Exploring the Evolution of Social Cohesion: Interdisciplinary Theories and their Impact

Hamizah Sahharon*
Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia

Jusang Bolong
Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia

Siti Zobidah Omar
UCSI University, Malaysia

Corresponding email: hamisahharon@uitm.edu.my*

Abstract

Several scholars have studied the concept of social cohesion through several theories rooted in economics, sociology, anthropology, psychology, political science, and communication literature. Due to the advancement of human civilisation and economic growth, social cohesion is needed to understand the fundamental bond of human society because it can instil a more civilised state and civilised culture. This review aims to explain the evolution of social cohesion as a causal system that determines a person's membership attitudes and behaviours. Fourteen interrelated theories within sociology, psychology, and communication were identified to predict the nature of human society and explain the communicative processes or exchanges between individuals in a group or community to foster social cohesion. The theoretical evolution of social cohesion demonstrates a shift from focusing on group mechanisms to emphasising individual viewpoints, trust, and shared values as critical factors in fostering cohesion within modern society. This evolution, from Ibn Khaldun's group solidarity to Durkheim's collective consciousness, reflects the increasing complexity of contemporary society due to population growth. The transition to examining social cohesion at the individual level underscores the modern emphasis on personal beliefs for promoting loyalty and unity.

Keywords: *Social Cohesion, Intercultural Relations, Cohesiveness, Communication Theories*

Received: 10 July 2023 | Reviewed: 20 Aug 2023 | Accepted: 17 Sept 2023 | Published: 31 Oct 2023
DOI: https://doi.org/10.24191/FK.V18i2.2023_05

Menyelami Evolusi Kejeleketan Sosial: Teori Interdisiplinari dan Impak Mereka

Abstrak

Beberapa sarjana telah mengkaji konsep kejeleketan sosial melalui beberapa teori yang berasaskan ekonomi, sosiologi, antropologi, psikologi, sains politik, dan literatur komunikasi. Oleh kerana kemajuan tamadun manusia dan pertumbuhan ekonomi, kejeleketan sosial diperlukan untuk memahami ikatan asas masyarakat kerana ia dapat menyemai negara dan budaya yang lebih bertamadun. Tinjauan ini bertujuan untuk menyelami evolusi kejeleketan sosial sebagai sistem penyebab yang menentukan sikap dan tingkah laku keahlian seseorang. Empat belas teori yang berkaitan dalam bidang sosiologi, psikologi, dan komunikasi dikenal pasti untuk meramalkan sifat masyarakat dan menjelaskan proses atau pertukaran komunikatif antara individu dalam kumpulan atau komuniti untuk memupuk kejeleketan sosial. Evolusi teori kejeleketan sosial menunjukkan peralihan daripada memfokuskan pada mekanisme berkumpulan kepada penekanan sudut pandangan individu, kepercayaan, dan nilai bersama sebagai faktor penting dalam memupuk perpaduan dalam masyarakat moden. Peralihan ini, daripada solidariti kumpulan Ibn Khaldun ke kesadaran kolektif Durkheim, mencerminkan peningkatan kerumitan masyarakat kontemporari akibat pertumbuhan penduduk. Peralihan untuk mengkaji kejeleketan sosial di peringkat individu menggariskan penekanan moden terhadap kepercayaan peribadi untuk menggalakkan kesetiaan dan perpaduan.

Kata kunci: *Kejeleketan Sosial, Hubungan Antarbudaya, Perpaduan, Teori Komunikasi*

Introduction

In trying to understand intercultural relations, developing theories describing the functions and roles of social cohesion in the society is vital to understanding how the concept evolve from 1377 until present day. A theory is defined as “a set of interrelated constructs (variables), definitions, and propositions that presents a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables to explain a natural phenomenon” (Kerlinger, 1979). Throughout the years, around 34 sources (refer to Table 1 and Table 2) were found to study the concept of social cohesion through several theories, in which each theory explains or predicts the phenomenon through interrelated constructs formed into propositions or hypotheses to determine the relationship among variables. Although past theorists did not use the term social cohesion directly, the concept of it is not new (Bruhn, 2009). Despite many scholars trying to define of the concept, Stiftung (2017) and Schiefer and Noll (2017) said that, up to date there is no generally accepted definition of social cohesion.

The evolution of social cohesion can be traced back in the 14th century by Ibn Khaldun and is rooted in economics, sociology, anthropology and political science literature. Ibn Khaldun formulated the concept of ‘asabiyah’ or social solidarity to explain group feeling, which leads to cohesion. Later in the 1890s, social cohesion was reinterpreted as “solidarity based on a uniformity of action” (Le Bon, 1896) and “social integration and strong social ties” (Durkheim, 1897). During this time, sociologist Emile Durkheim re-established the term “social solidarity” to “social integration” to explain social justice. He had an idea to bring people together while protecting their freedom in a way everyone agrees with, making it fair (Herzog, 2017). Durkheim believed in achieving social justice by running organisations in a more democratic manner. He was also interested in understanding why suicide rates varied among different social classes. He thought society could shape individuals through its shared beliefs, values, and norms, forming a collective consciousness. To promote social integration, he advocated

for cohesive and interconnected communities where people depended on each other for specific tasks, even if they held different values and interests.

