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Title: A network science approach to social cohesion.

Main purpose of the project: The project aims to assess social cohesion across social boundaries of class, income and origin in Spanish society, by exploring the diversity of large acquaintanceship networks. It also analyzes whether and how diverse networks contribute to (or conversely, deteriorate) intergroup solidarity, social welfare preferences, trust, and political orientation.

Design/methodology/approach:

The project will develop a novel methodology and implement it in a new, large-scale survey in Spain, based on a nationally representative sample. Statistical modelling and Agent-Based Modelling will be used to analyse the data at both the microscopic level of human interactions and on a societal level.

Potential results: The project will be able to detect societal cleavages and shed light on the conditions under which ties that bridge such cleavages form. Furthermore, we can show how individuals' positions in the social fabric shape their solidarity with other social groups and their social welfare preferences, among other variables.

Social relevance of the research: European societies are facing deepening and increasingly durable inequality and polarization, and therefore the question of what binds society is urgently important. In particular, it is crucial to know how the position of socially vulnerable groups in society can be strengthened.

Originality/value of the project: This project will develop a ground-breaking methodology from the perspective of network science. Instead of analyzing individual attitudes or trust, as studies into social cohesion typically do, it focuses on the societal fabric of human interactions and its effects, an important but currently underexplored feature of society.