KU LEUVEN

FACULTEIT SOCIALE WETENSCHAPPEN

An empirical multilevel study of the relation between community level social cohesion indicators and individual social capital in Flanders, Belgium

Sarah Botterman

Proefschrift aangeboden tot het verkrijgen van de graad van Doctor in de Sociale Wetenschappen

Promotor: Prof. Dr. Marc Hooghe
Onderzoekseenheid: Centrum voor Politicologie

2015

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DANKWOORD

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Aangezien ik al enkele teams heb mogen vervoegen sinds het begin van mijn loopbaan, is de groep collega's en oud-collega's die ik wil bedanken zeer uitgebreid. Met de grote groep van oud-collega's van politieke sociologie en politieke wetenschappen beleefde ik mijn eerste jaren als doctoraatsstudent, lief en leed hebben we gedeeld, op en naast het werk. Het was een schitterende tijd met heel veel fijne en mooie herinneringen. Ook via het *Sociale Cohesie in Vlaanderen Indicatoren* project kwam ik leuke collega's tegen, die werkten rond eenzelfde thema vanuit verschillende perspectieven wat ik altijd zeer fascinerend vond.

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Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. THE ACADEMIC AND POLITICAL INTEREST IN SOCIAL COHESION

This dissertation deals with the concept of social cohesion as a public good that is envisioned as the binding mechanism within a society. The concept has been used by academics, politicians and the public opinion for years, decades and even centuries to solve the question *"What holds societies together?".* The central objective in this dissertation will be to disentangle how social cohesion is conceptualised within classical and contemporary theories, to examine how it can be made operational to monitor it within communities and to study how it affects the individual outcome of social capital. In this introduction, the focus is placed on the relevance of the concept social cohesion by considering the level of interest by different actors in the field. Furthermore, the outline and rationale of this dissertation is presented.

First of all, the concept of social cohesion is not new within the field of social sciences. Founding fathers of sociology already mentioned social cohesion in their explanations to explain societal phenomena. It is remarkable that most often at times of distress and crisis, social cohesion was put forward as the necessary mechanism to let societies function. A lack of social cohesion was often pointed out as one of the reasons for uproars, upheavals, revolutions and so on. This will be considered within the theoretical

chapter on social cohesion, as it is important to take into account the context and time in which theories on social cohesion were formulated.

Although more often referred to in stressful times as a solution for non-functioning societies, academic interest in social cohesion has been constant throughout the history of social sciences. It is often linked to positive outcomes such as a high level of quality of life and a flourishing community life. However, given that it is seen as something worthwhile to strive for, several researchers use and define the term, leading to a proliferation of definitions. This may cause confusion and obsoleteness of the term itself and authors such as Bernard (1999) conceive social cohesion as a quasi-concept. Social cohesion is a construct that is partially based on a scientific analysis of reality which gives it its academic legitimacy, though still maintains certain vagueness (Bernard, 1999). This vagueness makes the concept adaptable, broad and flexible; yet, it makes it more difficult to see what is actually meant by it. This problem forms the starting point of this dissertation when searching for a clear definition and operationalisation of social cohesion.

There are different perspectives on social cohesion. Several disciplines disentangle the concept of social cohesion based on their own specific theoretical assumptions, focussing on several characteristics and elements. For instance, organisational psychologists emphasise social cohesion within work environments and groups. In their point of view, social cohesion relates to emotional and behavioural characteristics that members of a group have in common (Bruhn, 2009). Criminologists search for factors of social cohesion and social order within small geographical neighbourhoods. They question how inhabitants live together, characterised by feelings of security and trust (Blevins, Cullen, & Wright, 2006). In political and social sciences, the emphasis is often placed on social cohesion as the social glue that holds communities and societies in times of distress and social change (Reitz, Breton, Dion, & Dion, 2009). It is often seen as a synonym for amongst others social solidarity and social equality. As it has been studied by several disciplines, Pahl (1991: 413) argues: *"Disciplinary boundaries have protected the definitions of social cohesion and made it difficult to investigate multi-disciplinary, multilevel aspects of the concept."*

Furthermore, social cohesion has become an important concept that no longer can be labelled as an 'obscure academic abstract'. Instead, it has become a 'global phenomenon' that causes public debates (Woolcock, 2010). It attracts much attention from inter-governmental, governmental and non-governmental organisations (Hemerijck, 2005). The European Union set out the goal to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge based economy in the world, including a social pillar that focused on the enhancement of social cohesion and the fight against social exclusion (Council of European Union, 2000). The Council of Europe even installed a special committee for social cohesion and defined it as *"[t]he capacity of a society to ensure the welfare of all its members, minimising disparities and avoiding polarisation"* (European Committee for Social Cohesion, 2004: 3). This more communitarian view on social cohesion was also taken up by national governments, as they saw social cohesion as a responsibility of the state to secure the environment in which citizens could express themselves, participate in their community and benefit from state assistance if needed (Dragojević, 2001; Jenson, 1998; Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap, 2008).

In this spirit, the Social Cohesion Indicators in Flanders project was financed by the government agency for Innovation by Science and Technology (*agentschap voor Innovatie door Wetenschap en Technologie, IWT*) as an interdisciplinary and interuniversity project, aiming to develop indicators to monitor social cohesion within the Flemish communities. The project was conducted jointly by the Flemish universities of Leuven (political science), Ghent (criminology), Antwerp (sociology) and Brussels (economy), in cooperation with the Canadian McGill University in Montreal (political science).

1.2. OBJECTIVES AND RATIONALE

This dissertation is titled *"An Empirical Multilevel Study of the Relation between Community Level Social Cohesion Indicators and Individual Social Capital in Flanders, Belgium".* It deals with the development and use of social cohesion indicators. The first aim is to unfold a clear definition of social cohesion and to reveal its several dimensions. Therefore, Chapter 2 deals with the theory and conceptualisation of social cohesion. The concept is outlined, theories of founding fathers and contemporary scholars are

compared and the dimensions and level of analysis are considered in detail. This chapter forms the theoretical framework of the entire dissertation. After establishing the definition of social cohesion, the concept is made operational via community indicators, using factor analyses. Therefore, Flanders with its 308 communities is used as a test case in Chapter 3. Moreover, a quick glance is cast at the geographical distribution of social cohesion within the region of Flanders, before starting to use the social cohesion indicators as social explanations. More precisely, social cohesion dimensions are used to explain individual attitudes of trust and individual behaviours of participation. In Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, the relationship between social cohesion and these two elements of social capital are analysed. Next to the contextual influence of social cohesion at the community level, also other contextual cleavages are under investigation. For this reason, multilevel regressions models are analysed, using the Social Cohesion Indicators in Flanders survey. In Chapter 6, a synthesis is made and answers the question of this dissertation: "*What is the relationship between community social cohesion and individual social capital?*" The final Chapter 7 considers the conclusions that can be drawn and theoretically reflects on the core questions of this dissertation. The challenges and strengths in this research are discussed and future research possibilities are given.

Chapter 2. THEORY. THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL COHESION

2.1. INTRODUCTION[1]

In this chapter, the aim is to provide some insights in the development of the concept social cohesion, starting from the time when sociology became an independent discipline within the field of behavioural sciences. The ideas of two founding fathers of the social cohesion concept of that era are discussed, namely Emile Durkheim and Ferdinand Tönnies. Furthermore, contemporary scholars and their contribution to the conceptualisation of social cohesion within current societies are considered. The question is raised whether social cohesion can still be defined as in the early days of sociology or whether the current post-industrialised societies are characterised by another sort of social cohesion. In the second part of this chapter, the definition of social cohesion used throughout the entire dissertation is discussed and the several elements derived from it are reflected upon. To conclude, the research questions resulting from this conceptualisation are considered.

[1] This chapter is partially based upon the article: Botterman, S., Hooghe, M., & Reeskens, T. (2012). One Size Fits All? An Empirical Study into the Multidimensionality of Social Cohesion Indicators in Belgian Local Communities. *Urban Studies, 49*(1), 181–198.

As seen in the introduction of this dissertation, social cohesion is not a new concept and has received a lot of attention from both academics and policy makers. Remarkable is that the research attention given to the concept seems proportionate to the appearance of new social cleavages and changes within societies. The question of social cohesion and thus how societies are held together seems to become more important every time there is a certain stress on the cohesiveness within societies. For instance, in the late 19th century, the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution caused processes of industrialisation, modernisation and urbanisation that altered the ways of living together. These processes caused a change in the living surroundings and living conditions: pre-modern villages gradually disappeared and more modern cities arose. These changes implied an intensification of interactions and had detrimental effects on the more traditional, close-knit ties and connections between citizens. Following this, the question what kind of shift occurred in social cohesion within these societies was raised (Durkheim, 1893; Marx, 1867; Tönnies, 1887; Weber, 1898).

The question of this shift is also applicable nowadays as modern societies are undergoing social changes too, caused by the informational age and the processes of globalisation and migration. Therefore, one can once more claim that the concept of social cohesion needs to be re-examined and re-interpreted. The question what social cohesion means today will be the core of this dissertation. In other words, it will be assessed which elements are necessary to conceptualise the concept of social cohesion, that is often called the 'social fabric', the 'social cement' or the 'social glue' within a society (Beauvais & Jenson, 2002; Chan, To, & Chan, 2006; Harell & Stolle, 2011; Kearns & Forrest, 2000; Putnam, 2000). As social cohesion is a concept that is looked at from several disciplines, the approach in the following chapters will be interdisciplinary.

2.2. PAST AND PRESENT CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF SOCIAL COHESION

Social cohesion has a long history in social sciences and is still an important subject in the present social science research. Therefore, past and present research on social cohesion is reviewed in this part. First, the definition of social cohesion by scholars at the end of the 19th century is discussed. Therefore, two of the most cited authors in social cohesion

research are revised, namely Emile Durkheim and Ferdinand Tönnies. Their views on how social cohesion is developed in pre-modern and modern societies is investigated. Secondly, the interdisciplinary approach to social cohesion at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century is evaluated. The concept of social cohesion is re-examined via scholars from different disciplines, who look at social cohesion from different perspectives.

2.2.1. SOCIAL COHESION WITHIN PRE-MODERN COMMUNITIES AND MODERN SOCIETIES

At the end of the 19th century, scholars from different disciplines showed considerable attention to the notion of social cohesion within societies and communities (Durkheim, 1893; Park, Burgess, & McKenzie, 1925; Park, 1916; Tönnies, 1887; Wirth, 1938). This attention grew from the general question of how societies were held together. More specifically, sociologists were interested in which ties united people as a cohesive group and formed well-functioning social aggregates. This question was very relevant given that Western European countries such as France and Germany faced a malaise, caused by the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution and the appearance of mass society (Hughes, Sharrock, & Martin, 2003: 148). Traditional community networks crumbled down and made way for more anonymous living contexts within urbanised cities. As Park and colleagues (1925: 24) stated about the traditional social networks of church, school and family: *"these intimate relationships of the primary groups are weakened and the moral order which rested upon them is gradually dissolved".* This caused a problem for the level of social cohesion and social order within these new societies and cities, as they became more complex and more diverse. The processes of industrialisation, urbanisation and modernisation caused sociologists to reconsider how social order and social cohesion could be maintained in these modern settings, where citizens had become more isolated and detached from their traditional social networks (Tucker, 2002: 124). The changes at the end of the 19th century induced some severe social changes within societies and crumbled down the shared set of norms and values as a basis for living together. Therefore, a focus is placed firstly on the work of Emile Durkheim regarding the division of labour and secondly on the work of Ferdinand Tönnies regarding the difference between pre-modern communities and modern societies.

Emile Durkheim was one of the founding fathers of sociology and was a crucial figure in the development of the notion of social cohesion[2]. He was intrigued by the working of communities and societies and analysed social cohesion as the basis for the coherence between the several parts of a society to form one single and unified whole. He saw the loss and deterioration of social cohesion as the cause of the severe crisis within his own society, i.e. France. In his view, the notions of society and social cohesion should be bound and a separation between them would lead citizens to feel lost and unstable. Additionally, people could only feel fulfilled when integrated in a social aggregate or group: *"non seulement tous les membres du groupe sont individuellement attirés les uns vers les autres parce qu'ils se ressemblent, mais ils sont attachés aussi à ce qui est la condition d'existence de ce type collectif, c'est-à-dire à la société qu'ils forment par leur réunion"* (Durkheim, 1893: 73). Hence, the society formed a reality above the individuals and was assumed to be larger than merely the sum of individuals. It had a constitutive role as the individual life was created through this collective life within the society (Durkheim, 1893: 124). In other words, the unique reality of society influenced the attitudes and behaviours of its members.

Durkheim used the notion of social solidarity as an explanation for social behaviours and regarded the society as the starting point of his analysis. He presented an interactive relation between individual and society and further argued that the basis of social solidarity was to be found in the society instead of the individual (Tucker, 2002). In his view, societal elements of social solidarity and social cohesion generated the social networks and relations that attached the individual to the group (Durkheim, 1893: 78). Phrasing it more directly: "*Society emerges from individuals in interaction, yet social structure then becomes autonomous and external to individuals, and exerts causal power over those individuals"* (Sawyer, 2002: 231).

While observing the shift from pre-industrialised towards industrialised societies, Durkheim developed his theory on social cohesion in his book *De la Division du Travail Social* (Durkheim, 1893). In this book, he envisions two ideal representations of contrasting forms of social cohesion, each form representing a different kind of society.

[2] Durkheim sees social solidarity as a precondition for social cohesion and uses both expressions when considering the well-functioning of societies. Other notions that are sometimes used to indicate social cohesion are social integration and social order.

He described *solidarité mécanique* (mechanical solidarity) as the basis of interaction and social cohesion within the pre-industrialised and more traditional communities. These communities did not yet experience the consequences of industrialisation and were portrayed as small-scaled and rural communities with dense social networks between inhabitants. They functioned well because the social cohesion within it was formed via a strong *conscience collective* (collective conscience) that imposed a specific and concrete set of shared ideas and beliefs upon its members. This compelling force of social cohesion was possible because of the homogeneous constellation of the population within these communities. Durkheim (1893: 76) observed this mechanical solidarity as *"un produit des similitudes sociales les plus essentielles, et elle a pour effet de maintenir la cohésion sociale, qui résulte de ces similitudes."* Inhabitants resembled each other and formed a uniform and undifferentiated group. These communities were very often religious communities, based on close-knit bonds between inhabitants. Durkheim (1893: 143) therefore described religion to be synonymous with the social reality in these traditional communities: *"A l'origine, elle s'étend à tout; tout ce qui est social est religieux; les deux mots sont synonymes."* He continued by stating that *"quand une conviction un peu forte est partagée par une même communauté d'hommes, elle prend inévitablement un caractère religieux"* (Durkheim, 1893: 143). Hence, the emphasis was placed on the likeliness of its members and the almost direct link between them and the community. This kind of social cohesion consequently generated a strong and strict social order, where deviant behaviour from the shared set of beliefs was penalised in a rather repressive manner (Durkheim, 1893: 33-34).

Next to this mechanical solidarity, the profound changes within society that were produced by the social division of labour implied another sort of social cohesion. This *solidarité organique* (organic solidarity) accepted the differences between people and their growing interdependence, as they started to perform more heterogeneous tasks. In other words, citizens became more dependent on others. The mutual and complementary differences between people further caused a growing number of interactions between them. This enhanced the individual initiative to create organisations and groupings, making the link between the individual and the community more indirect.

Following this new form of solidarity, the shared set of beliefs and values became more diffused and slightly lost content and volume. The traditional connection and the

similarity between the social life and the religious life began to disappear as religion started to crumble down and communities became more secular (Durkheim, 1893: 143). For this reason, social cohesion and unity within the community could not be based anymore on the strict religious values and norms. Therefore, the basis of solidarity in modern societies had to be found somewhere else, namely in the differentiation and specialisation of labour. In this way, the dependency and reliance between members created social solidarity and social cohesion. Nonetheless, the collective conscience remained to play a vital role in these more modern communities as well, especially between strangers. Although the community had become more secularised and rational and as a result the collective conscience had become more abstract, the more modern community still required a basic set of shared norms and beliefs that would help to establish social bonds and coherency. This collective conscience thus became more loosely defined and did not exert an absolute authority anymore (Lukes, 1977: 158).

This evolution from a mechanical towards an organic sort of social solidarity at the end of the 19th century was not only Durkheim's observation when studying the concept of social cohesion. Also other authors noticed a change in how societies were organised as they became more and more complex and diverse. However, what differentiated Durkheim from other authors that wrote about the socio-cultural evolution of how societies changed over time (Comte, 1936; Marx, 1867), was that he did not follow the reasoning of progressive rationalisation of one sort of cohesion replacing the other one. Both mechanical and organic solidarity continued to exist in his perspective. He portrayed both forms of social cohesion as ideal types that predominated within certain types of communities, but these types did not necessarily exclude each other (Bottomore & Nisbet, 1979; Lukes, 1977). He did not portray a romantic vision of the mechanical tradition form, nor did he downgrade the more modern organic form of social cohesion.

Another view on the changing societies and their social cohesion was given by Ferdinand Tönnies (1887). He envisioned a similar dichotomy between a *Gemeinschaft* (community) and a *Gesellschaft* (society) that both represented a certain type of social cohesion. The first community form of social cohesion related to a group of people where membership was self-fulfilling and members perceived themselves as serving the objectives of the social group. The latter form related to a group of people that arose out of instrumental and superficial relations between the members and envisioned the social group as a

purpose and an orientation for individual objectives (Tönnies, 1887: 73-77). In this way, Tönnies conceived a clear division between a *Gemeinschaft,* were members were linked to one another no matter what, and a *Gesellschaft,* that embodied a group of separated individuals no matter what. In his words, he described this dichotomy as follows: *"Die Theorie der Gesellschaft konstruiert einen Kreis von Menschen, welche, wie in Gemeinschaft, auf friedliche Art nebeneinander leben und wohnen, aber nicht wesentlich verbunden, sondern wesentlich getrennt sind, und während dort verbunden bleibend trotz aller Trennungen, hier getrennt bleiben trotz aller Verbundenheiten"* (Tönnies, 1887: 34). He further described how these two types of social groupings were based on a certain human will: *"Der Begriff des menschlichen Willens, [...] soll in einem doppelten Sinne verstanden werden. […] Jeder stellt ein zusammenhängendes Ganzes vor, worin die Mannigfaltigkeit der Gefühle, Triebe, Begierden ihre Einheit hat; welche Einheit aber in dem ersten Begriffe als eine reale oder natürliche, in dem anderen als eine ideelle oder gemachte verstanden werden muß. Den Willen des Menschen in jener Bedeutung nenne ich seinen Wesenwillen; in dieser: seinen Kürwillen"* (Tönnies, 1887: 73). In other words, the *Wesenwille* (i.e. the natural or essential will) related to a *Gemeinschaft* and formed the source of every action and thought, while the *Kürwillen* (i.e. the rational or arbitrary will) related to a *Gesellschaft* and formed the product of our thoughts and created unity as every member took up a certain place and role within the group. Hence, in the modern *Gesellschaft,* there were no actions that were derived from an a priori unity within the community. Tönnies compared the dichotomy to the evolution that took place from small villages to large cities, where intimate relationships disappeared. These intimate relationships were replaced by impersonal relationships amongst individuals whose objectives were monetary and economic.

To recapitulate, Tönnies (1887) formulated these two types of community as one being based on feelings of connectedness and mutual ties, the other one based on more instrumental, superficial and impersonal relations. In the latter type, members were more individualised to pursue their own goals instead of the common good. However, Tönnies' fear was that this more modern form of *Gesellschaft* would include more atomistic individuals, letting their self-interest prevail above community interests. His pessimistic view on *Gesellschaft* was further expressed in his argumentation that the community identity would surrender to the anonymity of mass society. At this point in

his reasoning, Tönnies had another point of view on the changing social cohesion as Durkheim did.

Durkheim had the opportunity to review the work of Tönnies and argued that their argumentation was similar in the manner how they both perceived the two different types of social groupings: *"Comme lui j'admets que la Gemeinschaft est le fait premier et la Gesellschaft la fin dérivée. Enfin j'accepte dans ses lignes générales l'analyse et la description qu'il nous fait de la Gemeinschaft"* (Durkheim, 1889: 420). Nonetheless, Durkheim dissociates himself from Tönnies with reference to the strength that was attributed to the individual within the more modern type of social grouping: *"Mais le point où je me séparerai de lui, c'est sa théorie de la Gesellschaft [...] caractérisée par un développement progressif de l'individualisme, dont l'action de l'État ne pourrait prévenir que pour un temps et par des procédés artificiels les effets dispersifs"* (Durkheim, 1889: 420-421). In the analysis of Durkheim, the second type of social solidarity or cohesion was not a replacement of the first type: *"Ces deux sociétés n'en font d'ailleurs qu'une. Ce sont deux faces d'une seule et même réalité, mais qui ne demandent pas moins à être distinguées"* (Durkheim, 1893: 99).

To summarise this part on the past research on social cohesion, the most noticeable element in both works seems the shift in content from a more normative interpretation to a more structural interpretation of the notion of social cohesion. Social cohesion is generated via dense networks and religious values in pre-modern communities. Well-functioning and cohesive modern societies are associated with social cohesion that arises from instrumental networks between members of the same society and more loosely defined values. While Tönnies (1887) concluded that individuals will become more individualised, which will impede the social cohesion formation within every modern society, Durkheim (1893) argued that the social structure will create social cohesion in a different manner and that individuals will stay influenced by this other form of social cohesion.

2.2.2. SOCIAL COHESION WITHIN MODERN AND POST-INDUSTRIALISED SOCIETIES

The difference between traditional sociologists like Durkheim (1893) and Tönnies (1887) and social cohesion researchers today, is the changed context. In the past, social cohesion was first of all evaluated within families, kin-based networks, or small-scaled rural villages. These pre-modern communities disappeared over time and so one can question whether the reasoning behind the concepts of *solidarité mechanique* and *Gemeinschaft* could still be applied today. On the one hand, Durkheim (1893) argued that this pre-modern mechanical solidarity would maintain its function, next to the more dominant organic solidarity within modern communities. On the other hand, Tönnies (1887) was more sceptical about the prevalence of intimate relationships that were dominant within the *Gemeinschaft* type of community. The focus that is placed today on social cohesion is further driven by the observation that modern societies are changing and therefore, the content of socially cohesive societies is changing too. The focus is in both research traditions problem-driven. At times when new challenges and social cleavages arise, the quest for social cohesion becomes increasingly important (Chan, To, & Chan, 2006: 279). Hence, the crisis of social cohesion arises again as a new transformation at the end of the 20th century seems to change the ways in which cohesive societies are formed. This shift from modern to post-industrialised societies is caused by the processes of globalisation and migration that once more formulates the question how social cohesion could be reached within increasingly heterogeneous societies. The 'social fabric' or 'social glue' is thus once more under investigation (Harell & Stolle, 2011; Noll, 2002; Rajulton, Ravanera, & Beaujot, 2007).

Contrary to the past research on social cohesion, nowadays, the theory of social cohesion is studied within numerous disciplines of the human sciences. As a result of this large amount of disciplines that are interested in the term, there is less to no consensus on the exact meaning of social cohesion. The notion of social cohesion seems to be protected by disciplinary boundaries (Pahl, 1991: 413). The challenge thus remains how to define social cohesion, when scholars seem to opt for different perspectives and angles. As Rajulton and colleagues (2007: 462) state: *"There is still no universally recognized definition of social cohesion, and conceptualizations found in the literature are at times contradictory and difficult to operationalize".* As a result, several perspectives on social

cohesion should be examined to come to one single and clear definition of social cohesion within modern and post-industrialised societies. Based on the theoretical review paper of Harell and Stolle (2011), three recent perspectives on social cohesion can be discerned: (1) the communitarian perspective focuses on the aspects of common backgrounds, shared values and norms and a sense of belonging and identity; (2) the social capital perspective focuses on the aspects of social networks and social control; and (3) the economic perspective focuses on access and inclusion.

Firstly, the communitarian perspective on social cohesion focuses on the attitudes that form the prerequisite of a cohesive community. These attitudes include a shared set of values and the sense of belonging or attachment that are the basic principles of the community (Portes & Vickstrom, 2011). This identification with the community via a basic set of shared attitudes is said to overcome differences that impede social cohesion, such as ethnic or cultural differences (Cantle, 2001, 2005; Reitz & Banerjee, 2006). Etzioni (1996) uses the metaphor of a mosaic to illustrate how individuals and groups of individuals can have different identities and histories – like pieces of a mosaic that vary in shape and colour – while they still form one single community. When there is this recognition that everyone is part of a more encompassing whole via a shared set of basic values, social order and cohesion can be attained. As Helly and colleagues (2003: 35) express this idea: "*The actual notion of social cohesion updates a conception of society as grounded in multiples communities linked by some societal and political values according to a sociological tradition.*" This framework of shared values includes liberal democratic values such as fairness, justice, freedom or equality and all these generate mutual understanding between members of a community (Cantle, 2005: 148; Stanley, 2003: 10). This framework further creates a sense of belonging towards the community and without this shared set of values, mutual understanding and relationships between members of the community are considered impossible (Cantle, 2005). These values are always in relation with social interactions, which brings us to the second perspective on social cohesion.

Secondly, the social capital perspective on social cohesion focuses on social networks and social order. Social capital is a well-known concept that was first described in 1916 by rural educator Lyda Hanifan. He defined social capital as the *"[…] goodwill, fellowship, mutual sympathy and social intercourse among a group of individuals and families who*

make up a social unit, the rural community, whose logical center is the school" (Hanifan, 1916: 130). In this way, he was the first one to describe the notion of 'capital' in a figurative sense. He argued that public life and community interactions would boost the collective well-being of and the living conditions within a community (Hanifan, 1916: 131). Over the years, many definitions rephrased this idea. The most well-known current social capital researcher is Robert Putnam (1993; 2000). He defines social capital as those *"features of social organization such as trust, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions"* (Putnam, 1993: 167). Putnam (2001) further argues that social capital generates positive externalities for both the individual (the private face of social capital) as the community as a whole (the public face of social capital). Especially these social capital elements that have positive externalities for the community as a whole are understood as part of social cohesion. Indeed, formal and informal networks create social ties between individuals and groups. In particular weak ties are emphasised, because they can bridge different parts of the social system that otherwise can be disconnected (Doreian & Fararo, 1998; Friedkin, 1998; Granovetter, 1973). These externalities include among others better performing institutions (Putnam, 1993), a healthier population (Kawachi, Kennedy, Lochner, & Prothrow-Stith, 1997), and a more politically engaged population (Putnam, 2000). Because both social capital as social cohesion generate positive externalities and solve collective action problems, the two concepts are often used as synonyms (Kearns & Forrest, 2000: 8; Reitz & Banerjee, 2007: 538). For instance, Tolsma and colleagues (2009: 1-2) define social cohesion as *"the social harmony that enhances the quality of public and civic life by feelings of commitment and trust and participation in networks and civic organizations."* Social capital is further related to the concept of social order. Jane Jacobs (1961) describes this relation within her book *The death and life of great American cities.* As an anthropologist, she observes the interactions on the sidewalks and within neighbourhoods of the city as a form of social capital and order. As she (1961: 34) argues: *"A well-used city street is apt to be a safe street. A deserted city street is apt to be unsafe."* Interactions on the street will automatically lead to a stronger informal social control and without these interactions, no order is possible: *"No amount of policing can enforce civilization where the normal, casual enforcement of it has broken down"* (Jacobs, 1961: 32).

Thirdly and finally, the economic perspective on social cohesion focuses on access and inclusion within a society. This more structural component of social cohesion refers to the distribution of material goods between individuals such as work, education and economic resources (Bernard, 1999). The expectation is that the distribution of these goods extends towards all members of society. This perspective is related to the social capital perspective, as inequality and lower social capital form a vicious circle (Putnam, 2001: 50). Many economists and policy analysts argue that social cohesion is formed by the social structure of a society and that inequalities are seen as an absence of social cohesion within a society (Beauvais & Jenson, 2002; Jeannotte, 2000; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009a; Wilkinson, 1996). The vital role of the state is emphasised, as it is seen as the shaping context in which citizens live together as a unit (Easterly, Ritzen, & Woolcock, 2006). The social structure may generate social cohesion by assuring equal access to services and welfare benefits for all citizens and reducing marginality (Easterly, Ritzen, & Woolcock, 2006: 117; Jenson, 1998: 17). Furthermore, equalities should not be understood in a purely economic manner. Also the equal treatment of citizens and the fight against discrimination and social barriers are elements of inclusion and thus social cohesion. In this way, Helly and colleagues (2003) argue that social cohesion is only possible within an integrated and inclusive community, in which both social disruption and cleavages, next to individualistic motives and interests are seen as abnormalities: *"the image of a society stratified by structural inequalities is nonexistent"* (Helly, Barsky, & Foxen, 2003: 22).

These three perspectives on social cohesion are not mutually exclusive and an overlap between them is already apparent. Therefore, conceptualisations of social cohesion that take all these different perspectives into account are desirable. In other words, social cohesion should be seen as an umbrella concept that encompasses all these interconnected elements (Cheong, Edwards, Goulbourne, & Solomos, 2007; Harell & Stolle, 2011). A number of recent social cohesion researchers have therefore attempted to combine all these different elements and perspectives into a single framework. In what follows, three of them will be discussed briefly.

Sociologist Regina Berger-Schmitt (2002: 2) elaborates on two aspects of social cohesion, namely social inclusion and social capital. The first dimension of social cohesion deals with the disparities and inequalities within a community, promoting equal opportunities

to integrate and to impede social exclusion. The second dimension of social cohesion refers to the social networks and relations that should be maintained. Political scientist Jane Jenson (1998) disentangles the concept of social cohesion in even more refined dimensions. The first dimension of belonging focuses on the shared values and norms and the sense of being part of the same community. It is opposed to the process of isolation. The second dimension deals with the economic market and the shared market capacity and is opposed to the process of exclusion. It refers to the meaning of social cohesion as the social inclusion and solidarity between members of the same community. The third dimension of participation relates to the involvement in the civil and political society. Social networks and ties impede political disenchantment from the community and activate members within the public sphere, evading both non-involvement and passivity within the society. The fourth dimension of recognition points to the necessary tolerance and pluralism within a community and opposes processes of rejection that make members feel unconnected and excluded. The fifth dimension relates to the legitimacy of public and private institutions. Social cohesion is said to be a collective construction, therefore, intermediate groups are necessary between individuals and the state. These institutions and organisations play a mediating role in conflicts within a community and prevent illegitimacy. Urban sociologists Ade Kearns and Ray Forrest (2000: 996) refer to a social cohesive society as *"one in which the members share common values, which enable them to identify common aims and objectives, and share a common set of moral principles and codes of behaviour through which to conduct their relations with one another"*. They describe social cohesion as formed by five distinct, but interconnected dimensions. The first dimension involves a civic culture with shared values and norms that strive to facilitate the exchange relations with other citizens. The second dimension refers to the presence of social order and social control. The absence of conflict and threats and the absence of incivilities establish order and control. Third, they include the absence of social exclusion and structural inequalities and the presence of social solidarity and reductions in wealth disparities as a dimension of social cohesion. The fourth dimension entails the social networks and social capital perspective that is seen as an important resource allowing communities to function. And finally, they identify a common identification with a specific geographical unit or territorial belonging as a fifth dimension of social cohesion.

2.3. DEFINITION OF SOCIAL COHESION

What is clear from previous conceptualisations is that social cohesion within communities and societies should be conceived as a multidimensional concept. Both the attitudinal as structural aspects should be included to arrive at a comprehensive and clear definition of social cohesion. After this literature review of past and present theory on social cohesion, an answer is offered to the question what is meant by the 'social glue' that holds societies together. Early research on social cohesion in the 19th century predominantly emphasised the communitarian perspective on social cohesion regarding the common values and norms. Nevertheless, this should be complemented with the social capital and structural equality perspectives that have become more important in contemporary research. As Harell and Stolle conclude in their review study: *"In short, in a socially cohesive society we find the lack of structural inequalities, a willingness to build non-hierarchical relationships, and related values of mutual respect and support for democratic processes"* (Harell & Stolle, 2011: 34). This forms a clear recapitulation of all social cohesion elements that were presented by the several disciplines and perspectives. Therefore, the definition of social cohesion in this dissertation is based on the definition given by Harell and Stolle (2011: 30):

Social cohesion is defined as the cooperative relations among individuals and groups of individuals within a community that are associated with mutual respect, equality and norms of reciprocity.

In this way, social cohesion can be described as the presence of social ties and networks, shared norms and a sense of attachment and the absence of social conflict and inequalities related to among others income, wealth and opportunities. It is understood as a multidimensional concept that can furthermore be present within communities at different levels. Hence, the community that is mentioned in the definition above is not explicitly specified. The community in which social cohesion is studied refers to a specific cultural or geographical unit (Diener & Suh, 1997; Sirgy, Rahtz, & Swain, 2006). A socially cohesive community can refer to a small neighbourhood, a rural community, a metropolis, a region or a whole nation. In this case, it refers to a geographical or locational community. Yet, it can also refer to a work environment, a family or a religious

community as well. In this case, it refers to a cultural or relational community (Anderson, 2009, 2010).

The different elements of social cohesion are interconnected to one another. As derived from the definition, all elements coincide and no causal relations are made. In fact, most authors observe reinforcing relationships between the different elements of social cohesion (Forrest & Kearns, 2001; Kearns & Forrest, 2000; Putnam, 2000, 2001). Nonetheless, causality claims remain contested. For instance, a normative communitarian perspective on shared values, loyalties and solidarities may lead to observing social cohesion as a bottom-up phenomenon (Forrest & Kearns, 2001; Witten, McCreanor, & Kearns, 2003). Reversely, a structural equality perspective that focuses on structural equalities may view social cohesion as a top-down phenomenon (Harell & Stolle, 2011).

2.4. DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL COHESION

The definition that is proposed in the previous section clearly entails several dimensions that in this section are discussed into more detail. While these dimensions are deducted from the definition of Harell and Stolle (2011), they correspond to the dimensions that are envisioned by Kearns and Forrest (2000). The dimensions are derived from the definition that is based on the three perspectives on social cohesion. They should be seen as interconnected parts of the same latent concept of social cohesion. For instance, it can be expected that individuals identifying with a community will be socialised into adopting a shared set of basic values of this community. Identification with the community is further seen as a prerequisite for contributing to social control within a community. Moreover, it is argued that attachment or connectedness to a group is interwoven with a shared civic culture, common norms and values and the willingness to participate (Massey, 1991).

The five dimensions manifest themselves as ideal types that represent the different angles of social cohesion. They are labelled (1) common values and a civic culture; (2) social order and social control; (3) social solidarity and reductions in wealth disparities; (4) social networks and social capital; and (5) place attachment and identity (Kearns &

Forrest, 2000). The first and fifth dimension are emphasised in the communitarian perspective and via the notions of mutual respect and norms of reciprocity within the proposed definition. The second and fourth dimension are emphasised in the social capital perspective and via the notion of cooperative relations within the definition. The third dimension is emphasised in the structural equality perspective and via the notion of equality within the proposed definition. In what follows, all five social cohesion dimensions are presented.

2.4.1. COMMON VALUES AND CIVIC CULTURE

The first dimension is derived from the communitarian approach to social cohesion. It involves the basic set of common values that implicates a certain civic culture, shared by all members of that community. Communitarian scholars argue that communities as a whole can only function successfully, when at least there are some common norms and values present (Cantle, 2001; Stanley, 2003).

While in the past, these norms and values were mostly religious ones, present research focuses on more liberal democratic values. Religious values and norms referred to explicit moralities. It seems harder to outline the values that underpin contemporary and secular communities. Mutually respected norms and values are more loosely defined norms, such as tolerance, reciprocity, equitability and respect for the rule of law. These modern liberal values are seen as opposed to values within authoritarian regimes, where cohesion is based on hate and fear of an enemy. Contrary, in liberal democracies, values are based on the free choice of citizens to engage in the civic life (Stanley, 2003).

The alleged deterioration of community life has mostly focused on the decline of this essential set of common values and common purposes, especially in urban areas (Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974). The trend towards individualisation is often perceived as a threat for this dimension of social cohesion and the functioning of a society as a whole (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985; Etzioni, 1994; Inglehart, 1997). Moreover, modern societies are challenged with processes of migration and diversity that reduce the homogeneity between people. As a result, consensus on a shared set of values seems even harder to reach. Nevertheless, shared values still remain an important part of

maintaining a cohesive community. Park and colleagues (1925) argue that even modern cities are rooted in the habits and customs of their inhabitants and do form physical as well as moral entities. The civic culture is still build out of moral principles and codes of behaviour that oppose indifference or disaffection towards the community (Kearns & Forrest, 2000).

This dimension of common values and a civic culture is highly interconnected with other dimensions of social cohesion. The shared belief in certain norms and values leads to a commitment and attachment towards the community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). These values enable citizens to identify with common objectives, generate support for the political institutions and engage in civic life (Kearns & Forrest, 2000). They go hand in hand with the feeling of being part of a community (Jenson, 1998). If there is a sense of belonging, a sense of responsibility and social control will follow naturally (Jacobs, 1961). If social interactions erode, however, this sense of community and this shared set of values and norms will be at risk. Inversely, the question is posed whether the alleged fragmentation of support for these common values inhibits social life and the establishment of connectedness between citizens (Cantle, 2005).

2.4.2. SOCIAL ORDER AND SOCIAL CONTROL

Social order is a social cohesion dimension that is derived from the social capital perspective on social cohesion. It refers to the absence of conflicts within a community that may threaten the existing order or system (Kearns & Forrest, 2000). The basic idea is that cohesive communities should be characterised by a willingness to uphold norms and to apply sanctions if these norms are violated (Janowitz, 1975). In this view, social order is not the result of external policing, but is enhanced by social mechanisms that effectively sanction deviant behaviour, leading to a safer environment for all members within a community (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993; Sampson, Morenoff, & Gannon-Rowley, 2002; Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997; Sampson, 1986). As Jacobs (1961: 31-32) states: *"the public peace […] of cities is not kept primarily by the police […]. It is kept primarily by an intricate, almost unconscious, network of voluntary controls and standards among the people themselves, and enforced by the people themselves".* In this way, social order is maintained through social policing, more than trough state policing.

Especially criminologists argue that social cohesion can be seen as synonymous with social order and informal control. Social cohesion is defined via the level of *collective efficacy* within communities. This collective efficacy theory is a contemporary variant of the social disorganisation theory and considers the disappearance of traditional and dense social networks that once formed the basis of security and social order within pre-modern communities. Sampson and colleagues (1997: 918) define this collective efficacy as *"[the] social cohesion among neighbors combined with their willingness to intervene on behalf of the common good".* It can thus be argued that in this perspective both social control as well as social norms and values are aimed to influence the cohesiveness of a community.

Authoritarian regimes too can be characterised by a high degree of social cohesion, as coercion can serve as a powerful instrument to establish social order (Murphy, 1957). In contemporary democracies, however, the normative dimension is repeatedly stressed in definitions of social cohesion. It is assumed that social cohesion will only be stable if it relies on a normative consensus among the population. Therefore, social cohesion does not just refer to the ability of members of a community to cooperate in order to reach collective goals, but also to their ability to do so in a voluntary manner (Janowitz, 1975). This brings us to the connections between social order and the other dimensions of social cohesion. As already acknowledged, social networks play a substantial role in reducing crime and social disorder within the community (Jacobs, 1961; Sampson et al., 2002). A sense of belonging further fosters social order, as illustrated by Park and colleagues (1925: 24): *"Social order arises, for the most part spontaneously in direct response to personal influences and public sentiment."* Finally, social order is often related to social solidarity and equality (Hooghe, Vanhoutte, Hardyns, & Bircan, 2011; Kelly, 2000; Wilson, 1987). Disorder and crime are often connected to economic disadvantaged groups within communities. In other words, economic inequalities generate crime and diminish the level of social order (Kennedy, Kawachi, Prothrow-Stith, Lochner, & Gupta, 1998).

2.4.3. SOCIAL SOLIDARITY AND REDUCTIONS IN WEALTH DISPARITIES

The third dimension tackles the issue of social inclusion and social solidarity. A socially cohesive community is said to be one that prevents social exclusion and structural inequalities (Dahrendorf, Field, Hayman, & Commission on Wealth Creation and Social Cohesion, 1995). This dimension is derived from the social equality approach towards social cohesion and is often studied by economists and policy analysts (Easterly et al., 2006; White, 2003). It is argued that strong and persistent inequalities will augment social tensions between citizens and will diminish the level of social cohesion within a community (Uslaner, 2002; Wilkinson, 1996). Poor and excluded groups have no incentive to believe in the fairness of the system, while the privileged groups are likely to perceive other members of society as potentially threatening. This could further lead to a lower sense of connectedness (Uslaner & Brown, 2005; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009a, 2009b). Equality is therefore considered to be crucial for a society to ensure the level of social cohesion within a community. Especially vulnerable groups will feel the detrimental effects of a lower level of social cohesion within the community (Beauvais & Jenson, 2002).

This dimension can be interpreted narrowly as relating solely to inequality within the economic domain (Kearns & Forrest, 2000; Kearns & Parkinson, 2001). Yet, it can be argued that equality can also be considered broadly. In this case, equality and solidarity refer to the equality of opportunities and to several life domains. Social cohesion will be gained by eliminating discriminations on the basis of gender, age, social status, ethnicity and so on (Berger-Schmitt, 2002; Bernard, 1999; Noll, 2002). Furthermore, also reductions in other disparities, such as housing, health or education divisions within a community, are interpreted as part of this dimension (Kearns & Forrest, 2000).

The loss of social solidarity and inclusion puts a serious risk to the presence of equality and to the presence of other social cohesion dimensions such as social capital networks (Beauvais & Jenson, 2002). When social solidarity is taken into consideration, the likeliness to express solidarity with someone increases when this someone belongs to the same community and when bridging social interactions are present. In other words, on the basis of moral values and a shared sense of belonging, solidarity and cohesion will be fostered within a community (Kearns & Forrest, 2000).

2.4.4. SOCIAL NETWORKS AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

A cohesive community is seen as a society that is richly endowed with stocks of social networks and social capital. More precisely, social capital at the collective community level is considered. By this is meant the features of social structures that act as resources for individuals, that facilitate collective action, and that generate well-functioning communities (Berger-Schmitt, 2002; Maxwell, 1996; McCracken, 1998; Putnam, 1993, 2000). Social capital is aspired as it is said to solve collective action problems, to reduce transaction costs and to facilitate the distribution of information (Putnam, 2000). Indeed, the willingness of members of a community to cooperate is considered as a way to survive and prosper (Lockwood, 1999; Stanley, 2003). Communities that have dense social networks and consequently a high level of social capital are considered as more cohesive than communities in which these networks are lacking. This was already mentioned the first time the concept was used: *"First the people must get together. Social capital must be accumulated. Then community improvements may begin."* (Hanifan, 1916: 138).

Social networks form the most prominent part of the social capital perspective on social cohesion. As Jacobs phrased it: *"These networks are a city's irreplaceable social capital"* (Jacobs, 1961: 138). Networks can refer to either bonding or bridging ties between citizens (Putnam, 2000). The former refer to dense and more exclusive networks, while the latter refer to large and more loosely defined networks. It is argued that this latter form of networking creates bridging social ties. These bridging networks are important for the establishment of social cohesion as they are more inclusive and bridge social groupings within the community. This is also referred to as 'the strength of weak ties' (Granovetter, 1973). On the contrary, bonding and exclusive networks do not go together with other social cohesion dimensions such as solidarity and equality.

As indicated before, coerced cooperation is not considered as an indicator of social capital or social cohesion. The density of interactions between members of a community should therefore be based on a set of values and norms that are conducive to interaction and cooperation, including attitudes such as a sense of common belonging (Chan, To, & Chan, 2006). Social capital is thus related to the communitarian approach of common values and sense of connectedness. As Jacobs (1961: 56) stated: *"Most of it is ostensibly*

utterly trivial but the sum is not trivial at all. The sum of such casual, public contact at a local level [...] is a feeling for the public identity of people, a web of public respect and trust, and a resource in time of personal or neighborhood need".

2.4.5. PLACE ATTACHMENT AND IDENTITY

Finally, a common identification with a specific geographical unit is identified as a fifth dimension of social cohesion. Based on the communitarian perspective, socially cohesive communities are characterised by a feeling of belonging to a certain locus. Individuals are socialised in these loci, that direct in a certain way their attitudes and behaviours. More precisely, belonging to a community hinders feelings of anomie, alienation, isolation and loneliness and prohibits the presence of multiple communities and disconnected individuals (Helly et al., 2003).

This communitarian component of social cohesion is described in many conceptualisations of social cohesion when the difference between belonging and isolation is described (Berger-Schmitt, 2002; Bernard, 1999; Jenson, 1998; Parker & Karner, 2010). It refers to the community identity and how residents achieve the group feeling that enables them to take collective action (Adams, 1992; Amin, 2002; Guest & Lee, 1983). This sense of belonging and attachment is described by psychologists as the shared emotional connection between citizens, the perception of being member of the same community, and the perception of belonging to the same community (Glynn, 1981; McMillan & Chavis, 1986) The most well-known definition of community psychologists McMillan and Chavis describes the sense of belonging as "*a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together"* (McMillan & Chavis, 1986: 9).

The connection with other social cohesion dimensions seems to be assured. To illustrate, when members adhere to their community and thus have a strong sense of community, they are expected to develop a sense of solidarity towards their fellow members and to develop feelings of social connectedness. This will enable horizontal redistributions between those that are well-off and those who are less well-off, i.e. the disadvantaged

(Miller, 2000). In other words, a strong identification causes involvement towards the community and generates positive externalities encompassing all members of this community (Johnston, 1991).

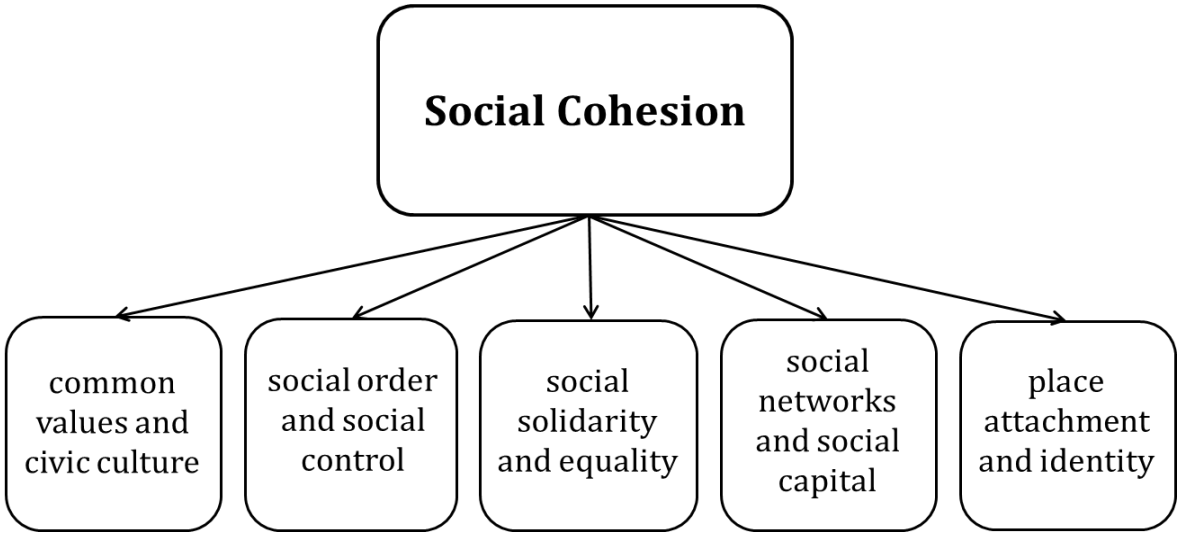
2.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The theoretical review of the past and present theory on social cohesion leads to the empirical research questions that are presented and examined in the following chapters of this dissertation. The first empirical research question relates to the operationalisation of the concept of social cohesion that was outlined in this theoretical chapter. This research question will be dealt with in Chapter 3. The second empirical research question relates to how social cohesion within a community effects the attitudes and behaviours of individuals and their social capital. These questions will be dealt with in Chapter 4 to Chapter 6.

