Sense of belonging: literature review

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Executive summary

Sense of belonging and its indicators can contribute to monitoring how CIC's mandate is fulfilled. More specifically, sense of belonging is of interest under CIC's Strategic Objective 3 (SO 3) -- newcomers and citizens participate to their full potential fostering an integrating society – comprising the policy and program areas of integration, citizenship and multiculturalism.

Sense of belonging represents a dimension of broader theoretical concepts, and/or as an empirical indicator of such concepts. For example, it is an important dimension of the broad perspective of citizenship theory, which covers legal status, rights, civic participation and sense of belonging. It is also a dimension and/or indicator of desirable broad societal outcomes such as: social inclusion, well-being, social cohesion, social capital, and nationhood.

Broad concepts that include sense of belonging – social cohesion, social capital, well-being, social inclusion/exclusion, nationhood – remain to a certain extent malleable. They are vehicles that mobilize attention and conversations on current social concerns, and bound to lead to many different specialized and localized applications. The malleability of the broad concepts and their diverse applications emerge throughout the review.

Indicators of sense of belonging in empirical studies have consisted primarily of survey questions. These questions have been worded directly in terms of sense of belonging (e.g.: "how strong is your sense of belonging to..."), especially in the research traditions of Canada, New Zealand and Australia. Other wordings are also found, especially in Europe, where sense of belonging is measured by survey questions worded primarily in terms of trust, identification, identity, pride, and confidence in institutions.

CIC's SO 3 could be seen as an example of a broad societal outcome of which sense of belonging is a dimension. Established survey traditions have used indicators directly worded as sense of belonging. These indicators focus primarily on three geographic scales: Canada, province, and the local community, as well as on non-geographic entities, such as family or ethnic group. Researchers sometimes focus on only one geographical scale; and sometimes on all, either keeping them separate or combining them in a composite measure.

Key findings on sense of belonging from the reviewed literature on Canada include:.

- Economic and human capital indicators, such as individual adjusted household income and level of education, as well as demographic indicators such as age categories and sex are included across all studies seeking to understand the determinants of sense of belonging. Findings show that:

  – Older age is consistently found to have a strong and positive impact on sense of belonging (to all geographic scales, but after a decline between youth and the early thirties for community belonging).

  – Females have slightly higher sense of belonging than males, more so to the lower geographic scales.

  – Income and education are found to have very small net effects, and findings are inconsistent (they change direction depending on the data source).

  – A recent qualitative study finds that high income individuals understand themselves as belonging to multiple communities through multiple institutional and organizational

connections, and use their economic means to participate and invest in their broad community. By contrast, low income individuals define themselves as belonging to limited networks of friends and neighbours.

- Studies focused on regional differences typical of Canada and immigration consistently show that:

  - In Quebec, and particularly for Francophones in the 3rd+ generation (i.e. those Francophones who are neither immigrants nor children of immigrants), sense of belonging to Canada is lower than elsewhere. By contrast, differences across regions tend to be small when considering sense of belonging of immigrants to province and the local community, as well as to Canada.

  - In Quebec, immigrants' sense of belonging to Canada grows with duration of stay, while remaining higher than that of the Canadian born overall.

  - Outside Quebec, immigrants' sense of belonging to Canada is lower than that of the Canadian born in the short term, but grows with duration of stay in Canada, reaching that of non-immigrants.

- Studies focused on immigration, ethnic attachment and discrimination show that:

  - Discrimination negatively impacts sense of belonging to Canada and to overall sense of belonging including three geographical scales, while various forms of ethnic attachment tend to partially counteract this effect.

- A study focused on neighbourhood diversity finds that, factoring out voluntary choice of neighbourhood:

  - Non-visible minorities residing in diverse neighbourhoods show higher sense of belonging to Canada and lower sense of belonging to ethnic group than their peers residing in low diversity neighbourhoods.

  - Visible minorities show the same level of sense of belonging to Canada and sense of belonging to ethnic group regardless of whether they live in a diverse neighbourhood or not.

  - Visible minorities have a stronger sense of belonging to their ethnic group than non-visible minorities.

- The literature focused on the geographic scale of the local community finds that:

  - Sense of belonging to the local community impacts health indicators positively.

  - Supportive neighbourhood social relations positively impact sense of belonging to the local community.

  - Immigrants have lower sense of belonging to the local community than the Canadian born, but this difference decreases with time spent in Canada.

  - Immigrant youth (12 to 17 years of age), especially girls, have a lower sense of belonging to the local community than their Canadian peers.

Lessons and recommendations for methodological improvement resulting from the review suggest:

- Studying internationally used indicators of belonging to improve understanding of how results depend on type of indicator, and increase cross-country comparability.

- Comparing indicators of trust and sense of belonging with special reference to how they respond to current experience, to clarify the uses of these two different indicators of "norms of reciprocity" in the social capital research tradition.

- Using accurate economic data through linked tax record to clarify the relationships between income (and other economic outcomes) and sense of belonging.

- Qualitatively studying individuals' understanding of belonging to the local community to gain insight on whether there are patterns of understanding based on socio-economic status and geography.

- Keeping explicit account of known territorial variations, such as lower sense of belonging to Canada in Quebec.

- When building composite measures of belonging, giving clear account of all their components and their composition across population segments of interest.

- Keeping in mind the potential of complementary qualitative research when statistical generalizations are insufficient.

A key recommendation, to enable future research which updates current knowledge and addresses knowledge gaps, is to develop and periodically update a data source satisfying key requirements, including: several questions on sense of belonging, a large sample that allows analysis of sub-populations, the full range of variables of interest associated with sense of belonging, and identifiers of population segments of interest to CIC.

Research themes identified as of interest to CIC for future development suggest:

- Comparing results on sense of belonging to: the various geographic scales, ethno-cultural background, and country of origin, taking into account duration of stay, generational status, and indicators of ethno-racial background.

- Studying sense of belonging to Canada in relation to citizenship take-up.

- Studying sense of belonging in relation to broad immigration category.

- Further studying perceived discrimination and sense of belonging.

- Studying sense of belonging in relation to a range of indicators of diversity of social contact, for example, by different types of social connections (personal, professional, community, etc.) and different types of diversity (e.g. ethno-racial, or based on socio-economic status, etc.).

- Studying sense of belonging taking into account factors related to the local geography and the position of the respondent; for example, ethno-racial diversity in the residential area and whether the respondent is in a minority or majority position.

- Comparing the factors associated with responses that fall in the "very strong" category of sense of belonging to those associated with responses that fall on the positive side of a scale of belonging, but are not necessarily very strong.

Some of the research directions highlighted above are taken up in the companion report "Sense of belonging: empirical study" (forthcoming), based on the GSS 2008. The empirical study will compare results on sense of belonging to Canada, province and the local community; analyze sense of belonging in relation to some distinct indicators of diversity of social contact; and compare the factors associated with responses that fall in the "very strong" category to those associated with responses that fall on the positive side of the scale.

1.   Introduction: Sense of belonging to what and why?

Intuitively, the idea of belonging is compelling and highly relevant to policy fields concerned with fostering the capacity to build a shared and successful life among Canadians, newcomers and including people with different backgrounds. Beyond this broad perspective, in practice, belonging can refer to many different geographic scales, groups and associated resources, on the basis of a variety of criteria, perhaps not always compatible. This raises additional questions on how various manifestations of belonging can combine and to what effect. This introductory section gives an overview of how available knowledge on forms of belonging is structured, how this knowledge is of relevance to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), and how the literature review that follows is organized.

1.1.   Belonging to ... ?

Sense of belonging can pertain to various geographic scales, as well as population segments and resources connected in ways that do not necessarily match the territorial geography of states and their administrative sub-regions. From the point of view of geographic scales, the literature presents two main lines of inquiry, while three more approaches are possible that do not correspond to a specific territorial geography.

- First, the concept of belonging in relation to country has figured prominently in studies of nationhood and citizenship. This line of inquiry includes attention to sub-national levels in cases, such as Canada, where there may be multiple or contested views of nationhood associated with regional populations. In this case, the administrative structure of the state and its regions matches the geographic scales, although studies of belonging often do not have an explicit institutional focus.

- Second, we find a focus on community belonging, or the immediate surroundings where everyday lives unfold, and feelings of belonging are sustained by ongoing interactions. Community belonging has been studied both independently and in relation to belonging to higher geographical scales. Often, community belonging is studied as a determinant of other desirable outcomes, such as health.

- Third, from the point of view of traits that do not match state and regional geographies, the most relevant focus consists of belonging to one's ethno-cultural heritage. The main Canadian survey with an ethno-cultural focus -- the Ethnic Diversity Survey (2002) -- included a specific question on the strength of sense of belonging to one's "ethnic or cultural group," analyzed in some of the studies here reviewed. In addition, the forthcoming General Social Survey on Social Identity will include a question on belonging to one's country of origin.

- Fourth, the non-territorial focus can clearly go beyond ethnicity, including, in general, belonging to a broad range of political or interest based organizations, other non-state institutions or organizations, and their identities and sub-cultures. This last angle requires specific research strategies depending on what types of organizations one is interested in, and falls mostly outside the scope of this review, except for the extent to which institutions with jurisdictions matching the geographical scales mentioned above in the first point can be considered as indirectly factored in, through individual responses on sense of belonging.

- Last, it is important to note that the study of sense of belonging, in all of its variants, is only beginning to address advances in communication technologies, and increased travel and

temporary residency. The related literature on transnationalism and diasporas highlights the contextualized complexity of transnational experiences, including complex connections between the urban local and global dimensions of belonging.

1.2. Why sense of belonging?

This section gives an overview of why sense of belonging is a worthy subject of investigation for CIC and its policy areas. It also presents the scope and organization of this literature review.

1.2.1. General relevance of sense of belonging for the mandate of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and Strategic Objective 3[1] (SO 3)

Sense of belonging and its indicators can contribute to CIC's understanding of how its mandate is carried out. A brief examination of CIC's mission statement illustrates why.

- The first component of CIC's mission is to "facilitate the arrival of people and their integration into Canada in a way that maximizes their contribution to the country." In this respect, it is plausible to expect feelings of belonging to Canada to be facilitating people's willingness to maximize their contribution, and therefore to be a useful indicator of immigrant integration. In addition, it is of interest to find out whether the arrival stream of immigrants is at all related to their ability to develop a sense of belonging in Canada.

- Secondly, CIC's mission states the goal to "enhance the values and promote the rights and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship". In this respect, it is of interest to investigate whether a greater sense of belonging to Canada might be associated with acquiring Canadian citizenship.

- Next, CIC's mission statement makes specific reference to "reach[ing] out to all Canadians and foster[ing] increased intercultural understanding and an integrated society with equal opportunity for all, regardless of race, ethnicity and religion." In this respect, whether Canadians of different immigration or ethnic, racial, or religious background feel that they belong to the country (as well as their more immediate communities) is potentially a useful indication of success.

Within CIC's *Strategic Plan*, the policies and program areas of citizenship, multiculturalism, settlement and integration all fall within the broad Strategic Outcome 3, defined as "newcomers and citizens participate to their full potential in fostering an integrated society." This strategic outcome reflects the last two points of the mission statement, and is aligned with Government of Canada Outcome in the area of Social Affairs: "a diverse society that promotes linguistic duality and social inclusion." Within the context of a broad and multifaceted goal such as SO3, sense of belonging and its indicators have been, and potentially will continue to be a useful component to understand.

1.2.2. Relevance to specific CIC, Policies and Programs

The different scales, focal lengths and angles on sense of belonging, outlined in section 1.1 "Belonging to…?", appeal in different ways to specific CIC policy and program areas. Throughout this report, geographic entities of various sizes such as Canada, province, town or community will be referred to as scales, or geographic scales.

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[1] "Newcomers and citizens participate to their full potential in fostering an integrated society."

- The country scale is of interest to citizenship policy and its goal to enhance the value of Canadian citizenship.

- The community scale has clear relevance to settlement policies and programs, which focus on making sure that newcomers have the necessary services and contacts to address issues in various spheres of their social and economic life, and feel welcome in their immediate community.

- In a less straightforward fashion, attention to combinations of geographic scales, and other manifestations of belonging, potentially provides added evidence for policy, by unveiling processes that are sometimes counterintuitive or puzzling. In past research, for example, the ethno-cultural manifestation of belonging has been studied in conjunction with that of the geographic scale of country. In this case, the question of interest to multiculturalism policy has been whether the two manifestations of belonging dovetail with each other -- a desirable outcome -- or if they are found to be in conflict, possibly requiring policy and programs to prevent social fragmentation or isolation.

- Attention to combinations of geographic scales and other cultural referents has also provided important panoramic depictions of the specific historical and geographic landscape of Canada, allowing placing population segments and policies and programs in their context. In this respect, the focus on Quebec and, data permitting, Aboriginal peoples, in combination with population segments of other backgrounds has provided key insight. Accounting for the multiple geographic scales and their different patterns is important also from a methodological standpoint, in order to generate realistic depictions of the overall Canadian situation.

1.3.   Organization of the review

The review below includes policy research reports from governments, international organizations, or research institutions, as well as academic publications. The material reviewed was found through search engines of academic sources, government documents, and general internet search engines. The review focuses on documents reporting empirical research.

The theoretical literature is discussed selectively to provide context and necessary strategies of organizing knowledge on sense of belonging, but it is not systematically reviewed. The literature produced to report on tracking of survey questions on sense belonging in opinion polls is also not systematically reviewed, but the knowledge provided by this type of exercise in identifying stable patterns is noted when complementary to the findings of the studies reviewed. The theme of transnationalism is taken up by a body of literature also discussed selectively to draw links and provide context.

The presentation is organized starting from the general and progressing to the particular. More specifically, the key broad theoretical concepts and strategies to organize knowledge on sense of belonging with reference to broader concepts are discussed first; international approaches and approaches where sense of belonging is a component among several empirical measures are presented next; followed by Canadian projects that empirically study sense of belonging as one among several dimensions of more general (and internationally widespread) concepts; and, last, Canadian projects are reviewed whereby sense of belonging is considered by itself as the primary focus of empirical study, rather than as one among several dimensions.

The review also shows that when sense of belonging and its empirical indicators are considered as dimensions of a more general concept indicating a desirable broad societal outcome (e.g. well-being, social cohesion, etc.), two types of approaches are found:

- The first approach consists of creating complex composite measures putting together several indicators for the purpose of tracking in time a broad societal outcome and all its components. This is evident in the examples reviewed below both among the international approaches (on cohesion and well-being in New Zealand, Social Quality in Europe, etc.), and in Canadian approaches (especially on well-being).

