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**MEASURING POPULATION DEVELOPMENT FROM THE SOCIAL COHESION  
PERSPECTIVE BY WOMEN AND MEN ACCORDING TO THE CENSUS DATA**

Note by Statistics Estonia<sup>1</sup>

Invited paper

**I. INTRODUCTION**

**A. Defining social cohesion**

1. Social and economic developments are inextricably linked. Social cohesion manifests itself in all actions that individuals consider to be important. Social cohesion determines the knowledge and experience about the society and the ability to act in different situations.

2. Social cohesion is based on social ties which is general welfare, and it also correlates with independence, availability of goods, personal development, respect of human dignity, responsible participation, sense of belonging, common values (Kornai 1992).

3. It can be said that social cohesion is determined by the conditions and assumptions of social activity. Societies can be ethnically and religiously diverse - this is what considerably shapes customs and traditions. In this case, diversity is a present condition and must be taken into account in order to comply with the request for increased cohesion. In economic terms, it signifies the increase of transaction costs, as the expectations and risks in economic activity vary more than those in the similar communities (Purju 2007).

4. Kalev Katus (1999) has stated that the substantive cohesion of the population and territory largely determines the course of population development: this cohesion is expressed by the status of being native-born that reflects the relationship between the country of residence and the country of origin being one of the three main demographic features. No one can choose their country of birth, whereas a person's parents can, in a sense, be regarded as having made the decision on their behalf. The birth place is not regarded as having as much of an important effect as the essence of nature and social environment that a person is born into. Although we may not

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have sufficient knowledge about the socialising process during childhood, it is clear that together with genetic factors inherited from parents, the demographic characteristics of the person and through it the belonging to a certain nation or geo-demographic system are determined by the environment where a particular person is brought up after birth.

5. A separate field is a movement outwards that is encountered in a unified society. Here, the importance lies in the country's foreign policy, its membership of international organisations, including the ones that cause the lifestyle pattern changes, as, for instance, the European Union.

6. The Council of Europe has defined the social cohesion through the contribution provided by every single member of the society. The capacity of a society is obtained through ensuring the welfare of all its members, minimising disparities and enhancing harmonisation. A cohesive society is mutually supportive democratic community that is pursuing common goals. The Council of Europe highlights the need to reinforce the social cohesion in Europe in their social, educational, cultural and health dimensions.

## **B. Cohesion measurement**

7. The main general parameter that characterises the range and importance of a certain action is the scope of activities and services. The second important attribute is the availability of services, where its indicators vary depending on the field.

8. The indicators are measured at the level of consistency through different participation rate such as activity rate, employment rate; participants in educational system and so on. Often the social cohesion is measured through the opposite, which gives a good overview of the coherence of the obstacles (for examples unemployment rate, jobless households' rate, etc).

9. Berger-Schmitt (2000) believes that social cohesion incorporates two main dimensions: 1) reduction of social exclusion (disparities and inequalities); 2) strengthening of social capital (social relations, interactions and ties).

10. The common European social cohesion indicators are rather known as social exclusion or Laeken indicators. Thus, the social cohesion is indicated by exclusion rate and its change is measured over time. Based on the Census data, it is possible to calculate the following indicators: people in jobless households, %; jobless households with children aged 0-17, %; young people aged 18-24 with basic or lower level of education, or not attending education or training, %. The proposal for the 2010 Census output programme: to include the social cohesion indicators by gender in the output programme developed at European level.

11. Census data being linked to administrative data (such as income) or survey data (the Labour Force Survey) will provide the value added through additional features such as the population below the poverty line after social transfers, %; or long-term unemployment rate, %.

