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DEVELOPING A SOCIAL COHESION INDEX FOR THE ARAB REGION

Background Methodological Paper by Charles Harb
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Promoting Social Cohesion in the
Arab Region Regional Project

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Charles Harb is a Professor of Social Psychology and Chair of the Department of Psychology at the American University of Beirut. He can be reached at ch17@aub.edu.lb

For any queries on the paper and/or implementation of the Social Cohesion Index, please contact Farah Choucair, Project Manager and Technical Specialist, Promoting Social Cohesion in the Arab Region Project, UNDP RBAS at farah.choucair@undp.org

PREFACE

In the Arab region, the exclusive nature of many political, economic and social institutions and processes, the limited or challenging pluralistic participation in social, economic and political life, and in some instances, the manipulations of diversity and identity, have manifested themselves since 2011 in social discontent, popular uprisings and collisions of identity politics. Setting geopolitics aside, conflictive and violent transitions in Yemen, Libya and Iraq have demonstrated the detrimental effects of weak state acceptance by citizens, and a history of exclusion, inequality and neglect. In Syria, the number of citizens who have fled the country since the outbreak of the armed conflict has risen to more than five million; the world's second-largest refugee population, after the Palestinians.¹ Taking into account the ongoing occupation of Palestine, and the crises of state and conflicts in Lebanon, Egypt, Somalia and Sudan, the region appears to be going through one of its most devastating and destabilizing periods in its modern history.

Against this backdrop, the relationships between citizen and state, as well as among various social groups in some countries, have further deteriorated, making the question of how to restore social cohesion more acute than ever. Recent events show that disaffections and group tensions vary among countries in the Arab region. What has taken the shape of sectarian/confessional civil strife in Iraq and Syria, or identity politics in Lebanon, emerges along party lines in Egypt. At the same time, supranational extremist groups have crafted the manipulation of religious text, and recruited the region's alienated youth to serve their opportunistic political and destructive ends, at the expense of tolerance and inclusivity.

Launched in 2015, "Promoting Social Cohesion in the Arab Region" (PSCAR) is a regional project that aims to promote social cohesion. It encompasses peacebuilding; equal citizenship; trust among citizens as well as between citizen and state; respect for human rights and for economic and social equality; and pluralistic acceptance of "the other", of different faiths, confessions, ethnic backgrounds and political ideologies. This project addresss the question of social cohesion through knowledge generation to better understand and measure this concept, taking into account regional, national and local contexts, while benefiting from the international experience in this regard. Most research on social cohesion emphasizes the multidimensionality and complexity of the concept, operationalizing multileveled indices. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) acknowledges that utilizing this concept to build a unifying agenda requires investment in analytical work to guide the ensuing advocacy initiatives and targeted technical support.

In early 2015, UNDP initiated discussions on the development of an instrument to measure social cohesion on a regional and national level based on feasibility across the Arab countries. The objective of developing a measurement instrument or index is to determine the indicators which can be utilized to measure changes in certain dimensions of socially cohesive behavior, as well as of a socially cohesive society over time, and in response to policies and programmatic interventions. In particular, the project aims to: (1) understand the present state of social cohesion in target geographies and populations, including at local, national and regional levels; (2) track future improvement or deterioration in social cohesion; and (3) offer an explanation for these changes. Indicators will be identified or developed that take into account both context and data availability. The framework for measuring social cohesion within

1 UNHCR, as of 6 April 2017.

the region will also need to take into consideration issues related to refugee populations and internally displaced persons, including refugee participation within host societies, and the host community's responses to refugees.

With this in mind, in November 2015 the PSCAR project commissioned Charles Harb, a professor of political and social psychology at the American University of Beirut, to lead the process of developing a conceptual framework and methodology of a Social Cohesion Index (SCI), or measurement model. In addition, UNDP followed a participatory process by engaging experts and stakeholders from diverse backgrounds. Two Experts' Group Meetings (EGMs) were convened in November 2015 (Amman) and December 2015 (Beirut), gathering around 30 participants to discuss the concept of social cohesion and the construction of a social cohesion index for the region. Four areas of expertise were considered in the selection of participants: (1) technical experts with experience designing composite indices; (2) statisticians and analysts affiliated with polling firms; (3) academic researchers in the fields of political science, social and political psychology, sociology and anthropology; and (4) specialists from UNDP country offices, regional bureaus and headquarters. This balanced combination of expertise resulted in a well-rounded discussion and forward-looking recommendations.

The outcome of this process was a three-tiered approach comprised of core, medial and peripheral indicators to measure social cohesion, where we propose a core measure of social cohesion as a composite score of horizontal and vertical attitudes as well as vertical and horizontal tendencies for collective action. Specifically, this approach assesses citizens' perceptions of the different social group components with which they interact (horizontal attitudes) and their perceptions of state and local authorities (vertical attitudes). Furthermore, citizens' tendencies for collective action against specific outgroups (horizontal) or state authorities (vertical) are a direct measure of potential conflict (and lack of social cohesion), and are thus more in tune with stakeholder interests for the Arab region as the UNDP 2015 EGM meetings showed. This paper presents a set of suggested medial variables strongly associated with the core variables: 1) identities (belonging); 2) emotions (motivation); and 3) trust. The third set of peripheral variables, which would provide a contextual understanding of social cohesion and help model an index for the Arab region, includes perceptions of 1) threat (human security) and 2) justice, as well as measures of 3) contact and 4) levels of participation and representation.

The proposed SCI is designed to help decision-makers, development practitioners and other stakeholders better understand the dynamics that influence attitudes and collective action, and has the potential to identify precise entry points for peace-building projects. When tested, the proposed index presents an opportunity to identify indicators which predict societal trends, as well as providing the basis for evidence-based policy recommendations to decision-makers. It also helps assess, both directly and indirectly, the likelihood of intercommunity violence through questions measuring participants' subjective estimate of conflict (indirect), and participants' willingness to support peaceful and violent forms of collective action to protect ingroups against specific targets (direct).

This is an Exposure Draft released for public interest and consideration. The methodology explored here will be tested over the next few years, and a revised version will be produced subsequently in light of the lessons learned. As a next step, UNDP will initiate a pilot phase of a multi-stage roll-out of the SCI across Arab countries, which will be implemented in partnership with UNDP Country Offices and other partners. The details of this phase will be laid out country by country, and the paper defines the overall process for this stage. The implementation of the SCI in the diverse Arab region would contribute to its validation and to enhancing the conceptual understanding of social cohesion, as well as in developing more targeted programmatic interventions and monitoring frameworks.

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Peer Review

- Miles Hewstone, Director of the Oxford Centre for the Study of Intergroup Conflict at the University of Oxford
- Amaney Jamal, the Edwards S. Sanford Professor of Politics and Director of the Mamdouha S. Bobst Center for Peace and Justice at Princeton University
- Alexandros Lordos, Director of Research at the Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development

Reader's Group

Farah Choucair, Jos De La Haye, Malin Herwig, Alexandra Wildre.

Members of the Experts' Group

Faleh Abdel Jabbar, Amr Abdelrahman, Mohammad Abu-Nimer, Fares Braizat, Terri Beswick, Amr Ezzat, George Fahmi, Ronald Fischer, Waseem Haddad, Anne Hagood, Miles Hewstone, Dina El Khawaja, Chikako Kodama, Kevin Koehler, Heba El-Laithy, Neophytos Loizides, Alexandros Lordos, Emad Mofreh, Jonathan Murphy, Joanna Nassar, Magued Osman, Bastien Revel, Monica Rijal, Giordano Segneri, Maha Shuayb, Lucine Taminian, Kim Wilkinson, Mohamed Younis.

Editing

English Text: Amy E. Robertson

Design

Cover, layout and production: Prolance FZC, Beirut, Lebanon

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Developing a Social Cohesion Index for the Arab Region

I- Context in the Arab Region

A- Sociopolitical context before 2011:

The sociopolitical context of the Arab region before the 2011 uprisings was extensively documented in a series of in-depth reports by the United Nations.² The reports revealed high levels of illiteracy, vast disparities in wealth within nations, the majority of citizens living in poverty, gender inequities, and significant deficits in health care provisions and educational benefits across the region. The bleak social realities were accompanied by widespread authoritarianism, corruption and abuse of power by ruling elites, compounded by foreign military interventions, occupation and war.³

For several years now, Arab populations have been youthful, with the majority under 25 years of age in many countries. Youth aged 15-29 account for nearly one-third of the 392 million nationals residing in the Arab region. More than half of the region's youth live in Egypt, Algeria, Sudan and Iraq.⁴ On a related and critical note, unemployment was a top concern across the region,⁵ with one in every three Arabs reportedly without a job.⁶ Furthermore, unemployment among Arab youth has reached 29 percent, compared to 13 percent worldwide.⁷ Analysts at the United Nations have estimated that 92 million jobs need to be created by 2030 to absorb this growing workforce.⁸

B- The 2011 Arab uprisings:

The Arab uprisings that started in late 2010 have significantly transformed the sociopolitical dynamics of the region. The seismic shifts engendered by the uprisings continue to ripple six years on, with wide-ranging costs and outcomes. While some uprisings yielded high returns to comparatively low costs (e.g. Tunisia), in other countries, the opposite was true (e.g. Syria).

These social movements produced varying results: proactive moderate reform in the case of Morocco's constitutional reforms in 2011; progressive change in the case of Tunisia's democratic election and new constitution; polarization in the case of Egypt; and sustained open conflict in the cases of Libya, Yemen, Syria and Iraq.

The Arab political landscape similarly ranges from stable to disintegrating states. While most Arab monarchies have managed to maintain their social order, other polities saw a gradual descent into conflict (e.g. Libya) and even disintegration (e.g. the rise of ISIS/Daesh and the redrawn borders of Syria and Iraq).

The situation is especially dire in the Mashreq countries, where massive population displacements continue to modify the population profiles of Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. Over five million Syrian

² Arab Human Development Reports (AHDR); UNDP 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2009 and 2016.

³ See the 2005 and 2009 AHDRs, respectively.

⁴ World Population Prospects, Population Division, United Nations, 2017.

⁵ E.g., Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, 2013; ASDA'A Burson-Marsteller, 2014.

⁶ Urdal, 2012.