- The second approach consists of studying the determinants of the various indicators measuring the several dimensions of the chosen broad concept, and comparing the results on such determinants (e.g. comparing the determinants of sense of belonging, trust, participation, understood as components of social cohesion, etc.). This approach will be evident below in the reviewed Canadian studies, primarily those using the broad concept of social cohesion.

When sense of belonging by itself is the primary focus of empirical study rather than one among several indicators, the main objective found in the literature is analyzing its determinants, often comparing the determinants of sense of belonging to different geographical scales and/or ethnic group. By contrast, in the case of belonging to the scale of the local community, sense of belonging is often studied as a determinant of health outcomes.

Text boxes summarizing key findings, lessons learned, and recommendations are provided throughout the report, as well as boxes detailing specific examples from research that are relevant to the review, and evidence boxes with descriptive statistics calculated[2] from publicly available data sources, supporting the review. These graphic devices help navigation through the document.

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[2] Author's calculations.

2.   Sense of belonging as a component of broader concepts – theoretical background and conceptual tools

Sense of belonging has been used as a dimension of broader theoretical concepts, and/or as an empirical indicator of such concepts. For example, it is central within the broad theoretical perspective of citizenship theory, which covers legal status, rights, civic participation and sense of belonging, as the key dimensions of citizenship. Sense of belonging is also included as a dimension and/or indicator of desirable broad societal outcomes under several conceptualizations: social inclusion/exclusion, well-being, social cohesion, social capital, and nationhood. This section provides a brief discussion of how belonging figures within citizenship theory, and presents a strategy for understanding the somewhat inconsistent and fragmented way in which sense of belonging figures within discussions of and studies based on other broad concepts.

2.1.   Observations on citizenship theory

Citizenship theory focuses on what defines and sustains membership in a community of citizens, encompassing legal status, rights, civic participation, and belonging (see, for example, Bloemraad, Korteweg and Yurdakul 2008), thus including analytic knowledge related not only to the policy area of citizenship, but also to those of integration and multiculturalism.

Some overviews of citizenship theory do not distinguish between rights and legal status, rather, they include rights as an implication of legal status[3]. This additional distinction is relevant to the policy focus of CIC because it has emerged to account for issues related to migration. This distinction has become increasingly commonplace as a result of inquiries on the existing regime of international and transnational rights (Soysal 1995), including, for example, the rights of immigrant workers outside their country of citizenship, and also the trans-national rights of members of a supranational entity such as the EU (e.g., recently, Joppke 2010).

It should also be noted that the two terms "identity" and "sense of belonging" have been used interchangeably in the analytic and theoretical literature on citizenship. At this high conceptual level, belonging and identity can be used interchangeably, however, when discussing empirical studies it is important to explicitly account for the two different formulations[4].

The belonging/identity dimension of citizenship refers to feelings of membership in a community, of being part of a collective "we," which facilitates acting together for common purposes.

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[3] A useful overview and extensive references based on this tripartite distinction can be found in the "Citizenship" entry of the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, available at http://plato.stanford.edu/entires/citizenship See Leydet, 2011 for version consulted for this report.

[4] Especially in studies based on survey research, it is clear that the two terms "identity" and "belonging" elicit related but different responses, which can be seen as indicators of the same broad dimension, but that do not give results that are directly overlapping.

Examples -1: Belonging as a topic of discussion in the field of citizenship theory. Among citizenship theorists, there exists considerable debate regarding feelings of belonging/identity, for example on:

- their importance and implications for citizenship,
- what they should ideally be focused on (e.g. territory, ethnicity, heritage, language, some combination of these, etc.),
- what are the consequences, should they not match the territorial borders of a state,
- how they might be affected by increased diversity and transnationalism,
- what are the most relevant social, political and psychological processes generating them, and
- the impact on them of processes related to the other dimensions of citizenship – rights, civic participation and legal status.

While a review of the literature on citizenship theory goes beyond the scope of this study, it is important to know that the concept of belonging figures prominently in its reflections, and that the most important articulations of the concept derive from this literature.

Also, whether they explicitly state it or not, topics of study and research that include belonging as one of their components have in common with citizenship theory a general preoccupation for the capacity of a society to sustain the "buy-in" of its ongoing and incoming members. The link to citizenship theory is usually explicitly made in studies of nationhood, nationalism or regionalism. In studies making use of the concepts of social cohesion, social inclusion/exclusion, social capital and well-being, reference to citizenship theory is less common. Nonetheless, all these different broad concepts share a basic preoccupation for sustaining the capacity for individuals and groups in a society to act together and have access to resources that sustain such capacity.

2.2. Belonging as a dimension of a desirable broad societal outcomes: a conceptual tool

Sense of belonging can represent a dimension of desirable broad societal outcomes such as social cohesion, social inclusion/exclusion, social capital, and well-being. In this context, a conceptual framework to organize the information found is needed. In fact, as the review in the sections below will show, several differences and inconsistencies are found along with several parallels when comparing how sense of belonging is understood across approaches to study these broad societal outcomes and even when comparing different formulations of the same broad societal outcome. What to make of these differences? Do they need a final clarification or perhaps a final explanatory classification? The discussion in this section helps understand why clarifications can be very useful within specific applications, but they are unlikely to reach a final consensus.

First of all, below, instead of the long expression "concepts indicating desirable broad societal outcomes" (e.g. social cohesion, etc.) the shorter term "broad concepts" is used. As noted by several observers (e.g. Bernard 1999, Beauvais and Jenson 2002, McNeill 2006, Jenson 2007), while the clarity of broad concepts can often be improved with reference to specific applications, the popularity of these types of concepts primarily results not from their capacity to reach consensus on one particular formulation, but from their capacity to mobilize debate. More specifically, these broad concepts draw their legitimization from addressing complex emergent social issues, while they also maintain a degree of ambivalence.

The ambivalence of broad concepts allows the participants in the discussion to mobilize attention under the same umbrella even while drawing a range of partly different conclusions and implications specific to particular domains of interest. These broad and malleable concepts facilitate connections and debates across domains, such as academia, government, NGOs, international organizations, or by bridging previously separate social science sub-disciplines. Among these, clarification efforts often do not put an end to the ongoing discussions but instead, keep them going, while they also define cross disciplinary communities of agreement and specialized applications, which can have an important impact on policies in local realms.

This review takes the observations drawn from these studies as a starting point. They offer a useful conceptual framework that helps considerably the understanding of the material reviewed in the sections below.

As a result two useful research strategies are possible:

- One resource intensive strategy would consist of taking one broad concept (or even brand a new one) and clarify how its dimensions, and sense of belonging as one among them, could be fruitfully defined and analyzed with reference to a specific policy area, within a situated institutional perspective and existing resources for data gathering. One clearly relevant example would be to develop this approach for CIC's current SO3 – an integrated society based on broad participation -- within the context of a data capacity that is sustainable over time.

- Another strategy, less resource intensive, but also highly relevant, would require instead targeting a particular recurrent conceptual component among the several included in broad

concepts, and trace its study across multiple approaches and disciplines seeking to highlight its relevance to concrete policy areas of interest to CIC.

This review takes the latter approach: while keeping in mind the mobilizing capacity of concepts indicating desirable broad societal outcomes, it traces the research applications involving of sense of belonging across broad concepts and disciplines. It includes examples of applications of the broad concepts that include sense of belonging as a component, but it does not provide a complete review of the literature on the broad concepts themselves. It seeks to assess the evidence emerging from available studies covering sense of belonging, focusing on its analytic clarity and relevance for policy areas of interest to CIC. The review also leads to identify knowledge and data gaps and potential future research directions on sense of belonging.

3. International examples of sense of belonging as a dimension of a broad societal outcomes

This section discusses international approaches that focus on widespread concepts indicating broad societal outcomes, but also on the empirical measurement of their several dimensions, through indicators that usually consist of survey questions. In these approaches, sense of belonging is one of these several dimensions, each with its own indicators, and may or may not be measured through a survey question that literally uses the expression "sense of belonging."

3.1. The Scanlon-Monash index of Social Cohesion (Australia – 2007 to present).

The Australian Center for Social Research, under the leadership of Professor Andrew Markus of Monash University, and with funding from the Scanlon Foundation, has been conducting a periodic survey since 2007 (repeated in 2009, and annual henceforth) monitoring various aspects of social cohesion. The conceptual introduction of the project recognizes that notwithstanding a long tradition, there is "no agreed definition of social cohesion" but some common elements can be identified. Among the difficulties of the concept, the report observes that current definitions "dwell on intangibles" among which: "sense of belonging, attachment to the group, willingness to participate and to share outcomes." The conceptual introduction declares to have adopted an eclectic approach, but also makes explicit reference to the influence of the work of Canadian scholars Jane Jenson[5] and Paul Bernard.

The Scanlon-Monash project identifies five domains of social cohesions, operationalized as follows:

A nominal index of social cohesion has been developed using the findings of the 2007 national survey to provide baseline data. The following questions, validated by factor analysis, were employed to construct the index for the five domains of social cohesion:

Belonging: Indication of pride in the Australian way of life and culture; sense of belonging; importance of maintaining Australian way of life and culture.

Worth: Satisfaction with present financial situation and indication of happiness over the last year.

Social justice and equity: Views on the adequacy of financial support for people on low incomes; the gap between high and low incomes; Australia as a land of economic opportunity; trust in the Australian government.

Participation (political): Voted in an election; signed a petition; contacted a Member of Parliament; participated in a boycott; attended a protest.

Acceptance and rejection, legitimacy: The scale measures rejection, indicated by negative view of immigration from many different countries; reported experience of discrimination in the last 12 months; disagreement with government support to ethnic minorities for maintenance of customs and traditions; feeling that life in three or four years will be worse (Markus 2011, p.13).

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[5] Jenson's 1998 article "Mapping Social Cohesion" had identified five dimensions of the concept as polarities: belonging/isolation, inclusion/exclusion, participation/non-involvement, recognition/rejection, legitimacy/illegitimacy, see also Beauvais and Jenson 2002.

The five dimensions composing the index of social cohesion are tracked in time, reporting the time series across the five separate results, as well as an overall average score.

Examples – 4: The Scanlon-Monash index of Social Cohesion includes "belonging" as one of its five main dimensions. The dimension "belonging" is measured with indicators of "sense of belonging to Australia", "pride" and "importance of maintaining" the "Australian way of life and culture."

3.2. The New Zealand General Social Survey (since 2008)

The New Zealand General Social Survey has taken place every two years since 2008, and is designed to provide information "on the well-being of New Zealanders aged 15 years and over. It covers a wide range of social and economic outcomes and shows how people are faring. In particular the survey provides a view of how well-being outcomes are distributed across different groups within the New Zealand population" (Statistics New Zealand, 2008). It includes questions on sense of belonging to New Zealand and to "any other country" within a module on "culture and identity", which also includes a battery of questions on whether it is "easy or difficult to express your identity" in New Zealand and, if difficult, the reasons why (Statistics New Zealand, 2010b). The results of these surveys where subsequently analyzed also under the lens of social cohesion, with sense of belonging as one of its dimensions (Statistics New Zealand 2011).

Examples – 5: The publication "Social cohesion in New Zealand facts from the General Social Survey 2008" (Statistics New Zealand, 2011) analyzes sense of belonging as a dimension of social cohesion. Other dimensions of social cohesion included in the analysis are: perceived discrimination, ability to express one's identity and tolerance of diversity (p.3).

The conceptual analysis based on social cohesion, and including sense of belonging among its components had begun in New Zealand at an earlier stage, and it also involved a conversation with Canada and consideration of the work of Canadian policy researchers (see Spoonley and Pearce 2007, Spoonley et. al. 2005).

3.3. The Social Quality approach (Europe 1997 – present)

The European Foundation on Social Quality developed a broad conceptual framework which includes four domains (socio-economic security, social cohesion, social inclusion and social empowerment) each with its own sub-domains and relative indicators. The approach sought to create a framework that included dimensions of quality of life beyond the domain of economic outcomes. Within this approach, sense of belonging was proposed as a dimension of inclusion indicating identification with the community, along with other dimension indicating community participation and connectedness (Berman and Phillips 2000). In the most recent version, sense of belonging appears as an indicator within the domain of "social cohesion," and the sub-domain of "identity" (van der Maesen et.al., 2005).

Examples – 6: Sense of belonging in the Social Quality approach. Sense of belonging to family and kinship network appears as indicator of "interpersonal identity", along with other indicators of "National/European identity" and "regional/community/local identity", which use related but different concepts, respectively: identification with national and European symbols, sense of national pride, sense of regional/community/local identity (van der Maesen et.al., 2005).

3.4. General considerations on international approaches

The specific concept of belonging is often referred to in the discussions that accompany research associated with approaches seeking to identify and combine multiple dimensions of desirable societal outcomes. The box below provides some European examples.

Examples – 7: European approaches

- The OECD Better Life Initiative mentions, within the "civic engagement and governance domain" of their well-being index: "Civic engagement may also increase people's sense of personal efficacy and control over their lives (Barber, 1984). Finally, civic engagement allows individuals to develop a sense of belonging to their community, trust in others and a feeling of social inclusion." (OECD 2011, p.189)
- The Eurostat "Feasibility Study of Well-Being indicators" discusses a specific domain of "relatedness – belonging" including the sub-domains of "social-interactions" and "basic rights at social/societal level." (Eurostat, 2010)
- The Eurobarometer Special Survey conducted in 2003 (European Opinion Research Group, 2004) was on the theme of "Ctizenship and Sense of Belonging." The survey probed "attitudes towards a diverse range of subjects including family and friendship, sport, religion, politics and learning languages." (Ibid., p.4)

Often, however, these approaches do not use a specific survey measurement of sense of belonging. Rather they use it as a general concept to be gauged by other indicators of connectedness and attachment. These indicators have meanings closely related to sense of belonging, but which also entail non-trivial response differences. They include primarily indicators of trust, identification, identity, pride, and confidence in institutions.[6]

Lessons learned - 2: In general, while the concept of belonging is commonly used internationally, survey questions specifically making reference to "sense of belonging" are currently used and have resulted in valuable research in New Zealand, Australia, and Canada (see also sections below), but are less widespread in European and other international sources

The examples reported in this section provide an overview of the types of debates that involve sense of belonging as a dimension of broad concepts outside Canada. The section shows that indicators of belonging based on survey questions vary in both conceptualization and wording. As a result, cross country comparative analysis can be difficult, even if the themes of research and the overarching concepts used show several points of convergence.