Literature Review

A shift of concept from clannism to collective consciousness of individuals

Early references to cohesion dated back to 1377 by the father of sociology, Ibn Khaldun. In his theory of human society, Ibn Khaldun emphasized the concept of 'asabiyah', which translates to social solidarity or group feeling (Khaldun, 1969). The concept emerges as he tried to understand civilisations' rise and fall. He analysed the dynamics of group relationships, emphasising psychological, economic, environmental, and sociological factors. Also, he explained how group feelings or 'asabiyah' influence human civilisation and economic growth. Ibn Khaldun claimed that what happens to an individual will affect the group, the city, and civilisation; 'asabiyah' is needed to explain the fundamental bond of human society or cohesion and combat inter-tribe conflicts that may lead to wars and anarchy. Although the process of 'asabiyah' instils a great sense of solidarity or group identity (which can instil a more civilised state and civilised culture), the theory is deemed not universally applicable to modern society (Gellner, 1975). Then again, the 'asabiyah' theory sets the foundation for the rise of scholars like Comte, Weber, Spengler, Marx and many more.

In the late 1800s to 1900s, the concept gradually evolved from clannism to collective consciousness of individuals attracted to one another in a group or group cohesion (refer to Table 1). Scholars in these eras started using the term group cohesion to describe the social and dynamic process involving group members willing to stick together and remain in a group that has mutual attraction (refer to Table 1). Overall, the concept of social cohesion during this era resides when individuals identify themselves as members of a group that they consider as in-groups as opposed to out-groups. However, the mechanism of group cohesion only applies a group level phenomenon and not the mass.

Table 1: The characteristics of group cohesion

Group cohesion is characterised as:
"a shared way of understanding and behaving in the world that binds individuals together and creates social integration"
- Durkheim (1893)
"the share of personal and enduring relationships"
- Cooley (1902)
"group identification and emotional ties"
- Freud (1921)
"collective individuals with common mode of feeling and reciprocal influence"
- MacDougall (1921)
"attraction and repulsion among group members"
- Moreno (1934)
"interdependence and intimacy of group members"
- Lewin (1943)
"situation where cooperation is to member's mutual benefit"
- Deutsch (1949)
"membership continuity – the cement that binds together group members to remain in the group"
- Festinger, Schachter, & Back (1950)
"when group members accept and conform to group norms"
- Cartwright & Zander (1960)
"the resultant forces which are acting on the members to stay in a group or the attraction of membership in a group for its members"
- Back (1951)
"the power of groups to generate conformity and willingness to compromise"
- Asch (1952)
"the resistance of a group to disruptive forces"
- Gross & Martin (1952)
"the attractiveness of the group, which is the pooled effect or the average of the individual members'

attraction-to-group or their wish to remain in the group”
- Israel (1956)
“a property that is inferred from the number and strength of mutual positive attitudes among group members”
- Lott & Lott (1960)
"the resultant of all forces acting on all the members to remain in the group"
- Cartwright (1968)
“cooperative interdependence in the pursuit of shared goals”
- Sherif & Sherif (1969)
“consensus among group members”
- Friedkin (1984)
“a sense of belonging and feelings of morale”
- Bollen & Hoyle (1990)
“attraction and bonding, and self-disclosure and feedback”
- Braaten (1991)
“a measure of the willingness of people to stay in the community”
- Robbins (1993)
“a set of social processes that help instil in individuals the sense of belonging to the same community and the feeling that they are recognized as members of the community
- Commissariat Général du Plan, 1997 (quoted in Jenson, 1998)
“dynamic process through which group members stick together and remain united”
- Carron & Hausenblas (1998)

Fast forward to the current days, social cohesion has become more specific and specialized (refer to Table 2). Although the concept has become more specific and specialized, the classical idea that social cohesion is the “field of forces” of conditions (direct or indirect attributes) and the causal system that determines a person’s membership attitudes and behaviors still remains unhinged. In 2019 and 2022, a number of research were carried out to investigate different facets of social cohesion. In the first study, social cohesion in a university community was determined to be sufficient by Maryna and Andrii (2019). This suggests that staff and students have a good attitude that includes tolerance, acceptance of diversity, mutual respect, and support.

In a subsequent investigation into the idea of therapeutic alliance in group therapy for drug and alcohol issues, Von Greiff and Skogens (2019) found that group members' social backgrounds could affect cohesiveness and that group homogeneity could both support cohesiveness and impede change. Comparably, a study conducted in 2022 by Silveira, Hecht, Adli, Voelkle, and Singer proposed that social cohesion is made up of various psychological elements, including social skills, trust, and social belonging. This finding has implications for psychological resilience as well as the significance of minimizing loneliness and improving social skills for intervention strategies. These studies collectively provide insights into the multifaceted nature of social cohesion and its impact on various aspects of human behavior and well-being.

