



PRESS RELEASE

Social Cohesion is under assault globally

Ipsos research finds that almost twice as many global citizens are “weak” than “solid” in their sense of social cohesion

Toronto, Canada October 28, 2020 — The Ipsos Social Cohesion Index (ISCI) suggests that Social Cohesion is under assault globally. Based on a survey of over 20,000 adults in 27 countries, Ipsos finds that twice as many global citizens are “weak” (41%) than “solid” (21%) in their sense of social cohesion.

Why does this matter?

Many pundits and others are talking about the importance of social cohesion and social capital in the pandemic recovery and beyond.

They note that the “group-think” and “what have you done for me and mine” perspective created by lower social cohesion can ultimately tear a society apart. People make demands of governments and businesses to act more to address how they think they are “wronged” and what their specific wants/needs are, than about what is good for the whole.

Therefore, social cohesion has widespread potential impact on marketing, messaging and positioning among the private sector, and public and social policy in the public sector moving forward.

The Ipsos Social Cohesion Index is a measure based on citizens’ attitudes relative to:

- Social relations—trust in other people, shared priorities with others, and diversity
- Connectedness—national identity, trust in the political system, and fairness of treatment
- Common good—helping others, respecting laws and corruption

Few countries can be described as cohesive

Lack of social cohesion cuts across most individual countries, although some are more challenged than others. For example:

- Only 6 of 27 countries are net positive in Social Cohesion – China (+65%), Saudi Arabia (+37%), Australia (+12%), India (+11%), Malaysia (+4%) and Sweden (+3%).
- The remaining countries are all net negative, with the most decidedly negative including Japan (-52%), South Korea (-52%), Poland (-51%), France (-49%) and Belgium (-46%). The net score of the United States is -26%.



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Myriad of competing attitudes

- On “Social Relations,” on the more positive, 32% globally “strongly agree” that “having a diverse population, with different ethnicities, cultures, etc. is a very good thing for the country.” But, only 15% globally “strongly agree” that “I have the same outlook on life, opinions on important issues, etc. than other (country citizens).”
- On “Connectedness,” on the more positive, 45% globally “strongly agree” that “I define myself as a (country citizen) first before anything else.” But, only 14% globally “strongly agree” that “I trust government/our political system to do what is right.”
- On “Common Good,” on the more positive, 39% globally “strongly agree” that “I respect our laws and ways of doing things.” But, only 9% globally strongly believe that their society/system is corruption-free.

“Social cohesion is the bedrock for societies and economies to function. No country will evolve in a positive direction if its citizens are all rowing in different directions,” Darrell Bricker PhD, Global Service Line Leader, Public Affairs, Ipsos, notes. “So, while understanding citizen attitudes toward issues and policies is important for the public sector, and customer experience and brand for the private sector, it is important to understand that there is a more fundamental level encapsulated in Social Cohesion that greatly influences both.”



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About the Study

These are the findings of a 27-country Ipsos survey conducted between September 25 and October 9, 2020 among 20,011 adults aged 18-74 in the United States, Canada, Malaysia, South Africa, and Turkey and 16-74 in 22 other countries, via Ipsos' Global Advisor online survey platform.

Each country's sample consists of 1000+ individuals in Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China (mainland), France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Spain, and the United States, and 500+ individuals in Argentina, Chile, Hungary, India, Malaysia, Mexico, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, and Turkey.

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Our 75 business solutions are based on primary data coming from our surveys, social media monitoring, and qualitative or observational techniques.

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