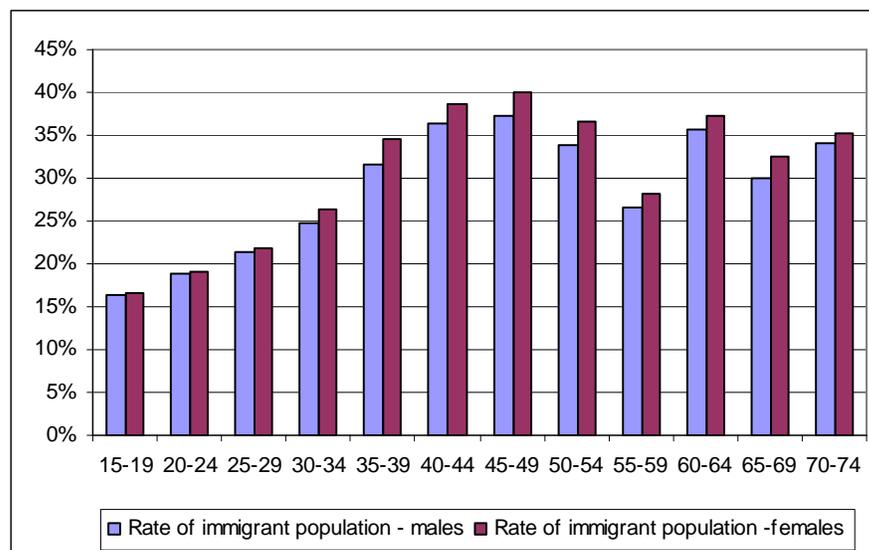
## **II. WHAT INDICATORS OF SOCIAL COHESION CAN BE IDENTIFIED ON THE BASIS OF THE EXISTING CENSUS DATABASE (THE 2000 POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS)?**

12. In order to understand the social cohesion it is necessary to map how main population groups function in the society. On the basis of the census two population groups can be distinguished: native and immigrant population (or foreign-born and native-born population). According to the data of the 2000 Population and Housing Census the share of immigrant

population in the total population was slightly less than a quarter – 24.4%. Currently, there are no significant differences between men and women – the share of women is slightly larger among immigrants.

13. The rate of the native population from birth cohorts provides a good overview of the homogeneity of the society. On the other hand when the proportion of immigrants is higher it is said that the society is more heterogeneous. Coherence indicates a more homogenous society. In this case, high rate of immigrant population must be taken into account in order to comply with the request for cohesion increase. It can be concluded that people aged 35-54 account for the highest share in immigrant population, thus making up the most heterogeneous group. There are no major differences between men and women. In the active working age group starting from the age 30 among women there are about two-three percentage points more immigrants compared to the same age group among men.

