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

Courant Research Centre 'Poverty, Equity and Growth' Discussion Paper No. 243
by Jana Kuhnt, Ramona Rischke, Anda David, and Tobias Lechtenfeld

GEORG-AUGUST-UNIVERSITÄT GÖTTINGEN

Presentation at the 1st International Forum on Migration Statistics, Paris
January 15, 2018

- **What we did:** Online survey among youth in Jordan
- **The case of Jordan**
  - Levels of social cohesion (SC) deteriorated but are higher than expected
  - Youth wants to be actors of change but face barriers of participation
  - Social cohesion is seen as an asset
- **Methodologically**
  - Promising operationalization of social cohesion (cross-validation necessary)
  - Challenging to have Syrian refugees respond to online survey
- **Relevant for development programming**
  - Respondents strongly identify with people of similar age and interests. This implies opportunities to strengthening SC by supporting access to joint activities.

Social cohesion

- **No uniform definition**

- **Social fabric or "a sense of togetherness" that helps keeping societies united and peaceful**

  - Related to but going beyond socio-economic integration/inclusion of different groups in society

  - Often approximated by concepts of trust and solidarity

  - Context specific across space and time

- **Key assumptions**

  - A sustainable integration of refugees requires promoting SC (e.g. *Jordan's Response Plan for the Syria Crisis, Gov. of Jordan 2015*)

  - SC desirable end in itself and means to fostering multidimensional welfare gains (e.g. *OECD 2011*)

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

Why should we care?

"Those who lost everything are hosted by those who already have little […]"
(UNDP, 2014, p. 8)

MercyCorps (2013)

UNDP (2014)

- **Social media survey**: online survey advertised via Facebook/Instagram and Email (university network) from January – March 2017
- **Target group**: people currently living in Jordan (18-35 years)

|	Viewed on QuestionPro (after language selection)	Survey started	Survey terminated (respondents outside target group)	Incomplete surveys (i.e. early drop outs)	Survey completed	Starting rate	Completion rate (among target group)	Average time spent on survey (among target group)
Facebook campaign	1691	376	124	**146**	**106**	0.22	0.42	7 mins
Email campaign	206	180	24	**47**	**109**	0.87	0.70	10.5 mins
	1897	556	148	**193**	**215**			
obs for analysis 2nd round:					**408**			
1st round of data collection:				**12**	**24**			
obs for analysis 1st and 2nd round:					**444**			

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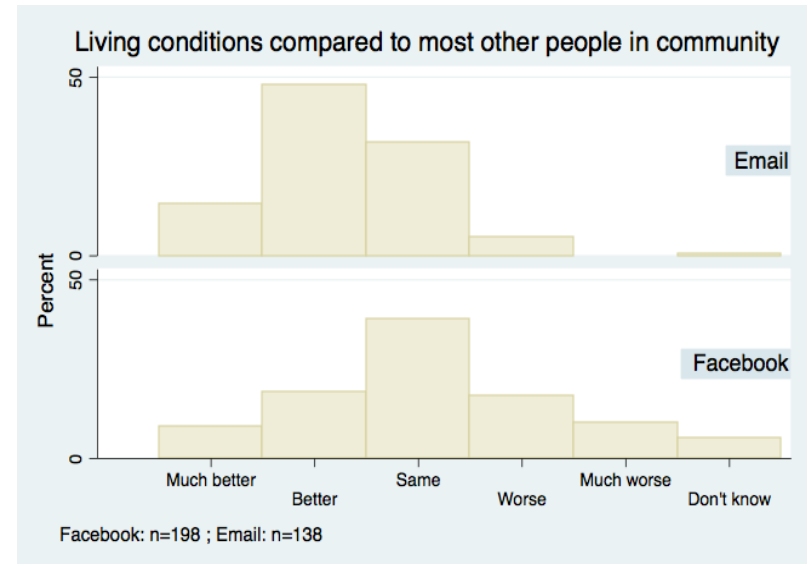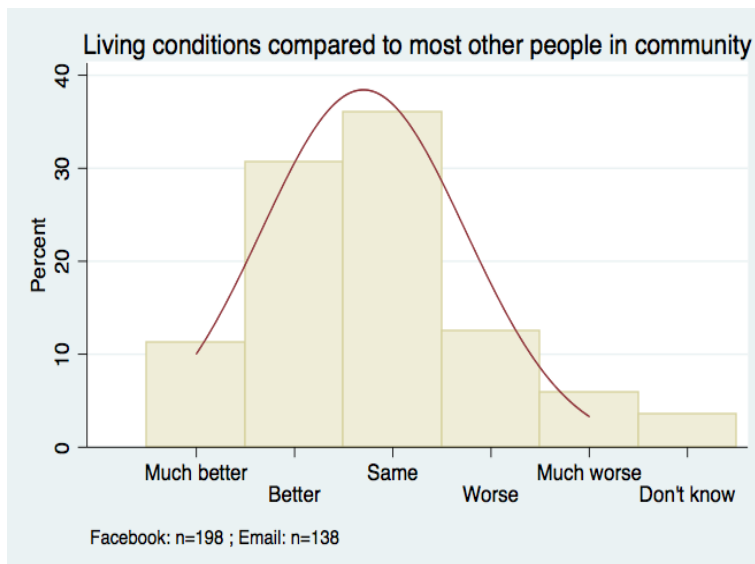
Feeling a sense of belonging to the local community

