevant dimensions and subdimensions. Finally, the indicators are presented, along with their explanations and the results for the last available year (2018).

B. Background to ECLAC measurements of social cohesion

ECLAC undertook the development of a reference framework for measuring social cohesion in order to place this issue on national agendas, seeing it as a means of improving the institutional framework in favour of inclusive economic growth and, at the same time, as a way to pursue the adoption of redistributive public policies by promoting a sense of belonging based on rights-centred values and on solidarity-based social compacts (ECLAC, 2007a).

³⁵ The authors are grateful to Camilo Acuña, Catalina Cea and Daniel Pailañir for their significant support and contributions to this chapter.

As stated in chapter I, social cohesion was defined by highlighting the dialectical relationships between the mechanisms of social inclusion and exclusion, and citizens' perceptions of how those mechanisms operate. In that approach, the sense of belonging and the dichotomy between exclusion and inclusion were considered the most relevant pillars. At the same time, including the subjective impressions of social actors (their perceptions) made it possible to establish interrelationships between the different elements (ECLAC, 2007a). Table 10 shows how the social cohesion metrics developed by ECLAC in the three documents reviewed were put into practice, along with the evolution of the pillars and dimensions.

Table 10
Evolution of the social cohesion metrics adopted by ECLAC by pillars and dimensions

	Distances	Institutions	Belonging
ECLAC, 2007a	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Income inequality 2. Poverty and extreme poverty 3. Employment 4. Education 5. Health 6. Housing 7. Pensions 8. Digital gap 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Functioning of democracy 2. State institutions 3. Market institutions 4. Family 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Multiculturalism 2. Trust 3. Participation 4. Mobility expectations 5. Social solidarity
	Distances	Institutional mechanisms for exclusion and inclusion	Sense of belonging
ECLAC, 2007b	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Poverty and income (including inequality) 2. Employment 3. Access to social protection (pensions) 4. Consumption of goods and access to basic services 5. Access to education 6. Access to health 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Democratic system 2. Rule of law (anti-corruption efforts, and justice and human security) 3. Public policies 4. Operation of the market 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Multiculturalism and non-discrimination 2. Social capital and participation 3. Expectations for the future and social mobility 4. Sense of social integration and belonging
	Gaps	Institutional capacity	Citizen support
ECLAC, 2010a	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Poverty and income 2. Employment 3. Access to social protection 4. Education 5. Health 6. Consumption and access to basic services 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Functioning of democracy 2. Functioning of the rule of law 3. Public policies 4. Economy and market (including indicators of the GDP/inflation context) 5. Family 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support for the democratic system (previously in the functioning of democracy) 2. Trust in institutions (previously in social capital and participation) 3. Economic expectations 4. Perceptions of inequality 5. Support for the reduction of social gaps

Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Cohesión social: inclusión y sentido de pertenencia en América Latina y el Caribe* (LC/G.2335/REV.1), Santiago, 2007; ECLAC, *Social Cohesion: Inclusion and a Sense of Belonging in Latin America and the Caribbean. Summary* (LC/G.2334), Santiago, 2007, and ECLAC, *Social cohesion in Latin America: concepts, frames of reference and indicators* (LC/G.2420), Santiago, 2010.

The concept was put into operation through the identification of three pillars (distances, institutions and belonging), the interrelations of which would define social cohesion processes and results. The first pillar sought to quantify the objective gaps in well-being within society created by the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. This metric was inspired by the Laeken indicators constructed by the European Union (income, employment, education and health), but complemented by several additional components (housing, pensions and access to technology) in the belief that the distribution of well-being and opportunities was not limited to income from work. For each dimension, a series of "primary" indicators were proposed to measure the essence of the problem by quantifying access to and the outcomes of inclusion mechanisms, and "secondary" indicators were developed to complement this

vision by measuring access to resources. With regard to the second pillar, the aim was to measure the impact of institutions on a society's structure of opportunities, institutional capacity for closing gaps and citizen evaluations of the institutions' performance in closing gaps. For this purpose, two types of institutions (State and market dynamics) were identified, with three dimensions: functioning of democracy, State institutions and market institutions. Finally, in the belonging pillar, the aim was to quantify citizens' degree of adhesion to a common collective solidarity-based project, in terms of the links between different groups of citizens and their linkages with the State through the following dimensions: multiculturalism, trust, participation, expectations of mobility and social solidarity (see table 10).

The result of these efforts was an initial framework for the development of a system of indicators, one of the central challenges of which was the identification of subjective databases for the region. ECLAC (2007b) returned to this undertaking, offering a second proposal with a system of indicators based on the same conceptual framework. There were several significant challenges in the development of this second proposal:

- The thematic scope of the metrics: as a result, the "housing" dimension was broadened to "consumption of goods and access to basic services", and the "pensions" dimension was redefined as "social protection", in order to provide a more global outlook on this phenomenon, especially for groups outside the labour market. In turn, the "public policies" dimension was added to the inclusion and exclusion mechanisms to quantify the State's commitment to and capacity for redistribution, along with citizens' willingness to pay taxes.
- Because of the lack of frequency of regional data, access to new technologies was not measured.
- The low reliability and availability of subjective indicators for the "social solidarity" dimension led to the inclusion of objective indicators for suicide and homicide rates as approximations of social anomie and as antonyms of "social integration and belonging".

Finally, in the document *Social cohesion in Latin America: Concepts, frames of reference and indicators* (ECLAC, 2010a) the measurement framework was again adjusted: the three pillars were renamed "social gaps", "institutional capacity" and "citizen support", with the aim of identifying institutional configurations favourable to social inclusion by focusing the measurement on quantifying the institutional capacity to close gaps in the levels of citizen approval of key social cohesion issues. Therefore, the earlier emphasis on inclusion and belonging was changed to measuring citizen support for social cohesion, where "belonging" refers to the degree to which citizens adhere to the country's socioeconomic order. The measurement of the linkages between groups in society was abandoned, and the measurement of subjective indicators was incorporated into the citizen support pillar. The latter was reduced to measuring perceptions regarding the evaluation of democracy, the perception of inequality and support for the reduction of gaps.

The document addressed the previous challenges while also adopting a normative perspective based on the goals set at the United Nations Millennium Summit (2000), especially for the selection of the dimensions of the "gaps" pillar. In turn, for the "institutional capacity" pillar, the measurement was constrained to the inclusion of objective indicators that quantify the fiscal commitment to social issues (social spending as a percentage of gross domestic product), fiscal capacity (tax burden as a percentage of gross domestic product) and the sufficiency and quality of institutions (State, market and family) in providing well-being, as the subjective citizen evaluation indicators regarding the capacity and functioning of institutions in the provision of well-being were eliminated. The subjective indicators were included under the "citizen support" pillar.

In addition, in the "institutional capacity" pillar, in order to meet the challenge of establishing desirable thresholds for normative and political and institutional matters, it was decided to exclude manufactured indicators such as the Freedom House index, the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index and the democracy-autocracy scale developed by the Center for Systemic Peace and the Integrated Network for Societal Conflict Research, and indicators of perception of democracy were chosen instead. At the same time, in order to address the reliability of self-reported indicators, participation in parliamentary elections

was not included in the “institutional capacity” pillar, since it varies considerably with the degree of openness of democracy in the region; instead, priority was given to the indicator of the percentage of women in parliament, which is more directly related to the level of democratic inclusion and representativeness.

Finally, in the “citizen support” pillar, the ECLAC (2010a) measurement system covers only the measurement of citizen support for the political system and the willingness of actors to reduce social gaps, leaving out the indicators of social capital, values of solidarity and a sense of social integration, which were originally used as indications of the sense of belonging due to the lack of research into the validity and reliability of the subjective indicators, as well as their unavailability (ECLAC, 2010a, p. 193).

Since 2007, the successive approaches to measuring social cohesion undertaken by ECLAC have faced the challenge of both deepening and synthesizing the proposals as far as possible at the conceptual level (incorporating the most significant dimensions while neglecting other more redundant ones) and at the operational level (assessing the availability and validity of subjective indicators for measuring complex issues, such as social capital, non-discrimination or social integration, as proposed in the initial conceptual framework). The current proposal takes up these difficulties and aspires to move forward from the path previously travelled.

C. Measurement proposal: pillars, dimensions and subdimensions

Chapter I provided an analysis of the different conceptual approaches to social cohesion, as well as a look at the frameworks for measuring social cohesion devised by a variety of institutions and regions. Chapter II then outlined a conceptual proposal for a specific equality-oriented model of social cohesion based on the challenges of the current historical context and new regional and global reference points for sustainable development. In particular, for measurement purposes, it embraced elements of social cohesion related to people’s subjective experiences and attitudes (culture of equality, equality-based social relations, sense of belonging and orientation towards the common good) alongside components that lend themselves more to the use of objective indicators (mechanisms for recognition and participation, or guarantees of well-being, for example).

A preliminary proposal that seeks to address social cohesion in line with the approach of the previous chapters is presented below. The current proposal differs from the previous measurement system, which focused on revealing the dialectic between the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion and their results, with the perceptions and attitudes of citizens in terms of the development of values of solidarity. In contrast, the proposed framework focuses on understanding the institutional capacity to promote equality-based social relations, as well as on the enabling factors and component elements of social cohesion. Thus, **its measurement focuses on the capacity of institutions to reduce gaps and generate well-being within the democratic rule of law, but it also addresses the capacity of institutions and societies to actively promote and support a culture of equality at the institutional and intergroup levels.**

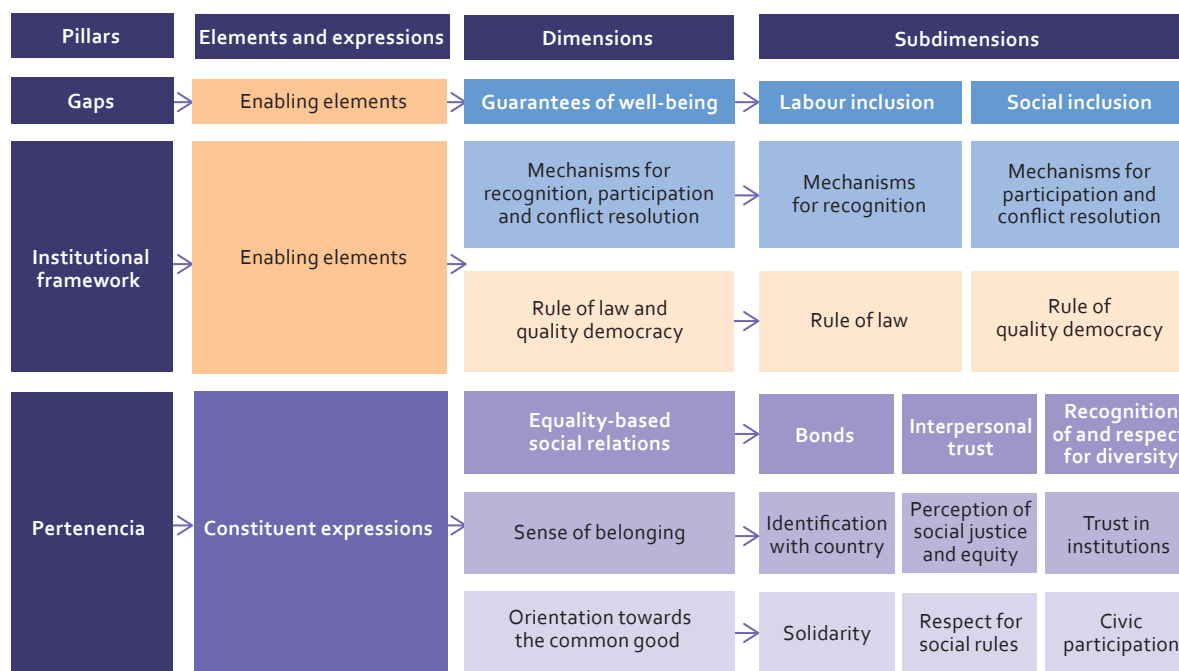
To this end, it maintains the three pillars used by ECLAC to measure social cohesion:

- (i) Gaps: social and labour inclusion
- (ii) Institutional framework
- (iii) Sense of belonging

The **gaps pillar** (see diagram 2) examines progress with the well-being of the population and of different groups in society. For this, it uses the subdimensions of labour and social inclusion. The aim is to quantify the absolute achievements of society in terms of social and labour inclusion—known as dual inclusion—as these make it possible to overcome poverty and reduce inequality, which are necessary components for progress towards equality of rights and the provision of guarantees for comprehensive individual development (ECLAC, 2017b). This is where efforts should be directed to end poverty, inequality and marginalization among various historically excluded groups such as women, indigenous peoples, Afrodescendants, persons with disabilities and older persons (ECLAC, 2020d). For this reason,

the measurement is given a gender, ethnic and racial focus, and it includes a review of progress in terms of the social and labour inclusion of persons with disabilities. In addition, social and labour inclusion is defined, since inclusion is fundamental in advancing towards equal rights and recognition of others as equals, which allows the development of equality-based social relations and a sense of belonging as citizens perceive themselves as recognized (socially and institutionally) and with full enjoyment of rights (ECLAC 2018b; Filgueira, 2014).

Diagram 2
ECLAC: proposal for measuring social cohesion



Source: Prepared by the authors.

Under the **institutional framework pillar**, the aim is to incorporate the promotion of a culture of equality in social, political, economic, cultural and environmental life. To that end, the following dimensions are defined: (i) mechanisms for recognition, participation and conflict resolution and (ii) rule of law and quality democracy. The first dimension covers: (i) the development and adoption of mechanisms for the promotion of equality, including the CEDAW Optional Protocol and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, (ii) the existence of agreements with conflict resolution and/or prevention mechanisms: ratification of the Escazú Agreement and ILO Convention 169, (iii) the existence of mechanisms for participation: proportion of parliamentary seats held by women and indigenous peoples and, finally, (iv) constitutional recognition of indigenous peoples and their fundamental collective rights in accordance with international standards. It thus quantifies, on the one hand, the State's commitment to the eradication of discriminatory practices in different areas of society (constitutional recognition, economic, social, political and cultural gaps) and, on the other, participation in decision-making and conflict resolution venues, since the establishment of mechanisms for dialogue allows the inclusion of different sectors in decision-making, prevents the reproduction and acceptance of social gaps and allows the demands that permeate horizontal and vertical relations in society to be channelled institutionally (ECLAC, 2021a). At the same time, the **rule of law** dimension seeks to quantify citizens' assessments of the legitimacy and probity of their institutions in the mediation of conflicts and the distribution of resources in society. According to the report *Political and social compacts for equality and sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean in the post-COVID-19 recovery* (ECLAC, 2020a), perception among citizens that public decisions are controlled by private interests casts doubt on their legitimacy and fragments the social fabric (Przeworski and Maravall, 2003). In addition, the correct functioning of democracy and

the correct combination of individual preferences enable the mechanisms of social cohesion and allow the pursuit of a renewed social compact towards just, peaceful and inclusive societies (ECLAC, 2020d).

Finally, the **sense of belonging** pillar quantifies the results of institutional action on links within society, and its identification with the direction of the current social agreement. For this purpose, the dimension of **equality-based social relations** is included to reveal the intensity or density of the social fabric and the intergroup social capital in society. This dimension measures: (i) **social bonds**, or the intensity of the network of social relations within a society, a necessary element to generate venues for cooperation that facilitate the development of equality-based social relations (UNDP, 2013), (ii) **interpersonal trust**, an attribute of social relations that enables intergroup interaction and facilitates collective action towards shared goals, and (iii) **recognition and respect for diversity**, as social relations of equality imply the recognition of similarities with others, together with their dignity, which is an element that arises from interaction in networks and associations with individuals of different characteristics and allows the development of interpersonal trust (ECLAC, 2007a and 2018c).

The next dimension is the **sense of belonging**, which seeks to quantify how individuals in society identify with the values and actions of their institutions and the extent to which they align with their own. This is achieved by measuring: (i) **identification** with the socioeconomic order that the country's institutions promote and reproduce, an element that implies an assessment of the values they represent, (ii) **perception of social justice**, or people's analysis of the capacity of institutions to deliver well-being and/or redistribute economic and political power, perceptions that affect institutional trust and consequently the sense of belonging to a given State (ECLAC, 2007a), and (iii) **trust in institutions**, which measures the implicit appreciation of the actions carried out by institutions to represent the values of society and/or to orient action towards the collective good (Warren, 2010).

Finally, the dimension of **orientation towards the common good** is included to identify the level of adherence to a solidarity-based social project. It should be noted that this adherence is influenced by institutional action and the proper functioning of the rule of law, because if citizens perceive the distribution of well-being as illegitimate or feel excluded from it, trends related to social anomie can be expected to arise: i.e. the prevalence of behaviours that deviate from society's norms and rules, stemming from disagreements with the social structure of opportunities, cultural aspirations and pathways for achieving these aspirations (Bachelet, 2011; Ramírez de Garay, 2013). This dimension includes: (i) **solidarity**, in order to quantify the presence of values of solidarity among individuals in society; this is based on the understanding that the reciprocity learned in networks is linked to the solidarity people perceive they receive from the State and their peers (ECLAC, 2007a), (ii) **respect for social rules**, or the respect and legitimacy afforded to the prevailing status quo, and (iii) **civic participation**, which indicates the willingness to engage with the political system's participation venues and the link between individuals and their community (related to interpersonal trust and intergroup cooperation). Social participation promotes citizen participation in public affairs, supporting collective projects that represent their opinions or political interests (Valdéz, Viramontes and Finol, 2016). At the same time, it develops people's civic awareness, strengthens bonds of solidarity, makes the general interest comprehensible and allows groups to intervene in public management, thereby enabling cooperation between institutions and citizens (ECLAC, 2007a).

D. Selection of indicators and their relationship to social cohesion

Given the complexity of the phenomena covered by the measurement system and the limitations in finding sources with comparable regional indicators, a detailed selection strategy was carried out in order to characterize each of the aspects contained in the conceptual proposal as clearly as possible, while at the same time taking advantage of the successes of previous proposals. Thus, the selection of indicators for each subdimension took account of the following criteria:

- Criterion of availability: indicators addressing a larger number of countries and therefore with greater temporal and regional coverage were prioritized.

- Criterion of disaggregation: indicators with disaggregations available by gender, ethnicity and race, age and urban/rural residence were selected, when relevant to the analysis.
- Criterion of relevance: indicators already included in the ECLAC 2007a and 2010a measurement methods and that were congruent with the indicators used in other measurements were preferred.

In short, the starting point for the indicators comprised the three previous ECLAC proposals for social cohesion measurement systems, the updating of the concept set out in chapter II and the review of various social cohesion metrics that have been emerging in think tanks, official country measurement methods and international organizations.

Box 1

Scope, limitations and uses of perception surveys

The previous ECLAC measurement schemes questioned the bias, reliability and validity of subjective indicators derived from perception surveys. Among the reasons for discarding their use, it was argued that their meaning had to be put into context in each particular case, which made comparability difficult; in addition, there is little existing literature on the validity and reliability of perception surveys (ECLAC, 2010a). However, as ECLAC states in the 2020 *Social Panorama*, it is extremely important that subjective indicators be monitored in order to reveal, as closely as possible, the subjective evaluation of citizens' experiences of the material conditions they experience in the economic, political and social dimensions, given that neglecting the disconnect between expectations and government action can generate great tensions, conflict and instability (ECLAC, 2021b). For example, the recent citizen mobilizations in the region cannot be explained solely by reviewing absolute or relative objective indicators of economic, political or social performance: people's subjective assessments of those dimensions in each context must also be taken on board.

As regards doubts concerning their consistency, validity and reliability, according to OECD (2011) and Sen (2008), these indicators should not be abandoned just because they are complex to interpret, since they can provide valuable and irreplaceable information on perceptions of well-being if they are placed in context. At the same time, although some commentators maintain that the perception of subjective well-being varies according to cultural considerations (Helliwell and Barrington-Leigh, 2010), OECD (2011) suggests that well-being indicators are related to the situation of the individual with respect to his or her relative position in the structure of opportunities and that they do not vary according to other factors such as race, ethnicity or nationality. Also, the complementary use of objective and subjective indicators can provide a better picture of the subjective and contextual dynamics driving social cohesion at a given time.