**Figure 1. Rate of immigrant population by age and gender**

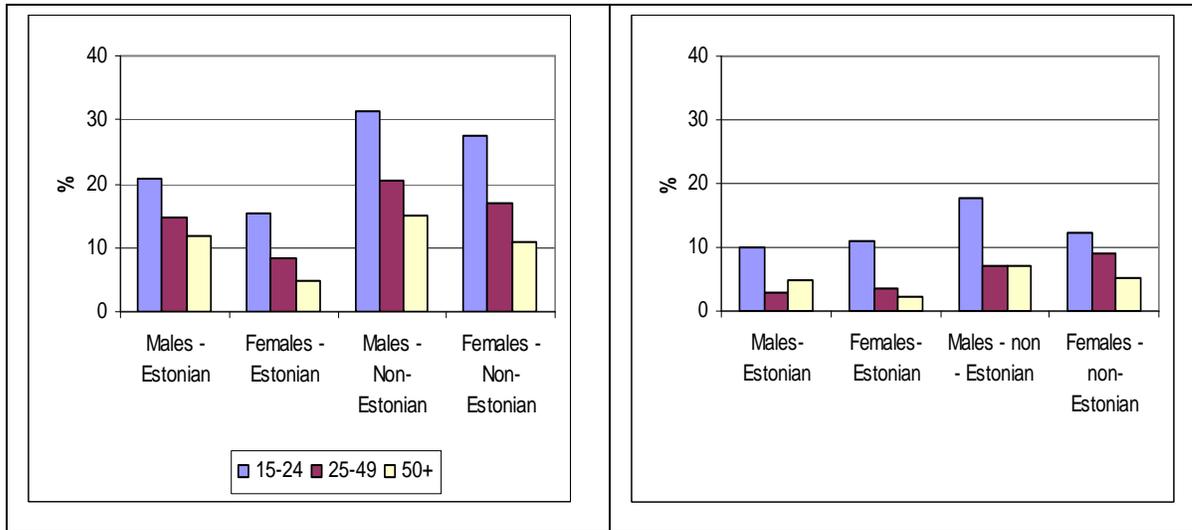


Source: Census database, 2000

14. The previous Population and Housing Census (2000) does not provide the labour market indicators by country of birth; it is primarily viewed through the self-determination of the nation. Until this information remains unavailable it is important to use the distinguishing characteristic of ethnic self-determination besides the variable of immigrant population. Observing the labour market situation through ethnic nationality, it can be stated that unemployment is notably higher among non-Estonians. This is confirmed by the Labour Force Survey study parameters. Thus, the structure of the population has strong impact on labour market, which must be taken into account. The unemployment rates of non-Estonian and Estonian population are quite different. At the same time there are significant differences between non-Estonian men and women and Estonian men and women. According to the 2000 Census data the largest gap in unemployment can be observed in the case of young men – over 30% of men in age group 15-24 are unemployed among the non-Estonian population while the number of unemployed young men is by 10 percentage points lower among Estonian men. The unemployment rate among non-Estonian women was 4 percentage points lower than among the non-Estonian men. The situation was similar in the labour market in 2008. Higher

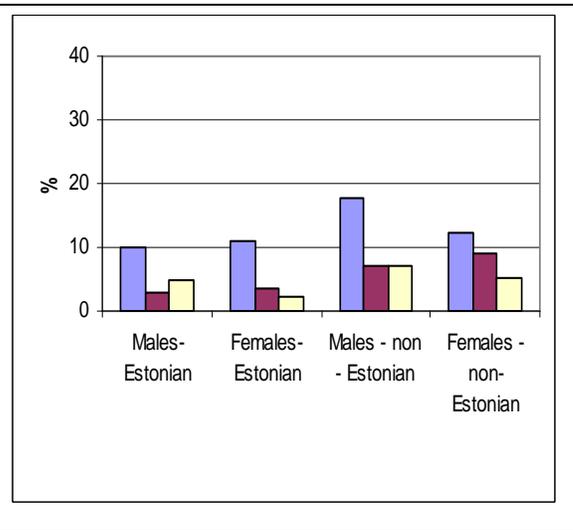
unemployment rate of non-Estonian population, especially of men, is one of the factors which reduced the social cohesion in society.

**Figure 2. Unemployment rate by age, sex and nationality, 2000**



Source: Population Census data, 2000

**Figure 3. Unemployment rate by age, sex and nationality, 2008**

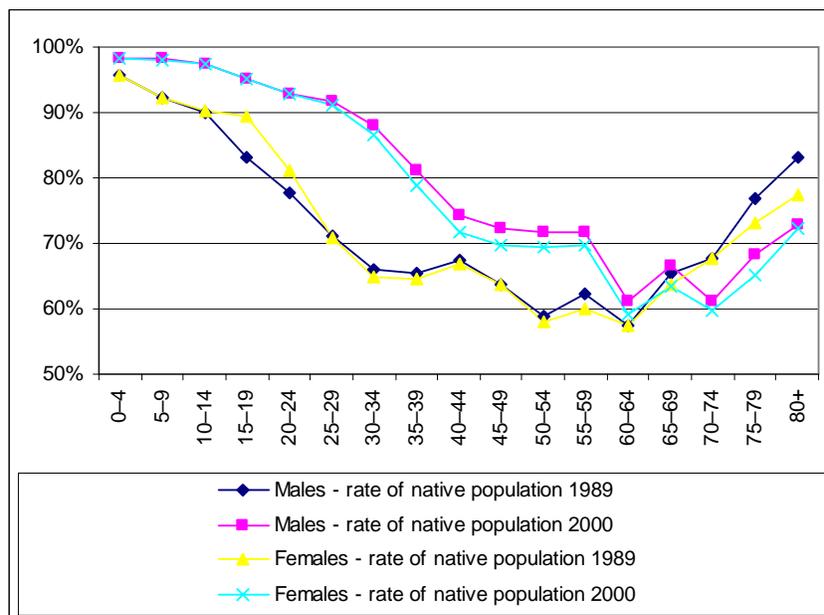


Source: Labour Force Survey data, 2008

15. While observing an important social cohesion indicator by gender: people in jobless households, it can be noticed that gender difference is significant in the 2000 Census data. In households with a female head of the household the share of unemployed people is 5.5% and in households with a male head of the household the corresponding rate is almost twice as high – 10.5%. It means that households with male head of the households are more affected by unemployment.

