



BRILL

COMPARATIVE SOCIOLOGY 17 (2018) 426-455

COMPARATIVE  
SOCIOLOGY

brill.com/coso

# Social Cohesion and Its Correlates: A Comparison of Western and Asian Societies

*Jan Delhey*

Institute for Sociology, Otto von Guericke University Magdeburg, Germany  
*j.delhey@ovgu.de*

*Klaus Boehnke*

Bremen International Graduate School of Social Sciences (BIGSSS),  
Jacobs University Bremen, Germany  
International Laboratory for Sociocultural Research, National Research  
University Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia  
*k.boehnke@jacobs-university.de*

*Georgi Dragolov*

BIGSSS, Jacobs University Bremen, Germany  
*g.dragolov@jacobs-university.de*

*Zsófia S. Ignác*

Institute of Sociology, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany  
*zsofia.ignacz@fu-berlin.de*

*Mandi Larsen*

BIGSSS, Jacobs University Bremen, Germany  
*m.larsen@jacobs-university.de*

*Jan Lorenz*

Department of Psychology and Methods, Jacobs University Bremen, Germany  
*j.lorenz@jacobs-university.de*

*Michael Koch*

Institute for Sociology, Otto von Guericke University Magdeburg, Germany  
*m.koch@detmold.de*

## Abstract

Trust can either be conceived of as a social glue in its own right, or as a constitutive element of a larger societal syndrome, termed social cohesion. This contribution takes the latter perspective, analyzing social trust and trust in institutions as integral parts of social cohesion more generally. Despite ongoing worries about the state of social cohesion in contemporary societies, surprisingly little is known as to which macro-level conditions actually weaken social cohesion, and which foster it. It remains an open question whether social cohesion is shaped by universal social forces that work similarly in various world regions, or by region-specific ones (the same holds true for outcomes of social cohesion). Against this background, the present paper seeks to advance our understanding of correlates of social cohesion by systematically comparing Western and Asian societies. The empirical analysis is based on the most comprehensive index of social cohesion currently available, the Bertelsmann Social Cohesion Radar. In separate analyses of 34 Western and 22 Asian societies, the authors explore the associations of economic, social, political, and cultural conditions with cohesion, as well as the associations between cohesion and population well-being. The results suggest that while some correlates (such as economic prosperity) can indeed be considered universal, others (e.g. income inequality, political freedom) work differently in Western and Asian societies. The authors link these findings to sociological and cross-cultural psychological theories on Asian modernization and Asian values. The practical conclusion is that not all policy recommendations for strengthening social cohesion can easily travel from one world region to another.

## Keywords

social cohesion – trust – modernization – multiple modernities – culture – Asian values

## Introduction

This paper seeks to contribute to our understanding of the key correlates of social cohesion. More specifically, we attempt to discover whether these correlates work universally or differentially across world regions. Social cohesion can be understood as the degree to which a “sense of togetherness” is manifest in a collectivity of people, of which trust is an essential component. Despite being of concern to sociologists since the seminal works of Emile Durkheim (1933) and Ferdinand Tönnies (1955), social cohesion is a relatively new

concept in quality-of-life research (Noll 2000). Only over the past twenty-five years has the issue of social cohesion gained currency, not the least because national governments around the globe and international bodies such as the European Union (EU), the Council of Europe, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have directed their attention towards learning more about the resilience of the social fabric of present-day societies (Delhey and Boehnke 2018; Schiefer and van der Noll 2017). This interest is largely driven by widespread concerns that social cohesion is fraying due to profound societal changes, such as the growth of ethno-cultural diversity, the widening gap between the rich and the poor (Wilkinson and Pickett 2010), welfare state retrenchments, secularization, and technological changes that are making people's lives less place-based (Castells 1998). The financial crisis of 2007-2008 and the Euro-crisis of 2008-2011 have added to these concerns in places hard-hit by economic recession. The popular impression of declining cohesion dovetails into a widespread narrative of social malaise in contemporary, post-modern societies – particularly in the West (Eckersley 2011; Elchardus and De Keere 2013).

Despite this growing general interest, little is known about the conditions that promote or undermine social cohesion, or about its tangible and intangible benefits. One important strand of scholarly research has focused on the challenging task of defining social cohesion (Berger-Schmitt 2002; Chan et al. 2006; Chiesi 2002; Schiefer and van der Noll 2017). Partly building on this conceptual debate, another strand of research has been concerned with mapping social cohesion. Meanwhile, country rankings exist for a mixed international set of some 50 countries (Janmaat 2011; Janmaat and Braun 2009), as well as for several major world regions: Europe (Dickes and Valentova 2013; Dickes et al. 2010; Janmaat 2011), the Western world (Dragolov et al. 2016), Africa (Langer et al. 2017), and Asia (Dragolov et al. 2018). Finally, by looking at aspects of cohesion separately, researchers have explored so-called regimes of cohesion within the Western world and beyond (Dimeglio et al. 2013; Dragolov et al. 2016; Green and Janmaat 2009; Janmaat 2011).

In contrast, the correlates of social cohesion – conditions as well as outcomes – are still poorly understood. Pioneering work by Janmaat (2011) has shown that, without rubbing away the specific features of world regions, wealth and widespread post-materialist values are correlated with social cohesion in an international set of roughly 50 countries. One weakness of this and other cross-national studies, however, is the universalist “one-size-fits-all” perspective observed when studying correlates of cohesion (or of a closely related social phenomenon) across a large set of diverse countries – an approach which,

by design, makes it difficult to detect correlates that are world-region specific (and, in this sense, particularistic). Informed by insights from comparative sociology, the present paper seeks to address this knowledge gap by exploring macro-level correlates of social cohesion for two major world regions: the Western world (comprising 34 European Union and OECD member states) and Asia (comprising 22 countries from the southern, southeastern, and eastern regions of the continent). Our main goal is to identify both “universal” correlates of cohesion – country characteristics, which operate in the same manner in both world regions – and “particularistic” correlates of cohesion, which work differently in the two world regions. This research question is inspired by the debate on modernization pathways (Therborn 2011; Tominaga 1991), multiple modernities (Spohn 2010; Wei-Ming 2000), and Asian values (Pye 2000), all of which stress the peculiarities of Asian modernity vis-à-vis Western modernity. Our strategy is to explore the correlates of cohesion among Western and Asian countries *separately*, and then identify similarities and differences by comparing key findings. For our analysis, we make use of the recently issued Social Cohesion Radar index (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2018; Dragolov et al. 2016), which is available for these two groups of countries. Our results suggest that some correlates of social cohesion do indeed work universally, while others do not. Ultimately, we conclude that there are only few “one-size-fits-all” public policy solutions for strengthening social cohesion.

In the next section, we briefly introduce the concept of social cohesion to which this article adheres, the Social Cohesion Radar (Section 2). We then discuss a selection of country characteristics that the academic debate has highlighted as important correlates of cohesion, starting with a Western-universalistic perspective (Section 3). Based on historical-comparative modernization theories, Section 4 discusses relevant Asian peculiarities, as well as how such phenomena may condition the correlates of cohesion in the region. Section 5 introduces the data and methods, while Section 6 documents the main findings. Finally, Section 7 discusses our results in light of historical-comparative modernization theories.

### Approach of the Social Cohesion Radar

Any study on social cohesion is confronted with the vagueness of the term (Bernard 1999). On the one hand, there are the more theoretically inspired conceptions, such as David Lockwood’s (1964) envisaging of cohesion, in terms of social integration, as a complement to system integration. Other scholars have taken a more pragmatic approach when identifying the constitutive

elements of cohesion; here, the major difference is between broad conceptualizations (e.g. Berger-Schmitt 2002) and more narrow definitions (e.g. Chan et al. 2006). Still, there is considerable overlap among them, as pointed out in a recent screening study (Schiefer and van der Noll 2017). To begin with, cohesion is consensually seen as an aspect of the collective quality of life: both the extent and quality of communal “togetherness” in a collectivity of people. This focus renders cohesion as more specific than social quality (Abbott and Wallace 2012; Walker and Van der Maesen 2004), but broader than social capital (Ostrom and Ahn 2009; Putnam 1995). Second, whereas social capital is applicable to individuals, cohesion is a strictly collective characteristic. Third, most scholars agree on the multi-dimensional and graduated nature of cohesion: it being comprised of different, more or less interdependent components that can be present to various degrees.