⁷ World Development Indicators, World Bank, 2015.

⁸ ESCWA, 2014.

nationals have sought refuge in neighboring countries, places that were already hosting significant numbers of migrants, displaced persons and refugees from around the region.⁹ Furthermore, the open conflicts ripping through Syria and Iraq have induced the reemergence of questions about state sovereignty, national borders and the reshaping of territorial entities in the region. Fractionalization along ethnic (Kurdish, Turkmen, Amazigh, Arab, etc.) and sectarian lines (Sunni, Alawi, Shia) is challenging the nation states created by colonial powers at the turn of the 20th century. The establishment of an Islamic State in Syria and Iraq (ISIS/Daesh) and the growing calls for an independent Kurdistan are cases in point.

It is thus not surprising to see increased attention paid to monitoring, assessing and shoring up social cohesion in the region. The disintegrating Levant is accumulating losses in human life and development that will impact populations for years to come. Damages to social bonds, broken networks, trauma, and the systematic destruction of property, infrastructure and human capital threaten the stability of the region and have direct implications for international security, stability and human development.¹⁰ It is thus essential to identify, assess and monitor the factors affecting social cohesion through a periodic survey of public perceptions and sentiments. Such an index would enable stakeholders to design intervention strategies built on actual data collected through waves of social cohesion assessments across locations and time (see section IV below for applications and details). In other words, a comprehensive, evidence-based approach to social cohesion would help stakeholders better identify sources of social tension, understand sociopolitical dynamics, and develop optimal intervention strategies for the region to stave off conflict (see sections III and IV below).

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II- Literature review of social cohesion:

A- Historical origins

Attention to social cohesion in the region can be traced back to the works of Ibn Khaldun, a fourteenth century Arab scholar considered one of the founding fathers of modern sociology.¹¹ Ibn Khaldun's Muqaddimah ("Introduction") explored, among other matters, the special bonds that tie group members together (assabiyah), and described its organic adaptation to different contexts (e.g. urban/nomadic), populations (tribe/city dwellers) and times (across-generations).¹² Assabiyah, loosely translated as "social cohesion", was used to explain the rise and fall of specific groups (and tribes), the dynamics that can animate them, and the conditions for prosperity and war within a social system.¹³

Modern sociological uses of the "social cohesion" concept can be traced to the work of Tonnies in

9 UNHCR, 2017.

10 The disintegration of central authority and continued warfare in the Levant has resulted in a rise in violent attacks outside the region (e.g. Turkey, France, Belgium, etc.), and large waves of refugees trying to reach safer havens (e.g. Germany).

11 Gates, 1967.

12 Ibn Khaldun, 1958.

13 Ibn Khaldun, 1958.

1887, and later to Durkheim in 1912, the latter famously attempting to characterize two contrasting forms of social cohesion, which he labeled “mechanical” and “organic” solidarity. Mechanical solidarity prevails in small societies organized into functionally equivalent segments, while organic solidarity prevails in much larger societies that are “united by mutual interdependence in an elaborated division of labor, rather than by likeness”, and divided into specialized organs.¹⁴

“Social cohesion” remained a loosely defined concept for over a century, with divergent definitions across disciplines (e.g. sociology, political science), stakeholders (e.g. academics, policy makers, etc.) and regions (e.g. Europe, Latin America, USA – see section II-D below). This paper does not aim to provide a detailed exploration of similarities and differences in approaching social cohesion, but rather an introduction to the literature by parceling it into three main categories: 1) academic, 2) by policymakers and stakeholders, and 3) majority world research.

B- Scholarly analyses of social cohesion

Early interest in social cohesion and the difficulties of operationalizing such a meta- (or quasi) construct pushed researchers to investigate various components spanning the concept’s nebulous semantic field. Investigations of dimensions of social cohesion were undertaken in a variety of fields (e.g. anthropology, sociology, political science, economics, psychology) with little cross-fertilization. For example, Reeskens, Botterman and Hooghe (2009) noted that social cohesion was variously defined as a) social order (e.g. Sampson et al. 1997, Hirschfield & Bowers 1997), b) common identity (e.g. Cantle, 2001), c) migration (Easterly et al. 2006), d) economic inclusion (e.g. White 2003), e) social capital (e.g. Friedkin, 2004; Hewstone, 2015), and f) trust (e.g. Hobson-Prater & Leech, 2012; Wickes 2010, Larsen, 2014).

More complex approaches to social cohesion were often multidimensional, and included political (voting and volunteering), economic (income, labor force participation) and social dimensions (social interactions, informal volunteering).¹⁵ For example, Jenson’s seminal paper proposed that social cohesion is composed of five factors: 1) affiliation/isolation (e.g. feeling of belonging); 2) insertion/exclusion (e.g. shared market capacity); 3) participation/passivity (e.g. involvement in management of public affairs); 4) acceptance/rejection (e.g. pluralism, tolerance regarding differences); and 5) legitimacy/illegitimacy (e.g. how adequately various institutions represent the people and their interests).¹⁶ The model was further refined by Bernard, who proposed six factors by relabeling acceptance/rejection as recognition/rejection, and adding a sixth dimension labeled equality/inequality.¹⁷ Building on the work of Bernard and Chan et al.,¹⁸ Dickes and Valentova developed a six-dimensional social cohesion measure which they validated in 47 European countries and regions.¹⁹ While the measure did well in most samples, it was less reliable in some countries, possibly because of the post-hoc operational definition of social cohesion and the retrospective analysis of secondary data.²⁰

Scholarly interests in social cohesion remained dispersed and relatively dormant. It was not until Putnam published his 2007 milestone study, *E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-*

14 As cited in Whitehouse & Lanman, 2014.

15 Rajulton et al., 2006.

16 Jenson, 1998.

17 Bernard, 1999.

18 Chan, To and Chan, 2006.

19 Dickes and Valentova, 2012.

20 The measure consisted of a post-hoc selection of items extracted from the European Social Survey (ESS), tested on data collected in 2008.

first Century, positing a negative relationship between ethnic diversity and social cohesion, that the scholarly interest of sociologists and political scientists in social cohesion boomed, primarily because of the publication's impact on policies related to immigration and minorities.²¹ Putnam argued that living in an ethnically heterogeneous environment was harmful to interpersonal trust and undermined social connections between and within ethnic groups.

Putnam's proposal was subsequently challenged by a series of studies and alternative models of explanations exploring social cohesion, trust and social capital. One of the more prominent rebukes was proposed by van der Meer and Tolsma in 2014, who reviewed the structural and empirical results of over 90 studies investigating the relation between ethnic heterogeneity and social cohesion. The authors' seminal review found that: 1) Putnam's findings were more common in the United States than in other countries (e.g. Europe); and 2) ethnic diversity was not related to lower inter-ethnic social cohesion. In other words, Putnam's findings were found to be confined to a specific context and were difficult to replicate in other parts of the US as well as globally. Van der Meer and Tolsma also expressed concern about the conceptual underrepresentation of social cohesion, noting the tendency of social researchers to consider "generalized social trust" as a key (proxy) indicator of the social cohesion construct.

In a similar challenge, Hewstone rebutted Putnam's claim that people would tend to "hunker down", or retreat from social life when faced with ethnic diversity.²² Citing the extensive empirical literature on Intergroup Contact Theory, Hewstone offered a more optimistic view of the consequences of diversity for trust and intergroup attitudes. Contact theorists had argued that engaging in positive contact with individuals from different groups has a positive impact on intergroup attitudes and other outcome measures (cf. Pettigrew & Tropp's 2006 meta-analysis). As Hewstone stated, "It is thus now well established that not only the frequency (or quantity) of contact, but importantly, the quality of contact determines the extent to which contact positively affects outgroup attitudes" (p.420). Contact quality refers to participants' subjective assessment of how favorable or positive they rate their interaction with outgroup members. In addition, Hewstone noted the importance of affective processes such as reduced intergroup anxiety, increased empathy and reduced intergroup threat perceptions on attitudinal outcomes.

It is worth noting that the large majority of scholars researching social cohesion reside in North America and Western Europe, and are mostly concerned with the effects of ethnic minorities on social dynamics, social peace and economic prosperity. The majority of studies on social cohesion have focused on the impact of minority groups on social majorities, especially in terms of assimilation of migrants and the effect of minorities on European and North American social cohesion. Furthermore, many studies have relied on secondary data analyses, using national surveys and statistics of European or North American states to validate a claim or verify a set of hypotheses. This is not optimal, as the reliance on already published data sets reduces the ability of researchers to generate their own items for testing their models or hypotheses, and often leads to research publications that suffer from a post-hoc bias. Furthermore, differences in the data sets used have also led to differences in conceptions of social cohesion, which is a possible explanation for some of the diffused operationalization of social cohesion in the literature cited above. Finally, relying on secondary data analyses reduces confidence in the validity of analyses, as researchers are unaware of the methodological threats and procedural

21 Van der Meer & Tolsma, 2014.

22 Hewstone, 2015.

constraints that affected the original collection of data.

Reliance on secondary data often leads to research publications that suffer from a post-hoc bias.

C- Applied conceptions: the role of international institutions and NGOs

Interestingly, an alternative literature on social cohesion has also developed among international institutions and NGOs, which goes beyond exploring the narrow link between ethnic diversity and social cohesion in Western nations.²³ While definitions of social cohesion remained elusive, different stakeholders adopted conceptions of social cohesion that addressed their specific goals and needs (e.g. OECD, World Bank, Council of Europe, UNDP, UNESCO). The elasticity of the social cohesion concept highlights its political nature, since the selection of one approach over another reflects a “political choice” about the means one would consider for fostering social cohesion.²⁴

For example, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defined a socially cohesive society as one that “works towards the well-being of all its members, fights exclusion and marginalization, creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, and offers its members the opportunity of upward mobility” [italics added],²⁵ while the Council of Europe defined social cohesion as “the capacity of a society to ensure the welfare of all its members, minimizing disparities and avoiding polarization. A cohesive society is a mutually supportive community of free individuals pursuing these common goals by democratic means” (p.7 [italics added]).²⁶ The minor differences in focus between the two institutions highlight the differences between the agendas promoted by each organization.