Similarly, Elasy and Gaddy (1998) maintain that indicator reliability —i.e. obtaining consistent results in the face of repeated measurement, and validity, defined as the correct measurement of the phenomenon— can be checked and controlled. Reliability can be checked by dividing the variance by its sum with its error, as the result facilitates the review of consistent results and evidences the variation of the indicator. Finally, validity can be checked by correlations with the elements that are expected to affect the variation. Bakker and others (2020) further argue that systematic surveys tend to be more reliable, since the consistency of results can be checked over time. For this reason, in order to corroborate the validity, consistency and reliability of subjective indicators, those from systematically applied perception surveys are preferred, those used by subjective indicators at the international level in similar surveys are selected and, finally, correlations are made to control the influence of other variables on the target of the measurement.

Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of E. Bakker and others, "Validity and reliability of subjective methods to assess sedentary behaviour in adults: a systematic review and meta-analysis", *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, vol. 17, No. 1, 2020; Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Social Cohesion in Latin America: Concepts, Frames of Reference and Indicators* (LC/G.2420), 2010; Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Social Panorama of Latin America, 2020* (LC/PUB.2021/2-P/Rev.1), Santiago, 2021; T. A. Elasy and G. Gaddy, "Measuring subjective outcomes: Rethinking reliability and validity", *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, vol. 13, No. 11, 1998; J. Helliwell and C. Barrington-Leigh, "Measuring and understanding subjective well-being", *NBER Working Paper Series*, 15887, Cambridge, April 2010; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *Perspectives on Global Development 2012: Social Cohesion in a Shifting World*, Paris, 2011; A. Sen, "The idea of justice", *Journal of Human Development*, vol. 9, No. 3, 2008; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), "La protesta social en América Latina", *Cuadernos de Prospectiva Política*, No. 1, Buenos Aires, Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 2012; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Informe sobre Desarrollo Humano 2019: más allá del ingreso, más allá de los promedios, más allá del presente - desigualdades del desarrollo humano*, 2020.

1. Indicator preselection

The process of selecting quantitative indicators involved three stages:

- (i) *Initial identification of sixteen proposals for measuring social cohesion*, two of which came from think tanks (Scanlon Monash Foundation and Bertelsmann Stiftung Foundation), four from national institutions (Belgium, Canada, France, New Zealand) and nine from international organizations: the World Bank (Easterly, Ritzen and Woolcock, 2006; World Bank, 2013), OECD, ECA, ECLAC (2007a and 2010a), UNDP (2016) and the European Union (Atkinson, Marlier and Nolan, 2004). This was to identify the operationalization of the existing measurements, based on the identified problem and its objective. Subsequently, the selected indicators found in more than one measurement were identified, to establish the **relevance** criterion.
- (ii) *Review of indicators meeting the relevance criterion*, which identified **333** indicators of interest from seven different sources: International Survey on Social Networks, World Values Survey, Latinobarómetro Corporation, LAPOP, UN Data, World Bank, OECD and International Labour Organization. An initial selection was then made, incorporating indicators with a time coverage of more than two years to ensure the sustainability of the measurement, and an availability equal to or greater than ten of the region's countries, in order to secure a regional overview of social cohesion (criterion of **availability**). In addition, priority was given to indicators with data disaggregated by sex, race, ethnicity and disability, to obtain information on the national situation of the region's different population groups.
- (iii) *Statistical analysis*, in which the pre-selected indicators for each dimension were processed, in order to avoid redundancy in the measurement of the same phenomenon, simplify the number of indicators and guarantee their validity. This involved: (i) histograms, (ii) scatter plots and (iii) Pearson correlation coefficient estimates (see annex 1). Through this analysis, the redundant indicators were eliminated (see annex).

Similarly, the qualitative indicator selection process consisted of two stages:

- (i) *Identification of the phenomenon to be measured*, in terms of participation, recognition and conflict resolution, based on a review of institutional reports and books. The indicators were then constructed, using compliance with international commitments as the maximum criterion. Those commitments included the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, ILO Convention 169, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- (ii) *Data systematization*: (i) For the international commitment ratification indicators, based on the classification used by the observatories of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), which classify compliance as "unsigned", "signed but not ratified", and "signed and ratified", and (ii) for the constructed indicators of "Constitutional recognition of indigenous peoples and their fundamental collective rights in line with international standards" and "special mechanisms for the participation of indigenous peoples in the representative bodies of the legislative branch", a weighting was performed that took on board multiple elements identified from the literature and based on the **relevance criterion**. In these, the weighting was distributed on the basis of the relevance of the element in practical terms: whether it was a State obligation or duty, or a direct or indirect mechanism, respectively (see tables 11 and 12).

The rationale for the selected indicators is set out below (the data sheets are included in the annex).

2. Description and relevance of the indicators adopted by dimension and subdimension

(a) Gaps pillar

1. *Guarantees of well-being dimension*

For the “guarantees of well-being” dimension, the selection of objective indicators was based on previous ECLAC measurements of social cohesion, respecting the selection of topics made in the “Gaps” pillar: poverty and income, employment, access to social protection, education, health, consumption of and access to basic services. New topics were also incorporated, such as computer ownership, Internet access and residential overcrowding, all of which have gained importance in recent years, especially in the context of the economic and social crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (ECLAC, 2020d).

To include the gender perspective in this dimension, the proposal disaggregates the relevant indicators by sex in order to show the more acute gaps suffered by women in several of the subdimensions. In addition, two indicators that account for economic autonomy (wage gap, proportion of women with no income of their own) are also specifically included; these come from the ECLAC Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean and are validated by the member countries.

1.1 *Labour inclusion subdimension*

- **Gender wage gap:** CEPALSTAT indicator that identifies women’s average income as a proportion of the average income of men with the same characteristics. It is measured in order to quantify progress with gender equality. It is included in the measurements of social cohesion developed by ECLAC (2007b and 2010b).
- **Quarterly unemployment rate:** CEPALSTAT indicator that indicates the percentage of unemployed population with respect to the economically active population, disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, race and disability, intended to reveal access to opportunities for the comprehensive development of each citizen’s life plans. This indicator is included in the three social cohesion measurement systems developed by ECLAC (2007b and 2010b).
- **Concern about the threat of unemployment:** Perception indicator from the Latinobarómetro Corporation that indicates concern about job uncertainty.

1.2 *Social inclusion subdimension*

- **Gini coefficient:** One of Latin America’s defining features is its pronounced income inequality. This has been documented and analysed by numerous studies conducted by ECLAC (2018b and 2019b), by the United Nations system (2020) and other international organizations (OECD, 2015; Clements and others, 2015). In addition to its familiar consequences for economic growth, education, both physical and mental health outcomes and co-optation of political processes by elites, inequality has a negative impact on social cohesion. A recent report by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (United Nations, 2020) argues that without proper political and institutional channelling, inequality can perpetuate and deepen social divisions. A society with high inequality undermines both citizens’ trust in institutions (because of their inability to address the needs of the majority) and interpersonal trust (impacting perceptions of the social position of others versus one’s own). Growing inequality creates discontent, obstructs the functioning of democracy and can lead to violent conflict. The present measurement framework opted to use the Gini coefficient as an indicator of income inequality: although much criticized and little understood, it is the most widely used indicator in both public discussions and academic studies. Ideally, two Gini coefficients would

be presented: one calculated before taxes and transfers, and one calculated after taxes and transfers, in order to portray the redistributive role of social policies (monetary transfers and provision of goods and services by the State) and tax policies (tax structure and progressivity of the tax system).

- **Perception of income distribution in the country:** This subjective indicator from the Latinobarómetro Corporation complements the objective income distribution indicator (the Gini coefficient).
- **Population living in poverty:** This indicator is present in all three ECLAC measurement schemes, because it serves to identify people who do not have the minimum level of resources to enable them to participate adequately in social life (Atkinson, Marilier and Nolan, 2005).
- **Satisfaction with public schools:** A perception indicator from the Latinobarómetro Corporation. It is included to identify the gap between satisfaction with the delivery of public services at the State level and the secondary education completion rate. ECLAC (2021b) determined that subjective experiences with objective material conditions is a source of social unrest. At the same time, it erodes the sense of belonging through a perception of social injustice and/or inequality.
- **Percentage of people aged between 20 and 24 with complete secondary education:** A CEPALSTAT indicator that identifies the percentage of people in that age group with completed secondary education. Education breaks the intergenerational cycle of inequality and promotes inclusive development, while wasted human capital reproduces inequalities and poverty (ECLAC, 2007b). Secondary education was selected because of the progress the region has made with levels of schooling. The indicator was included in the previous ECLAC measurements (2007a and 2007b). In addition, complete secondary education is included as target 4.1 of Sustainable Development Goal 4, "Quality Education", which aims to ensure, by 2030, "that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes"(United Nations, 2021, p. 1).
- **Satisfactorily meets needs with total family income:** Perception indicator from the Latinobarómetro Corporation. It is included with the objective of determining people's assessments of the possibility of pursuing their individual life projects with the incomes they receive from the private or public sector.
- **Women with no income of their own:** This indicator comes from the ECLAC Gender Equality Observatory. It indicates the percentage of women aged 15 and over who do not earn their own incomes and who are not engaged in full-time study. According to ECLAC (2021b), having their own incomes gives them decision-making power over the management of funds to cover their own needs and those of other household members, which is why this indicator plays a key role in identifying women's lack of economic autonomy.
- **Overcrowding:** An ECLAC indicator based on the Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG) that identifies households in which more than two people spend the night per room. It is used to quantify non-monetary poverty. The habitability and security of housing are part of the right to decent and adequate housing (Villatoro, 2017). The initial ECLAC (2007a) frame of reference measured the percentage of precarious homes in relation to the total number of dwellings.
- **Households according to availability of sewerage services:** The access to basic services indicators from CEPALSTAT that indicate social exclusion include the lack of access to basic services (ECLAC, 2007b). These indicators were included in at least two of the social cohesion measurement systems developed by ECLAC (the 2010a scheme does not include sanitation, and the 2007a model does not include water). In this measurement system, access to sanitation

was selected because of its high levels of correlation with access to drinking water and electricity (see annex IV.1). In addition, it presents the lowest levels of progress in the region, in that it remains a pending challenge for citizen well-being.

- **ICTs (computer ownership):** CEPALSTAT indicator on possession of devices to access the Internet. Access to connectivity affects the right to health, education and work, while its absence can increase socioeconomic inequalities and exclude individuals from participation in different spheres of society (ECLAC, 2020d). It was proposed for inclusion in the ECLAC reference framework (2007a), but ultimately was not included because of the lack of a time series for its indicators.
- **Employed persons contributing to the pension system:** A CEPALSTAT indicator that measures access and coverage and that shows the projected future relative poverty of those who are currently outside the system (ECLAC, 2007a). The indicator was included in the three previous ECLAC social cohesion measurement schemes (2007a, 2007b and 2010a).
- **Satisfaction with public health and medical services:** A perception indicator from the Latinobarómetro Corporation. It is included to identify satisfaction with the delivery of public services at the State level, as this perception influences the perception of justice and, with it, the sense of belonging to a society (social affiliation, in contrast to a perception of social exclusion).

(b) Institutional framework pillar³⁶

1. Recognition, participation and conflict resolution mechanisms dimension

The list of indicators for the recognition, participation and conflict resolution mechanisms dimension was drawn up by identifying agreements and mechanisms adopted by the States that allow for the democratic channelling of demands and needs and ensure the participation of all actors in society and in decision-making, so that progress can be made towards inclusive societies in which the other is recognized as an equal in social relations and in the construction of the social order. This dimension was not previously included in the measurement methods developed by ECLAC, since the focus was on quantifying the capacity of the different sources of well-being (State, market and family) to close social exclusion gaps. On this occasion, efforts are focused on quantifying the State's commitment to the promotion and protection of a culture of equality.

1.1 Mechanisms for recognition, participation and conflict resolution subdimension

- **The country has signed and ratified the CEDAW Optional Protocol:** The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women establishes governmental commitments and obligations to prevent and eradicate all forms of discrimination against women and, in addition, it provides for administrative and legislative measures to advance gender equality. The indicator is constructed through the classification of "not signed", "signed but not ratified" and "ratified", because ratification allows the full monitoring of the implementation of the Convention-related recommendations by its Committee, in addition to the fact that the Committee issues observations and recommendations to the participating States and receives reports from them and from civil society organizations. The indicator is included because ratification of the CEDAW Protocol indicates the government's commitment to the implementation of measures and public policies intended to reduce gender inequalities and guarantee women's rights (Bareiro, 2018). In addition, it implies a

³⁶ Because of their importance and the degree of exclusion, institutional mechanisms for the inclusion of persons with disabilities are an important issue to include in the measurement framework. In this document it was not possible to finalize the development of indicators on regulations for persons with disabilities, but they will hopefully be included in the document *Panorama of Social Cohesion in Latin America* that is currently being prepared.

commitment to the principles of equality and non-discrimination, as well as to strengthening women's empowerment and autonomy, which are all fundamental elements in guaranteeing the exercise of their human rights in a context of equality. The full implementation of this instrument would mean substantive progress with gender equality, especially in terms of greater autonomy for women, increased control over their bodies (physical autonomy), their ability to generate their own incomes and resources (economic autonomy) and their full participation in decision-making that affects their lives and their collective (decision-making autonomy) (Bareiro, 2018).

- ***Ratification of ILO Convention 169:*** The International Labour Organization's Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Populations (1989) recognizes indigenous peoples as subjects of individual and collective rights and imposes obligations on States, such as: (i) establishing means through which the peoples concerned may freely participate in decision-making in elected institutions and administrative and other bodies, (ii) institutionalizing the participation of indigenous peoples when setting policies that affect them, and (iii) consulting and cooperating in good faith with indigenous peoples through their representative institutions to obtain their free, prior and informed consent regarding the adoption and implementation of measures that affect them (Del Popolo, 2017). This indicator is constructed through the classifications "not signed", "signed but not ratified" and "ratified", where ratification indicates the binding nature of the obligations undertaken. This indicator is also included because the mechanism of free, prior and informed consultation (article 19 of the Convention), as well as its proper monitoring and management, can prevent the development of socioenvironmental conflicts originating in disagreements regarding the use, enjoyment, ownership and access to natural resources in the territory. Such conflicts have arisen primarily in relation to indigenous communities, since the admission of foreign investments, concessions for the exploitation of various resources and the privatization of basic social services have led to extensive violations of their rights (Altomonte and Sánchez, 2016). This has resulted in considerable conflict over mining and hydrocarbons throughout the region, threatening the erosion of democracy and social cohesion and the triggering of international State responsibility. For that reason, extractive activities must respect the rights of indigenous peoples. To prevent conflicts and guarantee the primacy of human rights over private interests, rights including the following must be respected: (i) rights over land, resources and territories, (ii) right to participate and have their rights considered in the planning of resource extraction and exploitation projects, (iii) consent mechanisms, (iv) impact studies, and (v) mitigation and compensation measures and benefit sharing (Altomonte and Sánchez, 2016). Finally, these conflicts must be addressed by increasing participation in decision-making processes and improving the distribution of the fruits of such exploitations (Altomonte and Sánchez, 2016).
- ***Ratification of the Escazú Agreement:*** The Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement) is the region's first environmental treaty. It enshrines a commitment to environmental sustainability, transparency and natural resource management. It is also the first instrument in the world to contain provisions protecting human rights defenders in this area, ensuring that actions with an environmental impact respect, protect and guarantee human rights and basic democratic principles (ECLAC/OHCHR, 2019). The agreement recognizes the right to a healthy environment, places equality at the centre and establishes protection mechanisms for the most marginalized and excluded sectors of society; it also serves as a tool to improve climate governance and counteract the negative effects of climate change in the region's countries. The indicator is constructed with the categories "unsigned", "signed but not ratified" and "ratified", with ratification the trigger that makes its obligations binding. The agreement helps prevent socioenvironmental conflicts (between individuals or communities and extractive companies) that delegitimize the State, and it aims

to ensure that activities are respectful of intrinsic human dignity, integral well-being and the environment, since by including access to information it favours openness and transparency in decision-making and contributes to building institutional trust. Provisions to ensure informed participation enhance the ability of governments to respond to public concerns and demands in a timely manner; it thus constitutes a tool that helps build consensus and prevent future socioenvironmental conflicts. Finally, the provisions on access to justice provide a tool for protecting communities' environmental rights (ECLAC/OHCHR, 2019). The Escazú Agreement energizes the transition towards a new development model and confronts the culture of privilege with a commitment to include those who have been excluded, marginalized or underrepresented in environmental matters and to give a voice to those who have none, while leaving no one behind (ECLAC, 2018a).

- ***Constitutional recognition of indigenous peoples and their fundamental collective rights in line with international standards:*** This indicator reflects the progress made in Latin American constitutions both with the recognition of indigenous peoples as collective subjects of rights and with the recognition and protection of core elements of their collective rights. It recognizes the following as essential elements in recognition and inclusion: (i) the recognition of their land rights, considering three fundamental normative principles (the collective nature of indigenous property, the aboriginal nature of indigenous property and the provision of special measures for its protection), together with the establishment of essential mechanisms for the realization of those rights, (ii) the recognition of rights over the natural resources existing in the collective territories of indigenous peoples, and (iii) recognition of their right to exercise autonomy. The indicator was constructed on the basis of the understanding that constitutional recognition of indigenous peoples and their political rights remains merely formal if the catalogue of collective rights of indigenous peoples and the State's obligations for upholding them are not recognized in basic laws (Del Popolo, 2017). On this basis, four components are identified (see table 10): (i) the constitutional recognition of indigenous peoples, which is given a weighting of 10%, (ii) recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples over territories, lands and natural resources, which, in accordance with the jurisprudence of the Inter-American Human Rights System, underpins their survival, identity and cultural integrity and therefore receives a weighting of 40%; this component also indicates the normative elements of land rights (the collective and aboriginal nature of indigenous property), which are given a weighting of 30% as the cornerstones of these rights under international treaties, while recognition of the duties of the State (to adopt special protection measures and establish mechanisms for demarcation, titling and regulation) receive a weighting of 20% each, (iii) recognition of rights over natural resources as provided for in ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, which is included with a 30% weighting as it is one of the structural causes of violations of indigenous peoples' rights and a source of intergroup conflict, and (iv) recognition of the right to self-determination, which is an essential element in indigenous peoples fully exercising their collective rights and receives a weighting of 20%. Finally, this indicator is included because the recognition of guarantees of territorial and collective rights allows the realization of other rights and enables each people to pursue its collective project of "living well", thereby promoting harmony and social coexistence (ECLAC, 2020e).
- ***Proportion of seats held by women in national legislatures (lower chamber or unicameral parliaments):*** A CEPALSTAT indicator intended to quantify the State's commitment to women's representation in decision-making venues, which favours the development of measures that promote their inclusion and participation in different areas of society. It also expresses at the national level the relative degree of autonomy in decision-making (Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2019). A national-level indicator was selected because of regional disparities in the constitutional decentralization of power (federal States and different administrative divisions at the local level).

Table 11
Weighting of the indicator on constitutional recognition of indigenous peoples and their fundamental collective rights in accordance with international standards

Component / content		Weighting	
Constitutional recognition of indigenous peoples		10%	
Recognition of land rights	Collective nature of indigenous ownership	30%	40%
	Aboriginal nature of indigenous ownership	30%	
	Special mechanisms for the protection of indigenous property	20%	
	Demarcation, titling and regulation mechanisms	20%	
	Subtotal	100%	
Recognition of rights over natural resources		30%	
Recognition of the right to self-determination or autonomy		20%	
Total		100%	

Source: Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE), on the basis of the current political Constitutions of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay.

- **Special mechanisms for the participation of indigenous peoples in the representative bodies of the legislative branch:** The recognition of indigenous peoples' right to participate in the State's political life involves to the implementation of the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (article 5) and of ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (article 6.b). This indicator was constructed to measure the constitutional presence of mechanisms to ensure the participation of indigenous peoples in countries' legislatures. The weighting is divided according to the level of impact of the mechanism established, depending on whether it is direct or indirect. Across the region, three mechanisms have been identified: (i) the reservation of seats in parliament, which directly ensures their representation and political inclusion and therefore receives a 50% weighting, (ii) the definition of indigenous electoral districts according to the proportion of indigenous people living there, which establishes specific electoral districts but does not ensure that the elected representative is from an indigenous people and thus receives a 30% weighting, and (iii) the definition of electoral quotas, which ensures the existence of indigenous candidates but not their election, and is weighted at 20%. The indicator is included to monitor the political inclusion of indigenous peoples in decision-making venues, since these enable processes of inclusion and thus promote the development of equality-based social relations.