16. The difference in age structure of the native and immigration populations is remarkable. The share of young people is much larger among native population than among immigrant population. Among native population, the share of persons aged 15-29 among population aged 15-74, was 25%, among immigrant population the share of persons aged 15-29 accounted for only 6%. In the period between Censuses the share of native population has increased. This is due on one hand to the integration of the third generation of immigrants into the native population and on the other hand to a very low migration rate to Estonia after its gaining re-independence. The share of older people was larger among immigrant population. The rate of growth of the native population in the period between Censuses rose equally for men and for women.

**Figure 4. Rate of native population by age, 1989,2000**



Source: Censuses 1989,2000

17. With regard to immigrant population, the process of adapting to a new society is essential, and this process takes more than one generation. In order to better understand and interpret the processes evolving in the society it is reasonable to observe the population not only as a whole, but through various characteristics, of which the gender aspect is one of the most essential ones.

18. One of the main tasks is to study the immigrant population (the first and second generation immigrants), their labour market positions as well as equal opportunities with the native population. In international terms it is determined by two indicators: a) proportion of foreign-born population – it specifies population who are born outside the territory of a given state; b) proportion of immigrant population – it measures the connection with state territory through two generations. In the last case neither of the parents is born on the territory under question. The study of immigration is a relatively new research area in particular with regard to the impact of immigration on labour market and it must be analysed in the context of the new Census data (2010). It is one proposal for the 2010 Census programme. It is very important in terms of cohesion to observe the behaviour of immigrant population by gender in all fundamental social processes.

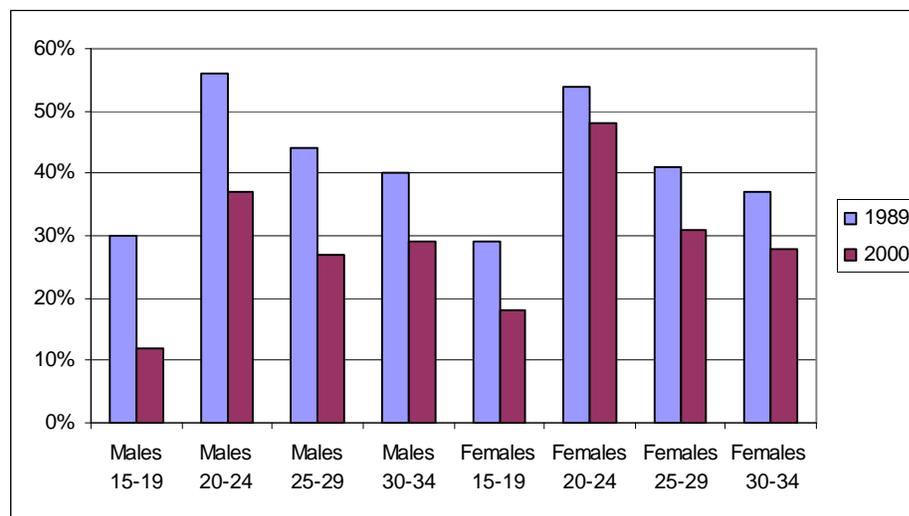
### III. EDUCATION AS A FACTOR SUPPORTING SOCIAL COHESION

19. In terms of social cohesion, the ability to cope in the society is often determined by the educational structure of population, which in turn is related to options on labour market. The development of education also enables the economic structures to make more efficient use of labour resources and creates prerequisites for the restriction of labour-intensive economy. Social cohesion is more affected by significant decrease in the education level of population aged 15–19: while in 1989 the proportion of population with secondary education in this generation exceeded 30%, then in 2000 it remained below 20%. This is naturally due to the time spent in the educational establishments of the secondary level — the number of years spent on that level

increased over the period between Censuses. Unfortunately, the same trend continues in the next two age groups: in age groups 20–24 and 25–29.