2.5.1. FROM THEORY TO EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

After establishing the definition of social cohesion and outlining its several dimensions, the first and foremost important question rises whether social cohesion can be made operational using the conceptualisation that was described in this chapter. How are dimensions of social cohesion measured and at which level? Does theory and empirical research come to the same conclusion that social cohesion is a latent concept, formed by five different dimensions that encompass the three perspectives on social cohesion? In other words, does the theoretical concept of social cohesion exist in a methodological reality as well? An empirical exercise is therefore carried out to evaluate the theoretical conceptualisation of social cohesion (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1 SOCIAL COHESION IN THEORY



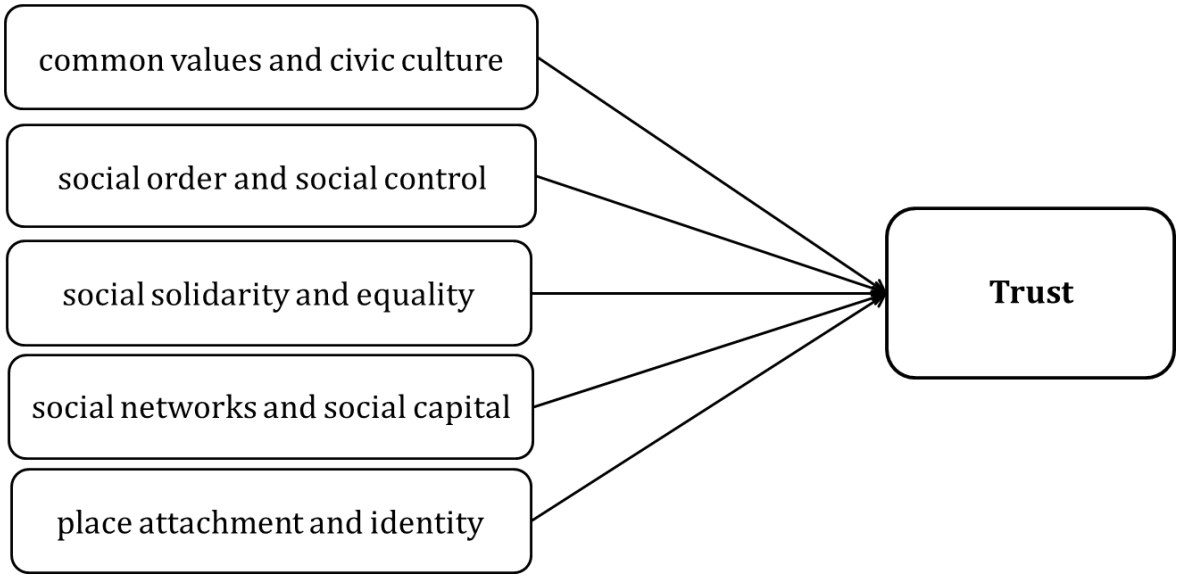
2.5.2. SOCIAL COHESION AS AN EXPLANATION FOR INDIVIDUAL ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS

After establishing the methodological connections between the five theoretically outlined social cohesion dimensions, the question is posed which consequences the empirical dimensions of social cohesion have on individual attitudes and behaviours. More precisely, it is examined which social cohesion dimensions have an effect on the attitude of trust (Chapter 4) and on the behaviour of participation (Chapter 5).

These questions are based on the idea that context matters. As the importance of context has been rediscovered within the field of social sciences, the study on community context has gained attention (Small & Newman, 2001). In research on the relationship between the individual and the community, it is acknowledged that the possibilities of an individual to act meaningfully and to pursue life projects are embedded in a broader societal and cultural context (Friedkin, 2004; Harding, 2003; Sampson et al., 2002).

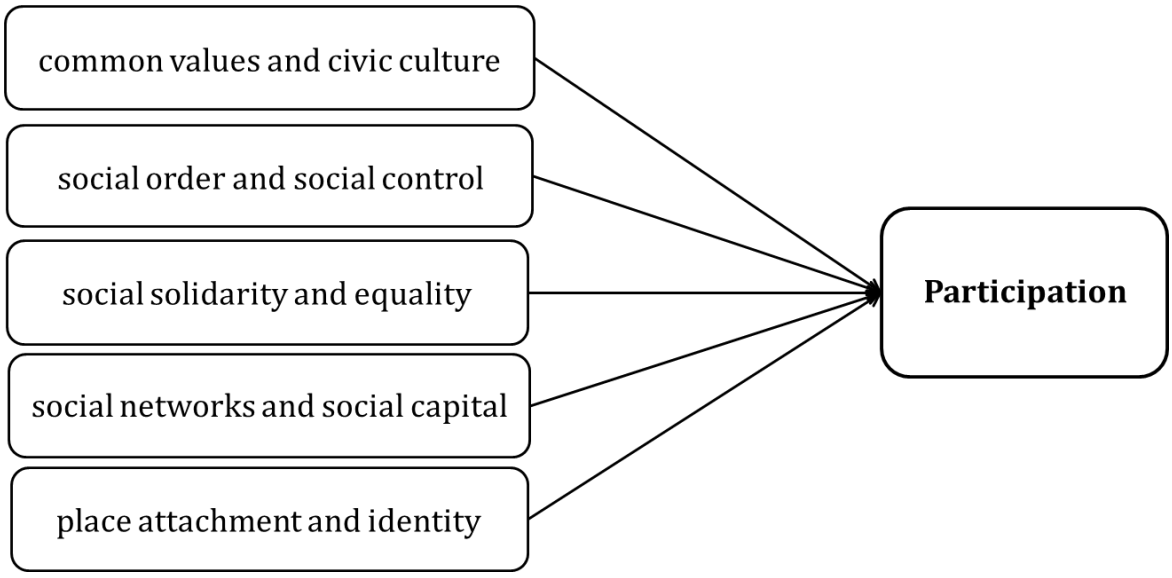
In Chapter 4, the relation between community social cohesion and individual trust is examined. Trust is seen as an integrating or synthetic force that is important within contemporary societies and communities (Hays & Kogl, 2007; Simmel, 1950).

FIGURE 2 THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL COHESION DIMENSIONS ON TRUST



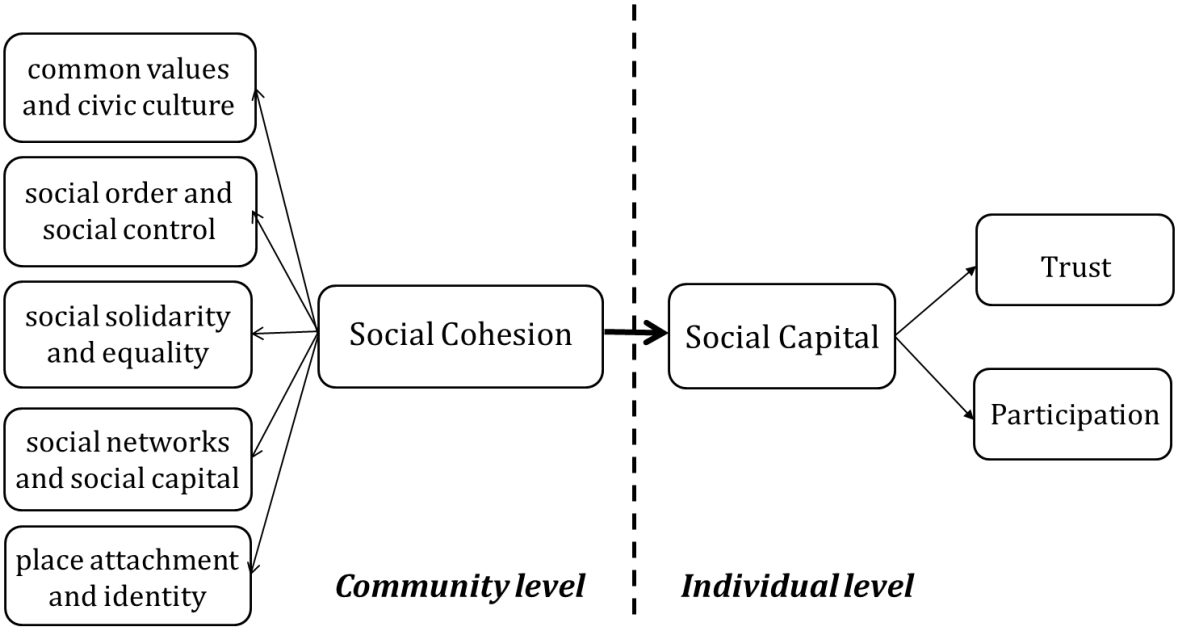
In Chapter 5, the relation between community social cohesion and individual participation is examined. Participation is viewed as an individual asset that is positively related to democracy, well-functioning governments and other positive outcomes (Putnam, 1993, 2000).

FIGURE 3 THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL COHESION DIMENSIONS ON PARTICIPATION



Finally, in Chapter 6, the research question is considered whether a socially cohesive community has an effect on social capital at the individual level, formed by its elements of trust and participation. The conceptual framework of this synthesis is presented in Figure 4.

FIGURE 4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL COHESION ON SOCIAL CAPITAL



2.6. CONCLUSION

The aim in this chapter was to give an overview of the theory on the concept of social cohesion within past and present research traditions. Starting with two founding fathers of sociology, Emile Durkheim (1893) and Ferdinand Tönnies (1887), an answer was given to the question "*What holds societies together?*" in the ways people interact and which values they adopt. In pre-modern societies, communities were small-scaled entities, based on family ties and kin networks. These socially cohesive communities were characterised by dense interactions, a religious morality and order, that was further reinforced by gossip and reputation (Jacobs, 1961). Yet, modernisation caused communities to transform and as a result, social cohesion within communities was not observed any longer in the same way. Modern communities or societies were larger and strong ties between citizens crumbled down. Socially cohesive societies were becoming

more characterised by functionality and specialisation. Social networks were not built any longer on the basis of family or background, but on the basis of instrumental interests and occupational status. Associations rose to the surface and networks between strangers started to increase sharply, while traditional ties and values gradually became faint. As a result, those common values that were maintained were not as explicitly formulated as the religious ones in pre-modern societies.

Later on, the concept of social cohesion was re-examined by several contemporary scholars from different disciplines. While often, the focus laid on one of the elements of social cohesion, more recently, researchers aimed to find an all-comprehensive conceptualisation of the umbrella term that social cohesion had become. Next to the values and networks that were discussed earlier by Durkheim (1893) and Tönnies (1887), contemporary scholars looked at other elements of social cohesion that were associated with these two elements and that had already been associated with the notions of social capital, social integration and social solidarity. As the process of globalisation made apparent that modern and post-industrialised communities had to deal with new cleavages and divisions, the question was phrased again: "*What holds societies together?*" The evolution was comparable to the previous one. Populations became more diverse and due to the arrival of the informational age, the civic culture and the social relationships were once more under pressure. As a consequence, homogeneity was no longer a basis for cohesion and emphasis shifted to the more economic perspective of equality and solidarity. While the other elements of common values and norms, a sense of belonging and social networks were still considered to indicate socially cohesive societies, the element that referred to the equality of opportunities was brought into prominence.

Consequently, in this dissertation, social cohesion was re-examined and re-interpreted by means of an interdisciplinary approach. The aim was to disentangle a clear and all-including conceptualisation of social cohesion and therefore the following definition was proposed: *Social cohesion is defined as the cooperative relations among individuals and groups of individuals within a community that are associated with mutual respect, equality and norms of reciprocity.* This definition contained several elements that were envisioned by criminologists, social and political scientists, psychologists, economists and so on. Consequently, as these several disciplines laid emphasis on different expressions of social

cohesion, social cohesion could be seen as a multidimensional concept. The dimensions that were derived from this definition were the following: (1) the presence of a basic set of common values that form a civic culture; (2) the presence of social order and social control and consequently, the absence of deviance and crime; (3) the pursuit of equality via social solidarity and the absence of particularly wealth disparities; (4) the presence of bridging social networks (formal or informal) and consequently the presence of social capital; and (5) the presence of a feeling of belonging and attachment to the community itself.

This theoretical conceptualisation of social cohesion finally leads to two research questions that are examined in the following chapters. First of all, the empirical evidence of social cohesion as an all-comprehensive umbrella concept stays limited. Therefore, the empirical exercise is conducted to see whether these theoretical dimensions can be retraced as empirical ones. Secondly, social cohesion is seen as a community or society characteristic that has positive outcomes, such as facilitating collective action and fostering a healthy and prosperous society. As the traditional sociological question has always been how to interpret the relationship between society and individual, this multilevel question will be posed relating to social cohesion. More precisely, it is studied whether social cohesion dimensions have an effect on the attitudes and behaviours of individuals, respectively trust and participation. These two individual features have been studied abundantly and there is reason to assume that they are affected by social cohesion.

To conclude, some theoretical remarks and reservations can be made when recapitulating this chapter. First of all, social cohesion has been described as immanent good. However, as with social capital, there is reason to presume that a dark side of social cohesion is existing. This is especially the case when several levels are considered. For instance, social cohesion can be high at a smaller sub-community level and consequently hinder social cohesion or other positive externalities at a higher regional or societal level. However, in this dissertation, only the community level will be discussed and therefore, the problem of the dark side of social cohesion is not taken into account. Secondly, the attitudinal dimension of common values are less defined in modern and post-industrialised communities. This causes speculation to what extent this shared set still exists. However, recent research provides evidence that general liberal values do still

indicate socially cohesive societies (Reeskens, 2009). Thirdly, although the research question relates to the significance of context, it is assumable that the socially cohesive society may generate different outcomes for different citizens, because citizens are not assumed to be completely conditioned by context.

Chapter 3. OPERATIONALISATION. THE MEASUREMENT OF SOCIAL COHESION

3.1. INTRODUCTION[3]

Social cohesion has been defined in Chapter 2 as a comprehensive concept that includes elements of social order, social capital and social solidarity. In this chapter, the aim is to conduct an empirical exercise to evaluate the operationalisation of social cohesion, starting from its theoretical conceptualisation. The objective is to develop clear indicators that measure all the different dimensions of social cohesion.

In this chapter, first, social cohesion as a multidimensional concept that can be made operational at different levels is reflected upon and the case study of 308 Flemish communities is introduced. Next, the operationalisation of social cohesion is considered by investigating the indicators that would be ideal for measuring social cohesion and the indicators that are available and most suited at the local community level in Flanders. Subsequently, the method of exploratory factor analysis is explained in more detail, as it

[3] This chapter is partially based upon the article: Botterman, S., Hooghe, M., & Reeskens, T. (2012). One Size Fits All? An Empirical Study into the Multidimensionality of Social Cohesion Indicators in Belgian Local Communities. *Urban Studies, 49*(1), 181–198.

forms the core technique that is used to investigate the presence of a latent social cohesion concept behind all these different indicators. The result section further looks at the construction of a social cohesion factor and the geographical distribution of social cohesion within the 308 communities in Flanders. To conclude, the question regarding the relationship between theory and empirical research is discussed and the challenges of the empirical exercise within this chapter are examined.

3.2. FROM THEORY TO EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Next to the interest that has been given to the conceptualisation, also the operationalisation of the notion social cohesion has gained importance over the years. Several scholars have made efforts to develop clear indicators to study the effects of policy efforts that aim at the enhancement of social cohesion and to study the effects of social cohesion on individual attitudes and behaviours (Chan, To, & Chan, 2006; Council of European Union, 2000; Putnam, 2000). Nonetheless, the operationalisation of the concept has not often been made in a comprehensive manner. Due to the use of vague definitions, a solid and meaningful measurement is hindered most of the time. The different perspectives on the notion of social cohesion produce different indicators and measurements that are seldom combined into an all-encompassing social cohesion measurement. As Bruhn (2009: 31) remarks: *"While the concept of social cohesion is intriguing, it has also been frustrating because its multiple definitions prevent its meaningful measurement and application. Investigators have conceptualised social cohesion, and developed methods for studying it, based on the theoretical assumptions of their own discipline."*

The search for a solid social cohesion measurement starts at the local community level in Flanders. Before describing and evaluating the choice for this case study of 308 communities, social cohesion as a multidimensional concept that can be investigated at different levels is considered. The point of departure forms the definition that has been developed in Chapter 2: *Social cohesion is defined as the cooperative relations among individuals and groups of individuals within a community that are associated with mutual respect, equality and norms of reciprocity.*

3.2.1. SOCIAL COHESION AS A MULTIDIMENSIONAL CONCEPT

As already made clear in the theoretical chapter, to study social cohesion, one has to monitor several dimensions at the same time. In other words, a full understanding of the concept of social cohesion takes multiple dimensions into account (Berger-Schmitt, 2002; Harell & Stolle, 2011; Jenson, 1998; Stanley, 2003). Although scholars from different disciplines look at social cohesion from different angles, these perspectives are seldom examined simultaneously in empirical research. Consequently, narrow perspectives are reflected in the large amount of instruments that are used to measure social cohesion. For instance, policy analysts and economists emphasise the economic equalities and social solidarity within a society (Atkinson, Cantillon, Marlier, & Nolan, 2002); social capital researchers investigate the social connections between inhabitants (Putnam, 2000; Tolsma et al., 2009); and criminologists focus on social order and the absence of crime (Almgren, 2005; Oberwittler, 2004; Sampson et al., 1997). It is therefore clear that a more limited focus will produce social cohesion measurements that do not encompass all elements of the concept.

There are scholars who recognize this limitation. For instance, Bernard and McDaniel (2007: 3) argue in an introduction to a special issue of the *"Canadian Journal of Sociology"* on social cohesion that different perspectives and angles should be studied as they matter for the definition and use of the concept. Furthermore, there are studies that have tried to develop an all-covering measurement of social cohesion (Rupasingha, Goetz, & Freshwater, 2006). For instance, Berger-Schmitt (2002: 413-414) lists the issues that are associated with social cohesion relating to first of all inequality – such as fighting against regional disparities and social exclusion and fighting for equal opportunities for all generations, citizenship groups, sexes and so on – and secondly social capital – such as enhancing social relations within primary social groups and associations, and improving the quality of social relations and institutions.

3.2.2. SOCIAL COHESION AT MULTIPLE LEVELS

Next to the characteristic of multidimensionality, social cohesion is seen as applicable to different levels. More precisely, all social groups can be seen as including a certain level of social cohesion. Carron and Spink (1995: 86) state in this way that *"the terms cohesion and group are tautological; if a group exists, it must be cohesive to some degree."* The geographical unit is further seen as the most common interaction context of people which can be investigated. It is important to consider the option of choosing different levels to study social cohesion, as dimensions of social cohesion may have different empirical indicators and outcomes depending on the level that is examined.

An important article that considers the applicability of several social cohesion dimensions at different levels is the one of urban sociologists Kearns and Forrest (2000). They investigate a wide range of social cohesion elements and consider the different levels that can be under investigation. They expect different forms of social cohesion to operate on different levels of geographical aggregations. Focus is often placed on specific elements of social cohesion that gain a lot of policy attention (Kearns & Forrest, 2000: 1003). Most studies investigate social cohesion either at the national level or at the neighbourhood level (Paxton, 2002; Sampson et al., 2002; Swaroop & Morenoff, 2006; Widome, Sieving, Harpin, & Hearst, 2008; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000).

Cross-national studies that examine social cohesion as a characteristic at the national level mainly consider the more structural side of social cohesion. It is argued that the national level is too high for considering the possibilities to form social networks and thus social capital, which forms a core element of social cohesion (Kearns & Forrest, 2000; Kearns & Parkinson, 2001). As a consequence, the emphasis often lays on economic indicators that indicate social solidarity and equality within a nation (Easterly, Ritzen, & Woolcock, 2006; Keck & Krause, 2007). For instance, a lot of research efforts have been undertaken regarding the relation between income inequality and societal well-being (Wilkinson, 1996, 2005).

Neighbourhood studies often focus on the dimensions of social capital, social order and the sense of community (Morenoff, Sampson, & Raudenbush, 2001; Parkes, Kearns, & Atkinson, 2002; Tolsma, van Der Meer, & Gesthuizen, 2009). However, by reducing the

level to the neighbourhood, problems of spatial definitions and demarcations may arise and cause data problems. Consequently, it is sometimes questioned what is meant by the neighbourhood level. This unit of analysis can be calculated, based on local geographical knowledge or based on cluster analysis of census tracks. In the former case, natural boundaries such as railroad tracks or freeways are considered; in the latter case, census tracks with similar socio-demographics are merged. It can thus be described as a social construct based on social relations or as a geographically based unit. (Oberwittler, 2004: 206-207; Swaroop & Morenoff, 2006: 1668). As a result, it may become harder to collect coherent and consistent data on this level. Moreover, studies on the neighbourhood level do not often form a representative sample of a region or country. Most research considers neighbourhoods in a specific, mostly urban city (Lindström, Merlo, & Ostergren, 2002; Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997). Studies that compare social cohesion in neighbourhoods within both urban cities as well as within rural villages are rather scarce (Oberwittler, 2004; Rotolo, 2000).

3.2.3. SOCIAL COHESION IN 308 FLEMISH COMMUNITIES

Taking into account these considerations, the case study of 308 Flemish communities is evaluated. Between the lower neighbourhood level and the higher national level, this intermediate community level forms a geographical entity that can also be used in studies on social cohesion (Hardyns, 2010; Hipp & Perrin, 2006; Tolsma et al., 2009). The level of local communities is studied, because this level is most suitable when investigating several dimensions that indicate all perspectives on social cohesion simultaneously (Kearns & Forrest, 2000: 1003). Local areas, such as local communities, are seen as places where people realise certain well-being and quality of life goals (Völker, Flap, & Lindenberg, 2007). Therefore, it is relevant to study these natural environments when looking at social cohesion (Park et al., 1925; Park, 1916).

Furthermore, the community level is considered to be an important level to study in Flanders, as it forms the lowest political entity. Given that local authorities in Belgium have real competences on areas that might affect social cohesion, it makes sense to focus on this community level (Atkinson, Cantillon, Marlier, & Nolan, 2002). These extensive authorities relate to amongst others housing affairs, urban planning, local police, social

affairs and culture (Deschouwer, 2009). Flanders forms the autonomous region in the northern part of Belgium and is composed of 308 local communities, with on average 20,000 inhabitants. The label 'community' is used to indicate a *gemeente* (municipality or city). The present borders of these communities were established in 1977, when the number of Belgian communities was reduced from 2359 to 589. Of these 589 communities, 308 are located in Flanders, 19 in the metropolitan region of Brussels and 262 in Wallonia. Flemish communities are thus well outlined entities and spatially defined since 1977 (De Ceuninck, 2009). In other words, the communities are considered to be rather established and well-known entities. The focus is placed on communities within the region of Flanders, because not every indicator of social cohesion is available and comparable across the local community level for all regions within Belgium. As some policies are federalised, Flemish regional authorities only collect data for the Flemish region and some criteria are set depending on the region within Belgium. There is simply no access to data covering communities within the entire country relating to all social cohesion dimensions.

3.3. OPERATIONALISATION OF SOCIAL COHESION

The challenge in this chapter is to search for meaningful and measurable key variables that make the several elements of social cohesion operational. These elements should coincide with the five dimensions that were outlined in the previous theoretical chapter. The several indicators are investigated and the technique of exploratory factor analysis is explained into more detail. A table with descriptive values regarding the data can be found in the Appendix.

3.3.1. COMMON VALUES AND CIVIC CULTURE

Theoretically, common values augment social cohesion and as a result create a civic culture (Kearns & Forrest, 2000). A socially cohesive community is one in which inhabitants share a set of moral norms that enable them to support the same collective goals of that community.

Methodologically, the social cohesion dimension of common values and civic culture is difficult to make operational at the local community level. Ideally, it requires a population survey within all 308 Flemish communities, although the question remains which values should be measured. There are several key values that are important to be shared by all salient groups within a community. However, as seen in the previous theoretical chapter, these values are not defined explicitly. In the past, only religious values were used to evaluate the common values within a community and referred to explicit moralities. In the present, it seems more ideal to consider values such as tolerance, reciprocity, or respect for the rule of law (Chan, To, & Chan, 2006; Harell & Stolle, 2011; Stanley, 2003).

Because such data is lacking, the most suitable indicators are proxy variables that indicate a certain civic culture within a community. These behavioural indicators can be interpreted as a reflection of a certain normative consensus within a community. It is opted to look at religious behaviours that indicate a certain civic culture within a community. In traditional pre-modern communities, religion was typically portrayed as a fundamental element of social cohesion. It was described as the social cement or conscience collective within a community (de Tocqueville, 1835; Durkheim, 1912; Turner, 1991). Religion was said to communicate common values that were necessary in community building. Although it can be contested that religion still plays the same community formatting role in contemporary secularised communities, empirical research still shows strong and positive spill-over effects of religious practice that make them the most suitable indicators for this dimension. Citizens, who are religiously involved, will also participate more actively in voluntary associations, even secular ones. In small-scale communities, religiosity may even still constitute the social surrounding of individuals. Religion enhances the development a civic, cultural and social context within a community. It creates a context in which individual social capital and community social cohesion formation takes place (Finke & Adamczyk, 2008; Kotler-Berkowitz, 2001; Traunmüller, 2010).

The participation rates in religious rites and celebrations are therefore taken as proxy indicators of the social cohesion dimension of common values that indicate a civic culture. However, another data problem arises after this decision to take religious behaviours as indicators of a shared civic culture. Data can only be obtained in a consistent and complete manner for every community relating to Catholic rituals and

celebrations. Ideally, all religious denominations should be taken in consideration as well as the values of non-religious persons. Unfortunately, only data from the Roman Catholic Church is available to evaluate. Nonetheless, the majority of the Flemish population still considers themselves as Christian and despite the process of secularisation, the Catholic Church is still considered as the dominant religious institution in Flanders. The presence of other religions, such as Jewish, Protestant and Islamic communities is very limited (Dobbelaere, 2003). For instance, in the Social Cohesion Indicators in Flanders survey (N = 2080), 74.6 per cent of the respondents labels themselves as Catholic, 10.9 per cent as having no denomination, 8.8 per cent as free-thinker, 3.7 per cent as Islamic, 0.2 per cent as Protestant and 0.0 per cent as Jewish (other denominations are reported by only 1.8 per cent of the respondents). Especially the rites of passage are well embedded in the Flemish communities. In the Social Cohesion Indicators in Flanders survey (N = 2080), 82 per cent of the respondents would chose to baptise their children, 74 per cent would chose for a religious marriage and 83 per cent would chose for a religious funeral. In reality, figures of 2007 show that in Flanders, 65 per cent of all newborns were baptised, 28 per cent of all weddings were catholic weddings and 68 per cent of all deceased received a Catholic funeral (Botterman & Hooghe, 2009). In recent decades, the meaning of these rites of passages have changed. Catholicism in Belgium in general has shifted from an institutional church-based religion towards a more social religion (Botterman & Hooghe, 2012; Dobbelaere & Billiet, 1983).

The following indicators are thus put forward: (1) the percentage of baptisms, being the number of baptisms divided by the number of newborns within a community; (2) the percentage of religious marriages, being the number of catholic marriages divided by the number of civil marriages[4]; (3) the percentage of religious funerals, being the number of catholic funerals divided by the number of deceased[5]; and (4) the percentage of participants at Christmas celebrations, being the number of churchgoers in Masses at the

[4] It has to be noted that all civil marriages are considered, even those marriages between couples that are not able to have a catholic marriage (because one or both of the partners has already experienced a divorce, or because the couple is a same-sex couple). This causes a certain underestimation of this percentage of catholic marriages.

[5] It has to be noted that the number of catholic services within crematoria are not considered. Therefore, the percentage of religious funerals is somewhat underestimated.

24th and 25th of December divided by the number of inhabitants between 5 and 69 years old[6].

The data are averages of the years 2006 and 2007 and are collected by the Roman Catholic Church of Belgium. From 1962, annual counts of religiosity were conducted (Dobbelaere 1966; Dobbelaere et al. 2000; Dobbelaere, 2003). After a pause from 1998 till 2006, data on religious involvement was re-collected in cooperation with the Centre for Political Research at the University of Leuven (Botterman & Hooghe, 2009; Hooghe & Botterman, 2008). In practice, every priest in Belgium received a questionnaire regarding the rites of passage and the celebrations during Christmas and all these questionnaires were centralised by the Belgian Bishops' Conference. Data were then aggregated to the community level on the basis of the Catholic Yearbook of Belgium and controlled for completeness and reliability. The final data gives a reliable image of the reach of the Roman Catholic Church within the Belgian society (Hooghe & Botterman, 2008).

3.3.2. SOCIAL ORDER AND SOCIAL CONTROL

The measurement of social order and social control is mostly studied and applied by criminologists (Hardyns, 2010; Messner, Rosenfeld, & Baumer, 2004). Social order can be measured by the absence of disorder, incivilities or crime. It is assumed that social control will impede the development of deviant social behaviours and social norms outside the mainstream (Dekker & Bolt, 2005). Consequently, violence and crime are as much spatial phenomena, as they are a matter of individual characteristics (Almgren, 2005: 218). Social control can further be measured by looking at community cohesiveness and the attitudes towards disorder. This latter measurement is mostly measured via population surveys at the neighbourhood level and asks respondents whether they consider their neighbourhood a safe one, whether they show avoidance behaviour relating to certain areas within their neighbourhood and whether they would intervene when disorder is observed in their neighbourhood (Sampson et al., 1997).

[6] The population age limitations are chosen, as children under six years old have not yet received their First Communion and people older than seventy are less mobile and able to participate in church celebrations (Botterman & Hooghe, 2009).

Looking at the aggregate level of the community, the presence of a safe climate within a community can be measured via crime figures. Ideally, also informal social control is controlled for. Yet, because there is no survey data available relating to all 308 Flemish communities, only official disorder measurements are used to make this dimension operational. More precisely, seven different criminal acts are used as indicators. The number of infractions is divided per 1000 inhabitants to make them comparable across communities.[7] These seven criminal acts are (1) intentional assault and battery, defined as all offences against the physical integrity; (2) vandalism aimed at cars; (3) vandalism aimed at other material goods; (4) destruction and damaging, defined as violent offences against properties and causing damage; (5) theft from motor vehicles, defined as theft or hijacking of objects that were in the vehicle, with or without assault; (6) stealing motor vehicles, defined as theft or hijacking of a vehicle, with or without assault; and (7) burglary, defined as theft as a result of burglary, trespassing or false keys, with or without assault, in a residence.

These forms of delinquency are selected because of three reasons. First of all, they occur relative frequently and as a consequence, the reporting rate is rather high (Hardyns, 2010: 76). Secondly, they can be considered as serious infractions to the social order within a community. These crimes are offences that are defined in the Belgian Penal Code and violations that in the case of recidivism may result in a correctional penalty. Thirdly, the registration willingness of these facts among local police is rather high. One can assume that the dark number of unreported or unregistered acts of these offences such as burglary is much lower than for instance with regard to stealing bicycles, an offence that is often not reported to the police (Hardyns, 2010: 71-76). In studies on the United States, it is customary to include the number of homicides in this kind of research as well (Rosenfeld, Messner, & Baumer, 2001). In Belgium and Flanders, however, the homicide rate is too low to be used meaningfully in any analysis.

[7] It can be noted that residuals of crime indicators after controlling for deprivation indicators present another way to represent indicators of social order and social control. Nevertheless, it is preferred to look at the pure crime indicators to make a clear distinction between the social order dimension and the social solidarity dimension of social cohesion. Hence, these indicators are not taken together, but treated separately.

The crime figures are officially recorded crime figures of 2006 that were gathered by the local police and the Belgian Federal Police. In the framework of the research project Social Cohesion Indicators in Flanders, permission was given to use these figures at the community level till 2006 (Hardyns, 2010).

3.3.3. SOCIAL SOLIDARITY AND REDUCTIONS IN WEALTH DISPARITIES

The dimension of social solidarity and reductions in wealth disparities has been studied by several scholars and mostly in an economic manner (Atkinson et al., 2002; Cantillon & Marx, 2006). Since the development of the Lisbon Strategy of the European Union, policy analysts mainly focus on the fight against several kinds of economic exclusion and social inequalities, as large socio-economic gaps between groups tend to lower the level of social cohesion within communities (Berger-Schmitt, 2002; European Committee for Social Cohesion, 2000).

These gaps can be measured within a community via a number of variables, measuring socio-economic exclusion and inequality. Once reverted, they indicate social inclusion, social solidarity and a reduction in wealth disparities. While the social safety net forms the focus of welfare scholars, economists solely focus on income inequality (Harell & Stolle, 2011). In this empirical exercise, it is opted to provide both indicators of social solidarity and inclusion as well as indicators that refer to income and wealth equality. There are sufficient indicators available to provide a reliable overview of the socio-economic inequalities within communities. In what follows, the chosen indicators of social solidarity and reductions in wealth disparities are presented.

Social solidarity can be seen as the access to a minimum standard of living for every inhabitant within a community. Consequently, exclusion and poverty are concentrated around groups that lack access to employment, housing, education and so on (Harell & Stolle, 2011). Indicators that measure the presence of poverty and deprivation within the community are considered and consequently reverted. These indicators are the following: (1) the share of inhabitants entitled to receive welfare benefits; (2) the unemployment rate; (3) the share of social residences; (4) the share of renters; and (5) the share of newborns that are born in underprivileged families. The absence of wealth

disparities is measured via the absence of income inequality. Income inequality is seen as an important indicator, as it measures the economic inequality across classes and consequently a lack of social cohesion. It is used to indicate the gap between poor and rich residents (Easterly et al., 2006; Harell & Stolle, 2011). The indicators that are added to measure this dimension of social cohesion are therefore: (6) the Gini coefficient and (7) the interquartile coefficient.

Data were collected for 2006 via official Flemish and federal governmental agencies. Only the percentage of renters relates to the situation of 2001. The indicator of the share of inhabitants entitled to receive the *leefloon* (minimum income), indicates the percentage of citizens within a community that are helped by the *Openbare Centra voor Maatschappelijk Welzijn* (Public Centres for Social Welfare) and forms a well-established poverty indicator (Vranken, De Boyser, & Dierckx, 2006). The unemployment rate is an indicator that measures the relation between the non-working and job-seekers between 18 and 65 years old and the employed population between 18 and 65 years old. These data are based on data from the *Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding* (Flemish Service for Employment and Vocational Training) and the *Federale Overheidsdienst Sociale Zekerheid* (Federal Public Service Social Security). The measurement is often used as an indicator of social exclusion within communities, as it is perceived as a structural cause for social disorganisation and deprivation (Harell & Stolle, 2011; Jeannotte, 2000; Ogg, 2005; White, 2003). It hinders participation within the economic, social and cultural life and alienates residents from the community (Duffy, 1995: 4). Social housing is another indicator of social solidarity, as it refers to the opportunities that are present for less economically strong families to live in communities. It measures the relation between the amount of social residences available in the community and the total number of inhabitants in 2006. The external privatized agency *Vlaamse Maatschappij voor Sociaal Wonen* (Flemish Company for Social Housing), in cooperation with the local social housing organisations, invests in housing for less well-off inhabitants. Together, they construct, renovate and reconstruct residences that are thereafter rented or sold to realise and maintain affordable and full-quality social residences for less well-off inhabitants (Vlaamse Maatschappij voor Sociaal Wonen, 2006). The share of renters is often used as an indicator of a low level of neighbourhood satisfaction and often indicates a lower social inclusiveness within, a lower social attachment to and a lower investment in the community (Hipp, 2009; Kleinhans, Priemus,

& Engbersen, 2007; Parkes et al., 2002). Therefore, it is included in this empirical exercise, although data is only available via the national census that was conducted in 2001. It measures the percentage of renters as the number of renters (private or social renters) compared to the number of inhabitants within a community. The indicator of the percentage of children that are born in deprived families in 2006 is established by the Flemish agency *Kind&Gezin* (Child and Family) and looks at deprivation in a broad way, as it measures deprivation in six life domains that effect the living context of a child. If a child is broad up under poor living standards relating to three or more of these life domains, it is categorised as born in a deprived family. It takes into account all family characteristics that could have a negative impact on the development of small children. These life standards relate to (1) the economic sphere, measured by a low and insufficient household income; (2) the educational sphere, measured by a low education background of the parents; (3) the work sphere, measured by a precarious work situation of the parents; (4) the social sphere, measured by a low stimulation level towards the children regarding the participation in pre-school kindergarten and difficulties in nursing children; (5) the housing sphere, measured by a poor housing accommodation; and (6) the health sphere, measured by a poor health status of all family members (De Cock & Buysse, 1999; Luyten & Lammertyn, 1990). This indicator is compared to the total number of newborns in a community and is conceived as an important policy indicator that is reliable and comparable at the community level. Given that the governmental agency *Kind&Gezin* provides assistance to parents of 97 per cent of all newborns, these figures can further be seen as very exhaustive. Therefore, although this indicator might be specific for the Flemish region, it is considered to offer high quality information and is included in the analysis.

The two income inequality measurements are measured as follows. The Gini coefficient indicates the distribution of incomes within a community after fiscal returns. A low Gini coefficient indicates a more equal distribution, with zero corresponding to complete equality, while a higher Gini coefficient indicates a more unequal distribution, with one corresponding to complete inequality. The interquartile coefficient indicates the relation between the interquartile difference, which is calculated as the difference between the first and third quartile of incomes, and the mean income within a community. It is less susceptible to outliers, but is less well-known as the Gini coefficient. Therefore, both indicators are included in the empirical exercise.

3.3.4. SOCIAL NETWORKS AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

The fourth social cohesion dimension of social networks and social capital offers a challenge to make operational at the community level for all 308 communities. As census data are not available, proxy variables that refer to the communal associational life and political engagement are chosen to make this social cohesion dimension operational.

Ideally, both formal and informal networks should be measured via position generators and resource generators, which measure the diversity of networks, the links between different citizens in a community and the social capital resources that are gained via these networks (Harell & Stolle, 2011; van der Gaag, 2005). Unfortunately, only two proxies of formal networks that create public social capital are available at the community level that can be used to measure social capital within all 308 local communities. These indicators are associational density and voter turnout. Nonetheless, these two indicators are often used together to measure social capital (Beyerlein & Hipp, 2005; Rosenfeld et al., 2001). They are said to correlate highly and are seen as quite important indicators of social capital (Alesina & La Ferrara, 2000; Putnam, 1993, 1994).

First of all, the density of associations within a community is considered. The most recent data that is available, is the number of socio-cultural associations per community in 2001 compared to the number of inhabitants in 2001 (Lauwerysen & Colpaert, 2004). This indicator is routinely used as an indicator of social networks and social capital within a community, as it reflects opportunities and possibilities for citizens to engage within their community in social networks (Alesina & La Ferrara, 2000; Jottier & Heyndels, 2012; Lauwerysen & Colpaert, 2004; Putnam, 1993; Rupasingha et al., 2006; Stolle, 1998). It should be noted, however, that the density of associations does not give information about the actual participation of citizens within a community. It only considers the possibility to be actively involved in civic life. The number of members within these associations is not available to use as an additional indicator. Secondly, voter turnout at the local community elections of 2006 is considered. This participation rate is seen as a manifestation of involvement with the local community, as it indicates the participation within public affairs (Jottier & Heyndels, 2012; Putnam, 1994). It is seen as an indicator of civic engagement and an element of social capital (Bekkers & Veldhuizen, 2008). Although voting is compulsory in Belgium at all political levels, there is some

variation on this indicator and the willingness to vote can be interpreted as a summary measure for civic and political engagement. In fact, the percentage of voters within a community that fulfils its civic obligation to vote ranges from 90 to 100 per cent.

3.3.5. PLACE ATTACHMENT AND IDENTITY

The last dimension of place attachment and identity is derived from the communitarian perspective on social cohesion. Harell and Stolle (2011) argue that a sense of belonging to a shared political community can be seen as an indicator of social cohesion. However, they question which components such an identity should include.

At this moment, data is not available to make this fifth dimension of social cohesion operational. Ideally, census or survey data on all communities should be used to measure a sense of belonging to the community and to measure community identity. It is not possible to measure this dimension via aggregate proxies (Parker & Karner, 2010). Previous research has shown that the Flemish population is quite strongly focused on the local level of the community (Hooghe & Vanhoutte, 2009). In the Social Cohesion Indicators in Flanders survey, 52 per cent of the respondents indicate a strong identification with their own community. In other words, half of the Flemish population indicates to belong and to feel connected to their own community. However, because data is lacking for all 308 communities, this dimension is not included in the empirical exercise to make social cohesion operational.

3.3.6. METHOD OF EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

Methodologically, the basic rule is that variables that are put forward as indicators of social cohesion can only be summarised into one latent social cohesion index, if they empirically refer to one underlying latent variable (MacRae, 1985). Exploratory factor analysis is presented as a method to identify these latent variables or factors. It makes the relationships among interrelated observable indicators apparent. Therefore, it is used to analyse the multidimensional structure of social cohesion, as both the separate dimensions as the underlying concept of social cohesion are unobservable concepts that can only be measured via indicators. The aim of exploratory factor analysis is to reveal

latent variables that form the reason behind the covariance between the observed variables (Brown, 2006; Costello & Osborne, 2005).

Determining the number of factors to extract in exploratory factor analysis is dependent on meeting appropriate criteria (Field, 2009: 639-642). The Kaiser-Guttman rule is often used, that considers factors with an Eigenvalue (i.e. the measurement of the variance in all the variables which are accounted for by that factor) greater than one as common factors. Further, the factor loadings (i.e. the correlation of the observable variable with a factor) after rotation are investigated, as a solid factor should only include items with strong factor loadings above at least 0.300 and should exclude items with strong cross-loadings on other factors (Costello & Osborne, 2005: 3). Next, to make decisions on which indicators represent an internally consistent underlying factor, the Cronbach's alphas can be critically reviewed (Field, 2009: 673-675). Cronbach's alpha of the observed variables of one factor should be higher than 0.700 to mean that the scale of the factor solution is internally valid (George & Mallery, 2003: 231).

Before investigating the factor loadings, the factor solutions are rotated. Rotation adjusts the frames of reference and in this way facilitates the interpretation of the factor loadings as it attempts to achieve a simple structure with simple and interpretable factors (Kim & Mueller, 1978). It reduces some of the ambiguities that may be present in the preliminary analysis. The varimax rotation is chosen, as this is an often used orthogonal rotation method that rotates the factor axes to maximise the variance of the squared loadings of a factor on all the variables. In this way, different factors are kept independent and unrelated to each other. Also an oblique rotation method that allows factors to correlate was conducted, but did not yield different factor solutions. De facto, it is argued that if the factor structure is clear, both oblique and orthogonal rotation methods will yield the same interpretation (Gorsuch, 1983: 205).

3.4. RESULTS

While the aim is to investigate whether social cohesion can be represented as a single latent concept, the alternative hypothesis is that communities may develop different

types of social cohesion. It is not certain that social cohesion can be represented as one single latent concept that covers all these various mechanisms in every single community.

First of all, the standardised indicators for the different dimensions of social cohesion are considered separately to see whether these theoretical dimensions can be represented by strong latent factors. Thereafter, mean sum scales are calculated and placed within a second order exploratory factor analysis to investigate whether they can be reduced into a single social cohesion index. Finally, the separate dimensions are presented geographically via maps of the 308 Flemish communities.

3.4.1. FIRST ORDER EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL COHESION DIMENSIONS

For the first three dimensions of social cohesion, exploratory factor analysis can be conducted. These three dimensions are common values and civic culture, social order and social control and social solidarity and the reduction in wealth disparities. For the fourth social cohesion dimension of social networks and social capital, only two items are available. Therefore, a simple correlation is calculated. The fifth dimension of place attachment and identity is currently not measurable at the community level.

3.4.1.1. COMMON VALUES AND CIVIC CULTURE

The four behavioural variables that are chosen as indicators for the common values and civic culture dimension of social cohesion are placed in an exploratory factor analysis in Table 1.

TABLE 1 EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS OF COMMON VALUES AND CIVIC CULTURE

Indicator	Factor 1
Baptism	0.725
Marriage	0.695
Funeral	0.681
Christmas celebrations	0.674
Eigenvalue	1.928
Explained Variance (%)	41.20
Cronbach's α	0.788

Entries are factor loadings of an exploratory factor analysis (N = 308).

The factor analysis in Table 1 shows that the four religious participation rates construct one latent and strong factor, which can be labelled Religious Involvement. These four rates all load on the same factor and their factor loadings are all higher than 0.6. Therefore, they indicate a high correlation between the original variables and the religious involvement factor. The explained variance further indicates that nearly 42 per cent of the variance in the observed variables is accounted for by this factor, which is very large. Also looking at the internal reliability of the factor, the Cronbach's alpha indicates an internally valid scale using these four items.

3.4.1.2. SOCIAL ORDER AND SOCIAL CONTROL

The seven criminal offences that indicate a lack of social order and social control are placed in an exploratory factor analysis in Table 2.

TABLE 2 FACTOR ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL ORDER AND SOCIAL CONTROL

Indicator	Factor 1	Factor 2
Theft from motor vehicles	**0.859**	0.155
Burglary	**0.813**	0.020
Car theft	**0.710**	0.246
Vandalism aimed at cars	0.400	0.778
Intentional assault and battery	0.222	**0.731**
Vandalism aimed at other material goods	0.167	**0.668**
Destruction and damaging	-0.114.	0.209
Eigenvalue	2.153	1.716
Explained Variance (%)	30.76	24.51
Cronbach's α / Pearson correlation	0.845	0.510

Entries are factor loadings of an exploratory factor analysis (N = 308).
Cronbach's alpha / Pearson correlation calculated on items in bold.

The factor analysis in Table 2 produces two distinct factors instead of one. As already argued by criminologists, it seems that social disorder or crime is not a one-dimensional construct (Braithwaite, 1989).