There is some disagreement, however, regarding the constitutive elements of cohesion. Social phenomena such as social relations and networks, social and political trust, tolerance, civic-mindedness, participation, and the absence of conflicts are regarded as components in almost all approaches (Chan et al. 2006; Dickes and Valentova 2013; Janmaat 2011), but others, such as inequalities (Berger-Schmitt 2002), value consensus (Janmaat 2011), ethnic homogeneity, or subjective well-being remain contested. Broad approaches, moreover, run the risk of diluting the meaning of social cohesion and complicating the exploration of its conditions and consequences.

We base this paper on a narrower definition of social cohesion that, nevertheless, offers considerable overlap with previous concepts. We understand social cohesion as “the quality of social cooperation and togetherness of a collective, defined in geopolitical terms, that is expressed in the attitudes and behaviors of its members. A cohesive society is characterized by resilient social relationships, a positive emotional connectedness between its members and the community, and a pronounced focus on the common good” (Dragolov et al. 2016: 6). This definition nests nine dimensions under three core domains. The domain of social relations encompasses horizontal linkages among individuals and groups in society, referring to the strength of social networks, the level of generalized interpersonal trust, and the extent to which different lifestyles are accepted. Connectedness, as the second domain, emphasizes the vertical relations among individuals, their social entity, and its institutions. This domain asserts identification with the social entity, institutional trust, and a perception of fairness in society. The third domain, focus on the common good, intersects both horizontal and vertical aspects of social interaction, incorporating attitudes and behaviors related to solidarity and responsibility for others, respect for social rules, and community engagement.

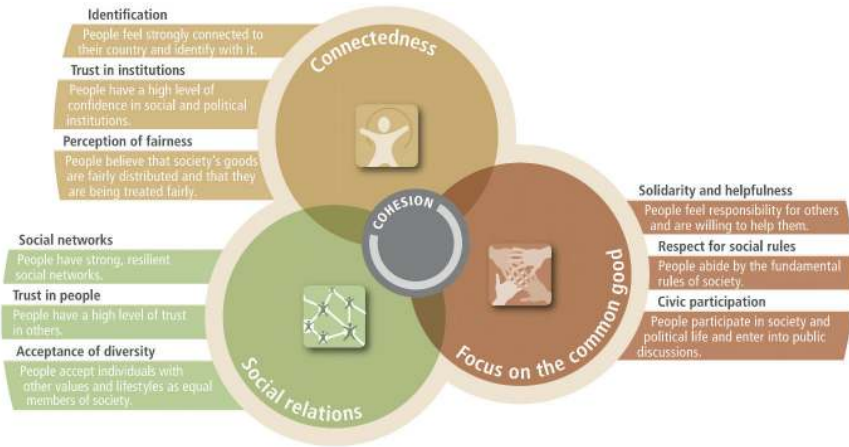


FIGURE 1 *Domains and dimensions of social cohesion.*  
BERTELSMANN STIFTUNG.

Figure 1 illustrates the concept with its three core domains and their subsequent subdivision into nine dimensions. Objective measures of distributive inequality are excluded from the concept, as unequal societies can, in principle, still be cohesive. Research has shown that societies differ in the amount of inequality they consider fair (Hadler 2005; Kelley and Evans 2009). Thus, instead of inequality, the Social Cohesion Radar takes perceptions of distributive and procedural fairness into account as a constitutive element of cohesion. The concept also excludes value consensus (e.g. Janmaat 2011), as it is largely unclear which values should be considered. Therefore, the Social Cohesion Radar prefers the approach of tolerance towards people who lead different lifestyles to that of a value consensus, which could potentially exclude non-mainstream groups (cf. Chan et al. 2006).

The concept shown in Figure 1, originally developed for Western societies, serves also as our framework for mapping cohesion in Asia. It should be noted that the major languages of the various Asian regions lack a direct linguistic equivalent to the term social cohesion (with the exception of research from Hong Kong, where English is an official language; see Chan and Chan 2006; Chan et al. 2006; Cheung et al. 2014). At the same time, the emic concept social harmony (Bell and Mo 2014) is a distinctly Confucian concept, and not general to Asia (Delhey and Boehnke 2018). The choice to stick to the above-introduced, universal framework of cohesion (which is common practice in cross-national quality-of-life research) ensures the conceptual correspondence of the Western and Asian Social Cohesion Radar studies, which is crucial for

our purpose. In order to fine-tune the conceptual framework to the specificities of Asian societies, contextually fitting indicators for the Asian study were chosen, which occasionally differ from those used in the Western study (see Data and Methodology).

### Correlates of Cohesion: The Western-Universalistic Perspective

This section discusses potential correlates of social cohesion from a Western-universalistic perspective, which is later complemented by a perspective based on the paradigms of modernization pathways and multiple modernities. Whether a correlate is a determinant or an outcome of social cohesion is difficult to disentangle, even on empirical grounds. Scholars are divided about how to approach cause and effect in cohesion studies:

There is no unanimous position on whether social cohesion is a cause or a consequence of other aspects of social, economic and political life. For some analysts and policy-makers, the condition of social cohesion in any polity is an independent variable, generating outcomes. For others, social cohesion (or the lack thereof) is the dependent variable, the result of actions in one or more realms.

BEAUVAIS AND JENSON 2002: 2

We acknowledge that there is often a causal loop involved; yet, following Janmaat (2011) and other scholars, we predominantly treat social cohesion as the outcome (dependent variable) of economic, social, political, and cultural characteristics. An exception, however, is people's well-being in terms of life satisfaction: in line with previous research (Delhey and Dragolov 2016), we assume well-being to be an outcome of cohesion.

#### *Economic Conditions and Economic Modernization*

The theory of (post)modernization (Inglehart 1997) and its successor, the human development theory (Inglehart and Welzel 2005), suggest that socio-economic development translates into existential security, thereby freeing individuals and groups from competition over scarce resources. Economic prosperity thus eases social tensions and paves the way for the formation of cooperative and trustful relationships, through which emancipative goals are pursued, ranging from personal well-being and self-expression to minority rights and concerns for the disadvantaged. Moreover, mass consumption and a broad middle class ensure rule compliance and boost social and political

participation in a thriving civil society. Indeed, Janmaat (2011) found economically advanced societies to be more cohesive. Likewise, socio-economic development has been found to be conducive to both trust (Delhey and Newton 2005) and unconventional political participation (Welzel et al. 2005).

### *Social Conditions: Inequalities*

The expectation that inequality weakens social bonds is widespread. Social philosophers argue that gaping inequalities between the rich and the poor undermine the idea of a community of equals which underpins modern democracy (Miller 1999). With a focus on rich societies, the Spirit Level Theory (Wilkinson and Pickett 2010) claims that inequality nurtures an unhealthy materialistic climate of status competition among citizens, which erodes social relations and mutual support and, thus, weakens social cohesion. Low-inequality societies, in contrast, are “better” societies with less social problems, better population health, and (presumably) stronger social cohesion. Other scholars also expect economic inequality to weaken cohesion – in particular, key components such as trust (Delhey and Newton 2005; Rothstein and Uslaner 2005; Uslaner and Brown 2003). Their main argument holds that inequality leads to conflicting interests and polarization between social groups. Several quantitative cross-national studies have found trust and social capital to be lower in unequal societies (Bjørnskov 2008; Delhey and Dragolov 2014; Delhey and Newton 2005; Uslaner and Brown 2003). However, empirical research has so far looked mainly at trust levels, social ills, and population health, but less so at comprehensively measured social cohesion.

### *Political Conditions: Freedom*

A key idea of Western political philosophy is that social bonds are more easily created among political equals in a non-coercive setting. Therefore, democracy and political freedom have been widely seen as conducive to, if not a crucial precondition for, cohesion – an assumption which is also prominent in research on social capital and trust (Levi and Stoker 2000; Newton 2001). For the group of Western countries studied, this assertion is difficult to test empirically: despite marginal differences, the *Freedom in the World* reports of Freedom House<sup>1</sup> have consistently rated all of these countries as free in terms of civil liberties and political rights. Against this background, the more salient aspect of the political regime in the Western world appears to be the extent to which liberal democratic rights are granted to citizens.

<sup>1</sup> See <https://freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-world>.



### *Cultural Conditions: Religiosity and Values*

According to the sociological classic work of Emile Durkheim (Durkheim 1933), religion constitutes an integrative force in society, providing people with a collective consciousness of shared values and norms that feed into mechanic solidarity. Other scholars, however, contend that religiosity belongs to a cluster of traditional values (Inglehart and Welzel 2005) which constitute a less fertile breeding ground for the kind of organic solidarity that characterizes the modern condition. Extending the perspective from religiosity to that of values in general, value change theory claims that it is rather the post-modern values of post-materialism and self-expression that motivate people to build ties to out-groups, develop a cosmopolitan outlook, care for the disadvantaged, and be politically active (Norris and Inglehart 2009; Welzel and Delhey 2015; Welzel et al. 2005).