Several institutions opted for scholarly conceptions of social cohesion and investigated the impact of migrant and ethnic communities on social cohesion within post-industrial nations. The Scanlon Monash Index (SMI) was inspired by the works of Jenson and Bernard, and measured social cohesion as a five-dimensional construct: 1) belonging; 2) social justice and equity; 3) participation; 4) acceptance and rejection (legitimacy); and 5) worth (life satisfaction, happiness). The SMI was tested yearly starting in 2007, totaling 13 surveys and a population of 24,000 Australian participants.²⁷ Similarly, Schmeets and Coumans adopted a three-dimensional approach, defining social cohesion as 1) participation, 2) trust and 3) integration.²⁸ Using secondary data issued from “Dutch parliamentary election studies”, “European social surveys”, and the “social statistics database”, Schmeets and Coumans developed a 15-indicator measure assessing participation and trust in the Netherlands.

D- Majority world studies²⁹

The literature in majority world countries is scant but informative. Research on social cohesion in Latin

23 E.g. Schmeets and Coumans, 2013; Jenson, 2010; Acket et al., 2011.

24 Boucher & Samad, 2013.

25 OECD, 2012.

26 Jenson, 2010.

27 Markus, 2014.

28 Schmeets and Coumans, 2013.

29 “Majority world” refers to the countries where the majority of the world’s population resides, traditionally referred to as “developing”.

America (e.g. Ferroni et al., 2008), Asia-Pacific (OECD, 2012), China (Chan et al., 2006), Kenya (The Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis, 2014), Cyprus (Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development, 2015) and Lebanon (UNHCR-UNDP Joint Secretariat, 2015; Harb & Saab, 2014) clearly demonstrates the divergence in foci and emphases from their Western counterparts. For example, Ferroni et al. defined social cohesion as the capacity for cooperation and solidarity in a society, based on an equitable distribution of opportunities to participate in economic, social and political life.³⁰ Their “Latin American” approach to social cohesion is conceived as comprised of two dimensions: 1) the extent of social capital that is present, that is, the degree to which citizens are able to work together because they trust each other; and 2) the degree of equality in the distribution of opportunities.

The focus on trust and justice highlighted in the Latin American conception is replaced by a focus on social harmony and interconnectedness within the Chinese context. Chan et al. defined social cohesion as the degree of interconnectedness between individuals that is both a result and cause of public and civic life. It encompasses feelings of commitment, trust and norms of reciprocity. By contrast, researchers in Asia-Pacific defined social cohesion as comprising life satisfaction, trust, social behavior, suicide and voting behavior,³¹ while researchers in Kenya defined social cohesion to include prosperity, equity, trust, peace, diversity and identity.³²

Interestingly, both the social cohesion study in Cyprus and the studies conducted in Lebanon focus on the social conflict undertones of social cohesion. As such, social cohesion is thought to represent “the absence of latent conflict and the presence of strong social bonds”, and includes “a focus on inclusive citizenship, trust between citizen and citizen as well as between citizen and state, respect for human rights, economic and social equality, and a pluralistic acceptance of the other”.³³

The paper “Monitoring stability in Lebanon” proposed the development of a monitoring strategy to assess stability and potentials for violence in Lebanon through an exhaustive multilevel approach acting as an early warning system.³⁴ The proposed model recommends daily monitoring of incidents and periodic assessment of population perceptions, accompanied by in-depth qualitative analyses. While this “stability monitoring system” is intuitively appealing, it does not assess causes of conflict, nor does it assess social cohesion within an eco-system. Furthermore, the cost of implementing such a complex and intensive monitoring system is likely to be quite prohibitive.

Researchers interested in social cohesion in the Arab region distinguish the concept along two dimensions: horizontal (citizen-citizen) and vertical (citizen-state).

On the other hand, the SCORE study³⁵ focused on post-conflict Cyprus, assessing intergroup perceptions and the potential for intergroup reconciliation. The project contained a large number of indices measuring: 1) trust in institutions; 2) human security; 3) satisfaction with civic life; 4) satisfaction

30 Ferroni, Mateo and Payne, 2008.

31 OECD, 2012.

32 The Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis, 2014.

33 UNDP-UNHCR Joint Secretariat, p. 13, 2015.

34 Aktis, 2015.

35 Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development (SeeD), 2015.

with personal life; 5) group identification; 6) civic engagement; 7) representation; and 8) perceptions of institutional corruption. The SCORE measure was subjected to robust psychometric testing, and the researchers proposed a data-driven model aimed at assisting policymakers working on peace initiatives between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. The SCORE study differs from the current SCI proposal in at least three important ways: 1) SCORE focused on reconciliation in a post-conflict context, while the SCI focuses on social cohesion and readiness for conflict in a fluid and still unfolding sociopolitical context; 2) SCORE used a bottom-up, item-driven approach, while the SCI uses a top-down, conceptually-driven approach, combined with a bottom-up contextual adaptation and validation (see sections III and IV below); and finally, 3) SCORE focused exclusively on the Cypriot sociopolitical context, while the SCI focuses on the sociopolitical context of the wider Arab region.

Importantly, the SCORE study highlighted the importance of human security as the most critical variable in predicting the outcomes of its index. UNDP was first to draw global public attention to human security in its 1994 Human Development Report, broadly defining it as everything that constitutes freedom from want and fear. The 2009 Arab Human Development Report focused on human security challenges in the Arab region, identifying seven dimensions of threat: 1) people and their insecure environment (population, urban growth, pollution etc.); 2) states and their insecure people (identity, citizenship, security etc.); 3) vulnerable groups (e.g. refugees, human trafficking etc.); 4) economic vulnerability (e.g. unemployment, poverty etc.); 5) food insecurity; 6) health security; and 7) military intervention and occupation. While human security can be assessed objectively, public perceptions of threat are more closely associated with social cohesion and potentials for conflict (see section III/C/i below).

In sum, the international literature on social cohesion is diverse and varies by discipline, political orientation and region. There is near consensus in understanding social cohesion as a complex (or a quasi) concept, encompassing a multiplicity of dimensions and indicators. The majority of Western studies focused on the impact of ethnic diversity on social cohesion (especially trust), while other scholars focused on interpersonal harmony, justice, human security and identity. Importantly, some researchers interested in social cohesion (e.g. Chan et al.) and experts in the Arab region (e.g. UNDP 2015 EGM) further distinguish the concept along two dimensions: horizontal (citizen-citizen) and vertical (citizen-state), as these are thought to indicate whether conflict is likely to occur between groups (intergroup conflict) or against state authorities (social uprisings).

III- SCI in the Arab Region

In the midst of wide-ranging definitions of social cohesion across literatures and contexts, developing a social cohesion index for the Arab world requires paying special attention to the sociopolitical and cultural dynamics at play in the region.

Considering the observed disintegration of some states, the eruption of both intergroup conflict (e.g. sectarian tensions in the Levant) and group-state conflict or polarization (e.g. Egypt, Tunisia), measuring social cohesion requires an assessment of the tension (in its physics sense) at play along both horizontal and vertical dimensions.

Sociopolitical observers of the Arab region are rightfully concerned about social conflict and civil strife in the region. Several governments and parliaments only weakly represent their national constituents, while fractionalization, corruption and nepotism increase social alienation, discontent and mistrust in

authorities and central governments. Receding government authority and services create spaces for special groups to fill the vacuum, leading to escalating tensions and dynamics between groups vying for power over scarce resources.

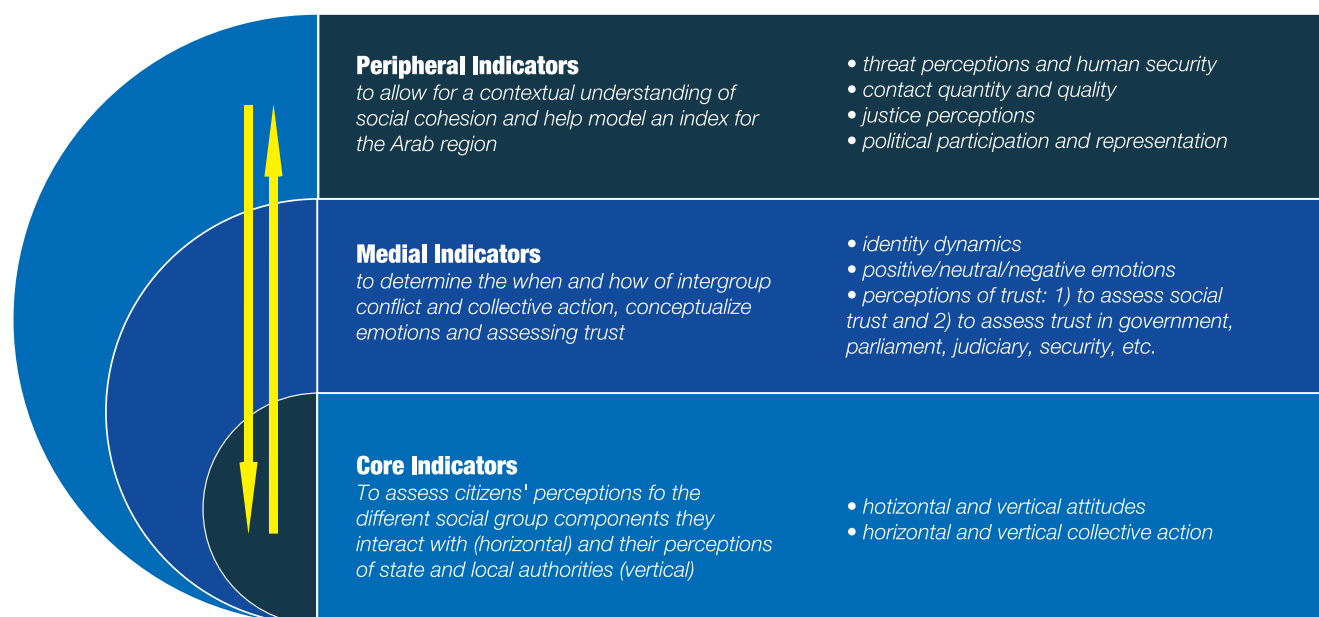
Citizens are thus caught at the junction of vertical and horizontal dynamics, affecting their perceptions of the social reality and leading them to a series of potential response options, ranging from disengagement (apathy, anomie, learned helplessness) to action (fight or flight responses). Individual and group perceptions are thus central to understanding conflict and to assessing social cohesion in the region. Citizens' perceptions of their government and state authorities are key determinants of anti-government sentiments and social strife. Weakened trust in state institutions (judiciary, executive, legislative) and decreasing assessment of representation and participation may lead to escalating citizen-state tensions and clashes. Furthermore, perceptions of unfair treatment by state authorities will stoke negative sentiments towards them. As such, state power is also likely to affect motivations for political action, as group perceptions of state security agencies are likely to play a key role in assessing vertical dimensions of social cohesion.