The first factor can be labelled Property Crime. It is composed out of the variables theft from motor vehicles, burglary and car theft. The label property crime is chosen, because the incentive of these offences seems to be economic and is related to a certain property. These three items form an internally valid scale when looking at the Cronbach's alpha and explains a fairly large amount of the variance. The factor loadings are very strong and

thus indicate a strong correlation between these three items and the factor of property crime. The second factor can be labelled Violent Crime. It is also considered to be a strong and valid factor, examining the high factor loadings and eigenvalue, which is higher than one. The variables that make up this dimension are vandalism and intentional assault and battery. These criminal acts have in common that they can be considered as acts of aggression. This aggression can be either directed towards objects or persons and has no economic benefit for the perpetrator. As vandalism aimed at cars has a strong cross-loading – i.e. it loads strongly on the first factor of property crime – it is excluded from the final violent crime scale. As the violent crime scale has only two items, the Cronbach's alpha cannot be calculated. The correlation coefficient indicates the relation between these two items. The correlation between vandalism aimed at material goods and intentional assault and battery is 0.510 and can be considered high enough to continue with this two-item scale. The variable of destruction and damaging does not load on any of the two crime factors and therefore is neither included in the factor of property crime, nor in the factor of violent crime.

Instead of one dimension of social order, the exploratory factor analysis thus presents two forms of criminality that form quite distinct phenomena. The retained scales are reversed in order to make the interpretation meaningful. Therefore, they will be labelled Absence of Property Crime and Absence of Violent Crime.

3.4.1.3. SOCIAL SOLIDARITY AND REDUCTIONS IN WEALTH DISPARITIES

The seven variables that indicate a lack of social solidarity and wealth disparities are placed in an exploratory factor analysis in Table 3. The reversed factor solution will hereafter be used to indicate social cohesion.

TABLE 3 FACTOR ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL SOLIDARITY AND REDUCTIONS IN WEALTH DISPARITIES

Indicator	Factor 1	Factor 2
Renters	**0.850**	0.097
Welfare benefit	**0.835**	0.029
Unemployment rate	**0.705**	-0.188.
Social residences	**0.587**	-0.240.
Births in underprivileged families	**0.587**	-0.201
Gini coefficient	-0.060.	**0.842**
Interquartile coefficient	-0.349.	**0.887**
Eigenvalue	2.731	1.639
Explained Variance (%)	39.02	23.42
Cronbach's α / Pearson correlation	0.839	0.721

Entries are factor loadings of an exploratory factor analysis (N = 308).
Cronbach's alpha / Pearson correlation calculated on items in bold.

The analysis in Table 3 shows that the indicators cannot be reduced into one single concept that measures this dimension. Two distinct and strong factors emerge.

The first factor comprises variables that indicate deprivation, poverty and social exclusion within a community. The share of renters, welfare benefit users, newborns in underprivileged families, social residences and the unemployment rate form an internally valid scale. All indicators seem to focus on the divisions and cleavages between social groups within communities. Therefore, this factor can be labelled Deprivation and refers to the inversion of the social solidarity and inclusion aspect of social cohesion as envisioned by many scholars (Berger-Schmitt, 2002; Easterly et al., 2006; Kawachi et al., 1997). The factor is reversed in order to facilitate its interpretation as a social cohesion dimension, and is labelled Absence of Deprivation. The second factor comprises the income inequality variables of the Gini coefficient and the interquartile coefficient. The eigenvalue of this factor is higher than one and a considerate amount of variance is explained by this factor. As this factor only comprises two variables, only the correlation can be measured. The correlation of 0.721 is considered strong and therefore, the two items are merged to measure a reduction in wealth disparities. This factor is reversed to facilitate its interpretation and can therefore be labelled Income Equality. The interquartile coefficient variable shows a cross-loading, as it is negatively related to the first factor of deprivation. However, it is apparent that this variable loads much stronger on the second factor of income inequality and is therefore not excluded, yet, assigned to the second factor. Next, it can be noted that both the interquartile coefficient as the Gini

coefficient load negatively on the deprivation factor. Unexpectedly, income inequality seems to be related positively to the absence of deprivation. These indicators load poorly and negatively on the first factor, while theoretically they are expected to coincide with this factor. This might indicate that at least on the community level in Flanders, income inequality does not indicate an absence of social solidarity. One reason for this can be found in view of the Belgian social security system that offers a strong protection against loss of income. As the lowest incomes are not taxable, in practice, income inequality can only rise as a result of an increasing number of high incomes. This is shown, when a correlation is calculated between this inequality measurement and the mean income within a community. There is a strong correlation, with a correlation coefficient of 0.749. Rich communities are also more unequal communities and do not necessarily indicate social cohesion. As Harell and Stolle (2011: 24) already point at this ambiguity: *"Income inequality, while usually conceived as a threat to social cohesion, is often included as a measure of social cohesion."*

3.4.1.4. SOCIAL NETWORKS AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

The social networks and social capital dimension only comprises two indicators, namely associational life density and voter turnout. Given that exploratory factor analyses and Cronbach's alpha coefficients on only two items are not informative, one can only note that a Pearson correlation between the two items is 0.498. While this coefficient between two structural community indicators may not seem overwhelming, it may not be forgotten that from a theoretical perspective, both variables have been associated with social capital. This is, for instance, represented by Putnam's Social Capital Index (Putnam, 2000: 291). This two-item scale is labelled Civic Engagement.

3.4.2. SECOND ORDER EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS FOR SOCIAL COHESION INDEX

To recapitulate, the several social cohesion dimensions have now been made operational via first order exploratory factor analyses. In Table 4, all social cohesion indicators that are retained are presented. Next, the correlations between the dimensions are considered. Thereafter, the mean sum scales that are made on the basis of the first order exploratory factor analysis are placed in a second order exploratory factor analysis.

TABLE 4 INDICATORS OF SOCIAL COHESION

Social Cohesion Dimensions	First Order Factors	Indicators
Common values and civic culture	Religious involvement	Baptisms Marriages Funerals Church attendance
Social control and social order	Absence of property crime	Car theft Theft from motor vehicles Burglary
	Absence of violent crime	Vandalism aimed at other material goods Destruction and damaging
Social solidarity and reductions in wealth disparities	Absence of deprivation	Renters Welfare benefit Unemployment rate Births in underprivileged families Social residences
	Income equality	Gini coefficient Interquartile coefficient
Social networks and social capital	Civic engagement	Associational life density Voter turnout

The first order exploratory factor analyses gave the factor solution of six intermediary scales that all formed dimensions of social cohesion. These are religious involvement, absence of violent crime, absence of property crime, absence of deprivation, income equality and civic engagement. Interestingly, it is already apparent that the dimensions of social order and social solidarity are already multidimensional concepts by themselves.

In Table 5, the correlations between the social cohesion dimensions are presented. It is clear that all dimensions relate to one another, though it is remarkable that income equality shows both negative as well as positive relations with the other social cohesion dimensions. It is expected that social cohesion dimensions all relate positively to each other, yet, it seems that income equality goes together with the presence instead of the absence of violent crime and deprivation. These correlations are rather weak. The strongest correlation is between the absence of violent crime and the absence of deprivation.

TABLE 5 CORRELATIONS BETWEEN SOCIAL COHESION DIMENSIONS

	Absence of property crime	Absence of violent crime	Absence of deprivation	Income equality	Civic engagement
Religious involvement	0.414**	0.334**	0.305**	0.158**	0.543**
Absence of property crime		0.333**	0.414**	0.295**	0.577**
Absence of violent crime			0.723**	-0.205**	0.342**
Absence of deprivation				-0.264**	0.299**
Income equality					0.302**

** Pearson correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

After the first order exploratory factor analyses and looking at the correlations between these dimensions, the following step is to conduct a second order exploratory factor analysis. Hereby, it is analysed whether these six dimensions create one latent social cohesion concept. This second order exploratory factor analysis is presented in Table 6.

TABLE 6 SECOND ORDER EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL COHESION DIMENSIONS

Social cohesion dimension	**Factor 1**	**Factor 2**
Religious involvement	**0.546**	0.256
Absence of violent crime	0.223	**0.763**
Absence of property crime	**0.682**	0.260
Absence of deprivation	0.195	**0.887**
Income equality	0.535	-0.405.
Civic engagement	**0.836**	0.169
Eigenvalue	1.836	1.695
Explained variance (%)	30.60	28.25
Cronbach's α / Pearson correlation	0.756	0.723

Entries are factor loadings of an exploratory factor analysis (N = 308).
Cronbach's alpha and Pearson correlation calculated on items in bold.

The social cohesion dimension scales entered in the second order exploratory factor analysis produce a two factors solution. Empirically, this means that there are two clear types of social cohesion and consequently that not all dimensions of social cohesion fit into one latent concept. The two factors that are found are both equally strong and valid. The first factor can be labelled as a rather Traditional Social Cohesion. This factor is comprised of the first order social cohesion dimensions of religious involvement, civic

engagement and the absence of property crime. These dimensions are mostly emphasised by social capital and communitarian researchers. The social capital dimension seems to be the key element of this factor. The second factor refers to a more structural or modern form of cohesion that is not defined by cultural elements but instead by the absence of deprivation and the absence of violent crime. It can be labelled as Modern Social Cohesion. As it only comprises two dimensions, a correlation between them is calculated that indicates a strong relation between the absence of deprivation and the absence of violent crimes. This was already apparent when considering the correlations between the several social cohesion dimensions in Table 5.

The social cohesion dimension of income equality shows strong cross-loadings and cannot be assigned to one of the two factors. It loads negatively on the modern type of social cohesion and positively on the traditional type of social cohesion. Therefore, it is excluded from any factor solution of social cohesion. It is remarkable that this inequality element of social cohesion is contested (Harell & Stolle, 2011).

From a theoretical point of view, the result of the second order factor analysis leads to important insights. Several authors have claimed that social cohesion should be considered as one latent concept comprising various dimensions (Forrest & Kearns, 2001; Harell & Stolle, 2011; Kearns & Forrest, 2000; Rajulton et al., 2007). Given the result of the current methodological exercise, the conclusion is that there is no single form of social cohesion, contrary to what theoretical researchers expect. If social cohesion was to be conceived as one single latent concept, then the second order factor analysis would have resulted in one single factor result. In reality, two different types of social cohesion seem to coexist that cannot be reduced into one single factor.

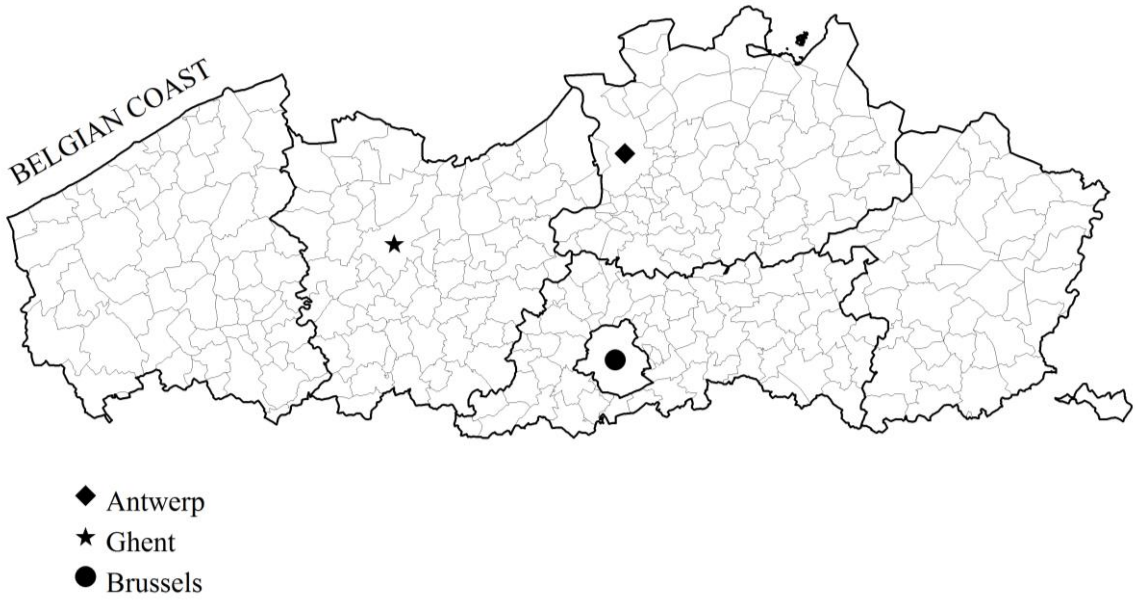
3.5. GEOGRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF SOCIAL COHESION IN FLANDERS

After the operationalisation of social cohesion via factor analysis, it makes sense to look at its dispersal in the Flemish region. In this regard, an insight in the geographical pattern and the occurrence of social cohesion is given. The five social cohesion dimensions that

are elements of traditional and modern social cohesion are considered. The question is whether these several dimensions of social cohesion show similar geographical distribution patterns and overlap or not. To obtain a clear representation of the geographical spread, MapInfo GIS-software is used to analyse the spatial interdependence.

The Flemish region of Belgium is but a small territory, with a total surface of 13,521 square kilometres.[8] As can be observed in the following figure, Flanders has five provinces, comprising its 308 communities. Indicated on the map are the two biggest cities of Antwerp (461,496 inhabitants in 2006) and Ghent (233,120 inhabitants in 2006). The city of Brussels is part of the autonomous metropolitan region of Brussels, which is not included in this analysis on Flemish communities. The region of Brussels is located and marked in the middle of the Flemish region.

FIGURE 5 MAP OF FLANDERS



The social cohesion dimensions are separately presented on the following page, starting with the dimensions that form the more modern type of social cohesion and thereafter the dimensions that form the more traditional type of social cohesion. Communities with a low level of a social cohesion dimension are coloured white, while communities with a

[8] Map of Flanders within Europe can be found in the Appendix.

high level of social cohesion are coloured black. For every dimension, five equal groups are made and the ranges in the legend represent the standardised coefficients of the mean sum scales that were made after the first order factor analysis.

FIGURE 6 DISTRIBUTION OF ABSENCE OF DEPRIVATION

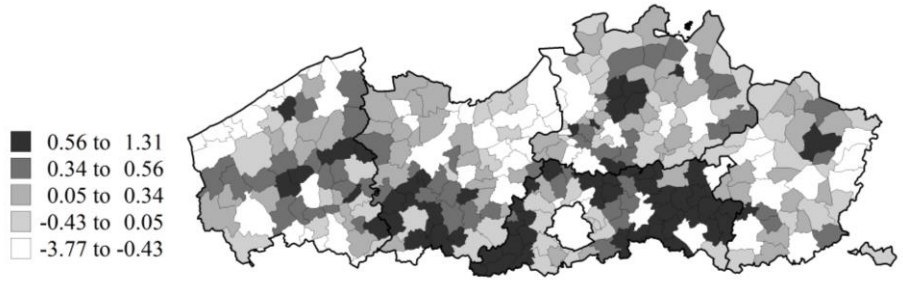


FIGURE 7 DISTRIBUTION OF ABSENCE OF VIOLENT CRIME

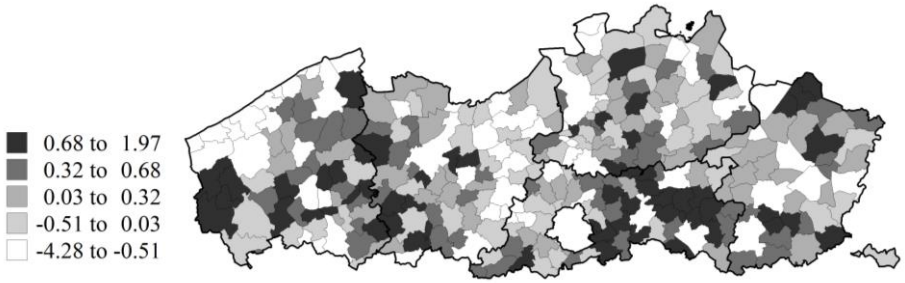


FIGURE 8 SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF RELIGIOUS INVOLVEMENT

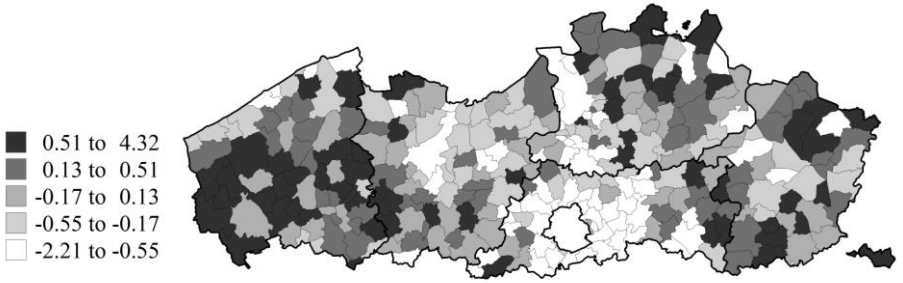


FIGURE 9 DISTRIBUTION OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

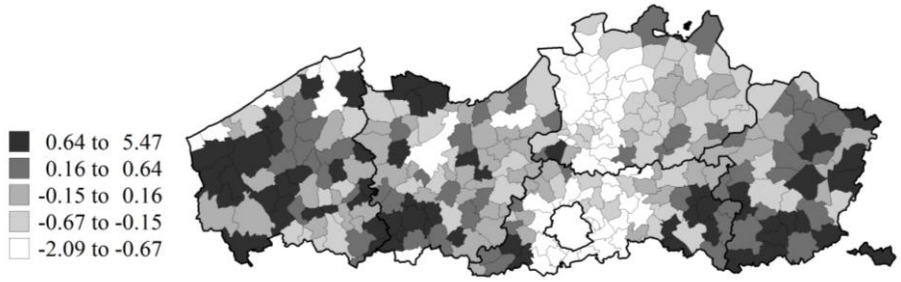
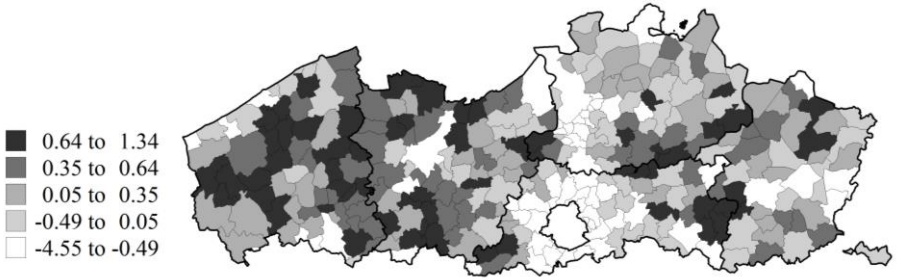


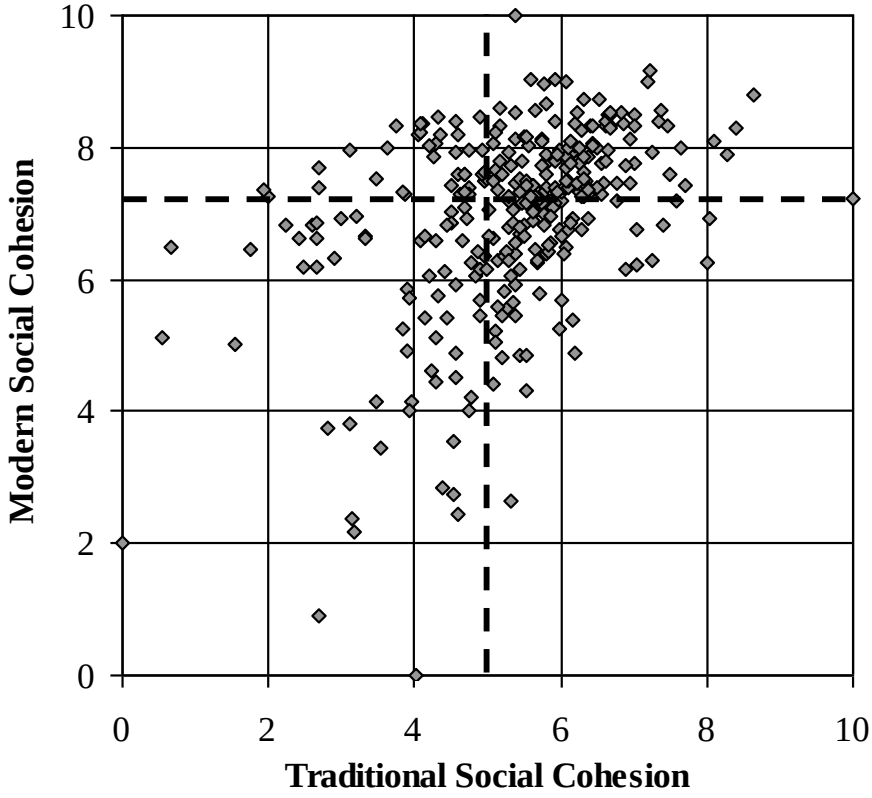
FIGURE 10 DISTRIBUTION OF ABSENCE OF PROPERTY CRIME



A clear pattern emerges when investigating the modern social cohesion dimensions of absence of violent crime and absence of deprivation. The main cities of Ghent and Antwerp are characterised by the lowest scores, just as the cities near the coast line. Central cities in general are characterised by lower levels of modern social cohesion. These communities will thus be characterised by more violent crimes and deprivation. Social cohesion is mostly observed in the more prosperous communities at some distance of a metropolitan centre. The communities do not appear to form strong clusters of communities with high or low levels of social cohesion. In every province, there is wide variety regarding these two dimensions of social cohesion. With regard to the traditional social cohesion, another geographical pattern arises. The presence of religious involvement, civic engagement and the absence of property crime is mainly found in the geographically peripheral provinces of Flanders. Reversely, the entire urbanised centre of the Flemish region is characterised by low levels of traditional social cohesion. These communities are highly secularised, are less engaged in civic affairs and are prone to property crime. Contrary to the modern dimensions, the coastal communities do not form one region with low social cohesion scores; there is differentiation between these communities.

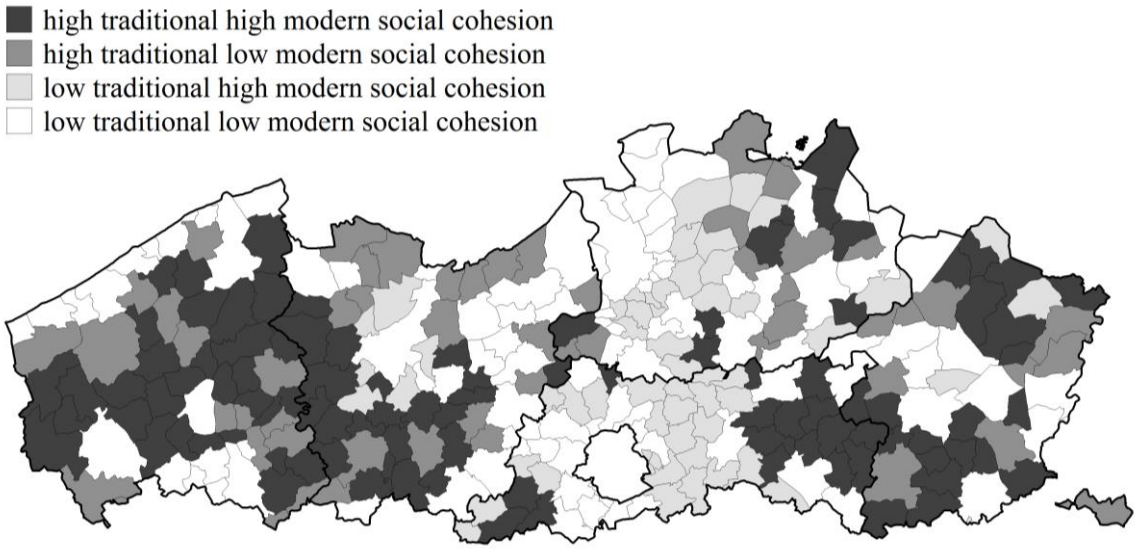
It is clear that large cities in Flanders, such as Ghent and Antwerp, score low on both modern as well as traditional dimensions of social cohesion. Consequently, the question can be raised which communities are characterised by both traditional and modern social cohesion. Therefore, taking the second order sum scales that are recoded from 0 to 10, the geographical distribution can be illustrated in a second manner, by making a two-dimensional overview of the distribution of both types of social cohesion. When indicating the score on modern social cohesion on the vertical axis and traditional social cohesion on the horizontal axis, it is clear that most communities in Flanders score relatively high on both forms of social cohesion. The majority of communities is located in the upper right corner of the scatter plot in Figure 11. The correlation between modern and traditional social cohesion is 0.437.

FIGURE 11 SCATTER PLOT OF MODERN AND TRADITIONAL SOCIAL COHESION



When one divides this scatter plot into four quadrants based on the median values of traditional social cohesion (5.51) and modern social cohesion (7.26), one can investigate which communities can 'combine the best of both worlds'. These median values are indicated by the dotted lines in Figure 11. The four quadrants are plotted on the map of Flanders in Figure 12 and represent those communities that score high on both dimensions (see upper right quadrant in Figure 11), those communities with the lowest scores on both dimensions (see lower left quadrant in Figure 11), and those communities that form intermediary groups (see lower right and upper left quadrants in Figure 11) combining a high and a low score.

FIGURE 12 DISTRIBUTION OF MODERN AND TRADITIONAL SOCIAL COHESION



In Figure 12, one can observe that the central cities of Antwerp and Ghent and all the coastal communities form the group of less well-off communities with regard to both types of social cohesion. Furthermore, the communities around the city of Antwerp and around the region of Brussels are also lacking both types of social cohesion. Border communities around the big city of Ghent seem not to be affected by a lack of social cohesion. Communities that succeed in maintaining traditional cohesion, while obtaining also high scores on the modern form of social cohesion, are not found in the centre area of the region. Both traditional as well as modern social cohesion seem to be concentrated within the province of West Vlaanderen on the left side of the figure, with the exception of the coastal communities, and the province of Limburg on the right sight, with the exception of the middle area around the regional cities of Genk and Hasselt. Some areas around the borders of these two peripheral provinces as well, seem to achieve high levels of both types of social cohesion. Looking at the communities that only score high on one type of social cohesion, it can be noted that communities surrounded by communities that score low on both types of social cohesion are often characterised by a low level of traditional social cohesion and remain a high level of modern social cohesion. This is especially the case when considering the communities around the big cities and the metropolitan region of Brussels. Communities that are only characterised by traditional social cohesion are rarely visible in the centre of the Flemish region and more present in the peripheral area.

3.6. Conclusion

The objective of this chapter was to investigate the connection between theory and empirical research. The research question was investigated whether social cohesion in theory coincides with social cohesion in empirical research.

Based on a series of factor analyses, the extensive set of community indicators of social cohesion was reduced to social cohesion dimensions that were used in a second order factor analysis. These first order factors were labelled on the basis of their indicators as Religious Involvement, Absence of Property Crime, Absence of Violent Crime, Absence of Deprivation, Income Equality and Civic Engagement. In the second order factor analysis, it was demonstrated that it is empirically impossible to combine all these social cohesion dimensions into a single comprehensive all-encompassing factor of social cohesion. Two factors of social cohesion emerged, which are labelled Traditional Social Cohesion and Modern Social Cohesion. These two types of social cohesion were certainly not incommensurable and were even positively correlated. However, they were clearly too distinct to be able to be summarised methodologically in one latent variable.

Hence, theory and empirical research do not tell the same story. It is noticeable when merging the indicators for the separate dimensions of social cohesion, that theory presumes wrongly that all indicators form one-dimensional concepts such as social order and social solidarity. Empirically, it is impossible to find one single social order concept and one single social solidarity concept. Especially when including these different dimensions in a second order exploratory factor analysis, it is clear why some dimensions in the first factor analyses already split into more dimensions than envisioned by theory. On the one hand, social order, indicated by the absence of property crime, goes hand in hand with the more traditional form of social cohesion; on the other hand, social order, indicated by the absence of violent crime, goes hand in hand with the more modern form of social cohesion. Also social solidarity is not a one-dimensional concept and causes another problem when attempting to make social cohesion operational. Not only can it not be measured by a single factor, it also includes an ambiguous element that cannot be attributed to one of the two final types of social cohesion. More precisely, income equality does not correspond with the dimension of absence of deprivation. Furthermore, it does

not fit to one of the two types of social cohesion and is excluded from the final factors of modern and traditional social cohesion.

The two factor solution is something that is not envisioned by theory, especially when looking at research that tries to comprehend social cohesion in a multidimensional way (Berger-Schmitt, 2002; Forrest & Kearns, 2001; Harell & Stolle, 2011; Jenson, 1998; Kearns & Forrest, 2000). One can argue that the traditional dichotomy of social cohesion in pre-modern and modern societies is implementable once more, as developed by traditional sociologists, such as Durkheim (1893) and Tönnies (1887). In this perspective, different communities rely on different mechanisms to maintain their social cohesion, because they are in a certain developing stage. However, while traditional sociologists look at an evolution between a more pre-modern and modern form of social cohesion, this empirical exercise was conducted on data from the same period. Therefore, it cannot be concluded that social cohesion is changing or shifting in content. The two different forms of social cohesion exist next to each other. As seen in the geographical distribution of the two forms, a considerable amount of still 90 communities scores well on both types of social cohesion. Furthermore, by no means should the use of the term traditional be equated with the way traditional sociological theorists used this expression when describing pre-modern communities. Current traditional social cohesion is seen as a rather conventional form of social cohesion, as the social capital dimension seems to be the key element of this factor. The fact that one is even able to identify this traditional form of social cohesion in a post-industrialised and densely populated region like Flanders further strengthens the argument that this form of social cohesion certainly is not obsolete. The main conclusion is that a focus on a single type of social cohesion is one-sided and insufficient to make social cohesion operational. It is clear that several mechanisms for maintaining social cohesion are available. This conclusion is already put forward by empirical research that tries to make social capital and social cohesion operational in Europe. Several authors have already observed a difference that is similar to this typology of traditional and modern social cohesion (Bekkers & Veldhuizen, 2008; Pichler & Wallace, 2007). This strengthens the claim that the pattern that is found in this empirical exercise is not just typical for the Flemish case, but may be repeatable in other European regions and societies as well.

Nonetheless, it should be acknowledged that the current exercise certainly has a number of shortcomings that point at the need for further research on this theme. To begin with, ideally, the exercise should be able to use individual level survey data for all these 308 communities to establish more ideal indicators for especially the communitarian dimensions of social cohesion. Common values, social control and especially place attachment and identity are not directly measurable at this moment. So far, not a single research team has been able to realise a survey in each and every community via a representative sample of inhabitants in a wide region such as Flanders. Moreover, it has to be acknowledged that the Flemish region is only a limited entity, without strong patterns of inequality or exclusion. To repeat this kind of endeavour in other social and cultural contexts and if possibly on a larger scale is therefore recommended. For a number of concepts, one has to rely on measurements that are idiosyncratic to the Flemish and Belgian political context. Therefore, it remains to be ascertained what other information could be used in other political contexts. Next, the reasons why income equality could not be included in the final operationalisation of social cohesion were only touched upon briefly. Also the geographical distribution of social cohesion makes clear that some processes are not part of the concept, but do influence it. In this way, it seems that urbanisation and economic development are two developments that influence social cohesion in two ways. While it seems that they relate to modern social cohesion positively, they relate to traditional social cohesion negatively. Empirical research on this is needed, as one cannot make strong claims about the relationship between urbanisation, economic development and social cohesion at this point. Finally, some questions that are raised after this empirical exercise cannot be solved without longitudinal data. More precisely, whether or not the traditional form of social cohesion is gradually being replaced by a modern form of cohesion, remains to be investigated as this requires longitudinal data that are not available for the moment. While it is always easy to equate the demise of traditional forms of solidarity with a loss of solidarity in general, this one-sided focus obscures the fact that more modern and structural forms of social cohesion seem to be present just as well, and might even become more important in the future.

Chapter 4. SOCIAL COHESION AND TRUST

4.1. INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapters, the focus was placed on the conceptualisation and operationalisation of the concept of social cohesion at the community level. In this and the following chapter, the objective is to investigate whether these cohesion indicators can be used as contextual explanations for individual attitudes and behaviours.

More presicely in this chapter, the influence of social cohesion dimensions on the individual attitude of trust is examined. Trust is seen as an important attitude, as it has several positive outcomes for the social, economic and political system within societies and communities. To illustrate, it forms the basis of a well-functioning, stable and flourishing democracy; it fosters a high level of societal well-being; and it promotes economic prosperity and growth (Coleman, 1988; Fukuyama, 1995; Nannestad, 2008; Putnam, 2000). People who trust are also more likely to take higher risks when engaging in social relations and to associate and cooperate more in social networks (Coleman, 1990; Gambetta, 1988). Therefore, trust is seen as a necessary precondition for members of a community to tackle collective action problems, to solve shared concerns and to improve the general well-being of their community as a whole (Hays & Kogl, 2007). It helps reducing transaction costs and improving sociability and as a consequence, it is a

prerequisite for social interactions with others (Knack & Keefer, 1997; Putnam, 2000). Next to the evaluation of these functions of trust for individuals, communities and societies, it is also important to consider the roots and sources of trust. Several scholars have put forward several individual, communal and societal explanations of trust (Hardin, 2006; Putnam, 2000; Sztompka, 1999). These determinants form the main focus within this chapter and, as already mentioned, the relationship between trust and the social cohesion dimensions are studied in more detail.

This chapter starts with the conceptualisation of trust. The importance of trust from a historical perspective is investigated, before a clear definition of trust is provided. The most essential form of trust in contemporary communities is investigated in detail, while other forms of trust will only be mentioned briefly. Subsequently, the relationships between trust and the several social cohesion dimensions are considered, before introducing the data and multilevel regression method. With regard to the data and method section, special attention is given to the design and development of the Social Cohesion Indicators in Flanders survey that is used and to the operationalisation of trust. The result section gives insights in the empirical relationships between the several social cohesion dimensions at the community level and trust at the individual level. Finally, strengths and caveats of this chapter are discussed in the conclusion.

4.2. CONCEPTUALISATION OF TRUST

The interest in trust has been thriving over the past decades, as modern communities are often confronted with a decline in trust that goes together with other negative consequences for the individual and the community (Uslaner, 2002). In what follows, a brief history of the relevance of trust in pre-modern and modern societies is given. The type of trust that is most essential in present times is further described by looking at the characteristics of it and a useful definition is put forward.

4.2.1. TRUST IN PRE-MODERN COMMUNITIES AND MODERN SOCIETIES

The evolution from a more traditional type of community to a more modern type of society is important to consider when studying the attitude of trust. The academic interest in the term has predominantly flourished in the past decades and trust has therefore become a popular concept in modern life. However, the type of trust that is most frequently observed in modern times is different from the type of trust that was envisioned as necessary for traditional communities to function and for pre-modern social relations and networks to be build and maintained. Therefore, in what follows, a brief conceptualisation of trust in pre-modern times is offered before looking at the significance of trust in modern life.

In pre-modern societies, social life was predominantly built around the nuclear family unit. Trust was necessary to interact with each other, in order to overcome collective action problems. It was a particular type of trust that was placed in people from the own social 'in-group'. As a consequence of these close-tied connections between members of the same community, past experiences with other group members were extended and information regarding other group members was comprehensive. In order to be able to work together and to undertake collective action, trust was placed in people that were familiar and for which knowledge was a determining factor to be confident about their actions towards others (Hardin, 2006). Past experiences and strong social ties therefore formed the key determinants of trust. In traditional pre-modern communities, trust was mostly seen as having confidence in those others that surrounded you. This confidence was thus specifically directed to a certain person or social group (Uslaner, 2002). Well-functioning, small and pre-modern communities were further defined by intensive interactions between inhabitants, bonding networks and consequently strong dependency upon fellow inhabitants. These communities were characterised by a homogeneous population with strong similarities between them (Durkheim, 1893; Tönnies, 1887).

The kind of trust that is often referred to when speaking of this type of trust in pre-modern communities is 'particularised trust' (Freitag & Traunmüller, 2009; Newton, 2007; Putnam, 2000), 'thick trust' (Wollebæk & Selle, 2002), 'knowledge-based trust' (Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994) or 'strategic trust' (Uslaner, 2002). These synonyms are

used by many scholars and refer to trust that is placed in people one has extended and personal knowledge on. It is a certain type of specific trust in known others that relates to strong ties, as it is usually shaped by intensive and daily contacts with others and is related with common rituals and traditions (Granovetter, 1973). Noticeably, pre-modern communities were small units and this kind of trust was therefore possible, while the development into more modern societies changed the most essential sort of trust that was necessary to interact with others. De facto, this pre-modern type of trust fostered bonding networks, but did not contain the basis for bridging networks that were necessary in modern societies. As Newton argues: *"At any rate, modern large-scale and heterogeneous society cannot be based upon particularized or thick trust, which is why attention has concentrated on generalized social trust."* (Newton, 2007: 348). This quote makes clear that in more modern societies, the meaning of trust has changed. The type of trust that is most prominent in current communities is referred to as 'social trust' (Delhey & Newton, 2003; Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005), 'generalised trust' (Freitag & Traunmüller, 2009; Nannestad, 2008), 'thin trust' (Khodyakov, 2007), 'moralistic trust' (Uslaner, 2002), or 'interpersonal trust' (Leigh, 2006a; Levi, 1998). It refers to placing faith in unknown others. This type of trust is self-evidently more important in contemporary societies that are characterised by an extended growing mobility, complexity and heterogeneity. As a consequence, impersonal relationships are more frequent and strong social ties in daily life weaken. As Uslaner expresses this opinion: *"Generalized trust is a feature of modern society"* (Uslaner, 2002: 9).

The evolution of trust is therefore one that coincides with the important social changes that coincided with the processes of industrialisation, modernisation and urbanisation. As social ties between families become weaker and loose ties with strangers become more prominent in daily life, the importance of particularised trust diminishes. Generalised trust becomes more important with regard to interactions with unknown others. Information is more limited and past experiences with others even become absent. As Fukuyama (1995) describes it with regard to trust in the 20th century, trust in unknown others is necessary in all spheres of daily life and most of all in the economic sphere. Economic activities are nowadays part of our social life and are influenced by this cultural attitude of trust: *"one of the most important lessons we can learn from an examination of economic life is that a nation's well-being, as well as its ability to compete, is conditioned by a single, pervasive cultural characteristic: the level of trust inherent in the*

society" (Fukuyama, 1995: 7). Fukuyama, by investigating interactions in the economic sphere, further illustrates that trust is a force that makes interactions possible, serving the economy and general well-being of a society. Although currently, one speaks of the 'information age', this does not mean that trust is reducible to information (Fukuyama, 1995: 25). While a stranger's trustworthiness is not evident or proven, one has many encounters and as a consequence also many interpersonal relations with strangers. Trust is inevitably placed in people one has little or no previous experiences with and therefore relates to faith in people for which information is scarce and only general (Nannestad, 2008). This kind of trust in unknown others relates to weak ties as it merely constitutes the attitude of trust towards the unknown and undefined other (Granovetter, 1973). It is this sort of trust that forms the basis for bridging networks within a community (Freitag & Traunmüller, 2009; Granovetter, 1973; Newton, 1999; Uslaner, 2002). For this latter reason, it is most important to search for determinants within contemporary communities why people trust the unknown other. As a result, it is opted to investigate trust within the unknown other. More precisely, it is demonstrated that the importance of this kind of trust in contemporary communities and societies increases, as interactions with undefined others accelerate and knowledge about these others diminishes (Newton, 2007; Putnam, 2000).

The evolution from pre-modern to modern communities has altered the nature of trust. A simple rational choice argument would explain trust by emphasising a cognitive evaluation of the trustworthiness of the other person (Hardin, 2006). Following this logic, first of all, interest can be seen as a reason to trust. Someone is trusted, because this person has an interest in keeping the relationship with the one who trusts. Next, the recognition of a shared moral commitment and the belief in the current and future relationship may create trust. Finally, trust may be given on the basis of knowledge about the psychological and character dispositions of the one who is trusted (Hardin, 2006: 17). It is evident that this trust on a rational basis is less prominent in modern communities with less information about others. As Fukuyama refers to this rational manner of explaining trust: *"It should also be quite evident that people do not always pursue utility, however defined, in a "rational" way, that is, by considering available alternatives and choosing the one that maximizes utility in the long run. Indeed, it is possible to argue that people are usually not rational in this sense"* (Fukuyama, 1995: 20). He further explains: *"[…] it is very questionable whether human beings act as individual utility maximizers*

rather than seeing themselves as parts of larger social groups" (Fukuyama, 1995: 21). It is acknowledged that although information is scarce, people will trust others. It must therefore be concluded that people are not always rational in their trusting behaviours towards others (Newton, 2007). For this reason, a definition should be developed that is applicable to the current context of modern communities. As the focus is on trust that is necessary in contemporary communities, the emphasis is placed on the general type of trust that is necessary to interact with unknown strangers.

4.2.2. DEFINITION OF TRUST

Trust is said to be *"the chicken soup of social life"* (Uslaner, 2002: 1). It often refers as a *"rationale for getting involved with other people and working toward compromises"* (Uslaner, 2002: 15). However, these rather vague descriptions of trust focus primarily on the diverse positive outcomes for the individual and the society it is said to generate. There are several conceptualisations of trust that can be found in the literature. To illustrate, trust is considered as a variety of phenomena by Levi (1998: 78): *"Trust is, in fact, a holding word for a variety of phenomena that enable individuals to take risks in dealing with others, that solve collective action problems, or that promote willingness to act in ways that seem contrary to standard definitions of self-interests."* In this conceptualisation, trust is argued to be a broad concept, though trust involves taking risks in relationships with others and thus occupying a rather vulnerable position. As Uslaner phrases it: *"To prosper, we must take risks. And these risks involve trusting other people. When we trust others, we push aside areas where we disagree and look for common ground."* (Uslaner, 2002: 250) This uncertainty that is emphasised is further argued to be the main focus in the study of trust. Why do people interact with other people? Why do people take a risk by interacting with – more precisely – unknown people? Because they lay trust in them. Many authors focus on this belief that is placed in others that one does not know. The uncertainty that goes hand in hand with interacting with others is said to be possible when people place faith in others, when they show confidence in others, when they trust others. Sztomka (1999: 25) frames this uncertainty as follows: *"Trust is a bet about the future contingent actions of others"*. More articulated, Gambetta (2000: 217) describes trust as *"a particular level of the subjective probability with which an agent assesses that another agent or group of agents will perform a particular action, both before*

he can monitor such action (or independently of his capacity ever to be able to monitor it) and in a context in which it affects his own action." Hence, trust can be seen as an essential precondition for engaging in social relationships with others and implies belief in others and commitment towards their future actions (Sztompka, 1999: 25-26). Knowledge about these others becomes limited and the bet that is placed in others to look after our interests and to avoid deliberate harmful actions becomes riskier and more uncertain. Therefore, it is most important to investigate the characteristics that foster this kind of trust. As Seligman argues: *"[T]rust is some sort of belief in the goodwill of the other, given the opaqueness of other's intentions and calculations"* (Seligman, 1997: 43). It refers to expectations regarding the actions of others and does not merely consider future possibilities. This is similar to the definition of trust by Uslaner, who describes trust as: *"a moral value that reflects an optimistic worldview and helps us explain why people reach out to others in their communities who may be different from (and less fortunate than) themselves."* (Uslaner, 2002: 16). Although he makes a small difference between generalised and moralistic trust, as generalised trust is said to be based on moralistic trust, the roots of them are identical. For generalised trust, Uslaner uses the following description: *"Generalized trust is the perception that most people are part of your moral community"* (Uslaner, 2002: 26). Therefore, this kind of trust is seen as *"a measure of the scope of your community"* (Uslaner, 2002: 26). This scope is thus more limited than when he refers to moralistic trust that is not directed directly or indirectly to a certain person or group. This type of trust is more considered to be a general outlook on human nature (Uslaner, 2002: 17).

Trust implies an expectation that the faith someone places in others will not be harmed, even if the information one has on these others is limited to absent. Therefore, in this chapter, the definition of Newton is used as a starting point: *"[Trust is] the belief that others will not deliberately or knowingly do us harm, if they can avoid it, and will look after our interests, if this is possible"* (Delhey & Newton, 2003: 105; 2005: 311; Newton, 2001: 202; 2007: 343). In this description, trust is seen as the reason why one believes in others to do the right thing, to have the right intentions and to be reliable (Hardin, 2006). Consequently, it reflects a certain belief in the benevolence of human nature in general (Paxton, 2007; Uslaner, 2002).

Before the relationship between trust and social cohesion is considered, two additional comments should be made with reference to generalised trust. First of all, generalised trust in contemporary communities refers to a certain type of trust that revolves around human interactions between people and not around trust or confidence that is placed in institutions. This latter kind of trust refers to a more 'faceless commitment' and confidence towards institutions and organisations such as parliaments and courts (Giddens, 1990: 83-88). The focus in this chapter is placed in trust that deals with interpersonal interactions with unknown persons and social groups such as colleagues or neighbours. Secondly, trust is placed in people because it is necessary in social interactions with strangers in present communities. It does not relate to trust that may be referred to as 'political trust'. This kind of political trust relates to trust that is placed on certain politicians, political institutions and organisations, and political systems (Marien, 2011). As the focus is placed on the social cohesion context and its potential influence on trust, generalised trust is chosen to be investigated. The motivation behind this choice is that explanations of generalised trust relate to more social factors, while explanations of political trust relate to more political characteristics (Newton, 2007: 352-353). It is further observed that it is trust, which generates well-functioning governments and makes them better (Uslaner, 2002: 8).

4.3. TRUST AND SOCIAL COHESION

The objective of this chapter is to shed light on how social cohesion within a community promotes trust. The emphasis is laid on the societal theory that envisions a positive relationship between social cohesion and trust. Societal theories argue that trust can be seen as a collective property that individuals create and use. Trust is conceived as an indivisible social good within a society. Social, economic and political circumstances may influence trust and as a consequence also the 'climate of trust' within a community or society (Newton, 2007: 349-351). It is further argued that people tend to associate and socialise more with others that belong to their own group. This group can be defined in terms of economic, social, cultural, religious or ethnic characteristics (Delhey & Newton, 2005).

Social cohesion can be measured via several dimensions that are made operational in Chapter 3. These dimensions are (1) common values and civic culture, measured via religious involvement; (2) social order and social control, measured via absence of property crime and absence of violent crime; (3) social solidarity and reductions in wealth disparities, measured via absence of deprivation; and (4) social networks and social capital, measured via civic engagement.[9] The relationships between these dimensions and trust are considered hereafter, but the general assumption is that social cohesion will relate positively to trust in the unknown other.

Firstly, trust may be influenced by culture, shared values and norms to a certain extent (Uslaner, 2000, 2002). Consequently, religious involvement that indicates a civic culture is assumed to influence trust as well in a positive way. More precisely, the presence of a strong religious subculture in a community will foster homogeneity and subsequently promote trust (Moïsi, 2009). A similar perspective is offered by the psychological idea of an imagined community, whereby social connections between people are based on shared values and cultural ideas (Calhoun, 1991). As Fukuyama phrases this idea: *"As a general rule, trust arises when a community shares a set of moral values in such a way as to create expectations of regular and honest behavior. To some extent, the particular character of those values is less important than the fact that they are shared"* (Fukuyama, 1995: 153). Cultural rules and habits may form the ground for people to trust unknown others (Fukuyama, 1995). Contrary, people may feel threatened by the loss of cultural dominance, which may impede their level of generalised trust (Boix & Posner, 1998; Lam, 2006). Nonetheless, it is recognised that cultural and religious diversity do not always yield consistent or strong negative effects on generalised trust (Hooghe, Reeskens, Stolle, & Trappers, 2009; Reeskens, 2009). This dimension of social cohesion does indicate a belief system that influences everyday understandings and generalised trust. Empirical evidence demonstrates that this influence of religion on social attitudes and behaviours still continues to exist, despite of processes of secularisation (Botterman, Hooghe, & Bekkers, 2009; van Ingen & Dekker, 2012).