To summarize this section, the following universal hypothesis can be derived:

*H<sub>1</sub>-universalistic: The level of social cohesion in a society is positively influenced by economic development, low income inequality, liberal democracy, and secularization/post-materialist values.*

### *Subjective Well-being*

Regarding outcomes, we assume higher subjective well-being to be a positive consequence of a cohesive society. The key argument is that human needs are manifold. The prominent work of Erik Allardt (1993) distinguishes between the needs of having, loving, and being. The more fine-grained Good Life approach considers seven basic goods, among which respect and friendship are included (Delhey and Steckermeier 2016; Skidelsky and Skidelsky 2013). Since cohesive societies can be considered more “warm-hearted” and solidary, arguably they cater better for social needs, such as loving (in the Allardt scheme), respect and friendship (in the Good Life approach). Cohesive societies, hence, induce a flow of positive life experiences and emotions, which should contribute to a high level of subjective well-being. Among European societies, social cohesion has been found to be a strong contextual determinant of subjective well-being, resulting in higher life satisfaction, less negative emotions, and better psychological functioning (Delhey and Dragolov 2016). Further, large international comparisons have shown a climate of trust in fellow citizens to correlate with population well-being (Bjørnskov 2003) and to have a positive contextual effect on individual well-being (Calvo et al. 2012). There is also mounting evidence for the positive effects of social relations and social support on happiness and life satisfaction (Helliwell 2006; Helliwell and Putnam 2004).

This leads us to assume:

*H<sub>2</sub>-universalistic: The subjective well-being of a population is positively influenced by a society's level of social cohesion.*

### Correlates of Cohesion: The Asian-Particularistic Perspective

The above hypotheses sound very familiar and plausible to the Western reader. Still, caution is warranted when blindly applying them worldwide, as the discussion about modernization pathways, multiple modernities, and Asian values suggests. Enlightened theorists of modernization have always stressed that there are different pathways to and through modernity (Therborn 1995; Tominaga 1991), with the Western path of largely endogenous development being one of several possibilities. In Asia, for instance, the process of modernization started (a) later, (b) in a different cultural context, and (c) was dependent upon cultural diffusion from the West (Tominaga 1991: 97). Having neither adopted “Westernization” nor simply rejected it, Asian societies ultimately transformed into versions of modernity different from the Western ones. In other words, there are multiple modernities, not just one (Spohn 2010; Wei-Ming 2000).

A most relevant issue for our paper is that of how the speed and extent of the adoption of the Western model of modernization varies systematically between societal spheres: “That means that in the modernization process of non-Western late-coming societies economic modernization comes first, political modernization comes later than that, and societal-cultural modernization comes last” (Tominaga 1991: 102). The reason is that the speed of the adoption of Western patterns was dependent on three factors: the ease of diffusion, the motivation of actors to adapt to Westernization, and the amount of conflict involved. Across all three dimensions, Tominaga argues, the adoption of Western patterns was easiest in the economic realm, and most difficult and contested in the socio-cultural realm. Consequently, according to this theory, the peculiarities of Asian societies are (still) most pronounced in social organization and culture, and least pronounced in the economic realm.

A similar argument offers the Asian values thesis. Its proponents assert that Western ideals of universal individual rights and liberal democracy do not fit with Asia's collectivistic traditions (Bomhoff and Gu 2012; Thompson 2004). The Asian model, thus, embraces economic and social modernization, but not political modernization towards liberal democracy. On the other hand,

focusing on value change and the public's democratic aspirations, Welzel (2011) finds no evidence in support of an Asian exceptionalism of this sort.

How do these – factual or assumed – peculiarities of Asian modernity play out for our subject matter, social cohesion? There is some evidence that East Asian societies, such as Japan and South Korea, form a social cohesion regime of their own – i.e., that they have similar scores for key dimensions of cohesion – which is partly different from those in Western countries (Janmaat 2011). Our research question essentially aims to find whether such peculiarities extend also to the macro-societal correlates of cohesion. In general, the theories of Asian modernization/Asian values remind us that correlates of cohesion are not necessarily universal: they may not work similarly in every world region. Rather, some correlates might be particularistic and exhibit different associations with social cohesion in the West and in Asia. Specifically, one would expect diverging patterns mainly in the socio-cultural (suggested by the idea of Asian modernization) and political realm (suggested by the idea of Asian values), but not in the economic realm. As to inequality, an element of the social realm, the Confucian idea of social harmony (Bell and Mo 2014) stresses the principle of hierarchy much more than Western philosophy – between father and son, rulers and masses, etc. From value research it is well-known that Asian societies – not only those with a legacy of Confucianism – typically score higher than Western societies on power distance, a value orientation that emphasizes hierarchy over equality (Hofstede and Bond 2001; Hofstede et al. 2010). Thus, in comparison to Western populations, Asians might be less sensitive to inequality, so that inequalities do not necessarily undermine cohesion; they might even contribute to it, as hierarchies provide social life with a predictable texture.

As to political circumstances, it is possible that the more autocratic regimes in Asia are equally successful – or even more successful – than Asian democracies in generating and maintaining social cohesion. A case in point is Singapore, which has contained ethnic and religious rivalries “by the command” of the political leadership (Tan 2017).

As to cultural contexts, value researchers have frequently emphasized gross differences between the individualist Western world and collectivist (East) Asia (Triandis 2004). However different degrees of collectivism within Asia, for example between non-Confucian (e.g., India) and Confucian countries (e.g., China), are likely to impact social cohesion at the country-level (Zhao and Diao 2013). The same applies to power distance, which is also not uniformly high across all Asian countries (Van 2009), although regularly higher than in Western countries. A plausible expectation is that in an Asian comparison, the

more cohesive societies are those in which citizens more strongly cherish values such as collectivism and power distance.

In summary, on the basis of these theories of Asian peculiarities, it can be hypothesized:

*H<sub>1</sub>-particularistic: The level of social cohesion in Asian societies is positively influenced by economic development, collectivism, and power distance, but not by political freedom and equality.*

Finally, the more collectivist tradition of Asia might also shape the relevance of social cohesion for population well-being. The emphasis on collectivism in Asian cultures suggests that living in a cohesive society is of paramount importance to the well-being of Asians.

*H<sub>2</sub>-particularistic: While the subjective well-being of a population is positively influenced by a society's level of social cohesion in both the Western world and Asia, the positive influence of cohesion is stronger in Asia.*

## Data

### *Social Cohesion in the Western World*

Data on *social cohesion in Western countries* stems from the Social Cohesion Radar project (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2013), conducted on behalf of Bertelsmann Stiftung by the authors of this article. This social reporting initiative compared 34 Western societies, among which the EU-27 and further seven OECD member states were included (see Table 1). The social cohesion index is based on 58 indicators from established international social surveys (aggregated to country-level information) and social statistics from international bodies, which have been carefully selected on both theoretical and methodological grounds. The measurement of the nine cohesion dimensions (see Figure 1) follows a reflective index-building approach and, therefore, has been performed in a factor analytical framework. The measurement of the overall cohesion index assumes, in contrast, a formative index-building approach by taking the average of the nine dimensions. Further details on the index of social cohesion for the Western countries, including the set of items upon which it is based, can be found in Dragolov et al. (2016: Ch. 2 and Appendix). The index is available for the following four time periods: 1989-1995, 1996-2003, 2004-2008, and 2009-2012. To ensure the comparability of the findings across the Western and Asian contexts, this paper uses the Western data from the two most recent periods.

TABLE 1 *Countries included in the Western study*

OECD only	Western European	Eastern European
Australia (AU)	Austria (AT)	Bulgaria (BG)
Canada (CA)	Belgium (BE)	Cyprus (CY)
Israel (IL)	Denmark (DK)	Czech Republic (CZ)
New Zealand (NZ)	Finland (FI)	Estonia (EE)
United States (US)	France (FR)	Hungary (HU)
	Germany (DE)	Latvia (LV)
	Great Britain (GB)	Lithuania (LT)
	Greece (GR)	Poland (PL)
	Ireland (IE)	Romania (RO)
	Italy (IT)	Slovenia (SI)
	Luxemburg (LU)	Slovakia (SK)
	Malta (MT)	
	Norway (NO)	
	Netherlands (NL)	
	Portugal (PT)	
	Spain (ES)	
	Sweden (SE)	
	Switzerland (CH)	

*Note:* Abbreviated country names in parentheses.