We adopt a conception of social cohesion that diverges from the classic Western literature's focus on ethnic diversity, and focus instead on conceptions developed by majority world researchers and tailored to concerns specific to the Arab region. We adopt a definition of social cohesion that is close to Chan et al.'s conception of social cohesion as "a state of affairs concerning both the vertical and the horizontal interactions among members of a society, as characterized by a set of attitudes and norms that include trust, a sense of belonging, and the willingness to participate and help, as well as their behavioral manifestations" (p. 290). We also build on the two UNDP-convened Expert Group Meetings (EGMs) held in Amman (November 2015) and Beirut (December 2015), which focused on exploring the nomological network of "social cohesion" for the Arab region using a multidisciplinary approach (see UNDP 2015 EGM summaries). The EGMs converged on identifying a set of key variables (see below) as important dimensions in assessing social cohesion in the Arab region.

The paper defines social cohesion as "a state of affairs concerning both the vertical and the horizontal interactions among members of a society characterized by a set of attitudes and norms that include trust, a sense of belonging, and the willingness to participate and help, as well as their behavioral manifestations."

Specifically, we propose to develop a social cohesion index that assesses intergroup perceptions (the horizontal dimension) and citizen-state perceptions (the vertical dimension). We also construe social cohesion as a multifactorial concept that includes core, medial (i.e. occurring in the middle) and peripheral variables. We first present two core variables as proxy indicators of social cohesion, namely 1) vertical and horizontal attitudes and 2) vertical and horizontal collective action tendencies. We then briefly present a set of medial variables strongly associated with the core variables above: 1) identities (belonging); 2) emotions; and 3) trust. We finally present a third set of peripheral variables that would

provide a contextual understanding of social cohesion and help model an index for the Arab region. These variables include perceptions of 1) threat (human security) and 2) justice, as well as measures of 3) contact and 4) levels of participation and representation.



Social Cohesion Index Measurement Model: A three-tier approach

The SCI is an academically and culturally grounded measure that builds on the social and political psychology literatures on intergroup dynamics and collective action, and is tailored to the sociocultural context of the Arab region. The SCI is conceived as a multidimensional, multilayered concept comprising of core, medial and peripheral indicators. The conceptually-driven approach to SCI reduces the challenges faced by a bottom-up approach (e.g. SCORE), and is a significantly more cost-effective and parsimonious model of social cohesion and stability than other available measures (e.g. Aktis).

A- Core indicators

As part of this three-layered approach to social cohesion, we propose a core measure of social cohesion as a composite score of horizontal and vertical attitudes along with vertical and horizontal tendencies for collective action. Specifically, we propose to assess citizens' perceptions of the different social group components with which they interact (horizontal attitudes) and their perceptions of state and local authorities (vertical attitudes). We conceptualize these attitudinal measures as the closest indicators of social cohesion as defined by Chan et al., and in line with the social and political psychology literature on intergroup dynamics and collective action.³⁶ Citizens' positive or negative evaluations of other groups and state authorities are likely to have a direct impact on social tensions and the potential for social conflict. Furthermore, citizens' tendencies for collective action against specific outgroups (horizontal) or state authorities (vertical) are a direct measure of potential conflict (and lack of social cohesion), and are thus more in tune with stakeholder interests for the Arab region as demonstrated by the UNDP Experts' Group Meetings conducted in 2015.

36 E.g. van Zomeren et al., 2008; van Zomeren, 2013.

Citizens' tendencies for collective action against specific outgroups (horizontal) or state authorities (vertical) are a direct measure of potential conflict (and lack of social cohesion).

i) *Attitudes:*

Identifying how individuals subjectively feel towards primary actors and groups in their environment (e.g. towards the government, army, political leaders, religious figures, community leaders etc.) would provide analysts with insights into the dynamics of a community: it would enable the description of intra- and inter- community perceptions and the identification of genuinely influential actors in the community. Assessing these networks of relationships and influences would provide policymakers with an understanding whom people consider as allies or enemies, while the polarization of attitudinal scores towards specific targets would identify the social fault lines on which stakeholders need to focus in order to mitigate social conflict and increase social cohesion.

ii) *Collective Action:*

Collective action is typically defined as any action that individuals undertake as psychological group members, with the subjective goal of improving their group's condition.³⁷ Collective action does not occur without the consent of individuals' "hearts and minds", and it follows that an understanding of their core motivations to undertake action is essential.³⁸ The social psychological literature on collective action has grown significantly over the past few years, and researchers have identified at least three key predictors across studies: social identities, justice perceptions and efficacy.³⁹ In testing social cohesion within the Lebanese conflict setting, Harb and Saab⁴⁰ further distinguished between peaceful and violent collective action tendencies, with the former consisting of peaceful protest, and the latter focusing on willingness to engage in violent action in defense of one's group. We propose adapting Harb and Saab's approach, further differentiating between horizontal and vertical collective action tendencies, both peaceful and violent—that is, collective action against other social groups (horizontal) or against state institutions (vertical).

B- **Medial Indicators:**

The second layer in the SCI model includes intermediate variables that bear a direct link to when and how core measures of social cohesion increase or decrease. The social psychological literature clearly identifies social identities and emotions as key variables in determining the when and how of collective action (i.e. their mediating and moderating effects on collective action). The role played by the psychological process of identifying with a group and the motivational impetus emotions have in predicting collective action are both well documented.⁴¹ Furthermore, measures of trust have often

37 Wright, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1990.

38 Zomer, 2013.

39 See Zomer et al. 2008, and Zomer 2013 for a model and review.

40 Harb and Saab, 2014.

41 E.g. Zomer et al., 2008.

been used as proxy assessments of social cohesion,⁴² and were identified as important co-variables to social cohesion measures in the Arab region.⁴³

Social identities and emotions as key variables in determining the when and how of collective action. ---

i) Identities:

Weakened state authorities often witness the rise of non-state actors and groups that manage social affairs and services. In the absence of an overarching authority, individuals tend to form or join groups to increase their chances of survival and promote a set of shared goals. Shifting references in service provisions may lead to alterations in social identities as individuals adjust to their changing realities. Intergroup tensions may escalate as competition for limited resources increases, and a race towards power and dominance begins.

Identity dynamics are thus central to understanding intergroup conflict and collective action. Meta-analyses results confirm that group identification is one of the most powerful predictors of collective action.⁴⁴ The groups with which we identify have direct implications on which groups we consider as our antagonists. For example, individuals who endorse a high sectarian identity will likely consider members of other sects as rivals, while individuals who endorse a high national identity will likely consider other nations as such. Understanding the level of ingroup identification is thus essential to understanding the kind of conflict or social dynamics at play in a specific context. We propose to measure levels of sociopolitical identification along six dimensions that are thought to be relevant to the Arab region: 1) family; 2) municipality/region; 3) sect/ethnicity; 4) nation; 5) pan-national (Arab/Islamic); and 6) self only (distinction from social groups). These dimensions emerged as most prominent in an Arab context.⁴⁵ These basic dimensions of identity can be further expanded (e.g. separating sect and ethnicity; adding other identity categories) or reduced (e.g. removing the regional dimension in surveys of city-states (e.g. Qatar)), depending on the specific social structure prevalent in each country sampled.

ii) Emotions:

“Arguably the strongest historical shift in thinking about motivations for collective action can be found in the conceptualization of emotions” (Van Zomeren 2013, p. 381). Emotions are dynamic psychological mechanisms that guide an individual’s coping efforts in context.⁴⁶ Individuals’ cognitive appraisal of their environment leads them to experience discrete emotions (e.g., anger or fear), which are associated with states of action readiness that prepare individuals for adaptive action, such as fight or flight responses.⁴⁷ Anger and fear are two emotions that have been extensively studied in collective action research, and

42 E.g. Hooghe et al. 2006.

43 UNDP 2015, EGM meetings.

44 Van Zomeren et al., 2008; van Zomeren, 2013.

45 E.g. Harb, 2010.

46 E.g. Scherer et al., 2001; van Zomeren et al., 2012.

47 Van Zomeren, 2013.

were found to have opposite effects: while anger is a clear positive predictor of collective action (fight response), fear has an opposite effect (flight response). We also propose adding several emotions we think may be relevant to understanding intergroup perceptions, namely contempt, hate, respect, empathy/compassion, fear and affection.

Arguably the strongest historical shift in thinking about motivations for collective action can be found in the conceptualization of emotion. ---

iii) *Trust:*

Perceptions of trust have been a core measure of social cohesion across the relevant literature. Trust is an important element in cementing relationships and estimating reactions to interpersonal interactions. Individuals who perceive the world as an unfriendly place, where people cannot be trusted, are also more likely to perceive outgroups with suspicion. We propose assessing trust as a global measure in line with the social cohesion literature,⁴⁸ but also in line with the current proposal by differentiating between vertical and horizontal perceptions. Specifically, we propose a two-dimensional approach assessing 1) global social trust (horizontal), and 2) trust in vertical structures, namely trust in the government, the parliament, the judiciary, security apparatuses and the media (e.g. Arab Barometer, 2013).