[9] The fifth theoretical dimension of social cohesion, community attachment and identity, could not be made operational as community data regarding this dimension is lacking.

Secondly, trust is related to social order, while distrust is related to social disorder (Andrews, 2007; Hardyns, 2010; Pauwels & Hardyns, 2009; Sampson et al., 1997). When crime is apparent, it seems to be well-founded that mistrust within a community will rise. It is assumed that a safe environment will have a positive effect on the attitudes of its inhabitants, while a threatened environment and community disorder will undermine trust. Hence, crime lowers the attitudes of trust and respect between citizens (Alesina & La Ferrara, 2002; Andrews, 2007; Sampson et al., 1997). Nonetheless, a direct link is not always found between crime and trust. Crime and social disorder may first of all create a sense of insecurity and feelings of powerlessness, which in turn may influence the attitude of trust negatively (Ross, Mirowsky, & Pribesh, 2001: 574). Although social order is made operational via two crime factors, the division between property and violent crime is not often made. Therefore, the assumption is that the absence of both forms of social disorder relates positively to generalised trust.

Thirdly, the relation between the absence of deprivation and trust is considered. Like crime, deprivation and social cleavages within a community may prohibit the formation of trust (Delhey & Newton, 2005; Knack & Keefer, 1997; Ross et al., 2001; Stolle, 1998). In other words, if the deprivation level within a community rises, the socio-economic cleavage will develop simultaneously and trust becomes jeopardised (Putnam, 2000; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009b). The presence of social distances is thus considered to be potentially detrimental to trust, as it will be more inclined to foster processes of distrust and pessimism (Delhey & Newton, 2005; Uslaner & Brown, 2005). Contrary, the absence of deprivation indicates a reduction in social distances between inhabitants and forms a catalyst for generalised trust (Delhey & Newton, 2005; Gustavsson & Jordahl, 2008; Leigh, 2006).

Fourthly, a positive relationship between civic engagement and trust is assumed. As stated by Putnam (1993; 2000), it is not necessary to participate oneself if civic engagement within the community one resides in is flourishing and other people within this community participate. This envisioned spill-over effect describes how social networks and civic engagement lay the basis for attitudes of reciprocity, solidarity and trust (Putnam, 2000). It is expected that civic engagement and trust form a virtuous circle, though the empirical evidence is rather mixed (Delhey & Newton, 2005). For instance, Quintelier (2008) investigates the relation between trust and participation in

several manners and concludes that while membership is slightly positively related to participation in voluntary associations, it has not a significant relation with political participation. A virtuous circle further refers to a bi-directional relationship between civic engagement and trust (Brehm & Rahn, 1997; van Ingen, 2009). In this chapter, the assumption is that the contextual element of civic engagement influences the individual attitude of trust.

4.4. DATA AND METHOD

As already argued, both individual as well as community characteristics explain why people trust each other (Alesina & La Ferrara, 2002; Sztompka, 1999). There are various theories, but no general theory on the origin of generalised trust (Delhey & Newton, 2005). The main research question in this chapter is whether the social cohesion dimensions have an influence on generalised trust. Additionally, also other contextual and individual level theories are examined. Therefore, both individual as well as community variables are presented, next to the dependent variable of generalised trust. Furthermore, the technique of multilevel regression analysis is used as the main research question implies a hierarchical question, including two levels. But first, the recent high-standard Social Cohesion Indicators in Flanders survey is introduced.

4.4.1. SOCIAL COHESION INDICATORS IN FLANDERS SURVEY

The *Social Cohesion Indicators in Flanders* survey is a cross-sectional survey within Flanders that was conducted in 2009. In total, 2,080 respondents were interviewed face-to-face in 40 different communities, representative for the 308 communities in Flanders. The fieldwork was carried out via the external research company GfK Significant between 8 April 2009 and 31 July 2009. The survey is especially designed to answer multilevel research questions for the Flemish case. Therefore, in what follows, the design of the survey is outlined into more detail.

The survey is developed within the framework of the interuniversity and interdisciplinary research project *Social Cohesion Indicators in Flanders*

(www.socialcohesion.eu). The survey is based on several surveys such as the European Social Survey (ESS), the Survey of Social Networks of the Dutch (SSND) and the Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (SILC). Via cognitive pilot interviews, questions were tested to discover response errors due to wrong understanding, wrong interpretations and wrong judgments regarding terms and concepts as well as to examine the use of show cards (Collins, 2003; Willis, Royston, & Bercini, 1991).

The survey is designed to answer multilevel questions and therefore, it is based on a two-stage cluster sampling. First, groups or clusters of communities are formed in order to minimise differences between communities within the same cluster and maximise differences between communities from different clusters. This cluster analysis is performed using indicators such as population mobility, industrial production, economic performance and other demographic indicators (Hooghe, Vanhoutte, & Bircan, 2010: 4-5).

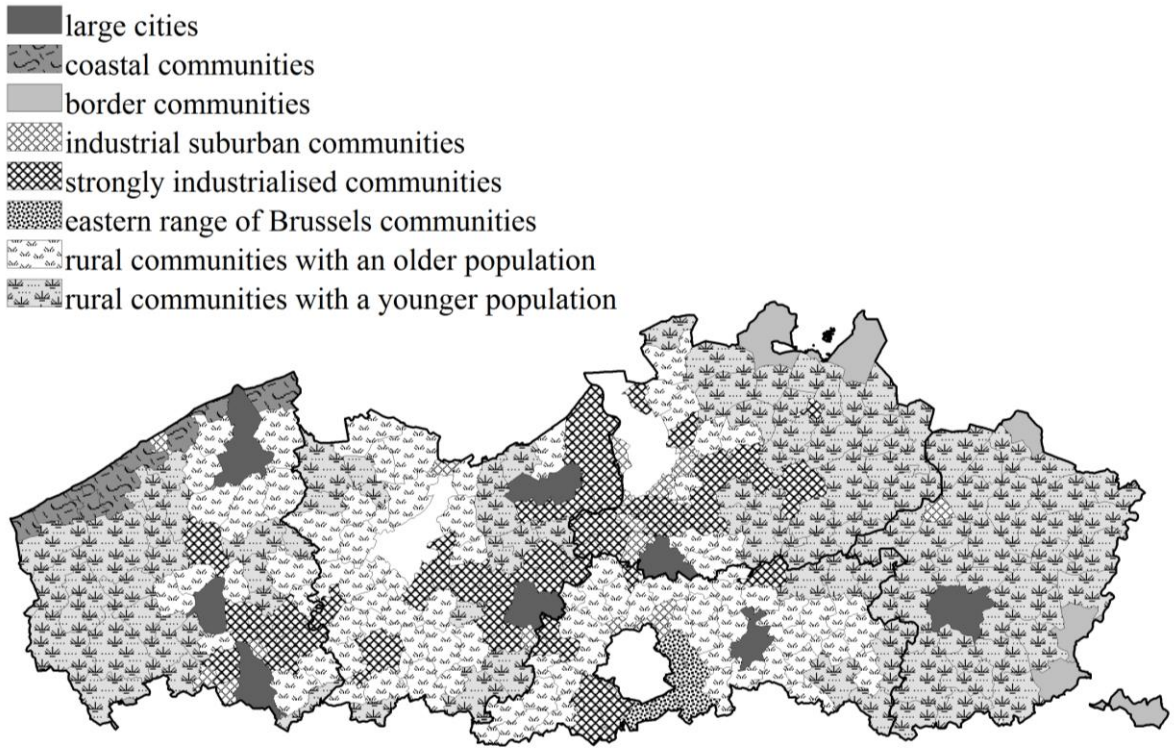
The following clusters are established:

1. a cluster of large cities, including 8 communities of which 4 communities are selected (Aalst, Brugge, Hasselt and Sint-Niklaas);
2. a cluster of coastal communities, including 8 communities of which 1 community is selected (Oostende);
3. a cluster of border communities, including 8 communities of which 1 community is selected (Hoogstraten);
4. a cluster of industrial suburban communities, including 20 communities of which 1 community is selected (Vilvoorde);
5. a cluster of strongly industrialised communities, including 56 communities of which 6 communities are selected (Oudenaarde, Sint-Amands, Temse, Wetteren, Wichelen and Zandhoven);
6. a cluster of eastern border of Brussels communities, including 7 communities of which 1 community is selected (Hoeilaart);
7. a cluster of rural communities with an older population, including 89 communities of which 9 communities are selected (Brasschaat, Damme, Grimbergen, Herne, Lochristi, Merchtem, Oud-Herlee, Sint-Gillis-Waas and Tielt);

8. a cluster of rural communities with a younger population, including 109 communities of which 15 communities are selected (Beringen, Bree, Eeklo, Hamme, Heist-op-den-Berg, Herselt, Houthalen-Helchteren, Houthulst, Maasmechelen, Oudenburg, Pittem, Ronse, Ruiselede, Tongeren and Veurne) (Hooghe et al., 2010).

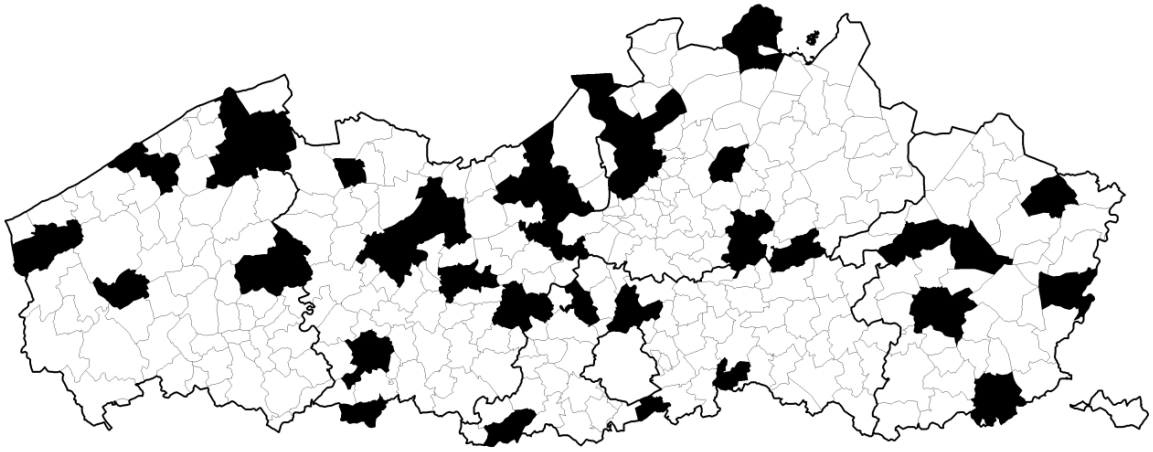
These eight clusters are presented in Figure 13.

FIGURE 13 EIGHT CLUSTERS SOLUTION OF CLUSTER ANALYSIS



Within these eight resulting clusters, 40 communities are randomly selected, with their selection chances dependent on their population size. This procedure is used to ensure a sufficient variation of relevant indicators on the community level. The two big cities of Antwerp and Ghent are left out from the cluster analysis as they are considered outliers that do not fit into one of the eight clusters (Hooghe, Vanhoutte, & Bircan, 2010: 5-6). Nonetheless, they are selected as two of the 40 selected communities that are presented in Figure 14.

FIGURE 14 SELECTED COMMUNITIES



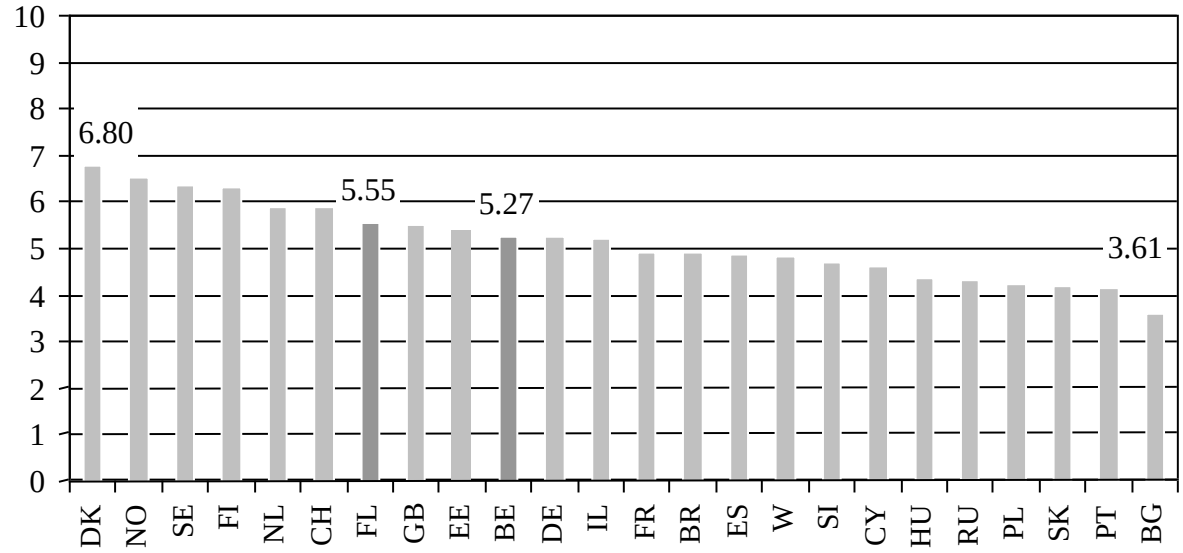
In the second phase of the two-stage sampling, a simple random sample of inhabitants born between 1924 and 1991 living in the selected communities is drawn from the official Belgian National Registry (including both Belgian citizens and foreign nationals). Overall, the survey obtains a response rate of 54 per cent, which can be considered as average for this kind of research within the Belgian context. A response analysis indicates that respondents are representative for the population of these 40 communities, with no significant differences between the sample and the total population with regard to age and gender (Hooghe, Vanhoutte, & Bircan, 2010: 13-14). In sum, the resulting dataset includes information on 2,080 respondents, nested in 40 distinct communities.

4.4.2. MEASUREMENT OF TRUST

Before investigating the operationalisation of trust, it is important to look at the case of Flanders within Europe from a cross-national point of view. For this reason, the European Social Survey that measures generalised trust via a three-item scale, may give an insight in the position of Belgium and more precisely the region of Flanders within Europe (Figure 15). In the wave of 2008, Belgium is an average student in Europe and is part of the middle group with regard to generalised trust. It has a score of 5.27 on the generalised trust scale that ranges from zero to ten. This is more than the average generalised trust level of Europeans, which is 5.15. Nevertheless, it is smaller than the average generalised trust of residents in the Nordic Countries such as Sweden (score of 6.37) or Norway (score of 6.52). When examining the separate regions in Belgium, it is

clear that inhabitants in Flanders (score of 5.55) trust more than inhabitants of Wallonia (score of 4.83) or Brussels (score of 4.91).

FIGURE 15 GENERALISED TRUST IN EUROPE



Note: ISO Country code (country): DK (Denmark), BE (Belgium), BG (Bulgaria), BR (Region of Brussels), CH (Switzerland), CY (Cyprus), DE (Germany), EE (Estonia), ES (Spain), FI (Finland), FL (Flanders), FR (France), GB (United Kingdom), HU (Hungary), IL (Israel), NL (the Netherlands), NO (Norway), PL (Poland), PT (Portugal), RU (Russian Federation), SE (Sweden), SI (Slovenia), SK (Slovakia), W (Wallonia).

Generalised trust is commonly measured using three items that are derived from the 'Rosenberg' or 'faith in people' scale, established in 1956 (Delhey, Newton, & Welzel, 2011; House & Wolf, 1978; Reeskens & Hooghe, 2008). In his article, Rosenberg (1956: 690) investigates 'faith in people' using the following five items that respondents can agree or disagree with:

1. Some people say that most people can be trusted. Others say you can't be too careful in your dealings with people. How do you feel about it?
2. Would you say that most people are more inclined to help others or more inclined to look out for themselves?
3. If you don't watch yourself, people will take advantage of you.
4. No one is going to care much what happens to you, when you get right down to it.
5. Human nature is fundamentally cooperative.

This 'faith in people' scale lays the focus *"on the respondent's feelings about people in general"* (Rosenberg, 1956: 690). It is argued that these items are remarkable accurate as

in this article, people who trust are referred to as ideal citizens (Uslaner, 2002: 10). Derived from these initial items, the generalised trust scale has been developed that is abundantly used in social sciences. On an eleven-point rating scale, the following questions are posed:

1. Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people? (TRUST)
2. Do you think that most people would try to take advantage of you if they got the chance, or would they try to be fair? (HONEST)
3. Would you say that most of the time people try to be helpful or that they are mostly looking out for themselves? (HELP)

These three questions create a valid and reliable measurement of generalised trust and cross-national surveys show that these items are answered in a consistent and non-random manner (Newton, 2007; Zmerli, Newton, & Montero, 2007). Furthermore, the behavioural consequences and the cross-cultural equivalence of this scale have already been tested and established to be robust (Glaeser, Laibson, & Sacerdote, 2002; Reeskens & Hooghe, 2008).

Within the *Social Cohesion Indicators in Flanders* survey too, these three items form a strong generalised trust scale. This can be observed in the exploratory factor analysis in Table 7. The eigenvalue is larger than one and the Cronbach's alpha value is high and indicates an internally valid scale.

TABLE 7 EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS OF GENERALISED TRUST

Items	Factor
Trust	0.786
Honest	0.776
Help	0.570
Eigenvalue	1.545
Explained Variance (%)	51.50
Cronbach's α	0.749

Entries are factor loadings of an exploratory factor analysis (n = 2,075).

Another generalised trust scale that is often used in criminology and neighbourhood studies is similar to this 'faith in people' scale (Hardyns, 2010; Oberwittler, 2004; Völker,

Flap, & Lindenberg, 2007). This kind of trust relates to the trust within loose, vague, irregular and unstructured social contacts within the local community environment. The scale was developed by Sampson and colleagues when investigating the relationship between 'collective efficacy' and crime within neighbourhoods (Sampson et al., 1997). This 'collective efficacy' concept is measured by merging a scale that indicates social control and a scale that indicates social trust. This latter scale expresses generalised trust within geographically demarcated unknown others. The level of information is thus a bit higher than the level of information that is provided by the generalised trust scale. For this reason, this scale will hereafter be referred to as the 'community trust' scale. On a five-point scale, ranging from totally disagree to totally agree, the following items make up this community trust scale:

1. People around here are willing to help their neighbours. (HELP)
2. This is a close-knit neighbourhood. (CLOSE)
3. People in this neighbourhood can be trusted. (TRUST)
4. People in this neighbourhood generally don't get along with each other. (ALONG)
5. Contacts between inhabitants in this neighbourhood are generally positive. (CONTACT)

In the *Social Cohesion Indicators in Flanders* survey, these five items form a strong scale when looking at the exploratory factor analysis in Table 8. The eigenvalue is larger than one and the Cronbach's alpha value indicates an internally valid scale.

TABLE 8 EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS OF COMMUNITY TRUST

Items	Factor
Help	0.749
Close	0.781
Trust	0.626
Along (reversed)	0.557
Contact	0.732
Eigenvalue	2.410
Explained Variance (%)	48.21
Cronbach's α	0.807

Entries are factor loadings of an exploratory factor analysis (n = 2,023).

However, these questions have never been investigated together. The correlation between the two sum scales is 0.287, only indicating a vague association. The two trust scales are thus not identical. However, to investigate the correlations and similarities between the different items within both scales, an additional exploratory factor analysis is conducted. Results of this factor analysis are presented in Table 9.

TABLE 9 EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS OF GENERALISED (GT) AND COMMUNITY (CT) TRUST

Items	Factor 1	Factor 2
Trust (GT)	0.116	**0.781**
Honest (GT)	0.129	**0.763**
Help (GT)	0.138	**0.549**
Help (CT)	**0.736**	0.128
Close (CT)	**0.786**	0.072
Trust (CT)	**0.594**	0.247
Along Reversed (CT)	**0.549**	0.101
Contact (CT)	**0.716**	0.130
Eigenvalue	2.377	1.602
Explained Variance (%)	29.71	20.03
Cronbach's α	0.807	0.749

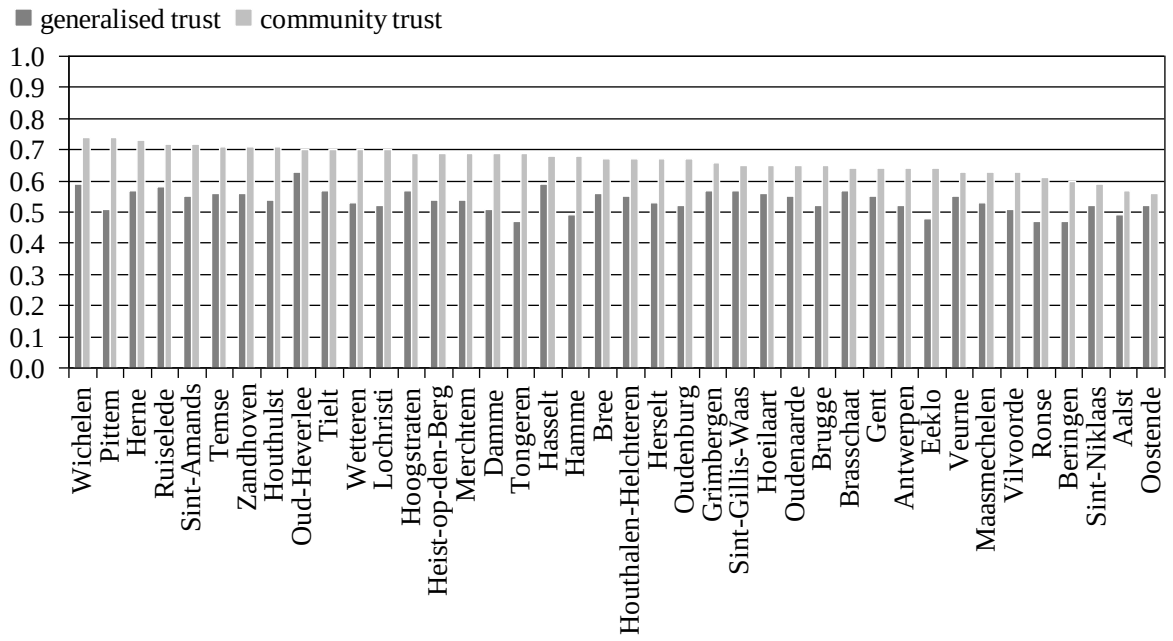
Entries are factor loadings of an exploratory factor analysis (n = 2,020).
Cronbach's alphas calculated on items in bold.

It can be observed that the same factor results are found as in Table 7 and Table 8. Generalised trust in neighbours does not form a common factor with trust in the general other without this geographical demarcation. There are no strong cross-loadings. As Uslaner (2002) already acknowledged in his study on the operationalisation of trust, trust can refer to trust in strangers or trust in friends and family. However, his measurement of trust in neighbours shows a strong loading on both factors relating to trust in strangers and trust in family and friends (Uslaner, 2002: 54). Uslaner expects that *"[g]eneralized trusters have positive views toward both their own in-group and out-groups. But they rank their own groups less highly than do particularized trusters"* (Uslaner, 2002: 32-33). Nonetheless, he has to admit that trust in neighbours is similar to trust in other strangers, as in modern communities, knowledge and information on these is rather limited.

These two trust scales, generalised trust and community trust, will form the two main dependent variables in this chapter. Their determinants may differ significantly. The additional objective in this chapter is to investigate whether the relationship between trust and social cohesion is affected by the geographical information of the unknown other that is trusted or not.

After standardising both scales, both scales can be compared in Figure 16 at the aggregate community level. It is obvious that the average community trust within communities is higher than the average generalised trust within communities. When the means for the total region of Flanders are compared, this becomes evident: people trust the unknown other within their own community (mean of 0.67) more than that they trust the unknown other without this geographical demarcation (mean of 0.54). The lowest average score on generalised trust of 0.47 can be found in Beringen, a rural community with a younger population. The highest average score on generalised trust of 0.63 can be found in Oud-Heverlee, a rural community with an older and rich population. The lowest average score on community trust of 0.56 can be found in Oostende, a coastal community. The highest average score on community trust of 0.74 can be found in Wichelen, a strongly industrialised community.

FIGURE 16 GENERALISED AND COMMUNITY TRUST WITHIN 40 FLEMISH COMMUNITIES



4.4.3. INDIVIDUAL LEVEL VARIABLES

There are ample possible determinants of trust that are proposed in the literature (Delhey & Newton, 2003, 2005; Nannestad, 2008). However, it is often unclear which determinants are most essential as significant relations are not often found (Newton, 2007: 352-353). For instance, Delhey and Newton (2005) propose 35 plausible determinants of trust, but looking at the bivariate associations, they can already conclude that thirteen determinants are not related to trust. Bjørnskov (2007) examines 21 plausible determinants of which only five seem to be related significantly to trust. In this chapter, eleven individual variables are chosen that relate to trust. Someone's trust level is hypothesised to be influenced by personal characteristics, family characteristics and personal resources.

First of all, the individual characteristics of age, gender (men coded one), educational level (nine categories, ranging from no education to obtained a higher education degree at a university) and the dummy of being unemployed[10] are included in the analyses (Sztompka, 1999: 58). It is argued that young persons have less trust in the generalised other, though it is expected that they have a higher level of trust in people they know such as family and friends (Uslaner, 2002: 113). Education is seen as fostering trust, as it exposures people to a more mixed culture, making people more tolerant and less distrustful (Brehm & Rahn, 1997). Highly educated people will have a higher level of trust, while low educated people will have a lower level of trust and are more inclined to only show a high level of particularised trust in those they know (Uslaner, 2002: 113). In other words, trust may be influenced by this life experience (Delhey & Newton, 2003; Newton, 2007). Other authors claim that those who have are more trusting than those who have not. The winners within a society or community are expected to be more inclined to trust other people (Delhey & Newton, 2003; Putnam, 2000; Whiteley, 1999).

[10] For the indicator of income, the OECD equivalence scale is available that controls for the number of household members (Van Doorslaer & Masseria, 2004). The family income is divided by the effective family members and this number is calculated by giving a decreasing weight to every additional member of the household living from the same family income. These weights are 1.0 for the first adult, 0.5 for other persons aged 14 or above, and 0.3 for children below this age. However, this indicator does not correlate with trust and as the percentage of missing values is rather high (12.5 per cent), it is not included within the multivariate models.

However, Uslaner for instance argues that income or financial resources do rarely influence the level of trust (Uslaner, 2002: 113).

Next, the dummies of having a partner and having children are included, as it is assumed that these dummies indicate a stable family life that will foster a positive outlook towards unknown others. The family status of an individual is seen as a vital element in improving a person's social support networks and subsequently are likely to promote generalised trust (Sztompka, 1999: 130-131, 137). They form important life experiences that influence trust in unknown others positively (Newton, 2007).

Religion is taken as a determinant of trust, measured via the dummy of a respondent's Catholic denomination and via church practice (seven categories, ranging from never attending church masses till attending church masses every week)[11]. Catholicism still forms the predominant religion in Flanders with 75 per cent of the respondents indicating that they are Catholic, though church practice has experienced a steep decline in the last decades (Hooghe & Botterman, 2008). The effect of hierarchical religions, such as Catholicism, on trust is rather uncertain. It may have a negative effect on trust (Paxton, 2007; Zak & Knack, 2001), it may have no significant effect at all (Alesina & La Ferrara, 2002), or it may have a positive effect (Greeley, 1997). Here, it is assumed to have a positive effect on trust, as religion encourages adherents to do well towards others and religious attitudes of honesty and generosity towards others may foster social interactions, cooperation and subsequently generalised trust (Greeley, 1997). The strongest effect from these two religious indicators is expected from the religious behaviour of church attendance.

Several authors argue that living in a stable community and being attached to a community has a positive effect on generalised trust (Kang & Kwak, 2003; Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006; Shah, McLeod, & Yoon, 2001). Two dummy variables of homeownership and stable home (living in the same community for more than ten year coded one) are included in the analysis as proxies for community attachment. In Flanders, the large majority of inhabitants owns their residence (81 per cent of the respondents) and is not

[11] Dummy variables that indicate weekly and monthly church practice yield quasi-identical results.

very mobile (62 per cent of the respondents have been living in the same residence for over ten years).

Lastly, the participation variable indicating active involvement in the civil society via membership in a voluntary association is included[12]. It is argued that being member in a voluntary association will create reciprocal networks and will generate trust. Especially active involvement in a voluntary association has a significant and positive influence on trust (Uslaner, 2002: 113). As social networks may lay the basis for attitudes of reciprocity and trust, this variable is included in the models. Trust and participation are thus part of a reciprocal relation at the individual level (Putnam, 1993, 1995; Stolle, 1998; Veenstra, 2002).

4.4.4. COMMUNITY LEVEL VARIABLES

Trust is an instrumental response to the environment (Uslaner, 2002: 253). Community and societal theories often focus on trust in unknown others, which is often fostered in more homogeneous communities. This can be measured via the absence of cleavages and the presence of social cohesion (Costa & Kahn, 2003; Hero, 2003; Knack & Keefer, 1997; Paxton, 2002). Heterogeneity implies the distribution of goods and is therefore seen as reducing trust, commitment and value consensus. Similarity leads to trust, as people hold less prejudice, distrust and stereotypical images about their own in-group members (Rokeach & Rothman, 1965; Rokeach, 1960). Trust relates to interactions with others and thus it is said that people congregate more easily with similar people (Uslaner, 2002). A highly stratified community is assumed to form a barrier or obstacle to trust. Nonetheless, it is necessary to note that consistent negative effects of diversity and heterogeneity on trust are absent, especially when looking at countries within Europe (Reeskens, 2009). Nonetheless, it is important to investigate cleavages relating to income, ethnicity and urbanisation, next to the social cohesion dimensions that were developed in Chapter 3. The most recent and available community level data were collected, referring to 2006.

[12] Passive membership in a voluntary association yields similar results.

The social cohesion dimensions that were established in Chapter 3 are taken as a starting point. These are sum scales that measure (1) religious involvement; (2) absence of property crime; (3) absence of violent crime; (4) absence of deprivation; and (5) civic engagement.

Economic wellbeing and economic diversity are studied via income measurements. In previous contextual research on trust, the foremost important cleavage has been the economic cleavage within a community (Alesina & La Ferrara, 2002; Costa & Kahn, 2003). The general assumption is that more equal societies will perform better. Equality and prosperity at the community level will create more opportunities for individuals to enhance their level of generalised trust (Easterly et al., 2006). Community and equality are reinforcing concepts, yet, it is equality that influences trust when looking at the causal relationship (Uslaner & Brown, 2005; Uslaner, 2002). First of all, the mean income per declaration after fiscal returns within a community is included. It is assumed that richer communities will have a positive effect on the level of trust, as equal communities will also be better societies (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009a). Secondly, the Gini coefficient is used to measure income inequality. This variable was already introduced in Chapter 3, as it was assumed that inequality was an indicator of the social solidarity dimension of social cohesion. Nonetheless, results in Chapter 3 showed that this was not the case. Income equality was not part of the final social cohesion factor solution and even related negatively to certain social cohesion dimensions. The relationship between income inequality and trust as a consequence appears somewhat underspecified. Income inequality and values such as trust and reciprocity show an ambiguous relation with each other (Harell & Stolle, 2011). Especially in Flanders, this may be the case as income inequality is strongly related to income (Pearson correlation of 0.721). The argument against income inequality is that the absence of income inequality does not measure equality per se (Uslaner, 2000, 2002). The absence of deprivation is more important, which is already included as a dimension of social cohesion.

Trust is more difficult to be formed in more ethnic heterogeneous communities (Alesina, Baqir, & Easterly, 1999; Alesina & La Ferrara, 2002). People will trust each other less in more diverse neighbourhoods (Gijsberts, van der Meer, & Dagevos, 2011; Putnam, 2007). The presence of foreigners may bring about different conceptions of the common good and this can hinder trust (Delhey & Newton, 2005: 312). However, other scholars argue

that focus is often placed on the United States and that when emphasis is placed on Europe, migration and diversity do not influence trust in a consistent negative way (Hooghe et al., 2009). Ethnic heterogeneity at the community level is first of all measured via the static diversity measure, namely the percentage of foreigners within a community. There is variation regarding this demographic character between the 40 communities. Self-evidently, border communities have high rates of foreigners. In Hoogstraten, which is near the Dutch border, nearly one fifth of the population is foreign (19.9 per cent of the inhabitants). Smaller and more rural communities have almost no foreigners. For instance, Oudenburg has only 0.6 per cent of foreign residents. However, as the foreign population within border communities may merely refer to foreigners from the neighbouring countries, four additional measurements of ethnic presence are considered (Vervoort, Flap, & Dagevos, 2010). First, the percentage of foreigners outside the European Union is considered and second, the percentage of foreigners outside Europe is considered. It is assumed that these percentages have a more pronounced negative influence on trust (Hooghe et al., 2009; Reeskens & Hooghe, 2009). The foreigners that may form a threat to generalised trust relate to those that do not belong to the same European political constellation of the European Union. Albeit Europe itself may form a border as a continent, as foreigners outside Europe are often less similar to us. The third and fourth additional indicators control for the percentage of foreigners within the European Union and within Europe. Furthermore, a Herfindahl index is included, taking into account all foreign nationalities within a community. Herfindahl indexes are abundantly used to measure diversity (Bekkers, 2011; Putnam, 2007). The index is calculated as follows: $H = \sum_{i=1}^{N} s_i^2$ where s_i is the fraction of the ethnic group i in the community population and N is the number of ethnic groups. It ranges from $1/N$ to one, from most ethnically diverse to least ethnically diverse. This index is often used in research on trust (Graddy & Wang, 2008; Leigh, 2006b; Putnam, 2007; Tolsma et al., 2009). It is reversed in order to measure ethnic diversity.

Finally, the rural-urban cleavage is considered. Urbanisation is said to have negative consequences for the individual attitude of trust, as cities and urban areas will create less social ties between inhabitants (Putnam, 2000). People in larger cities will experience deficits in the quality of their social interpersonal relations and trust will become harder to gain. This social breakdown was already envisioned by early sociologists such as Wirth

(1938) that described a pessimistic view on city life, referring to processes of individualisation and alienation. Also contemporary researchers have concluded a similar negative effect of urbanisation on trust (Amato, 1993; Fischer, 1975; Oliver, 2001). Urbanisation is first of all measured via the most commonly used indicators of population size and population density. The smallest community in this study is Ruiselede that comprises 5,113 inhabitants, while the largest city Antwerp comprises 461,496 inhabitants. Antwerp is further the most highly populated community with 2,238 residents per kilometre, while in Damme, only 122 residents per kilometre reside. Additionally, Oliver (2001) makes the statement that local communities should not be studied in isolation, as attention should also be placed to the process of suburbanisation. The dummy variable whether a community belongs to a *stadsgewest* (city region) is therefore also considered (Van der Haegen, Van Hecke, & Juchtmans, 1996). A city region is an empirical unit that includes a centre city and the suburban communities around it that form one economic centre. City regions are not only densely populated, but also their economic and socio-economic life is dense (Mérenne, Van der Haegen, & Van Hecke, 1998).

Descriptive figures of all variables can be found in the Appendix. All variables are standardised before used in further analyses. This standardisation is conducted to be able to compare regression coefficients.[13]

4.4.5. METHOD OF MULTILEVEL REGRESSION

The main research question is whether social cohesion dimensions influence the attitude of trust. More generally, it is examined whether contextual characteristics of a community have an effect on the individual attitude of generalised trust. This hierarchical research question requires the use of multilevel analysis. Two levels are considered, namely the individual level (level 1) and the community level (level 2). As individuals living in the same community are likely to resemble each other, ordinary least squared regression would cause biased results. Multilevel regression analysis is conducted, using HLM6.0 software (Raudenbush, Bryk, & Congdon, 2004).

[13] The statistical program HLM6.0 does not provide standardised coefficients.

Before starting by explaining trust via the individual and community level, it is necessary to examine the dependent variables 'generalised trust' and 'community trust'. The intra class correlations are investigated via the intercept only models (also referred to as null or base models), which investigate the extent of clustering. The intercept only models are empty, as they do not include any independent variables. The intra class correlation expresses the proportion of the variance in a sample that can be explained by the degree of resemblance between respondents in the same community (Hox, 2002; Kreft & de Leeuw, 1998). This baseline estimate of the second level variance is measured as $\rho = \frac{\tau_0^2}{\tau_0^2 + \tau_e^2}$, with τ_0^2 as the error variance at the second level and τ_e^2 as the error variance at the first level. If the intra class correlation is significant, the traditional linear model is not suitable, because the assumption of independent observations is violated.

TABLE 10 INTERCEPT ONLY MODEL FOR GENERALISED TRUST AND COMMUNITY TRUST

	Generalised Trust	**Community Trust**
τ_0^2	0.001	0.001
τ_e^2	0.032	0.027
$\rho = \tau_0^2 / \tau_0^2 + \tau_e^2$	0.018	0.044
Deviance	-1,210.3	-1,486.6

In Table 10, one can observe that trust is an individual attitude that predominantly can be explained by individual characteristics. With regard to generalised trust, two per cent of the variance is explained by the multilevel structure. With regard to community trust, four per cent of the variance is explained by the multilevel structure. The latter form of trust in unknown others within the community is thus more suitable to research at the local community level than the former form of trust in the unknown. Additionally, the deviance scores are reported, as they can be compared with the deviances in the following models to examine whether the more extended models are as well better models. Lower deviances indicate a better model fit (Hox, 2002: 47). As mentioned already, all variables are rescaled from zero to one before entered in the analyses, which makes the deviance scores negative.

4.5. RESULTS

The result section starts by examining the individual control variables as explanations of trust. Subsequently, the social cohesion dimensions are considered without and with inclusion of the individual level variables. This analysis strategy is opted to see whether social cohesion effects are created via composition effects. If significant social cohesion effects disappear after inclusion of the individual variables, effects were the consequence of a certain composition within the community. Finally, the other community level variables are considered as alternative explanations of trust.

Whereas all individual variables are included at once, the community level indicators are included one by one. This option is chosen, as high correlations between the social cohesion dimensions among themselves and with other community variables can create problems of multicollinearity when variables are included simultaneously and can yield biased results.

4.5.1. INDIVIDUAL DETERMINANTS OF TRUST

In Table 11, the individual variables as explanations for generalised trust and community trust are investigated.

TABLE 11 INDIVIDUAL EXPLANATIONS OF GENERALISED AND COMMUNITY TRUST

	Generalised trust		Community trust	
Individual variables	**B**	**[SE]**	**B**	**[SE]**
Age	-0.02	[0.02]	0.03	[0.02]
Male	-0.00	[0.01]	-0.00	[0.01]
Education	0.12 ***	[0.02]	0.00	[0.02]
Unemployed	-0.05 *	[0.02]	-0.05 *	[0.02]
Children	-0.00	[0.01]	0.00	[0.01]
Partner	-0.01	[0.01]	0.01	[0.01]
Catholic	0.02	[0.01]	0.02	[0.01]
Church practice	0.04 *	[0.02]	0.05 *	[0.02]
Stable residence	0.01	[0.01]	0.00	[0.01]
Own home	0.03 *	[0.01]	0.05 ***	[0.01]
Member voluntary association	0.03 **	[0.01]	0.02 **	[0.01]
τ_0^2	0.001		0.001	
τ_e^2	0.031		0.026	
$\rho = \tau_0^2 / \tau_0^2 + \tau_e^2$	0.016		0.034	
Deviance	-1,254.13		-1,500.46	
DD (Deviance difference)	-43.86		-13.89	

Entries multilevel regression in HLM are fixed effects (B) with robust standard errors [SE].
Intercept only model: ρgentrust = 0.018; ρcomtrust = 0.044; Dgentrust = -1210.3; Dcomtrust = -1,486.6
Significance: * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001.

With regard to generalised trust, five out of eleven assumed individual relationships yield significant results. As expected, higher educated and employed respondents report more generalised trust in others. The winners within a community seem to have more reason to trust other people. Also churchgoers trust more, while simply indicating a catholic denomination does not yield a significant result. Religious behaviour is more important than religious belonging for trust. Next, attachment to a certain community that is measured via homeownership does yield a significant and positive result. While a stable home does not affect trust significantly, respondents who own a residence will trust others more in general. This significant indicator of homeownership may additionally indicate a certain individual prosperity as well, next to being an indicator of community attachment. Finally, active members of voluntary associations have a higher level of trust, because of their involvement within the civil society. The model fit improves as the deviance score decreases compared to the deviance score of the intercept only model. The intra class correlation decreases only slightly compared to the intra class correlation of the intercept only model, indicating that a multilevel regression is still feasible to conduct.

With regard to community trust, similar results can be observed. Only education, which was the strongest explanation of generalised trust, does not significantly relate to community trust. Other than that, unemployed respondents show lower feelings of trust, while churchgoers, homeowners and active members in voluntary associations expose a higher level of trust in unknown others within their own neighbourhood. The model fit improves, as the deviance score decreases. The intra class correlation drops a little in comparison to the intercept only model, though, enough variance remains to be examined via a multilevel regression.

Noticeably, generalised and community trust remain difficult attitudes to explain. The assumed relationships between trust and most individual characteristics do not yield significant results. The difference between the explanations for the two dependent variables of generalised and community trust is limited. The comparison between the intra class correlations for both models after inclusion of the individual variables still reveals a higher variance to be explained at the higher level with reference to community trust. Therefore, it is questionable whether explanations will remain similar with regard to the contextual assumption. This is investigated in the following multilevel models.

4.5.2. COMMUNITY DETERMINANTS OF TRUST

First, the social cohesion dimensions are investigated separately, without inclusion of the individual level variables. The reason for this is to investigate whether significant relations are caused by the composition of the community. These compositional effects may become visible when individual level variables are included and significant relationships between social cohesion dimensions and trust disappear. In other words, if the inclusion of individual level variables renders the social cohesion effects non-significant, these social cohesion effects are caused by the composition of the community and do not indicate a direct relationship between social cohesion and trust. Finally, the contextual variables that indicate cleavages within the community are included one by one to the individual model to investigate alternative community theories.

In Table 12, the social cohesion dimensions at the community level are included one by one, without inclusion of the individual level variables.

TABLE 12 SOCIAL COHESION EXPLANATIONS OF TRUST (WITHOUT INDIVIDUAL VARIABLES)

	Generalised trust				Community trust			
Social cohesion dimensions	**B**	**[SE]**	**ρ**	**DD**	**B**	**[SE]**	**ρ**	**DD**
Religious involvement	0.02	[0.03]	0.028	3	0.08 **	[0.02]	0.036	-3
Absence property crime	0.01	[0.02]	0.019	3	0.08 **	[0.03]	0.036	-3
Civic engagement	0.02	[0.02]	0.018	3	0.09 ***	[0.02]	0.027	-10
Absence deprivation	0.06*	[0.02]	0.014	-3	0.10 ***	[0.03]	0.023	-14
Absence violent crime	0.04	[0.02]	0.016	1	0.11 ***	[0.02]	0.019	-17

Entries multilevel regression in HLM are fixed effects (B) with robust standard errors [SE] and deviance differences (DD) compared to the intercept only model.
Intercept only model: ρgentrust = 0.018; ρcomtrust = 0.044
Significance: * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001.

Generalised trust is influenced positively by the absence of deprivation, but other significant relations are absent. The intra class correlation and deviation score slightly lower. It can be concluded that people who live in a community where there is less deprivation will have a higher level of generalised trust. However, the strength of the coefficient is rather small. Social cohesion at the community level does not have a strong effect on generalised trust at the individual level.

Contrary, social cohesion has a strong effect on community trust. All social cohesion dimensions influence community trust positively, especially the more modern dimensions of absence of deprivation and absence of violent crime. Communities with a high level of social order, social solidarity, social networks and a shared religious culture promote trust in the unknown others within the own community. The model fit improves every time a social cohesion indicator is included within the model. The intra class correlations decrease, pointing at the fact that some of the variance can be explained by looking at social cohesion dimensions.

The question can be posed whether the significant effects are caused by the composition of the community. Therefore, the models are re-estimated with inclusion of the individual level variables. Only the social cohesion dimensions are reported in Table 13, as it is

already established which individual level variables influence trust and no changes appear after including the community level variables.

TABLE 13 SOCIAL COHESION EXPLANATIONS OF TRUST (WITH INDIVIDUAL VARIABLES)

	Generalised trust				Community trust			
Social cohesion dimensions	**B**	**SE**	**ρ**	**DD**	**B**	**SE**	**ρ**	**DD**
Religious involvement	0.02	[0.03]	0.016	-37	0.06 **	[0.02]	0.030	-15
Absence property crime	-0.01	[0.02]	0.017	-37	0.06 *	[0.02]	0.031	-15
Civic engagement	0.01	[0.02]	0.016	-36	0.07 **	[0.02]	0.024	-19
Absence deprivation	0.04	[0.02]	0.015	-40	0.08 **	[0.02]	0.021	-24
Absence violent crime	0.03	[0.02]	0.016	-38	0.09 ***	[0.02]	0.018	-26

Entries multilevel regression in HLM are fixed effects (B) with robust standard errors [SE] and deviance differences (DD) compared to the intercept only model. Individual variables are included, yet not reported.
Intercept only model: ρgentrust = 0.018; ρ comtrust = 0.044
Significance: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

When including the individual level variables, generalised trust is no longer influenced by the absence of deprivation within a community. This means that the effect in Table 12 is caused by the composition of the community. This can also be noticed when comparing the deviance differences. The model including individual level variables and the absence of deprivation at the community level has a weaker model fit than the model, including only individual level variables. Generalised trust is better explained by individual level indicators than by social cohesion at the community level.

Community trust, on the other hand, stays affected by all five social cohesion dimensions. The strength of the coefficients becomes slightly weaker, but all effects stay significant. Social cohesion shows to have a positive effect on community trust, regardless of the composition of the community. The model fit becomes better by including both individual as well as community level variables. This can be seen by the deviance difference and the intra class correlations that indicate that less variance remains to be explained at the community level.

Nonetheless, next to social cohesion, other community cleavages are assumed to play a role as well in the formation of trust. Therefore, in the next table, these contextual variables are added one by one to the individual level model. Again, only the community level variables are reported, because the individual explanations stay identical as observed in Table 11.