### *Social Cohesion in Asia*

Data on *social cohesion in Asian countries* stems from a separate study of the Social Cohesion Radar (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2018), which was also conducted by the authors of this article. The Asian study covers the three geographically and culturally defined areas of South Asia, Southeast Asia, and East Asia (see Table 2). Its design draws on the latent conceptual equivalence approach (Boehnke et al. 2014), which asserts the possibility of measuring an identical construct across different contexts through the use of varying indicators. With the input of experts on the region, the Asian study selected contextually fitting and reliable indicators from a variety of sources. Next to global surveys like the Gallup World Poll or the World Values Survey, it relied on regional surveys like the AsiaBarometer and the Asian Barometer. Additionally, data from international institutional sources and expert ratings were also incorporated: e.g., the Core Civil Society Index, equality of opportunity, group grievance,

TABLE 2 *Countries included in the Asian study*

South Asia	Southeast Asia	East Asia
Afghanistan (AF)	Cambodia (KH)	China (CN)
Bangladesh (BD)	Indonesia (ID)	Hong Kong (HK)
Bhutan (BT)	Laos (LA)	Japan (JP)
India (IN)	Malaysia (MY)	South Korea (SK)
Nepal (NP)	Myanmar (MM)	Mongolia (MN)
Pakistan (PK)	Philippines (PH)	Taiwan (TW)
Sri Lanka (LK)	Singapore (SG)	
	Thailand (TH)	
	Vietnam (VN)	

*Note:* Abbreviated country names in parentheses.

homicide rates, and political participation. Consequently, the measurement of the nine dimensions of the index of social cohesion utilizes a partially different set of items in Asia from that employed for the West (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2018: Appendix to Ch. 3; Larsen et al. 2018). The core methodology, however, matches that of the Western study: the same two-step process is used to first derive the nine dimensions and then the overall cohesion index. The Asian comparison offers scores for 22 countries and two time periods: 2004-2008 and 2009-2015.

In comparison to other “large *N*” cross-national studies which draw on survey data only (Dickes and Valentova 2013; Janmaat 2011; Langer et al. 2017), the key advantages of the Western and Asian studies of the Social Cohesion Radar are its sound methodological approach as well as the integration of survey and process data.

### *Correlates of Social Cohesion*

As to the potential conditions of cohesion, we consider the following economic, social, political, and cultural country characteristics.

Economic progress is measured with two variables. Our first measure is the *gross domestic product (GDP) per capita*, which provides information about the economic prosperity of a country. Data on the countries’ GDP per capita in purchasing power parity, expressed in current US dollars, stem from the World Bank (2017). In order to account for the broad range of this indicator, we take the natural logarithm of the original values. Our second indicator,

the *Knowledge Index* (KI) of the World Bank (2012), gauges economic progress from a more structural-technological point of view. The KI compiles information on educational levels, economic innovation, and infrastructure related to information and communication technologies. It, thereby, captures a society's progress towards a knowledge economy.

Regarding inequality, the analyses employ the *Gini index of income inequality*, which ranges from 0 (perfect equality) to 100 (perfect inequality). We take Gini estimates on the basis of household equivalized disposable income. For the Western study, data stem from the World Income Inequality Database (WIID3.4; UNU-WIDER 2017); we use the high-quality country estimates from Eurostat and OECD. For the Asian study, we draw on the Standardized World Income Inequality Database (Solt 2014).

As to political circumstances, we capture the degree of liberal democracy in the Western world using the *Liberal component index* from the Varieties of Democracy Project (v. 7.1, Coppedge et al. 2017), which takes into account the degree of equality before the law, individual liberties, and the mutual constraints between judicial and executive branches. A higher score on the index stands for a country's stronger emphasis of the principle of liberal democracy. The political characteristics of the Asian societies are captured, first, by a society's Freedom House (2015) ratings on *political rights and civil liberties* (used separately). The political rights dimension taps into the electoral process, political pluralism and participation, and the functioning of the government. Civil liberties measure the freedom of expression and belief, associational and organizational rights, the rule of law, personal autonomy, and individual rights. Ratings on each dimension range from 1 (greatest degree of freedom) to 7 (lowest degree of freedom). Second, we consider the *Polity Index* from the Polity IV project (Marshall, Jaggers, and Gurr 2014). Drawing on aspects like the competitiveness and regulation of political participation, the openness and competitiveness of executive recruitment, and the constraints on the chief executive, this index positions political regimes on a continuum from -10 (full autocracy) to +10 (full democracy).

As for culture, we consider the following aspects. First, we address the *strength of religiosity* in a society using data on a survey item from the Gallup World Poll: "Is religion an important part of your everyday life?" We take the percentage of respondents who select the answer "yes." Second, we address the salient cultural values in the two world regions. Using data from the World Values Survey and the European Values Study for the Western countries, these constitute the *materialism vs. post-materialism* value orientations of Ronald Inglehart (1997). For the Asian societies, the paper takes *individualism-collectivism* and *power distance* (Hofstede et al. 2010). The latter two value

dimensions have been chosen with regards to their alleged salience in (East) Asian cultures, as the Asian Values Thesis holds (e.g. Dalton and Ong 2005).

Subjective well-being is measured as *life satisfaction* through the use of the famous 'Cantril ladder of life' from the Gallup World Poll. Answers can range from 0 (worst possible life respondents can imagine) to 10 (best possible life). The higher the country average, the more satisfied the citizenry are with life.

## Methodology

As described above, the measurement of social cohesion in the two world regions, though based on the same concept, draws on partially different sets of items and the respective studies were conducted separately. Due to the relative nature of the country scores on the index of social cohesion in each of the two studies, it is not meaningful to join them into one body of data. Therefore, we test our hypotheses by conducting separate correlational analyses for the Western countries (Study 1) and the Asian countries (Study 2). The results are then compared. This strategy should not be seen as a drawback; given that the main aim of this research is to tell universal from region-specific correlates of cohesion, the separation appears to be advantageous.

We apply time-lagged correlations: when interested in determinants of social cohesion, we correlate measurements of the societal characteristics in question from the period 2004-2008 with the cohesion index in the following period: 2009-2012 for the Western countries and 2009-2015 for the Asian countries. When interested in the well-being effect generated by cohesion, we correlate country scores on the cohesion index from the period 2004-2008 with average life satisfaction in the period 2009-2012/15. Although correlations preclude conclusions about causation, this time-lagged framework does increase the plausibility of a causal interpretation.

In the analysis we consider both bivariate and partial correlations. The latter take into account GDP per capita, as many country characteristics go hand in hand with economic prosperity.

## Results

### *Study 1: Western Countries*

Figure 2 depicts the strength of social cohesion in Western societies for the most recent time period 2009-2012. The countries can be grouped into five tiers, ranging from very strong to very weak cohesion. Social cohesion is



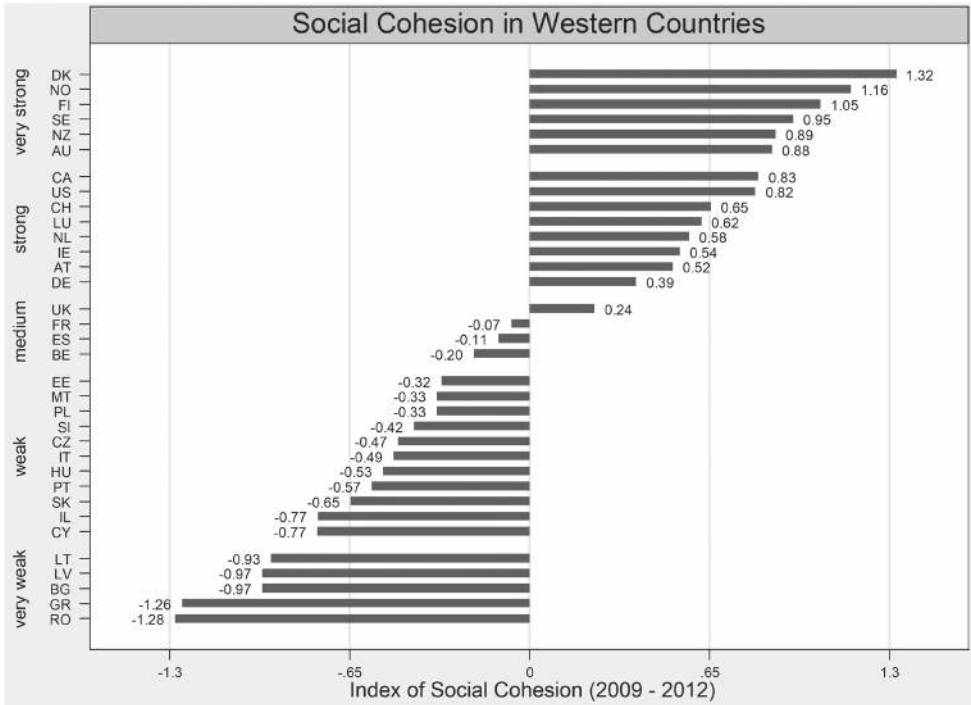


FIGURE 2 *Social cohesion in Western countries (2009-2012). The figure shows the scores of the Western countries studied on the overall index of social cohesion in the most recent available wave (2009-2012) in descending order. Countries can be grouped in five tiers of relatively very weak, weak, medium, strong, or very strong cohesion.*