C- Peripheral indicators:

i) *Threat perceptions and human security*

The regional literature on social cohesion identified human security as a prominent factor in predicting social cohesion outcomes.⁴⁹ Human security reflects an assessment of contextual threats, and can be measured both objectively and subjectively. It is, however, the subjective perceptions that are likely to have the greatest impact on social cohesion. Perceptions of threat constitute a powerful predictor of mobilized social action: negative attitudes and emotions toward outgroups are intuitively associated with the degree to which specific outgroups are perceived to constitute a potential threat to ingroup members.⁵⁰ Threat is thought to be the greatest obstacle to social harmony, and the trigger of defensive reactions that may result in conflict.⁵¹ Integrated Threat Theory (ITT) differentiates between two main types of threat: Symbolic and Realistic threats. Symbolic threats include threats to the ingroup's religion, value systems, ideology, philosophy, morality or worldview. Realistic threats encompass threats to the ingroup's existence, resources and/or general physical wellbeing of its members. These two threats are complementary rather than mutually exclusive, and have been consistently associated with intergroup anxiety, negative attitudes and discrimination.⁵²

48 E.g. Larsen, 2014.

49 E.g. Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development, 2015; Aktis, 2015.

50 Stephan & Stephan, 2000.

51 Hornsey & Hogg, 2000.

52 E.g., Riek, Mania, & Gaertner, 2006.

Negative attitudes and emotions toward outgroups are intuitively associated with the degree to which specific outgroups are perceived to constitute a potential threat to ingroup members.

Importantly, ITT investigations in the Lebanese context demonstrated a different typology consisting of three distinct categories: existential threat (i.e. perceptions of threat of bodily harm and property destruction), economic threat (i.e. perceptions of threat to one's job security and financial income) and symbolic threat (i.e. threats to an ingroup's value system (e.g. ideology, worldview, or morality)).⁵³ Furthermore, considering the relevance of human security in predicting social cohesion and the importance of assessing vertical perceptions, we propose a fourth dimension assessing perceptions of threat from state authorities. In the context of authoritarian Arab regimes, state power is likely to be perceived as a threat to personal and group well-being, and may take the form of restrictions on freedoms and civic rights as well as strong social policing through heavy-handed state security agents.

ii) *Contact hypothesis:*

Some theorists interested in reducing intergroup prejudice and discrimination have focused on the importance of contact as a mediating variable,⁵⁴ and have differentiated between two dimensions of contact: Contact Quantity and Contact Quality. The former refers to the frequency of contact between members of various groups, while the latter focuses on whether it is positive or negative contact. Both types interact to affect intergroup perceptions and relations: for example, groups might have high contact frequency, but the contact is mostly negative (leading to higher levels of prejudice), or groups might have low but positive contact (leading to lower levels of prejudice). The contact hypothesis has been tested in the contexts of Northern Ireland⁵⁵ and Lebanon.⁵⁶

iii) *Justice perceptions:*

Van Zomeren et al.'s seminal paper on the Social Identity Model of Collective Action (SIMCA, 2008) presented justice perceptions as an important predictor of collective action. Justice principles have long been held as core values motivating individuals and groups to action. Research on collective action against US forces in Iraq⁵⁷ highlighted the centrality of justice perceptions in predicting support for resistance to US occupation forces, while research in Lebanon showed justice perceptions played an important role in intergroup relations between Lebanese nationals, Palestinian refugees and Syrian refugees.⁵⁸ Justice perceptions are tied to vertical dynamics, as citizens monitor how authorities distribute resources (distributive justice), implement the same administrative procedures for all citizens (procedural justice), and interact with citizens in a fair and dignified way (interactional justice). Authorities that are perceived as violating any of the three dimensions listed above are likely to be negatively evaluated, which may increase the potential for protest action.

53 Harb, 2012; Harb & Saab, 2014.

54 Dovidio et al. 2013.

55 Cairns & Hewstone, 2005.

56 Harb & Saab, 2014.

57 Fischer et al., 2008.

58 Harb, 2012; Harb & Saab, 2014.

Justice perceptions are tied to vertical dynamics, as citizens monitor how authorities distribute resources.

iv) *Political participation and representation:*

Political participation and representation have been identified as possible indicators of social cohesion,⁵⁹ as they reflect the degree to which participants are involved in political life and feel represented by local and national authorities. While participation can be objectively measured by assessing voter turnout at regional or national elections, representation can be subjectively measured by asking citizens about the degree to which they feel represented in local and national assemblies. We also propose assessing citizen participation in socio-political events and organisations as an additional measure of social capital (e.g. participation in political groups/discussions, religious groupings, unions, etc.).

IV- Applying the social cohesion index in the region:

The proposed SCI is a complex multilevel and multidimensional model aimed at assessing peoples' horizontal (intergroup) and vertical (citizen-state) perceptions. The SCI is thus constructed as a survey instrument that is periodically polling public perceptions and sentiments, and is a quantitative measure of intra- and inter-group dynamics, social ties and citizen-state relations in any given locality. The SCI, administered yearly to representative samples of general populations, would permit researchers and stakeholders to: a) describe the types of social realities, tensions and dynamics at play in various locations; b) provide a geographical mapping of areas of concerns and identify localities or subpopulations that require urgent attention; c) monitor changes over time in social tensions, dynamics between groups and citizen state relations, thus identifying emerging trends and relationships; d) explore perceptual differences between groups in perceptions of threat, trust, security etc., and elaborate strategic recommendation for tailored interventions per target; e) monitor the impact of implemented interventions in affecting global perceptions of social cohesion; and f) develop and test theoretical and predictive models of social cohesion in the Arab region.

A - Describing sociopolitical dynamics in the region:

Data collected for the SCI would enable researchers to provide a “state of affairs” description of the sociopolitical profile in any surveyed population. Data could easily be desegregated by relevant categories (e.g. gender, sect, education, income, occupation, region, etc.), leading to complex portrayals of population perceptions and attitudes towards a variety of key indicators. For example, researchers could identify regional, occupational and gender variations in public appraisal of political representation. Data-driven descriptions would allow stakeholders to better address the challenges at hand, and develop appropriate communication strategies to more adequately represent the type of tensions at play in a given location.

⁵⁹ E.g. Jenson, 1998; Bernard, 1999; UNDP EGM meeting 2015.

Data-driven descriptions would allow stakeholders to better address the challenges at hand, and develop appropriate communication strategies to more adequately represent the type of tensions at play. _____

B- Geographical mapping

By using a representative sampling survey strategy, researchers would be able to provide a geographical mapping of points of interest. For example, regions with high scores on “threat perceptions” and “readiness for collective action or violence” could be identified and targeted for strategic interventions before the situation degenerated into open conflict. Pinpointing specific locations of interests would help tailor actions to optimize impact, and would lead to a more strategic distribution of resources.

C- Change over time

Repeated measures of the SCI in the same location/country would enable monitoring of change in attitudes and perceptions within specific populations. While one-time measurements give snapshots, repeated measures allow analysts to see trends and movement. As such, these trend analyses would lend strength to assessing whether a high rating on a variable is alarming (increasing scores) or reassuring (decreasing scores). Determining the gradients between data points would help in developing prediction models and thus anticipating outcomes. Importantly, the more data waves collected, the higher the confidence in estimating probability outcomes.

D- Exploring differences and relationships

Cross-sectional data of the SCI would allow statistical assessment of differences between groups, leading to a better understanding of dynamics and intervention points. While descriptive statistics (see section A above) can help researchers paint the sociopolitical context in wide brushstrokes, multivariate statistical analyses would confirm the presence or absence of differences between groups or relationships between variables.⁶⁰

E- Intervention impact assessment

Public dissemination and free access to the SCI survey instrument would enable stakeholders to use the SCI questionnaire as a stand-alone instrument to assess the impact of their interventions in specific locations. For example, an international or local NGO interested in carrying out a large media campaign in a specific location (a municipality or governorate, etc.) may be able to use the questionnaire to assess levels of SCI and its various indices both before and after their intervention. The versatility and free availability of the SCI can widen the spectrum of application and diversify the sources of data collection.

⁶⁰ Two means or numbers may visibly differ (e.g. a score of 4 and a score of 5), but this difference may not be meaningful. Only statistical analysis can determine whether the observed differences are real (significant) differences between two populations.

F – Modelling social cohesion

Sociopolitical dynamics and public perceptions in the Arab region are only partially understood, with few pan-regional empirical studies conducted to justify sociopolitical assumptions. Theories and hypotheses about dynamics in the Arab region are abundant and varied, often relying on logical inferences and subjective analyses. Systematic data collection would allow researchers to develop empirically-driven assessments and better-informed analyses, and in doing so, contribute more meaningfully to the international academic literature on social cohesion. Better models and understandings of the region would allow for more informed and effective intervention strategies to improve the human condition in the region.

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In sum, we propose a theoretically driven and culturally relevant model of social cohesion in the Arab region. The model is scholarly, grounded in the international literature on social cohesion and the academic social and political psychology literature on intergroup dynamics and collective action. Furthermore, the model is developed with the sociopolitical contexts and specificities of the Arab region in mind, as identified by a multidisciplinary panel of local and international experts. Considering this complex top-down approach and the projected applications of implementing the SCI (see section IV above), using a secondary data analysis approach is counterproductive and ill advised. Available public opinion surveys in the Arab region (e.g. WVS, Arab Opinion Index, Arab Barometer, Gallup etc.) do not address any of the horizontal (intergroup) variables proposed above and are thus unlikely to address questions on social cohesion in the region.⁶¹ Furthermore, some of these surveys are not carried out annually (e.g. Arab Opinion Index, Arab Barometer), and those that do (e.g. Gallup, WVS) lack items tapping into conceptions of social cohesion (worldwide opinion surveys). Finally, analyses based on secondary data will always be less reliable than first-hand data, as researchers are not sufficiently aware of the challenges and gaps that affected the original data collection exercise (e.g. response rates, missing data, biased sampling procedures etc. –see Appendix B).

⁶¹ The Arab Barometer and the Arab Opinion Index provide some measures of public perception of vertical dynamics, (e.g. satisfaction with the executive branch) of government, but no information on intergroup relations and conflict.

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Appendix A - Social Cohesion Index – Survey Instrument

The model and variables proposed to measure social cohesion in the Arab region are operationalized in the following section, and a template questionnaire is presented for guidance purposes. The template questionnaire is currently formatted to target a Lebanese general population within the Lebanese sociopolitical context. Adaptation to the sociopolitical contexts of other targeted populations is needed before questionnaire implementation (see Appendix B for methods and recommendations).

The questionnaire battery consists of 10 self-reporting measures using five-point Likert type scales ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree), detailed below. All 10 scales were previously validated in international or regional samples (e.g. Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria) and reported high reliability coefficients.