Table 2: Specified characteristics of social cohesion

Social cohesion is refined as:
“the strength of psychological link among members, and the attraction of community to members” - Younglin & Maryam (2001)
“the degree to which people respond cooperatively to achieve their valued outcomes and to deal with the political, economic, social, or environmental stresses that influence them” - Reimer (2002)
“a sense of responsibility and trust” - Figueroa, Kincaid, Rani, & Lewis (2002)
“the paths that link members are the social glue that hold them together” - Moody & White (2003)
“mutually supportive community of free individuals pursuing these common goals by democratic means” - European Committee for Social Cohesion (2004)
“the construction of shared values and communities of interpretation engaged in a common enterprise to address common challenges, and the reduction of inequality in wealth and income” - Jupp, Nieuwenhuysen & Dawson (2007)

"the bond that brings people together" - Bruhn (2009) "a cohesive society will work towards the well-being of all its members, minimizing disparities and avoiding marginalization between different groups, fighting discrimination, exclusion and excessive inequalities" - Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2011) "a sum of the positive forces that works towards the well-being of all members, fights exclusion and marginalization, creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, and offers its members the opportunity of upward mobility - Woolcock (2011) "a form of self-disclosure, member acceptance, empathy, roles, social trust, and social interaction" - Bolong (2011) "a measure of predictability to interactions across people and groups, which in turn provides incentives for collective action" - Social Development Department, World Bank (2012) "the quality of social cooperation and togetherness of a collective, defined in geo-political terms, that is expressed in the attitudes and behaviours of its members" - Dragolov, Koch, & Larsen (2018)

Methodology

This systematic review adhered to the rigorous standards of systematic reviews. For the search process, a comprehensive strategy was implemented by querying two prominent academic databases, Scopus and Web of Science. The search criteria encompassed both keyword searches and relevant textual terms associated with the concept of social cohesion.

The search involved using various combinations of specific keywords such as "enhance," "intensify," "increase," "improve," "strengthen," "augment," "boost," "raise," "elevate," "enrich," "heighten," and "deepen," in conjunction with terms related to social cohesion, such as "social cohesiveness," "group cohesiveness," "cohesion," "group cohesion," "coherence," "social connection," "social connectedness," "social interaction," "social collectivity," "togetherness," "social belonging," and "social integration." This method was applied to titles and abstracts in line with the review's primary research question, which is how have the concept of social cohesion evolve over the years and factors to enhance it.

The review evaluated a total of 14 theories pertaining to social cohesion (refer to Figure 1). The researcher assessed their relevance based on the presence of related keywords.

Findings and Discussion

Interrelated theories of social cohesion

Social cohesion is conceptualized based on the interrelated theoretical assumptions made by different academic fields concerning one another being antecedent, intervening or outcome variables (Friedkin, 2004; Bruhn, 2009). Theorists from the sociological, psychological and communication fields believe that social cohesion results from an innate sense of togetherness or belonging to the society as a whole. Since the year 1377 to 1993, different philosophical fields have influenced the understanding of the concept of social cohesion. The concept started from the sociological field, which then extending concept to the communication and social psychological field (refer to Figure 1). Each theory tries to predict the nature of human society and explains the communicative processes or exchanges between individuals in a group or community to foster social cohesion.