Feeling of belonging to local community
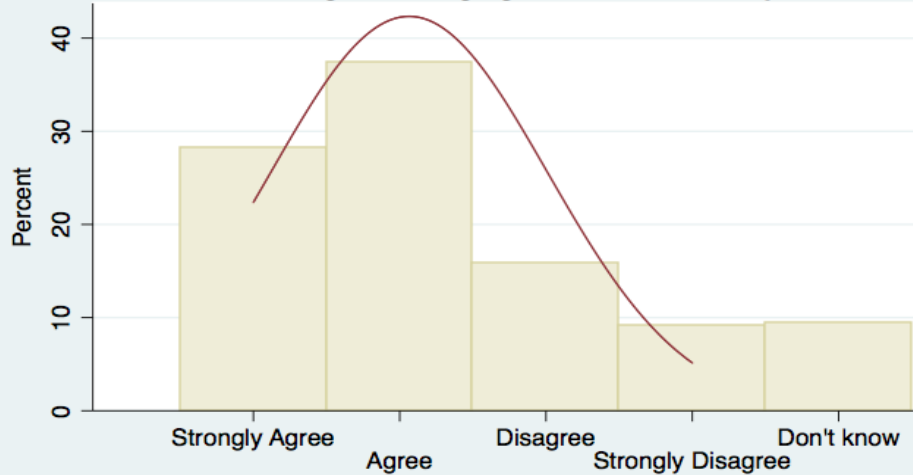
Facebook: n=180 ; Email: n=128

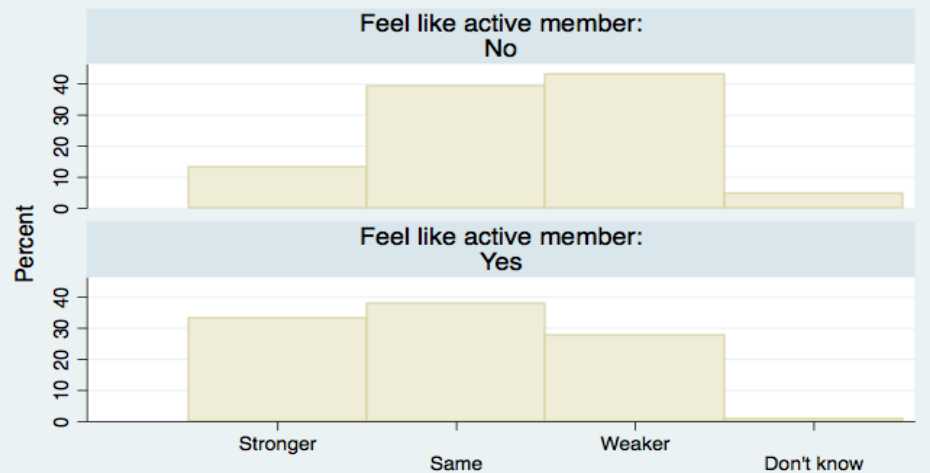Compared to 2 yrs ago: Feeling of belonging to local community