TABLE 14 CONTEXTUAL EXPLANATIONS OF TRUST (WITH INDIVIDUAL VARIABLES)

	Generalised trust				Community trust			
Contextual variables	**B**	**SE**	**ρ**	**DD**	**B**	**SE**	**ρ**	**DD**
Income	0.08 **	[0.02]	0.010	-45	0.06 *	[0.03]	0.030	-15
Income inequality	0.06 *	[0.02]	0.010	-43	-0.00	[0.02]	0.036	-10
Ethnic presence	0.02	[0.02]	0.016	-37	-0.05 *	[0.02]	0.030	-14
Ethnic presence outside EU	0.02	[0.02]	0.017	-37	-0.07 *	[0.03]	0.029	-16
Ethnic presence inside EU	0.03	[0.02]	0.015	-38	-0.04	[0.03]	0.033	-12
Ethnic presence outside Europe	0.01	[0.02]	0.017	-37	-0.06 *	[0.03]	0.030	-15
Ethnic presence inside Europe	0.03	[0.02]	0.016	-37	-0.04	[0.02]	0.032	-13
Ethnic diversity	0.05 ***	[0.01]	0.015	-39	-0.01	[0.02]	0.035	-11
Population size	-0.01	[0.01]	0.017	-37	-0.05 *	[0.02]	0.033	-13
Population density	-0.02	[0.01]	0.017	-27	-0.08 **	[0.03]	0.025	-20
Population city region	0.00	[0.01]	0.017	-35	-0.03 *	[0.02]	0.023	-14

Entries multilevel regression in HLM are fixed effects (B) with robust standard errors [SE] and deviance differences (DD) compared to the intercept only model. Individual variables are included, yet not reported.
Intercept only model: ρgentrust = 0.018; ρ comtrust = 0.044
Significance: * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001.

While generalised trust is not influenced by social cohesion dimensions after controlling for compositional effects, it does seem to be influenced by income, income inequality and ethnic diversity. These three contextual variables have a moderate significant effect on generalised trust. It is expected that wealthier communities generate more generalised trust. It is more unforeseen that income inequality and ethnic diversity would cause people to trust more. A consideration about the meaning of income inequality within Flanders is already made in Chapter 3, as the measurement is highly correlated with mean income. This indicates that for other cases, another effect can be found. Yet, for

Flanders, income inequality is not an ideal measurement for inequality, nor a good indicator for the economic cleavage within a community. This is mentioned in the data description. As for generalised trust, another indicator of the economic cleavage is deprivation, which was included when investigating social cohesion, yet, did not yield a significant effect. With reference to ethnicity, two things can be observed. First of all, although the coefficients are not significant, they point to different signs and effects when ethnic presence is looked at via different statistic measurements. Presence of foreigners does not yield the assumed negative effect if the nationalities are not considered into detail. Only the presence of foreigners outside the European Union and outside Europe do have a negative, though not significant, effect on generalised trust. Secondly, ethnic diversity shows a slightly positive and significant effect on generalised trust. Ethnic diversity within a community is positively related to generalised trust, which is not in line with the assumption that heterogeneity would lead to lower trust levels. Nonetheless, this result should be looked at with some reservations. When looking closer to the model fit indices, this ethnic diversity effect does not seem to improve the individual level model fit. While the model fit becomes better with a deviance difference score of 44 when including the individual level variables, this deviance score lowers to 39 when adding the community level variable of ethnic diversity. Only mean income slightly increases the model fit when it is added to the individual level that is presented in Table 11. Lastly, none of the urbanisation indicators has a significant effect on generalised trust. Generalised trust of an individual is not influenced by the context of living in a big city or village.

Other contextual variables seem to play a role in the explanation of community trust, with the exception of mean income. Income seems to foster both generalised as community trust. Affluent communities provide a contextual setting in which individuals create a higher level of trust in others. Income inequality does not yield a significant effect on community trust. Ethnic diversity does not relate significantly to trust, while the presence of other nationalities within a community does, regardless of which nationalities are under consideration. This result is interesting, as both the presence of border nationalities, other European Union member nationalities and non-European nationalities tend to hinder the level of trust that is placed in others within the community. All different ethnicities impede the formation of community trust. Lastly, the urbanisation variables all relate negatively and significantly to community trust.

Population density improves the model fit more than when other community variables are added to the individual model. Next to the absence of violent crime and the absence of deprivation, population density forms one of the strongest explanations for community trust. People that live in larger and more densely populated areas will trust their fellow citizens less than people who live in more rural and less populated communities.

4.6. CONCLUSION

The relationship between the social cohesion dimensions and trust was under consideration. Within contemporary communities, it was described how generalised trust in the unknown formed the most prominent type of trust in an ever more complex society. The main research question was: "Why do people take risks when placing trust in strangers and does the community context matter?" For this objective, two measurements of generalised trust were put forward, both abstracted from the 'faith in people' scale, which was developed by Rosenberg (1956). These two trust scales were referred to as 'generalised trust' and 'community trust'. While 'generalised trust' did not include any information regarding the unknown other, 'community trust' referred to a certain trust in the unknown other that resided in the same community. The idea was that this latter measurement was more applicable to the community level. Both scales could not be merged via factor analysis. Preliminary results already emphasised that the variance in community trust could be explained more by community factors than the variance in generalised trust.

While the individual theories were only taken as control variables to investigate whether context effects could be ascribed to population compositions, the individual level results already made clear that both 'generalised trust' and 'community trust' were difficult concepts to explain. More than half of the assumed individual relationships could not be confirmed. The most striking result was that the indicator of education forms the most prominent explanation for generalised trust, while it did not relate significantly to community trust. High educated people were thus more likely to have a higher level of trust in unknown others than low educated people, yet, there was no difference between high and low educated people when this trust in the unknown referred to those that lived

in the same community. The 'winners' within a community did not automatically trust more, when this was measured via education. Unemployment yielded a more consistent result for both trust scales. Employed people were more inclined to trust unknown others, regardless of the radius of trust. The community attachment theory and the voluntary action theory were confirmed as well. People who owned a house and who were active in the associational live trusted more.

The main question whether there was a relationship between social cohesion and trust, could only be confirmed partially. With regard to generalised trust, none of the assumed relationships with the social cohesion dimensions proved to be significant after controlling for compositional effects. Generalised trust was a general outlook on people and was not affected by a socially cohesive community context. With reference to community trust, a different conclusion could be drawn. Community trust was influenced positively and significantly by all social cohesion dimensions. The strongest effect could be found looking at the more modern social cohesion dimensions of absence of deprivation and absence of violent crime. Community trust was more affected by the community. Even after controlling for compositional effects, social cohesion still maintained the effect of fostering community trust. Hence, it was concluded that socially cohesive communities had an important influence on trust in unknown others that resided in the same community. Information and knowledge was limited when referring to general others, regardless of their place of residence. Therefore, there was no rational argument to trust either. Nevertheless, it could be that unknown others of the same community were still considered as part of a more touchable moral group. Contacts with members from the own community were still more frequent. Therefore, the idea of placing a bet regarding their behaviours towards us was still more contemplated. The context offered us more information about them and a socially cohesive community provided someone with an incentive to trust unknown others within their community.

With reference to the community cleavages, only some of them proved to have a positive and significant relationship on generalised trust. It was expected that prosperity increased, whereas ethnic heterogeneity hindered generalised trust. This result was contradictory to most conclusions found in previous research on trust. While the results for ethnic presence were not significant, the signs of the coefficients already pointed to a certain difference between the negative relations with ethnic presence of people outside

the European Union and Europe on the one hand and the positive relation with ethnic presence of foreigners inside the European Union and Europe on the other hand. The idea of a moral community that was envisioned by Uslaner (2002) seemed broader than the own community or society, yet, still smaller than the whole world. Furthermore, urbanisation did not yield any effect, while it was expected to hamper trust. With reference to community trust, almost all community cleavages affected this type of trust. Prosperity proved to have a positive effect on trust. Presence of foreigners, regardless of their descent had a negative effect on community trust. Nonetheless, not all coefficients were significant and the effect of ethnic diversity was negligible. The most important explanation of community trust was population density, which formed a clear obstacle for people to trust unknown others in the community.

While most earlier research with regard to generalised trust focuses on the effects of the national level (Delhey et al., 2011; Hooghe et al., 2009; Milfont & Fischer, 2010; Paxton, 2007; Reeskens & Hooghe, 2008; Wollebæk & Strømsnes, 2007), it seems reasonable to look further for explanations at the lower community level. Trust is most of all influenced by the community context when it refers to generalised trust in unknown others within the own community. The radius of trust matters for contextual studies. As the intra class correlation already makes clear in the intercept only models, trust is an attitude that should predominantly be explained using individual level explanations. Still, social cohesion and other social cleavage theories prove to have their merits.

To conclude, social cohesion is seen as an important indicator for reciprocal attitudes as is already established in its definition in Chapter 2. In this chapter, the main consideration is that the operationalisation of trust is essential to give more attention, as results change concurrent with the radius of generalised trust. Although in current times, it is argued that generalised trust is most important as contact with strangers augment and knowledge and information on these unknown others diminish, the visibility and tangibility of these unknown others stays important. It is more tangible for individuals to consider unknown others in their own community and this image is not identical to their general outlook. In other words, community context matters more as tangibility grows.

This study faced some challenges. First of all, the assumed causality between social cohesion and trust is contested and using simple multilevel regression analysis and cross-

sectional data, only simple relationships can be disentangled. It is thus hard to make clear what fosters and what effects. Trust may have effects for the individual who will gain more social capital and will in turn get better integrated in a community. The outlook on the community may have important implications for one's own behaviour and the investment in providing collective goods. Although the social cohesion and social cleavage indicators have been suggested to influence trust, the robustness of these determinants remains uncertain as robustness tests have only received rather mixed results (Delhey & Newton, 2003; Nannestad, 2008). The starting point in this dissertation is that social cohesion fosters social attitudes such as trust at the individual level. Nonetheless, it is acknowledged that the theory that looks at contextual determinants of trust received only mixed evidence until now and that longitudinal research is still necessary.

Secondly, only the community level was considered and, the explained variance of trust at the community level was rather limited. It would be interesting if data was available to compare the significance of social cohesion at different levels, such as the neighbourhood level or the national level. The level of the community is considered as an important level of analysis, as was already explained in Chapter 3. Yet, the generalised trust scale is less applicable at the community level in comparison to the community trust scale. Context matters, especially when the tangibility of the dependent concepts increases.

Chapter 5. SOCIAL COHESION AND PARTICIPATION[14]

5.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the relationship between the different social cohesion dimensions and the individual behaviour of participation in voluntary associations is investigated. This relationship is important, as participation in voluntary associations holds benefits for both internal members as for the external community and society as a whole (Hooghe & Stolle, 2003a). Members in voluntary associations are claimed to be more trusting, to have a higher level of self-esteem and a higher feeling of political efficacy. They are less likely to be alienated or socially disintegrated within their community and are less likely to show apathy (Billiet & Cambré, 1999; Curtis, Baer, & Grabb, 2001; Knoke, 1981; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). They further expand their social networks and ties and integrate within their community more easily. Hence, well-informed and actively involved citizens are fostered via these associational experiences in voluntary associations (van der Meer & van Ingen, 2009: 283). Participation in these associations fosters skills of cooperation and attitudes of members will be more moderated, because

[14] Based upon the article: Hooghe, M., & Botterman, S. (2012). Urbanization, Community Size, and Population Density: Is There a Rural-Urban Divide in Participation in Voluntary Organizations or Social Network Formation? *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *41*(1), 120–144.

of the multiple interactions with other people and groups (Lijphart, 1977). It increases access to information (Knoke, 1981) and provides individuals with organisational skills (Verba et al., 1995). In sum, voluntary associations create active, public-spirited and equal citizens that are cooperative, respectful and trustful towards others, even if these others have different opinions or interests (Putnam, 1993: 88-89).

With regard to the societal level, participation in voluntary associations is considered essential for the creation and maintaining of good-functioning participatory democracies (Almond & Verba, 1963; Putnam, 1993, 2000; Van Deth, 2006). It is referred to as a leverage for social integration (Putnam, 1993), a condition for the general well-being (Dassopoulos & Monnat, 2011; Durkheim, 1897), and even a learning school for democracy (de Tocqueville, 1835). A healthy society is henceforth proclaimed to be one that is consistent out of a viable civil society with multiple intermediate groups between individuals and the state. Voluntary associations form the necessary link between the society and the individual. This interpretation is used by both classical and contemporary social scientists, such as Alexis de Tocqueville (1835) and Robert Putnam (1993; 2000).

The search for determinants of participation in voluntary associations forms the objective in this chapter, with a special interest in the social cohesion dimensions that form the community climate. This chapter starts by presenting past and present research on the study of participation in voluntary associations via two key authors, namely Alexis de Tocqueville (1835) and Robert Putnam (1993). Their work is studied in detail before considering the definition of a voluntary association. Subsequently, the relation between the several social cohesion dimensions and participation in voluntary associations is considered. Thereafter, the data and method section deals with the hypothesised individual and contextual determinants of participation in voluntary association. Next to the scope and the intensity of participation, also the type of voluntary associations is under consideration. Finally, the results are discussed in the concluding section and the challenges are outlined.

5.2. CONCEPTUALISATION OF PARTICIPATION IN VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS

One of the first scholars who studied participation in voluntary associations was Alexis de Tocqueville, when he examined the American democracy in the 19th century (de Tocqueville, 1835). In particular the formal sort of social networking in voluntary associations caught his attention when he studied the maintenance of the democratic political system in America. Although participation in intermediary groups remained an important subject to consider throughout the following centuries, only in the 1980s the topic became popular again in social sciences (Magee, 2008: 309). It was Robert Putnam, who re-examined the significance of participation for societies' well-being while studying the efficiency of regional governments in Italy (Putnam, 1993: 157). De Tocqueville (1835) and Putnam (1993) are two of the most cited scholars in participation studies. For this reason, brief overviews of their main works are given hereafter.

5.2.1. ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE AND DE LA DEMOCRATIE EN AMERIQUE

Alexis de Tocqueville observed the juridical system of the young democracy of America by order of the French government in the first half of the 19th century. He studied the change in social conditions and the democratic character of the society and subsequently reported his findings in his book *De la Démocratie en Amérique* (1835). His work still remains essential for the examination of participation in voluntary associations. Ever since he investigated how a young democracy could remain its democratic character via participation in voluntary associations, scholars have been exploring the reasons why people are inclined to participate in voluntary associations. From the point of view of de Tocqueville, voluntary associations formed the necessary factor to solve the democratic puzzle.

De Tocqueville's main objective was to compare America, a young democracy, to an old established one, without placing any particular focus on voluntary associations. Nonetheless, while studying the American democracy, he became amazed by the vast majority of the population that united within groups and associations in a voluntary

manner. He phrased his infringement for this phenomenon extensively, especially because literally everyone could join any kind of voluntary association, regardless of age, gender, status or even religious conviction: *"Les Américains de tous les âges, de toutes les conditions, de tous les esprits, s'unissent sans cesse. Non seulement ils ont des associations commerciales et industrielles auxquelles tous prennent part, mais ils en ont encore de mille autres espèces: de religieuses, de morales, de graves, de futiles, de fort générales et de très particulières, d'immenses et de fort petites; les Américains s'associent pour donner des fêtes, fonder des séminaires, bâtir des auberges, élever des églises, répandre des livres, envoyer des missionnaires aux antipodes; ils créent de cette manière des hôpitaux, des prisons, des écoles. S'agit-il enfin de mettre en lumière une vérité ou de développer un sentiment par l'appui d'un grand exemple, ils s'associent"* (de Tocqueville, 1835: 145). In this quote, de Tocqueville already considered the positive effects of participation in voluntary associations, as he argued that via participation in these associations, public institutions such as schools, hospitals and prisons could be established.

Voluntary associations were not a complete new phenomenon that were first of all observed in America, yet, the objective of these American associations were more diverse and as a consequence innovative for the 19th century. In France, de Tocqueville's homeland, most voluntary associations related to economic and political themes and interests. These more traditional groupings were also present in the young democracy of America, however, they did not form the majority of voluntary associations in the vibrant American civil society: *"Les associations politiques qui existent aux États-Unis ne forment qu'un détail au milieu de l'immense tableau que l'ensemble des associations y présente"* (de Tocqueville, 1835: 145). On the contrary, the diversity of voluntary associations in France was limited and knowledge about them was rather scarce (de Tocqueville, 1835: 150).

The immense diversity of voluntary associations and the immense participation rate among citizens in the new democracy of America made de Tocqueville wonder whether there was a relationship between the two phenomena of participation and democracy. Alternatively, it could be a mere coincidence that the flourishing democracy and the vibrant civil society were present at the same time: *"Ainsi le pays le plus démocratique de la terre se trouve être celui de tous où les hommes ont le plus perfectionné de nos jours l'art de poursuivre en commun l'objet de leurs communs désirs et ont appliqué au plus grand nombre d'objets cette science nouvelle. Ceci résulte-t-il d'un accident, ou serait-ce qu'il*

existe en effet un rapport nécessaire entre les associations et l'égalité?" (de Tocqueville, 1835: 146).

He concluded in his work *De la Démocratie en Amérique* (1835) that this relationship between participation and democracy was not just a coincidence. More precisely, he stated that voluntary associations formed the 'learning school of democracy'. These associations were more important to study than other political oriented organisations. Although political associations secured the interdependence between individuals and the state, their absence would not form a hazard for people's wealth or ideas, at least not in the short run. More importantly, the absence of non-political voluntary associations could jeopardise the civilisation in its totality: *"Si les hommes qui vivent dans les pays démocratiques n'avaient ni le droit ni le goût de s'unir dans des buts politiques, leur indépendance courrait de grands hasards, mais ils pourraient conserver longtemps leurs richesses et leurs lumières; tandis que s'ils n'acquéraient point l'usage de s'associer dans la vie ordinaire, la civilisation elle-même serait en péril. Un peu le chez lequel les particuliers perdraient le pouvoir de faire isolément de grandes choses sans acquérir la faculté de les produire en commun retournerait bientôt vers la barbarie"* (de Tocqueville, 1835: 147). Investigating participation in voluntary associations was therefore essential. De Tocqueville even argued that the knowledge on voluntary associations should be considered as the basis for all knowledge: *"Dans les pays démocratiques, la science de l'association est la science mère; le progrès de toutes les autres dépend des progrès de celle-là"* (de Tocqueville, 1835: 150). The conclusion that voluntary associations formed the answer to the democratic puzzle was related to the positive effects for individuals within and outside voluntary associations. Internally, participation in voluntary associations generated positive externalities for members, who learned to interact with other members, to discuss problems and to create collective action solutions. This internal function of participation related to the acquisition of civic skills and competences of members that learned to negotiate and to reach compromises. As de Tocqueville claimed it: *"Les sentiments et les idées ne se renouvellent, le cœur ne s'agrandit et l'esprit humain ne se développe que par l'action réciproque des hommes les uns sur les autres"* (de Tocqueville, 1835: 149). As a result, these civic capacities were necessary to generate reciprocal action and consequently to solve external collective action problems. They were not only important for the functioning of these voluntary associations, but also for the general well-functioning of the society and social system as a whole. This last claim expressed the

second external function of participation within voluntary associations. The civic skills generated spill-over effects, such as realising shared goals and creating social opportunities. This dynamic effect of participation in voluntary associations made citizens capable to undertake collective actions and realise collective objectives.

De Tocqueville is one of the most abundantly cited authors within the field and his work has been re-examined by many scholars. In what follows, the most prominent author of the present decades is discussed. Robert Putnam's work on participation in voluntary associations as a way to form a well-functioning society is considered into more detail.

5.2.2. ROBERT PUTNAM AND MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK

Robert Putnam is the most well-known contemporary scholar regarding participation in voluntary associations. Nonetheless, his early work did not intentionally focus on the civil society. In his book *Making Democracy Work* (1993), he searched for a reason for regional differences in government efficiency in Italy. His longitudinal research focused on the effectiveness of twenty regional governments and in his conclusion, he pointed at the socio-cultural factor as the most influential and determining factor to explain the effectiveness of a region's government.

Putnam started his exposition on possible explanations regarding the effectiveness of governments by presenting three different reasons why some regional governments might perform better than others. First of all, he questioned whether institutional characteristics might serve as a possible explanation for differences between the twenty Italian regions. Because all regions started with the same institutional background, this explanation seemed not valid. This variable was kept constant for all twenty regions, as they all started with the same competences and the same structural characteristics. Another explanation that was examined related to the socio-economic sphere, because a correlation was present between government efficiency and economic characteristics that indicated a positive economic development. Whereas the Northern regions were characterised by more efficient regional governments and a prosperous economic development, the southern regions were characterised by less efficient regional governments and less economic prosperity. Nevertheless, it could only serve as a partial

explanation. The economic development could not explain the subtle differences between the different regions within the Northern or Southern part of the country (Putnam, 1993: 86). The third factor that was under consideration referred to the socio-cultural characteristics of a region. More precisely, norms of reciprocity and cooperation, a flourishing civic culture, voluntary associations and organisations with horizontal networks could be considered as socio-cultural characteristics that served as an explanation for effective governments (Putnam, 1993: 86-115). A civic community created social and political networks that made democracy work: *"a dense network of secondary associations both embodies and contributes to effective social collaboration"* (Putnam, 1993: 115). Putnam concluded, after examining these three possible explanations that *"the predictive power of the civic community is greater than the power of economic development […]. The more civic a region, the more effective its government. So strong is this relationship that when we take the "civic-ness" of a region into account, the relationship we previously observed between economic development and institutional performance entirely vanishes"* (Putnam, 1993: 98). Participation in civic associations therefore fostered the 'habits of the heart' that a well-functioning democracy needed (Putnam, 1993: 11).

Putnam further examined the roots of this explaining factor by conducting an historical study of the civic communities in the northern and southern regions of Italy. In this study, he claimed that path dependency formed an important aspect in the study of current systems, as cultural history explained today and predicted tomorrow (Putnam, 1993: 179). Especially with regard to the relationship between socio-cultural characteristics and a well-functioning democracy, it was noticeable that civic customs and practices were stable over time (Putnam, 1993: 157). While the northern regions had been characterised by a civic culture since the Medieval Times, the southern region did not have such a history. Northern republican city-states in Italy were characterised by horizontal and less hierarchical networks, which fostered cooperation and a rich associational life. Contrary, southern monarchical feudal regions in Italy provided more authoritarian and hierarchical ties between clients and patrons, hampering a civic culture to flourish. These vertical networks encouraged interactions centred on the nuclear family and hindered associational life. However, this idealistic dichotomy between north and south Italy obscured the civic activities that were present in the southern part of Italy and overestimated the flourishing civic culture in the northern part. This caused a biased

and oversimplified representation of the Italian regions, which consequently was criticised by other scholars (Halpern, 2005; Mouritsen, 2003; Tarrow, 2010). Nevertheless, the broad picture still remained an interesting insight in how a socio-cultural context influenced democracy as a whole. Similar to de Tocqueville, Putnam acknowledged that "*[c]ivil associations contribute to the effectiveness and stability of democratic government, it is argued, both because of their "internal" effects on individual members and because of their "external" effects on the wider polity"* (Putnam, 1993: 89). This idea of voluntary associations as learning schools of democracy was further taken over by many scholars. To illustrate, van der Meer and van Ingen stated that *"[v]oluntary associations […] are small scale learning environments […] in which people gain experiences in dealing with dissimilar others and with contributing to a common good. When people associate with others, they learn to cooperate, discuss, organize and trust"* (van der Meer & van Ingen, 2009: 284).

After this brief overview of how voluntary associations were delineated in the works of de Tocqueville (1835) and Putnam (1993; 2000), the defining elements of voluntary associations are considered hereafter.

5.2.3. DEFINITION OF VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS

There are several conceptualisations of voluntary associations and three main characteristics are stressed in almost every definition. These three components are considered hereafter.

First of all, voluntary associations are only voluntary when there is no coercion to be a member. One can enter and leave voluntary associations freely: *"[v]oluntariness refers to the freedom to associate, freedom to exit, and to the lack of coercion"* (van Ingen, 2009: 18). In the writings of de Tocqueville, it was already noticeable that voluntary associations were very diverse associations that united citizens in a non-coercive manner: *"J'ai rencontré en Amérique des sortes d'associations dont je confesse que je n'avais pas même l'idée, et j'ai souvent admiré l'art infini avec lequel les habitants des États-Unis parvenaient à fixer un but commun aux efforts d'un grand nombre d'hommes, et à les y faire marcher librement"* (de Tocqueville, 1835: 146). Membership within a voluntary association

implies belonging to an association without being employed by or being born into an association: *"Formal voluntary associations [...] are "organizations" (rather than simply groups) whose goals primarily involve voluntary action and the majority of whose members are engaging in voluntary action when they act as group members"* (Ross, 1975: 11-12).

Secondly, voluntary associations are associations that revolve around a certain theme or interest. This implies that members have a common goal or objective: *"A small group of people, finding they have a certain interest (or purpose) in common, agree to meet and act together in order to try to satisfy that interest or achieve that purpose"* (Rose, 1954: 52). Several definitions emphasise this aspect of common interests. To illustrate, Etzioni describes voluntary associations as *"social units devoted primarily to the attainment of specific goals"* (Etzioni, 1961: 17) and Ross argues that *"[a] voluntary association is, by its very nature, a human collectivity that stresses an identified purpose and the association of members who seek to achieve it. It is a certain kind of relationship between ends and means"* (Ross, 1975: 5). For these common interests, certain activities are undertaken. More precisely *"a course of co-operative action extending beyond a single act, and, for this purpose, agreeing together upon certain methods or procedures, and laying down, in however rudimentary a form, rules for common action"* (Cole, 1920: 37). Participation in voluntary associations is thus not restricted to altruistic people, as it is a certain self-interest to choose to participate in a voluntary association: *"Citizens in the civic community are not required to be altruists. In the civic community, however, citizens pursue […] self-interest defined in the context of broader public needs, self-interest that is "enlightened" rather than "myopic," self-interest that is alive to the interests of others"* (Putnam, 1993: 88).

Thirdly, voluntary associations are non-profit associations and as a result, there is no financial recuperation for members provided; most members are not financially compensated (Knoke, 1986). Voluntary associations are *"organizations that people belong to without pay, such as clubs, lodges, good works agencies and the like"* (Amis & Stern, 1974; Berelson & Steiner, 1964: 364). Voluntary associations are private non-profit associations that do not produce goods directly or supply services (Smith & Freedman, 1972). There is no direct profit from participation in these organisations (Ross, 1975).

In sum, van Ingen captures these three components of voluntary associations into the following conceptualisation: *"Summarizing, voluntary association can be described as an ideal type of social organization, with interactions and bonds of intermediate strength, which mainly serve rational considerations about common goals, and which are guided by established procedures and rules. Voluntariness refers to the freedom to associate, freedom to exit, and to the lack of coercion"* (van Ingen, 2009: 18).

5.3. PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL COHESION

Various social scientists stress the impact of context variables to explain individual behaviours and attitudes (Coleman, 1990; Friedkin, 2004; Putnam, 1993). In research on social networks, it is acknowledged that the possibilities of an individual to act meaningfully and to pursue his or her life project are embedded in a broader societal and cultural context (Harding, 2003; Sampson et al., 2002). As a consequence, the relationship between social cohesion and participation in voluntary associations is considered as an important one: *"different forms of civic participation have different internal characteristics in different communities"* (Magee, 2008: 322). The several social cohesion dimensions and their relationship with participation in voluntary associations are presented hereafter.[15]

The first dimension of social cohesion that is under consideration regards common values and a civic culture and was made operational in Chapter 3 via a religious involvement factor. It is assumed that religious involvement and social networking in voluntary associations are positively related to each other (Putnam, 1995, 2000). At the individual level, this relationship has been confirmed several times (Botterman et al., 2009; van Ingen & Dekker, 2012). A more religiously involved community generates social networks between inhabitants and as a consequence improves the chances as an individual to participate in social activities, such as in voluntary associations. Religious involvement can thus be an indicator for participation in voluntary associations. Even in current times, a religious homogeneous culture is expected to increase the probability of

[15] The fifth theoretical dimension of social cohesion, community attachment and identity, could not be made operational as community data regarding this dimension is lacking.

an individual to participate in voluntary associations (Bekkers, Völker, van der Gaag, & Flap, 2008).

The second dimension of social cohesion relates to social order and social control that was operationalized via an absence of property crime factor and an absence of violent crime factor. The relationship between this dimension and participation in voluntary associations is rather ambiguous. Results are sometimes contradictory and not all studies consider crime as an indicator to explain participation in voluntary associations (Perkins, Hughey, & Speer, 2002; Saegert & Winkel, 2004; Taylor, 1996). Higher crime rates may make people feel more motivated to stay socially connected and to foster collective action that is necessary to fight against crime and disorder. Attachment and involvement within high crime rate communities may as a result be higher and foster individual participation (Swaroop & Morenoff, 2006; Taylor, 1996). This energising effect is opposite to the depressing effect of crime on participation, which predicts that crime levels will lower the probability to become member of voluntary associations (Saegert, Winkel, & Swartz, 2002; Saegert & Winkel, 2004). De facto, it is more plausible that crime is negatively correlated with participation in voluntary associations, as disorder increases the likelihood that citizens feel constrained in their possibilities to interact because of fear and suspicion. In other words, crime will lead to interrupted social networks (Bursik, 1988; Paxton, 2007; Saegert & Winkel, 2004; Skogan, 1990). As a consequence, it is assumed in this chapter that there is a negative relationship between crime and participation. Conversely, there is a positive relationship between the social cohesion dimension of social order and participation in voluntary associations.

The third dimension of social cohesion focuses on the level of social solidarity within a community by studying reductions in wealth disparities. This dimension was made operational via an absence of deprivation factor. It is argued that deprivation has a negative influence on social networking and participation in voluntary associations. Deprivation indicators such as the unemployment ratio or the percentage of welfare benefit users decrease voluntary engagement in communities (Lindström et al., 2002; Lindström, 2005). As disadvantaged communities accommodate a higher portion of inhabitants with a lower socio-economic status, a higher proportion of inhabitants will lack the necessary tools to participate within their community (Dekker, 2007; Subramanian, Lochner, & Kawachi, 2003). Deprivation causes social exclusion and as a

consequence, participation in voluntary associations in these deprived communities will be in peril (Buck, 2001). Although some scholars argue that the possibilities to participate in deprived communities may be extended by the presence of other social cohesion dimensions (Docherty, Goodlad, & Paddison, 2001), the core relationship between deprivation and participation in voluntary associations remains negative. Contrary, the absence of deprivation within a community can lead to a higher probability to be member of a voluntary association.

The fourth social cohesion dimension refers to social networks and social capital and is made operational via a civic engagement factor. More precisely, civic engagement is measured by the share of socio-cultural associations in a community and the share of people that vote in local elections. The social fabric of civic associations is interwoven with the political and civic engagement, as Putnam argues this interrelatedness when establishing his Civic Community Index (Putnam, 1993: 96). Hence, this factor presents an indication of the possibility to participate in a community (Docherty et al., 2001; Oliver, 2001). It is argued that participation in voluntary associations is fostered in communities that are already characterised by a reserve of community social capital and civic engagement (van Ingen, 2009). Putnam phrases this opinion as follows: *"Voluntary cooperation is easier in a community that has inherited a substantial stock of social capital, in the forms of reciprocity and networks of civic engagement"* (Putnam, 1993: 167). As a result, a positive relationship between this social cohesion dimension and participation in voluntary associations is expected. When communities offer a context that includes abundant opportunities for recruitment, mobilisation, social support and appreciation, these communities will foster participation (Haddad, 2004). This further coincides with a sense of community, which also has been proven to be an important determinant of willingness to engage in community life (Anderson, 2009). [16]

As a result, the general assumption is that all social cohesion dimensions have positive effects on the likelihood for individuals to participate in voluntary associations. A higher level of social cohesion at the community level will be translated into a higher probability to participate and engage in voluntary associations.

[16] The fifth theoretical dimension of social cohesion, community attachment and identity, could not be made operational as community data regarding this dimension is lacking.

5.4. DATA AND METHOD

The research question regarding the relationship between social cohesion at the community level and the probability as an individual to participate in voluntary associations implies a multilevel research. This section includes a brief recapitulation of the data and method as introduced in Chapter 4 and focuses on the operationalisation of participation in voluntary associations.

Data is collected at two levels. At the individual level, data from the Social Cohesion Indicators in Flanders survey is used. This representative cross-sectional survey within Flanders gathered data of in total 2,080 respondents that were interviewed face-to-face within 40 different Flemish communities (see Chapter 4, Figure 14). The survey was conducted in 2009 and was especially designed to solve multilevel issues, as it was based on a two-stage cluster sampling. Firstly, cluster analysis on the basis of all Flemish communities resulted in eight community clusters (see Chapter 4, Figure 13). Within these eight clusters, 40 communities were randomly selected and in a second phase, 2,080 inhabitants were selected within these communities. At the second community level, data was gathered from different official sources, referring to 2006.

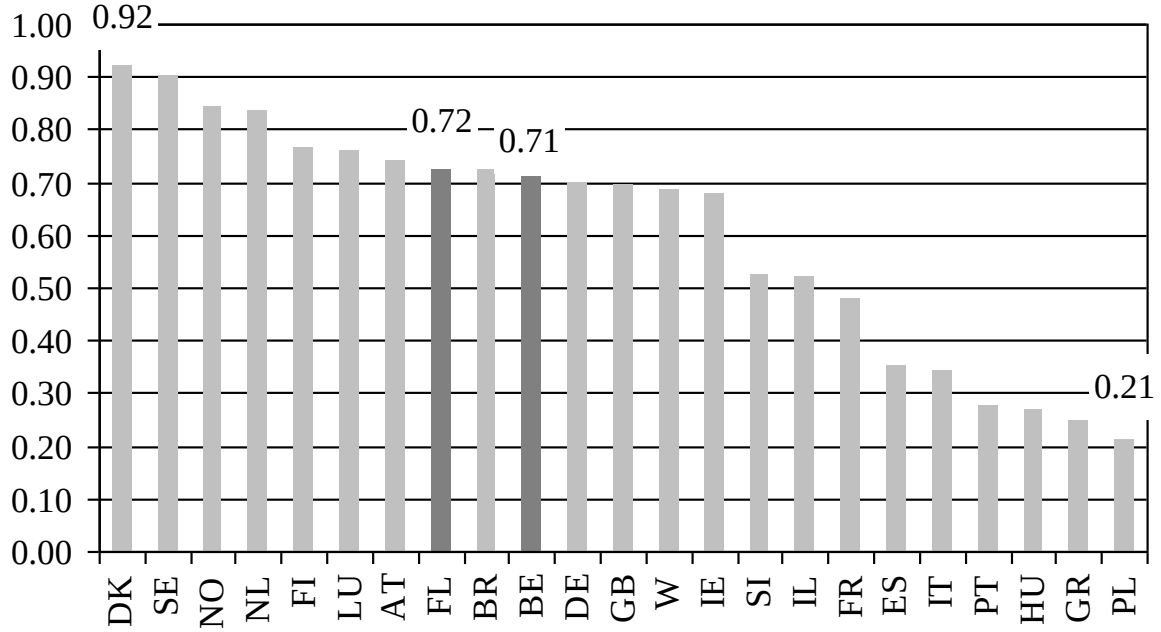
5.4.1. MEASURING PARTICIPATION IN VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS

The Social Cohesion Indicators in Flanders survey includes an extended battery on participation in diverse voluntary associations. Yet, before examining the participation battery, a general overview of participation in Flanders is provided. Flanders is on an average European level with regard to participation in voluntary associations, with both a strong presence of traditional associations, various new associations such as new social movements that are active on human rights or the environment, and sports clubs that tend to attract a young membership base (Hooghe, 2003).

When membership rates are considered at the national level, one can observe in Figure 17 that Flanders has a large amount of citizens participating in voluntary associations. These figures are derived from the first round of the European Social Survey in 2002/2003 and demonstrate that the Nordic countries such as Denmark and Sweden

have large majorities within their populations that are affiliated to voluntary associations. In Flanders, 72 per cent of the population indicates to be member of a voluntary association, which is a considerable proportion. In comparison, in European countries such as Greece or Poland, a minority of respectively 25 per cent and 21 per cent indicate to be member in a voluntary association. In these countries, the majority does not participate in formal social networks.

FIGURE 17 MEMBERS IN VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS IN EUROPE



Note: ISO Country code (country): DK (Denmark), BE (Belgium), BG (Bulgaria), BR (Region of Brussels), CH (Switzerland), CY (Cyprus), DE (Germany), EE (Estonia), ES (Spain), FI (Finland), FL (Flanders), FR (France), GB (United Kingdom), HU (Hungary), IL (Israel), NL (the Netherlands), NO (Norway), PL (Poland), PT (Portugal), RU (Russian Federation), SE (Sweden), SI (Slovenia), SK (Slovakia), W (Wallonia).

In order to measure membership in voluntary associations, respondents in the Social Cohesion Indicators in Flanders survey were presented with a list of 18 different associations. For every association, they could indicate whether they were an active or a passive member of that association, or not a member at all. The exact question wording was the following: *"I will read a list of different kinds of voluntary associations. Can you tell me if you are a member now or were a member before; if you are currently an active, passive, or board member. A passive member pays the membership fee and/or reads the magazine, whereas an active member is someone who participates in the activities of the association and a board member is someone who has an official function within the*

association, such as president, secretary, or treasurer."[17] The types of associations are quite diverse and cover the broad spectrum of all societal subsystems (Knoke, 1986). They range from labour organisations, religious associations, social movement organisations to recreational associations, civic service and philanthropy associations and so on. The 18 categories of associations were the following:

1. youth associations;
2. environmental associations;
3. associations helping physically challenged, elderly, the poor;
4. art associations, such as choir, theatre, literature, dance, music;
5. hobby clubs, such as cooking, sewing, collecting stamps, wine tasting;
6. women's associations;
7. social-cultural associations;
8. sports associations, including walking and chess;
9. political associations or political party;
10. religious associations of all denominations;
11. neighbourhood committee;
12. trade union, professional association;
13. municipal advisory council, school council;
14. family associations;
15. associations connected to a local pub, such as soccer, darts;
16. red cross, voluntary fire brigade;
17. associations for senior citizens;
18. other associations, groups or clubs.

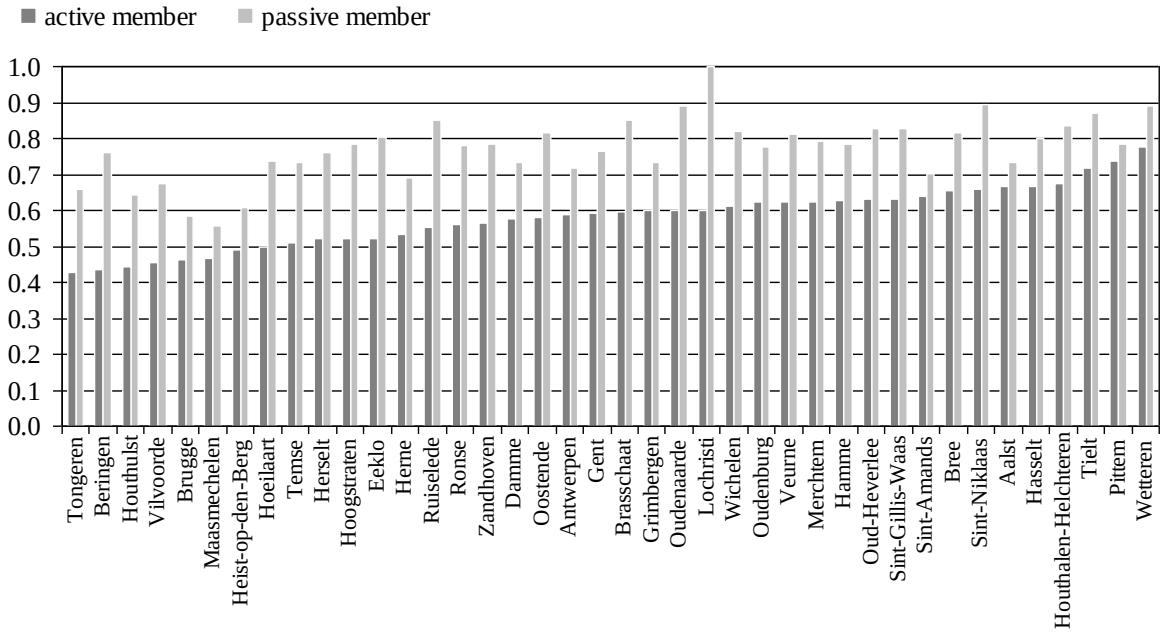
For measuring involvement in associational life, memberships are often measured. Being member or more precisely the number of memberships are often taken as indications of how much an individual respondent is engaged in the associational civic life. In what follows, participation within Flanders is considered using the scope and intensity of membership in voluntary associations as a starting point. Subsequently, also membership in specific types of voluntary associations is considered.

[17] Board members were assigned to the group of active members.

The intensity of participation in voluntary associations is an important factor to take into account. Participation in voluntary associations has more positive outcomes when involvement in associations is active and when members of a voluntary association have face-to-face contacts (Selle & Strømsnes, 2001). The higher the level of involvement within voluntary associations, the stronger the interactions with others and the higher the extent of exposure to the beneficial outcomes of participation will be (Rosenblum, 1998; van der Meer & van Ingen, 2009). In other words, only active participation in voluntary associations is assumed to create positive externalities for economy and society (Putnam, 2000). Others, however, argue that the difference between active and passive members of voluntary associations is less evident and less striking (Van Deth, 2006: 126). Therefore, both active and passive participation is studied.

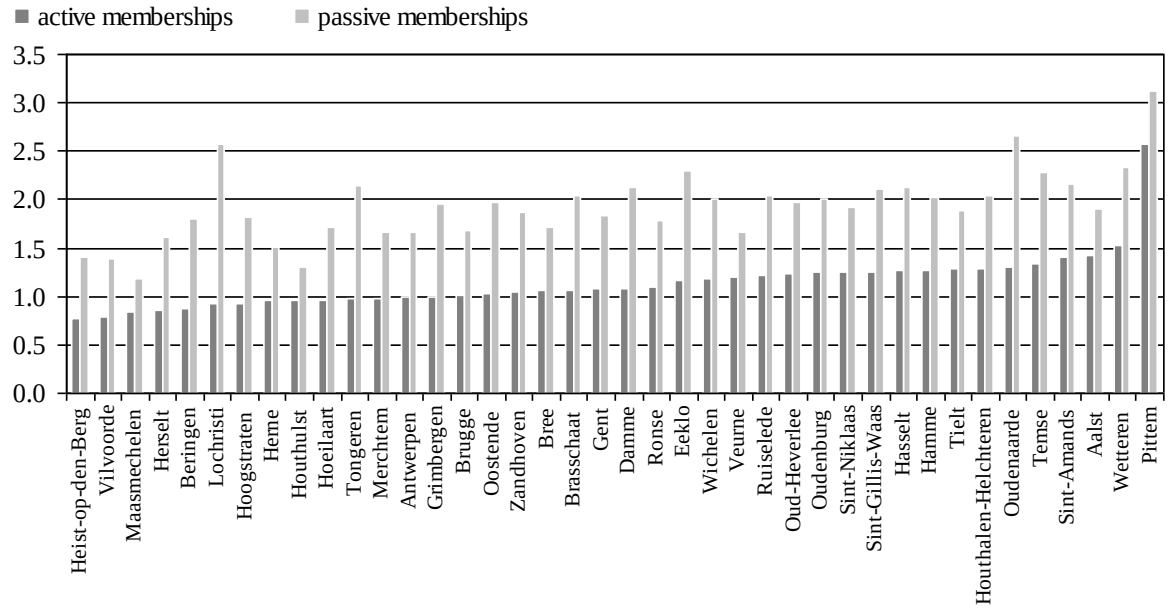
Within the Social Cohesion Indicators in Flanders survey, around 60 per cent of the respondents indicate to be actively involved in a voluntary association, while more than three quarters or 77 per cent of the respondents indicate to participate in a passive manner in a voluntary association. The proportion of active and passive participation in voluntary associations per community is presented in Figure 18. It can be observed that while Wetteren has an active participation rate of 78 per cent, it has not the maximum passive participation rate. In Lochristi, every respondent answered to be a passive member in at least one association. With regard to the active participation rate, there are only eight of the 40 selected Flemish communities of which not half of the population is actively involved in a voluntary association. The lowest rate of 43 per cent in Tongeren still remains a considerable proportion of the population that does participate actively. Furthermore, it can be observed that in every community at least half of the population is involved in a passive manner within a voluntary association.

FIGURE 18 INTENSITY OF PARTICIPATION IN VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS WITHIN 40 FLEMISH COMMUNITIES



Besides intensity, the scope of participation in voluntary associations is important to consider. Social ties that are formed within voluntary associations provide a base of different skills, knowledge and perspectives (Knoke, 1981; Verba et al., 1995). As a consequence, the more diverse someone's network, the better the probabilities to achieve these positive externalities (Magee, 2008). When the distribution of the number of memberships is examined, the maximum of different memberships is eleven active memberships and twelve passive memberships. When respondents that indicate to participate are looked at in detail, active members are half of the time member of only one voluntary association. Passive members are more often member of more than one voluntary association. In the Social Cohesion Indicators in Flanders survey, 65 per cent of the passive members is member in more than one association. In Figure 19, the participation figures per community are presented and it is clear that not Wetteren or Lochristi, but Pittem is the community with on average the most participating population when it is measured via the number of memberships. On average, an inhabitant of Pittem is member in more than two voluntary associations actively (score of 2.57) and more than three associations passively (score of 3.13).

FIGURE 19 SCOPE OF PARTICIPATION IN VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS WITHIN 40 FLEMISH COMMUNITIES



Furthermore, several types of voluntary associations are outlined. It makes sense to differentiate between different associations. It was mentioned already by Putnam when studying the civil society in Italy that affiliation in certain voluntary associations, namely unions, religious associations and political parties, should be studied separately from other cultural, recreational or local associations (Putnam, 1993). These former associations were important affiliations that differed greatly regarding the regional context within Italy. In the case of religious organisations, they even created an alternative to the civic community and were not a part of it (Putnam, 1993). In Flanders, participation in voluntary associations has changed over the years, as more and more possibilities have come into play. Historically, traditional associations were the most successful and most widespread associations. These associations were rather large and formally structured. Most of them do still operate according to a traditional hierarchical structure, where the focus is on the local chapter of a national umbrella federation (Hooghe & Botterman, 2012). Nonetheless, it is noticeable that mass-membership based organizations that were constructed on the dispersion of local chapters gradually lose ground (Skocpol, 2003). Voluntary associations in which membership is based on one background characteristic (e.g. gender, age or religion) present a smaller portion of associational life nowadays. The past decades have been characterised by the uprising of more often little and small-scaled initiatives (Hooghe, 1999). Younger age cohorts prefer different, more loosely structured forms of associations (Dalton, 2008). Nonetheless, the

difference between active members in different associations can be quite considerable and therefore is worthwhile to investigate (Hooghe & Quintelier, 2012; Van Deth, 2006).

What types of voluntary associations are most popular in Flanders can be observed in Table 15. Especially sports clubs and organisations have the highest participation rate. More than one quarter of the Flemish population is actively involved in a sports club. Referring to passive membership, it can be observed that work and labour organisations such as unions have a high membership rate of more than one quarter of the total population. Nonetheless, people are most of the time only passively affiliated to these organisations. Another remarkable fact is that one out of ten respondents is involved in an environmental or humanitarian association in a passive way (i.e. pay a membership fee or read the newsletter of the organisation), but only a limited portion of around one fifth of these members is also actively involved in these associations.