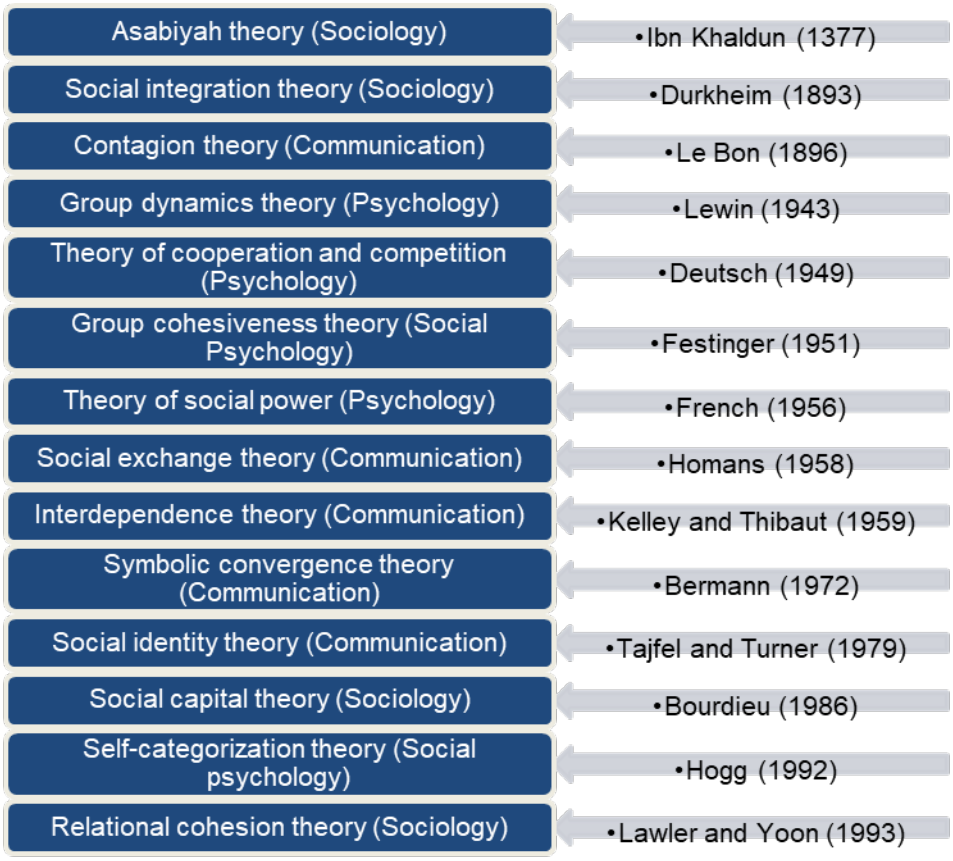

Figure 1: Fourteen interrelated theories on social cohesion

The extension of these theories involves emotional dimensions with attitudes like solidarity, trust, a sense of belonging, togetherness, membership, and the member's willingness to participate for equal benefits (refer to Table 3). Bonding between individuals is created once they feel connected through group feeling, frequent social interactions, social attraction, social capital, and task commitment or interdependence (Khaldun, 1969; Le Bon, 1896; Lewin, 1943; Deutsch, 1949; Festinger, 1954; French, 1956; Homans, 1958; Bourdieu, 1986; Hogg, 1992; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Lawler & Yoon, 1993).

Friedkin (2004) highlighted that social cohesion has no definite definition due to the complex system of various disciplines that studies the concept like sociology, social psychology, mental health, and public health. The study on social cohesion also revolves around three methodological approaches; empirical, experimental, and social network analysis (Bruhn, 2009). Although the definition of social cohesion is multidisciplinary, Friedkin (2004) emphasized that it is not important to distinguish between a person's desire to stay a member and the length of their membership. He pointed out that earlier hypotheses have demonstrated a causal connection between these variables.

Prior research offers complex insights into the idea of social cohesion. According to Heuser (2005), trust is crucial for encouraging people to act morally for the benefit of society. Three fundamental aspects of social cohesion are put forth by Schiefer and Van der Noll (2017), who define its fundamental components as social relationships, identification with the local community, and a focus on the common good. The impact of neighborhood-tagged social media and weak social ties on emergent social cohesion during disasters is studied by Fan, Jiang, and Mostafavi (2020).

In particular country clusters, Green, Janmaat, and Cheng (2011) demarcate discrete regimes of social cohesion and pinpoint long-term declines in social cohesion indicators across national boundaries. Lastly, a thorough framework describing the interaction of personal

beliefs, contextual perceptions, and institutional elements in forming social cohesion is presented by Fonseca, Lukosch, and Brazier (2019). This framework emphasizes the importance of compatible norms and values in fostering cohesion within groups and societies. When taken as a whole, these studies improve our comprehension of the complex relationship between social cohesion and various contexts. Consequently, the following paragraph will explore the extension, comprehension, and advancement of views concerning the interaction between micro and macro elements of social cohesiveness.

Table 3: Interrelated theoretical assumptions on the concept of social cohesion

Author (s) and year	**Theory**	**Definition**	**Dimensions involved**
Ibn Khaldun (1377) – cited in Khaldun (1969)	Asabiyah theory	It is the notion social solidarity with an emphasis on unity, group feeling and sense of shared purpose, and social cohesion within the context of tribalism and clannism. It is known to be a fundamental bond of human society and the basis motive force of nomadic history.	• Social bond • Cultural bond • Social solidarity • Cohesion
Durkheim (1893)	Social integration theory	It is believed that society exerted a powerful force on individuals. It asserts that people's norms, beliefs, and values make up a collective consciousness, or a shared way of understanding and behaving in the world. As a result, collective consciousness binds individuals together and creates social integration.	• Organic solidarity • Mechanical solidarity • Social interactions • Collective consciousness • Moral density
Le Bon (1896)	Contagion theory	It is the solidarity of the crowd due to its uniformity of action or collective behavior which explains that the crowd can cause a hypnotic impact on individuals which, in turn, is largely due to its anonymity and contagion.	• Hypnotic influence • Mental unity • Collective action
Lewin (1943)	Group dynamics theory	It is the degree of interdependence between group members depending on the size, organization, and intimacy of the group. The process is affected by the way groups and individuals think and feel, and their interaction especially within a group environment.	• Positive interpersonal interaction • Uniformity • Cohesiveness • Group norms • Trust
Deutsch (1949)	Theory of cooperation and competition	It is the belief that cooperation is better than competition upon small-group functioning. It asserts that cooperation is to the group member's mutual benefit, resulting in a win-win situation. Group members rewarded on a cooperative basis are more cohesive than members rewarded on a competitive basis.	• Network relationship • Competition • Cooperation • Conflict • Negotiation