Table 12
Weighting of the indicator on special mechanisms for the participation of indigenous peoples in the popularly elected bodies of the legislative branch

Mechanism	Description	Weighting
Reserved seats	Ensures exclusive seats for indigenous peoples in the legislature.	50%
Special districts	Ensures that territories with a large indigenous population are duly considered in electoral processes, but does not ensure that the elected representative belongs to the indigenous peoples living there.	30%
Electoral quotas	Ensures the inclusion of indigenous candidates on electoral lists, but does not ensure they will be elected and therefore not their representation in parliament.	20%

Source: Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE), on the basis of the current political Constitutions of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay.

2. Rule of law and quality democracy dimension

The selection of indicators for this dimension was based on the measurements of ECLAC (2007b), specifically as regards its indicators of how the functioning of democracy and the rule of law were perceived. It is intended to indicate public perceptions of the legitimacy and functioning of the institutions in charge of delivering well-being and mediating conflicts over values and resources.

2.1 *Rule of law and quality democracy subdimension*

- ***Citizens' basic rights are protected by the political system:*** A perception indicator from the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), it is included to quantify perceptions of how civil rights are protected and of the quality of the institutions in carrying out this work, given that the perception that government decisions are co-opted by private interests can fragment the social fabric, separating "them" from "us" and eroding trust in institutions (ECLAC, 2020d; Praworski and Maravall, 2003).
- ***Democracy is better than any other form of government:*** A perception indicator from the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) to measure the fulfilment of citizen expectations regarding the ability of the political system to combine individual preferences in pursuit of the common good. This indicator is based on the measurement developed by ECLAC (2007b), since assessing democracy as the best form of government is fundamental for reaching peaceful and stable agreements that significantly alter the distribution of resources among different groups in society (ECLAC, 2020a).
- ***Positive perception of democracy in the country:*** A perception indicator from the Latinobarómetro Corporation that registers public assessments of the level of democracy in the country, with positive perceptions of democracy expected when there are greater guarantees for the representation and participation of the different sectors and groups that make up society. Based on the measurement of social cohesion developed by ECLAC (2007b), it is intended to measure the legitimacy of social cohesion through the legitimacy of the mechanisms that exist for reaching agreements on the rules accepted by the majority (ECLAC, 2007b).
- ***Perception of corruption among public officials:*** A perception indicator from the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) that indicates citizens' assessment of the extent of corruption among a country's officials. Perceptions of corruption undermine the legitimacy of institutions, even though this relationship is mediated by subjective tolerance of corruption (ECLAC, 2007b). At the same time, perceptions that public decisions are co-opted by private interests fragments the social fabric (ECLAC, 2020a).
- ***Homicide rate:*** refers to the indicator of the number of unlawful deaths inflicted on a person by another person per 100,000 population, compiled by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. It is included as a reasonable approximation of the level of violent crime, of the levels of violence within a society and the capacity of States to control it.

(c) *Sense of belonging pillar*

1. *Equality-based social relations dimension*

This dimension seeks to quantify the new element of the conceptual proposal: the development of equality-based social relations. To that end, it relies on indicators used in measurements that define social cohesion as *trust linked to the commitment and ability to live and/or work together*, such as the *Social Cohesion Radar* (Dragolov and others, 2013) and the *Chilean Council for Social Cohesion* (Ministry for Social Development and the Family, 2020), since they identify the "social relations" dimension and its qualities: trust, dense social fabric and diversity as enabling factors for working together and harmonious coexistence (Dragolov and others, 2013; Ministry for Social Development and the Family, 2020). Additionally, consideration was given to the indicators contained in the UNDP (2016) mixed approach, which identifies the dimension of social relations and its three qualities as a necessary element for progress towards inclusive social development and peaceful conflict management.

1.1 *Linkages subdimension*

- ***Importance of friends in life:*** A perception indicator from the World Values Survey that aims to quantify the density of the interpersonal social fabric beyond the family circle in the region's countries. These social ties help create venues for cooperation that facilitate the development of equality-based social relations and instil patterns of interpersonal reciprocity (UNDP, 2013).

1.2 *Interpersonal trust subdimension*

- ***Trust in members of the community:*** A perception indicator from the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) to quantify how reliable individuals consider the inhabitants of their community, which involves the quality of the social bond between the inhabitants of a sector and the degree of community integration. Trust is seen as an enabling factor for cooperation and participation (social capital).
- ***Trust in people met for the first time:*** A perception indicator from the Latinobarómetro Corporation that quantifies whether most people can be trusted or whether one cannot be too careful with others. It is included to portray intergroup trust, as equality-based social relations arise among and between different communities and individuals.

1.3 *Recognition and respect subdimension (sexual orientation and gender)*

Although indicators related to tolerance towards people of different race and ethnicity, as well as to perceptions of discrimination, were identified in the selection process, they did not meet the minimum requirements to ensure their reliability and validity.

- ***Approval of the right of same-sex couples to marry:*** A Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) perception indicator that quantifies, on a scale of 1 to 10, agreement with same-sex marriage. It is included in order to quantify tolerance towards individuals and groups with a different sexual orientation, as an approximation to the equality-based social relations that are based on the recognition of the dignity of the “other”, equality in terms of citizenship rights and belonging to the same community regardless of circumstances (ECLAC, 2018b).
- ***Men do not have priority over women for securing jobs at times of employment shortages:*** A World Values Survey (WVS) perception indicator that quantifies agreement (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree) with the statement that men and women have the same right to work at times of job shortages. It is included to quantify the recognition of inequality and discrimination against women in the workplace, as an approximation to a culture of equality (ECLAC, 2018b).
- ***Women’s deaths at the hands of their intimate partner or former partner:*** ECLAC Gender Equality Observatory indicator measuring the number of women aged 15 years and over who are killed by their intimate partner or former partner each year (per 100,000 women). It is included as a proxy for gender-based violence.

2. *Sense of belonging dimension*

For the sense of belonging dimension, some significant indicators—specifically related to perceptions of inequality and trust in State institutions and political parties—are taken from the measurement scheme set out in ECLAC (2010a).

2.1 *Identification subdimension*

- ***Pride in the political system:*** A Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) perception indicator that measures the level of pride in the political system using a seven-step scale. It is intended to quantify support for the institutions’ work in representing values and preferences, which is a central component of the sense of belonging in the political sphere and the subjective evaluation of institutions’ representativeness, usefulness and efficacy.
- ***Pride in nationality:*** A World Values Survey (WVS) perception indicator that measures the intensity of pride in nationality on a four-step scale. It is included to quantify identification with the national collective and appreciation for the country of residence.

2.2 *Perception of social justice and equity subdimension*

- ***The State must implement policies to reduce income inequality:*** A World Values Survey (WVS) perception indicator that uses a scale of 1 to 7 to measure respondents’ agreement with that

statement. Its inclusion is intended to quantify perceptions regarding the role of the State in this area and to assess the importance given to income inequality in the country, which can be cross-referenced with the income inequality perception indicator and with the detected levels of social solidarity and aversion to inequality. These elements are in turn linked to individuals' evaluation of the work of institutions (whether they include and/or represent them), to their identification with those institutions and to their sense of national belonging.³⁷

- ***Incomes should be made more equal; inequality to encourage personal effort should not be maintained:*** A World Values Survey (WVS) perception indicator that reflects perceptions regarding aversion to inequality and support for social solidarity, as opposed to individualistic visions of the generation of well-being. Thus, those perceptions can be compared to the real level of income inequality in a country and variations in the predisposition towards social solidarity can be monitored.
- ***Work brings benefits in the long run, not connections or luck:*** A World Values Survey (WVS) perception indicator that measures agreement with that statement on a scale of 1 to 10. It is included to record perceptions about the structure of opportunities and the expectations of social mobility in a country, since feeling a part of it—or feeling excluded when a segment of the population is favoured— influences the notion of belonging.

2.3 *Institutional trust subdimension*

Six Latinobarómetro Corporation perception indicators are included to quantify the trust and legitimacy that individuals extend to the three branches of government (judiciary, legislature and national executive). Other indicators included depict levels of trust in the institution in charge of ensuring public security (the national police) and in the electoral system (elections) and its main political actors (parties). They seek to indicate people's assessments of political institutions and the legitimacy of their exercise of public power (Warren, 2010). This allows an approximation of relative perceptions of the legitimacy of the institutional framework in terms of its representativeness and its potential for orienting public action towards the collective good.³⁸

- ***Trust in the judiciary***
- ***Trust in the national legislature***
- ***Trust in the national police***
- ***Trust in political parties***
- ***Trust in the national government***
- ***Trust in elections***

3. *Orientation towards the common good dimension*

- For this dimension, indicators proposed by the ECLAC 2007a (participation dimension), and ECLAC 2010a (social affiliation as an antonym of anomie and social disaffection) measurement schemes were selected. It also includes the social solidarity subdimension proposed by the ECLAC 2007a conceptual framework.

3.1 *Solidarity subdimension*

- ***Attendance at community improvement group meetings (community versus intergroup status):*** A Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) social affiliation indicator that measures attendance at community improvement meetings over the past year. It is included to record concrete actions related to values of social solidarity and orientation towards the common good.

³⁷ Previously, ECLAC (2010a) included the income inequality perception indicator as an element with an impact on citizen support for institutions and their work in closing gaps.

³⁸ This subdimension was included in the measurement systems proposed by ECLAC in 2007a, 2007b (sense of belonging pillar) and 2010 (citizen support pillar).

3.2 *Respect for social rules subdimension*

- **Respect for institutions:** An indicator from the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) that measures the respect that citizens claim to have towards their institutions. It is included in order to indirectly reflect the acceptance and legitimacy of the status quo. In addition, respect for social rules allows an approximation to the willingness to cooperate and participate in the agreements and norms that govern society (Stanley, 2003).

3.3 *Civic participation subdimension*

- **Political activity (petitions, boycotts, peaceful demonstrations, strikes):** A World Values Survey (WVS) indicator that indicates concrete political participation beyond the electoral sphere. It is included to measure individuals' involvement with the direction of society and political action, as opposed to indifference and/or political disaffection.
- **Are you involved in any organizations? (all):** A World Values Survey (WVS) indicator that registers membership in various social organizations. It is included to measure individuals' involvement with their community and civil society, as a way of indicating levels of civic participation, which reinforces ties of solidarity and reciprocity and can reveal an orientation towards the common good and participation in public affairs (Valdéz, Viramontes and Finol, 2016).
- **Voted in the last presidential election:** An indicator from the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) that records voting in the most recent elections. Electoral participation is included to reveal the degree of basic civic engagement with the political system and democracy (ECLAC, 2007a; UNDP, 2016). For this indicator, that fact that voting is compulsory in the following countries must be taken into consideration: Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, Honduras, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay.

(d) **Presentation of the social cohesion dashboard and thresholds**

This framework for measuring social cohesion is not intended to establish a ranking of countries, but rather to present comparable regional indicators for the identification of commonalities and shared priority areas for public policies related to social cohesion in each national context (Maurizio, 2010). For that reason, it was decided to present the indicators together in a "dashboard" format, rather than other alternatives such as an overall summary index or a limited set of summary indices grouped into a few important dimensions of social cohesion, on account of the risk that aspects of particular relevance in one or a few countries could be subsumed or rendered invisible, even if this were not the case for most of the countries. A dashboard of indicators allows comparative analyses between countries at the aggregate level, or of particular dimensions or indicators, while at the same time making it possible to identify priority issues or public policy areas for each national context. At the same time, this alternative also allows complementary analyses of objective and subjective indicators; this is useful since people's subjective views of social cohesion may differ considerably from what objective social or economic indicators might at first suggest.³⁹

In addition to deciding on the format and logic of how the various indicators were to be presented, it was also necessary to establish some thresholds to allow the identification of progress or setbacks; this was particularly true in the case of subjective indicators, where the values vary considerably from one country to another and are not comparable due to their context-specific nature. The definition of these subjective indicator thresholds entailed three steps:

1. Correlating the meaning of changes in the indicators to social cohesion: thus, the dashboard shows each indicator's positive relationship with social cohesion.

³⁹ For example, an examination focused exclusively on certain social and economic indicators in recent years would show an auspicious situation in many dimensions for a country like Chile, particularly when compared to other countries in the region; however, that would fail to explain the high levels of social unrest that gave rise to the mass mobilizations of 2019 and 2020. In contrast, a complementary consideration from the people's subjective points of view would allow the identification of at least some possible alarms, as indicated, for example, by different indicators of institutional confidence or future expectations.

2. Dichotomization of responses: when there are more than two alternative answers—or a scale of responses—for a given question, those answers were “dichotomized”. Thus, by way of example, table 13 shows the responses selected for three indicators from three different surveys. For the indicator on perceptions of whether the court system guarantees a fair trial (a LAPOP survey question), responses that are “positive” for social cohesion are those people who replied “5”, “6” or “a lot” on of a scale of seven possible answers, while those who responded “not at all”, “2”, “3” and “4” were deemed “negative” responses.

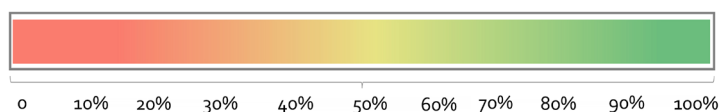
Table 13
Dichotomization of subjective indicators (selected examples)

Question	Survey	Positive responses	Negative responses	Reply options
How proud are you to live under the political system (country)?	AmericasBarometer (LAPOP)	5, 6, a lot	Not at all, 2, 3, 4	7
How fair is income distribution in the country?	Latinobarómetro Corporation	Very fair, fair	Unfair, Very unfair	4
Work brings benefits in the long run, not connections or luck	World Values Survey	In the long run, hard work usually brings a better life, 2, 3, 4	5, 6, 7, 8, 9, Hard work doesn't generally bring success; it's more a matter of luck	10

Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of the surveys mentioned.

3. Setting “thresholds” for the colour display of indicators on the dashboard. For this, the following thresholds were defined: values close to zero were assigned the colour red, 0.5 was assigned yellow and 1 was assigned green (see diagram 3). Intermediate values will be displayed in varying shades between those three colours.

Diagram 3
Thresholds for displaying subjective indicators



Source: Prepared by the authors.

In contrast, no thresholds were defined for the selected objective indicators; instead, a visualization method was chosen that shows the evolution of the indicator with a system of coloured arrows. The value of the indicator and its recent evolution over time is shown according to the latest available data: thus, a horizontal arrow indicates stability over time, while an arrow pointing upwards or downwards indicates, respectively, an improvement or worsening of the indicator.

It should be noted that the selection of objective indicators was largely based on the previous ECLAC social cohesion measurement method. In particular, the selection of themes in the “Gaps” pillar was respected: poverty, inequality, education, basic services and employment. In addition, new topics were incorporated, such as computer ownership, mobile broadband, Internet access and residential overcrowding, which have gained importance in recent years, or which were already important but did not have adequate data sources at the regional level. Lastly, although sex-disaggregated indicators were sought, priority was given to three gender equality indicators from the ECLAC Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, which are already validated by the member countries, for economic autonomy and autonomy in decision-making (women with no income of their own, presence in national legislatures, and adoption and ratification of the CEDAW Optional Protocol).

Table 14
Latin America and the Caribbean (19 countries): gaps pillar, around 2018

Pillar	Dimension	Sub dimension	Indicator	Argentina	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Brazil	Chile	Colombia	Costa Rica	Ecuador	El Salvador	Guatemala	Honduras	Jamaica	Mexico	Nicaragua	Panama	Paraguay	Peru	Puerto Rico	Dominican Republic	Uruguay			
Gaps	Guarantees of well-being	Labour inclusion	Gender wage gap		19.5% ↓	21.3% ↓	23.8% ↓	12.0% ↓	12.0% ↓	19.5% ↓	9.3% ↑		9.3% ↓		28.3% ↑		9.8% ↑	23.7% ↓	30.2% ↓		14.8% ↓	22.4% ↓			
			Average quarterly unemployment rate (2019)	10.1% ↑		13.8% ↓	7.0% ↑	11.8% ↑	11.8% ↑	5.8% ↑				7.9% ↓		3.9% ↑				7.6% ↑	6.7% ↑			9.3% ↑	
			How worried would you say you are about being made unemployed or unemployable in the next twelve months, or do you not have a job?	43%	36%	30%	34%	41%	58%	30%	37%	41%	49%			47%	29%	48%	30%	47%			32%	53%	
Social inclusion			Gini	0.400 ↑	0.430 ↓	0.538 ↓	0.454 ↑	0.529 ↑	0.495 ↑	0.456 ↑	0.406 ↑		0.494 ↑					0.506 ↑	0.473 ↓	0.429 ↓		0.432 ↓	0.392 ↑		
			Income distribution in the country is fair	10%	30%	8%	9%	15%	20%	30%	11%	18%	23%			12%	25%	16%	16%	13%			18%	20%	
			Population living in poverty	27.2% ↑	31.1% ↓	19.2% ↓	10.7% ↓	31.7% ↑	16.5% ↑	25.7% ↑	30.4% ↓		52.3% ↓			41.5% ↓		14.6% →		19.4% ↓	15.4% ↓			20.3% ↓	3.0% ↑
			Satisfaction with public schools					54%				65%	58%	60%	67%	63%				65%	45%			77%	
			Percentage of people aged between 20 and 24 with complete secondary education	71.2 ↑	76.2 ↑	73.6 ↑	86.6 ↑	74.5 ↑	59.4 ↑	72.8 ↑	41.7 ↑		41.4 ↓			57.6 ↑			65.7 ↑	62.7 ↓	85.4 ↑			62.9 ↑	41.1 ↑
			Satisfactorily meets needs with total household income	55%	56%	57%	55%	48%	63%	63%	48%	54%	40%			59%	45%	61%	57%	50%				40%	66%
			Women with no income of their own	16.8% ↓	31.3% ↓	23.7% ↓	19.6% ↓	28.6% ↑	33.3% ↑	34.4% ↑	40.9% ↓		43.5% ↑			25.5% →		24.0% ↓	27.7% ↓	23.1% ↓				18.1% ↓	13.2% ↓
			Overcrowding	36.9% ↓	56.7% ↓	23.4% ↓		30.3% ↑	12.0% ↓	35.5% ↑	49.3% ↓		53.1% ↓							31.5% ↓	39.0% ↓	40.0% ↓		22.3% ↓	15.6% ↑
			Households by availability of sanitation services		22.9% ↑	49.3% ↑	77.5% ↑	17.0% ↑			42.0% ↓						50.4% ↑				58.5% ↑	42.8% ↑	32.5% ↑		
			Percentage of households with a computer	69.0% ↑	36.3% ↑	46.3% ↑	60.2% ↓	44.3% ↓	51.0% ↓	40.7% ↓	21.5% ↑	24.8% ↑	17.1% ↓	40.8% ↑	45.4% ↓	13.5% ↑	46.7% ↑	25.9% ↓	32.9% →	71.4% ↑	34.1% ↑			70.9% ↑	
			Employed persons contributing to a pension system	49.7 ↓		63 ↓		37.7 ↑	69.6 ↑		30.2 ↓		12.1 ↑				31.9 ↑				23.6 ↑	20.7 ↑			75.5 ↓
			Satisfaction with public health and medical services					30%				46%	43%	42%	46%	44%					46%	31%		62%	

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Table 15
Latin America and the Caribbean (19 countries): institutions and belonging pillars, around 2018