relatively strongest in the Nordic countries: Denmark ranks highest, followed by Norway, Finland, and Sweden. Australia and Canada, two English-speaking new world countries, are also characterized by a very strong cohesion. The second tier of strong cohesion consists of the US and several wealthy Western European countries, including Germany. The middle tier of medium-strong cohesion includes three of the major EU countries: the UK, France, and Spain, plus Belgium. The fourth tier of weak cohesion consists of countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean region. The bottom tier of very weak cohesion, finally, includes the two Baltic countries Lithuania and Latvia, as well as the Southeastern European countries of Bulgaria, Greece, and Romania. Overall, a surprisingly clear geographic pattern emerges, ranked from top to bottom: Northern Europe; North America and Oceania; Western Europe; Southern Europe and Central and Eastern Europe; the Baltic region; Southeastern Europe. This is a pattern one often finds in rankings of individual and collective quality of life (Abbott et al. 2016; Delhey and Steckermeier 2016).

We now turn to potential determinants. Table 3 lists bivariate correlations with the selected variables, as well as partial correlations in which GDP per capita has been partialled out. In the West, national affluence is obviously good for social cohesion. The correlation coefficient is at  $.77$  ( $p \leq .01$ ), which indicates a very strong association. This is a noteworthy finding, given the often-heard claims that prosperity compromises human character and thus undermines mutual solidarity and other manifestations of social cohesion. The opposite is true, much in line with existential security theory. The Knowledge Index is also positively and strongly associated with social cohesion, even after partialling out economic prosperity ( $r_{\text{partial}} = .68$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ). It thus appears that advances towards better education, innovation, and communication technologies strengthen cohesion, over and above the economic benefits they generate.

Income inequality weakens the social fabric of Western societies. The bivariate correlation is moderately negative ( $r = -.49$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ), suggesting that societies with large gaps between rich and poor citizens are less cohesive. This corrosive effect gets weaker, but still holds when prosperity is accounted for ( $r_{\text{partial}} = -.31$ ,  $p \leq .10$ ).

As for the political system, liberal democracy strengthens the social cohesion of Western societies. The very strong, positive, and highly significant bivariate correlation ( $r = .70$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ) reduces to a moderately positive partial association ( $r_{\text{partial}} = .43$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ), suggesting that above and beyond economic prosperity, a more liberal democratic setup is conducive to a higher degree of social cooperation and togetherness.

As to cultural conditions, we examine the strength of religiosity as well as that of post-materialist and materialist values. Both religiosity and materialist values exhibit a negative association with cohesion. These correlations retain their statistical significance when partialling out national affluence (religiosity:  $r_{\text{partial}} = -.43$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ; materialist values:  $r_{\text{partial}} = -.49$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ). Post-materialist orientations present the mirror image of materialist values in so far as they strengthen cohesion ( $r_{\text{partial}} = .32$ ,  $p \leq .10$ ). Thus, our results for cultural conditions in the Western area are very much in line with Inglehart's post-modernization theory.

We finally investigate whether social cohesion is associated with life satisfaction. The raw correlation between cohesion and life satisfaction is as high as  $.87$  ( $p \leq .01$ ), which tempts us to conclude: "cohesion is happiness". Even after accounting for societal prosperity – which is both conducive to life satisfaction and social cohesion – the association remains strong ( $r_{\text{partial}} = .61$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ). To conclude, the social wealth that cohesion stands for is conducive to psychological wealth, as indicated by population life satisfaction.

TABLE 3 *Correlations of social cohesion with societal characteristics in Western countries*

Characteristic	Bivariate	Partial linear	Countries not covered
<i>Economic</i>			
GDP per capita (ln)	.77 ***	n/a	
Knowledge Index	.87 ***	.68 ***	
<i>Social</i>			
Income inequality	-.49 ***	-.31 *	AU, CY, NZ
<i>Political</i>			
Liberal component index	.70 ***	.45 **	LU, MT
<i>Cultural</i>			
Religiosity	-.46 ***	-.43 **	
Materialist values	-.72 ***	-.49 ***	BE, IL
Post-materialist values	.65 ***	.32 *	BE, IL
<i>Well-being</i>			
Life satisfaction 'at present'	.87 ***	.61 ***	

*Note:* The table shows the bivariate and partial correlation coefficients (after adjustment for the gross domestic product per capita) for the associations of the index of social cohesion with selected societal characteristics. Significance of the correlations in the case of two-sided tests: \*\*\*  $p \leq .01$ , \*\*  $p \leq .05$ , \*  $p \leq .10$ .

### *Study 2: Asian Countries*

Figure 3 depicts the strength of social cohesion in the 22 Asian societies during the time period 2009-2015. None of them can be characterized as having very strong cohesion, but six countries are characterized by a strong degree of cohesion. The society which leads the overall ranking is Hong Kong, a prosperous special administrative region of China, closely followed by Singapore, another rich city-state. To the same tier belong Thailand, Bhutan, Taiwan, and Sri Lanka. Most countries fall into the third tier of medium strong cohesion. Japan, China, South Korea, and Indonesia rank here, as well as Mongolia and the rest of the ASEAN members covered in the study: Laos, Malaysia, the

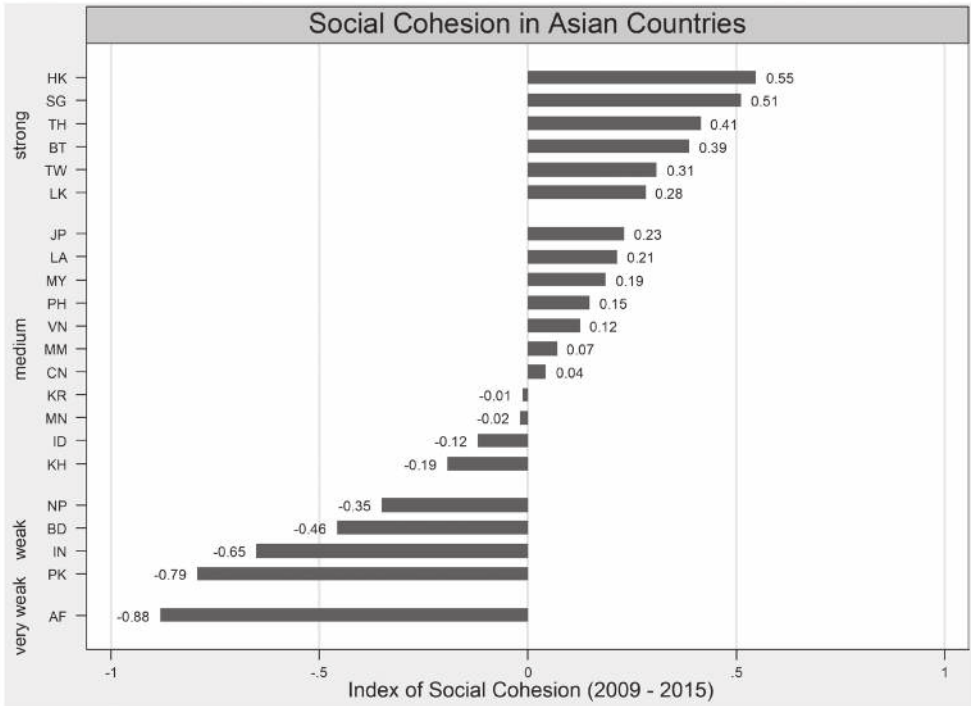


FIGURE 3 *Social cohesion in Asian countries (2009-2015). The figure shows the scores of the Asian countries studied on the overall index of social cohesion in the most recent available wave (2009-2015) in descending order. Countries can be grouped in five tiers of relatively very weak, weak, medium, strong, or very strong cohesion.*

Philippines, Vietnam, Myanmar, and Cambodia. Four societies, all from South Asia, exhibit a weak level of cohesion: India, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. Afghanistan, a state devastated by a series of wars since the 1970s, ranks in the bottom tier of very weak cohesion.