Festinger, Schachter, and Back (1950)	Group cohesiveness theory	It is the attractiveness to people which have the best care within the group and attractiveness to the group as a whole. It asserts that Members of strongly cohesive groups are more inclined to participate readily and to stay with the group.	• Social relations • Task commitment • Perceived unity • Emotions • Attraction • Group pride • Interpersonal attraction
French (1956)	Theory of social power	It is the potential for social influence a person has among their peers and within the society defined by the five sources of power for changing conditions inside or outside a social group.	• Reward • Coercion • Legitimate • Expert • Referent
Homans (1958)	Social exchange theory	It is the weight of costs against benefits while forming a relationship. It asserts that relationship commitments form because of self-interest and interdependence, social exchanges produce emotions (or feelings), and under certain conditions, people associate their individual feelings with their relationship or shared group affiliation.	• Individualism or self-interest • Interdependence • Costs • Rewards • Reciprocity
Thibaut and Kelley (1959)	Interdependence theory	It is the expectation of the kinds of outcomes a person expects to receive in a relationship. It asserts that the rewards and costs associated with a person's interpersonal relationship will influence their expectation so they can evaluate the outcome of their relationship as either positive or negative.	• Emotional reward • Social reward • Instrumental reward • Opportunity reward
Bormann (1972)	Symbolic Convergence Theory	It is a process through which collectives create and share a consciousness and develop a common symbolic reality. It asserts that once a group consciousness or mutual understanding is achieved, it results in group's cohesiveness, consisting of shared emotions, motives, and meanings where they no longer think in terms of "I" or "me" but in terms of "us" and "we."	• Shared group consciousness • Common symbolic reality
Tajfel and Turner (1979)	Social identity theory	It is the perception of self and others based on the social group that the person belongs to. It asserts that people develop a sense of personal identity through reliance upon factors that make them unique and possess multiple identities associated with their affiliated group memberships.	• Social categorization • Social identification • Intergroup comparison
Bourdieu (1986)	Social capital theory	It is about the value of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition, connections, and provides each	• Social connections • Social networks • Social support • Group

		member with the backing of collectivity. It asserts that individuals invest in social relations with the aim of economic, social and symbolic "profit" that follows from belonging to the association, leading to the growth of solidarity.	membership
Hogg (1992)	Self-categorization theory	It is the process of people forming cognitive representations of themselves and others in relation to different social groups and focuses more on uncertainty reduction rather than self-esteem as a motive. It asserts that people place themselves and others into social categories based on in-group and out-group attributes, the process shapes their attitudes, emotions, and behaviors.	• In-group • Out-group • Perceived fit • Perceived readiness
Lawler and Yoon (1993)	Relational cohesion theory	It explains how and when people who are exchanging things of value develop stable and cohesive relationships. It asserts that people tend to interact and commit to the group because they get something they value or want from others.	• Interdependence • Social exchanges • Predictability • Positive emotions • Group cohesion • Commitment

The theoretical evolution of social cohesion

In order to foster social cohesion, modern society depends on people's loyalty and internal convictions. In contrast to mass forums, this approach seems to value people internalizing their values and beliefs as a means of achieving cohesion. In terms of social cohesion, past literatures have moved away from depending exclusively on external or group mechanisms and towards highlighting the importance of individual viewpoints, trust, and shared values in fostering cohesion within a society. It reflects the notion which is consistent with many theories of social cohesion; that social cohesion depends not only on the collective actions of individuals but also on their individual alignment with the values and norms of their society.

This perspective leads us to the conclusion that social cohesion has evolved and broadened over time. The concept of social integration and collective consciousness, which emphasises the importance of shared norms, values, and beliefs in bringing people together and laying the groundwork for society, has developed from Ibn Khaldun's early emphasis on group solidarity and unity in tribal settings to Durkheim's idea. The complexity and interconnectedness of modern society are growing as a result of population growth, which is driving this evolution.

Moreover, the move to examine social cohesion at the individual level reflects the modern focus on a person's internal beliefs as a way to promote loyalty and unity. This implies that society understands the value of individual beliefs and distinctive viewpoints in fostering social cohesion. To sum up, the growing body of knowledge regarding social cohesion emphasises how dynamic human society is and how important it is for both individual and collective factors to shape social bonds and unity.

Compared to Khaldun, Durkheim’s (1893) view on cohesion is centrally concerned with the rise of modern capitalism and focused on the effects that the spread of market relations had on solidarity and on the society's ability to reproduce itself (Alexander, 2014). His research fundamentals are concerned with how societies maintain their integrity and cohesion in modern civilization. Although both interpretations focus on solidarity, Ibn Khaldun’s focus on

mechanical solidarity was seen as more positivistic than Durkheim but Durkheim managed to refine positivism by Auguste Comte (Gellner, 1975). All of the recent research emphasizes how important trust, inclusion, and cohesiveness are in forming societies. As noted by Sapsford, Tsourapas, Abbott, and Teti, (2019), corruption erodes trust in authorities and fellow citizens, gradually undermining social cohesiveness.