Pillar	Dimension	Subdimension	Indicator	Argentina	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Brazil	Chile	Colombia	Costa Rica	Ecuador	El Salvador	Guatemala	Honduras	Jamaica	Mexico	Nicaragua	Panama	Paraguay	Peru	Dominican Republic	Uruguay			
Institutional framework	Mechanisms for recognition, participation and conflict resolution	Country has signed and ratified the CEDAW Optional Protocol	Country has signed and ratified the CEDAW Optional Protocol	100%	100%	100%	50%	100%	100%	100%	50%	100%	0%		100%	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%		
			Ratification of ILO Convention 169	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	0%			
			Ratification of Escazú Agreement	100%	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
			Constitutional recognition of indigenous peoples and their basic collective rights in line with international standards	66%	94%	74%	0%	58%	0%	86%	10%	34%	22%		56%	78%	30%	30%	40%			0%		
			Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (2019)	41%	53%	15%	23%	18%	46%	39%	33%	19%	21%	29%	48%	47%	23%	16%	26%	28%	28%	21%		
			Special mechanisms for the participation of indigenous peoples in the representative bodies of the legislative branch	0%	92%	0%	0%	92%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	72%	0%	0%	0%	68%	0%	0%
	Rule of law and quality democracy		Basic rights are protected	20%	32%	22%	24%	27%	38%	37%	27%	26%	24%	28%	36%	38%	25%	26%	20%	27%	34%			
			Democracy is better than any other form of government	71%	49%	60%	64%	60%	72%	54%	59%	49%	45%	51%	63%	52%	54%	51%	49%	59%	76%			
			Positive perception of democracy in the country	31%	42%	19%	50%	32%	57%	36%	16%	32%	23%		27%	24%	35%	32%	25%	29%	62%			
			Perception of corruption among public officials	6%	8%	14%	6%	13%	7%	11%	12%	16%	18%	8%	8%	16%	14%	11%	9%	10%	8%			
Equality-based social relations	Bonds	Importance of friends in life	89%	49%	85%	85%	69%		63%		84%		77%	74%					50%					
		Interpersonal trust	70%	45%	40%	66%	65%	68%	50%	58%	46%	55%	69%	54%	51%	51%	65%	42%	58%	73%				
	Recognition of and respect for diversity	Trust in people	19%	16%	4%	14%	21%	10%	14%	13%	22%	14%		19%	12%	13%	18%	12%	14%	21%				
		Approval of the right of same-sex couples to marry	65%	24%	49%	56%	30%	31%	29%	15%	19%	16%	15%	52%						69%				
	Sense of belonging	Identification	Women killed by their current or former intimate partners (per 100,000 women)	0.78			0.5	0.51	0.36	1.15	0.5		1.01	0.34		0.65	0.29	0.99	0.59	1.54	1.22			
			Men do not have priority over women for obtaining a job when there is a shortage of work	69%	56%	70%	43%	74%		53%		60%			52%	63%				60%				
		Perception of social justice and equity	Pride in the political system	38%	45%	24%	36%	42%	61%	46%	36%	37%	32%	39%	49%	47%	35%	36%	26%	35%	49%			
			Pride in nationality	90%	91%	63%	79%	93%		95%		92%			91%	94%				94%				
		Trust in institutions	The State must implement policies to reduce income inequality	73%	58%	74%	80%	73%	85%	69%	76%	65%	64%	74%	69%		72%	64%	61%	75%	70%			
			Incomes should be made more equal; inequality to encourage personal effort should not be maintained	35%	25%	44%	56%	28%		28%		16%			34%	21%				29%				
Orientation towards the common good		Solidarity	Work brings benefits in the long run, not connections or luck	47%	54%	49%	47%	43%		57%		49%		55%	44%				67%					
			Attendance at community improvement group meetings	11%	52%	20%	27%	33%	21%	35%	27%	41%	33%	28%	29%	26%	30%	41%	40%	35%	14%			
	Civic participation	Trust in the judiciary	24%	24%	34%	27%	24%	50%	25%	14%	24%	25%	24%	16%	22%	26%	17%	21%	40%					
		Trust in the national legislature	27%	30%	13%	18%	21%	28%	26%	10%	18%	21%	24%	16%	28%	26%	8%	20%	35%					
		Trust in the national police	39%	23%	48%	49%	48%	51%	48%	23%	26%	33%	20%	21%	41%	35%	32%	24%	60%					
		Trust in political parties	15%	12%	6%	15%	16%	18%	19%	6%	11%	13%	11%	11%	11%	22%	7%	15%	22%					
Respect for social rules	Trust in the national government	23%	33%	7%	40%	22%	34%	26%	10%	16%	26%	16%	21%	16%	27%	13%	22%	39%						
	Trust in elections	24%	26%	27%	31%	49%	58%	27%	12%	26%	18%	33%	15%	26%	28%	34%	30%	50%						
Civic participation	Respect for rules	57%	52%	51%	50%	60%	74%	58%	65%	59%	49%	51%	60%	61%	52%	51%	37%	54%	64%					
	Engagement in political activity (signing petitions, boycotts, peaceful demonstrations, strikes)	26%	29%	55%	22%	40%		23%		32%			19%	17%			22%							
	Participation in an organization	26%	70%	55%	33%	58%		54%		65%			41%	59%			34%							
Civic participation	Voted in the most recent presidential election	Voted in the most recent presidential election	82%	81%	76%	58%	67%	73%	88%	67%	62%	72%	54%	80%	52%	67%	73%	82%	71%	84%				

Source: Prepared by the authors.

The proposed dashboard (see table 15) consists of 45 indicators, of which 29 are subjective and 16 are objective. As far as possible, efforts were made to select objective and subjective indicators for certain phenomena, in the understanding that objective indicators often do not show the perceptions that people have of the phenomenon or topic in question. In the case of income inequality, for example, the Gini coefficient (objective indicator) may show an improvement in income distribution even when perceptions of income distribution (subjective indicator) consider it unfair and it is a source of dissatisfaction.

A detailed country-by-country analysis of these indicators and an identification of regional trends and patterns will be provided in an additional publication within the framework of this project. Nevertheless, some significant elements are apparent in the collated information in tables 14 and 15. With regard to the sense of belonging, one shared trait is the low levels of interpersonal—and, above all, institutional—trust. This is compounded by negative perceptions of how the rule of law functions, seen in the perception of a low level of probity in the functioning of institutions and a reduced capacity to guarantee basic rights. In addition, low levels of interpersonal solidarity beyond the community are observed. At the same time, the indicators point to dissatisfaction with income distribution in the region: respondents perceive it as highly unfair, and expect greater activism from the State. The indicators also warn of high levels of vulnerability, particularly on account of employment uncertainty due to perceptions of an absence of stable jobs, which is confirmed by the excessively informal and precarious structure of the job market in most of the countries.

Finally, several challenges were identified in the development of indicators on issues of great importance for social cohesion that could gradually improve the current proposal. Further progress or improvements are needed with:

- Indicators of recognition in relation to race and ethnicity and tolerance (racism).
- Indicators on the implementation of mechanisms of recognition and access to justice in different groups of society (indigenous peoples, Afrodescendent populations, women, LGBTQ persons).
- Indicators of intergroup solidarity (adherence to external causes based on interpersonal trust and patterns of reciprocity).
- Indicators on tolerance and perceptions of conflict between different social groups.
- Indicators of social polarization.
- Indicators of social mobility.
- Indicators of excessive household debt.
- Indicators of the willingness to pay taxes.

IV. A policy agenda for social cohesion as part of a new social compact: initial thoughts⁴⁰

As has been shown, social cohesion is shaped by a wide range of causes and historical dynamics. Thus, policies are only one of the factors that can influence it, while the series of disruptive factors described above constantly stress and challenge it. Similarly, as noted by Sojo (2018, p. 26), social cohesion faces the challenge of “becoming part of the political sphere, reinforced with policies that are a means and an enabler, and also of fighting against policies that restrict and hinder it”. In the current complex and uncertain context, therefore, mobilizing a set of strategic public policies for social cohesion is an urgent task. Indeed, although the current situation of deep crisis poses a series of challenges for social cohesion—or magnifies those that already exist—it also offers opportunities for rebuilding trust and reactivating attitudes of solidarity that, simultaneously, could contribute to the forging of equality-based relations and a renewed sense of belonging and, at the same time, could contribute to the containment of those disruptive factors and even resilience for dealing with them. But the aim is not to identify one or two policy areas with an immediate effect on social cohesion, but rather several areas with an impact in the medium and long terms, varying in each context according to their effects on the enablers of social cohesion and on its constituent expressions. However, before describing them in detail, a review of some background information and particularly worthwhile earlier proposals would be useful.

A. Social cohesion and public policies: scope and background

Generally speaking, in terms of the observable configurations between State, market, civil society and families, Green, Janmaat and Han (2011) have identified several types of social cohesion regime, which have different public policy arrangements and different levels and types of social cohesion. The authors define a regime of social cohesion as relatively stable—but not immutable—configurations of social attitudes and behaviours that contribute to the social bonding of society as a whole and that are underpinned by particular institutional arrangements regarding, for example, private property and the spheres of action reserved for the market and the State. These configurations thus reflect normative and

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ideological elements, as well as institutional and historical ones. Among the developed countries of the Western world, the authors identify a continuum of three types of social cohesion regimes.

The first they identify is the liberal social cohesion regime. Centred around values such as freedom, effort and individual decision-making, this model is based on the idea that the individual comes before the State and that freedom is more precious than equality. As a result, it does not see social cohesion as dependent on economic equality, nor does it see the State and its public services and institutions as its guarantors beyond guaranteeing order and minimum social benefits to the most vulnerable. Instead, high levels of associativity and civic activism are needed as factors for social cohesion, especially in managing and tolerating cultural diversity within society (Janmaat, Green and Han, 2009). The authors' second model, the social market regime, emphasizes shared values and the importance of the State in generating and institutionalizing conditions conducive to social cohesion. Under this regime, it is argued that the market promotes greater wage equality and cooperation between workers, unions and companies in what is known as "conservative cooperativism". The final regime is the social democratic one, which, like the social market regime, holds that the pillars for generating social cohesion are the solidarity-based organization of the labour market and the existence of a welfare state. Unlike the previous model, however, under this regime social benefits and taxes are more expansive, emphasizing equality and redistribution. These models underscore the complex link between public policies and social cohesion, where institutional and normative dynamics intertwine under a logic of path dependence that is difficult to replicate, with the dynamics of change and the significant effects that public policies can contribute to develop. In this way, the policy areas identified as useful for advancing towards social cohesion in pursuit of equality by definition take on meaning and strength (and may also encounter resistance) depending on each context.

From this perspective, and in view of the growing volatility of economies and the impact of that on the labour market, a decade and a half ago ECLAC (2004) posited the importance of advancing towards a compact for social cohesion in the region's countries. To that end, it proposed four central pillars that combined aspects linked to fiscal responsibility in a first macroeconomic pillar, which was also required to consider a discussion on the tax burden and tax collection issues, job creation, social protection, and education and training. It was also noted that social protection required policies with private and public financing and solidarity-based mechanisms (ECLAC, 2004). In conjunction with a strategy that would bring together greater productivity and competitiveness with rising levels of social cohesion, Machinea and Uthoff (2005) identified a number of key policies, including increased public spending on education, health and social protection, with community policies to strengthen competitiveness and employment, and also assigning a leading role in their design and implementation to regional and subregional institutions.

Expanding and refining the approach to social cohesion, ECLAC (2007a) states that progress towards social cohesion built on democratic values requires the establishment of a genuine compact for social cohesion that can take account of the "agreement with and political commitment to the aforementioned objective, and furnish the economic, political and institutional resources needed to make it viable" (ECLAC, 2007a, p. 11). As already noted, under a conceptualization of social cohesion that emphasizes the dialectical nature between the instituted mechanisms of social inclusion/exclusion and the subjective sphere, the link with policies involves various sectors and areas of action. First, understanding social cohesion as an end, the public policies that contribute directly to its achievement are those that, on the basis of the exercise of rights, enable all those who make up a society to feel part of it. Thus, one key element in consolidating a renewed sense of relevance lies in social policies that guarantee the exercise of people's economic, social and cultural rights and curb inequalities. Second, understanding social cohesion as a means of building societies with increasing levels of development and of promoting equality, cross-cutting support for a new social covenant must be built. This can be achieved through broad coalitions between lower and middle sectors (Filgueira, 2020) or through redistributive partnerships or coalitions (Baldwin, 1990; Martínez Franzoni and Sánchez-Ancochea, 2020; Sojo, 2018).

Likewise, as noted by Sojo (2018, 2017a and 2017b), an approach centred on social cohesion must be explicitly incorporated into public policies. To that end, she identifies several structural areas on which

policies in general and inclusion policies in particular must have an impact: gender equality, a sense of belonging and, finally, democratic governance. These three areas are mutually reinforcing. For example, empowering women strengthens their sense of belonging, which in turn strengthens democratic governance. Cultural policies, identity recognition policies, institutional instruments, resource management and broad social and political dialogue also play leading roles. It is therefore important to forge new redistributive alliances or fiscal compacts where benefits tend towards universality. Dignity must be treated as a value to be appreciated by public policies, which could have positive externalities for social bonds and for the treatment of citizens. It also highlights three strategic prioritization criteria for synergies between social cohesion policies: sustainability, intersectorality and complementarity. Financing requires improved revenue administration through efficient and progressive tax systems, together with better fiscal policies and a more efficient tax collection, which is also emphasized in the third line of action of the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development, as noted in chapter II. Finally, these policies should be both sustained (continuity) and sustainable (financing) over time, as these are key aspects for progress with actions that contribute to strengthening national social cohesion through policies that contribute to a positive rethinking of the bonds between the State and the citizenry (Sojo, 2020).

B. A social cohesion policy agenda for equality, sustainability and resilience

Against that backdrop, this section discusses four areas of public policy from the perspective of the equality-oriented social cohesion model set out in this document. These sectors are interdependent, in that they could help strengthen the enabling elements and constituent components expressions of the model. **This is not an exhaustive list, but rather a first attempt at discussing them and their potential contribution** to setting the foundations for a new social compact or contract in the region. As indicated by ECLAC (2007a, p. 150), the purpose of a compact of this kind is “to legitimize social cohesion as a public policy goal. It also helps to define the role of the institutions whose role includes promoting social cohesion, especially those involved with social welfare and with the creation of the necessary political, legal and institutional conditions”. Higher levels of social cohesion would, in turn, enable the pursuit of a more ambitious policy agenda vis-à-vis the obligations and standards defined in international instruments dealing with economic, social and cultural rights.

Within that framework, the following four policy areas are proposed: (i) policies aimed at consolidating a set of guarantees of well-being, within the framework of developing welfare states, with a preponderant role for universal social protection systems, (ii) social inclusion policies to address the gaps and inequalities that affect access—especially by the most vulnerable people—to policies and mechanisms that allow the exercise of rights, (iii) policies aimed at shaping a culture of equality in the region that, based on a universalism that is sensitive to differences, can generate mechanisms for the recognition of diverse identities and needs and address the mechanisms that reproduce discrimination in its various forms, and (iv) policies for strengthening a democratic institutional framework that promotes citizen participation, transparency and accountability, and for the design of public policies that pay full attention to the factors involved in achieving social cohesion.

Table 16 presents some of the policies and measures set out in the chapter, grouped according to the public policy areas to which they belong and the social cohesion enablers to which they correspond (guarantees of well-being, a culture of equality, mechanisms for recognition, participation and conflict resolution, and the rule of law and quality democracy). The policies included serve as a reference for the possible options that countries can adopt to advance in each area, without being a complete or normative list of the measures to be undertaken. At the same time, the listed policies can be categorized into different areas and deployed in pursuit of multiple enablers—such as those referring to social participation and recognition-oriented policies—that are clearly linked.

Table 16
Policies for equality-oriented social cohesion by area and enabling elements

Enabling elements of social cohesion	Policy areas	Measures and associated policies
Guarantees of well-being	Universal social protection systems and human capacity-building	Basic income level Protection against risks Guaranteed access to quality health care Guaranteed access to quality education Provision of quality basic and social services
Culture of equality	Social and labour inclusion	Education: improve the quality and relevance of educational services, bilingual education, provision of adequate infrastructure, effective participation of communities in teaching processes Health: coverage of and access to health services, and their adaptability to the needs of a diverse population Water and sanitation services: equitable and of good quality; housing programmes that improve living standards for people living in inadequate conditions Technologies: access to necessary infrastructure and capacity-building for meaningful community impact Productive, quality employment in decent working conditions: expand formal work, labour quality and productivity, access to social protection, and labour incomes
	Affirmative action policies and anti-discrimination measures	Anti-discrimination policies, and policies guaranteeing the enjoyment of rights for specific groups: according to life cycle (children and adolescents, young people, the elderly), or by factors of inequality and discrimination: gender (women), ethnicity (Afrodescendants, indigenous peoples), territory (migrants), sexual orientation (LGBTIQ people), persons with disabilities and others. Quotas or reserved places in education (positive discrimination) Adaptation and cultural relevance of social services Labour protection in hiring, qualification and promotion processes Political representation and associativity of specific groups Mainstreaming inclusion and anti-discrimination perspectives in policy-making Raising the profile of inequality, discrimination and exclusion, and ensuring the availability of data showing gaps, discrimination and exclusion Social policies focused on eradicating violence Policies for the recognition and appreciation of indigenous peoples, the Afrodescendent population and migrants Promoting social participation by excluded persons and groups Expansion and promotion of the use of public spaces, access to culture and recreation
Mechanisms for recognition, participation and conflict resolution	Governance, openness in decision-making processes and dialogue mechanisms	Inclusive formulation of public policies Promoting inclusive and transparent forms of participation in political decision-making Promoting mechanisms for dialogue and dealing with conflicts
Rule of law and quality democracy	Open and participatory government, mechanisms for accountability and efficiency Development of effective and efficient accountability mechanisms	Incorporation of open and participatory forms of government in planning, budgeting, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation Promoting the effectiveness of public services and public administration Development of effective and efficient accountability mechanisms
	Information and public debate	Ensure greater access to public information systems and transparency bodies Media openness and transparency

Source: Prepared by the authors.

1. Guarantees of well-being and universal, comprehensive and sustainable social protection systems

As noted by Abrahamson (2011, p. 181), the development of a welfare state presupposes and at the same time strengthens the sense of belonging among citizens. This is on account of the close link that exists between the exercise of social rights and citizenship, and thus on the centrality of being recognized as full members of a community (Marshall, 1950) and achieving full social inclusion. The specific aim of the welfare state is to consolidate a set of social benefits and services geared towards guaranteeing economic, social and cultural rights and, thereby, to cement the basic level of inclusion, redistribution and recognition that is key to long-term progress towards cohesive societies. Moving in that direction requires an orientation towards the constant reducing of inequalities, solidarity as an overarching principle and a form of universalism that is sensitive to differences (ECLAC, 2021b). Moreover, given the current situation of crisis, uncertainty and vulnerability to multiple disruptive factors, protection for managing risks is no longer just an instrument for guaranteeing rights and well-being but has become a necessity to face constant, even systemic, adversity.

Welfare states comprise a set of State-led policies to ensure a minimum level of well-being for all, including a basic level of income, to protect against risks and thus influence their collective distribution, and underpin the development of human capacities through investments in education and health and access to social services with agreed-on standards of quality (Briggs, 1961; ECLAC, 2010a; Filgueira, 2014; Segura-Ubierno, 2007). By separating access to well-being from its provision by family and by position in the labour market, affecting social stratification (Esping-Andersen, 1999 and 1990), levels of protection and security conducive to the development of equality-based relations and a sense of belonging are generated. Their construction requires progress with various institutional and political elements and challenges, ranging from the forging of agreements on the basic well-being guarantees to be ensured, their provision and recipients, to the priority policies to be pursued, their interconnections and strategies for their universalization, taking due account of issues of coverage and benefit quality. That final element is particularly relevant considering the persistent challenge of creating broad coalitions that support the formation of this type of State and of generating public goods that can attract middle- and high-income populations (Filgueira, 2014; Sojo, 2018).

Particularly essential is progress towards a new logic of distribution and collectivization to overcome inequalities and structural problems through universal, comprehensive and sustainable social protection systems that are solid and capable of providing social protection for all through universal benefits, in combination with other possible mechanisms. More than a minimum social protection floor for survival, the goal is a platform that ensures citizens the enjoyment of rights and well-being. As the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development indicates (ECLAC, 2020d), social protection “aims to guarantee universal access to income that permits an adequate level of well-being, as well as universal access to social services (such as health, education, water and sanitation), housing, labour inclusion policies and decent work. Thus, social protection seeks to effectively address gaps in access to well-being, enabling people to exercise their rights and participate fully in society. This makes it a key tool for inclusion.”