TABLE 15 TYPES OF VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION (%)

	Member			No member
	Active	Passive	Total	
Youth	5.0	5.8	10.8	89.2
Environment	2.9	9.8	12.7	87.3
Helping deprived	5.5	9.6	15.1	84.9
Art	7.9	10.5	18.4	81.6
Hobby	9.7	11.2	20.9	79.1
Women	6.2	8.2	14.4	85.6
Socio-cultural	5.8	9.1	14.9	85.1
Sport	26.3	28.4	54.7	45.4
Politics	2.2	5.7	7.9	92.1
Religion	4.5	6.1	10.6	89.5
Neighbourhood	5.4	7.7	13.1	86.8
Work	5.1	27.7	32.8	67.2
Council	5.0	6.3	11.3	88.8
Family	3.4	12.3	15.7	84.3
Local pub	5.2	6.8	12.0	87.9
Red Cross	2.7	11.3	14.0	86.0
Senior citizens	5.5	8.0	13.5	86.4
Other	4.8	6.6	11.4	88.6

5.4.2. INDIVIDUAL LEVEL VARIABLES

Before looking at the relationship between participation in voluntary associations and social cohesion as a contextual setting, it is important to consider who joins these voluntary associations. Researchers have identified several individual level determinants that may explain why individuals are civically involved in their community (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011; Wiepking & Bekkers, 2012). First of all, participation in voluntary associations is related to personal characteristics that were developed in the 'dominant status model' (Lemon, Palisi, & Jacobson, 1972). This model emphasises that individuals who are characterised by a more dominant set of social positions and roles are more likely to participate in voluntary associations (Smith, 1994). In other words, inequality plays a role in the chances to be involved in voluntary associations. The 'winners' of society with more resources are more likely to have a more significant social network and thus have more chances to participate in voluntary associations (Bekkers et al., 2008). Highly educated and employed men are therefore more likely to be member of voluntary associations. A high socio-economic status will create more possibilities and this factor is measured via two variables: education level and unemployment status[18]. It is expected that highly educated respondents will be more likely to participate. Unemployment is expected to have a negative effect on participation in voluntary associations. Employed and educated individuals are typically more informed, have more possibilities to take part in civic associations and have larger changes to be mobilised (Brady, Verba, & Schlozman, 1995; Verba & Nie, 1972). Furthermore, men are likely to have a higher position and to participate in a larger number of voluntary associations (Bekkers, 2004). Gender is measured as a dummy with men coded one. The effect of age is assumed to be curvilinear, with the highest participation level to be found among the middle-aged group. Therefore, next to age, also age squared is included as an individual indicator (Hooghe & Botterman, 2012).

Given the importance of informal networks, it can further be expected that those having a partner and children, will be more easily recruited into voluntary associations (Hooghe &

[18] For the indicator of income, the OECD equivalence scale is available (Van Doorslaer & Masseria, 2004). However, this indicator does not correlate with participation and as the percentage of missing values is rather high (12.5 per cent), it is not included within the multivariate models.

Stolle, 2003a; Rotolo, 1999; Smith, 1994). Therefore, two separate dummy variables are included in the analyses, indicating the presence of a partner and the presence of children. Another important indicator of participation in voluntary associations that relates to informal networks, is religion (Bekkers, 2005). It is measured via two dimensions, namely religious belonging and religious behaving. Religious belonging is indicated via denomination. As 75 per cent of all respondents belong to the Catholic Church, it is assumed that Catholic respondents will have more structural opportunities to engage in voluntary associations than respondents that have a different denomination or no denomination at all. Religious behaving is indicated via church practice, with seven categories ranging from never attending church to weekly attending church.[19] It has been shown in previous research that this form of religious behaviour is strongly connected to membership in voluntary associations (Putnam, 2000). It is expected that religious behaviour is a more clear indicator of participation than religious belonging, because behaving already hints voluntary action (Smith, 1975: 249).

Finally, residential stability is measured via two dichotomous variables, namely home ownership and living in the same residence for over ten years. It can be assumed that residential instability poses a burden for the development of participation in voluntary associations (Ahlbrandt, 1984; Kang & Kwak, 2003; Sampson, 1988; Steenbeek & Hipp, 2011; Swaroop & Morenoff, 2006; Taylor, 1996). The geographical mobility of urban populations tends to be higher than that of rural populations, which increases the psychological distance with members of the same community and decreases the chances to be affiliated to locally based associations (Wirth, 1938).

5.4.3. COMMUNITY LEVEL VARIABLES

Cohesive communities are assumed to create denser and more intense social networks in voluntary associations (Bekkers et al., 2008; Cradock, Kawachi, Colditz, Gortmaker, & Buka, 2009). The several social cohesion dimensions are taken as a starting point, measured via five factors: (1) religious involvement; (2) absence of property crime; (3) absence of violent crime; (4) absence of deprivation; and (5) civic engagement.

[19] Dummy variables that indicate weekly and monthly church practice yield quasi-identical results.

Furthermore, also community indicators that relate to diversity and cleavages within the community are included. These community indicators influence participation in voluntary associations in two opposite manners. On the one hand, they may have a positive effect on the probability to participate in voluntary associations, as multiple interests may create multiple associations. Associations are built around a certain objective and therefore, a multiplication of interests may imply the creation of very diverse associations. On the other hand, diversity may also influence participation negatively and hinder civic participation. It may reduce the actual participation rate, as empirical studies have already shown (Magee, 2008: 326). Heterogeneity can impede social ties within a community and can be negatively related to associational membership (Costa & Kahn, 2003).

Three different community characteristics are considered, representing an economic, ethnic and urban cleavage. First of all, the economic cleavage is measured via mean income and income inequality. It is assumed that income has a positive effect on participation, because poverty leads to less participation and people who live in more affluent communities have more chances to participate in voluntary associations (Ahlbrandt, 1984; Chaskin, 1994; Dahl, Fløtten, & Lorentzen, 2008; Stoll, 2001). Economic segregation is measured via the gini coefficient. Its relation with participation is rather ambiguous. On the one hand, economic heterogeneous communities may produce more participating citizens, because conflict between groups may stimulate civic participation in several specific associations (Oliver, 2001). On the other hand, it is possible that economic inequality reduces engagement levels, as deprivation may lead to less engaged and motivated citizens (Kennedy et al., 1998; Wilkinson, 1996).

Secondly, ethnic heterogeneity is measured via static measurements of ethnic diversity. Ethnicity at the community level is first of all measured via the static diversity measure, namely the percentage of foreigners within a community. As the foreign population within border communities merely refers to foreigners from the neighbouring countries, additional measurements of ethnic presence are considered, as explained in Chapter 4. The percentage of foreigners outside the European Union and the percentage of foreigners outside Europe are included in the analyses. These foreigners do not encompass the foreigners that are interwoven with the industrial history of the region (Reeskens & Hooghe, 2009; Reeskens, 2009). This latter group of foreigners is also

considered by looking at the percentage of foreigners from within the European Union and Europe. Furthermore, a Herfindahl index is included, taking into account all foreign nationalities within a community. This Herfindahl index is calculated as follows: $H = \sum_{i=1}^{N} s_i^2$ where s_i is the fraction of the ethnic group i is the community population and N is the number of ethnic groups. It ranges from $1/N$ to one, from most ethnically diverse to least ethnically diverse. To indicate ethnic diversity, this index is reversed before included in the analyses. Previous research suggests that ethnic diversity in a community inhibits voluntary engagement. The pro-social behaviour turns less evident, increasing the chances to become a bystander that is less interested and whose feelings of efficacy decrease. However, it has to be noted that evidence on this relation is not conclusive (Greif, 2009).

Thirdly, urbanisation is considered as a contextual variable at the community level. An urban environment is considered not conducive for community engagement and social integration. The majority of research claims that there is a negative relationship between civic participation and big city life (Andrews, 2009; Curtis, Grabb, & Baer, 1992; Latané & Darley, 1970; Levine, Martinez, Brase, & Sorenson, 1994; Oliver, 2001; Olson, 1965; Smith, 1994; Sundeen, 1992; Wallace & Pichler, 2009). Urbanisation is often equated with a disruption of social ties, anonymity, and a breakdown of social life, making it difficult to mobilise urban city dwellers for various forms of engagement (Huckfeldt & Sprague, 1995; White & White, 1962). Lose, superficial ties in industrialised cities impede participation in civil society, harm civic engagement and social networks, and estrange citizens (Bell & Force, 1956a, 1956b; Oliver, 2001). Reversely, others argue that city dwellers do not necessarily have fewer ties, but that their networks are structurally different. They argue that city size creates the opportunity to develop ties with distant but like-minded others (Fischer, 1982; Kelleher & Lowery, 2009). While rural ties often call for geographic closeness and resemblance, networks in an urban context may allow for the development of specific subcultures (Gans, 1962). Empirical evidence about the relation between urbanisation and participation is therefore, at best, mixed (Latané & Darley, 1970; Levine et al., 1994; Oliver, 2001; Olson, 1965). Urbanisation is measured via population size, population density and a dummy variable that indicates whether communities belong to a city region (*stadsgewest*). This latter variable is relevant, as it refers to the argument that communities should not be studied in isolation, because of

suburbanization processes (Oliver, 2001). A city region is thus a collection of communities and a centre city that all form together a social and an economic unit (Mérenne et al., 1998).

Descriptive figures and more information for all individual and community level variables can be found in the Appendix. All variables are further standardised before included in the analyses.[20]

5.4.4. METHOD OF MULTILEVEL REGRESSION

To investigate whether there are contextual influences on participation probabilities in voluntary associations, multilevel regression techniques are used. Multilevel regression takes nested data of several levels into account. Individuals living in the same community cannot be considered as independent observations, because they are grouped into these communities. Preceding the multilevel analyses, intercept only models are conducted to examine the suitability of conducting multilevel analyses using participation indicators as dependent variables. The intra class correlation estimates the percentage that explains the degree of resemblance between respondents that live in the same community. When no significant variance can be found at the higher community level, this implies that contextual determinants of a certain indicator of participation are non-existent and this indicator of participation is evenly distributed over the whole territory of Flanders. Data are analysed using HLM6.0 software (Raudenbush et al., 2004).

First of all, the intensity of membership is investigated by looking at two dummy variables, namely active and passive membership in a voluntary association. These dependent variables are not normally distributed. As a result, logistic Bernoulli regression analysis should be applied. As a consequence, the variance at the first level is unknown, which is necessary to calculate the intra class correlation. Therefore, a fixed variance at the individual level of $\pi^2/3$, i.e. 3.29 is proposed to calculate the intra class correlation (Snijders & Bosker, 1999: 224-227). Examining the intra class correlations in Table 16, one can see that passive involvement in voluntary associations is influenced

[20] The statistical program HLM6.0 does not provide standardised coefficients.

stronger by the community context than active involvement. Overall, the intra class correlations remain rather low and contextual explanations are therefore expected to be limited.

TABLE 16 INTERCEPT ONLY MODELS FOR INTENSITY OF PARTICIPATION IN VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS

	Active member	Passive member
τ_0^2	0.033	0.144
τ_e^2	3.29	3.29
$\rho = \tau_0^2 / \tau_0^2 + \tau_e^2$	0.010	0.042

Second, the scope of participation is measured via the number of memberships in various voluntary associations. It can be considered a count variable. This dependent variable is a non-negative integer count of events. The events are the number of memberships and therefore only takes on a few values. As this variable is not normally distributed, multilevel Poisson regression analysis are conducted to hinder inefficient and biased estimators (Agresti, 1996; King, 1989; Land, McCall, & Nagin, 1996). The rate of memberships in voluntary associations follows an approximation of the Poisson distribution, which is presumed to be loglinear. Multiple memberships can be seen as a number of Bernouilli trails with a small success chance. As the error variance at the first level is absent, the error variance is fixed at 1.00 by default, assuming that the Poisson distribution holds (Hox, 2002: 80). The intensity of participation in voluntary associations seems to be more affected by context than the scope of participation.

TABLE 17 INTERCEPT ONLY MODELS FOR SCOPE OF PARTICIPATION IN VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS

	Number of active memberships	Number of passive memberships
τ_0^2	0.027	0.016
τ_e^2	1.000	1.000
$\rho = \tau_0^2 / \tau_0^2 + \tau_e^2$	0.016	0.026

Finally, specific types of associations are examined. From the different voluntary associations that are included in the Social Cohesion Indicators in Flanders questionnaire, five are investigated separately that have enough variance to be explained at the higher

community level. Most smaller associational types are only weakly represented and the number of respondents reporting an active membership in them is too low for a valid multilevel analysis. If less than three per cent of the respondents reports an active membership, there are too many empty cells to conduct a reliable analysis. Moreover, if there is no significant intra class correlation, this automatically rules out the possibility that community-level variables could have any meaningful effect. In this case, participation will be spread quite evenly across the territory of the Flemish region. Applying these considerations, five voluntary associations remain for which meaningful analyses can be conducted. These five dummies will be studied using multilevel logistic regression technique. Again, as the variance at the first level is unknown, a fixed variance of $\pi^2/3$, i.e. 3.29 is used to calculate the intra class correlation (Snijders & Bosker, 1999: 224-227).

TABLE 18 INTERCEPT ONLY MODEL PARTICIPATION IN VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS

	Youth	**Women**	**Religion**	**Family**	**Senior citizen**
τ_0^2	0.227	0.196	0.316	0.405	0.240
τ_e^2	3.29	3.29	3.29	3.29	3.29
$\rho = \tau_0^2 / \tau_0^2 + \tau_e^2$	0.065	0.056	0.088	0.110	0.068

The five associations in Table 18 are associations were people with a specific ascribed characteristic find their mutual interest. Youth associations will attract more often younger individuals, women's associations will attract more often women, religious associations will attract more often religiously involved individuals, family associations will attract more often married parents and senior citizens' associations will attract predominantly older and retired individuals. Membership in these associations can be characterised as instrumental, as there is a clear interest or reason to be affiliated to one of these associations. This is in contrast to expressive reasons to be member of an association, which are more related to affection towards a certain association (Bekkers et al., 2008). As a certain interest in these associations is seen, one can also present these five associations as interest associations, in contrast to leisure or activist associations (van der Meer & van Ingen, 2009).

5.5. RESULTS

The results are ordered per indicator of participation. Several dependent variables are considered that focus on the intensity of participation, the scope of participation and the type of voluntary association. As in the previous Chapter 4, individual level models are considered independently, before including community level variables one by one to this individual baseline model. Supplementing one additional community level variable at a time, multicollinearity problems are avoided. Furthermore, compositional effects are controlled for in the multilevel models, as individual level variables are included.

5.5.1. INTENSITY OF PARTICIPATION IN VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS

The intensity of participation in voluntary associations is studied by comparing passive and active participation. First of all, the individual level variables are considered in Table 19. The intra class correlation rises slowly, however, this increase is due to the fixed variance of 3.29 at the individual level. Odds ratios are presented and should be interpreted positive when higher than one and negative when lower than one.

TABLE 19 INDIVIDUAL EXPLANATIONS OF INTENSITY OF PARTICIPATION

	Active membership		Passive membership	
Individual variables	**OR**	**CI**	**OR**	**CI**
Age	0.62*	[0.41, 0.94]	0.78	[0.47, 1.32]
Age^2	0.43**	[0.27, 0.68]	0.32***	[0.20, 0.53]
Male	1.43**	[1.15, 1.76]	1.57***	[1.25, 1.97]
Education	5.04***	[3.39, 7.49]	4.91***	[2.90, 8.31]
Unemployed	1.00	[0.58, 1.71]	1.60	[0.71, 3.64]
Children	0.90	[0.73, 1.11]	0.99	[0.78, 1.25]
Partner	0.97	[0.79, 1.19]	1.04	[0.84, 1.29]
Catholic	1.08	[0.88, 1.33]	1.06	[0.84, 1.33]
Church practice	2.97***	[1.82, 4.83]	2.72**	[1.53, 4.83]
Stable residence	1.47**	[1.18, 1.84]	1.23	[0.98, 1.54]
Own home	1.49**	[1.17, 1.91]	1.56**	[1.16, 2.09]
τ_0^2	0.037		0.156	
τ_e^2	3.29		3.29	
$\rho = \tau_0^2 / \tau_0^2 + \tau_e^2$	0.011		0.045	

Entries multilevel logistic regression in HLM are Odds Ratios (OR) and Confidence Intervals [CI]. Fixed effects with robust standard errors are not reported here. Intercept only model: ρactpart = 0.010; ρpaspart = 0.042 Significance: * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001.

The individual level explanations for active and passive participation are similar. Looking at the dependent variable of active participation, men who have a stable residence and own a home have a higher likelihood to participate actively in a voluntary association. Also churchgoers and middle-aged people tend to have a higher chance to participate actively. The most important determinant of active participation is education, as the probability that the most educated respondents participate actively is five times higher than the probability for the least educated respondents. With regard to passive membership, the effect of a stable residence disappears, while the effects of homeownership, religious behaviour, gender, education and age remain. The probability

to participate increases when one owns a house, goes to church more often, is better educated and is male. The probability to participate decreases when one gets older. Participation is thus most of all affected by the socio-economic status indicator of education. Unemployment, having a partner or children and the religious belonging indicator of denomination did not yield significant results. In Table 20 and Table 21, the community level variables are added to the individual level model in Table 19.

TABLE 20 SOCIAL COHESION EXPLANATIONS OF INTENSITY OF PARTICIPATION

	Active member			Passive member		
Social cohesion dimensions	**OR**	**CI**	**ρ**	**OR**	**CI**	**ρ**
Religious involvement	0.94	[0.65, 1.38]	0.012	1.20	[0.72, 2.00]	0.047
Absence property crime	0.98	[0.65, 1.46]	0.012	1.59	[0.89, 2.86]	0.046
Civic engagement	1.13	[0.78, 1.62]	0.012	1.26	[0.72, 2.24]	0.047
Absence deprivation	0.92	[0.69, 1.23]	0.012	1.14	[0.70, 1.86]	0.048
Absence violent crime	0.77	[0.56, 1.07]	0.010	0.77	[0.49, 1.22]	0.047

Entries multilevel logistic regression in HLM are Odds Ratios (OR) and Confidence Intervals [CI]. Fixed effects with robust standard errors are not reported here. Individual level variables are included in these models, yet not reported. Intercept only model: ρactpart = 0.010; ρpaspart = 0.042 Significance: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

First of all, social cohesion dimensions are considered in Table 20. None of the five social cohesion dimensions are significantly related to the intensity of participation. The albeit insignificant odds ratios point to a lower probability to participate actively, yet, a higher probability to participate passively. Although these odds ratios cannot be interpreted, violent crime seems to enhance both ways of participation. It was acknowledged before that the link between crime and participation is a rather ambiguous one, as crime may hinder as well as foster collective action via participation in voluntary associations.

Nonetheless, it seems that the intensity of participation is not influenced by the social cohesiveness of a community.[21]

TABLE 21 CONTEXTUAL EXPLANATIONS OF INTENSITY OF PARTICIPATION

	Active member			Passive member		
Contextual variables	**OR**	**CI**	**ρ**	**OR**	**CI**	**ρ**
Income	0.91	[0.59, 1.39]	0.012	1.23	[0.52, 2.88]	0.047
Income inequality	0.87	[0.58, 1.31]	0.012	0.99	[0.60, 1.61]	0.048
Ethnic presence	0.73	[0.50, 1.08]	0.012	0.59	[0.30, 1.17]	0.044
Ethnic presence outside EU	1.09	[0.78, 1.52]	0.012	0.74	[0.44, 1.24]	0.048
Ethnic presence inside EU	0.62*	[0.42, 0.91]	0.010	0.51	[0.24, 1.29]	0.043
Ethnic presence outside Europe	1.10	[0.78, 1.54]	0.012	0.74	[0.50, 1.19]	0.048
Ethnic presence inside Europe	0.66*	[0.45, 0.95]	0.011	0.55	[0.25, 1.24]	0.043
Ethnic diversity	0.69	[0.46, 1.04]	0.011	0.72	[0.29, 1.78]	0.047
Population size	1.24	[0.98, 1.57]	0.012	0.77	[0.53, 1.12]	0.048
Population density	1.16	[0.86, 1.57]	0.012	0.88	[0.55, 1.42]	0.048
Population city region	1.10	[0.85, 1.42]	0.012	0.94	[0.62, 1.44]	0.048

Entries multilevel logistic regression in HLM, Odds Ratios (OR) and Confidence Intervals [CI] are presented. Fixed effects with robust standard errors are not reported here. Individual level variables are included in these models, yet not reported. Intercept only model: ρactpart = 0.010; ρpaspart = 0.042 Significance: * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001.

When other community level indicators are under investigation, significant effects remain mostly absent. Odds ratios indicate a difference between active and passive participation, when considering affluence, ethnic presence and urbanisation. Nonetheless, these odds ratios are insignificant and therefore, no conclusions can be

[21] Even when only community level variables are included in these models, therefore not giving attention to possible composition effects, none of the social cohesion dimensions has an effect on the intensity of participation in voluntary associations. These models are not reported here.

drawn. The most striking result is the negative and significant effects of ethnic presence of foreigners inside the European Union and within Europe on active participation. This is an unexpected result, especially the presence of foreigners outside these regions do not influence participation in voluntary associations. With regard to the intensity of participation in voluntary associations, it can be concluded that mostly individual characteristics seem to matter. The probability to participate is not influenced by contextual determinants that were assumed to play a role, except for two static ethnic cleavage indicators.

5.5.2. SCOPE OF PARTICIPATION IN VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS

The scope of participation refers to the affiliation within diverse networks, measured via multiple memberships in different voluntary associations. In Table 22, the individual explanations for this measurement of participation are presented. Given the skewed distribution of these count variables, it is opted to conduct Poisson regression, resulting in event rate ratios. These event rate ratios can be interpreted similar to odds ratios, indicating a positive likelihood to participate in multiple associations when higher than one and a negative likelihood to participate in multiple associations when lower than one.

TABLE 22 INDIVIDUAL EXPLANATIONS OF NUMBER OF MEMBERSHIPS

	Active memberships		Passive memberships	
Individual variables	**ERR**	**CI**	**ERR**	**CI**
Age	0.99	[0.80, 1.23]	1.07	[0.92, 1.23]
Age^2	0.54***	[0.40, 0.75]	0.56***	[0.44, 0.70]
Male	1.09	[0.98, 1.21]	1.10*	[1.02, 1.18]
Education	2.80***	[2.27, 3.46]	2.39***	[2.02, 2.83]
Unemployed	0.97	[0.70, 1.34]	1.14	[0.93, 1.39]
Children	0.90	[0.79, 1.01]	0.97	[0.89, 1.06]
Partner	0.95	[0.83, 1.09]	1.02	[0.93, 1.12]
Catholic	1.10	[0.97, 1.23]	1.07	[0.97, 1.18]
Church practice	2.33***	[1.84, 2.95]	1.93***	[1.56, 2.37]
Stable residence	1.19*	[1.04, 1.37]	1.11*	[1.00, 1.22]
Own home	1.25*	[1.05, 1.48]	1.27***	[1.13, 1.43]
τ_0^2	0.021		0.014	
τ_e^2	1.000		1.000	
$\rho = \tau_0^2 / \tau_0^2 + \tau_e^2$	0.021		0.014	

Entries multilevel Poisson regression in HLM are Event Rate Ratios (ERR) and Confidence Intervals (CI). Fixed effects with robust standard errors are not reported. Intercept only model scope: ρactpart = 0.026; ρpaspart = 0.016. Significance: * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001.

Age does not yield significant effects on the number of memberships. Nonetheless, the curvilinear age squared does yield negative and significant likelihoods, indicating that at a higher age, the likelihood to participate in multiple associations decreases. Next, men have a somewhat higher likelihood to participate passively in multiple associations. Education proves to be the most substantial indicator for both the number of active as the number of passive memberships in voluntary associations. The other socio-economic status factor of unemployment does not affect the number of memberships, neither do the stable family indicators of having a partner and children. Children or having a partner do not broaden the scope of participation. Churchgoers are more often inclined to be

active and passive members in multiple associations. Denomination does not affect this participation indicator. Community attachment, measured by homeownership and a stable residence, increases the likelihood to participate in multiple associations.

TABLE 23 SOCIAL COHESION EXPLANATIONS OF NUMBER OF MEMBERSHIPS

	Active memberships			Passive memberships		
Social cohesion dimensions	**ERR**	**CI**	**ρ**	**ERR**	**CI**	**ρ**
Religious involvement	1.16	[0.92, 1.46]	0.021	1.14	[0.98, 1.33]	0.013
Absence property crime	1.26	[0.94, 1.69]	0.020	1.20	[0.99, 1.45]	0.016
Civic engagement	1.31*	[1.00, 1.70]	0.017	1.18	[0.97, 1.43]	0.012
Absence deprivation	1.05	[0.85, 1.29]	0.022	1.03	[0.86, 1.23]	0.014
Absence violent crime	0.99	[0.72, 1.36]	0.022	0.97	[0.77, 1.21]	0.014

Entries multilevel Poisson regression in HLM: Event Rate Ratios (ERR) and Confidence Intervals (CI). Fixed effects with robust standard errors are not reported. Individual level variables are included in these models, yet not reported. Intercept only model scope: ρactpart = 0.026; ρpaspart = 0.016. Significance: * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001.

Social cohesion dimensions do not influence the intensity of participation significantly, except when considering the number of active memberships. Social capital, measured by a civic engagement scale, increases the likelihood to participate actively in multiple associations. As Putnam (1993) already concluded, a civic community will create an environment that encourages citizens to take part in it via memberships within voluntary associations. Not only the civic opportunities, but also the political engagement of a community is important to consider. Whereas the chances of having plural active memberships in voluntary associations are affected by the civic engagement level, the chances of having plural passive memberships in voluntary associations are not. Participation in multiple voluntary associations remains a rather individual driven choice. Because this result is rendered even after inclusion of the individual level variables, no compositional effects come into play. The next step is to look at other possible community explanations for having multiple memberships in voluntary associations.

TABLE 24 CONTEXTUAL EXPLANATIONS OF NUMBER OF MEMBERSHIPS

	Active memberships			Passive memberships		
Contextual variables	**ERR**	**CI**	**ρ**	**ERR**	**CI**	**ρ**
Income	0.84	[0.64, 1.11]	0.021	1.00	[0.78, 1.30]	0.014
Income inequality	0.76*	[0.60, 0.98]	0.018	0.90	[0.75, 1.08]	0.014
Ethnic presence	0.75**	[0.61, 0.93]	0.011	0.78*	[0.61, 0.10]	0.011
Ethnic presence outside EU	0.89	[0.72, 1.10]	0.018	0.87	[0.73, 1.03]	0.014
Ethnic presence inside EU	0.70*	[0.53, 0.92]	0.017	0.76	[0.54, 1.06]	0.011
Ethnic presence outside Europe	0.86	[0.70, 1.07]	0.022	0.86	[0.73, 1.01]	0.013
Ethnic presence inside Europe	0.72*	[0.56, 0.92]	0.017	0.76	[0.56, 1.04]	0.011
Ethnic diversity	0.80	[0.60, 1.06]	0.021	0.87	[0.60, 1.25]	0.014
Population size	0.96	[0.82, 1.12]	0.022	0.94	[0.83, 1.05]	0.014
Population density	0.93	[0.76, 1.12]	0.022	0.96	[0.82, 1.12]	0.014
Population city region	0.98	[0.89, 1.09]	0.022	0.98	[0.90, 1.07]	0.014

Entries multilevel Poisson regression in HLM: Event Rate Ratios (ERR) and Confidence Intervals (CI). Fixed effects with robust standard errors are not reported. Individual level variables are included in these models, yet not reported. Intercept only model scope: ρactpart = 0.026; ρpaspart = 0.016. Significance: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

The scope of participation is influenced by more community level indicators than the intensity of participation in voluntary associations. More precisely, the scope of active participation is influenced negatively by income inequality within a community and the presence of foreigners. With regard to this latter indicator, especially the foreigners within the European Union and Europe have a negative effect on the probability to participate actively in several associations. Foreigners outside the European Union and Europe do not affect the intensity of participation, at least not in a significant manner. Income inequality has a negative effect on the probability to be an active member in multiple voluntary associations. Passive memberships are not influences by this

economic cleavage. Urbanisation characteristics do not determine the probabilities to participate in multiple voluntary associations.

5.5.3. TYPES OF VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS

Investigating the general membership measurements of active and passive affiliation did not reveal many significant context effects on participation in voluntary associations. These non-findings might be explained by the fact that while context have a positive impact on some forms of associations, it may have a negative impact on others (Skocpol, 2003). Therefore, some specific types of voluntary associations that have enough variance to be explained at the community level are looked at into more detail. These are youth associations, women associations, religious organisations, family organisations and senior citizens' associations. Membership within each of these five associations is considered separately, starting by examining the individual level determinants, before investigating the possible social cohesion and other community level determinants.

TABLE 25 INDIVIDUAL EXPLANATIONS OF PARTICIPATION IN SPECIFIC VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS

	Youth		Women		Religion		Family		Senior citizen	
Individual variables	**OR**	**CI**	**OR**	**CI**	**OR**	**CI**	**OR**	**CI**	**OR**	**CI**
Age	0.03***	[0.01, 0.12]	22.60***	[7.99, 63.98]	0.52	[0.22, 1.28]	0.30	[0.08, 1.12]	8,259.14*	[2.39, 0.28E10]
Age^2	1.07	[0.35, 3.29]	0.05***	[0.02, 0.15]	0.20**	[0.06, 0.67]	0.39	[0.10, 1.57]	0.10	[0.00, 5.57]
Male	1.76**	[1.26, 2.46]	0.02***	[0.01, 0.06]	0.70	[0.44, 1.13]	0.68	[0.39, 1.18]	0.63	[0.37, 1.05]
Education	7.51**	[2.49, 22.59]	0.68	[0.30, 1.55]	17.08***	[5.44, 53.59]	16.48***	[5.63, 48.20]	0.92	[0.44, 1.94]
Unemployed	0.89	[0.19, 4.21]	0.49	[0.10, 2.35]	0.53	[0.14, 1.99]				
Children	0.72	[0.39, 1.34]	0.95	[0.62, 1.44]	0.69	[0.38, 1.24]	2.27*	[1.14, 4.51]	0.58	[0.25, 1.38]
Partner	0.62	[0.35, 1.12]	1.53	[0.80, 2.90]	0.99	[0.60, 1.64]	1.14	[0.84, 2.02]	0.77	[0.49, 1.21]
Catholic	1.38	[0.92, 2.08]	2.36*	[1.01, 5.52]	0.44*	[0.22, 0.86]	1.70	[0.76, 3.81]	2.76*	[1.05, 7.24]
Church practice	2.55*	[1.03, 6.28]	3.10***	[2.02, 7.91]	270.65***	[103.61, 707.00]	5.08***	[2.19, 11.79]	3.78***	[1.96, 7.28]
Stable residence	1.58	[0.91, 2.73]	0.82	[0.45, 1.47]	0.91	[0.56, 1.47]	1.28	[0.70, 2.24]	1.01	[0.51, 2.00]
Own home	1.21	[0.61, 2.41]	1.53	[0.70, 3.32]	1.25	[0.67, 2.32]	1.45	[0.56, 3.75]	2.99**	[1.44, 6.20]
τ_0^2	0.205		0.121		0.031		0.306		0.182	
τ_e^2	3.29		3.29		3.29		3.29		3.29	
$\rho = \tau_0^2 / \tau_0^2 + \tau_e^2$	0.059		0.036		0.009		0.085		0.053	

Entries multilevel logistic regression in HLM are Odds Ratios (OR) and Confidence Intervals (CI). Fixed effects with robust standard errors are not reported. Intercept only model type: ρyouth = 0.065; ρwomen = 0.056; ρreligion = 0.088; ρfamily = 0.110; ρsenior = 0.068. Significance: * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001.

As expected, the individual level variables differ significantly according to the type of association that is under consideration. Youth associations attract mainly young men that are highly educated and go to church more often. The employment status, stable family life or community attachment indicators do not influence the likelihood to participate in youth associations. Women associations self-evidently attract mainly women and age shows a curvilinear relation. Younger respondents tend to participate less than middle-aged respondents, yet, this relationship reverses as the likelihood to participate drops when becoming older. Furthermore, participants in women associations are more often catholic and go to church. Family life and community attachment do not play a role, neither does employment status for being member of a women association. The chance to be member of a religious association self-evidently increases enormously when respondents are regular churchgoers. On the contrary, religious identification reduces the likelihood to be member of a religious association. Religious associations are most of the time related to the church and church involvement will induce participation in religious associations, while the high percentage of respondents denoting to be Catholic are not involved in religious activities. Also education has a strong positive impact on the probability to participate in religious associations. While age itself does not have a significant effect, age squared shows a negative effect, indicating that a curvilinear relationship between age and participation in religious associations is present. Participants in religious associations tend to pull out at an older age. Family life and community attachment indicators surprisingly yield no significant results, nor do unemployment and gender. With regard to family associations, especially education seems to effect the chances to be member of this type of association. Whereas having children increases the chances of being member in a family organisation, having a partner does not. Finally, churchgoers are more inclined to participate in family associations, while having a Catholic denomination does not. Again, community attachment does not yield significant results, neither do the demographic variables of age and gender. As expected, senior citizen's associations attract mainly older people and other determinants are not as important. Catholics and churchgoers have a higher probability to participate in senior citizens' associations. Gender, the socio-economic status and the family life do not yield significant results. While having a stable residence does not affect participation in senior citizens' associations, homeownership has a clear positive effect.

When these different individual level variables are considered, already some interesting results are apparent. Demographic characteristics such as age and gender have different relationships with memberships in different types of voluntary associations. It is not just middle aged men that participate more often. Significances change from type to type of association. Furthermore, education is a prominent determinant of participation in voluntary associations. It has a positive and significant relationship with being member of several types of voluntary associations. Education strangely enough hinders participation in women and senior citizen's associations, yet, these results are not significant. Another socio-economic status measurement, unemployment, yields no significant effects at all. Also family status remains very limited in its explaining power of participation. Having a partner does not yield a single significant relationship. Having children yields an expected positive relationship with membership in family associations, but is not the most important determinant. An individual's social network seems not generated by the family status, as was expected. Neither do the measurements of community attachment explain membership in these associations, with the exception of owning a residence that increases the chances to participate in senior citizens' associations. The most interesting result refers to the religion variables. They seem to yield the most strong and stable effects for most types of voluntary associations. Especially religious behaviour proves to be a constant factor in the explanation of membership in all kinds of voluntary associations. However, the Catholic denomination indicator has a strange relationship with participation, as it has a positive effect on participation in all sorts of voluntary associations, except for religious ones. In this case, being catholic even decreases the chances of being member in this kind of voluntary association.

Hereafter, results are presented of the multilevel logistic regression models. First of all, the social cohesion dimensions are examined, before the other community context variables are considered. Individual variables are included, yet not reported. Consequently, composition effects cannot come into play.

TABLE 26 SOCIAL COHESION EXPLANATIONS OF PARTICIPATION IN SPECIFIC ASSOCIATIONS

	Youth			Women			Religion			Family			Senior citizen		
Social cohesion dimensions	**OR**	**CI**	**ρ**	**OR**	**CI**	**ρ**	**OR**	**CI**	**ρ**	**OR**	**CI**	**ρ**	**OR**	**CI**	**ρ**
Religious involvement	1.02	[0.25, 4.10]	0.06	2.20	[0.73, 6.64]	0.026	1.00	[0.30, 3.37]	0.013	2.65	[0.68, 10.40]	0.076	1.83	[0.69, 4.86]	0.054
Absence property crime	1.27	[0.34, 4.75]	0.06	2.00	[0.60, 6.70]	0.033	1.30	[0.49, 3.49]	0.006	7.70**	[1.50, 39.56]	0.059	3.15	[0.64, 15.39]	0.045
Civic engagement	0.99	[0.37, 2.63]	0.06	2.36	[0.88, 6.31]	0.023	1.13	[0.41, 3.12]	0.010	7.50**	[1.99, 28.28]	0.029	4.22*	[1.30, 13.64]	0.024
Absence deprivation	1.46	[0.72, 2.95]	0.06	1.27	[0.51, 3.16]	0.036	0.71	[0.25, 2.05]	0.024	2.04	[0.68, 6.16]	0.078	2.18	[0.94, 5.03]	0.043
Absence violent crime	1.02	[0.47, 2.22]	0.06	1.65	[0.59, 4.58]	0.030	0.56	[0.15, 2.07]	0.026	2.20	[0.47, 10.27]	0.074	1.82	[0.77, 4.31]	0.047

Entries multilevel logistic regression in HLM: Odds Ratios (OR) and Confidence Intervals (CI). Fixed effects with robust standard errors are not reported. Individual level variables are included in these models, yet not reported. Intercept only model type: ρyouth = 0.065; ρwomen = 0.056; ρreligion = 0.088; ρfamily = 0.110; ρsenior = 0.068. Significance: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

Social cohesion dimensions are almost always positively related to participation, yet, only three significant effects are observed. In Table 26, it is clear that the type of association does matter when studying social cohesion as an explanation of participation. While youth, women and religious voluntary associations are not influenced by any of the social cohesion dimensions, a more interesting result emerges when one considers family and senior citizens' associations.

Family associations are more likely to attract members in communities with less property crimes and more civic engagement. These two dimensions are part of the traditional type of social cohesion and the odd ratios show that the chances increase quite sharply. In secure communities with low levels of property crime and in communities with thriving civic engagement levels, citizens are more likely to participate in family associations. Especially the dimension of civic engagement seems to lower the intra class correlation, indicating less variance that remains to be explained by other community determinants. Senior citizens' associations are more likely to have members in communities with a higher level of civic engagement. Again, the intra class correlation lowers considerably. The modern social cohesion dimensions of absence of deprivation and absence of violent crime are less likely to influence participation. The religious involvement dimension of social cohesion does not have an effect on the membership in any type of voluntary association, not even on the membership in religious associations.

TABLE 27 CONTEXTUAL EXPLANATIONS OF PARTICIPATION IN SPECIFIC ASSOCIATIONS

	Youth			Women			Religion			Family			Senior citizen		
Contextual variables	**OR**	**CI**	**ρ**	**OR**	**CI**	**ρ**	**OR**	**CI**	**ρ**	**OR**	**CI**	**ρ**	**OR**	**CI**	**ρ**
Income	0.81	[0.31, 2.11]	0.063	0.33*	[0.11, 0.95]	0.031	0.32	[0.09, 1.12]	0.006	0.34	[0.10, 1.09]	0.080	0.48	[0.13, 1.81]	0.055
Income inequality	0.56	[0.23, 1.36]	0.057	0.27*	[0.10, 0.74]	0.020	0.61	[0.20, 1.85]	0.005	0.22*	[0.05, 0.90]	0.061	0.28*	[0.11, 0.74]	0.039
Ethnic presence	0.63	[0.22, 1.78]	0.059	0.38*	[0.16, 0.91]	0.028	1.41	[0.59, 3.37]	0.019	0.20	[0.04, 1.06]	0.063	0.29*	[0.11, 0.78]	0.039
Ethnic presence outside EU	0.76	[0.27, 2.16]	0.063	0.74	[0.30, 1.84]	0.037	1.02	[0.36, 2.86]	0.017	0.17*	[0.05, 0.66]	0.062	0.40	[0.12, 1.37]	0.050
Ethnic presence inside EU	0.59	[0.19, 1.85]	0.059	0.24**	[0.10, 0.61]	0.026	1.59	[0.76, 3.33]	0.014	0.21	[0.03, 1.57]	0.075	0.26	[0.06, 1.04]	0.041
Ethnic presence outside Europe	0.80	[0.22, 3.00]	0.064	0.77	[0.34, 1.75]	0.038	1.03	[0.35, 3.08]	0.018	0.19*	[0.05, 0.78]	0.067	0.44	[0.11, 1.80]	0.054
Ethnic presence inside Europe	0.59	[0.20, 1.71]	0.058	0.27**	[0.11, 0.70]	0.025	1.53	[0.72, 3.24]	0.016	0.19	[0.02, 1.48]	0.070	0.23	[0.06, 0.90]	0.036
Ethnic diversity	0.79	[0.34, 1.84]	0.062	0.22**	[0.09, 0.52]	0.032	1.61	[0.88, 2.96]	0.013	0.03	[0.00, 1.64]	0.080	0.57	[0.25, 1.32]	0.054
Population size	0.81	[0.50, 1.29]	0.063	0.57	[0.18, 1.85]	0.035	0.58	[0.33, 1.03]	0.004	0.15**	[0.04, 0.54]	0.066	0.60	[0.22, 1.61]	0.055
Population density	1.37	[0.43, 4.41]	0.063	0.67	[0.26, 1.71]	0.035	1.23	[0.39, 3.93]	0.023	0.16*	[0.04, 0.64]	0.055	0.29	[0.07, 1.22]	0.039
Population city region	0.73	[0.46, 1.16]	0.058	0.69	[0.37, 1.26]	0.030	1.16	[0.62, 2.17]	0.020	0.49*	[0.26, 0.93]	0.072	0.47*	[0.25, 0.87]	0.030

Entries multilevel logistic regression in HLM are Odds Ratios (OR) and Confidence Intervals (CI). Fixed effects with robust standard errors are not reported. Individual level variables are included in these models, yet not reported. Intercept only model type: ρyouth = 0.065; ρwomen = 0.056; ρreligion = 0.088; ρfamily = 0.110; ρsenior = 0.068. Significance: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

Membership in youth or religious associations is not influenced at all by community cleavages and characteristics. The three sorts of associations that are influenced to some extent by the community structure are women, family and senior citizen's associations. First of all, a negative impact of income inequality on the likelihood to join these three associations is observed. This cleavage hinders participation in a clear manner, as the intra class correlation lowers drastically when this determinant is included. Income as such has only a negative influence on the probability to participate in women associations. Affluent communities do not generate inhabitants to be actively involved in these five types of voluntary associations. Secondly, the ethnic cleavage characteristics give somewhat contradictory results. The presence of foreigners lowers the likelihood to participate in women and family associations, yet, the origin of these foreigners is different for both types of associations. Communities with a large proportion of foreigners within the European Union or Europe have a significant and negative effect on participation in women's associations. A large proportion of foreigners originating from outside the European Union and Europe, hinders the likelihood of a citizen to participate in family associations. Next, ethnic diversity has a very negative effect on the chance for inhabitants to be affiliated in women associations. Thirdly, with regard to urbanisation, only membership in family associations is associated with an urban environment. An urban setting hinders the chances to be member of a family association and in some degree to be member of a senior citizen association. Living in a city region is negatively related to being member of a senior citizens' association. Urbanised communities do not significantly influence individual membership in other voluntary associations.

5.6. CONCLUSION

This chapter investigated the relationship between social cohesion at the community level and the participation probabilities in voluntary associations at the individual level. This form of social networking was introduced as an important behaviour for both members of these associations as for members of the community in general. Starting by considering the works of de Tocqueville (1835) and Putnam (1993), it became clear that investigating the determinants of participation in formal voluntary associations was essential to understand how a democracy could work. The question was raised whether

socially cohesive communities could generate a climate in which inhabitants were inspired and stimulated to participate in associational life. The assumption was that all social cohesion dimensions were positively related to participation in voluntary associations.

For solving this research question, several measurements and forms of participation were considered. First of all, the difference between active and passive involvement was considered. Both at the individual level as at the community level, active and passive involvement in associations was related to similar determinants. Secondly, the difference in scope was investigated by looking at the number of different memberships. Connected to the difference in intensity, a small difference could be seen between the active and passive scope of participation. The social cohesion dimension of social capital, measured by the civic engagement factor, affected the number of active memberships in a positive and significant manner. Other social cohesion dimensions indicated mostly positive relationships, still, remained non-significant. Other community characteristics hindering participation in multiple associations were income equality and ethnic presence of foreigners. Nonetheless, the scope and intensity of participation in voluntary associations remained a predominantly individual behaviour.

The more commonly used measurements of social networking via participation in voluntary associations did not yield satisfying results. Social cohesion could not be seen as an important indicator. Consequently, additional multilevel analyses were performed to look at participation in several types of voluntary associations. As associational life in Flanders has been changing drastically over the last decades, several associations were considered separately. Especially the more traditional associations with a rather long history in Flanders seemed to be affected by community characteristics when intercept only models were examined. These associations included youth, women, religious, family and senior citizens' associations. These five types of associations had some things in common. First of all, traditionally, they were very important in the Flemish context and used to be strong, local based mass membership organizations. Most of these organizations were further affiliated in some way or another with the Catholic Church or the Christian Democratic party (Hooghe & Botterman, 2012). Secondly, these associations are structured on one ascribed personality characteristic: being young, being a woman, being religious, having children or being old age. This was observed in the

individual level model, in which one particular characteristic always had a very outspoken effect.

When conducting multilevel analyses, especially family and senior citizen's associations were influenced by the more traditional dimensions of social cohesion. The results suggested that some, more traditional forms of associations did not thrive all that well in less socially cohesive settings. With regard to family associations, the absence of property crime and the presence of civic engagement had large positive effects on the likelihood to be actively involved. Family associations were further affected by almost all other structural community indicators as well. Membership in senior citizens' associations was affected by the level of civic engagement within a community and hindered by several heterogeneity indicators.

With regard to the community structure indicators, ethnic heterogeneity generated a community climate that impeded participation in women's associations. Additionally, the presence of foreigners decreased the chances to be actively involved in this type of association. Contrary to this expected result, not all analyses supported the alleged negative effects of urban life that were stressed by various sociological theories. Only for family and senior citizens' associations, negative results were significant and pointed at a hampering effect of urbanisation on participation in these two types of voluntary associations.

In line with Chapter 4, the challenges in this chapter relate to causality and the level of analysis. First of all, there seems to be a circular reasoning behind the examination of the relationship between social cohesion and membership in voluntary associations. Individual initiatives to form associations and to create organisations with a certain interest may in turn have a positive effect on the community (Stanley, 2003). This was already envisioned by de Tocqueville (1835) when explaining the positive outcomes outside the association for the society as a whole. Participation in voluntary associations may be an individual choice, yet, may create more socially cohesive communities. In this chapter, no causal claim was made. Social cohesion may impede the processes of atomisation and alienation and affect members' attitudes and behaviours positively. Consequently, individuals may operate in such a way as to maintain these group-level conditions to maintain their level of social cohesion.