Recommendations – 1: A first step to facilitate international comparability of studies of sense of belonging would be to carry out systematic analysis of the different indicators of belonging used, seeking to clarify how findings might be influenced by the different measures.

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[6] For example, based on the World Values Survey, responses on trust and identity of Canadian immigrants by length of stay have been analyzed by Gillkinson (2010). The analysis benefited from an oversample of immigrants, and in general, shows the convergence over time of immigrant responses on these two types of indicators.

4. Common findings on the determinants of sense of belonging in Canadian studies: key demographic, economic and human capital factors.

Several of the studies reviewed in the sections below on Canadian studies focus on understanding the determinants of sense of belonging at one or more geographical scales in Canada, some in comparison to the determinants of other measures of broad desirable societal outcomes, and some not. In addition, all these studies focused on the determinants of sense of belonging include in their analysis a standardized set of commonly used demographic, economic and human capital factors. For this reason, it is useful to discuss at the outset the findings on this standardized set of factors, especially since some tend to be consistent and others consistently inconclusive across studies. This section provides an overview of these common findings.

The first consistent finding across studies of the determinants of sense of belonging is the clear and strong net effect of age: with reference to all scales of sense of belonging, older age group tend to belong strongly in larger proportions. Some results based on GSS 2008 are shown below.

Evidence – 1 -- GSS 2008:
Sense of belonging to all three geographical scales increases with age (starting after the 18-19 age category) especially for the "very strong" category of response (See Figure 4-1 to 4-3).
There is a decline in very strong sense of belonging to the local community between the age categories 35 to 39 and 40 to 44, and the increase is repeated across the age categories that follow.

Figure 4-1:   Sense of belonging to Canada
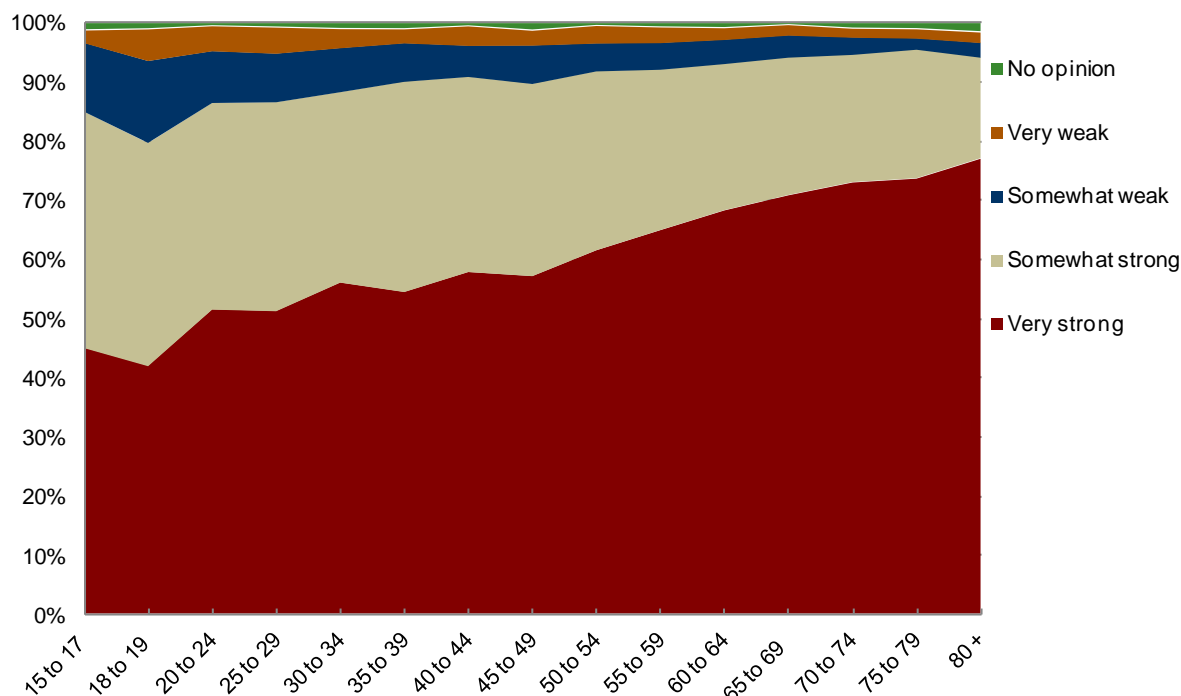
Figure 4-2:   Sense of belonging to province
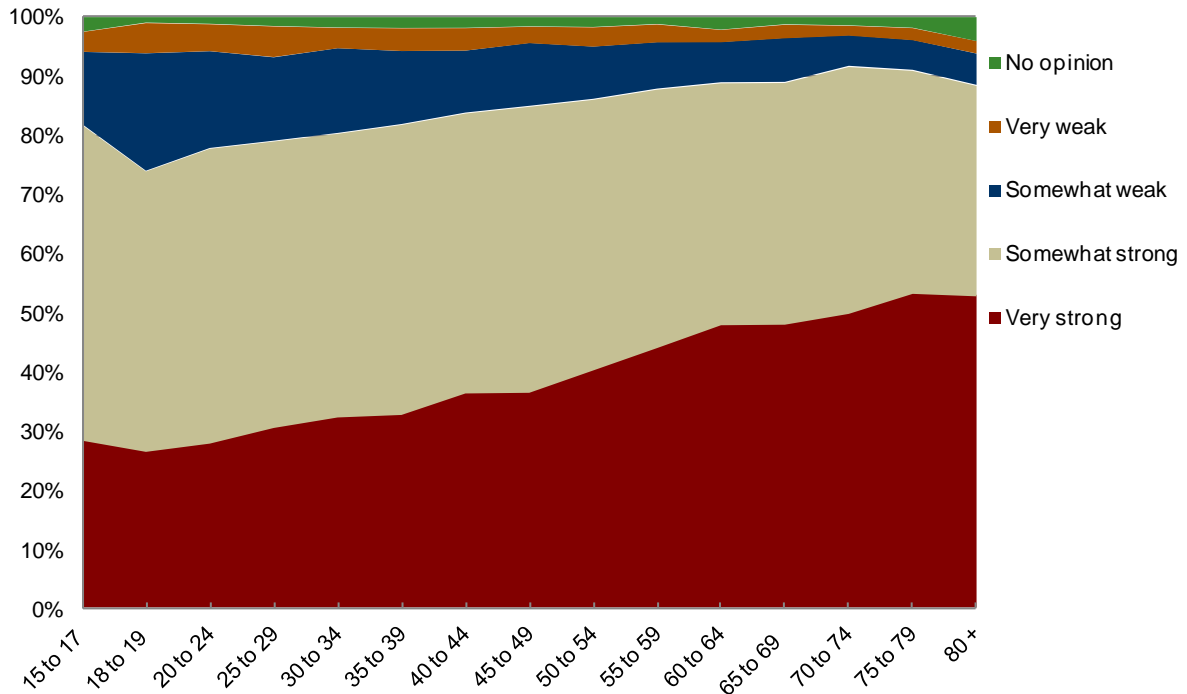
Figure 4-3:   Sense of belonging to the local community
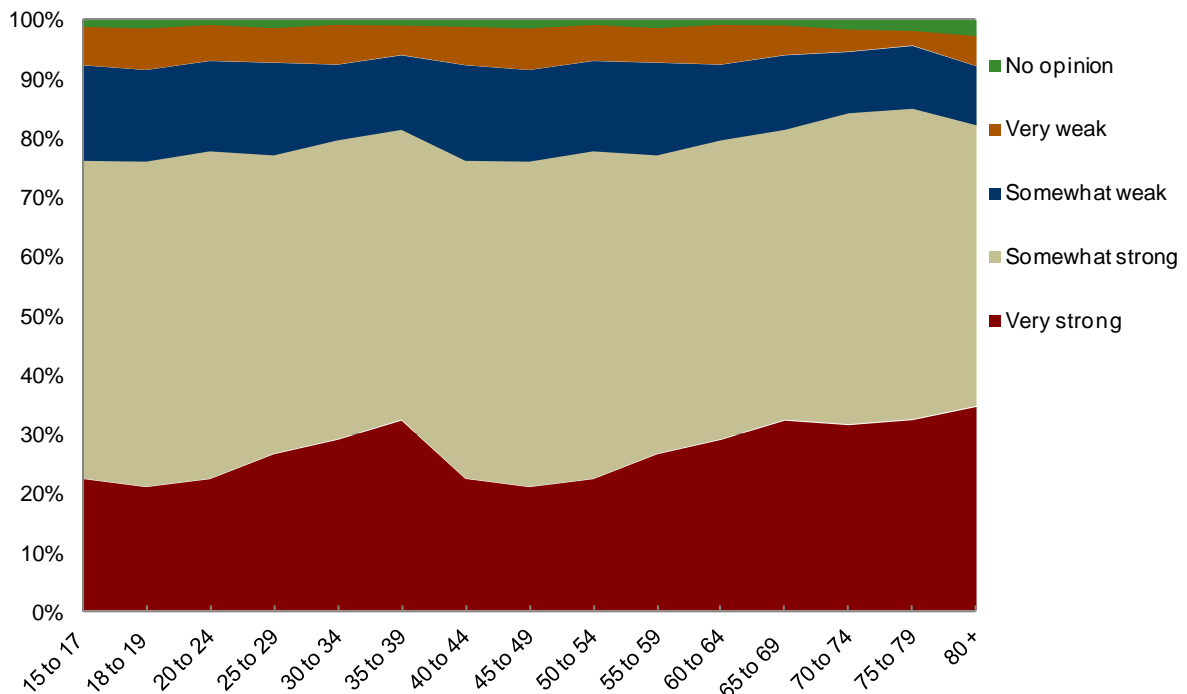
Sense of belonging to Canada, but not to the lower geographic scales, has also been found to follow a consistent regional variation: with considerable stability over time, in Quebec lower proportions of the overall population report strong belonging to Canada[7].

Evidence – 2-- GSS 2008:
Outside Quebec differences in sense of belonging to Canada are very small (93% to 96% of the response is in the somewhat and very strong categories). In Quebec sense of belonging to Canada is lower - 74% of the response is in the somewhat and very strong categories.
The proportion in the "very strong" category (red portion of the histograms) is overall larger for the response on sense of belonging to Canada than for the responses on belonging to the smaller scales.
Differences across provinces in sense of belonging to both province and the local community are small, and do not show a distinct pattern for Quebec.
(See Figures 4-4 to 4-6).

Figure 4-4:   Sense of belonging to Canada

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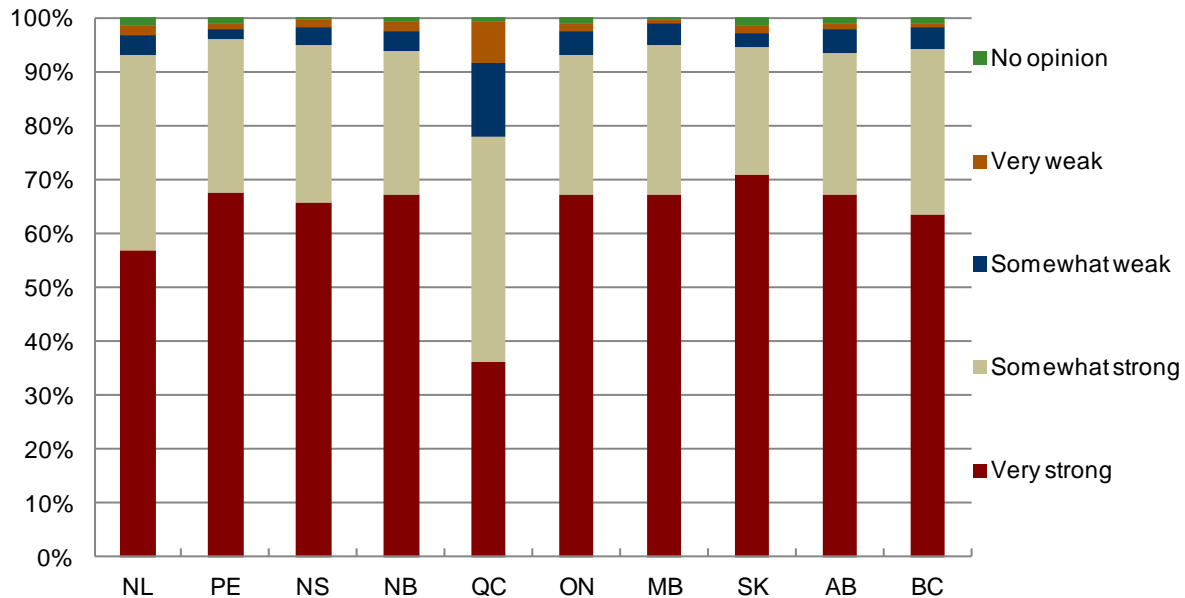
[7] A comprehensive overview of opinion polls and surveys that includes results on Quebec over time has been compiled by the department of Canadian Heritage (Maslov 2006).