I- Social Cohesion Instruments:

A- Horizontal and Vertical Attitudes (adapted from Haddock et al., 1993)

Attitudes towards horizontal (outgroups) and vertical (government) targets are measured through an adaptation of Haddock et al.'s attitude favorability scale. The item is adapted to measure how favorable or unfavorable participants feel towards: 1) various outgroups within the nation's socio-political context (e.g. community/neighborhood, political and religious leaders, sect, ethnic groups, politico-religious groups, refugees) and 2) governmental authorities (state institutions, army, internal security forces). Response categories range from "positive to a large extent" to "negative to a large extent". This single item multi-target scale has been validated in an Arab context.⁶²

B - Collective Action (Harb & Saab, 2014)

We propose assessing the likelihood of intercommunity violence both directly and indirectly through questions measuring participants' subjective estimate of conflict (indirect), and participants' willingness to support peaceful and violent forms of collective action to protect their ingroup against specific targets (direct). The indirect measure assesses participants' subjective estimate of conflict between their ingroup and a specific outgroup, while direct measures assess participants' willingness to engage in peaceful or violent action against state authorities (vertical) and outgroup members (horizontal). The scales were tested and validated in Lebanese and Syrian samples).

C - Justice Perceptions (Colquitt, 2001)

Justice perceptions are measured through an adaptation of Colquitt's Organizational Justice Perception scales. Three justice dimensions (Distributive, Procedural, Interactional) are selected to assess citizen perceptions of fairness in: a) distribution of resources and services; b) applied procedures; and c) interactions between authority figures and citizens. Validities of the scales were tested in 13 cultures), including in samples from Lebanon and Iraq.⁶³ Sample items include "Government officials treat you in a polite manner", "Administrative rules and procedures are fair and unbiased", "State resources are distributed to citizens equally", and "Security forces treat you with respect".

⁶² E.g. Harb & Saab, 2014.

⁶³ Fischer et al., 2011; Dbalbo, Harb, & Van Meurs, 2010; Fischer et al, 2008.

D - Perceived Threats (Stephan and Stephan, 2000)

Threat perceptions are measured using an adaptation of Stephan & Stephan's Integrated Threat Theory (ITT) measure. Previous research in the region had identified three distinct threat dimensions (existential, economic and symbolic threats) measured with a 12-item scale.⁶⁴ Existential threat items measure perceptions of threat of bodily harm and property destruction, economic threat items measure perceptions of threat to one's job security and financial income, while symbolic threat items measure threats to an ingroup's value system (e.g. ideology, worldview, or morality). Considering the research on the concept of human security reviewed earlier (see section III), we propose adding a fourth dimension assessing state security threat, with items assessing the state's constraints on civic rights and basic freedoms, as well as state security forces' pressures on one's ingroup. Items are adapted from Khodr, Younes and Kamel el Sayed's "human security questionnaire" developed for the UNDP's AHDR 2009 report. Economic threat items include: "When [outgroup] make economic gains, [ingroup] lose out economically", while existential threat items include: "I worry about being physically attacked by people from the [outgroup] community". Symbolic threat items include: "[ingroup] and [outgroup] have very different values", "[outgroup] do not understand the way the [ingroup] view the world", and "The values of the [outgroup] regarding work are different from those of the [ingroup]". State security threat items include "the state protects/guarantees the following rights and freedoms (freedom of speech, religion, etc.)" and "security forces are a threat to my [my ingroup]".

E - Intergroup Contact (Islam & Hewstone, 1993)

The quality and quantity of contact between groups can be assessed through an adaptation of Islam and Hewstone's intergroup contact scale. Contact quantity is assessed with two items measuring how often participants meet and spend time with members of the outgroup. Contact quality is assessed through two items measuring participants' evaluations of contact through favorability and valence ratings (i.e. favorable/unfavorable, positive/negative). The scale has been validated in Lebanese samples.⁶⁵

F - Sociopolitical Identities (Harb, 2010)

The scale was adapted from Harb, based on a measure of identification developed by Brown et al. in 1992. By adopting a model of inclusiveness through Self-Categorization Theory,⁶⁶ an 18-item multifactorial identity scale is proposed to explore various levels of identification ranging from personal to supra-national. Using a five-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree), participants are asked to rate three identification statements towards 6 different targets. The following three statements are used: "I'm concerned with the welfare of", "My foremost allegiance is to" and "My identity is defined by my belonging to". Participants are asked to rate these items against the following categories: Self (no one, I am a unique and independent person), family, municipality/region, sect, nation, and Arab/Islamic. Additional categories may be added based on preliminary assessments of relevant sociopolitical identities in targeted countries. Previous versions of this scale were validated in samples from Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ E.g. Harb & Saab, 2014.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Cf. Turner & Onorato, 1999.

⁶⁷ Harb, 2002; Fisher et al., 2005.

G - Emotions (Mackie et al., 2000)

Emotions tend to play important mediating roles between attitudes and collective action, and often constitute a motivational drive for action (both in their negative and positive valences). Emotions towards specific outgroups are measured through an adaptation of Mackie et al.'s scale, assessing how participants feel towards a key outgroup through ratings on emotions of fear, contempt, anger, hate, empathy/compassion, respect and affection. The scale was previously tested in an Arab sample.⁶⁸

H - Trust (Hooghe, Reeskens, Stolle & Trappers, 2006; Arab Barometer, 2013)

A three-item measure was adapted from Hooghe et al.'s trust scale, measuring individuals' general trust orientation (e.g. "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?"). This is the classic scale used by researchers on "social cohesion",⁶⁹ and has been previously validated in an Arab sample.⁷⁰ The scale provides a global assessment of trust and is an indicator of suspicion especially towards outgroup members.

This global trust orientation measure is accompanied by target specific assessments using items published and validated by the Arab Barometer. Adapted items assess trust perception in: government, parliament, judiciary, security apparatuses and the media. Additional targets (e.g. specific political or religious parties, institutions, etc.) may be added as required in specific countries.

I - Participation and Representation

Citizen participation in local (municipal), and national elections should be measured objectively through inspection of official figures on election participation rates. However, a two-item measure asking participants if they participated in the local and national elections is proposed, and would allow for comparisons between groups on SCI measures.

Representation is assessed through a two-item measure assessing the degree to which participants feel they are represented in local (municipal council) and national (parliament) assemblies. Both participation and representation measures are developed for the current SCI measure and require construct and operational validation during pilot testing.

Furthermore, we propose assessing participation as an indirect measure of embeddedness or social capital through three items assessing participant's engagement in socio-political discussions, religious classes, unions, and other forms of civic engagement.

J - Demographic Information

A standardized section measuring self-reported demographic variables includes gender, age, marital status, nationality, monthly income, education, sectarian/religious affiliation, employment status and place of residence.

⁶⁸ Harb & Saab, 2014.

⁶⁹ E.g. Larsen, 2014.

⁷⁰ Harb, 2012.

K - Order Effects and Counterbalancing

Because the SCI is composed of several scales that are possibly correlated, order effects (a sequencing effect arising from the order in which the treatment conditions are administered to participants) may distort participant responses. As such, it is important to counterbalance the scales, with at least two versions of the SCI: one with the core items (attitudes and collection action) appearing first, and one with the core items appearing last.

II- SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE

Social Cohesion Index – Survey Instrument (English) – Adapted to Lebanese Context

Assessment of social relations:

Please indicate how positively or negatively you feel towards the targets below using the provided 5-point scale. A higher number indicates more negative feelings towards the group, while a lower number indicates more positive feelings towards the group.

I feel very positive	I feel positive	Neutral	I feel negative	I feel very negative
1	2	3	4	5

1. Town or neighborhood residents	1	2	3	4	5
2. Political leaders in the region	1	2	3	4	5
3. Religious authorities	1	2	3	4	5
4. My sect	1	2	3	4	5
5. Institutions of the Lebanese state	1	2	3	4	5
6. The Lebanese Army	1	2	3	4	5
7. Lebanese Security Forces	1	2	3	4	5
8. Syrian refugees	1	2	3	4	5

Collective action:

	Very probable	probable	not probable	Not probable at all	DK
9. In your opinion, what is the probability of a violent conflict emerging between (outgroup) and (ingroup) during the upcoming months?	1	2	3	4	99

How willing are you to peacefully defend (through protests, sit-ins...) the rights of [your group] against:	very large extent	large extent	certain extent	little extent	Not at all
10. The Lebanese or local authorities	1	2	3	4	5
11. (Outgroup) in town	1	2	3	4	5

To what extent do you support violent acts against the following groups to defend the rights of your group?		very large extent	large extent	certain extent	little extent	Not at all
	10. The Lebanese or local authorities	1	2	3	4	5
	11. (Outgroup) in town	1	2	3	4	5

Justice:

	Not at all	To some extent	moderate extent	large extent	highest extent
	1	2	3	4	5

Please indicate to what extent:

14. Is the state's wealth equally and fairly distributed among citizens?	1	2	3	4	5
15. Are the state's public services available to all citizens without exception or discrimination between them?	1	2	3	4	5

The following questions refer to the laws and procedures followed in the state's institutions:

16. Were the procedures fair and non-prejudiced?	1	2	3	4	5
17. Were you able to appeal the outcome of these procedures?	1	2	3	4	5

The following questions refer to representatives of the administrative and governmental authorities. To what extent did they:

18. Treat you politely?	1	2	3	4	5
19. Treat you respectfully?	1	2	3	4	5
20. Refrain from giving you inappropriate remarks or comments?	1	2	3	4	5

The following questions refer to the security forces. To what extent did they:

21. Treat you politely?	1	2	3	4	5
22. Treat you respectfully?	1	2	3	4	5
23. Refrain from giving you inappropriate remarks or comments?	1	2	3	4	5

Contact Quantity and Quality:

What is the frequency with which you do the following?