Are the prosperous Asian societies more cohesive? We find a strong and highly significant positive association of national affluence in Wave 1 (2004-2008) with the level of social cohesion in Wave 2 ( $r = .62, p \leq .01$ ; see Table 4 for all correlations presented in Study 2). Still, prosperity alone is not enough to ensure strong cohesion. A case in point is South Korea, which ranks number four in terms of prosperity, but nevertheless has a just-average level of cohesion, behind the much poorer states of Bhutan and Laos. Evidence points to a lack of association between the Knowledge Index and the degree of social cohesion, once prosperity has been taken into account. However, we

find a strong, positive, and highly significant correlation in the bivariate case ( $r = .59, p \leq .01$ ). This suggests that progress towards a knowledge economy in Asia enhances cohesion insofar as it generates economic resources, but not beyond that.

Unlike in the West, income inequality and social cohesion are not *linearly* related. There is, however, a significant inverted-U-shaped (quadratic) correlation. This finding points to a dual role of income inequality in the Asian context. Assuming that a Gini above .40 describes a large gap between the rich and the poor (Catalano et al. 2009), the evidence suggests that moving from small to moderate inequalities in income tends to promote social cohesion, whereas moving from moderate to high income inequality undermines it.

As to political conditions, our analyses do not find statistically significant bivariate associations between any of the investigated characteristics of political regime and social cohesion. Yet, after accounting for GDP per capita, we do find some evidence that political conditions matter in Asia: Restrictions on the political rights of citizens (as measured with the respective Freedom House Index component) turn out to be *positively* and significantly related to social cohesion ( $r_{\text{partial}} = .44, p \leq .05$ ). Thus, opposite to the Western model, at similar levels of economic development, the more authoritarian countries in Asia are slightly more cohesive than the democratic ones. However, although the other political indicators point in the same direction, the partial correlations are not statistically significant.

Turning to culture, as in the West, cohesion is at first sight weaker in more religious societies ( $r = -.46, p \leq .05$ ). However, the role of religiosity in Asia appears to be driven by economic conditions rather than belief, as religiosity is typically stronger in less-affluent societies. This is evident from the partial correlation (accounting for differences in GDP per capita) approaching zero ( $r_{\text{partial}} = .03$ ). There is a weak tendency that the acceptance of power distance accompanies stronger cohesion, yet the association is not statistically significant. Next, we find a quadratic association of individualism-collectivism and cohesion: the medium-level collectivist societies are more cohesive than both the most individualistic and the most collectivistic ones.

Finally, does cohesion contribute to subjective well-being in Asia? Indeed, the more cohesive societies in Asia appear happier 'at present'. The correlation is strong and positive ( $r = .64, p \leq .01$ ); yet after partialling for economic prosperity, the relationship loses its statistical significance. Life satisfaction appears to be driven by economic wealth rather than the social wealth that social cohesion refers to. A more robust well-being effect of cohesion surfaces with well-being optimism: in cohesive societies, citizens' average expected life satisfaction in five years is systematically higher ( $r_{\text{partial}} = .38, p \leq .10$ ).

TABLE 4 *Correlations of social cohesion with societal characteristics in Asian countries*

Characteristic	Bivariate	Partial linear	Partial quadratic	Countries not covered
<i>Economic</i>				
GDP per capita (ln)	.62 ***			
Knowledge Index	.59 ***	-.03		AF, BT
<i>Social</i>				
Income inequality	.18	.37	∩	MM
<i>Political</i>				
Freedom House: Civil Liberties	-.17	.29		HK
Freedom House: Political Rights	-.01	.44 **		HK
Polity Index	.08	-.25		HK
<i>Cultural</i>				
Religiosity	-.46 **	.03		BT, CN, MM
Power distance	.03	.33		AF, BT, KH,
Collectivism-Individualism	-.09	-.14	∩	LA, MM, MN
<i>Well-being</i>				
Life satisfaction at present	.64 ***	.25		
Life satisfaction in five years	.46 **	.38 *		

*Note:* The table shows the bivariate and partial correlation coefficients (after adjustment for the gross domestic product per capita) for the associations of the index of social cohesion with selected societal characteristics. Significance of the correlations in the case of two-sided tests: \*\*\*  $p \leq .01$ , \*\*  $p \leq .05$ , \*  $p \leq .10$ . The ∩ symbol refers to the shape of the quadratic association, significant at  $p \leq .10$  in a two-sided test.

## Discussion and Conclusion

This paper aimed to find whether the correlates of social cohesion are universal or particularistic. We find evidence for both perspectives. The most striking similarity between the West and Asia is the positive impact of economic prosperity. In both world regions, economic resources generate cohesion, which supports previous studies (Dragolov et al. 2016; Janmaat 2011).

The most striking peculiarities of the Asian region refer to income inequality and political conditions. Regarding disparities in the income distribution, a simple formula applies in the West: The larger the gap between rich and poor, the less cohesive the society, corroborating theories of the corrosive effect of inequality on the social fabric of rich societies (Wilkinson and Pickett 2010). For Asia, the formula is more complex, as the most cohesive societies are those with a moderate level of income inequality, not those with the lowest inequality. A speculative interpretation is that Asia experiences two competing influences of income inequality: a corrosive effect and a positive tunnel effect (Hirschman and Rothschild 1973), balanced out at a medium-level of inequality.

The second major peculiarity of Asia in comparison to the West is the evidence of more authoritarian regimes having stronger, not weaker, cohesion. This association surfaces once economic prosperity is accounted for. This finding is in line with an observation made by Croissant (2018: 187): “Even though the more democratic political systems in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan perform better in combating income inequality, implementing various principles of social justice, and fighting corruption than other regimes in Asia – except for Singapore and Hong Kong – institutional trust and perceptions of fairness are weak, and dissatisfaction with the political process is widespread”. For the West, the evidence speaks of the opposite: the most cohesive countries are those with the most liberal democratic setup – that is, elevating the rights of minorities groups to a level of protection equal to those of the majority. The Asian pattern lends some support to the Asian modernity/Asian values perspective, although it is important to recall that the statistical significance of the association depends on the indicator chosen to tap political freedom. Moreover, an authoritarianism-cohesion nexus may also be present in other non-Western world regions which are not covered in the study at hand, thus one should be cautious in diagnosing an Asian exceptionalism (Croissant 2018; Roßteutscher 2010).

A third group of correlates consists of those that are neither fully universalistic nor particularistic, such as economic structure (knowledge economy), religiosity, and average life satisfaction. In all these cases, the bivariate associations with cohesion are positive (negative in the case of religiosity) and moderately strong in the West *and* in Asia – however, accounting for prosperity does render such associations insignificant in Asia. For religiosity, our results generally suggest that its role for the social fabric of societies is not really the positive one often assumed by conservatives. One speculative explanation is that religion fosters cohesion *within* a community of believers (bonding, in Putnam’s terminology), but not between communities (bridging). Future research should further explore this issue. The results on life satisfaction in

Asia do not support our initial hypothesis based on Asian collectivisms (*H<sub>2</sub>-particularistic*). The evidence rather fits with the argument that the transition to capitalist economies and the economic boom experienced by many Asian countries in the last decades have paved the way for a “monetization of happiness” (Brockmann et al. 2009) in the sense that money, status goods, and consumption have become paramount for one’s life satisfaction. Nevertheless, caution is warranted in concluding that material circumstances in Asia *generally* trump social conditions. Subjective well-being might still be quite dependent on the cohesion of family and kin, which is a layer of the social fabric deliberately excluded from the Social Cohesion Radar. Additional research employing other data may shed light on this issue.

In motivating our research, we have drawn on theories of Asian modernity and Asian values. These theories were not devised to explain similarities or peculiarities in the correlates of social cohesion, which is why our results can neither support nor refute their implications. We deem it more appropriate to ponder how helpful these theories are for contextualizing our results. The modernization theory by Tominaga (1991) locates the peculiarities of Asian societies primarily in the socio-cultural realm, and least so in the economic realm. Dovetailing with this sequential arrangement, it is indeed the economic conditions that can be considered to be more universalistic, particularly economic prosperity. Furthermore, Asia differs from the West with respect to political and social (inequalities) conditions, again largely in line with the idea of Asian modernity.