Figure 4-5:   Sense of belonging to province
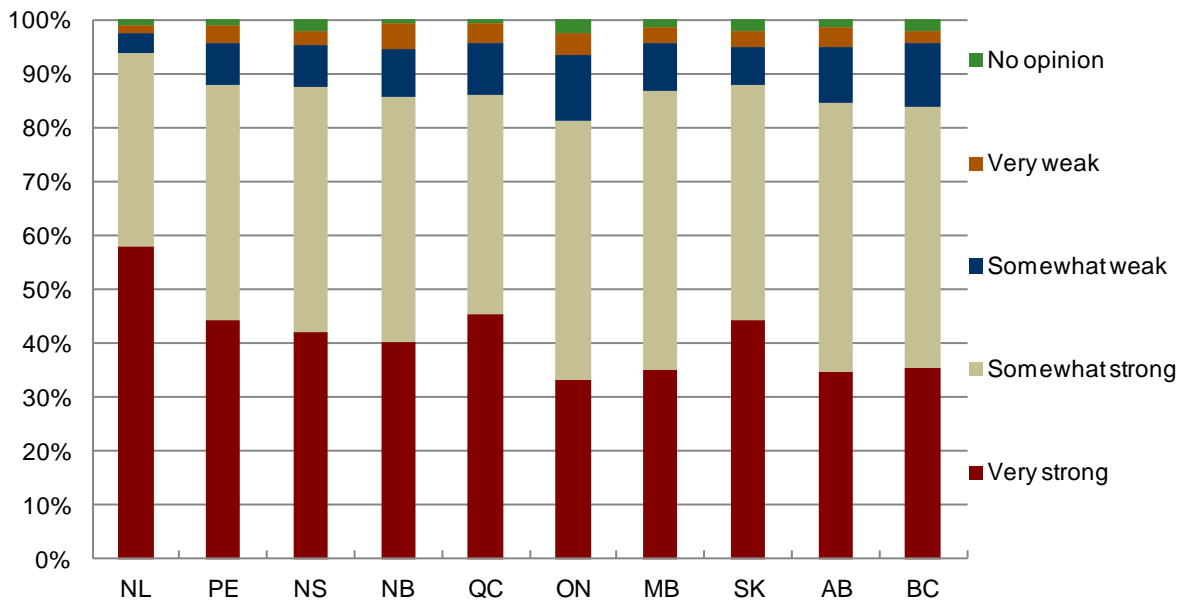
Figure 4-6:   Sense of belonging to the local community
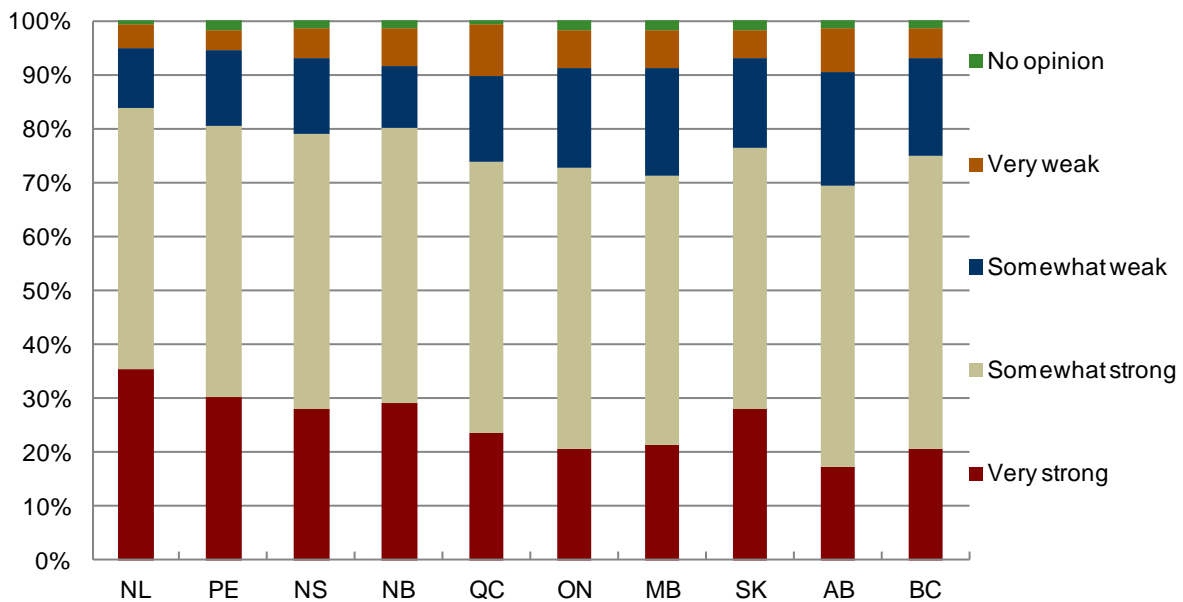
Gender based results show a slightly higher propensity to belong of females; though in some cases this result is not significant for sense of belonging to Canada. The difference found between females and males gets larger and clearer as the geographical scale to which belonging refers gets smaller.

Level of education is found to have small effect at the scale of the local community and province, with those having high education being slightly less inclined to belong (e.g. Carpiano and Hystad 2011). Education level does not yield consistent results at the scale of Canada, with studies based on the EDS (2002) finding a small negative effect for those with high education (e.g., Banting and Soroka 2012 and Wu, Hou and Schimmele 2011), and studies based on the

GSS (2003 and 2008) finding a small positive effect for the same education level (Schellenberg 2004, and the empirical study following this research, forthcoming). Based on the EDS (2002), belonging to ethnic group is found to have a positive association with lower levels of education (Wu, Hou and Schimmele 2011).

> **Key findings -1 - from the literature:**
> - Older age groups belong strongly in larger proportions
> - Females belong strongly in slightly larger proportions than males, especially at the scale of the local community
> - In Quebec, lower proportions belong strongly to Canada
> - Results on education and individual adjusted household income are weak and sometimes contradictory, possibly indicating no consistent relationship with sense of belonging.

The most common economic indicator included in analyses of sense of belonging is individual adjusted household income – a measure of an individual share of the pooled household income adjusted for number of household members. Results, in general, show a rather weak impact of this measurement on sense of belonging. In studies on sense of belonging to Canada it has been found to have a small positive impact, but only for the category of high income compared to the others (e.g., Banting and Soroka 2012 and Wu, Hou and Schimmele 2011). Household income is found to have no significant impact on sense of belonging to the community in some of the multivariate analyses from the literature on health reviewed below, and a small negative impact in others. The results based on the CCHS provided by the Canadian Index of Well Being (2010) report that lower income households have lower belonging to the local community. Lack of noticeable difference in sense of belonging to the community, province and Canada by household income categories can be found in tabular results reported by Schellenberg (2004) and based on the 2003 GSS as well as on the more recent 2008 GSS (tabulations available upon request). However, the empirical study based on the GSS that follows up this review finds a net small positive association between high income and sense of belonging to Canada and between low income and belonging to the local community and province. Based on the EDS (2002), belonging to ethnic group is found to have a positive association with lower levels of income (Wu, Hou and Schimmele 2011). These weak and contradictory findings may be in part due to the low quality of data on household income based on self-reported placement in brackets. This type of data tends to be imprecise and to suffer from a high number of respondents not answering at all.

> **Recommendations – 2:** Better economic data, possibly obtained through linkage to tax records, could help clarify further the relationship between household income and sense of belonging at different geographic scales. So far, results on this relationships have been weak and in some cases inconsistent, but it is unclear whether this is due to the low quality of the data on household income or on the actual absence of a clear relationship.

4.1. Qualifying the impact of household income on belonging

A recent qualitative analysis provides some interesting evidence showing how, underneath results based on survey questions, there may be differences in how individuals with different socio-economic status understand their belonging to the community. Stewart et. al. (2009) carried out a study comparing the experiences of social isolation and the resulting sense of community belonging of low-income and high-income individuals. The study is primarily

qualitative.[8] It shows that isolation and low sense of belonging are more pronounced for the disadvantaged segments, while belonging and social engagement are the prevailing outcome among those of high income. It also shows that while the high income respondents describe themselves as belonging to multiple communities, through institutional and organizational linkages, low income respondents define themselves as belonging to more limited networks of friends and neighbours. In addition, the study reports that income limitations result in lacking the financial ability to participate as well as feelings of social stigma associated with poverty. Both these factors are shown to have an impact on sense of belonging. By contrast, high income respondents were able to use their means not only to participate, but to invest in the community by giving back through donations and skilled interventions.

> **Examples -8: Stewart et. al. (2009)** show, through a qualitative study of community belonging, that people with high income have an understanding of the community they belong to as being much broader, institutionalized, and resource intensive than that of low income individuals.

While not focusing on immigrants or ethno-racial minorities, this research is indicative of the level of depth that can be achieved complementing survey results through qualitative research.

> **Lessons learned - 3:** Qualitative research can be very useful to explore how population categories with different backgrounds or capabilities may have a different understanding of a survey question. This different understanding may be masked under similar survey responses.
>
> **Recommendations – 3:** A survey question that it would be useful to study qualitatively refers to "sense of belonging to the local community", to investigate variations and systematic patterns in the understanding of what local community means.

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[8] The study is based on in-depth interviews, focus groups and a survey of 1,671 individuals drawn from low- and high-income categories. The published article reports primarily the qualitative results, only mentioning briefly the quantitative results. Perhaps, one is left to presume, because the survey results may be inconclusive.

5. Canadian studies where empirical indicators of sense of belonging and other social outcomes measure dimensions of broad societal outcomes

The approaches reviewed in this section all include sense of belonging as one among many dimensions composing a broader societal outcome that is the main focus of research. In the examples reviewed, several dimensions, including sense of belonging, are measured empirically through indicators. In these Canadian approaches, the dimension of sense of belonging is measured with survey questions also worded in terms of sense of belonging, in most cases based on Statistics Canada surveys. The approaches and studies vary in how they select, combine or compare survey questions on sense of belonging focused on various geographic scales, and, for studies based on the Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS, 2002), also belonging to one's ethnic group.

5.1. Sense of belonging as an indicator of well-being

The concept of well-being has taken hold internationally to counterbalance the emphasis on economic outcomes as key indicators of individual and societal success, such as individual income or GDP. Several variants exist, with the common thread of including dimensions that matter to people's lives that are seen as not reducible to a single economic indicator. With respect to well-being at the aggregate level, two Canadian efforts that include sense of belonging are presented here, both aimed at tracking complex composite measures of well-being and their various components and indicators. With respect to well-being at the individual level, a study is discussed that seeks to understand the determinants of individual level indicators of well-being separately.

5.1.1. Indicators of well-being in Canada: the approach of HRSDC

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) has formulated a series of indicators of well-being covering the following domains: work, housing, family life, social participation, leisure, health, security, environment, financial security and learning. Within this framework, indicators of sense of belonging to the local community, province and Canada are included in the domain of social participation.

> **Examples – 9: Sense of belonging in the HRSDC well-being framework.** The indicators of sense of belonging at the three geographical scales (local community, province and Canada), along with indicators of trust in others and of social networks, are conceptualized as "key influences", representing societal and individual resources facilitating the condition of participation. Indicators of "status" measure the amount of participation: participation in political activities, participation in social activities, giving and volunteering. (HRSDC, n.d).

The HRSDC well-being website reports results on sense of belonging based on the 2003 GSS on the percentage reporting somewhat or very strong belonging to the three geographical scales, as well as some results by age, sex and region confirming known trends discussed in section 4 or this report, where results based on the more recent 2008 GSS can also be found[9].

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[9] For details see this sub-page of HRDC's well-being site: www4.hrsdc.gc.ca/.3ndic.1t.4r@-eng.jsp?iid=71 see also section 4 of this report for updates of these findings based on the 2008 GSS.

5.1.2. The Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW)

Key findings -2- from the Community Vitality domain of the CIW (2010, p.83):

- According to the CCHS, in 2009, the highest level of sense of belonging to the local community was among youth aged 12 to 19 years (75.1%). It drops quite sharply, however, among young adults – falling to 58.1% among those aged 20 to 34. Level of attachment to community grows after age 35.

The Canadian Index of Wellbeing was developed over the years with the leading support of the Atkinson Charitable Foundation (ACF) and is currently housed at the University of Waterloo, Faculty of Applied Health Sciences. It consists of a composite measure covering eight domains: community vitality, democratic engagement, education, environment, healthy populations, leisure and culture, living standards, and time use. Each domain, in turn, is measured by combining eight additional indicators. The domain of community vitality includes sense of belonging to the local community as one of its indicators.

Examples – 10: Sense of belonging in the Canadian Index of Wellbeing. The percentage reporting very or somewhat strong belonging to the local community is one among eight indicators in the domain of Community Vitality (the other seven indicators of community vitality are rates of participation in organized activities, having 6 or more close friends, property crime, violent crime, feeling safe walking alone in the dark, providing unpaid help to others on their own).

They use the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) to track belonging to the local community, which is found to increase over time (Canadian Index of Wellbeing, 2010 and 2012).

5.1.3. Community belonging and immigrant well-being

Key findings -3- from Burton and Phipps (2010):

- Immigrant adults have lower propensity to belong to the local community than the Canadian born, but they become increasingly similar to the Canadian born with time spent in Canada.
- Immigrant youth (12 to 17 years of age), especially girls, have a lower propensity to belong to the local community than their Canadian peers.

A recent working paper by the title "The well-being of immigrant children and parents in Canada" by economists Peter Burton and Shelley Phipps (2010) of Dalhousie University use survey questions on "life satisfaction" and "sense of belonging to the local community" as indicators of well-being among immigrant adults and children aged 12 to 17, based on the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS). This is an empirical study using the general concept of well-being, but really focusing on empirical results based on two specific sub-dimensions and two sub-populations, achieving detailed results with reference to these. They analyze the two outcomes separately, and find that the negative association between immigrant status and both life satisfaction and sense of belonging to the local community is larger for adults than children, but, for adults it decreases with time spent in Canada. In addition, for youth, immigrant girls show a larger gap in sense of belonging to Canada compared to their Canadian peers than immigrant boys

5.1.4. Considerations on sense of belonging in the context of approaches to well-being

The above three approaches fit very well the picture of well-being as a concept clear enough to encompass current concerns regarding quality of life, but sufficiently malleable to allow for several distinct ways of conceptualizing the detailed definitions and indicators used. This is the case even within the Canadian context, where all approaches have access to the same data resources, often using Statistics Canada surveys, which offer a consistent set of questions worded directly in terms of sense belonging. While the HRSDC approach uses three geographical scales conceptualizing them as facilitators of social participation, the CIW chooses to use only belonging to the local community as a component of community vitality. The causal analysis in the study of belonging and life satisfaction is limited to belonging to the local community. This analysis also takes advantage of the large sample size of the CCHS, allowing the researchers to focus on immigrant outcomes, and achieve interesting results by duration of stay and age category, including controls for ethno-cultural traits. In both this and the CIW approach, it is possible that the choice of considering only the geographic scale of the local community was dictated by the preference for the data source with a large sample size, but only one question on sense of belonging (to the local community).

Given the various policy interests of CIC, noted in the introductory section, both the country and local scales of belonging are relevant, as well as their development over time for immigrants. In addition, indicators of diversity are also of interest, both with respect to forms of belonging (for example to one's country of origin or ethnic group) and to the ethno-cultural and racial identity of the respondent. Diversity indicators, as shown in the sections that follow, are more common in approaches based on the broad concept of social cohesion

> **Lessons learned – 4:** The Canadian Community Health Survey offers a very large sample size but only one question on sense of belonging to the local community, and the General Social Survey offers three geographic scales of belonging but a smaller sample size. These currently available periodic surveys have defined recent research possibilities.