The expansion of universal, comprehensive and sustainable social protection systems goes hand in hand with the need to consolidate a social and fiscal compact. The latter requirement demands, on the one hand, a basic level of adherence and support, which in turn is connected to what people detect as the effect of that compact on their standard of living, which could also involve effects associated with stability and governance linked to social spending, or the disposition towards the common good itself. It is also linked to the level of people’s involvement as taxpayers, recipients of social policies or both (Burchi, Strupat and von Schiller, 2020). Duly considering redistributive and solidarity-based criteria, belonging and recognition, transparency and increasing coverage that generates broad levels of inclusion and guaranteed floors in the design of policies and strategic actions for the further consolidation of these systems and a new social State is a challenging priority task from the perspective that combines objectives of well-being, sustainability and governance for coexistence in democracy.

2. Policies for social and labour inclusion

Social and labour inclusion policies—which are usually applied at a general level, but often focus on specific groups—are a second dimension of policies aimed at equality-oriented social cohesion. Although Latin America has made significant progress in different dimensions of social and labour inclusion, in terms of the right to education, health, access to basic infrastructure (water, sanitation, electricity and Internet) and decent employment, significant inequalities between different population groups still exist, and these must be addressed by social policies to ensure the full inclusion of all people.

Guaranteeing inclusion, the closing of gaps and the exercise of the rights of the entire population requires, first of all, **strengthened policies for ensuring social and labour inclusion** (ECLAC, 2019b), which translates into various actions, several of which are present in the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development (ECLAC, 2020d). One of these is the implementation of a set of measures in **education**, including those aimed at improving its quality and relevance and increasing the efforts already made with respect to intercultural bilingual education, in recognition of the need to address the persistent problems associated with the geographical access of those schools, their deficient infrastructure and strengthening the effective community participation in teaching and learning processes (Corbetta and others, 2018; Del Popolo, 2018). In turn, these policies should be oriented towards access to **health services** and their universal coverage, considering the different health needs of different population groups from an intercultural approach with awareness of the social determinants of health. In addition to the above, there are the challenges of vaccination posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which is necessary to control the infection curve and protect the population from its health and socioeconomic consequences (ECLAC/PAHO, 2020). Policies should also focus on increasing the coverage of equitable and quality **water and sanitation services** and on housing programmes to improve the quality of life of those living in inadequate conditions. In addition, policies aimed at social inclusion must consider the need to guarantee access to **technologies**: not only as regards the necessary infrastructure, but also in terms of the capacities required for them to become tools that have a significant impact on the lives of people and communities, especially in light of their usefulness and necessity in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Lastly, given the high levels of informality and significant inequalities in the quality of jobs, access to social protection and labour incomes characteristic of the region, (ECLAC, 2019b) efforts must be made to promote **productive and quality employment and decent work** for all people.

While these policies should be universal in nature based on a rights-based approach, they also need components aimed at breaking down barriers to access to social services and well-being faced by different population groups (ECLAC, 2017a and 2018b), thus adopting an approach based on universalism that is sensitive to differences. Policies and programmes must be developed to ensure enjoyment of rights for children and adolescents, young people, older persons, women, persons of African descent, indigenous peoples, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTIQ) persons, persons with disabilities and migrants, with a focus on territorial inclusion (ECLAC, 2020a), seeking to correct and prevent the discrimination, inequality and exclusion that they have historically suffered. **Affirmative action policies and anti-discrimination measures** are central to this. In the **education** field, the main mechanisms available are quotas, reserved places or scholarships, mainly in higher education; in **labour** matters, in hiring, qualification and promotion processes; and in **politics**, in terms of representation and associativity (Rangel, 2019).

A case in point in the region is Brazil, where, since 2012, 50% of university places are reserved for low-income students who have studied in public schools, and within that percentage, places are reserved for people of African descent in accordance with their proportion in each State's population (Htun, 2004; Vieira and Arends-Kuenning, 2019). Countries including Costa Rica, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia have also implemented similar programmes (Rangel, 2016).

To enhance the effectiveness of these measures, they must be accompanied by policies that seek to change the dynamics of discrimination and exclusion by recognizing and appreciating various population groups, which will be described in the following section. Accordingly, all these policies must **incorporate**

perspectives of inclusion and anti-discrimination, addressing such issues as gender, ethnicity and race, persons with disabilities, migrants, sexual diversity and others, to ensure that they do not contain elements associated with stereotypes or other forms of discrimination and to guarantee that the value of equality is promoted in all policies (ECLAC, 2020d). This requires that those perspectives be considered in the different policy stages, from design to implementation and evaluation, considering all persons as subjects of rights, without any distinctions whatsoever.

3. Policies for a culture of equality

Equality-based social relations are one of the main expressions of the proposed social cohesion model; they belong to the sphere of subjectivity and culture, and they are in turn intertwined with the dynamics of power. Historically, the region has suffered the costs of the “culture of privilege” (ECLAC, 2018b), which restrict the possibilities for development, participation and equality among people and which arise in part from the concentration of power and capital in the hands of certain population groups (Fairfield, 2015). Relations of this kind are at the heart of a culture of equality that, as noted above, recognizes equal rights through policies and institutions that promote them. Consolidating social relations with these characteristics requires concrete actions by the State and an active commitment by society as a whole to combat the various forms of discrimination and exclusion that remain strong in Latin America, to guarantee effective equality of rights and to promote active citizen participation. The following paragraphs offer some examples of policies that would contribute to this dimension, based mainly on different lines of action from the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development.

First, in order to eradicate the multiple forms of discrimination experienced by those population segments that have traditionally been discriminated against as a result of the culture of privilege and to guarantee the exercise of their rights, there must be **policies to make inequality, discrimination and exclusion visible**. The Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development affirms the need to “deepen the analysis of the inequalities that affect different populations... and expand dissemination of information on such inequalities” and to raise the visibility of expressions of discrimination such as racism, xenophobia, homophobia and transphobia (ECLAC, 2020d, p. 33). In order to advance towards an understanding of the urgency of equality and to denaturalize inequality, the reality of exclusion and discrimination suffered by different groups of the population must be made visible.

Thus, **data availability** is needed in order to highlight the various forms of discrimination and exclusion. The production of social data must take into consideration both the different dimensions of social inequalities and the populations that are affected by them. In keeping with the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development (ECLAC, 2013), special efforts must be made to provide useful and relevant information that covers such groups as LGBTIQ people, persons with disabilities, Afrodescendent and indigenous people and others, who, because they are excluded groups or are not considered in the measurement instruments, do not achieve statistical visibility. Facilitating access to sources of public information by reducing administrative barriers and creating digital platforms also helps promote its use and dissemination, in addition to fostering transparency and encouraging public engagement. Also crucial in this area is promoting research that helps showcase and analyse inequalities and expressions of discrimination in society, in order to identify challenges and make informed public policy decisions that are sensitive to differences.

In particular, there is an urgent need for **social policies focused on eradicating the violence** that is deeply rooted in the region and that especially affects such groups as children, young people, women, indigenous and Afrodescendent people, migrants and LGBTI people. In addition to analysing the various consequences of different forms of violence on inclusion and social cohesion and on the visibility of the problem, progress must also be made with policies to enshrine security and a life without violence as a right that must be respected and guaranteed, and to promote a cultural change with peace, tolerance and appreciation of diversity at its centre (ECLAC, 2021b). Schools play a fundamental role in that regard, as venues that can work to form new generations that value and respect diversity and are

ethically responsible and civic-minded, through the adoption of contents that address education for citizenship—in both its cognitive and socioemotional and behavioural dimensions— together with the reinforcement of pedagogical resources and tools and the management of social relations (Trucco and Inostroza, 2017; UNESCO, 2015).

In third place, along with the eradication of inequality, discrimination and exclusion, the implementation of policies aimed at **recognizing indigenous peoples and Afrodescendent populations and appraising the contribution that migrants make to communities** is required. This recognition implies full adherence to the rights of indigenous peoples as set out in instruments such as ILO Convention 169 (1989) and the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which provide for cultural and social rights as well as rights in the political and economic spheres. This could be reinforced through the adoption of a cultural diversity approach in both the design and implementation of social and labour inclusion policies (ECLAC, 2021b) as well as in the education provided by the school system. This education goal can be achieved by including in curricula elements that recognize the historical, cultural and political contribution that the Afrodescendent and indigenous populations have made in Latin America (UNESCO, 2017) and by incorporating interculturality into educational processes (Corbetta and others, 2018), together with the contributions made by migrants in both countries of origin and destination (ECLAC, 2021b). In addition, several countries in the region have implemented other policies to assert those groups' worth, such as establishing official days to celebrate Afrodescendants or embracing ancestral health practices and placing emphasis on the diseases that are most prevalent among the Afrodescendent population (ECLAC, 2017b).

Likewise, consolidating the culture of equality demands active social participation, which means all population groups being able to exercise, on equal terms, their right to participation. This requires progress with policies that **allow and promote social participation** by those people who have been traditionally excluded from it: for example, young people, older persons, people with disabilities and indigenous and Afrodescendent populations (ECLAC, 2021b). Different means of participation in different areas must therefore be created, taking into consideration the adequacy and accessibility of these venues, with the digital divide being one of the main obstacles to overcome. In addition to reinforcing equality, promoting social participation can contribute to reinforcing the values of trust, solidarity and reciprocity in that such participation is based on recognition and promotes the emergence of equality-based social relations between different population groups.

Finally, renewed attention must be given to the importance of public spaces as locations where bonds of belonging and community can be forged (Kaźmierczak, 2013) and equity and social inclusion can be fostered (UN-Habitat, 2015). Given the high residential segregation that characterizes the region's cities, it is important to promote the use and expansion of public spaces, such as squares, parks, paths and libraries, in order to encourage people to meet. For those meetings to take place in a context of equality, respect and appreciation of diversity, public spaces must be inclusive, integrated, connected, accessible, environmentally sustainable and safe (UN-Habitat, 2015); otherwise, they could become venues for exclusion. Thus, their design and planning must be carried out with the participation of the community, as well as of other relevant social actors such as civil society, the public and private sectors and academia (UN-Habitat, 2015), and with an inclusive approach that takes on board the diverse needs of different population groups.

4. Strengthening democratic institutions for trust

(a) Conflict resolution and consensus-building mechanisms

The ability to process and resolve conflicts peacefully is one of the most important enablers of social cohesion. A virtuous circle exists between the peaceful management of conflicts and tensions and the consolidation of greater social cohesion. However, the old and new disruptive factors identified in chapter II continually create new conflicts and tensions for coexistence, and so new adjustments and accommodations are required. There are no universal models or formulas for managing conflict; instead,

the institutional formulas that can be seen in certain contexts are largely the result of a long history of social and political practices that are difficult to replicate. In each context the democratic order defines actors and procedures originally designed to process conflicts: for example, by transforming the popular will into mandates through electoral competition and the plural representation of interests, or through agencies designed to settle conflicts between the government and citizens or among citizens and authorities. However, these mechanisms are often insufficient, especially when the political system and institutions are distrusted and discredited by citizens, as is the case in Latin America. At the same time, the flip side of the capacity to resolve conflict peacefully is the ability to build consensus and forge major social compacts, despite the centrifugal effect of particular interests, cycles of electoral conflict and, in general, the disruptive factors outlined above.

Building social compacts is a complex task, particularly in a region with such wide inequalities as Latin America and the Caribbean (Martínez Franzoni and Sánchez-Ancochea, 2020). Not only are wide socioeconomic differences still found, they are also exacerbated by ethnic, racial and gender inequalities, which affect people's levels of income, well-being, and recognition (ECLAC, 2016). The economic elites have largely been able to influence political decisions, which hinders the generation of broad consensus and social compacts. However, in recent decades, countries such as Costa Rica and Colombia have been able to develop fruitful processes in this area, with the progressive construction of a social compact regarding the right to health in the former and a constitutional agreement in the latter (Martínez Franzoni and Sánchez-Ancochea, 2020). Both cases show the importance of the State in mediating the interests of the different actors involved, maintaining effective venues for dialogue and participation, redistributing resources and opportunities and ultimately compensating disadvantaged groups on the way to defining major agreements. At the same time, citizen participation and social movements are of great importance in driving major changes and influencing the political agenda.

Indeed, a large range of measures exist to support a policy agenda that can improve the functioning of the system, its representativeness and its capacity to process demands and settle conflicts. One possibility is to maintain open plural channels of communication, consultation and demand between governments and citizens. Another alternative is the establishment of consultative bodies at the sectoral or general levels, as has been common in Brazil, through National Public Policy Conferences in areas such as health or social assistance (Abramo, Araujo and Bolzon, 2014). Thus, strengthening the inclusive and dialogue-based formulation of public policies can contribute to increasing trust between citizens and institutions.

In addition, an authentic State commitment to permanent mechanisms for dialogue, recognition, participation and conflict resolution with the full range of social actors will make it possible, in the medium and long term, to manage the inevitable tensions between population groups, communities and private actors, improve social inclusion by addressing the demands of different sectors and even prevent the development of large-scale conflicts. This capacity for response and constant dialogue on the part of institutions strengthens their own legitimacy and, at the same time, contributes to a sense of belonging in democracy.

ECLAC has highlighted the importance of the countries of the region moving towards citizen-centred **open government** regimes that include citizen participation in the formulation and implementation of policies (ECLAC, 2018c). Open and participatory governments foster the right of citizens to take part in decision-making and promote venues for dialogue and meetings that favour the protagonism and involvement of citizens. The public system in turn benefits from the knowledge, opinions and experience of citizens. Likewise, by including a range of actors and socializing debates and proposals at different stages, civic responsibility can be increased and citizen demands for accountability can be motivated. This reduces the risks of conflict during the implementation of policies and increases their legitimacy and effectiveness (OECD, 2009). Promoting inclusive and transparent forms of participation in different decision-making spheres also makes it more difficult for interest groups to capture these spaces politically, reducing the possibility of major conflicts.

Consultative councils are a leading mechanism for strengthening trust, dialogue and the processing of conflicts in the region. They currently operate in at least thirteen countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Consultative councils are bodies with the purpose of making participation and social dialogue effective in the process of building greater equality of opportunities. Their importance lies in the fact that they are permanent bodies and that in most cases they meet on a regular basis. As a result, greater trust can be built through dialogue and civil society participation, which makes it possible to build greater trust in the corresponding institution or body, thus strengthening the mechanisms that enable social cohesion. A leading example is the Social Cohesion Advisory Council convened by the executive branch in Chile (see box 2). However, in order to take full advantage of the contribution of agencies of this kind, their findings and recommendations must be broadly disseminated beyond technical and decision-making circles.

Box 2

Chile's Social Cohesion Advisory Council (2020)

The Social Cohesion Advisory Council was created in 2020 with the purpose of advising the Ministry for Social Development and the Family in establishing a set of recommendations for measuring social cohesion and adopting it as a long-term policy objective. It was formed by a diverse group of experts from national academia, in response to the protests and social unrest that broke out in the country in and after October 2019. The Council's mandate was to identify ways to improve the measurements carried out by the Ministry for Social Development, to incorporate the social cohesion approach into existing programmes and, finally, to identify opportunities for the ministry and public institutions in general to strengthen social cohesion.

As a first step, the Advisory Council adopted a definition of social cohesion to frame the analysis to be undertaken. The definition chosen was the one provided by the Bertelsmann Foundation in its report *Social Cohesion Radar* (2013): "Social cohesion refers to the quality of interactions among the members of a community, defined in geographical terms, and is based on resilient social relations, a positive emotional connectedness to the community and a strong focus on the common good." The Advisory Council also differentiated social cohesion from the phenomena of social inclusion and exclusion, although it is believed that they can influence increases or decreases in cohesion. Social cohesion is a continuum and no society is completely cohesive.

Second, it prepared a diagnostic assessment and identified the main trends in social cohesion in the country based on dimensions such as the **quality of social bonds**, the **decent treatment of people**, the **acceptance of diversity**, the **sense of belonging** and the **focus on the common good**.

Proposals in the Advisory Council's Final Report

Based on the diagnostic assessment carried out, various proposals were made, which are grouped into four categories:

The first group addresses the **measurement of social cohesion and the creation of indicators** at the national level to measure progress and setbacks. One specific proposal is to incorporate some indicators that measure social cohesion in the Supplementary Social Welfare Survey. The Advisory Council also suggested that social cohesion be analysed in territorial terms in order to measure the impact of urban segregation and its consequences. The report further recommended that the information be as disaggregated as possible, in order to determine the risks and vulnerabilities suffered by certain age, gender, ethnic, economic or other groups. For that measurement to have positive consequences, however, it must be understood that aspects of public policy have to be modified to improve the indicators. It is also necessary for citizens to be able to monitor the information and data, and so it would be advantageous to create a website to collect and present information on the state of social cohesion.

Second, the report **made public policy proposals**, especially as regards the Ministry for Social Development and the Family, for the incorporation of the social cohesion perspective into the evaluation of social programmes. Given the low levels of social cohesion in Chile, an agenda with priority social policy measures must be adopted in order to improve the situation. An ex-ante evaluation should be carried out to ensure that social programmes are not harming social cohesion, and that, if that is the case, technical objections can be brought against that programme. The main guidelines to be incorporated are ensuring that programmes do not damage social ties by favouring only certain groups, and ensuring that civil society is consulted in the design process.

The targeting of programmes should be reviewed, as there are still programmes that use additional selection methods such as subgroup targeting and quotas by commune, which produces feelings of injustice and mistrust. Another recommendation is for social programmes to move towards targeting at least the most vulnerable 40%

Box 2 (concluded)

in the Social Household Register, since this would enable the same instruments to be used to serve groups that are very similar to each other. The requirements imposed by social programmes should be analysed with care, as failure to comply with them can lead to stigmatization and a sense of injustice, given that families are not always in a position to meet them. Of specific concern in the current context are the requirements for formal employment and academic achievement among children and adolescents.

Progress must also be made with the gradual allocation of benefits, so that the transition from one tranche to another does not entail a total loss or generate perverse incentives, especially when the amounts are high, as in the case of the free university benefit. Given that people's efforts to improve their lives are not only individual, but can also be collective, the Council proposed incorporating territorial and community targeting into certain programmes, ideally with the involvement of community organizations or civil society. This would prevent the creation of artificial differences between very similar groups living together in the same territory and would strengthen social cohesion in the community.

As regards decent treatment, it was recommended that maximum waiting times for access to State benefits be defined and that complaints be handled quickly and transparently. In order to improve understanding of the social protection system, it would be beneficial to move towards greater interconnection of programmes and to create a one-stop shop. It is urgent that the policies for the protection of children and adolescents in SENAME do not make excessive use of the institutionalization mechanism, as this can break minors' social links with their communities in the broadest sense.

Third, the report made proposals for **creating an institutional framework to advance social cohesion**. The Advisory Council recommended the creation of an institutional framework to advise the ministry in adopting the social cohesion approach. To be effective it must be adequately funded, report at a high level and be equipped with a technical team and clear governance. Ideally, it should be created as a unit within the Ministry for Social Development and the Family. The institutional framework must also be able to connect with and include civil society and other institutions of the Chilean State that may have more advanced programmes in certain specific areas. To counteract the current short-term vision of public policies, it was suggested that a Development Plan be created to structure a common vision of future challenges at the national level.

Finally, **measures for the private and non-governmental sector** were proposed, including partnerships with civil society and NGOs, given that not all social cohesion problems or challenges can be resolved by the State. In the business area, the creation of a "Social Cohesion Seal" was suggested, based on the successful experience of the Migrant Seal, which is awarded to institutions that meet certain standards in this area. Likewise, venues for dialogue between different community actors and local governments could be organized. Two positive examples are the "3xi" and "We have to talk about Chile" initiatives, which are public-private in nature. Similar initiatives would help repair Chile's social fabric and are key to advancing the construction of a more cohesive and inclusive society.

Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of Ministry for Social Development and the Family, *Informe final para Consejo Asesor para la Cohesión Social: Diagnóstico para una aproximación a la cohesión social en Chile y recomendaciones para fortalecer el aporte de la política social*, Santiago, 2020, and G. Dragolov and others, *Social Cohesion Radar Measuring Common Ground: An international Comparison of Social Cohesion*, Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2013.

Among the areas and topics dealt with by consultative councils, particularly noteworthy are the economic and social councils, which dialogue with various actors, such as trade unions, academics, NGOs and other civil society actors, on economic policies at the national level. This enables the building of greater consensus and a common agenda, and the prevention or anticipation of possible tensions that could arise from the application of the measures in question. However, over the last twenty years, the region has also seen an increase in the number of consultative councils or similar bodies that aim to address issues such as gender, the inclusion of indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, migrants and others.

This is a sign that countries' visions are increasingly in line with the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development line of action 3, which promotes the recognition, well-being and rights of various population groups. This facilitates the identification of all possible sources of tension in social cohesion, which are not exclusively economic in nature. However, for consultative councils to have a real effect on social cohesion and not just be a formality, progress must be made towards greater transparency and effective civil society engagement, so that participation has a real impact on the public policies in question and can be made visible.

(b) Mechanisms to strengthen citizen trust in institutions: accountability and transparency, participation and effective communication

Because of distrust in institutions and political actors, the very legitimacy of public policy ends up being called into question. Expectations of the misappropriation of public funds, corruption, and the political use or outright inefficiency of policies creates a vicious circle, and additional efforts are required to rebuild the credibility of public action. In response, accountability mechanisms offer a range of useful alternatives, as do mechanisms for citizen participation and social oversight at different levels.

Accountability can be defined as the legal institutionalization of distrust (O'Donnell, 2003) and comprises various horizontal and vertical mechanisms that ensure that public action is taken in accordance with established rules and defined objectives. Vertical (or societal) mechanisms refer to the accountability of the authorities to civil society, the electorate or even society as a whole. Social mobilization, the media and public opinion in general seek to exercise oversight over public action, although their effectiveness and systematicity vary over time and between different policy areas or sectors. The sophistication of this form of accountability requires, however, considerable and sustained human and financial resources, which is not always easy to ensure from organized civil society, especially in the face of pressure from powerful private interests. The improvement of these mechanisms remains a constant and pending task in the region's countries.

On the other hand, horizontal (or intra-State) accountability mechanisms involve oversight between State entities that have a formal mandate to perform such monitoring. Typically, the legislative branch exercises oversight over the spending budgeted on a yearly basis by the various branches of the State, although its effectiveness, speed and capacity to sanction is highly variable. Public comptrollerships play a similar role within the executive branch itself. In most countries, these bodies require resources, autonomy, strong mandates and the power to impose sanctions in order to be able to exercise effective oversight, which in itself constitutes an agenda for reform in the region. Similarly, ensuring the independence and proper governance of the judiciary is essential in order to prevent the influence of extra-legal factors on institutional accountability and oversight.

The ways in which public services are administered influence their effectiveness and, consequently, citizens' trust in institutions. In particular, with a recruitment system based on merit rather than privilege, public services can improve their effectiveness by recruiting staff according to technical and professional requirements and the skills needed for their specific tasks. Similarly, the administrative management of institutions must follow a model based on results indicators, and the changes that are made must respond to informed decision-making based on them. These measures can also help prevent corruption and strengthen a more efficient civil service (OECD, 2020).

The importance of citizen participation goes far beyond the sphere of institutional trust, as it also plays a central role in legitimizing the economic, political and social order. That is why it is essential for social cohesion. There are thus several areas that can be identified for policies that promote participation. First are all the actions aimed at facilitating and promoting the conventional political participation of representative democracy (voting, party and trade union membership, civil associations, NGOs and so on). The second group covers actions for the adoption of new mechanisms for participation through non-conventional channels. Finally come complementary or parallel mechanisms that seek to enable a more participatory democracy, the feasibility of which tends to be greater at the local level.

Within the paradigm of open and participatory government, ECLAC has stated that the region's public administrations can benefit greatly from greater inclusion of citizen participation in the public policy formulation and implementation processes (ECLAC, 2018c). Similarly, the digital revolution has, in some cases, made it possible to change the ways in which public services connect with citizens, allowing greater access to those services as well as various new opportunities for participation and cooperation (Naser, Ramírez-Alujas and Rosales, 2017). The following are four areas that offer opportunities for progress along these lines.

First, national development plans present an opportunity for greater interconnections among various actors to generate a fruitful dialogue in long-term planning.⁴¹ One challenge is that such plans on occasions end up being government plans that change at the beginning of each mandate, so there is an opportunity to transform them into a venues for longer-term planning, where development strategies at the country level are openly and participatively debated. As of November 2017, 33 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean had or were in the process of designing development planning instruments; 12 of these are long-term instruments, 14 are medium-term instruments and 7 were under development (ECLAC, 2018c).

National budgets are another area that could benefit from greater openness and citizen participation. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda has strongly promoted the role of budgets as an instrument to promote the financing of goals and ensure their fulfilment (ECLAC, 2018c). Although recent years have seen a strengthening of the legal and institutional frameworks for budgets in the region, an opportunity still exists to further develop a results-oriented budgeting model, in addition to strengthening participatory budgets, in which citizens are able to propose and decide how resources are invested at the local level. Budget transparency—understood as the timely and systematic provision of relevant budgetary information—is critical to facilitating the participation of citizens and non-governmental organizations in budget processes. In 2013, ten of the region's countries were using citizen budgets, including Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Mexico (OECD/IDB, 2014).

Third, in the area of budget execution and policy resource management, public investment could benefit from an inclusive logic that involves government actors as well as civil society and the private sector in the development of strategic planning for public investment. To this end, National Public Investment Systems (NPISs) need powers and organizational capacities that allow them to monitor and ensure the efficiency and quality of investments and to improve transparency practices, accountability and access to information, so as to enhance the involvement of various stakeholders in project stages in an informed and transparent manner. This is part of a paradigm shift in the functioning of the NPISs, whereby they are evolving from being normative entities focused on performing ex post evaluations to paying greater attention to ex ante evaluations and to considering the numerous actors involved in public interventions (local, regional and sectoral bodies).

Fourth, monitoring and evaluation systems are vital for the generation of information to make policy outcomes transparent and allow their effectiveness to be analysed by public scrutiny. The use of monitoring and evaluations for decision-making, and their dissemination to citizens and relevant actors, must be encouraged. Including participatory mechanisms in evaluations and monitoring can contribute to a closer understanding of how different policies operate from the users' point of view, which is of great importance in introducing changes and improvements to those policies (ECLAC, 2018c). This is of particular relevance for social policies and social protection. The mistrust, unease and discredit that can arise from the non-transparent, clientelistic or corrupt use of public resources for social purposes is one of the sources of greatest annoyance among the citizens of the region's countries. To address this, the establishment of solid and transparent institutions is an essential factor in the effectiveness and legitimacy of social policies. It is not for nothing that the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development selected social institutional frameworks as one of its strategic axes.

Specifically, moving towards open government forms of public administration enhances citizen engagement in decision-making that directly affects them, increasing accountability and consensus-building through participatory mechanisms and providing more information and knowledge for responsible and

⁴¹ Most of the region's countries have national development plans. Those with long-term national plans include Barbados, Belize, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Others have medium-term plans: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Suriname. Meanwhile, a third group have plans established only recently or still undergoing development: the Bahamas, Cuba, Grenada, Guyana, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay.

informed decisions. In this way, social cohesion can be fostered through improvements in the institutional capacity to respond to citizen demands and greater legitimacy and joint responsibility in policy formulation and implementation.

Likewise, the media are essential for the creation of informed and healthy debates, where diverse positions are represented. Accordingly, countries must make efforts to combat the concentration of the mass media in order to prevent specific interest groups from taking control over information dissemination. Another important step is to lower the barriers to entry for new media to enter the marketplace to help generate informed and healthy debate by encouraging the representation of different social, economic, political and environmental perspectives. The deconcentration of the media, together with the protection of press freedom, are measures that favour the correct functioning of democracy and hinder the ability of the media to shape public opinion according to their interests (OECD, 2017).

Transparency initiatives and public information access systems are other important accountability mechanisms that ensure greater trust in institutions. These can be seen both in open government plans and dialogue forums and in the creation of data portals and transparency laws. They aim to facilitate accountability and access to public information so that effective oversight of State actions can be performed, in line with target 6 of SDG 16. When those measures are implemented correctly and with effective dialogue and citizen participation, they will also strengthen the enabling mechanisms of social cohesion, specifically the mechanisms for conflict resolution and participation, and for the rule of law and quality democracy. However, progress should be made in facilitating effective and free access to information through online portals containing information that is easily accessible to the population and in accessible formats, in order to reduce barriers to access.

As a policy agenda, accountability should be an integral part of any strategy to combat citizen discontent and distrust. Therefore, in addition to instituting and implementing such mechanisms (which, as noted, are very diverse), they must be actively communicated, both to publicize their existence and functions and to enhance their deterrent effect on possible offenders. The invention of new devices that combine appeals to technical expertise, to participation by diverse and representative social actors and to political and governmental actors is a promising alternative, despite the risks of political instrumentalization. The recent case of the Advisory Council on Social Cohesion in Chile, the example of a consultation and consensus-building mechanism examined in box 2, can also be seen as a venue for consultation and participation by technical experts and diverse social actors.

To summarize, although the link is not obvious or immediate, the establishment of adequate and accountable institutional framework is a central factor in counteracting the widespread distrust of public policies and institutions in the medium and long term. And as noted, greater institutional trust is a positive factor for social cohesion in several key ways: it strengthens legitimacy, facilitates citizen cooperation and participation, renews people's sense of belonging and enhances public policy's own efforts to promote social cohesion. Thus, the institutional framework is both a means and an end on the road to a new social compact.

V. Conclusions

As stated at the beginning of this publication, the notion of social cohesion has a long and rich history. Beyond the wide range of approaches and traditions at the conceptual level, this long history stems from the fact that the fundamental questions that underlie the problem of social cohesion (what unifies, identifies and motivates people to live together voluntarily in society, without the need for constant coercion or strictly instrumental interests) have remained valid, or rather have cyclically withdrawn from and returned to the centre of social and political debate. Indeed, from the industrial era onwards, the elements identified as “disruptive factors” have not ceased to challenge the foundations of social cohesion at different times and at all latitudes. Some of these factors are meaningless today because societies have learned to adapt to and overcome them; such is the case with the effects of early industrialization in those countries where it first emerged. In contrast, other factors have remained a constant and unequalizing pressure: for example, the effects of technological progress on economic and social life, or changes in geographical and temporal setting, such as migrations. At the same time, several of the historically great cohesive elements have come and gone, such as nationalism, tradition, religion or the assertion of identities, in line with the need to redefine senses of belonging in the face of changes in those factors. Today, such unprecedented factors as the COVID-19 pandemic, the digital revolution, climate change and the increasingly evident finiteness of the planet’s available resources are challenging social cohesion across all societies. These new challenges will require considerable adaptations and sacrifices where not everyone will benefit, creating new inequality gaps. New solidarities and motivations will also be needed to maintain functional levels of cooperation on the part of individuals in order to meet these challenges and those that are to come. In other words, questions and answers around social cohesion are not part of a one-off conversation on a narrow topic. It is an ongoing conversation, as previous answers cease to work or matter, and new questions and tensions for coexistence emerge. The conversation on social cohesion that has been reopened in this document undoubtedly requires further development, but it is hoped that it has made a contribution to its conceptualization, measurement and positioning within public policy.

Taking that long history into account, this document revisits the concept of social cohesion and its measurement in order to offer an approach that, in the current context, aims to orient public action towards a certain type of social cohesion, based on various reference points such as the central role of human rights, the 2030 Agenda, the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development and the extensive ECLAC agenda on sustainable development and inequality. It posits a model of social cohesion geared

towards equality and sustainability that, through democracy, aims to leave no one behind, while at the same time responding to many of the factors that call into question the weak foundations of social cohesion in our countries. Part of social cohesion understood as a process was originally defined in the ECLAC tradition⁴² to redirect attention towards the search for a national social cohesion model based on equality-based social relations, on the basis of various enabling elements such as guarantees of well-being, the culture of equality or a democratic and functional rule of law. This model is offered as a response to the set of disruptive factors currently affecting social cohesion, seeking to help deal with them, to overcome them or, at least, to contain them through a greater systemic resilience. Derived from this proposal is a measurement framework with quantitative and qualitative elements, which seeks to reassert both objective and subjective elements that are central to this model of social cohesion. The objective was for the monitoring to incorporate the wide range of dimensions that play a role in social cohesion, under the assumption that, at any given time, each country has specific strengths and weaknesses that can be identified and addressed through public policies. In addition, this proposed measurement framework was constrained by the availability and comparability of indicators in most Latin American countries. The framework is therefore open to improvement and enrichment as the available sources and information permit.

From the proposed conceptual approach, a policy framework is derived that has been designed to take action and issue alerts in each national scenario about the very diverse weaknesses of social cohesion in its different dimensions. It distinguishes numerous and varied policy sectors that may be relevant for strengthening social cohesion. However, a first circle of policies can be distinguished whose importance lies in the fact that they can directly affect certain key enabling elements. In particular, the need to build true welfare states in the region —adapted to the new context in order to guarantee decent levels of well-being and promote a culture of equality based on universal, comprehensive and sustainable social protection systems that contribute to greater resilience of our societies in response to the uncertainty and permanent risks of the current context— is very much at the centre. Another essential element is strengthening the accountability of States as a key factor for their legitimacy and democratic viability and, accordingly, ensuring the participation and cooperation of citizens in resolving the current existential challenges. This core circle could be termed social cohesion policies, with the proviso that, depending on the case, other areas and sectors of public policy may also be crucial. Of course, these policy areas could change in response to new disruptive factors that generate inequality and require a public response.

⁴² Social cohesion is defined as the conflictive and contentious dialectic between the established mechanisms of social inclusion/exclusion, and the responses, perceptions and dispositions of the citizenry towards the way in which they operate (ECLAC, 2007a and 2010a; Sojo, 2018, 2017a and 2017b).

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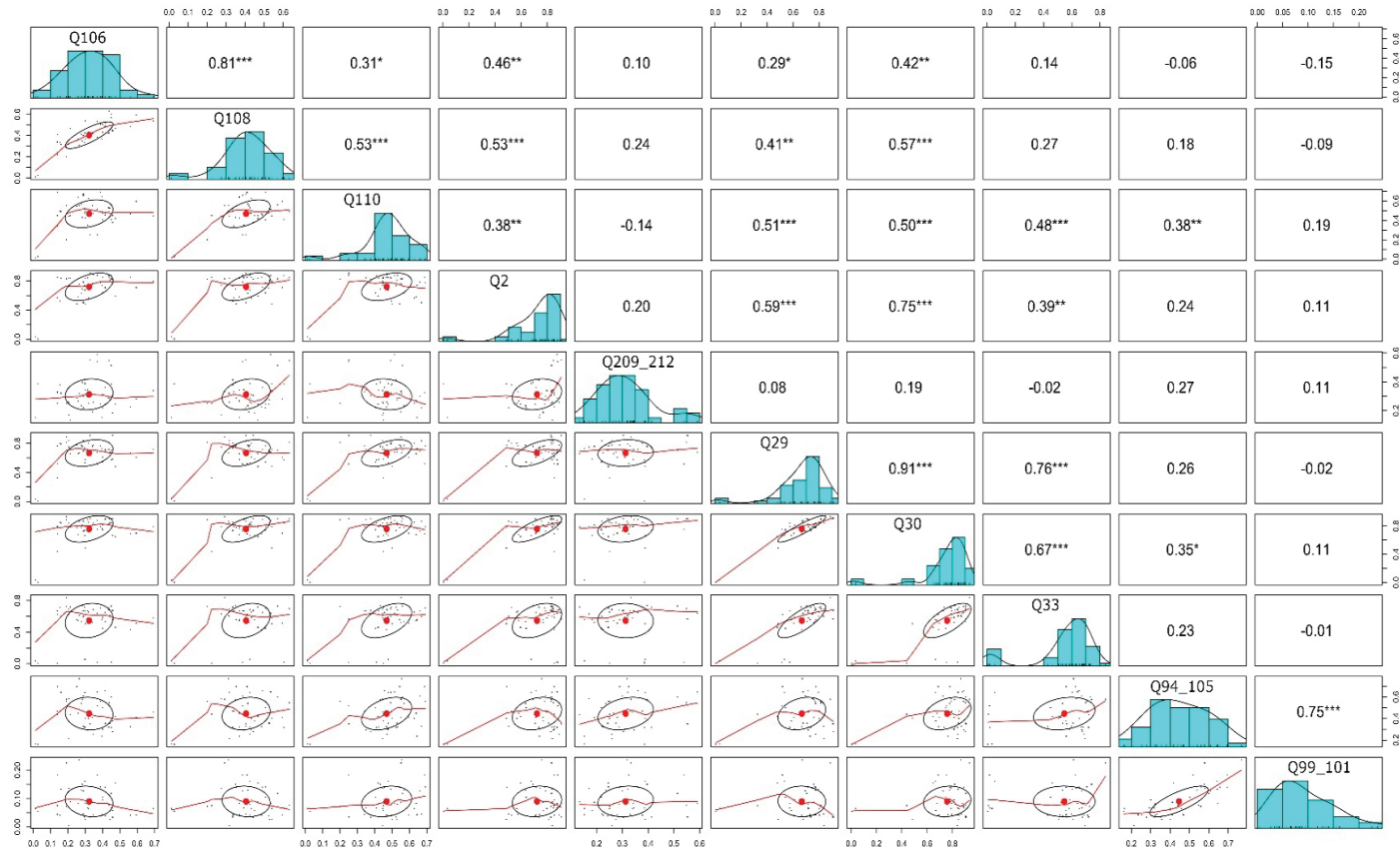
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Annex

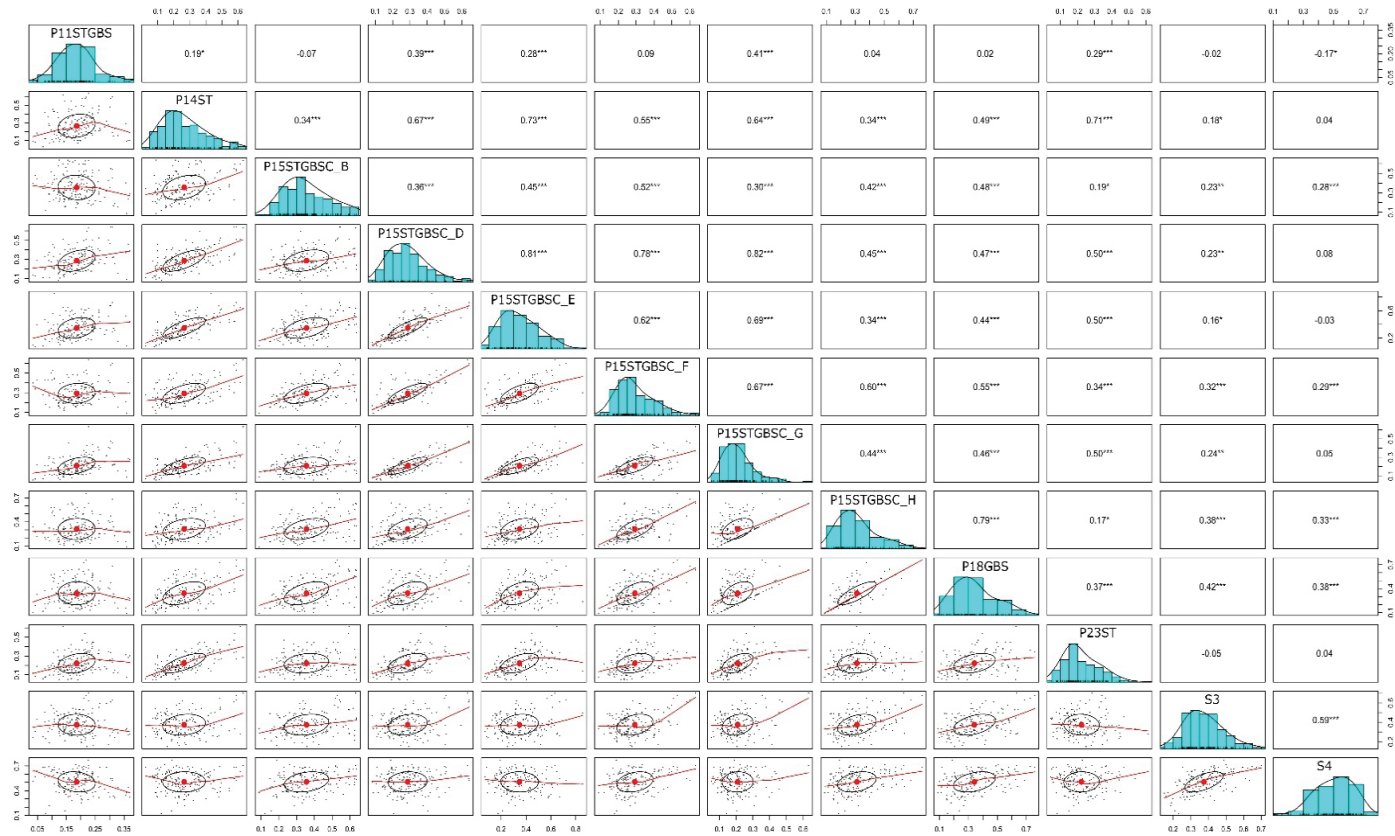
Figure A1
Scatter matrix, histogram and correlation coefficient for World Values Survey indicators



Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of data from the World Values Survey.