Facebook: n=144 ; Email: n=110

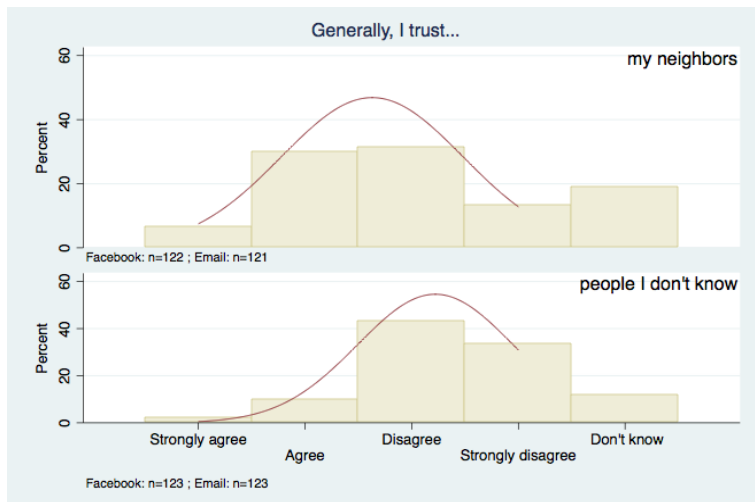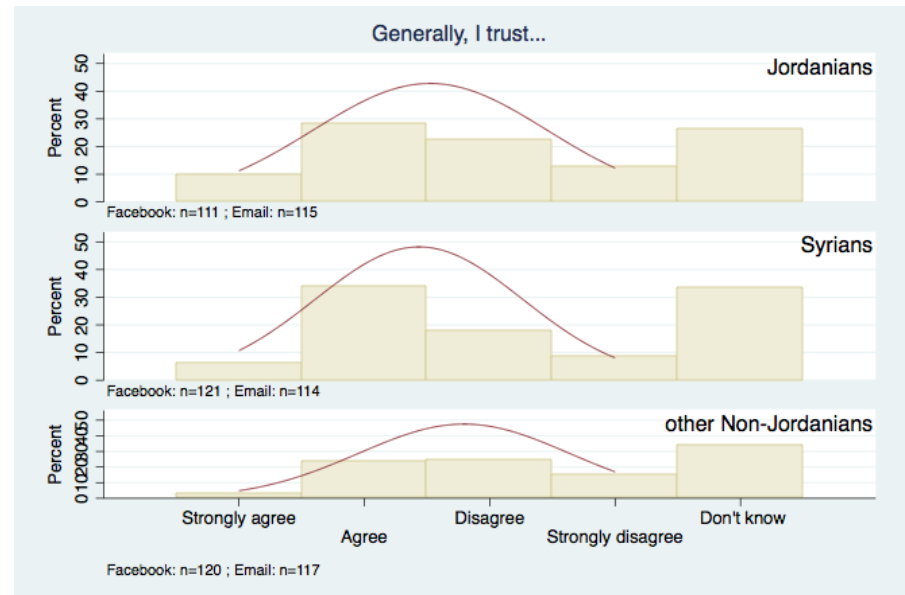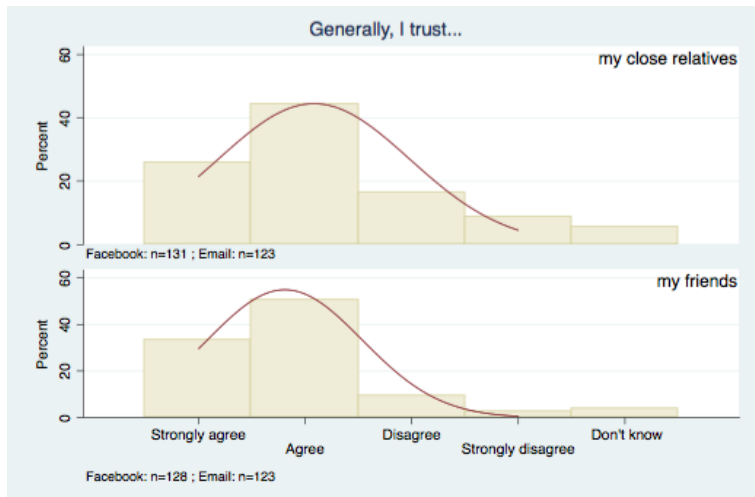Feeling a **sense of belonging**
- Lower sense of belonging compared to 2014 REACH survey
- Stronger sense of belonging among
  - Those who feel like active members
  - Those who belong to majority group
  - Jordanians