5.2. Sense of belonging as an indicator of social cohesion

The concept of social cohesion took hold internationally in the 1990s to indicate a broad desirable societal outcome that includes elements related to social interactions and shared values, in addition to economic outcomes. The lens of social cohesion has been applied to the study of sense of belonging to Canada from two main viewpoints:

a) Comparing historically rooted patterns of belonging in Canada, including primarily those of the French Québécois, and Canadians of Anglo/Northern European origins, and, when data permit, those reporting Aboriginal identity, along with those of population categories identifying ethno-cultural minority segments traceable to relatively recent immigration. (Key published research: Soroka, Johnston and Banting 2007)
b) Comparing the Canadian "white" population of primarily European origin with visible minority population segments, and sense of belonging to Canada with sense of belonging to ethnic group. (Key published research: edited volume by Reitz et. al., 2009)

Both these approaches focus on analyzing the determinants of several dimensions of social cohesion and their indicators, rather than tracking composite measures of social cohesion over time (the tracking approach is used for social cohesion by the Scanlon Foundation in Australia, outlined in section 3.1.).

5.2.1. Social cohesion and historical identities

Soroka, Johnston and Banting (2007) discuss three different views of social cohesion:

a) a Durkheimian approach, with emphasis on common values and identity,
b) a Social Inclusion/Exclusion approach, with emphasis on pluralism of values and equality of participation in several spheres of society,
c) and a Social Capital approach, with emphasis on a virtuous balance between social connections within and across cultural divides -- bridging and bonding ties.

Drawing across these views, they formulate a multi-indicator approach based on wave 2 of the Equality Community and Security Survey (ECSS, 2002), and the 2004 Canadian Election Survey (CES). Their approach consists of comparing results on the measures of social cohesion across ethno-cultural categories, net of the effect of a set of socio-economic, demographic and immigration factors. The results are compared to a "majority" reference category consisting of Canadians of English or northern European ethnic background. Sense of belonging to Canada is included in the comparison along with indicators of trust, social values, and civic participation.

> **Examples – 11: In this study by Soroka, Johnson and Banting (2007)**, the indicators of social cohesion included are: pride in Canada, sense of belonging to Canada, generalized trust, strategic trust , support for gay marriage, support for women staying at home, membership in social organizations that cross ethno-cultural divides (for which they use the term "bridging groups" from the literature on social capital), and election turnout.

The findings of their study highlight some key patterns, the strongest of which is the specificity of Quebec Francophone responses on indicators that imply attachment to a pan-Canadian collective identity.

a) Responses to the questions on voting, membership in "bridging groups,"[10] and support for the opinions on social values show that neither the various ethno-cultural categories nor Quebec Francophones differ significantly from the reference category, with the exception of Quebec Francophones being slightly more likely to be in favour of gay marriage.
b) More specifically to sense of belonging to Canada, they show that the most significant differences among population categories after introducing socio-economic, demographic and immigration controls are those between Francophone Quebec and the reference category. By contrast, sense of belonging to Canada of the ethno-cultural categories of immigrant origin tends to come close to the results of the "majority" reference category as time and generations since immigration pass. Even though some some small differences across immigrant categories remain, they tend to be smaller than the differences between Francophone Quebec and the reference category. In their analysis, they also include an indicator of Aboriginal identification, and find that the results on sense of belonging to Canada for this segment are not significantly different from those of the reference category, once controls are introduced.
c) In addition, their findings on trust vary slightly from those on sense of belonging: for some ethno-cultural categories (Southern European, East Asians, and African/Caribbean

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[10] From the social capital literature (Putnam, 2004), bridging groups refers to groups which span ethnic divide as opposed to bonding groups which bring together people of the same ethnicity.

categories, data limitations did not allow finer distinctions) they converged less markedly to those of the reference category with the passing of time and generations.

d) They also find a greater contrast between Francophone Quebec and others in the pride indicator than in other indicators. In the case of pride, Francophone Quebec gave responses likely to be much lower than those of the reference group while none of the ethnic categories maintained views significantly different from the reference category (a lower pride is found only among immigrants in the East Asian and Caribbean/African categories, but not in the second generation).

e) With respect to self-reported voter turnout, Aboriginals show somewhat lower propensity to vote, as well as immigrant (but not Canadian born) East Asians and immigrant (but not Canadian born) Caribbeans/Africans.

Key findings -5- from Soroka, Johnston and Banting (2007):

- Quebec Francophones have the lowest sense of belonging to Canada compared to the reference category of Canadians of English or northern European ethnic background.
- The sense of belonging to Canada of ethno-cultural categories of immigrant origin tends to converge to that of the reference category with time spent in Canada.

They conclude by analyzing the results through the three social cohesion lenses set out at the beginning of their chapter (and summarized at the beginning of this section), and noting that the second view, which emphasizes participation, leads to a more optimistic outlook than the first view, which highlights commonality of values and identities. The major differences, however, remain those rooted in historical identities, not those brought on by immigration. With respect to the social capital lens, the analysis shows no difference across ethno-cultural categories.

Lessons Learned – 5: When including an indicator of sense of belonging to Canada in an analysis, it is important to explicitly account for the consistently found lower proportions belonging strongly to Canada distinctive of Quebec, in order to achieve a correct interpretation of overall findings.

Regardless of the preferences one may have for the approaches to social cohesion or social capital discussed by the authors, this study and its empirical results, in general, have the merit of highlighting the contours of the Canadian landscape of historical and regional populations with respect to sense of belonging to Canada and other indicators. This, after all, and not some generalized Canadian average, is the terrain with which immigrants and population segments of all backgrounds have to interact.

5.2.2. Social cohesion and ethno-racial diversity

Jeffrey Reitz and a team of collaborators (2009) published an edited volume titled *Multiculturalism and Social Cohesion*, based entirely on analysis of the Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS). The book is focused primarily on the relationship between forms of attachment directed to ethnicity (e.g. belonging to "ethnic or cultural group" and importance of "ethnic identity") and other measures of social cohesion which, among others, include sense of belonging to Canada or its smaller geographic (and administrative) scales – province, and town or city.

In much of the book, with the exception of the first and fifth chapters, the researchers chose to combine into an additive index sense of belonging to Canada, province, and "town, city, or local community" (the lowest geographic level available in the EDS). This composite index is then used for comparisons. With this choice, the three geographic levels are treated as equivalent, or,

more precisely, equivalent for the purposes of the comparisons with other indicators carried out in the various chapters. In this respect, the focus of this team of researchers is very different than the focus of the researchers discussed in the previous section, and below, in the section on Canadian studies of sense of belonging as a special focus. As discussed below, the approach chosen by Reitz et. al. works in some cases, but can be unclear in others[11].

Chapters using "belonging to Canada" as an indicator of social cohesion

As noted above, rather than using a measure of belonging that combines geographic scales, the analysis in Chapter 1 is focused on belonging to Canada only, and other measures of cohesion including: trust, life satisfaction, Canadian identity, Canadian citizenship, voting in federal elections and volunteering. The measures of ethnic attachment in relation to which the measures of cohesion are analyzed include: importance of ethnic ancestry, importance of customs and traditions, and belonging to ethnic group. Results, in general, show that ethnic attachments are positively related to sense of belonging to Canada. Other measures of cohesion found to be positively related to ethnic attachments are life satisfaction, volunteering and voting. By contrast ethnic attachments are found to be negatively related to Canadian identity and citizenship, as well as generalized trust. The direction of these associations is found to be broadly consistent across visible minority status and immigration status.

The theme of cohesion at the scale of Canada is reprised in Chapter 5, which focuses on perceptions of inequality and discrimination for population categories characterized by visible minority status, as well as their proximity to immigration in terms of generations or length of stay in Canada. The chapter uses the same measures of cohesion used in Chapter 1.

> **Examples - 12: Chapters 1 and 5 of the volume by Reitz et. al. (2009)** analyze sense of belonging to Canada as an indicator of social cohesion along with trust, life satisfaction, Canadian identity, Canadian citizenship, federal voting and volunteering. They compare how each of these dimensions is associated with indicators of ethnic attachment (ch.1); and discrimination and fear of hate crimes (ch.5).

The multivariate analysis shows that, net of the effect of age and time in Canada, visible minority status is positively related to sense of belonging to Canada for recent immigrants and, to a slightly smaller extent, earlier immigrants[12]. However, visible minority children of immigrants (i.e. the second generation) are found to have slightly lower sense of belonging to Canada than those who are not visible minorities.

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[11] The review below proceeds by focusing first on Chapters 1 and 5, and, in a separate section, on Chapters 3 and 4. Chapter 2 focuses on ethnic self-identity, and it shows that, with several nuances varying across population categories (by visible minority and immigration indicators), it is enhanced by inter-group threats such as discrimination. Since chapter 2 is not explicitly focusing on sense of belonging, either as a concept or indicator, it is not reviewed in further detail.

[12] The book defines recent immigrants as those arriving 1991-2001, and earlier immigrants as those arriving before 1991, based on the EDS (2002).

Further indicators are then added to the analysis, including: income (measured as individual equivalent household income), perception of discrimination, and perception of vulnerability (measured as fear of hate crimes). The results on household income are, in general, inconclusive. Perceived discrimination, as it is plausible to expect, is negatively related to sense of belonging to Canada, with the size of negative coefficient growing from those of recent immigrant, to earlier immigrants and to those with at least one immigrant parent (i.e. the second generation). With respect to perceived vulnerability (fear of hate crimes), results include a negative impact for the second generation and earlier immigrant, but are inconclusive for recent immigrants.

The findings of this chapter provide an interesting contrast in reference to perceived discrimination and vulnerability. On the one hand, they are shown to have a negative impact on several aspects of attachment to Canada, especially those related to feelings of belonging, trust, and satisfaction. On the other hand, results are inconclusive with respect to the association of discrimination and vulnerability with indicators of behaviours, such as voting and volunteering. From a policy point of view, this suggests that further inquiry might achieve useful results if it were able to show more precisely how participation and civic engagement might be an effective pathway to inclusion for victims of discrimination. Participation might create opportunities to counter discrimination and dispel the feelings of isolations that may have resulted from previous experiences.

Chapters including indexes of sense of belonging with three geographic scales combined

Chapter 3 investigates whether "measures of well-being", among which a measure that combines scales of sense of belonging is included, are affected by discrimination[13]. It also analyzes how ethnic belonging ("belonging to ethnic or cultural group"), may mediate the effect of experiences of discrimination on well-being. The chapter includes analyses on separate population categories, defined by their responses to the ethnic origin question (since ethnic origin responses can be multiple, a respondent can be in more than one category, hence, the segments so obtained are analyzed separately). The categories are "Anglos", "French", "White Minorities", "Visible Minorities"[14]. Measures of well-being include: a combined measure including various questions on sense of belonging (which is termed "sense of social inclusion" in this chapter), a combined measure of questions on trust, and self-reported life satisfaction. The findings show that

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[13] This chapter, uses the term "well-being" within a collective project on social cohesion. The choice was made to review it in the social cohesion section together with the other components of the same broader project and publication. The change of terms within the same project is another example of the malleability of both these broad concepts.

[14] Those who reported English, Scottish, Irish, Welsh, or other British Isles ethnic ancestries and resided outside Quebec were considered 'Anglos'. Those with same ethnic origins if residing in Quebec were categorized as 'White Minorities'. Those claiming French ancestry and residing in Quebec were defined 'French'. Those with the same ethnic origin but residing outside Quebec were also classified as 'White Minorities'. 'White Minorities' also included, in Quebec, other European background (in addition to those termed 'Anglo' if outside Quebec) except French.

discrimination decreases well-being in all its indicators, and there are some variations across respondents in terms of their ethnic origin categories. It also finds that ethnic attachment can, to a limited effect, buffer the negative effect of experiences of discrimination on all measures of well-being, but not for the "French" category. For the "French" ethnic origin categories employed in this analysis, the internal composition of the combined sense of belonging measures is considerably different than that of the other ethnic origin categories, with higher sense of belonging to province and lower to Canada. Since the analysis is conducted on separate population segments, though, this does not present a problem. In addition, the findings on this combined measure for the "French" category are consistent with those of the other measures of well-being – trust and life satisfaction, which are also calculated separately.

Key findings -7- from Reitz et. al. (2009), ch.3:

Belonging to ethnic group can diminish the negative effect of perceived discrimination on overall sense of belonging (combined geographic scales) for all ethnic origin categories except those of French ancestry in Quebec.

Chapter 4 identifies different "patterns of attachment" in Quebec and the rest of Canada by studying how a number of variables associate, including: high scores in combined measure of belonging, high importance of "Canadian Identity", strong sense of belonging to ethnic group, high importance of ethnic identity, high importance of ethnic ancestry and high importance of customs and tradition.

Lessons learned – 6: Discrimination is an important factor to take into account when studying sense of belonging, and especially when focusing on ethno-racial minorities.

In this chapter, the approach to add up all the sense of belonging responses asked in reference to the three different geographic scales is used, while a measure of "ethnic belonging" is kept separate. In parallel, the chapter uses a similar approach also for other measures, but somewhat inconsistently. With respect to measures of identity, a composite measure of "Canadian identity" is created combining all identities referring to Canada and its sub-units (p.98), such as, for example, "Canadian," "French Canadian," "Québécois," "Acadian," "Newfoundlander," etc. At the same time, other identities are separated in a measure of "ethnic" identity. By contrast, the measure of "importance of ethnic ancestry" is defined including all ethnic ancestries related to French and British origins (e.g. French, French-Canadian, Quebecois, British Isles, etc.) together with other ones related to different parts of the world and immigration background. In other words, while belonging and identity result in separate "Canadian" and "ethnic" indicator, importance of ethnic ancestry does not separate between these two.

Examples - 13: Chapters 3 and 4 of the volume by Reitz et. al. (2009) use indexes of sense of belonging that combine the geographic scales of Canada, province and "town, city or municipality." They also use several other composite measures.

The analysis goes on to compare four patterns. A "marginalized" pattern in which all types of identification have low importance; an "ethnic pattern" associated with high ethnic belonging, importance of "ethnic" identity and importance of ethnic ancestry; a "mainstream" pattern, it is associated with high importance of the Canadian identity and low importance of ethnic ancestry; and a "pluralist" pattern, with high importance of Canadian identity and ethnic ancestry (but, in

contrast with the "ethnic" pattern, not with high importance of ethnic identity). In addition, other measures are also combined in the four patterns, including: indicators of inter-group relations (experience discrimination, worry about hate crime, mostly in-group friends) and social integration (trust in people and neighbours, association membership, volunteering, voting, life satisfaction).

In general, the high level of complexity of the measures combined, without a clearly articulated strategy of how to take into account how the single components vary across the population segments compared makes the results of this chapter difficult to interpret[15].

> **Recommendations – 4:** When using several indicators to build a composite measure of a complex concept, it is important to give a clear account of all the components, how they are combined, and how their composition varies across the population segments analyzed. In Canada, it is especially important to explicitly account for consistently found specific patterns of responses on belonging to Canada and ethnic ancestry in Francophone Quebec.

