

# SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

## 1. Basic concepts

Relational networks to which individuals belong and in which they recognize themselves, represent a fundamental resource that allows pursuing their own ends relying on additional resources compared to the available endowments of economic and cultural capital (Bourdieu, Coleman). In literature it is widely recognised that a generalized climate of interpersonal trust, high involvement in associative networks and widespread civic culture increase individual wellbeing and social cohesion, allowing a better performance, greater efficiency of public policies and a lower cost of economic transactions.

In Italy the informal networks, that include all the relationships that gravitate around individuals, are of particular interest (family relationships, parenting, friendship, neighbourhood, mutual help). These networks put in place human and material resources to provide support and protection to individuals both in everyday life and in critical moments and periods of discomfort, representing an essential element of social cohesion.

## 2. Dimensions considered to represent the domain

The proposed indicators are organized according to a scheme based on three areas considered as drivers of wellbeing of individuals, families and social groups. This is a scheme that is inspired by the classic "welfare diamond", for three vertices of which the relations are fundamental: Civil Society, Family and Market. The other vertex constituted by the component State, even if covered by some indicators in this domain, will be specifically detailed in the domain "Policy and Institutions."

1. Civil society. The relational aspects referring to the component "civil society" of welfare were distinguished in two major aspects, trying to keep into account both traditional and emerging forms of participation to civil society:
  - a. *social participation*, considered as participation in associations and volunteering
  - b. *generalized trust*.
2. Social economy. A market that values the relations in order to create utility (not only in monetary terms) and that is able to create relationships based on reciprocity and trust can have a positive influence on the level of well-being of a society. In recent years there has been a blossoming of new forms of participation anchored to principles of reciprocity, solidarity, ideal, ethical or religious values, which have won more and more social relevance. These activities, in contrast to those falling within the traditional market, are ruled by different motivations from individual economic interest and are based on capital relations, social ties and collaboration. Unfortunately, it is not currently available a data source which is systematic, complete and of appropriate statistical quality, allowing to describe this dimension. Given its importance, the Commission considered opportune to propose some indicators that can be derived from the more consolidated sources of data currently available in the social solidarity field.
3. Family. It is a dimension of particular relevance in Italy but it is not exempt from difficulties of measure. The distinction appearing in literature between "bridging" and "bonding" social capital is very complex.

The first one connects people belonging to different social realities and conditions (for examples through participation to social movements); the second connects people who are similar for some important traits (e.g. by ethnicity or parenthood). As the Oecd report *How's Life?* says, "Too much bonding in the absence of bridging social capital can lead to 'in group/out group' dynamics, leading to the exclusion of those outside the bonding group. Network can also foster values that are detrimental for society, as in the case with mafia or terrorist organisations". Taking into account this complexity we tried to select indicators that would allow to explain this fundamental aspect of social life. The family context in which people live is also used as a background variable to analyse many of the indicators proposed, believing that it can provide important additional information on the behaviour of population.

### 3. List of the best indicators

1. Satisfaction with family relationship: Share of population aged 14 and over who have declared to be very satisfied with his/her family relationships.
2. Satisfaction with friendship relationship: Share of population aged 14 and over who have declared to be very satisfied with the relationship with his/her friends.
3. Percentage of people of 14 years and over which have relatives, friends or neighbors on which they can count: Based on the aggregation of the following indicators: Share of people aged 14 and over who have relatives they can count on; Share of people aged 14 and over who have friends or neighbors they can count on.
4. Percentage of children aged 3 to 10 years who play with their parents: Based on the aggregation of the following indicators: Children aged 3-10 years who every day spend some time playing with his/her father; Children aged 3-10 years who every day spend some time playing with his/her mother.
5. Provided aids: Share of population aged 14 and over who in past 12 months have given unpaid aid to non-cohabiting relatives and non-relatives.
6. Synthetic indicator of social participation: Based on the aggregation of the following indicators: People aged 14 and over who during the past 12 months have participated in meetings of associations (cultural/recreational, ecological, civil rights, for peace); People aged 14 and over who in the past 12 months have participated in meetings of trade unions and of professional associations; People aged 14 and over who during the past 12 months have attended meetings of political parties and/or have worked free for a party; People aged 14 and over who pay monthly or periodical dues for a club/sports club; People aged 14 and over who during the past 12 months have participated in meetings or activities (cultural, sporting, recreational, spiritual), organized or promoted from parishes, religious or spiritual organizations/groups.
7. Volunteer work: Percentage of population aged 14 and over who in the past 12 months performed non-paid volunteer work for associations or volunteer groups.
8. Association funding: Share of population aged 14 and over who in the past 12 months have funded associations.
9. Non-profit organizations per 10,000 inhabitants: Number of non-profit organizations per 10,000 inhabitants
10. Social co-operatives per 10,000 inhabitants: Number of social co-operatives per 10,000 inhabitants
11. Generalized trust: Share of population (aged 14 and over) who believes that most 2 of the people are trustworthy.