Social cohesion in times of forced displacement – the case of young people in Jordan

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by Jana Kuhnt, Ramona Rischke, Anda David, and Tobias Lechtenfeld

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Takeaway messages

- **What we did:** Online survey among youth in Jordan

- **The case of Jordan**
  - Levels of social cohesion (SC) deteriorated but are higher than expected
  - Youth wants to be actors of change but face barriers of participation
  - Social cohesion is seen as an asset

- **Methodologically**
  - Promising operationalization of social cohesion (cross-validation necessary)
  - Challenging to have Syrian refugees respond to online survey

- **Relevant for development programming**
  - Respondents strongly identify with people of similar age and interests. This implies opportunities to strengthening SC by supporting access to joint activities.
Social cohesion

- No uniform definition
- Social fabric or “a sense of togetherness” that helps keeping societies united and peaceful
  - Related to but going beyond socio-economic integration/inclusion of different groups in society
  - Often approximated by concepts of trust and solidarity
  - Context specific across space and time
- Key assumptions
  - A sustainable integration of refugees requires promoting SC (e.g. Jordan’s Response Plan for the Syria Crisis, Gov. of Jordan 2015)
  - SC desirable end in itself and means to fostering multidimensional welfare gains (e.g. OECD 2011)

- For our instrument, we build on Social Cohesion Index by Langer et al. (2016) and Relational Capability Index by Giraud et al. (2013)
Why should we care?

“Those who lost everything are hosted by those who already have little […]”

(UNDP, 2014, p. 8)
### Social media survey:

Online survey advertised via Facebook/Instagram and Email (university network) from January – March 2017.

### Target group:

People currently living in Jordan (18-35 years).

#### Data Collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey started</th>
<th>Survey terminated</th>
<th>Incomplete surveys (i.e. early drop outs)</th>
<th>Survey completed</th>
<th>Starting rate</th>
<th>Completion rate (among target group)</th>
<th>Average time spent on survey (among target group)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook campaign</td>
<td>1691</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>0.22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email campaign</td>
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<td>180</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total observations for analysis 2nd round: 408

1st round of data collection: 12 24

Total observations for analysis 1st and 2nd round: 444
Sample – respondent’s background

- Non-representative sample
  - Frequent internet and social media users (yet, suitable for target group)
  - Almost 80% Jordanian, < 10% Syrians
- Mostly urban areas (Amman, followed by Irbid and Zarqa)
Feeling a sense of belonging to the local community

- Lower sense of belonging compared to 2014 REACH survey
- Stronger sense of belonging among:
  - Those who feel like active members
  - Those who belong to majority group
  - Jordanians
Trust towards different groups

- No general mistrust towards foreigners or certain nationalities; 75% have foreign friends they would rely on for help
- Tendency of being less trusting compared to 2 years ago
  - 31% indicate less trust in their personal networks
  - One third indicate less generalized trust (i.e. trust in strangers)
  - Least favourable towards Syrians
Who do respondents identify with?

- SC is a **group phenomenon**

- **Group identities** are a relevant component of SC (e.g. Langer et al. 2016)
  - Determines who is considered **in-group** and **out-group**

- Among the three most important groups respondents “feel a sense of belonging” to
  - 50% chose same **age**
  - 52% chose similar **interests**
  - 20% chose same **ethnicity/tribe**
  - 20% chose same **religion**
  - 11% chose same **language**
Civic commitment & barriers to participate are high

- Majority feels like an active member of society, and worked jointly with others to solve a problem in their local community
- Almost 80% of respondents expressed a desire to participate more actively in their society
  - Lack of public spaces, lack of knowledge about existing activities, distance, and safety concerns are important barriers to do so
Respondents identify similar dimensions as crucial ingredients for (supporting) social cohesion as proposed in the theoretical literature.

How does a local environment look like that supports a sense of togetherness?

“People who are financially stable, people who are actually living a life and not only worry about what and how to feed their family and provide shelter to them. If people are not living a decent living, supporting local community will be the least of their worries.”
Thank you very much.