Secondly, although theories have been written about how community life affects participation in certain ways, limited variation could be explained by the higher community level. Nonetheless, the effort to measure participation in different ways and conduct separate analyses for separate associations did yield some significant results. The civic engagement factor that measured the social capital dimension proved to enhance a community context that increased the chances to participate actively in multiple voluntary associations. It can, however, be worthwhile to continue to search for community effects when looser social network activities are considered. As explained in the presentation of our measurement, associational life within Flanders has been changing over the last decades. More and more individuals are member of a voluntary association, reducing the inequality in participation. This is also noticeable at the individual level determinants, as not all expected dominant status model variables proved to be significant. Previous studies regarding participation in voluntary associations and the civil society in general predominantly focused on either the national country level (Baer, Curtis, & Grabb, 2001; Bell & Force, 1956a; 1956b; Dekker & Van den Broek, 2005; Wallace & Pichler, 2009) or the neighbourhood level (Docherty et al., 2001; Kang & Kwak, 2003). Nonetheless, the community level can also function as a context that can colour the behaviour of inhabitants, if other indicators are chosen. The definition of participation in voluntary associations may be too strict to grasp the total influence of the community level on social participation. For instance, informal networks can be considered that individuals build with friends, family, co-workers or neighbours. The contact between members within a social network and the diversity of a network can be taken into account. Social participation in outdoor activities, such as participating in cultural activities or going out to a restaurant or to a bar, can also be taken as indicators in future research.

Chapter 6. THE RELATION BETWEEN SOCIAL COHESION AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

6.1. INTRODUCTION

Communities prosper when their inhabitants cooperate with each other, whereas individuals have incentives to act more selfishly and try to seek profits from cooperation without facing the costs (Brehm & Rahn, 1997; Hooghe & Stolle, 2003b). A solution for these collective action problems can be the investment in social capital. Social capital is a resource that individuals possess next to other cultural, economic and human resources. It is less tangible than these other resources, but equally important to among others find a job, obtain social support, and achieve political power (Astone, Nathanson, Schoen, & Kim, 1999; Putnam, 2000). It further makes it plausible for individuals to act against their own self-interests and to invest in the interest of the community. In this way, social capital can be the foundation for collective action and cooperation among unknown others (Axelrod, 1984; Coleman, 1990). It is a means to achieve outcomes of mutual benefits (Stone & Hughes, 2002). As it facilitates coordination between actors, it consequently implies a form of future (Nieminen et al., 2008).

Several positive effects have been ascribed to the level of social capital individuals within a society uphold: "*A heavy dose of social capital supposedly makes a society healthier and*

wealthier and perhaps wiser" (Uslaner and Dekker 2001: 176). As a matter of fact, both social cohesion and social capital are considered as an *"all-purpose elixir for the ills of society"* (Uslaner & Dekker, 2001: 176). This leads to the core research question of this chapter: *What is the relationship between community social cohesion and individual social capital?* The question is thus raised whether a socially cohesive community influences the level of social capital that individual citizens acquire.

Before empirically looking at this relationship, the concept of social capital is conceptualised via investigating the definitions of the three most abundantly cited social capital scholars. Also the relationship between social capital and the dimensions of social cohesion are considered. Next, the operationalisation of both social capital and social cohesion as latent concepts is examined. The result of the synthesis model in which the relationship between social capital and social cohesion is analysed, is further presented and reflected upon.

6.2. CONCEPTUALISATION OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

6.2.1. BOURDIEU, COLEMAN AND PUTNAM'S DEFINITIONS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

Social capital has been studied by many scholars, of which the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1986), the American sociologist James Coleman (1988) and the American political scientist Robert Putnam (1993, 2000) are often considered as the most influential ones. Whereas Bourdieu and Coleman took on a more theoretical approach, Putnam was the first to employ a more statistically and empirically based approach toward the concept of social capital (Svendsen & Svendsen, 2005: 252). There are similarities, yet also subtle differences in how these three scholars described social capital. Their definitions form the starting point of this theoretical section on social capital.

First, Pierre Bourdieu defined social capital as follows: *"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 – i.e., membership in a group which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a 'credential' which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word. These relationships may exist only in the practical state, in material and/or symbolic exchanges which help to maintain them. They may also be socially instituted and guaranteed by the application of a common name (the name of a family, a class, a tribe, a school, a party, etc.) and by a whole set of instituting acts." (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 199; Bourdieu, 1980: 2, 1986: 248-249).

Second, James Coleman defined social capital as follows: *"Social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities having two characteristics in common: They all consist of some aspect of social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure. Social capital inheres in the structure or relations between persons and among persons."* (Coleman, 1990: 302).

Third, Robert Putnam defined social capital as follows: *"[Social capital refers to] the connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them"* (Putnam, 2000: 19). *[In other words, the] features of social organization, such as trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions"* (Putnam 1993:167).

6.2.2. SIMILARITIES IN DEFINITIONS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

What is apparent from these three definitions is that social capital is realized through social relationships and networks. Social capital is inhered in the structure of social networks (Stolle, 1999). An individual that is related to others possesses social capital and not the individual itself, but these others are the actual source of social capital (Portes, 1998). In other words, social capital only exists when it is shared with others (Narayan & Cassidy, 2001). It is generated as a mostly unintended side-consequence or by-product of social activities. In other words, a deliberate contribution on the part of the actor to create social capital is not always present.

Furthermore, social resources can be both potential and actual. While not explicitly stated in all definitions, it is agreed upon that social capital can be interpreted as having access to social resources and/or as using these resources (Lin, 1999, 2001). In this way, social capital is actually and/or potentially productive to achieve certain goals. It is something that individuals can invest in and/or use. Without investment in it, social capital depreciates. As a consequence, social capital accumulates or decreases when relations among individuals change (Astone et al., 1999).

6.2.3. DISSIMILARITIES IN DEFINITIONS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

Social capital is considered to consist out of an attitudinal and structural component, yet, the three definitions only refer to it indirectly (Hooghe & Stolle, 2003a; Van Deth, 2008). Bourdieu and Coleman were mostly intrigued by the attitudinal element of social capital, focussing on the emotional, cultural and social quality of social relationships. They did not really investigate the structural element of social capital in detail. Reversely, Putnam described social capital as quantifiable relationships, emphasising the structural element of social capital (Svendsen & Svendsen, 2005). In particular, he extended the theory on social capital by looking at social networks consisting out of more formal and institutionalized relationships via civic participation in groups and associations.

Another difference appears considering the level in which social capital is formed. The three definitions differ regarding the amount of emphasis that is placed on the individual, social group or social structure (Nieminen et al., 2008; Portes & Vickstrom, 2011). Social capital can be considered on the one hand as a private good and individual property and on the other hand as a public good and collective property (Stolle, 1999). Bourdieu (1986) argued that social capital was an attribute of an individual within a certain social context. Whereas his analysis was micro-sociological, he did acknowledge that social capital was related to an individual's position within his social networks. In other words, social capital was an individual attribute, based upon the position an individual took in the existing social structures (Hays & Kogl, 2007). Shifting the emphasis to the social structure, Coleman (1988) described social capital as an attribute of an individual and as an attribute of a social structure. The individual was a corporate actor within the social structure (Coleman, 1988, 1990). The argument was that individuals interacted and

undertook actions, but always within a certain economic and political power structure (Astone et al., 1999; Hays & Kogl, 2007). Coleman (1988) focused on the reciprocal obligations and expectations between individuals at both micro- and macro-level. Consequently, individual social capital was distinct from among others family, community, regional or national types of social capital. The viewpoint that social capital was a collective property or public good emerging from connections and relations, was most of all reflected in the work of Putnam (1993, 2000). The emphasis was placed on social capital within geographically delimited units, such as regions or nations. While there are different focuses, evidently, individual and collective benefits derived from social relations are not incompatible (Portes, 2000). Although the focus in these three definitions is somewhat different, it is reasonable to consent that social capital is can be shaped at different levels.

6.2.4. DEFINITION OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

In this chapter, social capital is examined as an individual asset, a private good.[22] When social capital is considered as an individual property, the argument is used that it is the individual and not the collectivity who decides to invest in social capital (Glaeser, 2001; Klein, 2013). Social capital differs between individuals within the same collectivity, as it relates to among others social skills and charisma (Glaeser et al., 2002). Individuals generate a unique amount of social capital that can experience changes over time. Social capital cannot be exchanged with others and cannot be given to others. In other words, it is inalienable (Astone et al., 1999). Furthermore, both components of social capital are considered in this chapter as essential for the formation of the concept. Attitudinal norms and structural networks of cooperation that relate to individuals' social relationships, are both preconditions for facing collective action problems and for achieving cooperation amongst individuals (Hooghe & Stolle, 2003b).

Therefore, the definition of Brehm and Rahn (1997) is used as a starting point: "*[T]he phenomenon of social capital manifests itself in individuals as a tight reciprocal relationship between levels of civic engagement and interpersonal trust."* (Brehm & Rahn, 1997: 1001).

[22] As a dimension of social cohesion at the community level, social capital was conceptualised as a public good in Chapter 2, based upon the conceptualisation of Putnam (1993, 2000).

The definition is based upon the social capital theories of Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1988) and Putnam (1993), and encompasses both the attitudinal (i.e. interpersonal trust) as well as the structural (i.e. civic engagement) component of social capital.

In this definition, the attitudinal component of social capital is indicated by the level of interpersonal trust one has in others (Putnam, 1993; Stolle, 1999). Interpersonal trust is defined as *"the belief that others will not deliberately or knowingly do us harm, if they can avoid it, and will look after our interests, if this is possible"* (Delhey & Newton, 2003: 105; 2005: 311; Newton, 2001: 202; 2007: 343). It is the faith that is placed in unknown others, assuming that these others are reliable enough to be trusted (Hardin, 2006; Paxton, 2007; Uslaner, 2002). Social capital is impossible without trustworthiness and reciprocity, with reciprocity being the understanding between individuals that a favour will be returned once one has been given (Stolle, 2003). Values of interpersonal trustworthiness and reciprocity are needed to define social capital, because they facilitate exchanges and arrangements among people. In fact, generalised and delayed exchanges are only possible when one disposes of interpersonal trust (Fukuyama, 1999). Without these values, an external third party is needed for controlling and enforcing interactions between people (van der Gaag, 2005).

The structural component of social capital is conceptualised as civic engagement. More precisely, social networks within voluntary associations are referred to (Brehm & Rahn, 1997). A voluntary association is defined as *"an ideal type of social organization, with interactions and bonds of intermediate strength, which mainly serve rational considerations about common goals, and which are guided by established procedures and rules. Voluntariness refers to the freedom to associate, freedom to exit, and to the lack of coercion"* (van Ingen, 2009: 18). Civic engagement has a dynamic effect on the members of these associations, which undertake collective action to realise shared goals and objectives. It includes the involvement of individuals in social, but also political, educational and other kinds of activities (Newton, 1999). Members of associations are more likely to behave in a cooperative way and inhere values of reciprocity. A spill-over effect is further expected to affect non-members by this socialisation process (de Tocqueville, 1835; Putnam, 2000).

As interpersonal trust and civic engagement are regarded as two essential components of social capital, a reciprocal, virtuous and bi-directional circle among them is expected

(Brady et al., 1995; Curtis et al., 2001; Veenstra, 2002). There are authors who question the causality of the relationship between the two components of social capital. Some authors stress that it is the socialization process that leads to the internalization of a particular set of values and norms (Narayan & Cassidy, 2001; Portes, 1998). Others stress that it is this particular set of values and norms that generate civic engagement, that it is only when individuals expect others to be reliable and honest, they will undertake collective actions and cooperate (Fukuyama, 1999; Helly et al., 2003; Stolle, 2003). Nevertheless, most scholars agree that interpersonal trust lubricates cooperation and civic participation breeds faith in others. Consequently, it is agreed upon that stocks of social capital tend to be self-reinforcing and cumulative (Putnam, 1993).

6.3. SOCIAL CAPITAL AND SOCIAL COHESION

Social capital is context dependent (Diani, Edwards, & Foley, 2001; Muir, 2010). An individual's position in the social structure substantially influences his or her choice processes (Astone et al., 1999; Granovetter, 1985). The relationship between community social cohesion and individual social capital is therefore assumed to be positive. All individual social cohesion dimensions are assumed to be positively related to both the attitudinal social capital component of interpersonal trust and the social capital structural component of civic engagement (Bekkers et al., 2008).[23]

First, the dimension of common values and civic culture is considered. More specifically, religious involvement within a community is under investigation. A community in which the majority of inhabitants still participates in the rites of passages and engages in church masses, can foster a common civic culture and consequently generate social capital for its inhabitants (Coleman, 1990). A positive relationship is expected, as religious structures encourage people to build up social capital (Häuberer, 2011). Although the influence of religiosity has been declining because of processes of secularisation, the religious community effect still remains when studying everyday behaviours (Botterman et al., 2009; van Ingen & Dekker, 2012). Next, the dimension of social order and social control is

[23] The fifth theoretical dimension of social cohesion, community attachment and identity, could not be made operational as community data regarding this dimension is lacking.

indicated by the absence of property and violent crime. Security within a community has a positive association with social capital, while a threatened community can undermine social capital (Saegert et al., 2002; Saegert & Winkel, 2004). Crime lowers trust and respect between citizens and reduces the likelihood to maintain social networks with others (Alesina & La Ferrara, 2002; Andrews, 2007; Sampson et al., 1997). Disorder increases the likelihood for citizens to feel constrained in their possibilities to interact because of fear and suspicion (Bursik, 1988; Paxton, 2007; Skogan, 1990). Reversely, social control is likely to have a positive relationship with social capital at the individual level. Nonetheless, some authors object to this relationship and speak of an energising effect instead of a depressing effect of crime. They argue that crime can also be considered as a motivation to be connected to others and to foster collective action regarding the collective problem of disorder (Swaroop & Morenoff, 2006; Taylor, 1996). Subsequently, the dimension regarding the level of social solidarity is regarded via the absence of deprivation. Deprivation forms a social cleavage within a community which prohibits norms of reciprocity and hinders civic participation (Putnam, 2000; Vergolini, 2011; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009b). It creates social distances between inhabitants that are potentially detrimental to social capital (Dekker, 2007; Fieldhouse & Cutts, 2010; Subramanian et al., 2003). The absence of deprivation, on the contrary, fosters social capital, creating more trusting and civically engaged inhabitants. Finally, the dimension of social capital is under consideration via a civic engagement index at the community level. A positive spill-over effect of civic engagement at the community level on social capital at the individual level is assumed. In other words, civic engagement at the community level forms a basis for social capital at the individual level. Participation in voluntary associations and interpersonal trust are nurtured in communities that are already characterised by a reserve of community social capital and civic engagement (Putnam, 2000; van Ingen, 2009). A context of social mobilisation, activation and social support is generated via social capital at the community level.

6.4. DATA AND METHOD

The relationship between social cohesion at the community level and social capital at the individual level implies a hierarchical research design. As in the previous chapters, data

are used from the Social Cohesion Indicators in Flanders survey 2009 (individual level, N = 2,080) and from different official sources regarding 2006 (community level, N = 40).

6.4.1. MEASUREMENT OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

One can measure social capital in several ways, depending on the discipline of the researcher and the topic of the research (Nieminen et al., 2008; Putnam, 2000; van der Gaag, 2005). As it cannot be measured in a direct way, it is necessary to use proxy indicators (Nieminen et al., 2008). At the individual level, interpersonal trust and civic engagement in voluntary associations are most often used to measure respectively the attitudinal and structural component of social capital. Both indicators are clear and uncomplicated.

In Chapter 4, two measurements of interpersonal trust were put forward, both abstracted from the 'faith in people' scale of Rosenberg (1956). These two interpersonal trust scales were referred to as 'generalised trust' and 'community trust'. While 'generalised trust' did not include any information on the unknown other, 'community trust' referred to interpersonal trust in the unknown other that resided in the same community. The latter measurement is chosen, as it is more strongly relates to the community level. The intra class correlation of community trust (ρcomtrust = 0.044) – which indicates the proportion of variance that can be explained by the higher community level – is substantially higher than the intra class correlation of generalised trust (ρgentrust = 0.018). Community trust is measured via five items: (1) people around here are willing to help their neighbours; (2) this is a close-knit neighbourhood; (3) people in this neighbourhood can be trusted; (4) people in this neighbourhood generally don't get along with each other; and (5) contacts between inhabitants in this neighbourhood are generally positive. These five items form one valid factor that explains 48 per cent of the variance and has an Eigenvalue of 2.410 and a high Cronbach's alpha of 0.807. On average, respondents scored a seven out of ten on this community trust scale.

In Chapter 5, civic participation was measured via membership in voluntary associations. In this chapter, the number of active memberships in voluntary associations is considered. Actively involved members come together in different voluntary associations,

thereby generating diverse social networks. Their involvement is more than sympathising with an association by paying a membership fee or by reading the newsletter. A larger number of memberships implies a more broad and varied social network, as individuals come into contact with a multitude of people through these diverse associations. Respondents received a list of 18 different kinds of associations and organisations for which they needed to indicate whether they were an active member of it or not. The associations covered the broad spectrum of all societal subsystems, ranging from labour organisations, religious associations, social movement organisations to recreational associations, civic service and philanthropy associations. On average, respondents were member in one or two different voluntary associations.

6.4.2. INDIVIDUAL LEVEL VARIABLES

The individual variables that are assumed to explain social capital are ample. Abundant research efforts have focused on personal and family characteristics and on other resources. First of all, the individual characteristics of age, gender, educational level and unemployment status are included. These characteristics indicate human and financial resources that generate social capital (Glaeser et al., 2002). The winners with a dominant status within a community are more inclined to have a higher level of social capital, as they more willingly to trust and to participate in social life (Delhey & Newton, 2003; Lemon et al., 1972; Newton, 1999; Putnam, 2000; Whiteley, 1999). Individuals with a more dominant set of social positions and roles, such as employed, educated, middle-aged men, are more likely to acquire social resources, needed to invest in social capital (Bowles & Gintis, 2002; Brady et al., 1995; Verba & Nie, 1972). Gender and unemployed status are included as dummy variables, age and education as metric variables. Next, having a partner and children are included as dummy variables. A stable family life generates social capital, larger social networks and more interpersonal trust (Sztompka, 1999). Furthermore, religiosity is included via respondents' denomination (dummy variable of being catholic) and church practice (metric variable)[24]. Religiosity is said to foster both attitudinal as well as structural social capital (Botterman et al., 2009; Hinckley, 1990; van Ingen & Dekker, 2012). Finally, the dummy variables of

[24] Dummy variables that indicate weekly and monthly church practice yield similar results.

homeownership and a stable home (i.e. living in the same community for more than ten year) are included. Geographical distances create thresholds for acquiring social capital, because the psychological distance between inhabitants are assumed to increase simultaneously (Wirth, 1938). Community attachment reduces mobility and increases social capital, as individuals are more inclined to invest within their own community (DiPasquale & Glaeser, 1999). It fosters social and emotional connections and thus makes social capital more appealing (Ahlbrandt, 1984; Greif, 2009; Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974).

6.4.3. COMMUNITY LEVEL VARIABLES

Social cohesion was made operational in Chapter 3 via five social cohesion factors: (1) religious involvement; (2) absence of property crime; (3) absence of violent crime; (4) absence of deprivation; and (5) civic engagement. Next to social cohesion dimensions, three different cleavages within the community are investigated. Cleavages are said to influence social capital negatively, as heterogeneity hinders the formation of social networks and decreases the level of trust inhabitants have in others (Costa & Kahn, 2003).

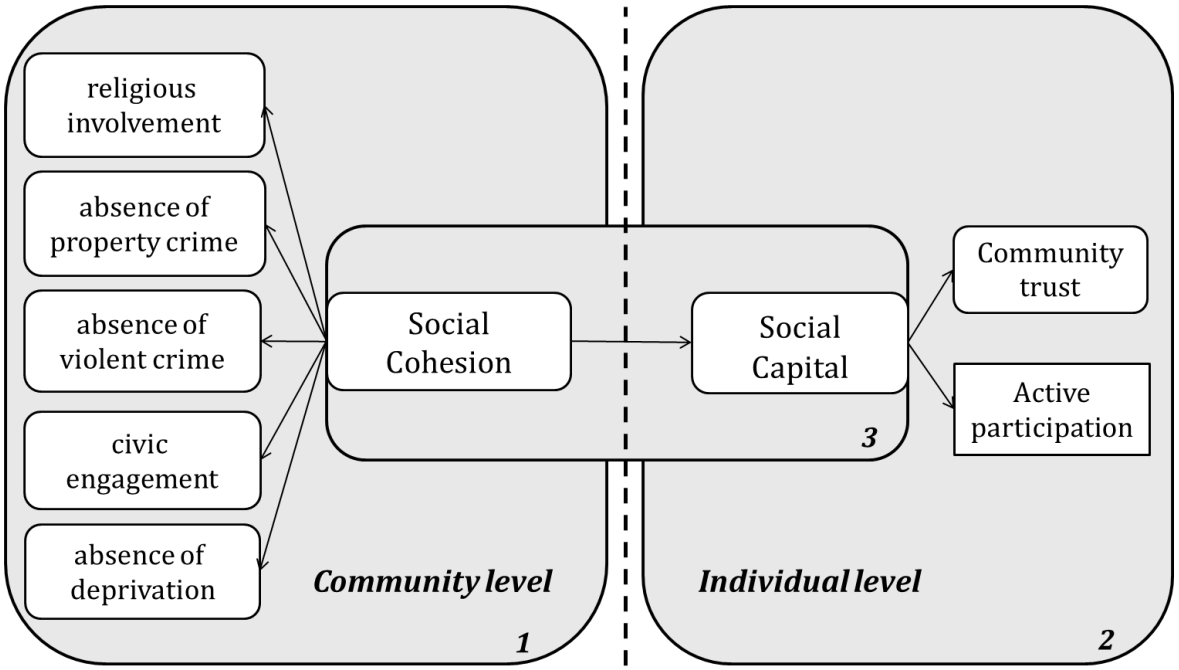
First, the economic cleavage is measured via two indicators: (1) income and (2) income inequality. The hypothesis is that equality leads to more social capital, as equal communities perform better (Easterly et al., 2006; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009a). The relationship between income inequality and social capital is, however, somewhat ambiguous (Harell & Stolle, 2011). In Flanders, income inequality is strongly and positively related to income, therefore, the absence of income inequality does not seem to measure equality (Uslaner, 2000, 2002). The alternative hypothesis is therefore that both income and income inequality are positively related to social capital. Second, the ethnic cleavage is measured via six diversity indicators. Inhabitants trust each other less and are less likely to participate in more diverse neighbourhoods (Laurence, 2009; Putnam, 2007). The percentage of foreigners is measured via five different percentages: (1) the total percentage of foreigners; (2) the percentage of foreigners outside the European Union; (3) the percentage of foreigners outside Europe; (4) the percentage of foreigners within the European Union; and (5) the percentage of foreigners within Europe. The sixth diversity indicator is the Herfindahl index, which takes into account all foreign

nationalities within a community. Third, the urban cleavage is measured via three indicators: (1) population size; (2) population density; and (3) a dummy variable that indicates whether communities belong to a city region (*stadsgewest*) or not (Van der Haegen et al., 1996). An urban environment and more precisely the big city life can impede the level of social capital of inhabitants. It can disrupt social networks, hinder the social life, and estrange citizens (Oliver, 2001; Wallace & Pichler, 2009).

6.4.4. METHODS AND ANALYTIC FRAMEWORK

In Figure 20, the relationship between community social cohesion and individual social capital is presented. Latent constructs are represented as ovals and observed variables as rectangles. Social cohesion and its dimensions are part of the community level, social capital and its dimensions are part of the individual level.

FIGURE 20 ANALYTIC FRAMEWORK OF THE RELATION BETWEEN SOCIAL COHESION AND SOCIAL CAPITAL



The results are organised as follows: first, the latent concept of social cohesion at the community level is disentangled, conducting exploratory factor analysis. Second, the latent concept of social capital at the individual level is disentangled, conducting correlation analysis. Third, the synthesis model is investigated that investigates the

relationship between social cohesion and social capital. The hierarchical research question whether community social cohesion influences individual social capital asks for multilevel regression techniques. This can be combined with structural equation modelling, when social cohesion and social capital are identified as latent variables using confirmatory factor analysis (Muthén & Muthén, 2012).

6.5. RESULTS

6.5.1. SOCIAL COHESION AS A LATENT CONCEPT

As already mentioned, social cohesion is constituted out of five dimensions: (1) religious involvement; (2) absence of property crime; (3) absence of violent crime; (4) absence of deprivation; and (5) civic engagement. To explore social cohesion as a latent concept, these five dimensions are included in a factor analysis. While confirmatory factor analysis is often the first option to use when researching latent concepts, exploratory factor analysis can likewise be used when no convergence is reached. With regard to social cohesion, a problem arises in the sense that there are strong correlations among the five dimensions, even if they do not load on one single factor (see Chapter 3). The strict requirement of zero cross-loadings in confirmatory factor analysis therefore leads to non-converging or ill-fitting measurement models.[25] The dimensions of social cohesion are too related to omit every cross-loading between them. The search for a well-fitting measurement model is therefore better suited by conducting exploratory factor analysis (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2009). In fact, the Flemish data raises an additional issue with regard to the power and required sample size. The total number of communities is too limited to produce reliable results when confirmatory factor analysis would be conducted.[26] For these reasons, an exploratory factor analysis is conducted in Table 28, using the five social cohesion dimensions.

[25] In confirmatory factor analysis, model modifications are made until a well-fitting model is found. This extensive model modification takes away the confirmatory character of a factor analysis, therefore, making it resemble more to an exploratory factor analysis.

[26] One rule of thumb is that the ratio of ten observations per free parameter has to be required to obtain trustworthy estimates (Bentler & Chou, 1987). Another rule of thumb is that the ratio

TABLE 28 EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL COHESION DIMENSIONS

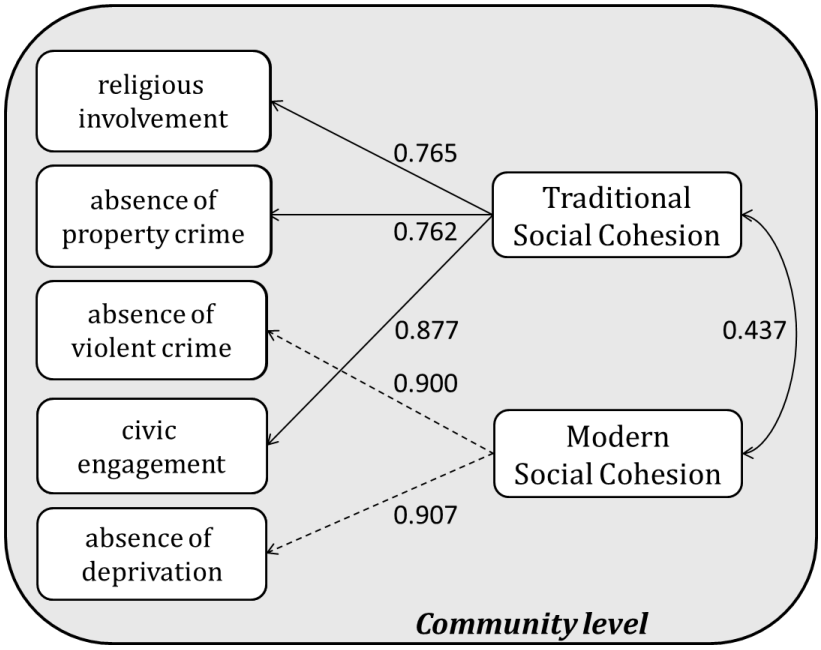
Social cohesion dimension	Factor 1	Factor 2
Religious involvement	**0.765**	0.176
Absence of violent crime	0.203	**0.900**
Absence of property crime	**0.762**	0.264
Absence of deprivation	0.206	**0.907**
Civic engagement	**0.877**	0.125
Eigenvalue	2.018	1.748
Explained variance (%)	40.37	34.96
Cronbach's α / Pearson correlation	0.756	0.723

Entries are factor loadings of an exploratory factor analysis (N = 308).
Cronbach's alpha and Pearson correlation calculated on items in bold.

As in Chapter 3, two strong latent concepts are detected. The first factor indicates a traditional type of social cohesion and is formed out of religious involvement, absence of property crime and civic engagement. The second factor indicates a modern type of social cohesion and is formed out of absence of violent crime and absence of deprivation. Both factors are valid, indicated by their high Eigenvalues and their substantial proportions of variances that they explain. In Figure 21, the factor loadings are presented and the significant correlation between the two types of social cohesion is indicated, representing the first step at the community level in the analytic framework in Figure 20. Instead of one single latent construct, social cohesion is modified and split in two types. Consequently, the relationship between social cohesion and social capital will be split into two sub questions: (1) *What is the relationship between traditional social cohesion and social capital?* And (2) *What is the relationship between modern social cohesion and social capital?* As all dimensions of social cohesion were expected to influence social capital positively, it is assumed that both questions yield the same answer.

of ten observations per item is required to obtain trustworthy estimates (Flynn & Pearcy, 2001).

FIGURE 21 SOCIAL COHESION AND ITS DIMENSIONS

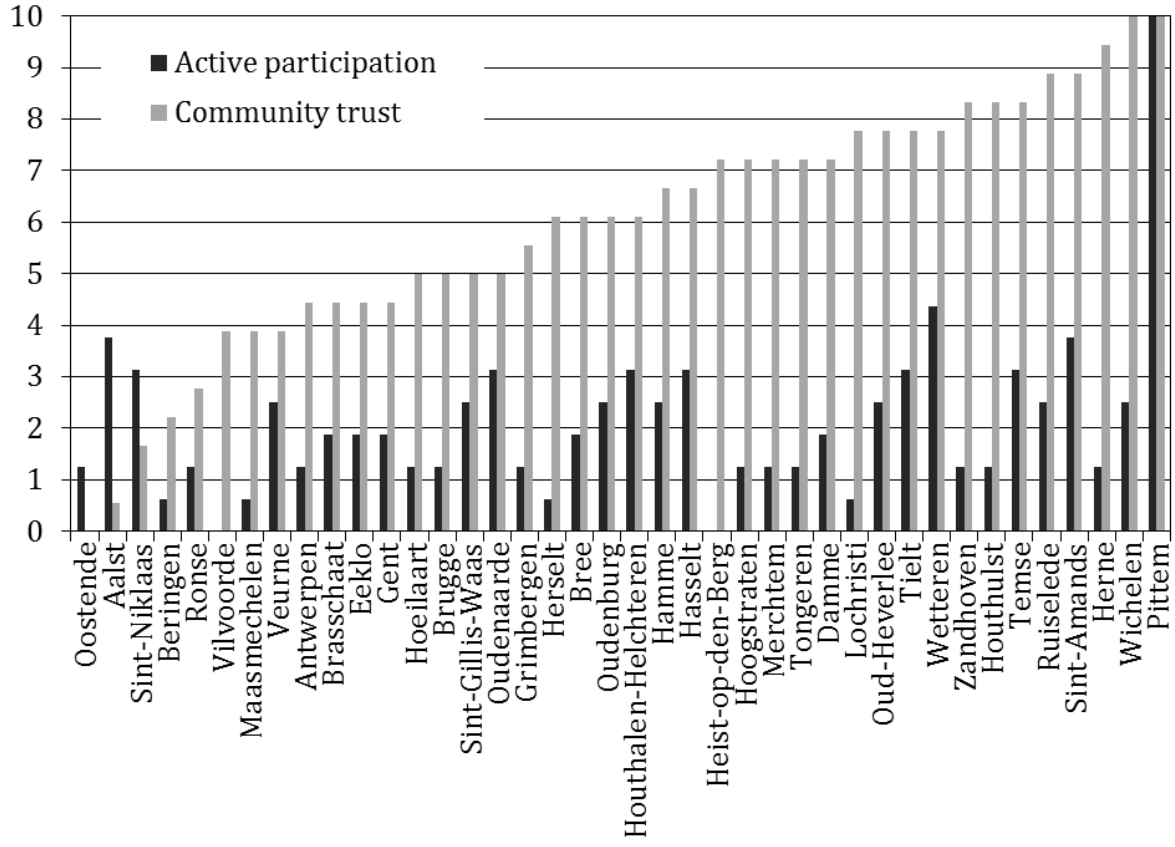


6.5.2. SOCIAL CAPITAL AS A LATENT CONCEPT

Social capital encompasses the indicators of community trust and active participation in multiple voluntary associations. As two indicators are insufficient to conduct any kind of factor analysis, a simple correlation between the two observed variables is calculated. A slightly positive and significant Pearson correlation of 0.110 is visible. Consequently, the empirical basis to combine both indicators into a single social cohesion measurement remain absent. Community trust and active participation will therefore be studied independently. The intra class correlations of both indicators are considerable to study the influence of the community level on them (ρcomtrust = 0.04 and ρactpart = 0.02). As van Ingen (2009) argued, this limited correlation between interpersonal trust and civic participation is expected, as the underlying features and determinants that would produce both elements simultaneously, remain unclear and unspecified. Although some authors such as Putnam (2000: 291) attempt to place several indicators of social capital into one single index, factor analyses don't yield clear factor solutions. Social capital indexes are often criticized for this reason, as the creation of one makes no statistical or substantive sense (Guillen, Coromina, & Saris, 2010; Jicha, Thompson, Fulkerson, & May, 2011; Stolle, 2003; Stone & Hughes, 2002; Taniguchi, 2013; van Ingen, 2009).

The relationship between community trust and active participation in multiple voluntary associations is presented in Figure 22, using the Social Cohesion Indicators in Flanders survey. Aggregated to the community level (rescaled from 0 to 10), Pittem, a rural community with a younger population, scores extremely high in comparison to other communities on active participation. The variation among communities is more equally distributed regarding community trust. Pittem again scores high on this indicator of social capital, but also Wichelen, a strongly industrialised community, has on average a high trusting population. Once more, one can notice the absence of a strong relationship between both indicators of social capital. Wichelen, who scores the maximum level on community trust, scores rather low on active participation. Reversely, Heist-op-den-Berg, a rural community with a young population, has the lowest score on active participation, while a relatively high score on community trust. The same goes for Herne, which is also one of the most trusting communities (position 38 out of 40 communities), though one of the less participating communities (position out 8 of 40). Contrary, Aalst has one of the least trusting populations (position 2 out of 40), while it has one of the most actively involved populations (position 38 out of 40).

FIGURE 22 ACTIVE PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNITY TRUST IN FLANDERS



The second step at the individual level that was presented in the analytic framework in Figure 20 is therefore deserted, as both indicators of social capital will be examined separately. Only a bi-directional link between the two indicators will be included in the last step of the analysis. Again, the research question is adapted, as the sub questions become: (1) *What is the relationship between traditional social cohesion and community trust?*; (2) *What is the relationship between traditional social cohesion and active participation?*; (3) *What is the relationship between modern social cohesion and community trust?*; and (4) *What is the relationship between modern social cohesion and active participation?*

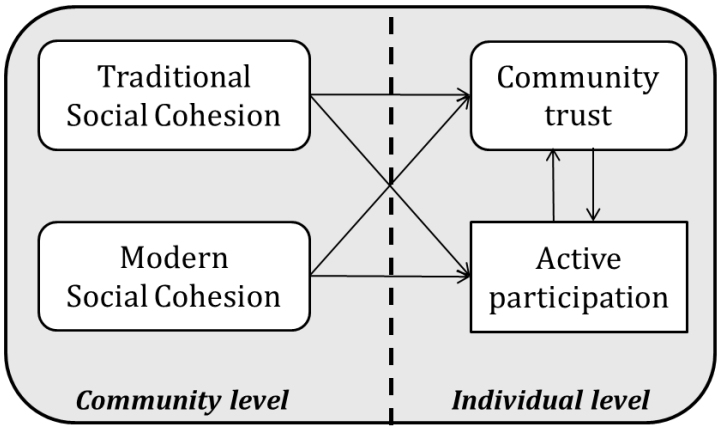
Because social cohesion and social capital cannot be defined via confirmatory factor analysis, the option to use structural equation modelling is omitted. A multilevel structural equation model begins with a measurement model in which all latent variables are specified, then adds structural multilevel effects between latent concepts at the community and individual level to the model. The number of communities at the community level was, however, too small to conduct reliable confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation models (Meuleman & Billiet, 2009). Because only direct paths between the two types of social cohesion and the two indicators of social capital are of interest, another option to use path analysis is also omitted. One of the main advantages to use structural equation modelling or path analysis, namely estimating of indirect effects, is not present in the synthesis model. The relation between community social cohesion and individual social capital will therefore be looked at via multilevel regression models.

6.5.3. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNITY SOCIAL COHESION AND INDIVIDUAL SOCIAL CAPITAL

The relation of interest between social cohesion at the community level and social capital at the individual level is presented in Figure 23. Compared to the analytic framework in Figure 20, this relation is adjusted and four arrows instead of one arrow between social cohesion and social capital will be estimated. Social cohesion is split into traditional and modern social cohesion, community trust and active participation are examined separately. In addition, a bi-directional effect between these latter two indicators is

added to the synthesis models. Community trust is an explanatory variable for active participation and active participation is an explanatory variable for community trust. Active participation is analysed via Poisson multilevel regression and community trust is analysed via normal linear multilevel regression.

FIGURE 23 EMPIRICAL RELATION BETWEEN SOCIAL COHESION AND SOCIAL CAPITAL



First, in Table 29, the individual control variables of the two social capital indicators are presented.

TABLE 29 INDIVIDUAL EXPLANATIONS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

	Community trust		Active participation	
Individual Variables	**B**	**SE**	**B**	**SE**
Age	0.03	[0.02]	-0.00	[0.11]
Age^2	0.01	[0.02]	-0.60***	[0.17]
Male	0.00	[0.01]	0.08	[0.05]
Education	0.00	[0.02]	1.04***	[0.11]
Unemployed	-0.05*	[0.02]	-0.00	[0.16]
Children	0.00	[0.01]	-0.12	[0.06]
Partner	0.01	[0.01]	-0.06	[0.07]
Catholic	0.02	[0.01]	0.08	[0.06]
Church practice	0.04	[0.02]	0.80***	[0.13]
Stable residence	0.00	[0.01]	0.17*	[0.07]
Own home	0.05***	[0.01]	0.16	[0.08]
Community trust			0.57**	[0.17]
Active participation	0.10**	[0.03]		
$\rho = \tau_0^2 / \tau_0^2 + \tau_e^2$	0.033		0.019	

Entries multilevel regression in HLM: fixed effects with robust standard errors [SE]. Intercept only model: ρcomtrust = 0.044, ρactpart = 0.016. Significance: * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001.

The results already make clear why the two social capital indicators do not form a single measurement. Different variables play a role in the explanation of community trust and active participation. More precisely, only churchgoers seem to score higher on both aspects of social capital. The socio-economic status yields positive effects on both components, yet with different indicators. While unemployed respondents trust less, the lower educated respondents are less likely to participate in multiple voluntary associations. Reversely, community attachment, measured via a stable residence and homeownership, fosters active participation. Also middle-aged respondents have a higher likelihood to participate actively in multiple associations. The two components of social capital clearly influence each other. Respondents who trust more, are more likely to actively participate in voluntary associations. Actively engaged respondents show a higher level of community trust.

In Table 30, the contextual explanations of social capital are researched by including the cleavage indicators one by one to the individual model.[27] Economic, ethnic and urban cleavages are expected to hinder social capital.

TABLE 30 CONTEXTUAL EXPLANATIONS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

	Community trust			Active participation		
Contextual Variables	**B**	**SE**	**ρ**	**B**	**SE**	**ρ**
Income	0.06*	[0.03]	0.030	-0.18	[0.14]	0.021
Income inequality	-0.00	[0.02]	0.036	-0.27*	[0.12]	0.018
Ethnic presence	-0.05*	[0.02]	0.030	-0.29**	[0.11]	0.011
Ethnic presence outside EU	-0.07*	[0.03]	0.029	-0.12	[0.11]	0.018
Ethnic presence inside EU	-0.04	[0.03]	0.033	-0.36*	[0.13]	0.017
Ethnic presence outside Europe	-0.06*	[0.03]	0.030	-0.15	[0.10]	0.022
Ethnic presence inside Europe	-0.04	[0.02]	0.032	-0.33*	[0.12]	0.017
Ethnic diversity	-0.01	[0.02]	0.035	-0.22	[0.14]	0.021
Population size	-0.05*	[0.02]	0.033	-0.04	[0.07]	0.022
Population density	-0.08**	[0.03]	0.025	-0.08	[0.10]	0.022
Population city region	-0.03*	[0.02]	0.023	-0.02	[0.05]	0.022

Entries multilevel regression in HLM: fixed effects with robust standard errors [SE]. Individual variables are included, yet not reported. Intercept only model: ρcomtrust = 0.044; ρactpart = 0.016. Significance: * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001.

[27] Because the cleavage indicators are all highly correlated, problems of multicollinearity are avoided by adding them one by one to the individual model.

Inhabitants of affluent communities are more likely to trust others, while income inequality in communities hinders active participation. The negative relation between the income cleavage and individual social capital is thus confirmed, although the precise indicators differ with regard to the attitudinal and structural component. Also the ethnic cleavage within a community influences inhabitants' social capital negatively. Communities with a large share of other ethnicities generate less trusting and less engaged citizens. However, the specific nationality of foreigners leads to different estimates. Whereas the presence of foreigners from outside the European Union and Europe impede community trust, it is the presence of foreigners from within Europe and the European Union that hinder active participation. Urbanisation only has a negative effect on community trust, while not on participation in voluntary associations. The big city life is negatively associated with community trust, while it does not affect active participation in voluntary associations. Overall, the expected community cleavages could be confirmed for both components of social capital.

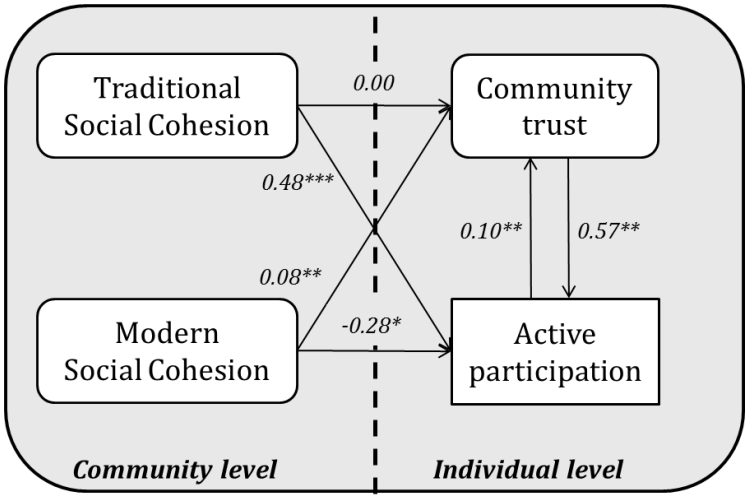
The social cohesion explanations of social capital are presented in Table 31 and Figure 24. The expectation is that both traditional and modern social cohesion are positively associated with both components of social capital.

TABLE 31 SOCIAL COHESION EFFECTS ON SOCIAL CAPITAL

	Community trust		**Active participation**	
Community Social Cohesion	**B**	**SE**	**B**	**SE**
Traditional social cohesion	0.00	[0.02]	0.48 ***	[0.11]
Modern social cohesion	0.08 **	[0.03]	-0.28 *	[0.11]
Individual Social Capital				
Community trust			0.57 **	[0.17]
Active participation	0.10 **	[0.03]		
$\rho = \tau_0^2 / \tau_0^2 + \tau_e^2$	0.019		0.017	

Entries multilevel regression in HLM: fixed effects with robust standard errors [SE]. Individual variables are included, yet not reported. Intercept only model: ρcomtrust = 0.044, ρactpart = 0.016 Significance: * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001.

FIGURE 24 TRADITIONAL AND MODERN SOCIAL COHESION EFFECTS ON COMMUNITY TRUST AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

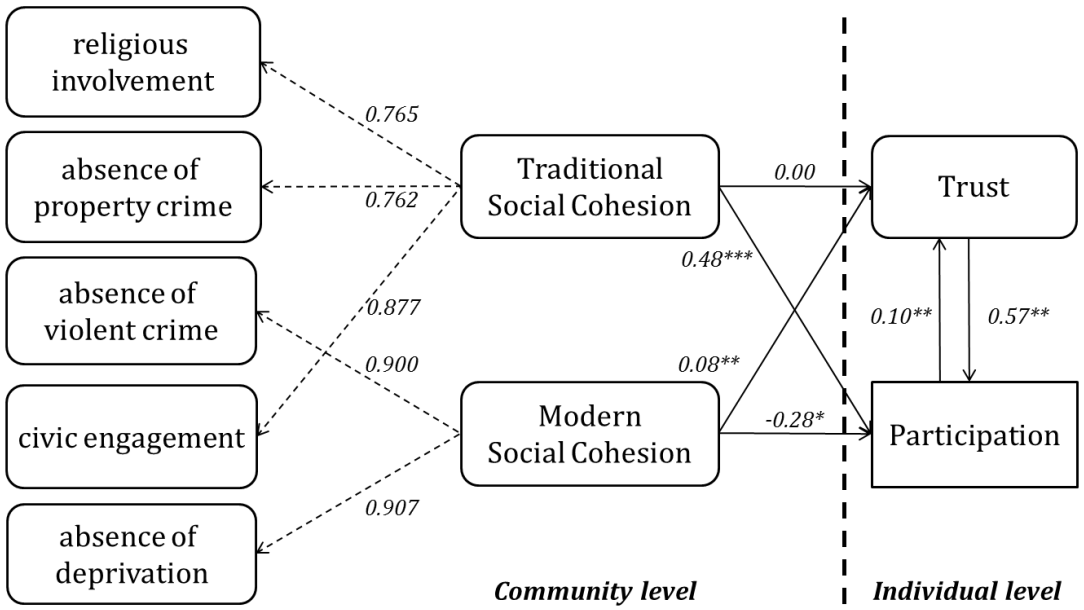


While both traditional and modern social cohesion affect the structural component of social capital, it is only the modern type of social cohesion that affects the attitudinal component of social capital. In modern cohesive communities, characterised by social order and social solidarity, inhabitants show higher levels of trust in the unknown other within these communities. This is not the case in traditional cohesive communities, as no significant effect was found on community trust. While it was expected that both types of social cohesion would produce positive effects on both components of social capital, one negative effect visible. An unexpected negative effect of modern social cohesion on individual participation in multiple associations is observed. Unanticipated, because the absence of violent crime and deprivation dimensions yielded no significant results on active participation when looked at independently (see Chapter 5). It seems that the alternative hypothesis of an energising effect of deprived communities on individual's civic engagement level is present (Saegert & Winkel, 2004). Communities without modern social cohesion, yet with high levels of disorder and deprivation, form catalytic powers for individuals to get civically engaged in associations that rally against the negative community environment. Finally, as expected, the two components of social capital lubricate each other. Community trust fosters active participation in voluntary associations and active participation in voluntary associations fosters community trust. What is apparent is that the effects on community trust are smaller compared to the effects on active participation in multiple voluntary associations. The underlying mechanisms of structural social capital are explained more by the two types of social

cohesion and the attitudinal indicator of social capital. The attitudinal social capital indicator of community trust is to a lesser extent affected by the two types of social cohesion and the structural social capital indicator.

In Figure 25, the synthesis model is presented in which all three analytic steps are included. Dotted arrows starting from traditional and modern social cohesion denote factor loadings, while full arrows denote standardised coefficients.