20. Disparities between men and women having completed secondary education are alarming. The education level of males aged 15–19 decreased significantly: while in 1989 the share of males of the respective age group with secondary education exceeded 30%, in 2000 the corresponding indicator was only 10%. Among males aged 20–24 the proportion of those with secondary education decreased 10% during the Census period. Similarly, the decline has taken place among females with secondary education in the age group, but this decrease is not as great as in case of males. This trend will lead to a weakening of the cohesion, in particular among young men, and is a threat to a sustainable society.

**Figure 5. Completed secondary education by selected age group and gender**

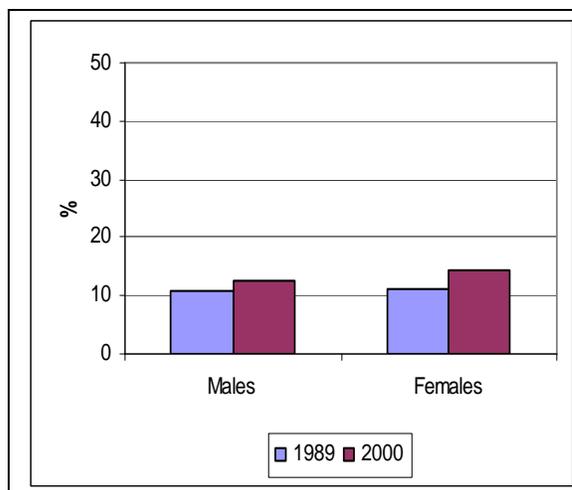


Source: Censuses, 1989, 2000

21. Generally speaking, education is still more likely to unite than divide the society. However, one should note that instead of being unambiguous and linear, the paradigm of social cohesion might be interpreted in more ways than one. For example, there is always going to be conflicts of interest between groups and individuals, but this progress can also be regarded as an essential part of the process of integration of different parts of the society into a single entity, ensuring that differences are not lost, but developed into a more extensive unity.

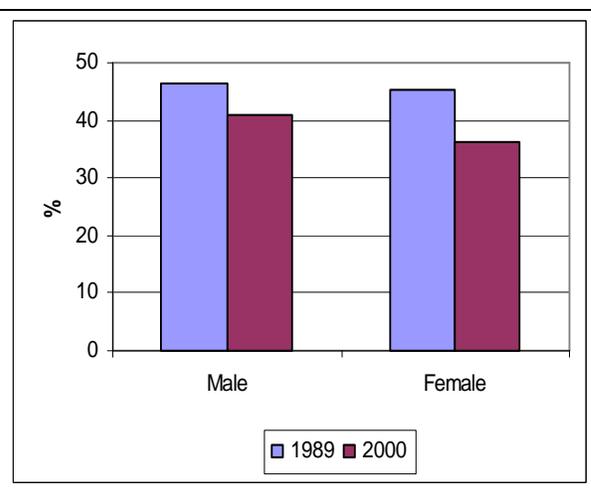
22. Estonian people become more and more highly educated year after year. This shows that education may support cohesion in the society. Higher education has started to supersede lower level education. In the period between Censuses the proportion of population with higher education increased and the proportion of population with lower education level decreased.