In contrast, Fry et al. (2021) shed light on the unique characteristics of peace systems that foster intergroup harmony, underscoring the importance of non-violent norms and values for maintaining cohesion. Meanwhile, Amin (2019) highlights the detrimental impact of social exclusion and ethnic diversity on institutional quality, emphasizing the necessity for effective management. Lastly, Klein and Rudert (2021) stressed that cooperation thrives when individuals feel a sense of inclusion and belonging to a group. Collectively, these findings underscore the fundamental role played by cohesiveness, trust, and inclusion in preserving stable and cooperative societies.

The concept of social cohesion is complex and influenced by many different things, such as group dynamics, individual traits, and trust in institutions. These studies demonstrate that a wide range of factors, from individual characteristics like a disability or membership in an in-group to more general concerns like corruption or intergroup harmony, must be taken into account in order to comprehend and foster social cohesion. The value of inclusion and trust comes up as a recurring theme in all of the studies. Building trust and making sure people feel included are essential for social cohesion, whether bioethics principles are incorporated into education to promote tolerance or the importance of belonging to an in-group is emphasized to foster cooperation.

The studies also show that there are many different kinds of solutions needed to address the problems that modern societies face, such as ethnic diversity and corruption. In order to overcome these obstacles, constructive components like non-warring norms, values, and symbols or robust social networks must be promoted in addition to addressing particular problems. Our understanding of social cohesion has evolved over time, as demonstrated by the theoretical evolution of social cohesion theories discussed here. This progression has improved our understanding of social cohesion, from early ideas of group solidarity to more modern viewpoints that take individual and group dynamics into account.

This demonstrates how interwoven societies are on a worldwide basis. In conclusion, these points of view highlight the significance of comprehending and fostering social cohesion via diverse, inclusive methods that take into account both personal and societal elements.

From solidarity to group cohesiveness

Early group dynamic theories, such as Lewin's and Deutsch's, concentrated on the concept of group cohesiveness. They explored the factors that contribute to the desire of individuals to remain in a group, emphasizing the role of interdependence, positive interpersonal interactions, and cooperation. Festinger and colleagues added the element of attractiveness to the group, suggesting that interpersonal attraction contributes to group cohesion. Social identity theories introduced the idea that cohesion is enhanced when group members receive valuable activities, strengthening their sense of belonging and social identification.

From group dynamic to individual attachment

Group dynamic theories give way to individual attachment theories, which place more emphasis on the causes of the behavioral processes that promote cohesiveness. Social exchange theory was developed by academics such as Homans, who proposed that people weigh the advantages and disadvantages of relationships before committing to them successfully. According to Kelley and Thibaut's interdependence theory, rewards and penalties in interpersonal interactions have an impact on people's decisions and how they perceive their group. Tajfel and Turner emphasized the significance of social identification for cohesion by incorporating it into the social exchange mechanism. People can compare groups with each other based on their emotional connections and affiliations thanks to the idea of social identification.

Individual Attachment, Social Identification, and Membership Loyalty

Current theories acknowledge that people are free to choose whether or not to stay in a group. The social categories that an individual associates with and their own cognitive representations of themselves influence their membership attitude and behavior. According to the relational cohesion theory of Thye, Vincent, Lawler, and Yoon (2014), affective ties to groups are formed through repeated exchanges, structural interdependencies, and a sense of shared responsibility. There is a need for a theory of social cohesion that takes into account group-level factors and focuses on social processes in networks that influence individual attitudes and behaviors in order to address the processes that connect micro and macro levels of interaction. Together, these theories essentially emphasize how social cohesiveness is dynamic. They stress the interaction between processes occurring at the individual and group levels.

Conclusion

Over time, the theories of social cohesion have changed, from emphasizing group cohesiveness and solidarity to a more complex understanding of social identification and personal attachment. While more recent theories explore the origins of these mechanisms and the part that personal decisions play in determining cohesion, earlier theories focused on group dynamics and mechanisms that foster cohesion. It is acknowledged that social cohesion is a dynamic, multifaceted concept. Individual attitudes, group dynamics, interpersonal relationships, and social processes are just a few of the many variables that are involved in this intricate interplay at both the micro and macro levels. All of these elements work together to support the growth of cohesiveness in communities and societies.

The shift in theories recognises people's autonomy in choosing to stay in or leave a group. Individual decisions are vital to a group's cohesiveness because they are influenced by their assessments of the costs, benefits, social identity, and social exchanges. Understanding social cohesiveness requires an understanding of social identification, the process by which people classify others and themselves into social groups. People who are socially identified with a group are more likely to display cohesion, highlighting the importance of a common sense of belonging and group norms.

Current theories place a strong emphasis on social cohesion's affective and emotional components. Cohesion is promoted and strong bonds within groups are facilitated by positive emotions, interpersonal attachments, and shared experiences. It is acknowledged that these affective factors are major forces behind social cohesiveness. The theories draw attention to the intricate interdependencies that exist between group members. Affective ties and cohesive behaviours within groups are largely dependent on elements like shared responsibility, repeated exchanges, and structural interdependencies. It is believed that social cohesion is a desirable quality in a society. Positive network structures, categorical identifications, commitment to organisations, interpersonal attachments, and membership loyalty are all encouraged by it. It is believed that a cohesive society is more cooperative, stable, and resilient in the face of adversity.