24. Meet with (outgroup) in town?	1	2	3	4	5
25. Spend time with (outgroup) in town?	1	2	3	4	5

Please indicate how positive or negative was your contact with (outgroup) by circling the number closest to your sentiment:

I feel very positive	I feel positive	Neutral	I feel negative	I feel very negative
1	2	3	4	5

26. Meet with (outgroup) in town?	1	2	3	4	5
27. Spend time with (outgroup) in town?	1	2	3	4	5

Threat perception:

The following are statements about [your outgroup]. You might find yourself agreeing with some of them and disagreeing with others to various degrees. Please indicate your reaction to each of these statements by circling the number closest to your position:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5

28. (Ingroup) and (outgroup) have very different values	1	2	3	4	5
29. The way of life of (ingroup) differs strongly from the way of life of (outgroup)	1	2	3	4	5
30. (Outgroup) don't understand the way (my group) views life	1	2	3	4	5
31. When (outgroup) make economic gains, (ingroup) lose out economically	1	2	3	4	5
32. When job opportunities increase for (outgroup) job opportunities and salaries decrease for (ingroup)	1	2	3	4	5
33. (Outgroup) want to advance their economic interest at the expense of the (ingroup)'s	1	2	3	4	5
34. I'm afraid that (outgroup) would destroy my private property	1	2	3	4	5
35. I'm afraid that (outgroup) would destroy public property	1	2	3	4	5
36. I'm afraid that (outgroup) will harm my dignity and that of my family	1	2	3	4	5
37. I'm afraid that (outgroup) will harm my social status	1	2	3	4	5
38. The government is weak in its protection of citizens	1	2	3	4	5
39. The government is arbitrary in its dealing with citizens	1	2	3	4	5
40. Security forces present a threat to (ingroup)	1	2	3	4	5

To what extent do you think the (country's) government protects the following rights and freedoms?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5

41. Freedom of belief	1	2	3	4	5
42. Freedom of expression	1	2	3	4	5
43. Freedom of organization (i.e. forming associations, syndicates or parties)	1	2	3	4	5
44. Right to a fair trial	1	2	3	4	5

Identity:

Below you will find statements about your identity. Please use the 5-point scale to indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with these statements using the scale below.

	Not at all	To some extent	moderate extent	large extent	highest extent
	1	2	3	4	5

I'm concerned with the welfare of:

45. My family/parents	1	2	3	4	5
46. My town or region	1	2	3	4	5
47. My sect	1	2	3	4	5
48. Lebanon	1	2	3	4	5
49. The Arab World/ the Islamic Nation	1	2	3	4	5
50. No one, I am a unique and independent person	1	2	3	4	5
51. Other, please indicate:	1	2	3	4	5

My foremost allegiance is to:

52. My family/parents	1	2	3	4	5
53. My town or region	1	2	3	4	5
54. My sect	1	2	3	4	5
55. Lebanon	1	2	3	4	5
56. The Arab World/ the Islamic Nation	1	2	3	4	5
57. No one, I am a unique and independent person	1	2	3	4	5
58. Other, please indicate:	1	2	3	4	5

My identity is defined by my belonging to:

59. My family/parents	1	2	3	4	5
60. My town or region	1	2	3	4	5
61. My sect	1	2	3	4	5
62. Lebanon	1	2	3	4	5
63. The Arab World/ the Islamic Nation	1	2	3	4	5
64. No one, I am a unique and independent person	1	2	3	4	5
65. Other, please indicate:	1	2	3	4	5

Emotions:

To which extent do you feel each of the following emotions towards (outgroup)?

	To a very large extent	To a large extent	To a certain extent	To a little extent	Not at all
	1	2	3	4	5

66. Fear	1	2	3	4	5
67. Compassion	1	2	3	4	5
68. Anger	1	2	3	4	5
69. Respect	1	2	3	4	5
70. Hatred	1	2	3	4	5
71. Affection	1	2	3	4	5
72. Contempt	1	2	3	4	5

Trust:

	Most people are trustworthy			One has to be careful	
73. Generally, do you believe most people are trustworthy, or that one should be careful when dealing with them?	1	2	3	4	5
	Most people would try to abuse me			Most people would act fairly	
74. Generally, do you believe that most people would try to abuse you if they got the chance, or that they would act fairly?	1	2	3	4	5
	Most people try to help others			Most people prioritize their interest	
75. Do you believe that most of the time people try to help others or that they prioritize their interest at the expense of others?	1	2	3	4	5

Please indicate the extent to which you trust each of the following institutions: Please indicate the extent to which you trust each of the following institutions:

	Not at all	To a little extent	To a certain extent	To a large extent	To a very large extent	I don't know	I don't want to answer
	1	2	3	4	5	99	999

76. The government	1	2	3	4	5	99	999
77. The parliament	1	2	3	4	5		
78. The judiciary	1	2	3	4	5		
79. Security forces	1	2	3	4	5		
80. The media	1	2	3	4	5		

Participation and Representation:

81. Did you vote in the parliamentary elections year 201x?

yes ☐ no ☐

82. Did you vote in the municipal elections year 201x?

yes ☐ ☐

	Not at all	To a little extent	To a certain extent	To a large extent	To a very large extent
	1	2	3	4	5

83. To what extent do you feel represented in the parliament?	1	2	3	4	5
84. To what extent do you feel represented in the municipal council?	1	2	3	4	5

	never	Rarely/infrequently	Sometimes/occasionally	Frequently/periodically
	1	2	3	4

85. how frequently do you participate in events or lectures organized by socio-political groups (e.g. NGOs, Clubs, associations etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
86. how frequently do you participate in events or lectures organized by religious groups	1	2	3	4	5
87. how frequently do you participate in events or lectures organized by unions or other labor organizations	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix B - Recommended Methodology

Ideally, the SCI would be administered annually to a large randomized sample using a longitudinal design. Repeated frequent measurements of the SCI would provide researchers and policymakers with the ability to monitor social cohesion indices and their predictors, and thus engage in preemptive interventions to mitigate them. Longitudinal designs are better suited to infer causation since they allow for the simultaneous testing of co-variation between variables and the temporal order between them.

Unfortunately, in the context of surveys in Arab countries, longitudinal designs are likely to be both impractical and counterproductive. Longitudinal research requires a relatively stable environment over time, and the ability to record participant identifiers (e.g. names and addresses). Instability and the potential for conflict in most Arab countries are creating significant population displacements and confusion about population statistics. Following a large sample of participants across changing population landscapes creates a logistical quandary and is a costly exercise. More importantly, longitudinal data requires participant identification, violating the principle of anonymity. Conducting sensitive sociopolitical research in countries with high levels of suspicion, paranoia, and fear of authorities and their intelligence security services is unlikely to be successful without some guarantees of anonymity. Considering this research context, we recommend adopting a repeated measure cross-sectional survey design using a randomized sampling procedure as an optimal strategy to measure SCI in the Arab region.

I- Recommended strategy of implementation:

Considering the importance and sensitivity of deploying the SCI in Arab countries, we recommend a multi-stage multi-method approach that comprises the following sequence: 1) Identify a first group of countries to be targeted for the SCI implementation (first wave); 2) identify the level of analysis required in each country; 3) identify the best population sampling strategy; 4) initiate a qualitative research phase to adapt and meliorate the SCI; 5) initiate a pilot testing phase; and finally, 6) collect the main SCI data through a large random sampling procedure in the selected first wave countries.

1) *Selection of target countries:*

The SCI questionnaire can be applied to a small sample of Arab countries, as a first phase in a multi-stage rolling out of the SCI across the Arab region. This first phase should include at least four countries with established survey research institutions, capable of deploying teams to the field quickly and efficiently. The Arab region may be socioculturally divided into four main regions,⁷¹ and as such, selecting each of the four countries from one of those regions would be optimal. Jordan or Lebanon (Levant), Kuwait (GCC), Egypt (Nile Valley), and Tunisia (Maghreb) would be prototypical choices for first wave testing. Interestingly, these four countries represent different outcomes and conditions of the post-2011 era. At the moment of writing this report, survey research in Egypt is not feasible;⁷² should this condition not change by the time of applying the SCI, replacing Egypt with Sudan (same cultural region) or Lebanon (special multi-confessional system with high social tensions) may be suitable alternatives.

⁷¹ Harb, 2016.

⁷² The Egyptian central state is placing high constraints on research institutions and currently prohibits sociopolitical surveys of public opinion.

2) *Unit of analysis – sample sizes:*

Population sizes in three of the countries suggested above are small, and are spread across relatively small geographical areas of the Arab region (Tunisia/10.8M, Kuwait/3.4M, Jordan/6.5M, and Lebanon/4.5M). Sample sizes between 1,200 and 1,500 participants would enable analyses with less than three percent margins of error (95%CI). Such sample sizes would permit an assessment of the psychometric properties of the SCI in all four countries (factor structures, reliabilities, structural equivalence), and thus help amend and further meliorate the SCI measure before its second wave deployment. Furthermore, a sample of 1,500 would allow for sub-national analyses and comparisons as long as comparison groups have at least 250 participants per group. For example, a sample size of 1,500 would permit comparisons between youth and the general population, or between rural and urban residents, but may not allow comparisons at the governorate levels in all countries (the number of administrative divisions varies by a factor of three: Kuwait and Lebanon both have 6 governorates, Jordan has 12, and Tunisia has 24). However, the division of a country's population by administrative units is neither a necessary nor optimal strategy, as other more sociopolitically relevant divisions may be used instead. Importantly, analysts interested in displaced populations (e.g. refugees) would need to collect additional samples of at least 600 participants from refugee populations to allow for adequate comparisons.

3) *Population sampling strategy:*

Depending on available population data, sampling strategies may follow a “systematic random sampling” technique (e.g. refugee camps etc.), or follow one of the multi-stage probability sampling techniques (cluster or stratified sampling) to ensure a random, representative sample of the population. The strategy adopted will partially depend on available population parameters in each of the countries sampled. Importantly, records of response rates need to be carefully recorded and included in the interpretation of results, as these have a direct impact on the generalizability of results.

4) *Qualitative exploration and melioration:*

The SCI needs to be adapted to every country being surveyed before it is deployed to a sample of the population. Social dynamics and networks, governance structures, and historical narratives differ substantially between Arab countries, and the questionnaire needs to be sufficiently sensitive to detect these. We propose a two-stage procedure (qualitative and quantitative) to tailor the SCI before its deployment to a large sample of the population.