One cultural condition, secularization, however, works quite similarly in both the West and Asia, contrary to the implications of the literature on Asian modernization. On the one hand, secularism might be a less specific trait of Asian societies, as it is often a by-product of socio-economic modernization (Norris and Inglehart 2004), which may explain the similarity between the West and Asia regarding the secularism-cohesion nexus. On the other hand, we find only weak evidence that other Asian cultural traits, such as collectivism or power distance, are a strong and indispensable underpinning of social cohesion, as their associations with cohesion are either weak (power distance) or non-linear (individualism/collectivism). This implies that the relevance of Asian values for keeping Asian societies together is more limited than often presumed. Again, this conclusion does not rule out the possibility that Asian values are important for smaller-scale cohesion in the context of communities, neighborhoods, and families, or for social harmony (Bell and Mo 2014) as a conceptualization of “togetherness” in the Confucian tradition.

A firm conclusion of our research is that policy makers interested in strengthening social cohesion should be careful in copying recipes that worked well in



other parts of the world. One key exception is economic prosperity; obviously, economic means are useful for achieving social ends, too.

### Acknowledgement

We would like to thank Bertelsmann Stiftung for the fruitful cooperation on the Social Cohesion Radar project, and for making the open access publication of the present paper possible. Klaus Boehnke's contribution to this article was in part prepared within the framework of the Basic Research Program at the National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE) and supported within the framework of a subsidy granted to the HSE by the Government of the Russian Federation for the implementation of the Global Competitiveness Program. Part of Georgi Dragolov's and Jan Lorenz's contribution benefited from a grant of the German Research Council (DFG 265108307).

### References

- Abbott, P. and C. Wallace. 2012. "Social Quality: A Way to Measure the Quality of Society." *Social Indicators Research* 108: 153-167.
- Abbott, P., C. Wallace and R. Sapsford. 2016. *The Decent Society. Planning for Social Quality*, New York: Routledge.
- Allardt, E. 1993. "Having, Loving, Being: An Alternative to the Swedish Model of Welfare Research." Pp. 88-94 in *The Quality of Life*. Edited by M. Nussbaum and A. Sen. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Beauvais, C. and J. Jenson. 2002. "Social Cohesion: Updating the State of Research." CPRN Discussion Paper, Ottawa.
- Bell, D.A. and Y. Mo. 2014. "Harmony in the World 2013: The Ideal and the Reality." *Social Indicators Research* 118: 797-818.
- Berger-Schmitt, R. 2002. "Considering Social Cohesion in Quality of Life Assessments. Concept and Measurement." *Social Indicators Research* 58: 403-428.
- Bernard, P. 1999. "Social cohesion: A critique." CPRN Discussion Paper No. F/9., Ottawa.
- Bertelsmann Stiftung. 2013. *An International Comparison of Social Cohesion*. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung.
- Bertelsmann Stiftung. 2018. "What Holds Asian Societies Together? Insights from the Social Cohesion Radar." Gütersloh: Verlag Bertelsmann Stiftung.
- Bjørnskov, C. 2003. "The Happy Few: Cross-Country Evidence on Social Capital and Life Satisfaction." *Kyklos* 56: 3-16.

- Bjørnskov, C. 2008. "Social Trust and Fractionalization: A Possible Reinterpretation." *European Sociological Review* 24: 271-283.
- Boehnke, K., C. Arnaut, T. Bremer, R. Chinyemba, Y. Kiewitt, A.K. Koudadjey, R. Mwangase and L. Neubert. 2014. "Toward Emically Informed Cross-Cultural Comparisons: A Suggestion." *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 45: 1655-1670.
- Bomhoff, E.J. and M. M-L. Gu. 2012. "East Asia Remains Different: A Comment on the Index of 'Self-Expression Values,' by Inglehart and Welzel." *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 43: 373-383.
- Brockmann, H., J. Delhey, C. Welzel and H. Yuan. 2009. "The China Puzzle: Falling Happiness in a Booming Economy." *Journal of Happiness Studies* 10: 387-405.
- Calvo, R., Y. Zheng, S. Kumar, A. Olgiati and L. Berkman. 2012. "Well-Being and Social Capital on Planet Earth: Cross-National Evidence from 142 Countries." *PLoS ONE* 7: e42793.
- Castells, M. 1998. *End of Millennium: The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture, Volume III* Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Catalano, M., T. Leise, L. Tanya and T.J. Pfaff. 2009. "Measuring resource inequality: The Gini coefficient." *Numeracy* 2: article 4.
- Chan, J. and E. Chan. 2006. "Charting the State of Social Cohesion in Hong Kong." *The China Quarterly* 187: 635-658.
- Chan, J., H-P. To, and E. Chan. 2006. "Reconsidering social cohesion: Developing a definition and analytical framework for empirical research." *Social Indicators Research* 75: 273-302.
- Cheung, C-K, R.K-H. Chan and W-C. Ho. 2014. "Feeling Close to Fellow Citizens in Hong Kong, Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand." *Social Indicators Research* 119: 25-48.
- Chiesi, A.M. 2002. "Social Cohesion and related concepts." Pp. 235-253 in *Advances in sociological knowledge*. Edited by N. Genov. Paris: International Social Science Council.
- Croissant, A. 2018. "Social Cohesion in Asia: Unexpected and Not So Unexpected Insights." Pp. 169-193 in *What Holds Asian Societies Together? Insights from the Social Cohesion Radar*. Edited by Bertelsmann Stiftung. Gütersloh: Verlag Bertelsmann Stiftung.
- Dalton, R.J. and N-N.T. Ong. 2005. "Authority Orientations and Democratic Attitudes: A Test of the 'Asian Values' Hypothesis." *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 6: 211-231.
- Delhey, J. and K. Boehnke. 2018. "Conceptualizing Social Cohesion in Asia." Pp. 29-48 in *What Holds Asian Societies Together? Insights from the Social Cohesion Radar*. Edited by Bertelsmann Stiftung. Gütersloh: Verlag Bertelsmann Stiftung.
- Delhey, J. and G. Dragolov. 2014. "Why Inequality Makes Europeans Less Happy: The Role of Status Anxiety, Distrust, and Conflicts." *European Sociological Review* 30: 151-165.

- Delhey, J. and G. Dragolov. 2016. "Happier together. Social cohesion and subjective well-being in Europe." *International Journal of Psychology* 51: 163-176.
- Delhey, J. and K. Newton. 2005. "Predicting Cross-National Levels of Social Trust: Global Pattern or Nordic Exceptionalism?" *European Sociological Review* 21: 311-327.
- Delhey, J. and L.C. Steckermeier. 2016. "The Good Life, Affluence and Self-reported Happiness: Introducing the Good Life Index and Debunking Two Popular Myths," *World Development* 88: 50-66.
- Dickes, P. and M. Valentova. 2013. "Construction, Validation and Application of the Measurement of Social Cohesion in 47 European Countries and Regions." *Social Indicators Research* 113: 827-846.
- Dickes, P., M. Valentova and M. Borsenberger. 2010. "Construct Validation and Application of a Common Measure of Social Cohesion in 33 European Countries." *Social Indicators Research* 98: 451-473.
- Dimeglio, I., J.G. Janmaat, and P. Mehaut. 2013. "Social Cohesion and the Labour Market: Societal Regimes of Civic Attitudes and Labour Market Regimes." *Social Indicators Research* 111: 753-773.
- Dragolov, G., Z. Ignácz, J. Lorenz, J. Delhey, K. Boehnke and K. Unzicker. 2016. *Social Cohesion in the Western World. What Holds Societies Together: Insights from the Social Cohesion Radar*. Heidelberg & New York: Springer.
- Dragolov, G., M. Koch, and M. Larsen. 2018. "Level, Trend, and Profiles of Social Cohesion in Asia." Pp. 69-95 in *What Holds Asian Societies Together? Insights from the Social Cohesion Radar*. Edited by Bertelsmann Stiftung. Gütersloh: Verlag Bertelsmann Stiftung.
- Durkheim, E. 1933. *The Division of Labour in Society*. New York: Free Press.
- Eckersley, R. 2011. "Whatever Happened to Western Civilization. The Cultural Crisis, 20 Years Later." *The Futurist*: 16-22.
- Elchardus, M. and K. De Keere. 2013. "Social control and institutional trust: Reconsidering the effect of modernity on social malaise." *The Social Science Journal* 50: 101-111.
- Green, A. and J.G. Janmaat. 2009. *Regimes of social cohesion: Societies and the crisis of globalization*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hadler, M. 2005. "Why Do People Accept Different Income Ratios? A Multi-Level Comparison of Thirty Countries." *Acta Sociologica* 48: 131-154.
- Helliwell, J.F. 2006. "Well-Being, Social Capital and Public Policy: What's New?" *The Economic Journal* 116: C34-C45.
- Helliwell, J.F. and R.D. Putnam. 2004. "The social context of well-being." *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London* 359: 1435-1446.
- Hirschman, A.O. and Rothschild, M. 1973. "The Changing Tolerance for Income Inequality in the Course of Economic Development." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 87: 544-566.