5.3. Considerations on sense of belonging as a component of broader concepts in Canadian studies.

The approaches discussed above show considerable variation in how general concepts are developed into research applications and how these applications include sense of belonging. Some clear lessons and recommendations have emerged from the review so far, primarily:

a) All geographical scales (Canada, province, a local scale – currently "local community"), as well as indicators of belonging to country of origin and ethnic group are of interest to CIC. Developing a data source that includes them all and has an adequate sample size for analyzing immigrants by duration of stay as well as ethno-cultural segments for both immigrants and the Canadian born is desirable.

b) As also noted in section 4, for an improved understanding of sense of belonging to the three main geographic scales, a more thorough study of what respondents understand as being the "local community" is desirable.

c) Consistent regional variations in sense of belonging need to be explicitly accounted for, both when analyzing geographic scales separately and when combining them.

d) Perceived discrimination is an important variable to include in the study of sense of belonging.

e) Measures of socio-economic status, as also noted in the previous section (4) on common findings, need improvement and more in depth study to confirm or qualify their lack of impact, or small impact with inconsistent directions on sense of belonging.

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[15] For example, the analysis finds that the "mainstream" pattern and, to a lesser extent, the "ethnic" pattern are prevalent in the rest of Canada, while the "pluralist" pattern is prevalent in Quebec, where high importance ethnic ancestry is more likely to be expressed along with importance of Canadian identities. However, because of how the measurements are built, it is possible that this is simply the result of regional manifestations of identity which prevail in the "Canadian identity" measure in Quebec, combined, possibly, with French-related ancestries. If so, the significance of labeling this result as "pluralist" would be unclear. However, the chapter does not provide evidence to assess and better understand the composition of the results.

6.   Sense of belonging as a primary focus in Canadian studies.

In the studies reviewed below, sense of belonging is seen as important to study by itself, as it is affected by other factors or social processes. These factors include, primarily: diversity, changing social connections, or other socio-demographic traits or economic factors. In this case, reference may be made to sense of belonging being a dimension of a broader outcome, but the focus or the empirical analysis is sense of belonging as an important outcome by itself.

6.1.   Sense of belonging, diversity and social capital

Wu, Hou and Schimmele (2011), in their article "Racial Diversity and Sense of Belonging in Urban Neighbourhoods," place their inquiry on sense of belonging to Canada within the literature on social capital, and especially the extensive debate on social capital decline associated with increasing neighbourhood diversity, which started with the well known lecture by Robert Putnam, published as the article "E Pluribus Unum" (2007).

The concept of social capital, even though existing in several variants, generally includes a behavioural component referring to social connections – i.e. "networks of civil engagement" – and a normative/affect component, referring to reciprocity and trust – i.e. "norms of reciprocity."[16] In practice, while the behavioral component has been frequently measured with indicators of the intensity and frequency of social connections, as well as indicators of participation in civil society organizations, the normative component has been most frequently measured with indicators of trust. Indicators of sense of belonging have been used less frequently, with the exception of indicators of community belonging in the Canadian literature on health (discussed in a separate section.)

In this respect, the work of these researchers presents an interesting alternative, paving the way for the use of an indicator of norms and feelings of reciprocity that is potentially relevant for CIC policy. It is likely that an indicator of sense of belonging expresses feelings more responsive to experience and less determined by childhood formation than indicators of trust.[17] Although more research is needed to establish this for certain, other available results point in this direction. An example is provided in the study reviewed above by Soroka and Banting (2007), which shows greater convergence with length of stay in Canada in indicators of belonging than those of trust. This type of indicator, more susceptible to experience, may be of greater interest to policies focused on adult immigrants, or even adults in general. More in general, they may give useful results that are distinct from results based on trust in contexts of high population mobility and increased diversity. Currently, however, indicators of sense of belonging have the disadvantage to be less available in international surveys than indicators of trust, thus, so far, not allowing as many cross-national comparisons.

> **Lessons learned - 7:** Some findings drawn from existing research point to sense of belonging as susceptible to change based on current experience, and generalized trust as rooted in childhood experience. If systematic comparisons confirmed these findings, this distinction would be of high relevance to policy and programs.

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[16] See Putnam 1993, chapter 6.

[17] Studies specifically focused on trust formation have shown that feeling of trust are to a significant extent hardwired in childhood experience, see Uslaner 2002 and 2012.

The authors start from the premise that sense of belonging to Canada is a facilitating factor to "bridging that promotes cooperation across groups" (p.574), since partaking of the same "we" can only facilitate social contacts, by encouraging reciprocity and the expectation of reciprocity.

> **Recommendations – 5:** Within the conceptual framework of social capital, more research is desirable to compare indicators of "norms of reciprocity" (Putnam 1993) based on questions on trust with those based on questions on sense of belonging.

They identify three main positions in the debate over the effects of growing diversity, and discuss how these lead to three different expectations regarding sense of belonging:

1) The first position – conflict theory – argues that increasing diversity results in out-group conflict and increased in-group solidarity, which would be translated in higher sense of belonging to one's narrow group, and lower to communities more broadly defined, such as Canada.

2) The second position – contact theory – argues that, especially if certain conditions are satisfied, exposure to diversity results in the emergence of a superordinate sense of belonging that encompasses that of smaller groups, therefore a higher sense of belonging to Canada, but no particular expectation regarding the effect on sense of belonging to more narrow (ethnic) groups.

3) The third position – "constrict theory", as suggested by Putnam's findings – argues that both in-group and out-group relations weaken, as individuals tend to be less trusting in general, leading to expect lower sense of belonging in general.

Their findings support the contact hypothesis, showing that living in a diverse neighbourhood results in higher sense of belonging to Canada and lower sense of belonging to ethnic group. It also must be noted that their methodology corrects for the possibility of endogeneity – the fact that one can choose neighbourhood within a region based on their preferences for its ethno-racial composition -- by using an instrumental variable approach to measure diversity at an appropriately sized regional level.

In addition, they find that these effects – higher sense of belonging to Canada and lower sense of belonging to ethnic group in diverse neighbourhood – are accounted for mainly by the results of the white population. In fact, the minority population tends to have a higher sense of ethnic belonging than the white population in general, but neither their sense of belonging to ethnic group nor to Canada results affected by neighbourhood diversity, at least as it is measured by the Herfindahl index of racial diversity.

When considering this result, it must be noted that in practice, in the current Canadian context, a low value of the Herfindahl index is likely to result in different implications for whites and visible minorities. In fact, the majority of areas with low diversity are predominantly white, and, although increasing, especially in metropolitan areas, only relatively few are dominated by a single visible minority group. At the time when the data used in this study were collected (2001 Census 2001 and 2002 EDS) the predominance of white areas among areas with low diversity was even more marked.[18] As a result, the findings of the paper show that, controlling for neighbourhood selection by respondents:

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[18] Hiebert's study reports that, based on the 2001 Census, the percentage of visible minorities living in neighbourhood where they were over 70% of the population and where one visible minority group was at least

a) whites in a diverse neighbourhood show higher sense of belonging to Canada and lower sense of belonging to ethnic group than whites in a low diversity neighbourhood (most of which are prevailingly white), while

b) minorities show the same level of sense of belonging to Canada and sense of belonging to ethnic group regardless of whether they are in a diverse neighbourhood or not (where neighbourhoods that are not diverse are in most cases prevailingly white). In addition, the sense of belonging to ethnic group of minorities is generally higher than that of whites.

> **Key findings -8- from Wu, Hou and Schimmele 2011:**
> - Whites that reside in a diverse neighbourhood have higher sense of belonging to Canada and lower sense of belonging to ethnic group
> - Visible minorities have higher sense of belonging to ethnic group than whites
> - The sense of belonging of visible minorities is not affected by neighbourhood diversity
> - With increasing length of stay in Canada, immigrants' sense of belonging to Canada grows and sense of belonging to ethnic group decreases

Their analysis also controls for regional differences and length of stay in Canada. Regarding regional differences, they use the EDS variable that identifies separate categories for Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, other large CMAs, and smaller CMAs. The results show that, in general, controlling for several socio-demographic factors in addition to the neighbourhood diversity index, large CMAs show lower sense of belonging to Canada and higher sense of belonging to ethnic group than smaller CMAs. In addition, in Montreal this pattern is considerably stronger than in the other CMAs. Regarding length of stay in Canada, they find that those in Canada ten years or longer tend to have higher sense of belonging to Canada, while sense of belonging to ethnic group is stronger for recent immigrants and decreases with time in Canada. This study provides important results on sense of belonging to Canada, and it would be useful to follow up with complementary approaches to understanding the association between diversity of social connections and sense of belonging.

> **Recommendations – 6:** Wu, Hou and Schimmele have linked neighbourhood diversity to higher sense of belonging to Canada for non-visible minorities. It would be of interest to continue along the path of their study, by considering also other complementary indicators of diversity of social connections. For example, it would be important to study the effects of ethno-racial diversity in the workplace (or other sites where most time is spent), or in terms of chosen personal connections rather than residential neighbourhood; furthermore, diversity could be accounted for in terms of socio-economic status rather than ethno-racial background, etc. In addition, measures of neighbourhood (or other place based) diversity that also highlight the minority or majority position of the respondent within the neighbourhood (or other place) would provide important qualifications to the findings.

Some exploratory evidence based on the proportion of friends of the same ethnic origin, calculated by tabulating EDS data, are reported in the box below.

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twice the size of any other were 0.4% in Montreal, 13.5% in Toronto and 18.9 % in Vancouver (Hiebert 2009, p.30).

Evidence – 3 -- EDS 2002:

The EDS includes a question that follows the question on ethnic origin, and asks what proportion of one's friends has the same ethnic origins as the respondent's first one. This measure of diversity of social connections implies active choice rather than geographical proximity.

The findings of this exploratory descriptive analysis show that, for those who are not visible minorities, having a network of friends with diverse ethnic origins results in reporting a stronger sense of belonging (65% compared to 53% in the level 5 of the 5 point scale, labeled "very strong", while the proportion at level 4 (between the neutral point and "very strong") is not significantly different in the two groups, at about 20%). By contrast, visible minorities report the same levels of sense of belonging to Canada whether or not their networks of friends are of ethnically diverse origins, and their proportion in the "very strong" belonging to Canada category is just below 60%, while in the "somewhat strong" category it is just above 20%. (In the EDS the age distribution of the VM and not VM segments is close enough not to require controlling the results by age group).

Figure 6-1:   Sense of belonging to Canada by VM status and proportion of friends with same Ethnic Origin
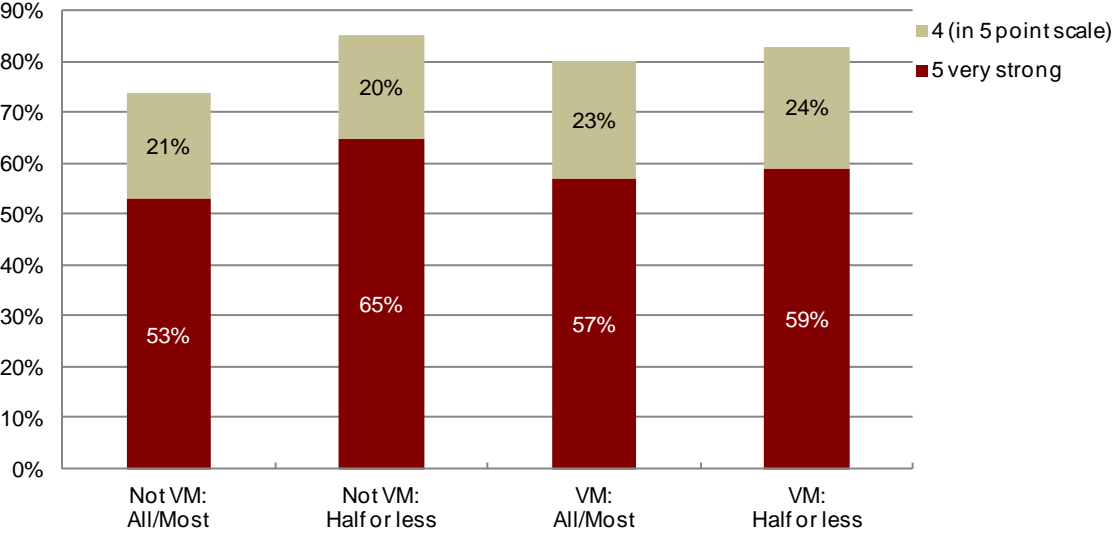
The result for visible minorities – for whom the diversity of contacted friends does not matter for belonging to Canada – is consistent the findings on neighbourhood diversity in the analysis by Wu, Hou and Schimmele discussed above.

6.2.   Sense of belonging and minority nationalism

Banting and Soroka (2012), already featured in the section above on sense of belonging and social cohesion, investigate further sense of belonging to province, Canada, and "city, town or local community" in a recent analysis based on EDS data. This analysis places itself directly within the debate on minority nationalism. The authors investigate how immigrants, their children and, among them, visible minorities develop sense of belonging to these geographic units in the context of the pre-existing divergence between Quebec and the "rest of Canada"

with respect to the primacy of Canada and province, indicating contrasting views of nationhood. They compare the sense of belonging to each of the three geographical scales by generational status, visible minority status (yes or no) and region (Quebec and "the rest of Canada).[19]

> **Examples -14: Banting and Soroka (2012)** focus is primarily on comparing the sense of belonging to Canada, province, and "town, city or municipality" of immigrants, the second generation after immigration, and the third generation and above (third+ generation), and carrying out comparative analyses by visible minority status and region – comparing visible minorities to non-visible minorities by generation in Quebec and in the rest of Canada. They aim to gain insights on the impact of contrasting views of nationhood on the sense of belonging of immigrants and their children in Quebec and elsewhere.

It should be noted that this study is very recent, but based on data collected in 2002 (EDS), a choice likely made to take advantage of the large subsample of visible minorities included in this survey.

In this recent analysis, Banting and Soroka's compare second generation results separately for majority and visible minority respondents in the context of Quebec. In Quebec, the "mainstream" third generation+ is less likely to express very strong belonging to Canada than to province, while the opposite pattern is found elsewhere.

They find that, in Quebec, second generation majority respondents tend to converge to the proportions of very strong belonging to province of the third generation+, while maintaining a higher proportion of very strong belonging to Canada. By contrast, second generation visible minority respondents in Quebec show low propensity to express very strong belonging to province, while their propensity to report very strong belonging to Canada is somewhat lower than that of second generation majority respondents.