This research significantly contributes to communication and media studies. First, providing a historical context, this text comprehensively surveys the evolution of social cohesion theories. Secondly, this research bridges the interdisciplinary nature of social cohesion by incorporating insights from sociology, psychology, and communication theories, creating a more holistic framework for analysis. Moreover, it emphasizes the emotional dimensions of social cohesion, such as trust and belonging, shedding light on critical factors in understanding communication dynamics. In conclusion, this research enriches the field by providing historical context, interdisciplinary insights, and emotional dimensions. These contributions can provide significant benefits to researchers in communication and media studies.

Author's Declaration

This article has not been published previously, not under consideration for publication elsewhere. This publication has approved by all authors for publication and not be published elsewhere printed or electronically in the same form or in any other language without the written consent of the copyright-holder, which is Forum Komunikasi.

References

Alexander, J. C. (2014). The Antinomies of Classical Thought: Marx and Durkheim (Theoretical Logic in Sociology). Routledge.

Amin, S. (2019). The endless nexus between ethnic diversity, social exclusion and institutional quality of Pakistan. International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, 39(3/4), 182-200.

Asch, S. (1952). Social psychology. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Back, K. W. (1951). Influence through social communication. The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 46(1), 9.

Bollen, K. A., & Hoyle, R. H. (1990). Perceived cohesion: A conceptual and empirical examination. Social forces, 69(2), 479-504.

Bolong, J. (2011). Minda Komuniti Maya. Bangi: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

Bormann, E. G. (1972). Fantasy and rhetorical vision: The rhetorical criticism of social reality. Quarterly journal of speech, 58(4), 396-407.

Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education (pp. 241–258). New York: Greenwood.

Braaten, L. J. (1991). Group cohesion: A new multidimensional model. Group, 15(1), 39-55.

Bruhn, J. (2009). The group effect: social cohesion and health outcomes. New York, USA: Springer.

Carron, A. V., Hausenblas, H. A., & Eys, M. A. (2005). Group dynamics in sport. Fitness Information Technology.

Carron, A.V. & Hausenblas, H.A. (1998). Group Dynamics in Sport. Morgantown: Fitness Information Teenology.

Cartwright, D. (1968). The nature of group cohesiveness in group dynamics. Research and Theory. Tavistoc, London

Cartwright, D. E., & Zander, A. E. (1960). Group dynamics: Research and theory. Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson.

Cooley, C. H. (1902). Human nature and the social order. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Deutsch, M. (1949). A theory of co-operation and competition. Human relations, 2(2), 129-152.

Dragolov, G., Koch, M., & Larsen, M. (2018). Level, Trend, and Profiles of Social Cohesion in Asia. What Holds Asian Societies Together, 69-95.

Durkheim, E. (1893). The division of labor in society, 291-306.

Durkheim, E. (1897). Suicide. New York: Free Press.

Fan, C., Jiang, Y., & Mostafavi, A. (2020). Emergent social cohesion for coping with community disruptions in disasters. Journal of the Royal Society Interface, 17(164), 20190778.

Festinger, L. (1954). A theory of social comparison processes. Human Relations, 7, 117–140.

Festinger, L., Schachter, S., & Back, K. (1950). The spatial ecology of group formation. Social pressure in informal groups, 141-161.

Figueroa, M. E., Kincaid, D. L., Rani, M., & Lewis, G. (2002). Communication for social change: an integrated model for measuring the process and its outcomes. European Committee for Social Cohesion. (2004). Revised Strategy for Social Cohesion. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Fonseca, X., Lukosch, S., & Brazier, F. (2019). Social cohesion revisited: a new definition and how to characterize it. Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research, 32(2), 231-253.

French, J. R. P. Jr. (1956). A formal theory of social power. The Psychological Review, 63(3), 181–194

Freud, S. (1921). Group psychology and the analysis of the ego. Standard Edition, 18. London: Hogarth.

Friedkin, N. E. (1984). Structural cohesion and equivalence explanations of social homogeneity. Sociological Methods & Research, 12(3), 235-261.

Friedkin, N. E. (2004). Social cohesion. Annual Review Sociology, 30, 409-425.

Fry, D., Souillac, G., Liebovitch, L., Coleman, P., Agan, K., Nicholson-Cox, E., Mason, D., Gomez, F., & Strauss, S. (2021). Societies within peace systems avoid war and build positive intergroup relationships. Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 8, 1-9.

Gellner, E. (1975). Cohésion and identity: the Maghreb from Ibn khaldûn to Emile Durkheim. Government and Opposition, 10(2), 203-218.

Green, A., Janmaat, G., & Cheng, H. (2011). Social cohesion: converging and diverging trends. National Institute Economic Review, 215, R6-R22.