- Q106 Incomes should be made more equal; inequality to encourage personal effort should not be maintained.
- Q108 Government should take greater responsibility for providing well-being, as opposed to the primacy of individual responsibility.
- Q110 Work brings benefits in the long run, not connections or luck.
- Q2 Importance of friends in life.
- Q209_212 People who have participated in any of these activities: petitions, boycotts, peaceful demonstrations or strikes.
- Q29 Men do not make better political leaders than women.
- Q30 Men do not have priority over women for admission to university education.
- Q33 Men do not have priority over women for obtaining a job when there is a shortage of work.
- Q94_105 Persons with an active membership in any religious, sporting, artistic, educational, labour or self-help organization.
- Q99_101 Persons with an active membership in an environmental, professional or humanitarian/charity organization.

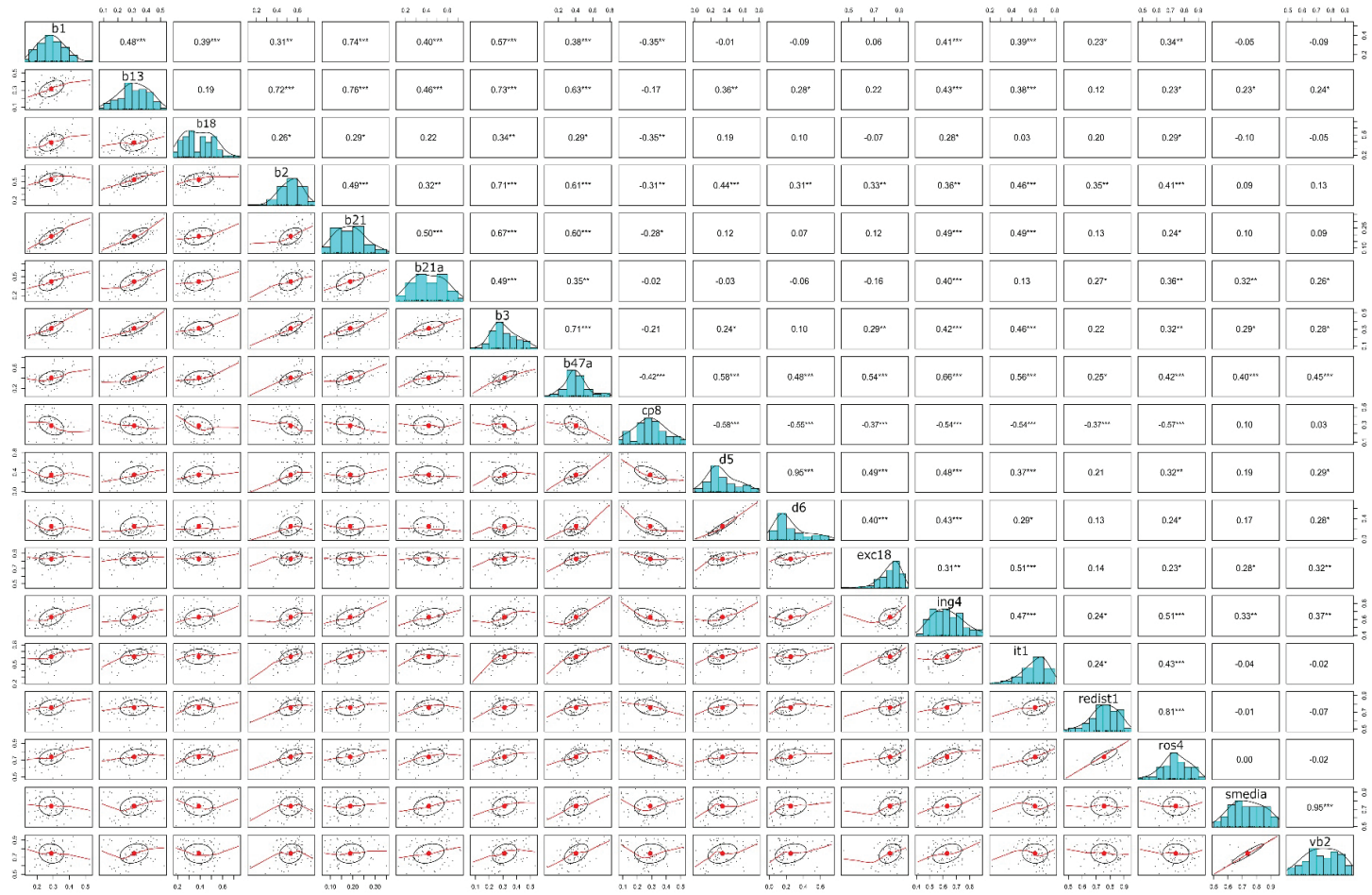
Figure A2
Scatter matrix, histogram and correlation coefficient for Latinobarómetro indicators



Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of Latinobarómetro data.

- P11STGBS Interpersonal trust.
- P14ST The country is governed by a few powerful groups for their own benefit or for the good of all the people.
- P15STGBSC_B Trust in the police.
- P15STGBSC_D Trust in the legislature.
- P15STGBSC_E Trust in government.
- P15STGBSC_F Trust in the judiciary.
- P15STGBSC_G Trust in political parties.
- P15STGBSC_H Trust in: The country's electoral institution.
- P18GBS How would you describe democracy in your country?
- P23ST How fair is income distribution in the country?
- S3 Concern about being out of work in the next 12 months.
- S4 Satisfactorily meets needs with total household income.

Figure A3
Scatter matrix, histogram and correlation coefficient for LAPOP indicators

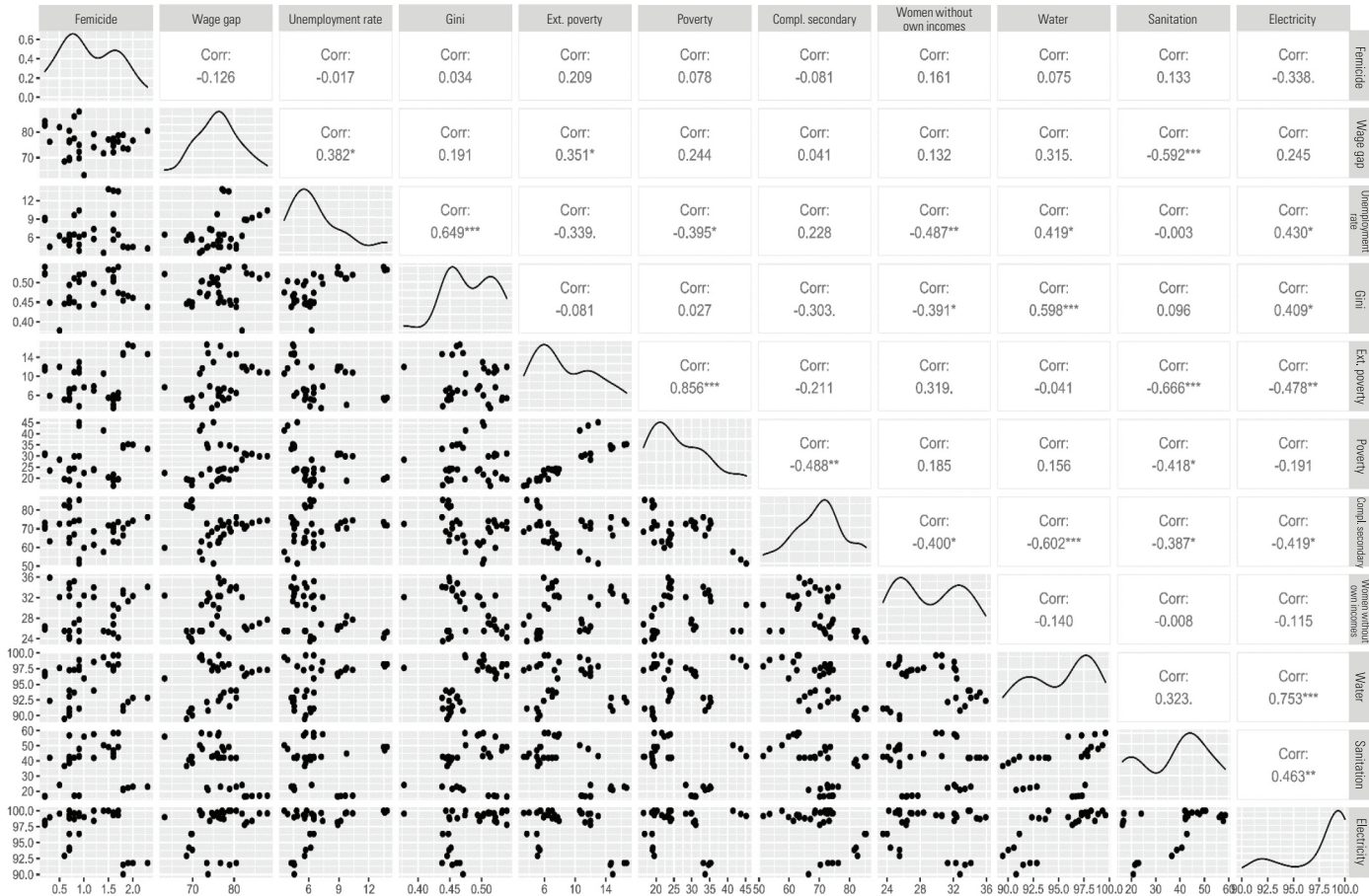


Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of data from the LAPOP survey.

- b1 To what extent do you believe that (country's) courts of law guarantee a fair trial?
- b13 To what extent do you trust the national legislature?
- b18 To what extent do you trust the national police?
- b2 To what extent do you have respect for the political institutions of (country)?
- b21 To what extent do you trust political parties?
- b21a To what extent do you trust the president/prime minister?
- b3 To what extent do you think that citizens' basic rights are well protected by the political system of (country)?
- b47a To what extent do you trust elections in this country?
- cp8 Community improvement board or committee meetings?
- d5 How strongly do you approve or disapprove of these people being able to run for public office?
- d6 How strongly do you approve or disapprove of same-sex couples having the right to marry?

- exc18 Things being as they are, do you think that paying a bribe can sometimes be justified?
- ing4 Democracy may have problems, but it is better than any other form of government.
- it1 Speaking of the people around here, would you say that the people in your community are very trustworthy, somewhat trustworthy, untrustworthy, or not trustworthy at all?
- redista The government should spend more on helping the poor. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?
- ros4 The State of [name] must implement strong policies to reduce income inequality between the rich and the poor. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?
- media How often do you see political information on Facebook? How often do you see political information on Twitter? How often do you see political information on WhatsApp?
- vb2 Did you vote in the last presidential election?

Figure A4
Scatter matrix, histogram and correlation coefficient for CEPALSTAT indicators



Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of data from CEPALSTAT.

- Femicide Femicides per 100,000 women (CEPALSTAT)
- Wage gap Ratio of the average earnings of urban wage-earning women aged 20–49 working 35 hours and more per week to the average earnings of men with the same characteristics.
- Unemployment rate Unemployment rate (CEPALSTAT)
- GINI Gini index (CEPALSTAT).
- Ext poverty Percentage of total population with median per capita incomes below the poverty and extreme poverty lines (extreme poverty) (CEPALSTAT).
- Poverty Percentage of population living in poverty (CEPALSTAT).
- Compl. secondary Percentage of population aged 20 to 24 who have completed secondary education (CEPALSTAT).
- Women without incomes Female population aged 15 years and over who are not individual income earners and who are not studying, in relation to the total female population aged 15 years and over who are not studying (CEPALSTAT).
- Water Households with drinking water service (CEPALSTAT).
- Sanitation Households with sewerage service (CEPALSTAT).
- Electricity Households with electricity service (CEPALSTAT).

Data sheets for the selected indicators

a) Gaps pillar

1. Guarantees of well-being

1.1. Labour inclusion

Data sheet 1: Labour inclusion

1. Gender wage gap	
Definition	Ratio of average incomes between the sexes.
Comments	The indicator is obtained by dividing the average income of waged and self-employed women (numerator) by the average income of waged and self-employed men aged 15 and over (denominator). Average income is the sum of wages, salaries and earnings. The indicator is displayed with 1 subtracted so as to show the gap. To estimate variation, the years 2017 and 2018 were used.
Source	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, CEPALSTAT [online] https://statistics.cepal.org/portal/cepalstat/index.html?lang=en (indicator 2296).
2. Average quarterly unemployment rate (2019)	
Definition	Indicates the unemployed population: that is, both unemployed persons who have previously held a job and those who are looking for work for the first time. Shows open and urban unemployment, unless hidden and/or national unemployment is indicated. Urban figures may refer to urban areas in the aggregate, according to the definition used by the country concerned, or to a set of cities or metropolitan areas. The years between countries also vary because the figures come from official national sources in the countries.
Comments	Unemployed population as a percentage of the economically active population. The country information comes from official national sources. The regional aggregates were estimated as an average using the economically active population figures given by the projections prepared by CELADE as a weighting factor. To calculate variation, data for the second quarter of 2019 vs the third quarter of 2019 were used, except in the cases of the Plurinational State of Bolivia (Q3 2018 vs Q4 2018), Nicaragua (Q3 2018 vs Q4 2018), and the Dominican Republic (Q1 2019 vs Q2 2019). Paraguay (urban areas).
Source	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, CEPALSTAT [online] https://statistics.cepal.org/portal/cepalstat/index.html?lang=en (indicator 2182).
3. How worried would you say you are about being made unemployed or unemployable in the next twelve months, or do you not have a job?	
Definition	Percentage of people who are little or not at all worried about being out of work within the next twelve months.
Comments	Possible responses: 1 (very worried), 2 (worried), 3 (slightly worried), 4 (not worried). Percentage shown corresponds to those who answered 3 (slightly worried) or 4 (not worried).
Source	Latinobarómetro Corporation, Question S3, 2018.

1.2. Social inclusion

Data sheet 2: Social inclusion

4. Gini coefficient	
Definition	The Gini coefficient is used to measure income distribution. It is an index that uses values in the range [0,1], where zero indicates to absolute equity and one indicates absolute inequity.
Comments	Calculation of the indicator: The Gini index corresponds to the area between the Lorenz curve and the equidistribution line. Using G to indicate the Gini index: $G = 1 - 2 \int_0^1 F(y) dy$ where $F(y)$ represents the Lorenz curve: i.e. the proportion of individuals who have cumulative per capita income less than or equal to y. It should be noted that there is a wide range of formulas available for calculating the Gini index, since the Lorenz curve does not have an explicit algebraic formulation. The value shown in the indicator corresponds to 2019 Gini results. Gini variation was calculated for 2018 vs 2019 (2019–2018). Brazil (annual data; comparable series since 2016). Dominican Republic (annual data; comparable series since 2017).
Source	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, "Gini", CEPALSTAT [online] https://statistics.cepal.org/portal/cepalstat/index.html?lang=en .

5. Income distribution in the country is fair	
Definition	Percentage of people who believe that income distribution is very fair or fair in their country.
Comments	Possible responses: 1 (very fair), 2 (fair), 3 (unfair), 4 (very unfair). The percentage shown corresponds to the people who answered 1 (very fair) or 2 (fair).
Source	Latinobarómetro Corporation, Question P23ST, 2018.
6. Population living in poverty	
Definition	Percentage of total population whose average per capita income is below the poverty and extreme poverty lines.
Comments	Calculation of the indicator (known as the "headcount index"): If "n" is the total number of people and "i" is the number of people whose average per capita income is below the extreme poverty line, the percentage of people in extreme poverty is expressed as $I=i/n$. If "p" is the number of people whose average per capita income is below the poverty line, the percentage of people living in poverty is expressed as $P=p/n$. This indicator includes people below the extreme poverty line (by definition, $P \geq I$). Per capita income (yPC) is calculated by dividing the total income of each household by the number of people in the household (size "T"): $yPC = YTOT/T$. Nationwide data are given, except for Argentina, where the figures correspond to urban areas. The figures shown are from 2019, except for Chile (2017) and Mexico (2018). Variations were calculated from the years 2018 vs 2019, except Chile (2015 vs 2018), Mexico (2018 vs 2016), Argentina (reference period: fourth quarter) and Brazil (annual data; comparable series since 2016), Honduras (reference period: June), Panama (March), Dominican Republic (annual data; comparable series since 2017).
Source	Population living in extreme poverty and poverty by geographical area, CEPALSTAT.
7. Satisfaction with public schools	
Definition	Percentage of people who are satisfied with public schools.
Comments	Possible responses: 1 (very satisfied), 2 (satisfied), 3 (dissatisfied), 4 (very dissatisfied) Percentage shown corresponds to those who answered 1 (very satisfied) or 2 (satisfied).
Source	AmericasBarometer Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), Question sd3new2, 2018.
8. Percentage of people aged between 20 and 24 with complete secondary education	
Definition	Ratio of the number of persons aged 20–24 with complete secondary education to the total number of persons aged 20–24, multiplied by 100.
Comments	To ensure comparability of educational structures between the region's countries, the indicator is calculated using the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED-1997). ISCED is a methodological framework that classifies educational programmes into six equivalent levels of content: pre-primary education (level 0); primary education (level 1); lower secondary education or second stage of basic education (level 2); upper secondary education (level 3); post-secondary non-tertiary education (level 4); first stage of tertiary education (level 5); second stage of tertiary education (level 6). The levels are specified by taking into consideration the age of entry and the duration of each level.
Source	Percentage of persons aged 20 to 24 with complete secondary education by sex and geographic area, CEPALSTAT.
9. Needs satisfactorily met with total household income	
Definition	Percentage of families who have enough or just enough income to meet their household needs.
Comments	Possible responses: 1 (enough, they can save), 2 (just enough, without great difficulty), 3 (not enough, they have difficulties), 4 (not enough, they have great difficulties). Percentage shown corresponds to those who answered 1 (enough, they can save), 2 (just enough, without great difficulty).
Source	Latinobarómetro Corporation, Question S4, 2018.

