

Study: Measuring Neighbourhood Belonging

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Statistics Canada continues to use a variety of data sources to provide neighbourhood-level information on a wide and expanding range of domains, such as income, crime, services and amenities, and ambient environment. Information on the social aspects of neighbourhoods has now been added to this inventory, filling an important data gap.

A new paper released today, "[Measuring Social Capital at the Neighbourhood Level: Experimental Estimates of Sense of Belonging to the Local Community Measured at the Census Tract Level](#)," describes the construction of a neighbourhood-level variable measuring community belonging within census tracts (CTs).

Respondents to the Canadian Community Health Survey who reported a sense of belonging to their local community were pooled over four years of the survey from 2016 to 2019 and individual responses were aggregated up to the CT level. The Small Area Estimation component of the Generalized Estimation System developed at Statistics Canada was then used to produce more efficient estimates of average community belonging.

The approach yielded smaller coefficients of variation within CTs than obtained from standard survey-weighted methods alone. On a scale from 1 to 4, average community belonging within CTs ranged from 2.67 to 3.28.

The correlations between community belonging and seven other CT-level characteristics were explored. These characteristics varied markedly across CTs with low, moderate or high levels of community belonging. For example, average population density was almost three times higher in CTs with low community belonging than in CTs with high community belonging. Likewise, the share of the population residing in rented rather than owned dwellings was almost three times higher in low community belonging CTs (48%) than in high community belonging CTs (17%).

In terms of duration of residence, 19% of residents in low community belonging CTs had lived at their current address for less than one year compared with 10% of residents in high community belonging CTs. The average age of the population in low community belonging CTs (38.1 years) was significantly younger than the average age in high community belonging CTs (41.8 years).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers [3226](#) and [3901](#).

The study "[Measuring Social Capital at the Neighbourhood Level: Experimental Estimates of Sense of Belonging to the Local Community Measured at the Census Tract Level](#)," part of the *Analytical Studies: Methods and Reference Series (11-633-X)*, is now available.

For more information, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca).

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