Gross, N., & Martin, W. E. (1952). On group cohesiveness. American Journal of Sociology, 57(6), 546-564.

Herzog, L. (2017). Durkheim on Social Justice: The Argument from “Organic Solidarity”. American Political Science Review, 112, 112 - 124.

Heuser, B. L. (2005). The ethics of social cohesion. Peabody Journal of Education, 80(4), 8-15.

Hogg, M. A. (1992). The social psychology of group cohesiveness: from attraction to social identity. New York: New York University Press.

Homans, G. C. (1958). Social behavior as exchange. American journal of sociology, 63(6), 597-606.

Israel, J. (1956). Self-evaluation and Rejection in Groups. Stockholm, Sweden: Almqvist & Wiksell.

Jenson J (1998) Mapping Social Cohesion: The State of Research. Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Network.

Jupp, J., Nieuwenhuysen, J., & Dawson, E. (Eds.). (2007). Social cohesion in Australia. Cambridge University Press.

Kerlinger, F. N. (1979). Behavioral research: A conceptual approach. Harcourt School.

Khaldun, I. (1969). Muqaddimah. Trans. Franz Rosenthal, ed. and abridged by NJ. Dawood. Princeton University Press, 5-9.

Klein, S. A., & Rudert, S. C. (2021). If they don't care, I won't share: Feeling unrelated to one's in-group increases selfishness instead of behavior for the greater good. European Journal of Social Psychology, 51(4-5), 773-783.

Lawler, E. J., & Yoon, J. (1993). Power and the emergence of commitment behavior in negotiated exchange. American Sociological Review, 465-481.

Lawler, E. J., Thye, S. R., & Yoon, J. (2009). Social commitments in a depersonalized world. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

Le Bon, G. (1896). The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind. New York: Macmillan Company.

Lewin, K. (1943). Psychology and the process of group living. The Journal of Social Psychology, 17(1), 113-131.

Lott, B. E., & Lott, A. J. (1960). The formation of positive attitudes toward group members. The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 61(2), 297.

Maryna, D., & Andrii, Z. (2019). Social cohesion in education: cognitive research in the university community. International Journal of Cognitive Research in Science, Engineering and Education, 7(2), 19-27.

Moody, J., & White, D. R. (2003). Structural cohesion and embeddedness: A hierarchical concept of social groups. American Sociological Review, 103-127.

Moreno, J. L. (1934). Who shall survive? A new approach to the problem of human interrelations. Washington, DC: Nervous and Mental Disease.

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2011). Development Co-operation Report 2011. Retrieved 3 February, 2019 form https://www.oecd.org/dac/developmentco-operationreport2011.htm

Reimer, B. (2002). Understanding and measuring social capital and social cohesion. Retrieved 3 February, 2019 form http://nre.concordia.ca/nre_reports.htm

Robbins, P.S. (1993). Organizational Behaviour-Concepts Controversies and Applications, Practice-Hall.

Sapsford, R., Tsourapas, G., Abbott, P., & Teti, A. (2019). Corruption, trust, inclusion and cohesion in North Africa and the Middle East. Applied Research in Quality of Life, 14, 1-21.

Schiefer, D., & van der Noll, J. (2017). The essentials of social cohesion: A literature review. Social Indicators Research, 132(2), 579-603.

Sherif, M., & Sherif, C. W. (1969). Ingroup and intergroup relations: Experimental analysis. Social psychology, 221-266.

Silveira, S., Hecht, M., Adli, M., Voelkle, M. C., & Singer, T. (2022). Exploring the structure and interrelations of time-stable psychological resilience, psychological vulnerability, and social cohesion. Frontiers in Psychiatry, 13, 804763.

Social Development Department, World Bank. (2012). World Development Report 2012. Retrieved 15 March, 2019 from https://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDR2012/Resources/7778105-1299699968583/7786210-1315936222006/Complete-Report.pdf

Stiftung, B. (2017). What holds Asian societies together? Insights from the social cohesion radar (1st ed.). Gütersloh, Germany: Verlag Bertelsmann Stiftung.

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. Austin (Ed.), The social psychology of intergroup relations (pp. 33e47). Monterey, CA: Brooks-Cole.

Thibaut, J. W., & Kelley, H. H. (1959). Power and dependence. The social psychology of groups, 7, 100-125.

Thye, S. R., Vincent, A., Lawler, E. J., & Yoon, J. (2014). Relational cohesion, social commitments, and person-to-group ties: Twenty-five years of a theoretical research program. In Advances in group processes (pp. 99-138). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Von Greiff, N., & Skogens, L. (2019). Understanding the concept of the therapeutic alliance in group treatment for alcohol and drug problems. European Journal of Social Work, 22(1), 69-81.

Woolcock, M. (2011). What Distinctive Contribution Can Social Cohesion Make to Development Theory. Paper presented at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development International Conference on Social Cohesion and Development, Paris, January 20.

Younglin, Y., & Maryam, A. (2001). Media and group: relative influences on social presence, task participation, and group consensus. MIS quarterly, 25(3), 2001.