The lead researcher needs to conduct a series of in-depth qualitative interviews with key stakeholders and experts (e.g. UNDP country officers, prominent sociopolitical researchers and analysts) to identify key dynamics and challenges in a specific targeted country. These interviews would allow the researcher to develop a sensitive and culturally appropriate understanding of factors likely to impact social cohesion indicators. The assumptions derived from in-depth interviews may be tested in different social groups through a series of focus group discussions (FGDs). These FGDs would assess participant reactions to the SCI instrument and further identify key variables that are likely to increase the sensitivity of the SCI.

5) *Quantitative piloting:*

The integration of key findings from the in-depths interviews and FGD sessions should permit the

melioration of the SCI and increase its sensitivity to detect important effects and increase its applicability to various sociocultural contexts across the Arab region. The modified SCI would need to be pilot-tested on a relatively small sample of 20 random participants in each location. Pilot testing techniques (e.g. think-aloud, concurrent probing, or retrospective verbal reports) would enable further fine-tuning of the questionnaire, as well as provide a preliminary testing of scale reliabilities and score distributions (e.g. ceiling or floor effects, etc.).

II- Additional research concerns:

The research methodologies described above need to be accompanied by additional guidelines for the SCI implementation in the Arab region. We focus on the following nine issues: 1) informed consent; 2) experimenter effects and demand characteristics; 3) anonymity and confidentiality; 4) data collection in conflict areas; 5) classic guidelines for item generation; 6) language translation and equivalence; 7) gendered Arabic language and its implication; 8) accessing non-literate populations; and 9) quality control.

1) *Informed consent:*

All human subject research requires procedures that are in line with global guidelines for ethical research (e.g. American Psychological Association, 2010). Since the research is using an anonymous survey methodology with a randomized sample of the adult general population (i.e. non-vulnerable population), ethical concerns are limited. The “informed consent” document that must be shared with participants before handing out the questionnaire should 1) clearly state the objectives of the research (avoid passive or active deception), 2) highlight the anonymity of responses, 3) provide contact numbers for complaints or feedback, and 4) remind participants of their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Additional information may be added to address specific population level concerns.

2) *Experimenter effects and demand characteristics:*

High context collectivist cultures are quite sensitive to interpersonal harmony and socially desirable responding,⁷³ and as such, controlling experimenter effects and demand characteristics to reduce biases is essential. Field data collectors play an important role in the interface between the research and participants, and the way they present themselves and interact with participants may have significant effects on participant perceptions and responses. Consequently, we recommend the reduction of experimenter effects by: 1) limiting contact interaction between data collector and participants; 2) selecting data collectors that are similar to the participant population (ingroup); 3) respecting local cultural norms and practices; and 4) ensuring gender sensitivity and matching (e.g. female field collectors targeting female participants). United Nations logos and emblems need to be clearly identifiable to participants, as these will increase their confidence and sense of security (also see section 3 and 4 below).

3) *Anonymity and confidentiality:*

Contact with participants needs to highlight and reiterate the anonymity and confidentiality of

73 Hook, Worthington, & Utsey, 2008.

responses. Data collectors need to reinforce participants' sense of security by refraining from actions or statements that may lead to suspicion or decreased trust. A clear United Nations identifier would reinforce perceptions of neutrality and re-assure participants of the non-partisan nature of the research. Furthermore, participants should complete the questionnaire on their own (i.e. with paper and pen and in private) and should not have the questions read to them (to reduce experimenter effect, demand characteristics, social desirability etc.). Data collectors should ensure that participants are filling in the questionnaire in privacy, away from any interpersonal interference. This privacy concern is also important to avoid correlated errors in the data. Finally, participants would return their questionnaires in sealed unmarked envelopes, and place these among other already completed and sealed envelopes (increases participant confidence in confidentiality and anonymity procedures). These concerns for privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of data are essential considering the context of widespread paranoia towards the intelligence services operating in most Arab states.⁷⁴

4) *Data collection in conflict areas:*

It is possible that data collection occurs during periods of turmoil or in locations with low to medium levels of conflict. The physical safety of data collectors and participants needs to be a primary concern. Data collection in difficult areas must secure the approval of local gatekeepers (community leaders or local authorities) to ensure that no harm is brought to data collectors. Furthermore, we recommend that data collectors be carefully selected from the targeted populations, and ensure that they have no perceived partisan affiliations; survey participants need to feel they are interacting with a neutral ingroup member.

5) *Key guidelines for questionnaire design and item generation:*

Item generation for survey research needs to follow a set of academically and culturally validated recommendations. Twenty-five guiding principles are compiled from classic and cross-cultural methodology literature⁷⁵ and included at the end of this appendix. These guidelines address the four facets of studies conducted in more than one language, namely context (defining the general background), development and adaptation (recommended practices in designing instruments in more than one language), administration (defining issues regarding instrument administrations), and documentation and score interpretation (defining issues in the interpretation and cross-cultural comparison of scores).⁷⁶ Any addition of items to the SCI needs to follow these guidelines, and ensure the cultural applicability and relevance of generated items.

6) *Issues of language translation and equivalence:*

A researcher wishing to transpose an instrument that is available in a particular cultural context to a different one has three options: 1) the instrument can be applied (i.e. literal translation is considered linguistically and psychologically appropriate in all groups); 2) the instrument can be adapted (i.e. literal translation of some items while changing the wording or contents of others to enhance appropriateness); or 3) the instrument can be assembled (i.e. a new instrument is developed to capture the construct more adequately in the new cultural context).⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Consequently, phone interviews should never be considered a valid method of data collection on sensitive topics in the Arab region.

⁷⁵ E.g. van de Vijver and Leung, 1997; Brislin, 1988; see below.

⁷⁶ Hambleton, 1994; van de Vijver and Hambleton, 1996; van de Vijver and Leung, 1997.

⁷⁷ Van de Vijver and Leung, 1997.

The development of the SCI followed all three methods described above, as some scales were directly applied (e.g. Hooghe et al.'s Trust scale), others were adapted (e.g. Stephan & Stephan's Perceived Threat scale), and others were assembled within Arab cultural contexts (e.g. Harb & Saab's Collective Action scale).

7) *Issue of genders and questionnaire versions:*

Unlike the English language, Arabic is a highly “gendered” language, in which the gender of objects and subjects directly affects the sentences’ grammar and syntax. In other words, translating the typical “he/she” formula from English to Arabic would require two separate sentences addressing each gender alone.

We developed a Social Cohesion Index that avoids to a large extent gender identification and differentiation, leaving its current applicability possible with minimal amendments except to scale instructions. However, the possible addition of scales or items following a pilot or initial research phase may require developing two versions of the SCI questionnaire, one addressing female participants and the other addressing male participants. We do not recommend following the current practice of developing a single male-oriented version of the survey to be distributed to a sample of the general population.

8) *Non-literate populations:*

The survey methods we recommended in points 1, 2 and 3 above will face challenges when targeting non-literate participants. This is a substantial concern when we consider that tens of millions of Arabs are non-literate.⁷⁸ Accessing these populations necessitates a) a careful selection of specially trained data collectors, and b) a special coding scheme during data entry and preparations. We recommend that trained data collectors read the informed consent and the questionnaire items in a private space, and that questionnaires from non-literate participants be clearly identified as such for subsequent analyses (to allow comparisons of scores of literate versus non-literate populations on key indices). This method is deemed more suitable than having participants select a literate family member or friend to read the questionnaire.

9) *Quality control:*

The survey team sub-contracted to collect data in a specific country should demonstrate clear quality control credentials (ISO ratings), and should propose a clear set of implemented mechanisms to ensure the quality of the services provided. Field inspectors, field reports, 10-20% call back and other similar measures need to be reported along with cleaned data sets (SPSS or other database formats). The lead UNDP research team should be able to access and monitor the data collection process at all times.

78 United Nations Development Programme, 2014.

10) *Qualitative Contextual Narrative:*

As it currently stands, the SCI is a psychometric instrument developed to assess social cohesion within the Arab region. The data collected through random population surveys will provide analysts with an abundance of findings, both intuitive and counterintuitive. It is highly recommended that a group of senior experts in a variety of social science disciplines (e.g. history, political sciences, political anthropology, economy and others) convene and discuss the empirical findings obtained through the SCI survey. These analyses would serve as an important qualitative background paper or introduction to each country-level SCI report.

Criteria for questionnaire designs: ⁷⁹

1. Use simple sentences of fewer than 16 words.
2. Employ active rather than passive voice, because the former is easier to comprehend.
3. Repeat nouns instead of using pronouns, because the latter may have vague referents.
4. Avoid metaphors and colloquialisms.
5. Avoid the subjunctive form, with words like could and would. Many languages express this meaning in different ways, thereby putting a burden on the translator.
6. Add sentences to provide context for key ideas. Redundancy is not harmful for communicating key aspects of the instruments.
7. Avoid verbs and prepositions telling “where” and “when” that do not have a definite meaning. (How many times a week do you have to see someone in order to say that you see him “often”?)
8. Avoid possessive forms where possible, because it may be difficult to determine ownership. Languages do not have similar rules for expressing this ownership.
9. Use specific rather than general terms.
10. Avoid jargon, slang and abbreviations
11. Avoid ambiguity, confusion and vagueness and ill-defined words.
12. Avoid emotional language (e.g. what do you think about a policy to pay murderous terrorists who threaten to steal the freedoms of peace-loving people”, and prestige bias such as “do you support the president’s policy regarding...”)
13. Avoid double barreled questions (making each question about one and only one topic).
14. Avoid leading questions.
15. Avoid asking questions that are beyond respondents’ capabilities.
16. Avoid false premises.
17. Avoid asking about future intentions (i.e. hypothetical circumstances).
18. Avoid double negatives.
19. Avoid overlapping or unbalanced responses.
20. Make sure there is no shared meaning attached to the words used.
21. Avoid value judgments.
22. Be wary of context effect (e.g. difference between asking young persons about drinking habits, and in the context of a health survey).
23. Be careful around hidden assumptions.
24. Avoid questions that lead to a floor or ceiling effects (social desirability).
25. Be careful with sensitive issues (e.g. sickness, marginalization etc.).

⁷⁹ The recommended guidelines below have been compiled from the following sources: Oppenheim, 1992; Brislin, 1988; van de Vijver and Leung, 1997; Breakwell et al., 1995; Neuman, 1997.