This contrast between Quebec and the rest of Canada in their expression of very strong belonging to province and country does not hold when considering very strong belonging to town (the survey question refers "town, city or municipality"). In fact, in this case first generation respondents, both with or without visible minority status, and both within or outside Quebec, tend to show greater propensity of a very strong response than that of all other segments. The other Canadian-born segments too, do not show significant differences among one another.

> **Key findings -9- from Banting and Soroka 2012:**
> - In Quebec the third+ generation that is not visible minority is the least likely to report very strong belonging to Canada
> - In Quebec the visible minority second generation has comparatively low propensity to have very strong sense of belonging to both Canada and province
> - The first generation has higher propensity than the second and third+ generations to very strong belonging to the town, city or municipality, in both Quebec and the rest of Canada

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[19] The term generational status refers to immigrants as the first generation, and their children as the second generation, while those whose parents are Canadian born are referred to as the third generation and above (third+ generation). More precisely, the second generation is defined as the population with at least one parent who is an immigrant. The third+ is defined as the population whose parents are Canadian born including whether their lineage beyond their parents is Canadian born or not.

In the rest of Canada, second generation respondents show lower propensity to express very strong belonging to Canada than third generation+ majority respondents, and the difference is larger if the second generation respondents are visible minorities. In addition, second generation visible minority respondents have a slightly lower propensity to report very strong belonging to province than third generation+ majority. However, both the differences between generations and between those with or without visible minority status are much smaller than in Quebec.

From the point of view of CIC, Banting's and Soroka study offer an interesting broad perspective with important insights on the Canadian context. To make this type of study of greater relevance for policies and programs, especially in the field of integration, it would be important to include for the immigrant segment of the population – the first generation – an analysis of how outcomes change based on the length of stay in Canada. CIC integration policies, in fact, are interested in the outcomes of the second generation, but also place great emphasis on the integration of first generation immigrants over time. The extent to which immigrants are able to fully contribute and belong to society over time matters greatly also because it is plausible that it may have an important impact for the integration and sense of belonging of their children – the second generation.

In addition, it should be noted that the study is focused on the "very strong" response to sense of belonging question, which in the EDS is posed by giving respondents a choice five point scale from "very weak" to "very strong". The two lower geographic scales – and "town, city or municipality" -- however, have less uneven distributions of responses (see
The proportion of responses at the extreme pole of the scale (5 – very strong) is much larger for sense of belonging to Canada than to the lower geographic scales. The proportions of responses at level 4 (between neutral and very strong) and 3 (neutral point) are considerable at the scale of province and "town, city or municipality."
Figure 6-2), leading to question whether some important information might be missed by focusing only on the very strong response.

Evidence 4 -- EDS 2002:
The distribution of responses along the 5 point scales of sense of belonging to Canada,
province, and "town, city or municipality".
The proportion of responses at the extreme pole of the scale (5 – very strong) is much
larger for sense of belonging to Canada than to the lower geographic scales. The
proportions of responses at level 4 (between neutral and very strong) and 3 (neutral
point) are considerable at the scale of province and "town, city or municipality."

Figure 6-2:   EDS - Distribution of responses - sense of belonging to...
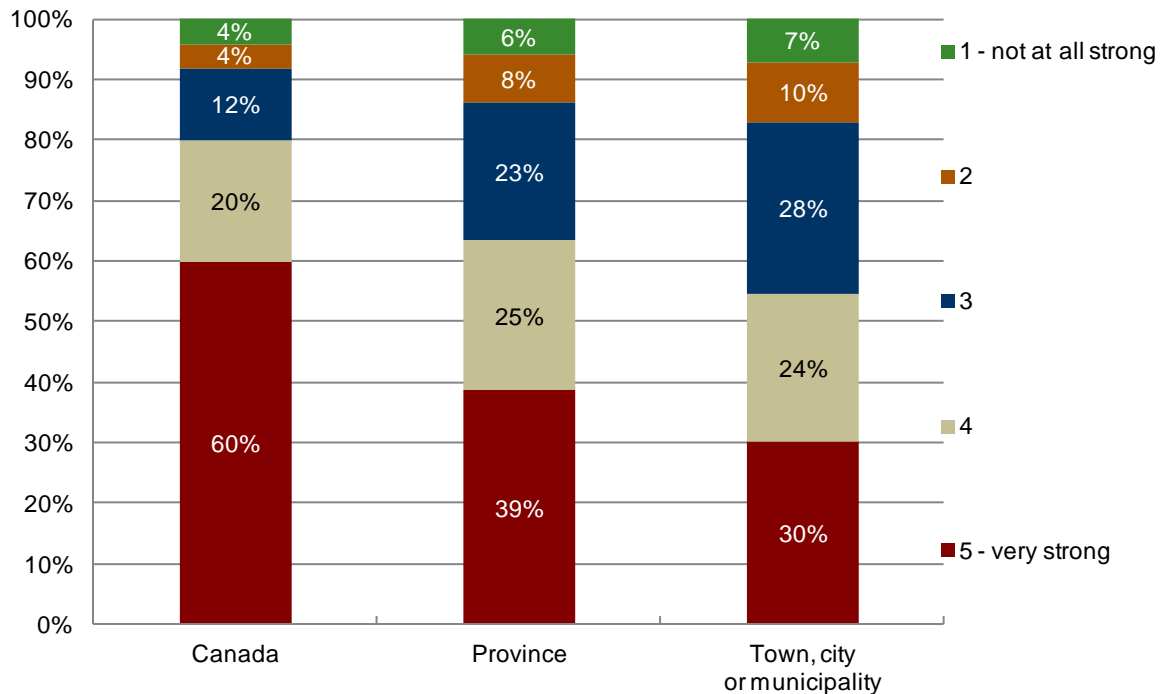
From the substantive point of view as well, it would be of interest to understand why
respondents report being on the entire positive side of the scale – including the whole spectrum
above the neutral point. Indeed, what brings population segments to cross the threshold beyond
neutral may be a policy question of greater importance than finding out what leads to the "very
strong" pole of the scale. This question, in fact, may be more relevant for some population
segments of interest and the specific policies targeting them, including, for example recent
immigrants. The question on "very strong" belonging may instead be more relevant for other
segments and policies, for example, targeting established immigrants or the second generation,
and among these, visible minorities. In addition, considering the "above neutral" and "very
strong" responses as distinct, may lead to find out that different factors have an impact on the
two outcomes; rather than the same factors in greater intensity pushing the level of belonging
over successive thresholds. This would be an interesting finding for policy decisions seeking to
effectively identify priorities for targeted population segments.

Lastly, a clear and important methodological implication of the research reviewed above is that any analysis of sense of belonging to Canada that includes comparisons across generations, even when not specifically focused on comparisons between Quebec and other provinces, needs to keep in mind – control for – the specificity of this territorial pattern, which has proven remarkably consistent over time. If this specific pattern is ignored, an analysis runs the risk of misrepresenting the average of highly distinct outcomes as an actual result occurring everywhere in Canada.

6.3.   Community belonging and health

Sense of belonging to community has been studied in the Canadian literature on health. Findings show that it is positively related to both self-reported health (Ross 2002, Shields 2008) and health improving behaviours (Hystad and Carpiano 2009). This literature does not relate sense of belonging to community to sense of belonging to Canada, and it is not focused on diversity, but it provides some findings that begin to unravel the relationship between local social connections and belonging, in this case to the local community.

In particular, based on 2008 GSS data, Carpiano and Hystad (2011) find that sense of belonging to community is strongly influenced by indicators of neighbourhood social connections, more specifically, the number of people known well enough to ask a favour, as well as the number of people known in general. Having close friends or relatives in the same city/municipality are also variables positively related to sense of belonging to community, but, in comparison to variables indicating the social support available in the neighbourhood (especially the number of neighbours known well enough to ask a favour), these relations have a weaker effect.

The authors carry the analysis one step further, investigating the difference between rural and urban respondents. They show that, in general, rural respondents tend to have a stronger sense of belonging to the community. However, the social connections underpinning community belonging of rural respondents are found to be different than those of urban respondents. Rural respondents are found to be counting on fewer and closer contacts, and, while declaring to belong to the community more strongly, they do not to derive from this the same amount of health benefits as urban residents.

They also find that sense of belonging to community and some indicators of social connections have an impact on self-reported health for urban but not rural respondents. This seems to indicate that rural residents, constrained by the context of low population density, tend to be relatively penalized by needing to rely on the same close connections for several purposes.

The same researchers find a similar result in a separate analysis based on the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), focused on health improving behavioural change (Hystad and Carpiano 2009). They find that this behaviour is positively affected by community sense of belonging, and that health region context has an impact, in general showing that the relationship is weaker or disappears in rural contexts. In other words, there is some indication that having supportive connections leads to a health-related advantage especially in settings where there is a broader pool of connections to draw from, rather than in settings where one may strongly belong, but perhaps also feel constrained by the limited range of the available connections.

Key findings -10- from the literature on community belonging and health:
- Sense of belonging to the local community impacts health indicators positively.
- Supportive neighbourhood social relations positively impact sense of belonging to the local community
- In urban areas sense of belonging to the local community has a greater positive impact on health and is based on a greater variety of supportive social connections.

Another recent study based on the CCHS, confirms the lower health outcomes and higher sense of belonging outcomes of rural areas (Kitchen, Williams, Chohwan 2011). This analysis also finds higher sense of community belonging among seniors, single home dwellers, and couples with children, and lowest among youth, residents of high-rise apartments, and single-parents.

The studies based on the CCHS also include in their analysis an indicator of immigrant status and aboriginal identity but find no significant differences between these categories and the rest of the population. The study by Carpiano and Hystad (2011) based on the 2008 GSS, finds that the propensity to have sense of belonging to the community of visible minorities is higher than that of non-visible minorities, while that of those who identify as Aboriginal is lower than that of those who do not. They find no significant difference between immigrants and non-immigrants.

In general, it would be of interest to link the study of community belonging to that of higher geographical scales, such as the region or province and Canada. It would be also important to include duration of stay and generation for immigrants, and, for all, indicators of ethno-racial category. Under what conditions and how community belonging relates to larger attachments is indeed an area of great interest, but relatively unexplored.

Recommendations – 9: Research that systematically compares the determinants of sense of belonging at the geographic scales of the local community, province and Canada and includes factors of interest to CIC (generational status, length of stay in Canada, ethno-cultural indicators, other immigrant status indicators, etc.) would be of interest.

7. Complementary insights from qualitative research and research that includes detailed geographic information

One of the results brought forward by the research on community belonging and health discussed in the previous section is that community belonging can refer to different types of social relations and health outcomes in rural and urban contexts. Similarly, section 4.1 above discussed the findings of a qualitative study highlighting that individuals with high and low income understand community belonging as referring to very different types of social relations and engagement.

Clearly, the understanding of what is a local community could potentially vary quite significantly depending on who responds and where, including in ways that are important to understand for the policy interests of CIC. For example, for someone in an urban ethnically concentrated neighbourhood, the local community would likely have quite different connotations than for someone in a different type of neighbourhood. In addition the implications of their response in terms of sense of belonging would be different depending on whether the respondent is a recent immigrant and/or an ethno-racial minority in that particular neighbourhood. More research that systematically takes into account this type of localized variations and their overall significance would potentially give very useful results for policies aiming at guaranteeing a consistent level of service throughout local contexts.

When the factors impacting the understanding of the community one belongs to are not associated to a clearly identifiable geographic pattern, qualitative research can achieve considerable insight. While more difficult to generalize and more resource intensive this type of research can constitute an invaluable contribution in cases where satisfactory information cannot be provided through statistical generalizations. One such example is constituted by the literature on transnationalism, primarily based on qualitative research focusing on the experience of single transnational population segments. This research shows that the dynamics generating sense of belonging to Canada or their community of residence in Canada are highly contextualized and depending on the particular transnational experience[20].

Examples – 16: Transnationalism and belonging. In a study of transnational migration at the Canadian-US borderlands Hardwick (2010) showed that the impact of the decision to remain American citizens on sense of belonging in Canada depends on the spatial and temporal contexts of the Canadian settlement experience, including individual reasons for leaving the US, time of arrival in Canada, and individual characteristics such as gender, age, and socioeconomic status.

Another study (Waters 2009, 2011), this time focusing immigrant women whose husbands had returned to Hong Kong and Taiwan to work while they were residing with their children in Canada, and shows that these transnational immigrants often demonstrate a high level of local civic involvement and a localised sense of identity in the 'new' country, even when continuing to practice transnationalism on a daily basis.

Identifying through statistical analysis population segments that require a more detailed qualitative investigation to answer key policy questions is promising research strategy.

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[20] A review of research on transnationalism from Metropolis British Columbia can be found in Oliver Schmidtke, 2012.

Lessons Learned – 8: In general, research that has the capacity to qualify statistical generalizations with nuanced findings identified as needed for policy questions is an important option. In reference to belonging to the local community, both introducing geographic detail in statistical analysis of population segments, and carrying out targeted qualitative studies of population segments identified as geographically mobile, are directions potentially providing insights.

8. Knowledge gaps and related CIC priorities: citizenship take-up and immigration category.

In the introductory section, the significance of sense of belonging for CIC's mission and Strategic Plan was briefly discussed. The literature reviewed in the sections above has covered quite extensively the study of sense of belonging as an indicator of integration, both for immigrants and population segments of diverse background within Canadian society. The review has also identified several findings of interest, and useful lessons for future research speaking to CIC's knowledge needs.

Two research themes that were initially identified as CIC's interests, but were not at all covered in the available literature are discussed in this section. They are:

1) The relationship between immigration category and sense of belonging

2) The relationship between citizenship take-up and sense of belonging

8.1. Immigration category and sense of belonging – filling a data gap.

The main problem for the theme of immigration category has been the lack of a data sources including both responses on sense of belonging and a reliable indicator of immigration category. Pending a successful data collection, the solution is forthcoming with the GSS 2013 on Social Identity, which will have an immigrant oversample (funded by CIC) and will provide an option to obtain results based on detailed immigration class by linking the immigrant sample to the longitudinal immigrant database (IMDB). This data will allow analysis to assess whether the initial entry category has had any impact on developing a sense of belonging in Canada (to any geographic scale of interest). While immigration policy is undergoing several changes, these results will provide a useful benchmark for future comparisons, as most of immigrant respondents in the GSS sample that is currently in the field will have landed before such changes.