**Figure 6. Proportion of population with higher education**



Sources: Censuses, 1989, 2000

**Figure 7. Proportion of population with below upper secondary or lower level education**

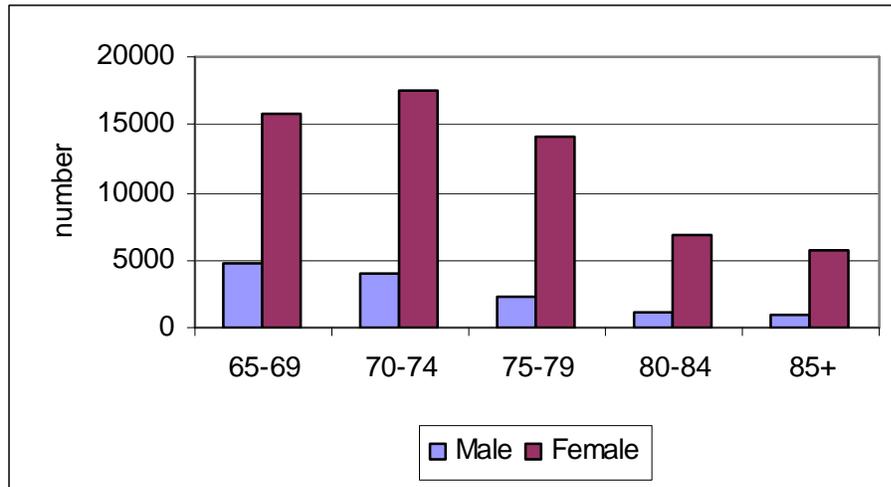


Sources: Censuses: 1989, 2000

#### **IV. AGEING POPULATION**

23. The developments of Estonia during the next decades will be affected by a more rapid process of population ageing. Already in the Census 2000 single person's households (person aged at least 65) accounted for 37% of which fifth were single men households and a half single women households. In the oldest age group single women households are predominating. If the number of women in age group 65-69 exceeds that of men three times, then in the age group 75-79 already six times. The long-term high mortality rate of Estonian men has resulted in an unevenly high proportion of women in older generation's — the situation is not expected to change in the future, and this will become a major issue with regard to social cohesion of the Estonian society in the next few decades.

**Figure 8. Single persons by age and gender**

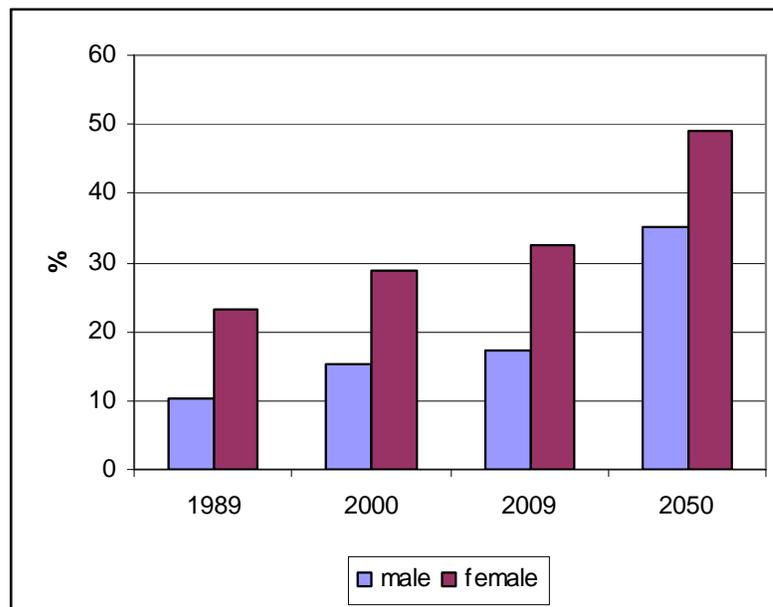


Source: Census 2000

24. On the one hand, higher proportion of the elderly population with higher education allows the implementation of innovative potential, in order to increase the generational cohesion rate during the next few decades whereas a great prevalence of women in that population group has to be taken into consideration. A greater proportion of higher educated population among age group 65-69 is on the one hand associated with the mandatory secondary education of Soviet times, which served as a basis for acquiring higher education for majority of the population during the lifetime. On the other hand it is generally known that the population with higher education has the above average life expectancy, which increases the proportion of population with higher education among older age groups (Sakkeus, 2007).

25. The inevitable nature of that trend is also manifested in the old-age dependency rate. It is defined as a number of persons aged 65 and over as a percentage of the number of persons aged between 15–64. It is characterised as the burden on the working age population. In old-age dependency rate the gender difference is extremely large. This shows that in the future the old-age dependency rate is higher among women. Therefore, it is necessary to assess efficient opportunities for supporting economic structure to ensure social welfare and take into account the difference of the population structure for all population groups.

**Figure 9. Old-age dependency rate by gender**



Sources: Censuses 1989, 2000, current population statistics 2009, prognoses 2050

26. In view of such a population development it becomes more and more important to consider the regional dimension. The substantially increased proportion of the elderly and the old-age dependency rate necessitate crucial reorientation of economy, where the stable, secure, sustainable, competitive and cohesive development is ensured primarily by the increase in educated population in each following generation. Social cohesion definitely influences economic activity.

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