FIGURE 25 SYNTHESIS OF COMMUNITY SOCIAL COHESION AND INDIVIDUAL SOCIAL CAPITAL



6.6. CONCLUSION

The concept of social capital was introduced via the definitions of its founding fathers, namely Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1988) and Putnam (1993, 2000). Similar in these definitions was the description of social capital as intrinsic relational. It related to the access to social resources of individuals and included an attitudinal and a structural component. The first attitudinal component referred to the internationalisation of values and norms. The latter structural component related to the socialisation process in social networks. Differences among the three definitions regarded the focus placed on attitudinal or structural social capital, and regarded the level of analysis. Based upon these definitions and because social capital in this chapter was considered an individual asset, including both an attitudinal and a structural component, the definition of Brehm and Rahn (1997: 1001) was used as a point of departure: "*[T]he phenomenon of social capital manifests itself in individuals as a tight reciprocal relationship between levels of civic engagement and interpersonal trust."* The attitudinal component of social capital was indicated via interpersonal trust, the structural component via civic engagement.

As social capital is considered context dependent, it was hypothesised that it was influenced by social cohesion at the community level. Three steps were undertaken to come to a synthesis model in which the relationship between social cohesion at the community level and social capital at the individual level was regarded. First, the latent concept of social cohesion was constructed via factor analysis, which resulted into two types of social cohesion, a traditional and a modern one. Second, the formation of a single social capital measurement was investigated and rejected, as the individual measurements of interpersonal community trust and active civic participation in multiple associations did not form a statistically relevant index. Multilevel structural equation modelling was omitted, as no trustworthy measurement models could be estimated and as no indirect effects were hypothesised. Third, the separate indicators of social capital were looked at via multilevel regression models. The individual model demonstrated both indicators of social capital to have different underlying explanatory mechanisms. Social capital as a single measurement would have hid these different effects. There was a bi-directional effect between community trust and active participation, a result in line

with the existing literature. Interpersonal trust lubricates civic engagement and participation fosters faith in others (Brehm & Rahn, 1997; Veenstra, 2002).

When examining the multilevel model including both traditional and modern social cohesion, some unforeseen results appeared. The positive view that social cohesion influences social capital was nuanced. The attitudinal component of social capital, measured via community trust, was positively affected by modern social cohesion, yet not affected by traditional social cohesion. Traditionally cohesive communities have a dense civic engagement structure and a religiously involved population, but do not affect their inhabitants' levels of community trust. More modern cohesive communities have a lower level of violent crime and are less deprived, and consequently generate inhabitants that trust each other more. The structural component, measured via active participation in multiple voluntary associations, was influenced by both types of social cohesion. However, while traditional social cohesion had a positive effect on participation as expected, modern social cohesion influenced the likelihood to be civically engaged negatively. This latter result was unexpected, as the separate dimensions of modern social cohesion had not yield the same negative results on active participation. Nonetheless, together, the absence of violent crime and the absence of deprivation within communities hinder inhabitants to be actively involved in multiple voluntary associations. An explanation can be that the presence of crime and deprivation creates an environment in which individuals cooperate and come together in different voluntary associations, to counter these contextual characteristics. In conclusion, the attitudinal and structural components of social capital remain two distinct elements with different determinants. One should thus not limit the measurement to only attitudinal or only structural indicators to investigate social capital. Also the two types of social cohesion revealed to have differentiating impacts. While social cohesion has always been seen as one single concept and has most often been included in analyses via its separate dimensions, it appears substantial to look at the higher order constructs of traditional and modern social cohesion.

While the synthesis models proved to have their strengths and further contributed to the social cohesion and social capital research, there are some limitations that have to be addressed. First, the specific measurement of structural social capital raises a challenge. Participation in voluntary associations can be argued to be narrow to research the

structural component of social capital. Social relationships exist in many objective as well as subjective social structures, such as the working place, the school, a friendship circle and so on. Furthermore, the community data prohibited the use of structural equation modelling, a technique which makes it possible to pose causality statements without longitudinal data. The effects found in this chapter point to relationships which contain no causal claims.

Chapter 7. CONCLUSION

7.1. SUMMARY

The paramount interest in the concept of social cohesion has led to a wide range of definitions, descriptions, dimensions and indicators. A review of the literature was conducted to make the conceptualisation of social cohesion more clear in Chapter 2. Of the early sociologists, the theoretical frameworks of Durkheim (1893) and Tönnies (1887) on social cohesion were examined. In their views, the community was a distinct entity that implied more than the mere sum of individuals. Social cohesion was the basis for the coherence between the different parts of a society to form one single and unified whole. The evolution from pre-modern to modern communities led to a shift in content, shifting from a more normative to a more structural interpretation of the notion of social cohesion. On the one hand, social cohesion was a normative form of social solidarity, emphasizing social and affective linkages between members of a community. This could be created by religion, a shared set of values and norms, or as Tönnies (1887: 73) claimed, a *Wesenwille* to co-exist. On the other hand, social cohesion was a more structural form of social solidarity, emphasizing the structural linkages between members of a society. This could be created by clearly outlined functions, roles and responsibilities, or by a more rational will to coexist that Tönnies (1887: 73) defined as the *Kürwille*.

While both sociologists distinguished two types of social cohesion, a different interpretation was given by Durkheim and Tönnies to the relationship between them. Durkheim argued that the pre-modern type of social cohesion (*a mechanical solidarity*) remained next to and was complemented by a more modern type of social cohesion (*an organic solidarity*). Tönnies argued that social cohesion in pre-modern communities (based on the *Wesenwille*) was replaced within modern communities by another type of social cohesion (based on the *Kürwille*). The pre-modern type of social cohesion would crumble down within the anonymity of mass society. This type was not complemented by a more modern type of social cohesion – as Durkheim had phrased it – but it was replaced by it.

In the contemporary literature, the theoretical frameworks of Durkheim and Tönnies are still frequently used and adapted by contemporary scholars that conceptualise social cohesion in post-industrialised societies. A review of the current literature on social cohesion in Chapter 2 made clear that there were three approaches on social cohesion: (1) the communitarian, (2) the social capital and (3) the economic approach (Harell & Stolle, 2011). The communitarian approach defined social cohesion as the presence of a common background, shared values and norms, and a sense of belonging and identity. The social capital approach defined social cohesion as the presence of social networks and social norms. The economic approach defined social cohesion as the presence of social solidarity and inclusion. While some authors followed one approach and defined social cohesion in exclusively communitarian, social capital or economic terms; others combined all approaches together to investigate the concept of social cohesion. As explained in Chapter 2, conceptualisations of social cohesion that combine all three approaches are more and more used as a preferred starting point (Cheong, Edwards, Goulbourne, & Solomos, 2007; Harell & Stolle, 2011). Therefore, the reasoning of Kearns and Forrest (2000) was further explained in detail as they took into account five interconnecting theoretical dimensions that related to the three approaches on social cohesion. They distinguished a dimension of common values and a civic culture, and a dimension of place attachment and identity, which stemmed from the communitarian approach on social cohesion. They illustrated a dimension of social order and social control, and a dimension of social networks and social capital, which stemmed from the social capital approach on social cohesion. They discerned a dimension of social solidarity

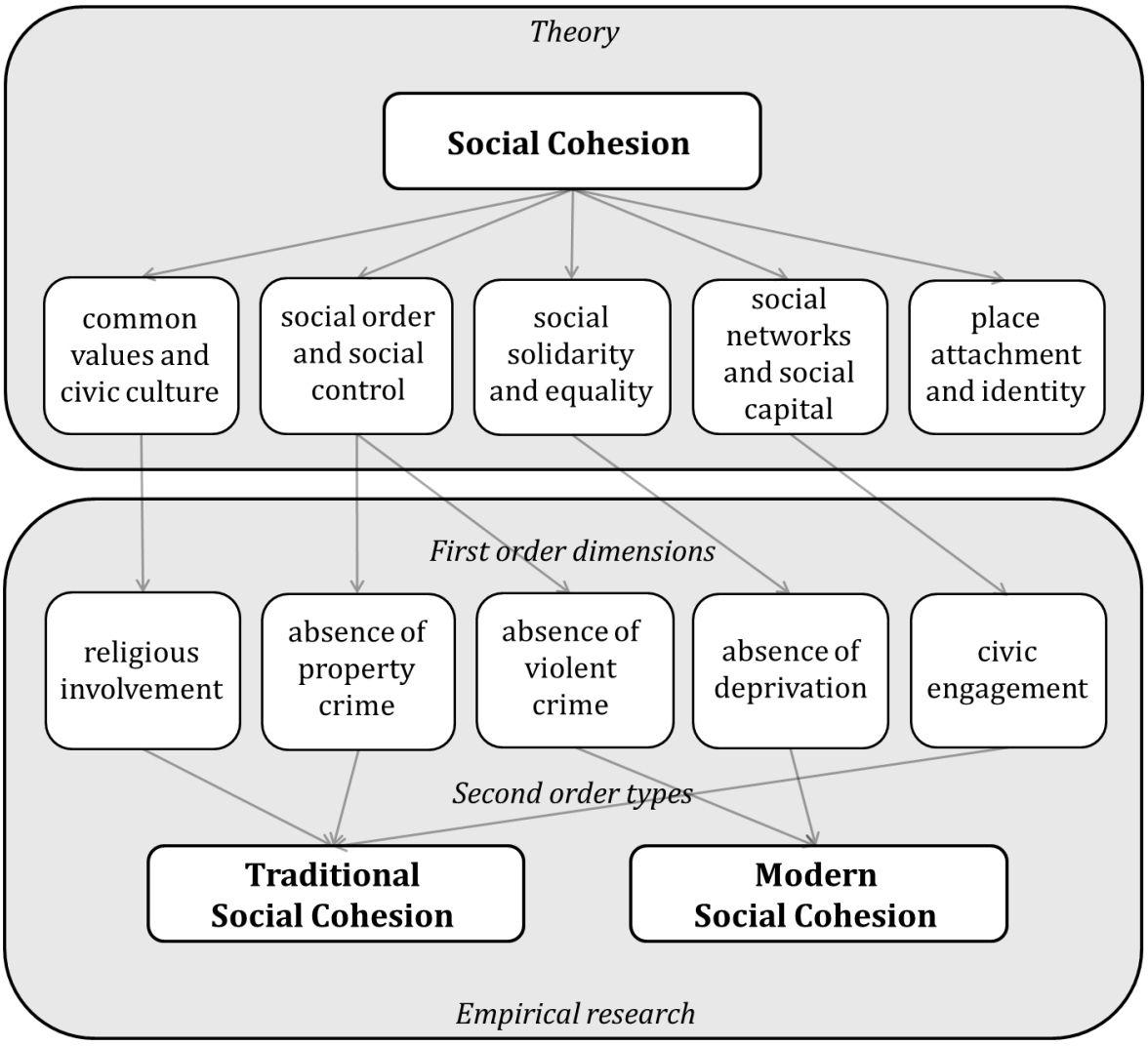
and reductions in wealth disparities that stemmed from the economic approach on social cohesion.

On the basis of the theoretical conceptualisation and more specific the framework of Kearns and Forrest (2000) in Chapter 2, social cohesion was made operational at the community level via proxy indicators in Chapter 3. The 308 Flemish communities formed the research context. Before summarising this empirical exercise, it should be remarked that at the local level, some theoretically expected social cohesion dimensions were more suitable and easier to make operational than others. Especially capturing the more communitarian dimensions proved to be challenging and as a result, the dimension of place attachment and identity could not be made operational. A possibility for future research can therefore be to use aggregated survey data. For instance, the sense of duty to help fellow citizens in trouble, the community attitude to feel the need to increase the quality of neighbourhood living, or a simple attachment survey question regarding how attached someone is to a certain geographical unit, may help making this dimension of place attachment and identity operational (Hooghe & Vanhoutte, 2009; Lelieveldt, 2004). Of course, a survey in all communities may be too big as a challenge; therefore, utilising a sample of communities that represent a wide variety in terms of the other social cohesion dimensions may be an option to consider.

In Chapter 3, the final set of social cohesion indicators included 19 measurements of religious, civic and political engagement levels, crime levels, and socio-economic indicators. These empirical indicators of social cohesion were analysed via the data reduction technique of exploratory factor analysis. The aim of the exercise was to examine whether the theory of social cohesion captured the empirical reality in Flanders. In the first order factor analyses, five empirical dimensions of social cohesion were observed. These five dimensions corresponded to the theoretical dimensions, but were not always identical: one theoretical dimension had two empirical counterparts. Using the five empirical social cohesion dimensions, a second order factor analysis was conducted and two types of social cohesion appeared. The three empirical social cohesion dimensions of (1) religious involvement, (2) civic engagement, and (3) absence of property crime denoted a more *traditional* type of social cohesion; the two empirical social cohesion dimensions of (4) absence of violent crime and (5) absence of deprivation denoted a more *modern* type of social cohesion. The labelling was based on how the focus

was placed on these specific dimensions in the social cohesion literature. Durkheim and Tönnies discussed two types of social cohesion and framed them as either pre-modern or modern. Consequently, the labels traditional and modern were chosen in light of this distinction. As scholars working in this line of thought agreed upon measuring both types of social cohesion, a second order factor analysis was conducted. It was expected that both types of social cohesion formed one latent concept of social cohesion in the current Flemish communities. Though the two types were interrelated to each other, they could not be merged into one single latent concept. This empirical exercise is presented in Figure 26.

FIGURE 26 SOCIAL COHESION ACCORDING TO THEORY AND EMPIRICAL RESEARCH



Furthermore, in Chapter 3, the case of Flanders was looked upon from a geographical point of view. Although Flanders is a rather homogeneous region, the geographical distribution of the traditional and modern type of social cohesion within the 308 Flemish communities showed clear regional patterns. Communities nearby the major cities were more often low in traditional and modern social cohesion, whereas peripheral communities near the borders were more often characterised by high levels of traditional social cohesion. Future research could therefore conduct spatial analyses to analyse both contagion and dispersion effects of social cohesion levels between communities. To illustrate, early sociologists applauded suburbanism. They assumed that suburbs would function as a corrective to the dense and unhealthy conditions of the urban environment (Oliver, 2001). Therefore, the assumption could be that major cities would affect the levels of social cohesion within neighbouring (suburban) communities.

The five empirical social cohesion dimensions formed the key explanatory variables in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 for the examination of individual social capital. Individual social capital was theoretically defined as the relationship between the attitudinal element of trust (focus within Chapter 4) and the structural element of participation (focus within Chapter 5). In what follows, the main results of these two separate examinations are discussed.

In Chapter 4, the attitudinal element of social capital was measured via a generalised trust scale and a community trust scale. Generalised trust items referred to trust in the generalised unknown other. Community trust items referred to trust in the unknown other within the same community. This geographical notation was explicitly mentioned in the question wording of all community trust items. While generalised trust was not influenced by any of the empirical social cohesion dimensions, community trust was influenced positively by all five of them. It was therefore concluded that the radius of trust was very important. Dimensions of social cohesion explained trust better if trust was more perceptible for individuals. Community trust had a smaller radius than generalised trust and was affected more easily by the social cohesion dimensions at the community level. It may be that generalised trust is more affected by social cohesion dimensions at the country level (Delhey & Newton, 2005). Another issue is the possible spill-over effect between community trust and generalised trust (Freitag & Traunmüller, 2009). Therefore, next to the relationship between trust and social cohesion at the

country level, future research could also research if a socially cohesive community fosters community trust and in turn forms the basis for generalised trust (Freitag & Traunmüller, 2009). While often trust is aggregated to the country level, this study and others show that the variation of the radius of trust within a country is interesting to investigate as well (Reeskens, 2013).

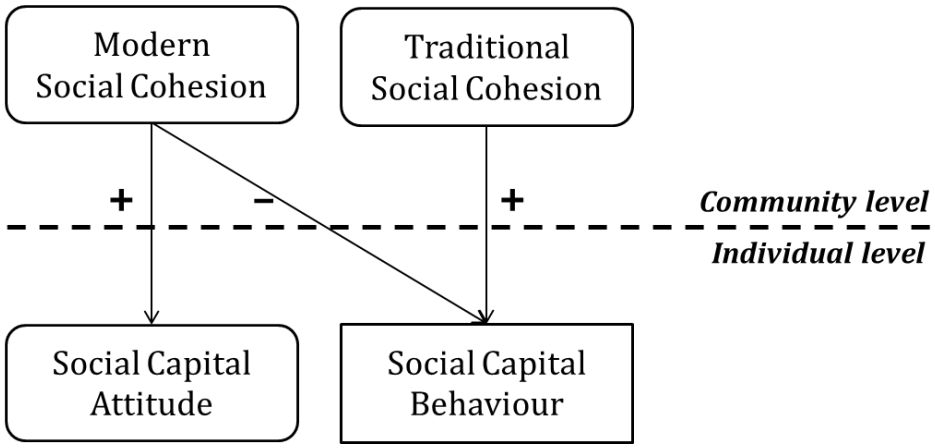
In Chapter 5, the structural element of social capital was measured via the intensity and scope of membership in voluntary associations and additionally via the type of voluntary association. The intensity referred to passive and active participation in a voluntary association. The scope referred to the number of memberships. When analysing the number of active memberships in voluntary associations, a positive effect of the social cohesion dimension civic engagement was found. This means that a strong civically engaged community fosters individuals' active participation within multiple voluntary associations. The other social cohesion dimensions did not influence the intensity or scope of participation in voluntary associations. Additionally, participation in more traditional and homogeneous types of voluntary associations was more likely to be influenced by social cohesion dimensions than other memberships. These associations were mostly characterised by a hierarchical structure and often locally based (Hooghe & Botterman, 2012). More precisely, membership in family and senior citizen's associations were affected positively by the social cohesion dimensions of absence of property crime and presence of civic engagement. Other types of voluntary associations were in general not related to any of the community level indicators.

After consideration of the relationship between the five social cohesion dimensions and the elements of individual social capital, another research option was chosen. In Chapter 6, the relationship between the types of modern and traditional social cohesion and the elements of individual social capital was investigated. The attitudinal and structural elements of social capital – trust and participation – did not form one latent concept. Moreover, modern and traditional social cohesion had distinct effects on trust and participation[28]. Controlled for traditional social cohesion, modern social cohesion had an expected positive effect on the attitudinal social capital element of trust, yet, an

[28] The attitudinal social capital element of trust was measured by the indicator of community trust. The structural social capital element of participation was measured by the number of active memberships in voluntary associations.

unexpected negative effect on the structural social capital element of participation (measured as active involvement in voluntary associations). In other words, inhabitants of communities with high levels of modern social cohesion participated significantly less in more traditional and formal voluntary associations. The reasons for this negative association were not clear and thus future research is needed. Future research could, for instance, re-iterate the empirical analysis using other types of participation such as participation in more informal settings or other social activities both outdoors and indoors. Controlled for modern social cohesion, traditional social cohesion had an expected positive effect on structural social capital, but no effect on attitudinal social capital. To summarise, an individual's level of structural social capital is clearly influenced by the level of traditional social cohesion (positive relation) and by the level of modern social cohesion (negative relation) within its community. An individual's level of attitudinal social capital is clearly influenced by the level of modern social cohesion within its community (positive relation), but not by the level of traditional social cohesion (see Figure 27).

FIGURE 27 THE RELATION BETWEEN COMMUNITY SOCIAL COHESION AND INDIVIDUAL SOCIAL CAPITAL



The empirical analysis in this dissertation showed that data at the community level in Flanders were ideal to conduct exploratory factor analysis and disentangle empirical dimensions of social cohesion at the local level. Combined with data from the *Social Cohesion Indicators in Flanders* survey, these data on 2080 inhabitants within 40 Flemish communities were ideal to conduct multilevel regression analysis. The combination did not allow to conduct confirmatory factor analysis or (multilevel) structural equation

modelling. Therefore, using cross-sectional data and regression techniques, no causal claims were made and effects could potentially be reversed. While a relationship was observed, it was not possible to study the causal effect of social cohesion on social capital. The assumed effect could therefore also be reversed: social capital could also lead to a more socially cohesive community. Individuals, who have a high stock of social capital, can make the decision to live in communities with a high level of social cohesion. A longitudinal study or surveying respondents in more communities could lead to better insights into this matter of causality.

7.2. REFLECTIONS

In what follows, three reflections are made. The first reflection concerns normative connotations given to the traditional type of social cohesion in particular; the second reflection deals with the use of different research options in empirical social cohesion research; and the third reflection considers the current indicator of structural social capital and its relationship with social cohesion.

7.2.1. NORMATIVE CONNOTATIONS AND THE TYPE OF TRADITIONAL SOCIAL COHESION

Societal transformations have always formed a basis for speculation on how communities and societies are organised and as a reason to consider and reconsider social cohesion. Scholars are intrigued by societal changes, as change is most often assumed to create disorder, disintegration or even dis-cohesion (Ritzer, 2008). As a consequence, scholars can be at risk of awarding traditional social cohesion in particular a positive normative connotation. In this case, they often focus on the assumption that social cohesion is disappearing altogether, without investigating its new or different interpretation. Although it is not wrong to hypothesise there is a decline in the elements of traditional social cohesion[29] in particular, some limitations should be taken into account.

[29] For instance, the decline-in-community thesis (Tönnies, 1887), the bowling-alone thesis (Putnam, 2000), and the decline-in-engagement thesis (Berry, 1973).

First of all, this assumption should not automatically lead to a pessimistic view on the current cohesion within communities. As this research has shown, another more modern type of cohesion was also present in current post-industrialised communities, next to the more traditional type of social cohesion. Therefore, traditional cohesive communities should not automatically be situated in a nostalgic past. Scholars may romanticise the image of an almost lost community with traditional social cohesion, giving it a mythical status (Ritzer, 2008). In this line of thought, the community with traditional social cohesion is described as an ideal, warm, loving, harmonious, emotionally rich community[30] and is defined as opposite to the more modern community in which social cohesion is disappearing. In contrast, this research has shown that empirically, it remains uncertain whether traditional social cohesion is disappearing. Because this traditional type of cohesion was possible to be identified in a post-industrialised and densely populated region like Flanders, the type of traditional social cohesion should not be considered as obsolete. The effects may have become weaker over time, yet, with the present cross-sectional data, this could not be investigated. Traditional social cohesion did not relate to individuals' attitudinal social capital (i.e. community trust), but it did affect individuals' structural social capital (i.e. active participation). Without robust time series evidence, it remains a hazard to make bold conclusions on the evolution of traditional social cohesion, but with this research, the hypothesis that traditional social cohesion has disappeared and has become something from the past, does not receive support. Moreover, the labels of traditional and modern social cohesion may had a past and present connotation, but they were not chosen to automatically denote an empirical reality. Both modern and traditional social cohesion were found to be present in post-industrialised societies. Although empirically their interrelatedness was limited, they were not incompatible.

Next, even if traditional social cohesion would be diminishing, focussing only on this type of social cohesion would always give an incomplete result. As was seen in the theoretical Chapter 2 of this dissertation, social cohesion incorporated several dimensions that related to both more traditional and more modern interpretations of social cohesion. Therefore, if traditional social cohesion would become less important, it would not self-

[30] For instance, the *Gemeinschaft* (Tönnies, 1887), the society of organizations (Etzioni, 1961) or the long civic generation (Putnam, 2000).

evidently mean that there would be social dis-cohesion. This can be concluded by simply observing the current functioning of a community, which nuances and even contradicts the image of a past socially cohesive community. In communities where there is no prior knowledge regarding acquaintances and connections with other fellow citizens, citizens still know how to use public transportation, behave when crossing fellow citizens on the pavement, queue in stores, and so on.

Consequently, indicators of (traditional) social cohesion should be adapted to context. While social cohesion dimensions remain identical, their indicators may change over time and place. To illustrate, a remark was made when introducing religious involvement figures as indicators of a 'civic culture' in Chapter 3. The indicators were chosen because they were still suitable for the current Flemish community context and were interpreted as a reflection of a certain normative consensus within a community. However, one should not restrict this choice for certain indicators to the ones currently used. For instance, in current communities, norms and values are becoming more loosely defined and other indicators may become more appropriate to make the social cohesion dimension of a 'civic culture' operational, such as tolerance for minorities or the proportion of extreme (political) views.

To conclude, as was shown in Chapter 6, both modern and traditional social cohesion exist next to each other, similar to the reasoning of Durkheim that two types of social cohesion can exist simultaneously in a single community. Although it may seem that modern social cohesion has gained more importance when considering individuals' social capital, this does not receive support in this study. Traditional social cohesion is not yet outdated and like modern social cohesion, it can play a role in explaining individual social capital.

7.2.2. DIFFERENT OPERATIONALISATIONS AND RESEARCH STRATEGIES

Although there is some discussion about the importance of traditional social cohesion, the conclusion is that a focus on a single type of social cohesion seems too one-sided and incomplete to examine social cohesion. Both traditional and modern social cohesion stay important to consider at the community level. In other words, using a single type of social

cohesion could have led to partial and different conclusions; using both types was a more enriching research strategy.

Starting from this reasoning, another reflection emerges. Social cohesion was made operational using factor analyses that resulted in five dimensions and two higher-order typologies. As a result, one can wonder whether a single conclusion is possible, especially since different results were present using dimensions and types of social cohesion as explanatory factors of individuals' social capital. In other words, two different research strategies led to two different conclusions. More precisely, with respect to the social capital attitude of trust, all five social cohesion dimensions yielded positive effects, while only the modern type of social cohesion yielded a positive effect. With respect to the social capital behaviour of participation, only one out of five social cohesion dimensions yielded a positive effect, while both types of social cohesion yielded significant results. Traditional cohesion yielded a positive and modern cohesion yielded an unexpected negative effect on participation.

Initially, it was interesting to look at the dimensions of social cohesion and the separate effects that dimensions had on individuals' social capital. It was remarkable to observe that the operationalisation within dimensions did not follow neatly the theoretical conceptualization of social cohesion. Nevertheless, there were some hazards when using the dimensions instead of types of social cohesion. Dimensions were interrelated and therefore could not be examined simultaneously in one model, while the two types of social cohesion could be placed in a single model as they were more distinct from each other. Furthermore, although the use of specific dimensions of social cohesion made interpretations more tangible than the use of more abstract types of social cohesion, the use of types of social cohesion resulted in more nuanced interpretations regarding the effects of community social cohesion on individual social capital.

For these reasons and starting from the main research question in this dissertation that considered the relationship between community social cohesion and individual social capital, the final model is the most preferred research option. When using both types of social cohesion within a single model, a less ambiguous but surprising result emerged. The understanding of the relationship between community social cohesion and individual social capital became thus more challenging. When controlling for modern social

cohesion, traditional social cohesion was not explaining community trust. It was only this modern type of social cohesion which was important for the attitudinal element of social capital. When controlling for the other type, traditional social cohesion yielded a positive effect and modern social cohesion yielded an unexpected negative effect on active participation. This result was remarkable, as it opposed the assumed relationship between modern social cohesion and the structural element of social capital. The conclusion was made that traditional social cohesion was the driver of participation, while modern social cohesion was the driver of trust and a barrier to participation. This result itself forms the focus of the next reflection.

7.2.3. THE NEGATIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MODERN SOCIAL COHESION AND PARTICIPATION IN VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS

The third reflection regards the component of structural social capital, and its relationship with modern social cohesion. The negative relationship between modern social cohesion and structural social capital that was found in the final model was not expected. It seems that the secure feeling of living in a modern socially cohesive community gives individuals no reason to be actively involved in a structural manner. Even more, it reduces the likelihood for citizens to participate actively in voluntary associations. It is questioned how this can be explained and two explanations are explored: the different ways structural social capital can be measured and the different levels in which social cohesion is present.

First, the question can be posed whether structural social capital in general or its indicator of participation in voluntary associations leads to a negative relationship with modern social cohesion at the community level. Structural social capital was made operational as participation in voluntary associations via formal and active memberships. It was introduced as part of individuals' voluntary action repertoire. This kind of participation can be considered as somewhat more complicated, bureaucratic, time-consuming, and costly than for instance informal participation within loose and more flexible groups. It was not studied whether these more loose and more flexible participation behaviours were also affected negatively by the modern social cohesion within a community. Indeed, social relationships exist in many formal and informal

structures, such as the working place, the school, or the friendship circle. They may evenly be affected by the community context of social cohesion and may lead to different results. Moreover, Bekkers (2004) argued that citizens are nowadays more inclined to send or donate money to tertiary associations and labelled this "checkbook participation". It seems plausible that modern social cohesion may affect these indicators of structural social capital positively. It has still to be investigated whether inhabitants of socially cohesive communities are more inclined to participate in more informal settings or by for instance donating money to tertiary associations. If this would be the case, modern socially cohesive communities would also produce active inhabitants, just not active in the sense of active memberships. Nevertheless, the more traditional indicator of membership was chosen because even in contemporary Flemish communities, participation in voluntary associations was widespread: more than half of the citizens were active member and about three quarters passive member of at least one voluntary association. Therefore, the negative relationship between modern social cohesion and formal participation in voluntary associations remains important to identify, although the conclusion cannot be to lower the level of modern social cohesion in communities to generate more active individuals with higher levels of structural social capital.

Therefore, as an alternative, another explanation is explored, namely the different levels in which social cohesion can be found. Social cohesion was introduced as being present at different levels of analysis, though some social cohesion dimensions were more suited than others within certain levels of analysis. The community was chosen as unit of analysis, as it formed the level in which all social cohesion dimensions were most likely to appear. However, as social cohesion can be simultaneously present at higher and lower levels of analysis, contradictory forces can be at play, creating different relationships between social cohesion and individuals' structural social capital (Oliver, 2001; van Ingen, 2009). As a consequence, it would be interesting to study the relationship between social cohesion at different levels simultaneously, as it could possibly explain the negative relationship between modern social cohesion at the community level and formal participation in voluntary associations at the individual level. For instance, it seems plausible that there are more opportunities for citizens to be part of smaller inner-community subcultures, find like-minded people to interact with and have more compelling issues to become civically active (Fischer, 1975; 1982). Inner-communities or neighbourhoods may therefore have a certain level of modern social cohesion that is

positively related to individuals' structural social capital. Contrary, citizens in current urbanised cities may be psychologically and physically less connected to each other and feel more like strangers, therefore show less interest to participate within voluntary associations in their own urban city (Fischer, 1975; 1982). Another example is the family as a unit of analysis in which social cohesion can be studied. It might be plausible that a cohesive family with a high level of modern social cohesion can increase the likelihood of its family members to participate, rendering the effect of the community social cohesion insignificant or even opposite. This would mean that different relationships at different levels interfere with each other. An individual's participation behaviour can be triggered by the modern social cohesion within one level of analysis, eliminating or even reversing the effect of modern social cohesion at another level of analysis.

All these reflections form an interesting starting point for further research. Using data of the *Social Cohesion Indicators in Flanders* project, several of these hypotheses and research questions can be tackled. Moreover, the combination with and use of other datasets can also be interesting to study research questions relating to social cohesion and its relationship with individual social capital.

APPENDIX

MAP OF FLANDERS WITHIN BELGIUM AND EUROPE

DESCRIPTIVE FIGURES TABLE

	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Source	Year
Individual Level (N = 2080)						
Generalised trust	5.38	1.81	0.00	10.00	SCIF survey	2009
Community trust	2.34	0.67	1.00	5.00	SCIF survey	2009
Active membership (dummy)	0.58	0.49	0.00	1.00	SCIF survey	2009
Passive membership (dummy)	0.76	0.42	0.00	1.00	SCIF survey	2009
Active memberships	1.13	1.40	0.00	11.00	SCIF survey	2009
Passive memberships	1.91	1.85	0.00	12.00	SCIF survey	2009
Member youth association	0.05	0.22	0.00	1.00	SCIF survey	2009
Member women association	0.06	0.24	0.00	1.00	SCIF survey	2009
Member religious association	0.04	0.21	0.00	1.00	SCIF survey	2009
Member family association	0.03	0.18	0.00	1.00	SCIF survey	2009
Member senior citizens association	0.06	0.23	0.00	1.00	SCIF survey	2009
Age	48.20	17.94	18.00	85.00	SCIF survey	2009
Male	0.48	0.50	0.00	1.00	SCIF survey	2009
Education	5.47	2.36	1.00	10.00	SCIF survey	2009
Unemployed	0.03	0.16	0.00	1.00	SCIF survey	2009
Children	0.40	0.49	0.00	1.00	SCIF survey	2009
Partner	0.68	0.47	0.00	1.00	SCIF survey	2009
Catholic denomination	0.75	0.44	0.00	1.00	SCIF survey	2009
Church practice	2.10	1.54	1.00	7.00	SCIF survey	2009
Stable residence	0.62	0.48	0.00	1.00	SCIF survey	2009
Home ownership	0.81	0.39	0.00	1.00	SCIF survey	2009

DESCRIPTIVE FIGURES TABLE (CONTINUED)

	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Source	Year
Community Level (N = 40)						
Religious involvement						
- Baptism ratio	70.08	23.07	28.5	122.4	CCB	2006-2008
- Marriage ratio	29.99	12.55	9.50	85.3	CCB	2006-2008
- Funeral ratio	67.48	17.41	28.50	103.00	CCB	2006-2008
- Church attendance ratio	17.36	8.29	4.50	45.30	CCB	2006-2008
Absence of property crime						
- Car theft ratio	0.64	0.55	0.00	2.88	FP	2006
- Theft from motor vehicles ratio	3.70	3.11	0.00	15.69	FP	2006
- Burglary ratio	3.83	2.40	0.64	11.38	FP	2006
Absence of violent crime						
- Vandalism aimed at other material goods ratio	3.84	1.55	1.17	8.44	FP	2006
- Destruction and damaging ratio	1.00	0.74	0.20	3.16	FP	2006
Absence of deprivation						
- Renters ratio	0.99	3.22	0.00	31.40	DGSEI	2006
- Welfare benefit ratio	19.83	6.76	5.30	43.80	DGSEI	2006
- Unemployment rate	7.94	3.21	4.40	16.00	DGSEI	2006
- Births in underprivileged families ratio	3.20	3.04	0.00	20.70	K&G	2006
- Social residences ratio	1.61	1.33	0.00	7.04	DGSEI	2006
Civic engagement						
- Associational life density	2.66	1.10	0.62	11.63	HUB	2001
- Voter turnout ratio	95.27	1.70	89.97	100.00	DGSEI	2006

DESCRIPTIVE FIGURES TABLE (CONTINUED)

	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Source	Year
Community Level (N = 40)						
Income	25380.00	2900.00	21070.00	35840.00	DGSEI	2006
Income equality						
- Gini coefficient	0.29	0.03	0.24	0.44	DGSEI	2006
- Interquartile coefficient	103.51	10.53	86.03	138.38	DGSEI	2006
Ethnic presence	4.45	4.80	0.60	19.88	DGSEI	2006
Ethnic presence inside EU	2.92	4.14	0.34	19.30	DGSEI	2006
Ethnic presence inside Europe	3.48	4.35	0.34	19.56	DGSEI	2006
Ethnic presence outside EU	1.52	1.56	0.22	7.99	DGSEI	2006
Ethnic presence outside Europe	0.97	1.15	0.17	6.17	DGSEI	2006
Ethnic diversity	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.03	DGSEI	2006
Population size	43922.73	78658.08	5113.00	461496.00	DGSEI	2006
Population density	587.18	483.54	122.00	2238.00	DGSEI	2006
Population city region	0.23	0.42	0.00	1.00	DGSEI	2001

SCIF = Social Cohesion Indicators in Flanders
CCB = Catholic Church of Belgium
FP = Federal Police
DGSEI = Directorate General Statistics and Economic Information
K&G = Flemish governmental agency Kind en Gezin
HUB = Hogeschool Universiteit Brussel

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SUMMARY: AN EMPIRICAL MULTILEVEL STUDY OF THE RELATION BETWEEN COMMUNITY LEVEL SOCIAL COHESION INDICATORS AND INDIVIDUAL SOCIAL CAPITAL IN FLANDERS, BELGIUM

Social cohesion is introduced as an answer to the question *"What holds societies together?"* by academics, politicians and the public opinion. However, the proliferation of conceptualisations and operationalisations seems to have made social cohesion (too) broad, (too) vague, and (too) popular to handle. Contrary, disciplinary boundaries seem to have led to protectionism, disregarding social cohesion's multi-disciplinary aspects.

First of all, the conceptualisation and operationalisation of social cohesion at the community level is researched.

Theory formation started in the early days of sociology when new social cleavages and changes - such as industrialisation and urbanization - appeared and a shift from pre-modern to modern communities was apparent. Sociologists such as Emile Durkheim (1893) and Ferdinand Tönnies (1887) tried to answer the question *"What holds societies together?"* by interpreting social cohesion in a more normative manner in pre-modern communities and in a more structural manner in modern communities. While Tönnies envisioned a clear shift in the content of social cohesion, Durkheim did not and emphasised that two types of social cohesion formed two faces of the same reality.

At the end of the 20th century, again, new social cleavages and changes - such as globalisation and migration - created a renewed interest in social cohesion, as industrialised communities shifted to post-industrialised communities. Reviewing the multi-disciplinary literature on social cohesion, it is apparent that although starting from different angles, perspectives on social cohesion overlap and coincide into an umbrella concept, composed out of different dimensions. Using a case study of 308 Flemish communities, all perspectives and dimensions are operationalised and it is clear that theory and empirical research are not identical. The theoretical expectation of one single latent concept is not confirmed as the empirical findings show two types of social cohesion existing in the same post-industrialised community: a traditional type and a modern type of social cohesion.

Next, the multilevel question is investigated whether there is a relation between community social cohesion and individual social capital. Both concepts are often regarded as the elixirs for the ills of society and positive relations between the two types of community social cohesion (traditional and modern) and the two elements of individual social capital (trust and participation) are expected.

The empirical findings show the expected positive relations between modern social cohesion and trust, between traditional social cohesion and participation. However, they also show an unexpected negative relation between modern social cohesion and participation, and no relation between traditional social cohesion and trust. Again, there is not a clear and uniform confirmation of the existing theory.

The results in this dissertation therefore lead to important reflections and new insights in social cohesion and social capital research. For instance, although the indicator of participation remains important to identify, the conclusion cannot be to lower the level of modern social cohesion to generate more active individuals with higher levels of social capital. Future research could therefore focus on the different aggregated levels in which social cohesion can be found, as different relations at different levels could interfere with each other: an individual's participation behaviour can be triggered by modern social cohesion within one level of analysis, eliminating or even reversing the effect of modern social cohesion at another level of analysis.

RÉSUMÉ: UNE ÉTUDE MULTI-NIVEAUX EMPIRIQUE DE LA RELATION ENTRE LES INDICATEURS DE LA COHÉSION SOCIALE AU NIVEAU DE LA COMMUNAUTÉ ET LES ÉLÉMENTS DE CAPITAL SOCIAL AU NIVEAU INDIVIDUEL EN FLANDRE, BELGIQUE

La cohésion sociale est présentée comme une réponse à la question *"Qu'est-ce que détient sociétés ensemble?"* par des universitaires, des politiciens et l'opinion publique. Cependant, la prolifération des conceptualisations et opérationnalisations semble avoir fait de la cohésion sociale (trop) large, (trop) vague, et (trop) populaire à manipuler. Contrairement, les frontières disciplinaires semblent avoir conduit au protectionnisme, sans tenir compte des aspects multidisciplinaires de la cohésion sociale.

Tout d'abord, la conceptualisation et l'opérationnalisation de la cohésion sociale au niveau de la communauté est recherché.

La formation de la théorie a commencé dans les premiers jours de la sociologie quand de nouveaux clivages sociaux et des changements sociaux - tels que l'industrialisation et l'urbanisation - sont apparus et un déplacement de communautés prémodernes pour les communautés modernes était apparente. Des sociologues comme Émile Durkheim (1893) et Ferdinand Tönnies (1887) ont essayé de répondre à la question *"Qu'est-ce que détient sociétés ensemble?"* en interprétant la cohésion sociale d'une manière plus normative dans les communautés prémodernes et d'une manière plus structurelle dans les communautés modernes. Alors que Tönnies a envisagé un changement clair dans le contenu de la cohésion sociale, Durkheim n'a pas et a souligné que deux types de cohésion sociale forment deux faces d'une même réalité.

A la fin du 20ème siècle, à nouveau, de nouveaux clivages sociaux et des changements sociaux - tels que la mondialisation et la migration - ont créé un regain d'intérêt pour la cohésion sociale, en tant que les communautés industrialisées décalées aux communautés post-industrialisées. Lors de l'examen de la littérature multidisciplinaire sur la cohésion sociale, il est évident que même si à partir de différents angles, les perspectives sur la cohésion sociale se chevauchent et coïncident dans un concept de parapluie, composées de différentes dimensions. En utilisant une étude de 308 communautés flamande de cas, toutes les perspectives et dimensions sont opérationnalisées et il est clair que la théorie et la recherche empirique ne sont pas

identiques. L'attente théorique d'une notion latente unique n'a pas confirmé que les résultats empiriques montrent deux types de cohésion sociale existants dans la même communauté post-industrialisée: un type traditionnel et un type moderne de la cohésion sociale.

Ensuite, la question à plusieurs niveaux est examinée s'il y a une relation entre les indicateurs de la cohésion sociale au niveau de la communauté et les éléments de capital social au niveau individuel. Les deux concepts sont souvent considérés comme les élixirs pour les maux de la société et des relations positives entre les deux types de cohésion sociale au niveau de la communauté (traditionnelle et moderne) et les deux éléments du capital social individuel (la confiance et la participation) sont attendus.

Les résultats empiriques montrent les relations positives attendues entre la cohésion sociale moderne et la confiance, entre la cohésion sociale traditionnelle et la participation. Cependant, ils montrent aussi une relation négative inattendue entre la cohésion sociale moderne et la participation, et pas de relation entre la cohésion sociale traditionnelle et la confiance. Encore une fois, il n'y a pas de confirmation claire et uniforme de la théorie existante.

Les résultats de cette dissertation conduisent donc à des réflexions importantes et de nouvelles perspectives dans la recherche sur la cohésion sociale et le capital social. Par exemple, bien que l'indicateur de la participation reste important d'identifier, la conclusion ne peut pas être d'abaisser le niveau de cohésion sociale moderne pour générer les individus plus actifs avec des niveaux plus élevés de capital social. Les recherches futures pourraient donc se concentrer sur les différents niveaux d'agrégation dans lequel la cohésion sociale peut être trouvé, que différentes relations à différents niveaux pourraient interférer avec l'autre: le comportement de la participation d'un individu peut être déclenchée par la cohésion sociale moderne dans un niveau d'analyse, éliminant ou même inverser l'effet de la cohésion sociale moderne à un autre niveau d'analyse.

SAMENVATTING: EEN EMPIRISCHE MULTILEVEL STUDIE OVER DE RELATIE TUSSEN GEMEENTELIJKE SOCIALE COHESIE EN INDIVIDUEEL SOCIAAL KAPITAAL IN VLAANDEREN, BELGIË

Sociale cohesie wordt geïntroduceerd als een antwoord op de vraag *"Wat houdt gemeenschappen samen?"* door academici, politieke figuren en de publieke opinie. Echter, de proliferatie aan conceptualiseringen en operationaliseringen maken de term sociale cohesie (te) breed, (te) vaag, en (te) populair om te vatten. Tegengesteld aan dit zien we dat disciplinaire grenzen leiden tot protectionisme, waardoor het multidisciplinair aspect van sociale cohesie wordt veronachtzaamd.

In deze dissertatie wordt vooreerst de conceptualisering en operationalisering van sociale cohesie bestudeerd.

Theorieformatie startte in de begindagen van sociologie, toen sociale breuklijnen en veranderingen - zoals industrialisatie en urbanisatie - tevoorschijn kwamen en een verandering van premoderne naar moderne gemeenschappen zichtbaar werd. Sociologen zoals Emile Durkheim (1893) en Ferdinand Tönnies (1887) trachten de vraag *"Wat houdt gemeenschappen samen?"* te beantwoorden door sociale cohesie te interpreteren op een meer normatieve manier in premoderne gemeenschappen en op een meer structurele manier in moderne gemeenschappen. Terwijl Tönnies een duidelijke verandering zag in de inhoud van sociale cohesie, beschouwde Durkheim twee types van sociale cohesie als twee gezichten van eenzelfde realiteit.

Aan het einde van de 20ste eeuw brachten nieuwe sociale breuklijnen en veranderingen - zoals globalisatie en migratie - een hernieuwde interesse in sociale cohesie met zich mee en bestudeerde men de verandering van geïndustrialiseerde naar post-geïndustrialiseerde gemeenschappen. Een review van de multidisciplinaire literatuur maakt duidelijk dat er verschillende invalshoeken zijn, maar dat de perspectieven op sociale cohesie overlappend zijn en samenvallen in een overkoepelend concept, samengesteld uit verschillende dimensies. Gebruik makend van een case studie van 308 Vlaamse gemeenten, worden al deze perspectieven en dimensies geoperationaliseerd en wordt duidelijk dat theorie en empirisch onderzoek niet identiek zijn. De theoretische hypothese om één enkel latent concept te vinden kan niet worden bevestigd, aangezien het empirisch onderzoek resulteert in twee sociale cohesie types in

eenzelfde post-geïndustrialiseerde gemeenschap: een traditioneel en een modern sociale cohesie type.

Vervolgens wordt de multilevel onderzoeksvraag gesteld of er een relatie bestaat tussen gemeentelijke sociale cohesie en individueel sociaal kapitaal. Beide concepten worden vaak beschouwd als de elixirs binnen een gemeenschap en bijgevolg worden er theoretisch positieve relaties verondersteld tussen de twee types van gemeentelijke sociale cohesie (traditioneel en modern) en de twee elementen van sociaal kapitaal (vertrouwen en participatie).

De empirische resultaten tonen de verwachte positieve relaties tussen moderne sociale cohesie en vertrouwen, tussen traditionele sociale cohesie en participatie. Echter, ze tonen ook een onverwacht negatieve relatie tussen moderne sociale cohesie en participatie, en geen enkele relatie tussen traditionele sociale cohesie en vertrouwen. Opnieuw is er geen duidelijk en uniforme bevestiging van de bestaande theorie.

De resultaten van deze dissertatie leiden dan ook tot belangrijke reflecties en nieuwe inzichten in het onderzoek aangaande sociale cohesie en sociaal kapitaal. Bijvoorbeeld, ondanks dat de indicator van participatie belangrijk is en blijft, kan de conclusie niet zijn dat de moderne sociale cohesie verlaagt dient te worden om tot meer actieve individuen te komen met meer sociaal kapitaal. Toekomstig onderzoek zou daarom kunnen focussen op de verschillende geaggregeerde niveaus waarop sociale cohesie kan voorkomen, aangezien verschillende relaties op verschillende niveaus met elkaar kunnen interfereren: een individu zijn participatiegedrag kan getriggerd worden door moderne sociale cohesie op een bepaald analyseniveau, en daardoor het effect op een ander analyseniveau elimineren of zelfs omkeren.

DOCTORATEN IN DE SOCIALE WETENSCHAPPEN EN DOCTORATEN IN DE SOCIALE EN CULTURELE ANTROPOLOGIE

I. Reeks van doctoraten in de sociale wetenschappen[31]

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