8.2. Citizenship take-up and sense of belonging – data and methodological challenges

The second theme -- empirical research on the relationship between citizenship take-up and the development of sense of belonging among immigrants -- comes with some technical difficulties that could be surmounted if data of good quality became available. These difficulties are due to the fact that both citizenship take-up, sense of belonging, as well as several factors facilitating sense of belonging (e.g. the development of social connections), are all dependent on the passing of time. Time in Canada is a requirement of citizenship take-up and increases the likelihood of the immigrant "getting around to" applying and taking the necessary steps for going through the process; it also facilitates building connections and engagement in Canada which contribute to belonging; and, naturally, with time people get older, and therefore more likely to belong[21].

In addition, while it is plausible to think that citizenship is associated to higher sense of belonging to Canada, it is difficult to single out a causal direction between the two. Most likely there is reciprocal causation between taking up citizenship and feelings of belonging: becoming a citizen may consolidate and strengthen one's attachment to Canada, but also, realizing that one belongs may motivate citizenship take-up. Longitudinal data including information on sense of

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[21] As discussed in the previous sections, research has consistently found that as age progresses, people are more likely to belong.

belonging before, during, and after citizenship take-up would be needed to allow a comparison of sense of belonging before and after citizenship take-up.

Without making any distinction on causal flow, a simple tabulation of immigrants, showing the proportions of sense of belonging to Canada by duration of stay in Canada (more or less than ten years) is provided below, based on the EDS (2002). The graphs give some preliminary evidence, suggesting that, at least without taking into account other potentially important factors, there is a positive association between sense of belonging to Canada and citizenship for established immigrants, and a small positive association for those in Canada less than ten years[22].

EDS 2002 evidence – citizenship by immigrant length of stay
Figure 8-1 reports the proportions of sense of belonging to Canada along a 5 point scale from 1 (not at all strong) to 5 (very strong) for those who immigrated before 1991 only, comparing citizens to non-citizens. It shows that the established immigrants who have taken up citizenship have very strong sense of belonging to Canada in higher proportion than established immigrants that are not citizens (71% and 56% respectively). In addition, combining level 4 and 5 (very strong and the level just below) the difference between the two groups is smaller, but it is still considerable and statistically significant (89% for citizens and to 79% for non-citizens).

Figure 8-1:   Citizenship and belonging - established immigrants (<1991)


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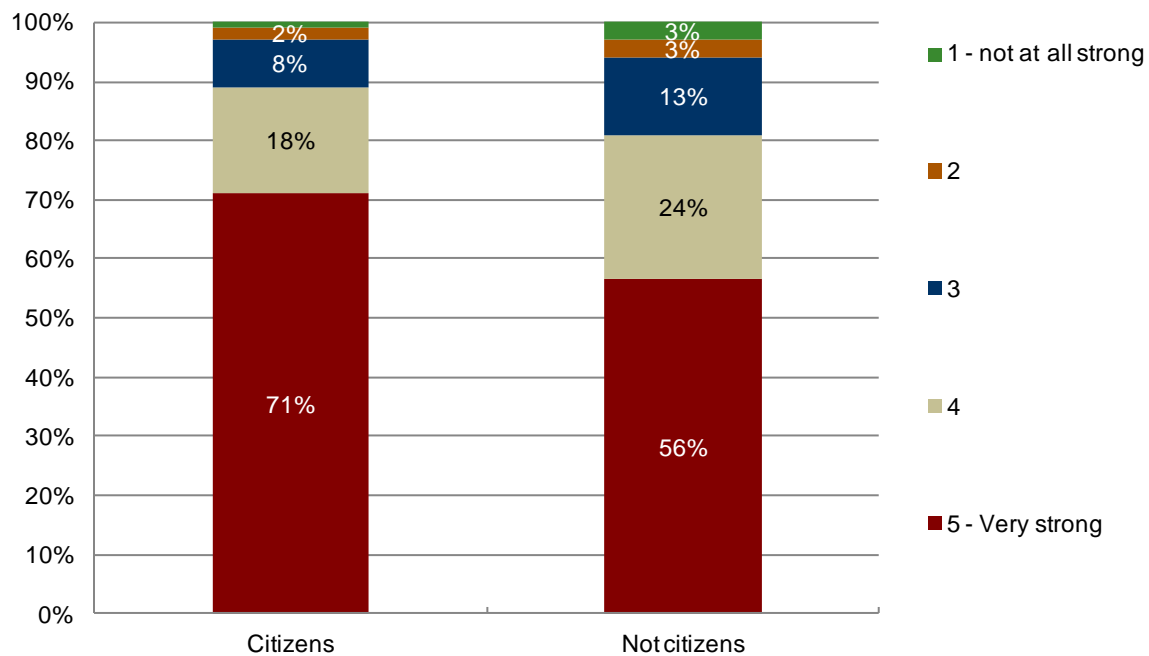
[22] The age profile of immigrant citizens and non-citizens is similar within the two durations of stay. If immigrants were considered all together, without splitting them by duration of stay, citizens would have an older age profile than non-citizens. As a result, analyzing established and recent immigrants separately allows the comparison of citizens and non-citizens within each length of stay not to be confounded by the known positive impact of age on sense of belonging.

Figure 8-2 carries out the same comparison but for those who immigrated after 1991. It turns out that, in their case, the proportion reporting very strong belonging to Canada is almost identical between citizens and non-citizens (at about 53%), while the proportion at level 4 in the scale – between very strong and neutral – is slightly larger for citizens making the combined 5 and 4 response overall larger for citizens (83% compared to 76% for not citizens).

Figure 8-2: Citizenship and belonging - recent immigrants (≥1991)
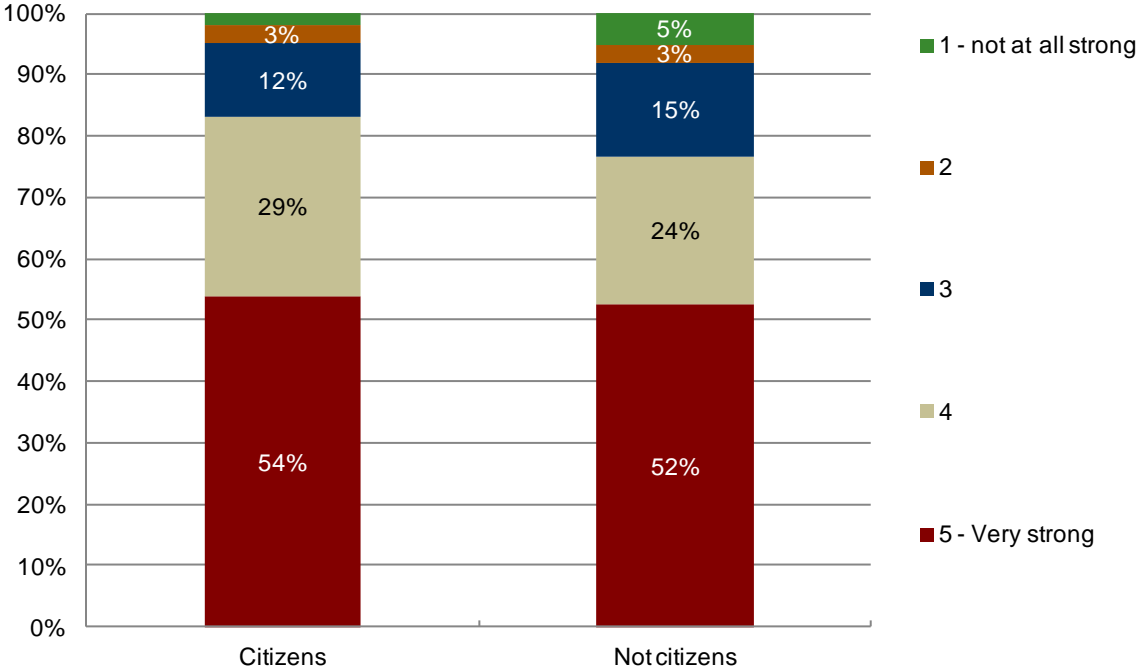
While there is a gap in research about the relationship between citizenship take-up and sense of belonging, some research literature exists on the determinants of citizenship take-up. As noted by Hou and Picot (2011), available research on citizenship has identified three types of determinants. First, the personal characteristics of the immigrant associated with citizenship take-up include: more years spent in Canada, a younger arrival age, being male, knowledge of an official language, and higher rather than lower education. Second, characteristics of the source country associated with higher citizenship acquisition in Canada include: allowing for multiple citizenship, geographical distance, a low GDP per capita, and having limited civil liberties. Third, and associated to both of the first two types of factors, immigration class has been shown to be related to citizenship take-up, including, in decreasing order: being refugees, skilled workers, and family class immigrants. (Tran, Kustec and Chui, 2005).

These multiple factors are quite different in their nature, further complicating the understanding of the impact of citizenship take-up on belonging for people who may be differently motivated or facilitated in the first place.

Lessons Learned – 9: Data sources allowing for the study of sense of belonging of immigrants by immigration class and by citizenship take-up have not been available so far, and are currently under development.

All these factors need taking into account simultaneously in order to shed light on the net influence of sense of belonging on citizenship take-up. As a counterpart, all the factors known to influence sense of belonging would have to be taken into account in an analysis of the opposite influence -- of the net impact of citizenship take-up on sense of belonging. In both cases, time related factors highly related to both citizenship and sense of belonging would have to be included in the analysis, taxing data capacity to make fine distinctions.

Lessons Learned – 10: The study of sense of belonging and citizenship take-up requires accounting for several inter-related factors, and therefore, especially good quality data.

Notwithstanding these complexities, efforts carrying out research on this relationship would be highly relevant to citizenship policy. Statistical techniques exist to model or correct for reciprocal causation (endogeneity), which would require good quality data that include information on citizenship take-up as well as on sense of belonging and all the other relevant factors. Possibly, the 2013 GSS on Social Identity with enhanced oversample will provide opportunities to further explore this research theme.

Recommendations – 10: pending the development of the necessary data, research on sense of belonging and citizenship take-up, and on sense of belonging and immigration categories would be of interest to CIC.

9. Concluding remarks

This review has led to several findings relevant to CIC policy areas, as well as directions for future research. This concluding section focuses on pulling together directions for future research that have emerged from the various sections of the review. These recommended directions can be subdivided into a few separate headings: research to support improved methodology and results, methodology tips, data development, and research themes.

9.1. Research and tips to improve methodology

The review has led to several useful recommendations on research that would allow improving methodology and results on sense of belonging:

– Research to compare the different indicators of belonging used in international approaches would help understand how different results depend on different survey questions used. This would also facilitate international comparisons; and, related,

– Research to compare survey results on sense of belonging to results based on trust would be useful to confirm whether sense of belonging varies based on relatively recent experiences, while generalized trust is rooted primarily in childhood learning. Within the research framework on social capital, this would potentially lead to relevant findings on different indicators of "norms of reciprocity", and how they could be facilitated in population segments of different ages to help positive social connections.

– It would be important to use linked tax records to clarify the relationship between income (or other economic outcomes) and sense of belonging. Results based on self-reported income categories have so far given inconclusive results.

– It would be useful to carry out qualitative study of how belonging to the local community may be differently understood among different types of respondents, as there is indication that this understanding may vary depending on neighbourhood characteristics as well respondents' capabilities and socio-economic status.

A few simple tips on methodology have been found to be important for research on sense of belonging:

– In order to achieve a correct interpretation of overall findings, analyses including an indicator of sense of belonging to Canada need to take into account lower proportions reporting strong belonging to Canada in Quebec, which is a consistent feature of the Canadian landscape; and, related,

– When using several indicators to build a composite measure of a broad concept, it is important to give a clear account of all the components, how they are combined, and how their composition varies across the population segments analyzed. This greatly enhances the interpretability of the results that can be achieved.

– Qualitative research can provide required detail in cases where statistical generalizations are not sufficient; for example, on populations that are highly mobile geographically, such as transnational populations; or to investigate different understandings of belonging based on status (both socio-economic and ethno-racial).

9.2. Data development

As noted in the review, research on sense of belonging has often found limits due to sample size and/or lack of variables that convey desirable information. Data development is fundamental for improving knowledge on sense of belonging in directions of interest to CIC.

> **Recommendations – 11:** A periodically updated data source that includes: several questions on sense of belonging, a large sample that allows analysis of sub-populations, the full range of variables of interest associated with sense of belonging, and identifiers of population segments of interest to CIC, is a priority to make possible future research capable of addressing knowledge gaps.

A first step in this direction is constituted by the General Social Survey 2013, on Social Identity, with enhanced sample of immigrants, in the field at the time of this writing. This survey will include questions on sense of belonging to: local community, town or city, province, Canada, country of origin, people with the same ethnic or cultural background, and people who speak the same language. The improved immigrant sample and extended questions on belonging promise to make possible research that achieves considerable detail with up-to-date data. In addition, this survey includes information on time of immigration, time of acquisition of landed immigrant status, and country (or countries) of citizenship, opening the opportunity to explore further the theme of citizenship take-up and belonging. The survey will also include ethno-racial indicators and several questions on discrimination alongside several indicators of social connections, civic engagement, and values, allowing novel opportunities to analyze discrimination by social engagement and values. Finally it will be possible to link this survey to administrative data that offer precise information on immigration category, providing the opportunity to explore this angle as well. Data from this source is expected approximately at the end of 2014.

9.3. Research themes

Research themes of interest to CIC for future development include:

– Comparing results on sense of belonging to: the various geographic scales, ethno-cultural background, and country of origin, taking into account duration of stay, generational status, and indicators of ethno-racial background.

– Studying sense of belonging to Canada in relation to citizenship take-up.

– Studying sense of belonging in relation to broad immigration category.

– Further studying perceived discrimination and sense of belonging.

– Studying sense of belonging in relation to a range of indicators of diversity of social contact, for example, by different types of social connections (personal, professional, community, etc.) and different types of diversity (e.g. ethno-racial, or based on socio-economic status, etc.).

– Studying sense of belonging taking into account factors related to the local geography and the position of the respondent; for example, ethno-racial diversity in the residential area and whether the respondent is in a minority or majority position.

- Comparing the factors associated with responses that fall in the "very strong" category of sense of belonging to those associated with responses that fall on the positive side of a scale of belonging, but are not necessarily very strong.

Some of the research directions here highlighted are taken up in the companion report "Sense of belonging: empirical study" (forthcoming), based on the GSS 2008. The data source used in the companion study has some limitations, especially the size of its sub-samples of immigrants and visible minorities. Compatibly with these limitations, the study will compare results on sense of belonging to Canada, province and the local community; study of sense of belonging in relation to some distinct indicators of diversity of social contact; and compare the factors associated with responses that fall in the "very strong" category to those associated with responses that fall on the positive side of the scale, but are not necessarily at this positive extreme.

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