- Hofstede, G. and M. Bond. 2001. "The Confucius Connection: From Cultural Roots to Economic Growth." Pp. 31-50 in *Cultural metaphors: Readings, research translations, and commentary*. Edited by M.J. Gannon. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Hofstede, G., G.J. Hofstede and M. Minkov. 2010. *Cultures and Organization. Software of the Mind. Intercultural Cooperation and its Importance for Survival*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Inglehart, R. 1997. *Modernization and Postmodernization. Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Societies*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Inglehart, R. and C. Welzel. 2005. *Modernization, cultural change and democracy. The human development sequence*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Janmaat, J.G. 2011. "Social Cohesion as a Real-life Phenomenon: Assessing the Explanatory Power of the Universalist and Particularist Perspectives." *Social Indicators Research* 100: 61-83.
- Janmaat, J.G. and R. Braun. 2009. "Diversity and Postmaterialism as Rival Perspectives in Accounting for Social Solidarity." *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 50: 39-68.
- Kelley, J. and M.D.R. Evans. 2009. "Economic Development Reduces Tolerance for Inequality. A Comparative Analysis of Thirty Nations." Pp. 49-71. in *Charting the Globe: The International Social Survey Programme 1984-2009*. Edited by M. Haller, R. Jowell and T. Smith. London: Routledge.
- Langer, A., F. Stewart, K. Smedts and L. Demarest. 2017. "Conceptualising and Measuring Social Cohesion in Africa: Towards a Perceptions-Based Index." *Social Indicators Research* 131: 321-343.
- Larsen, M., M. Koch and G. Dragolov. 2018. "Measuring Social Cohesion in Asia." Pp. 49-68 in *What Holds Asian Societies Together? Insights from the Social Cohesion Radar*. Edited by Bertelsmann Stiftung. Gütersloh: Verlag Bertelsmann Stiftung.
- Levi, M. and L. Stoker. 2000. "Political Trust and Trustworthiness." *Annual Review of Political Science* 3: 475-507.
- Lockwood, D. 1964. "Social Integration and System Integration." Pp. 244-257 in *Social Change: Explorations, Diagnoses, and Conjectures*. Edited by G.K. Zollschan and W. Hirsch. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Miller, D. 1999. *Principles of Social Justice*. Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press.
- Newton, K. 2001. "Trust, Social Capital, Civil Society, and Democracy." *International Political Science Review* 22: 201-214.
- Noll, H-H. 2000. *Konzepte der Wohlfahrtsentwicklung: Lebensqualität und "neue" Wohlfahrtskonzepte*. Berlin: wzb Discussion Papers.
- Norris, P. and R. Inglehart. 2004. *Sacred and Secular. Religion and Politics Worldwide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Norris, P. and R. Inglehart. 2009. *Cosmopolitan Communication. Cultural Diversity in a Globalized World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ostrom, E. and T.K. Ahn. 2009. "The meaning of social capital and its link to collective action." Pp. 17-35. in *Handbook of Social Capital. The Troika of Sociology, Political Science and Economics*. Edited by G.T. Svendsen and G.L.H. Svendsen. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.
- Putnam, R.D. 1995. "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital." *Journal of Democracy* 6: 65-78.
- Pye, L.W. 2000. "Asian Values': From Dynamos to Dominoes?" Pp. 244-255 in *Culture Matters. How Values Shape Human Progress*. Edited by L.E. Harrison and S.P. Huntington. New York: Basic Books.
- Roßteutscher, S. 2010. "Social capital worldwide: Potential for democratization or stabilizer of authoritarian rule?" *American Behavioral Scientist* 53: 737-757.
- Rothstein, B. and E.M. Uslaner. 2005. "All for all. Equality, Corruption, and Social Trust." *World Politics* 58: 41-72.
- Schiefer, D. and J. van der Noll. 2017. "The Essentials of Social Cohesion: A Literature Review." *Social Indicators Research* 132: 579-603.
- Skidelsky, R. and E. Skidelsky. 2013. *How Much is Enough? Money and the Good Life*. London: Penguin Books.
- Spohn, W. 2010. "Europäische multiple Modernität als interzivilisatorische Konstellation. Zur Transformation Europas durch europäische Integration und Erweiterung in einer sich globalisierenden Welt." *Berliner Journal für Soziologie* 20: 5-22.
- Tan, C. 2017. "Multiculturalism and Citizenship." Pp. 127-137 in *Lee Kuan Yew's Educational Legacy*. Edited by O. Tan, E. Lo and D. Hung. Singapore: Springer.
- Therborn, G. 1995. *European modernity and beyond*. London: Sage.
- Therborn, G. 2011. *The World. A Beginner's Guide*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Thompson, M.R. 2004. "Pacific Asia after 'Asian values': authoritarianism, democracy, and 'good governance'." *Third World Quarterly* 25: 1079-1095.
- Tominaga, K. 1991. "A theory of modernization and social change of the non-western societies: toward a generalization from Japan's experience." *International Review of Sociology* 2: 95-120.
- Tönnies, F. 1955. *Community and association*. London: Routledge & Paul.
- Triandis, H.C. 2004. "The Many Dimensions of Culture." *The Academy of Management Perspective* 18: 88-93.
- Uslaner, E.M. and M. Brown. 2003. "Inequality, Trust, and Civic Engagement." *American Politics Research* 31: 1-28.
- Van, D.T.T. 2009. "A comparative study of Vietnamese and American customers' behavior in negotiation style and implications for global pricing strategy." *Journal of Global Business Issues* 3: 25-32.

- Walker, A. and L. Van der Maesen. 2004. "Social Quality and Quality of Life." Pp. 13-32 in *Challenges for quality of life in the contemporary world. Advances in quality-of-life studies, theories and research*, vol. 24, *Social Indicators Research Series*. Edited by W. Glatzer, S. von Below and M. Stoffregen. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Wei-Ming, T. 2000. "Multiple Modernities: A Preliminary Inquiry into the Implications of East Asian Modernity." Pp. 256-266 in *Culture Matters. How Values Shape Human Progress*. Edited by L.E. Harrison and S.P. Huntington. New York: Basic Books.
- Welzel, C. 2011. "The Asian Values Thesis Revisited: Evidence from the World Values Surveys." *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 12: 1-31.
- Welzel, C. and J. Delhey. 2015. "Generalizing Trust: The Benign Force of Emancipation." *Journal of Cross Cultural Psychology* 46: 875-896.
- Welzel, C., R. Inglehart and F. Deutsch. 2005. "Social capital, Voluntary Associations, and Collective Action: Which Aspect of Social Capital has the Greatest Civic Payoff?" *Journal of Civil Society* 1: 121-146.
- Wilkinson, R. and K. Pickett. 2010. *The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Always Do Better*. London: Penguin Books.
- Zhao, C. and S. Diao. 2013. "Comparative Analysis of Luxury Market in China and India Based on PEST Model." Pp. 193-200 in *Proceedings of 2012 3rd International Asia Conference on Industrial Engineering and Management Innovation (IEMI2012)*. Edited by R. Dou. Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer.

### *Data Sources Used*

- Coppedge, M., Gerring, J., Lindberg, S.I., Skaaning, S.-E., Teorell, J., Altman, D., ... Wilson, S. (2017). V-Dem [Country-Year/Country-Date] Dataset v7.1. Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project.
- Freedom House. (2015). Freedom in the world 2015. Discarding democracy: Return to the iron fist. Washington, DC: Freedom House.
- Marshall, M.G., Jaggers, K., and Gurr, T.R. (2014). Polity IV Project: Political regime characteristics and transitions, 1800-2013. INSCR.
- Solt, F. (2014). The standardized World Income Inequality Database – Version 5.0. *Social Science Quarterly* 97. <http://fsolt.org/swiid/>.
- UNU-WIDER. (2017). World Income Inequality Database (WIID3.4). Helsinki: United Nations University World Institute for Development.
- World Bank (2017). World development indicators. Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- World Bank (2012). Knowledge for development. Washing, DC: The World Bank.