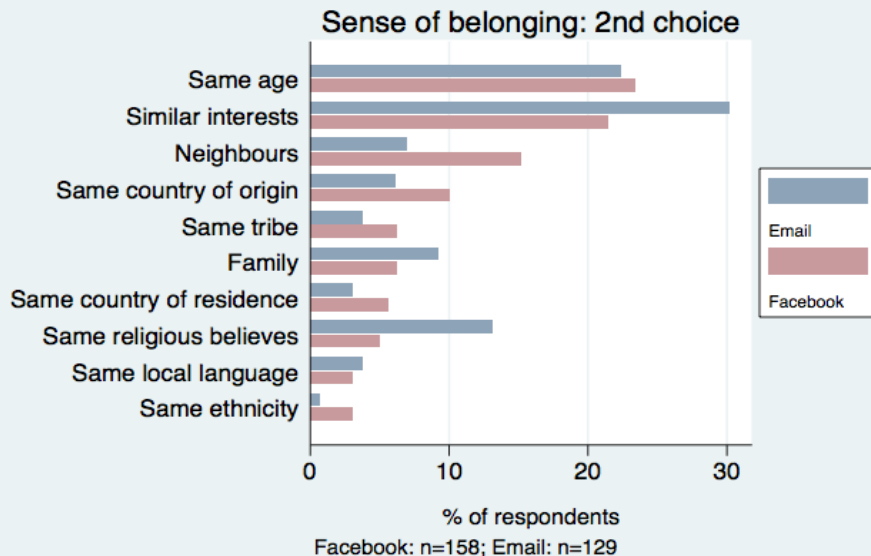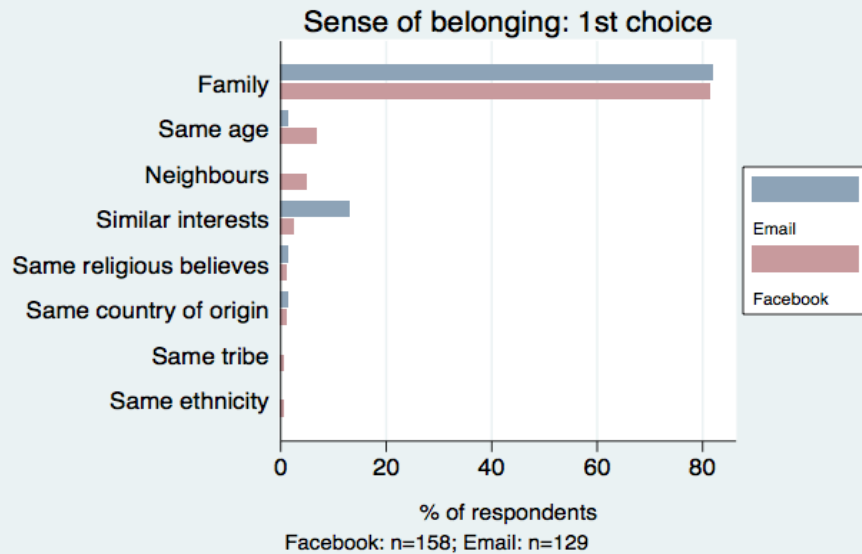Compared to 2 yrs ago: Feeling of belonging to local community

No: n=84 ; Yes: n=108

Trust towards different groups

Generally, I trust...
my close relatives
Facebook: n=131 ; Email: n=123
my friends
Facebook: n=128 ; Email: n=123

Generally, I trust...
my neighbors
Facebook: n=122 ; Email: n=121
people I don't know
Facebook: n=123 ; Email: n=123

Generally, I trust...
Jordanians
Facebook: n=111 ; Email: n=115
Syrians
Facebook: n=121 ; Email: n=114
other Non-Jordanians
Facebook: n=120 ; Email: n=117

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

Sense of belonging: 1st choice

Facebook: n=158; Email: n=129

Sense of belonging: 2nd choice

Facebook: n=158; Email: n=129

- SC is a **group phenomenon**
- **Group identities** are a relevant component of SC *(e.g. Langer et al. 2016)*
  - Determines who is considered **in-group** and **out-group**
- **Among the three most important groups respondents "feel a sense of belonging" to**
  - 50% chose same **age**
  - 52% chose similar **interests**
  - 20% chose same **ethnicity/tribe**
  - 20% chose same **religion**
  - 11% chose same **language**

- Majority feels like an **active member of society**, and **worked jointly with others** to solve a problem in their local community
- Almost 80% of respondents expressed a **desire to participate more actively** in their society
  - Lack of public spaces, lack of knowledge about existing activities, distance, and safety concerns are **important barriers** to do so

REACH (2014)

UNDP (2014)

Supporting a sense of togetherness

- Respondents identify similar dimensions as crucial ingredients for (supporting) social cohesion as proposed in the theoretical literature

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

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

Thank you very much.

GIRAUD, G., R. Gupta, C. RENOUARD and T. ROCA (2014) *Relational Capability Index 2.0.* AFD Research Papers, No. 2015-12, September.

GOVERNMENT OF JORDAN (2015) *Jordan Response Plan for the Syria Crisis.* The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation.

LANGER, A., F. STEWART, K. SMEDTS and L. DEMAREST (2016) *Conceptualising and Measuring Social Cohesion in Africa: Towards a Perceptions-Based Index*, Social Indicators Research, pp. 1-23.

MERCY CORPS (2013) *Mapping of Host Community-Refugee Tensions in Mafraq and Ramtha, Jordan.*

OECD (2011) *Perspectives on Global Development 2012 – Social Cohesion in a Shifting World.*

REACH (2014a) *Understanding Social Cohesion and Resilience in Jordanian Host Communities*, Assessment Report, British Embassy Amman.

UNDP (2014) *Municipal Needs Assessment Report: Mitigating the Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on Jordanian Vulnerable Host Communities,* United Nations Development Program.