10. Women with no income of their own	
Definition	Proportion of the female population aged 15 and over not receiving individual monetary income and not studying (by activity status) in relation to the total female population aged 15 and over not studying.
Comments	<p>Calculation of indicator P: Percentage of women aged 15 and over who do not receive individual monetary income and are not studying as a proportion of the total population of women aged 15 and over not studying. Where $P = (n/N) * 100$.</p> <p>n: number of women with no income of their own, not studying, age "e", in geographical area "z". N: total number of women not studying, age "e", in geographical area "z". e: age groups: (1) total (aged 15 years and over); (2) 15 to 24 years; (3) 25 to 34 years; (4) 35 to 44 years; (5) 45 to 59 years; (6) 60 years and over. z: geographical areas of residence: (1) national; (2) urban area; (3) rural area. National data are shown for all countries except Argentina (urban area). 2019 figures are shown for all countries, with the exception of Chile (2017), and Mexico (2018). 2018 vs 2019 values are used to indicate variation, except Chile (2015 vs 2017), and Mexico (2016 vs 2018).</p>
Source	"Population without own income by sex, age groups and geographical area", CEPALSTAT.
11. Overcrowding	
Definition	Percentage of households in which there are more than two persons per room available (or potentially usable) for sleeping in a dwelling.
Comments	Habitability and security of housing are part of the right to decent and adequate housing enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Art. 25, paragraph 1) and in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR) (Art. 11). This indicator counts as bedrooms all rooms used for sleeping in the dwelling, even if they have multiple uses (living/dining/sleeping or living/eating/cooking/sleeping).
Source	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG).
12. Households by availability of sanitation services	
Definition	The proportion of the population using safely managed facilities, including a hand-washing facility with soap and water, is currently measured by the proportion of the population that uses basic sanitation facilities that are not shared with other households and where human waste is safely disposed of on-site or treated off-site. "Improved" sanitation facilities include flushing or dumping toilets into sewerage systems, septic tanks or pit latrines, improved ventilated pit latrines, pit latrines with covering slabs and composting toilets.
Comments	<p>The Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (JMP) estimates the use of basic sanitation facilities for each country, separately in urban and rural areas, by applying a regression model to a series of household survey and census data points. This approach was used to report on the use of "improved sanitation" facilities for MDG monitoring. JMP is evaluating the use of alternative statistical estimation methods as more data become available.</p> <p>The 2017 JMP update and SDG baselines report describe in more detail how estimates of the proportion of domestic wastewater that is safely disposed of on-site or treated off-site have been combined with data on the use of different types of sanitation facilities, as recorded in the JMP global database.</p> <p>At the country level, the JMP method uses a simple regression model to generate time series estimates for all years, including those lacking data points. JMP then shares all its estimates using its country consultation mechanism to obtain consensus from the countries before publishing its estimates.</p> <p>Both regionally and globally, JMP does not publish estimates for countries for which national data are not available. Regional and global estimates for basic services are made whenever data are available for 50% of the region's population, weighted according to the latest UNDP population estimates. Regional and global estimates for safely managed services use a lower threshold of 30% for the 2017 JMP update and SDG baseline report.</p> <p>2017 data are shown for all countries. Variations indicate data for 2016 vs 2017.</p>
Source	"Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services", CEPALSTAT.
13. Percentage of households with a computer	
Definition	The percentage of households with a computer is a measure of the level of availability of this technology in a country's total households. It indicates how many households out of every 100 have one computer or more among their household assets.
Comments	<p>The indicator is calculated by dividing the total number of households with computers in a given country (numerator) by the total number of households in that country (denominator). The result is multiplied by 100.</p> <p>2017 data are shown for all countries. Variation was calculated as 2016 vs 2017 for all countries. Data for Argentina include only urban households in localities of 2000 and more inhabitants.</p>
Source	"Percentage of households with a computer", CEPALSTAT.

14. Employed persons contributing to a pension system

Definition	Number of employed persons aged 15 and over who contribute to a pension system as a percentage of the total number of employed persons in the same age group.
Comments	A common method for measuring the link between the employed population and the pension system has been to construct an indicator that uses enrolment and/or contribution numbers, depending on the availability of information in the countries' surveys. On this occasion, both indicators are presented separately. Enrolment and contribution are not equivalent or interchangeable in terms of the promise of future well-being they represent. Contributing to a pension system is a better approximation than enrolment to the probability of access to a more or less adequate pension in the future. This holds true in countries where the future pension depends partially or totally on the worker's contribution. Neither are enrolment and contribution equivalent in terms of the level of integration or linkage of employed persons with the social security system. A person who is enrolled but does not contribute will probably be in a more socially vulnerable and less protected than an individual who contributes regularly to the pension system. The construction of an indicator that combines enrolment and contributions may also cause problems in the ranking of certain countries, since it will involve comparing countries on the basis of indicators that reflect different standards or levels of demand (e.g. an enrolment indicator is used for one country and a contribution metric in another). The pension fund contribution indicator includes private and public insurance, self-insurance schemes and pay-as-you-go systems.
Source	Employed persons contributing to a pension system, CEPALSTAT.

15. Satisfaction with public health and medical services

Definition	Percentage of people who are satisfied with public health and medical services.
Comments	Possible responses: 1 (very satisfied), 2 (satisfied), 3 (dissatisfied), 4 (very dissatisfied). Percentage shown corresponds to those who answered 1 (very satisfied) or 2 (satisfied).
Source	AmericasBarometer Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), Question sd6new2, 2018.

b) Institutional framework pillar**1. Mechanisms for recognition, participation and conflict resolution****Data sheet 3: Mechanisms for recognition, participation and conflict resolution****16. Country has signed and ratified the CEDAW Optional Protocol**

Definition	This indicator presents information on countries' status with regard to the signature and ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The CEDAW Optional Protocol was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session (October 1999). The protocol strengthens the action of CEDAW by giving individuals and groups the power to denounce violations or request investigations of rights violations committed by States parties. States parties to the Protocol recognize the competence of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to receive and consider communications from or on behalf of individuals or groups under the jurisdiction of the State party who claim to be victims of a violation by that State party of any of the rights enshrined in the Convention.
Comments	Data for this indicator are based on information published on the official United Nations treaty website and from information submitted by countries to the Committee, which is available on the website of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.
Source	"Countries that have signed and ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women", CEPALSTAT.

17. Ratification of ILO Convention 169

Definition	Countries that have signed or ratified ILO Convention 169.
Comments	Decree adopting International Labour Organization Convention 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (Decree No. 9 of 1996).
Source	Observatory, ECLAC.

18. Ratification of the Escazú Agreement

Definition	Indicates the countries that have signed or ratified the Escazú Agreement.
Comments	Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean.
Source	Observatory, ECLAC.

19. Constitutional recognition of indigenous peoples and their fundamental collective rights in line with international standards

Definition	Constitutional recognition of indigenous peoples as collective subjects of rights, and protection of the core elements of their collective rights. Those rights include: (a) recognition of their land rights, in consideration of three fundamental normative precepts: the collective nature of indigenous property, the original nature of indigenous property and the provision of special measures for the protection of that property, together with the establishment of mechanisms essential to make it a reality, (b) the recognition of rights over the natural resources existing in the collective territories of indigenous peoples, and (c) recognition of their right to exercise autonomy.
Comments	The indicator is constructed from the following weighting, based on the stipulations of international standards: (component / weighting (%)): (1) Constitutional recognition of indigenous peoples (10%): becomes merely formal if not recognized in conjunction with other collective rights and protection mechanisms. (2) Recognition of land rights (40%): considered the hard core of the rights of indigenous peoples by the case law of the inter-American human rights system, since they are the basis for indigenous survival, identity and cultural integrity. Within this component, the weighting is divided as follows: the normative content of land rights (the collective nature and original nature of indigenous property) receive 30%, while the State's duties of protection (adopting special protection measures and establishing mechanisms for demarcation, titling and regulation) receive a weighting of 20% each. (3) Recognition of rights over natural resources (30%): provided for in ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples and considered one of the structural causes of violations faced by indigenous peoples. (4) Recognition of the right to self-determination or autonomy (20%): deemed fundamental for the full exercise of other collective rights (ECLAC, 2020e).
Source	Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE), on the basis of the current constitutions of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay.

20. Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (2019)

Definition	Indicates the proportion of women in the national parliament. For international comparisons, generally only the lower or sole chamber is used.
Comments	This indicator is constructed by placing the total number of women parliamentarians participating in the lower or sole chamber as the numerator and the total number of seats in that same chamber as the denominator. The result is multiplied by 100. Data shown are for the year 2020. Variation data are 2019 vs. 2020.
Source	"Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments", CEPALSTAT.

21. Special mechanisms for the participation of indigenous peoples in the representative bodies of the legislative branch

Definition	Recognition of the right of indigenous peoples to participate in the political life of States, as provided for in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Article 5) and ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (Article 6.b). Addresses the implementation of those agreements through constitutional provisions that ensure the participation of indigenous peoples in countries' legislative branches. Three mechanisms exist in the region: (a) reserved seats, (b) indigenous electoral districts, and (c) electoral quotas.
Comments	This indicator is constructed through a weighting that emphasizes regional mechanisms that directly ensure the political inclusion of indigenous peoples. Thus, the percentage is divided as follows: (component / weighting (%)): (1) reserved seats (50%): ensures exclusive seats for indigenous peoples in the legislature; (2) special districts (30%): ensures that territories with a large indigenous population are duly considered in electoral processes, but does not ensure that the elected representative belongs to the indigenous peoples living there, and (3) electoral quotas (20%): ensures the inclusion of indigenous candidates on electoral lists, but not their election and therefore not their representation in parliament.
Source	Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE), on the basis of the current political constitutions of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay.

2. *Rule of law and quality democracy*

Data sheet 4: Rule of law and quality democracy

22. Basic rights are protected	
Definition	Percentage of people who believe that their basic rights are protected.
Comments	Possible responses: 1 (not at all), 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 (very much). Percentage shown corresponds to those who answered 5, 6 or 7 (very much).
Source	AmericasBarometer Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), Question b3, 2018.
23. Democracy is better than any other form of government	
Definition	Percentage of people who think they agree with the statement "democracy is better than any other form of government".
Comments	Possible responses: 1 (strongly disagree), 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 (strongly agree). Percentage shown corresponds to those who answered 5, 6 or 7 (strongly agree).
Source	AmericasBarometer Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), Question ing4, 2018.
24. Positive perception of democracy in the country	
Definition	Percentage of people who believe that their country's democracy is a full democracy or a democracy with minor problems.
Comments	Possible responses: 1 (a full democracy), 2 (a democracy with small problems), 3 (a democracy with big problems), 4 (not a democracy). Percentage shown corresponds to those who answered 1 (a full democracy) or 2 (a democracy with small problems).
Source	Latinobarómetro Corporation, Question P18GBS, 2018.
25. Perception of corruption among public officials	
Definition	Percentage of people who believe that corruption among their country's public officials is not at all widespread.
Comments	Possible responses: 1 (very widespread), 2 (somewhat widespread), 3 (slightly widespread), 4 (not at all widespread). Percentage shown corresponds to those who answered 4 (not at all widespread).
Source	AmericasBarometer Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), Question exc7, 2018.

c) *Sense of belonging pillar*

1. *Equality-based social relations*

Data sheet 5: Equality-based social relations

26. Importance in life of friends	
Definition	Percentage of people for whom friends are an important group.
Comments	Possible responses: 1 (very important), 2 (rather important), 3 (not very important), 4 (not at all important). The percentage shown corresponds to the people who answered: 1 (very important) and 2 (rather important).
Source	World Values Survey, Q2 in round 7.

1.1 *Interpersonal trust*

Data sheet 6: Interpersonal trust

27. Trust in the people of your community	
Definition	Percentage of people who trust the people in their community.
Comments	Possible responses: 1 (very trustworthy), 2 (somewhat trustworthy), 3 (not very trustworthy), 4 (not all trustworthy). The percentage shown corresponds to the people who answered: 1 (very trustworthy), 2 (somewhat trustworthy).
Source	AmericasBarometer Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), Question It1, 2018.

28. Trust in people

Definition	Percentage of people who trust others in general.
Comments	Possible responses: 1 (most people can be trusted), 2 (you can never be careful enough in dealing with others). Percentage shown corresponds to those who answered 1 (most people can be trusted).
Source	Latinobarómetro Corporation, Question P11STGBS, 2018.

1.2 Recognition and respect for diversity**Data sheet 7: Recognition and respect for diversity****29. Approval of marriage rights for same-sex couples**

Definition	Percentage of people who approve of same-sex marriage.
Comments	Possible responses: 1 (strongly disapprove), 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 (strongly approve). Percentage shown corresponds to those who answered 7, 8, 9 or 10 (strongly approve).
Source	AmericasBarometer Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), Question d6, 2018.

30. Men do not have priority over women for securing jobs at times of employment shortages

Definition	Percentage of people who do not agree with "Jobs scarce: men should have more right to a job than women".
Comments	Possible responses: 1 (agree strongly), 2 (agree), 3 (neither agree nor disagree), 4 (disagree), 5 (disagree strongly). Percentage shown corresponds to those who answered 4 (disagree) and 5 (disagree strongly).
Source	World Values Survey, Q33 in round 7.

2. Sense of belonging**Data sheet 8: Identification****31. Pride in the political system**

Definition	Percentage of people who, on a scale of 1 to 7, rate their pride in the political system at 5 or above.
Comments	Possible responses: 1 (not at all), 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 (very much). Percentage shown corresponds to those who answered 5, 6 or 7 (very much).
Source	AmericasBarometer Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), Question b4, 2018.

32. Pride in nationality

Definition	Percentage of people who feel very proud or quite proud of their nationality.
Comments	Possible responses: 1 (very proud), 2 (quite proud), 3 (not very proud), 4 (not at all proud). Percentage shown corresponds to those who answered 1 (very proud) or 2 (quite proud).
Source	World Values Survey, Q254 in round 7.

2.1 Perception of social justice and equity**Data sheet 9: Perception of social justice and equity****33. The State must implement policies to reduce income inequality**

Definition	Percentage of people who, on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), answer 5 or above to the sentence "The State must implement policies to reduce income inequality".
Comments	Possible responses: 1 (strongly disagree), 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 (strongly agree). Percentage shown corresponds to those who answered 5, 6 or 7 (strongly agree).
Source	AmericasBarometer Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), Question ros4, 2018.

34. Incomes should be made more equal; inequality to encourage personal effort should not be maintained

Definition	Percentage of people who, on a scale from 1 (incomes more equal) to 7 (larger income differences), answer 4 or below.
Comments	Possible responses: 1 (incomes more equal), 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 (larger income differences). Percentage shown corresponds to those who answered 1 (incomes more equal), 2, 3 or 4.
Source	World Values Survey, Q106 in round 7.

35. Work brings benefits in the long run, not connections or luck

Definition	Percentage of people who agree more with the statement "In the long run, hard work usually brings a better life" than with the statement "In the long run, hard work usually brings a better life".
Comments	Possible responses: 1 (in the long run, hard work usually brings a better life), 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 (hard work doesn't generally bring success; it's more a matter of luck and connections). Percentage shown corresponds to those who answered 1 (in the long run, hard work usually brings a better life), 2, 3 or 4.
Source	World Values Survey, Q110 in round 7.

1.2 Institutional trust**Data sheet 10: Institutional trust****36. Trust in the judiciary**

Definition	Percentage of people who trust the judicial branch a great deal or to some extent.
Comments	Possible responses: 1 (a great deal), 2 (to some extent), 3 (not much), 4 (not at all). The percentage shown corresponds to the people who answered 1 (a great deal) or 2 (to some extent).
Source	Latinobarómetro Corporation, Question P15STGBSC_F, 2018.

37. Trust in the national legislature

Definition	Percentage of people who trust the national legislature a great deal or to some extent.
Comments	Possible responses: 1 (a great deal), 2 (to some extent), 3 (not much), 4 (not at all). The percentage shown corresponds to the people who answered 1 (a great deal) or 2 (to some extent).
Source	Latinobarómetro Corporation, Question P15STGBSC_D, 2018.

38. Trust in the national police

Definition	Percentage of people who trust the national police a great deal or to some extent.
Comments	Possible responses: 1 (a great deal), 2 (to some extent), 3 (not much), 4 (not at all). The percentage shown corresponds to the people who answered 1 (a great deal) or 2 (to some extent).
Source	Latinobarómetro Corporation, Question P15STGBSC_B, 2018.

39. Trust in political parties

Definition	Percentage of people who trust political parties a great deal or to some extent.
Comments	Possible responses: 1 (a great deal), 2 (to some extent), 3 (not much), 4 (not at all). The percentage shown corresponds to the people who answered 1 (a great deal) or 2 (to some extent).
Source	Latinobarómetro Corporation, Question P15STGBSC_G, 2018.

40. Trust in the national government

Definition	Percentage of people who trust the government a great deal or to some extent.
Comments	Possible responses: 1 (a great deal), 2 (to some extent), 3 (not much), 4 (not at all). The percentage shown corresponds to the people who answered 1 (a great deal) or 2 (to some extent).
Source	Latinobarómetro Corporation, Question P15STGBSC_E, 2018.

41. Trust in elections

Definition	Percentage of people who trust the country's elections a great deal or to some extent.
Comments	Possible responses: 1 (a great deal), 2 (to some extent), 3 (not much), 4 (not at all). The percentage shown corresponds to the people who answered 1 (a great deal) or 2 (to some extent).
Source	Latinobarómetro Corporation, Question P15STGBSC_H, 2018.

3. Orientation towards the common good

3.1. Solidarity

Data sheet 11: Solidarity

42. Attendance at community improvement group meetings	
Definition	Percentage of people attending community meetings at least once or twice a year.
Comments	Possible responses: 1 (once a week), 2 (once or twice a month), 3 (once or twice a year), 4 (never). Percentage shown corresponds to those who answered 1 (once a week), 2 (once or twice a month) or 3 (once or twice a year).
Source	AmericasBarometer Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), Question cp8, 2018.

3.2. Respect for social rules

Data sheet 12: Respect for social rules

43. Respect for institutions	
Definition	This indicator shows the percentage of people who consider themselves to have respect for institutions.
Comments	Possible responses: 1 (not at all), 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 (very much). Percentage shown corresponds to those who answered 5, 6 or 7 (very much).
Source	AmericasBarometer Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), Question b2, 2018.

3.3. Civic participation

Data sheet 13: Civic participation

44. Political activity (petitions, boycotts, peaceful demonstrations, strikes)	
Definition	Percentage of people who have participated in any of these activities: signing petitions, boycotts, peaceful demonstrations or strikes.
Comments	This indicator groups together four individual questions Q209 (political action: signing a petition), Q210 (political action: joining in boycotts), Q211 (political action: attending lawful/peaceful demonstrations) and Q212 (political action: joining unofficial strikes). For all these questions the answer options are: 1 (have done), 2 (might do), 3 (would never do); for all the questions, only respondents answering 1 (have done) were taken into account to obtain the final percentage. Note that respondents who answered 1 (have done) more than once were only counted once within the grouped indicator.
Source	World Values Survey, Q209, Q210, Q211 and Q212 in round 7.
45. Are you involved in any organizations?	
Definition	Percentage of people who have participated in any of these religious, sporting, artistic, educational, labour or self-help organizations.
Comments	This indicator groups together nine individual questions Q94 (active/inactive membership: church or religious organization), Q95 (active/inactive membership: sport or recreational org), Q96 (active/inactive membership: art, music, educational organization), Q97 (active/inactive membership: labour union), Q98 (active/inactive membership: political party), Q100 (active/inactive membership: professional organization), Q102 (active/inactive membership: consumer organization), Q103 (active/inactive membership: self-help group, mutual aid group), Q105 (active/inactive membership: other organization). For each of these questions, the answer options were 0 (don't belong), 1 (inactive member) and 2 (active member). In all the cases, only those answering 2 (active member) were included in the percentage. Note that respondents were only counted once even though they were active members of more than one organization.
Source	World Values Survey, Q94, Q95, Q96, Q97, Q98, Q100, Q102, Q103 and Q105 in round 7.
46. Voted in the last presidential election	
Definition	Percentage of people who voted in the last election.
Comments	Possible responses: 1 (did vote), 2 (did not vote). Percentage shown corresponds to those who answered 1 (did vote).
Source	AmericasBarometer Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), Question vb2, 2018.

What holds societies together? What identifies people and motivates them to live together voluntarily without the need for constant external coercion or immediate self-interest? At times of great uncertainty, crises and existential challenges, social cohesion assumes a central role in the progress of Latin American and Caribbean countries towards sustainable development. This publication examines the concept of social cohesion and offers an equality-centred theoretical approximation, a measurement framework for 18 of the region's countries and a policy agenda for social cohesion, against a backdrop defined by a pandemic, uncertainty and challenges such as rampant inequality, mistrust of institutions, rising social unrest and different manifestations of violence. The conclusions call for the strengthening of some of the enabling elements of social cohesion, from a medium- and long-term perspective.

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