Social cohesion index for Kyrgyzstan: methodology, findings, implications

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12-13 October 2017

Bishkek

Overview

1. What is social cohesion and why it is important?

2. Background to this study

3. Methodology and data source

4. The results, correlations, dynamics

5. Implications and applications

1.What is social cohesion and why it is important?

Social cohesion: a greatly discussed topic

- Social cohesion is seen as the glue that holds society together, …

- … and it is positively regarded as a development outcome

- Academic consensus that social cohesion is:
    - Multi-dimensional
    - Gradual phenomenon
    - Characteristic of societies
    - Manifests in attitudes and behavior of people

Social cohesion: is it deteriorating?

Globalization and economic change

- Poverty, social division, exclusion

- Individualism, decreasing local identification

Global migration and growing ethnic and cultural diversity

- Social conflicts

- Ethnic divisions

Information and communications technologies

- Change social relationships

- Decrease face-to-face interactions

Social cohesion: a greatly discussed topic

- But what does social cohesion **really** mean?

- There is not yet a consensus on its definition

- There is a growing number of studies and projects investigating the role of social cohesion

- We need a common understanding of the concept:

  - If we want measure levels of social cohesion, and

  - Test whether it is indeed changing with time

2. Background to this study

Overview of the project

Social Cohesion through Community Development project aims to identify approaches to promote social cohesion in community driven development

Research Component: Evidence-driven identification, research, monitoring and capacity building

Intervention component: Piloting of social cohesion approaches in community driven social mobilization and investment micro projects

Social Cohesion Project

- In this research project, we test whether and how community driven development fosters social cohesion

- The project uses randomised experimental approach to identify the impact on social cohesion

- This social cohesion index is an innovative output of the project

- It has been helpful for programming in targeting specific dimensions

Community and sample selection

Community selection

❑15 intervention and 15 control communities were randomly selected through pair-wise matching

❑8 communities are multi-ethnic, and 7 are mono-ethnic

Household selection

❑Random selection of households in project communities

❑In total, we survey 2,000 households and over 6,000 individuals in 30 project communities

Baseline data	Tracking	Tracking	Endline data
2014	2015	2016	2017

Interventions
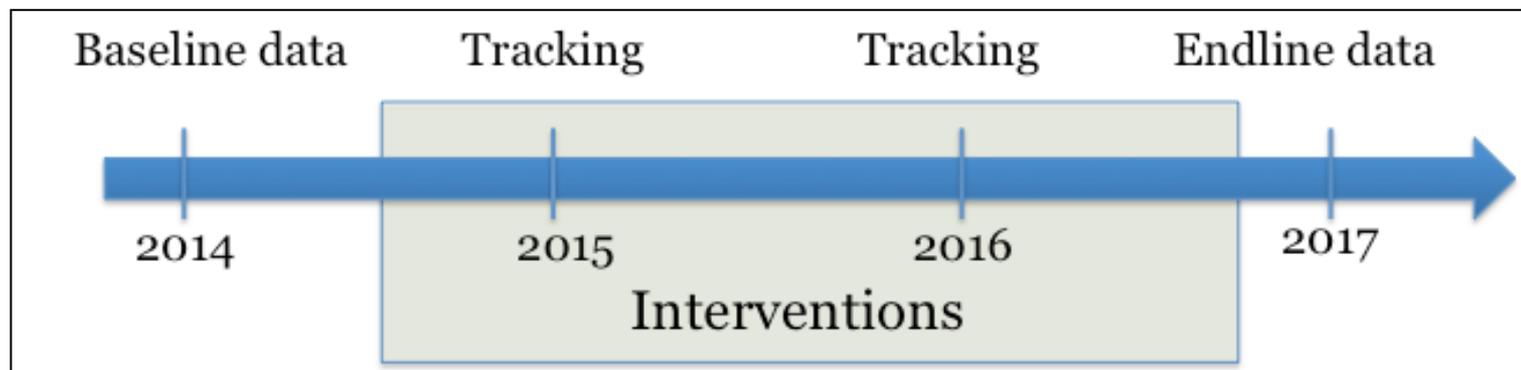
Social Cohesion Project partners

Donors:

Aga Khan Foundation and the World Bank

Research Team: SIPRI and UCA
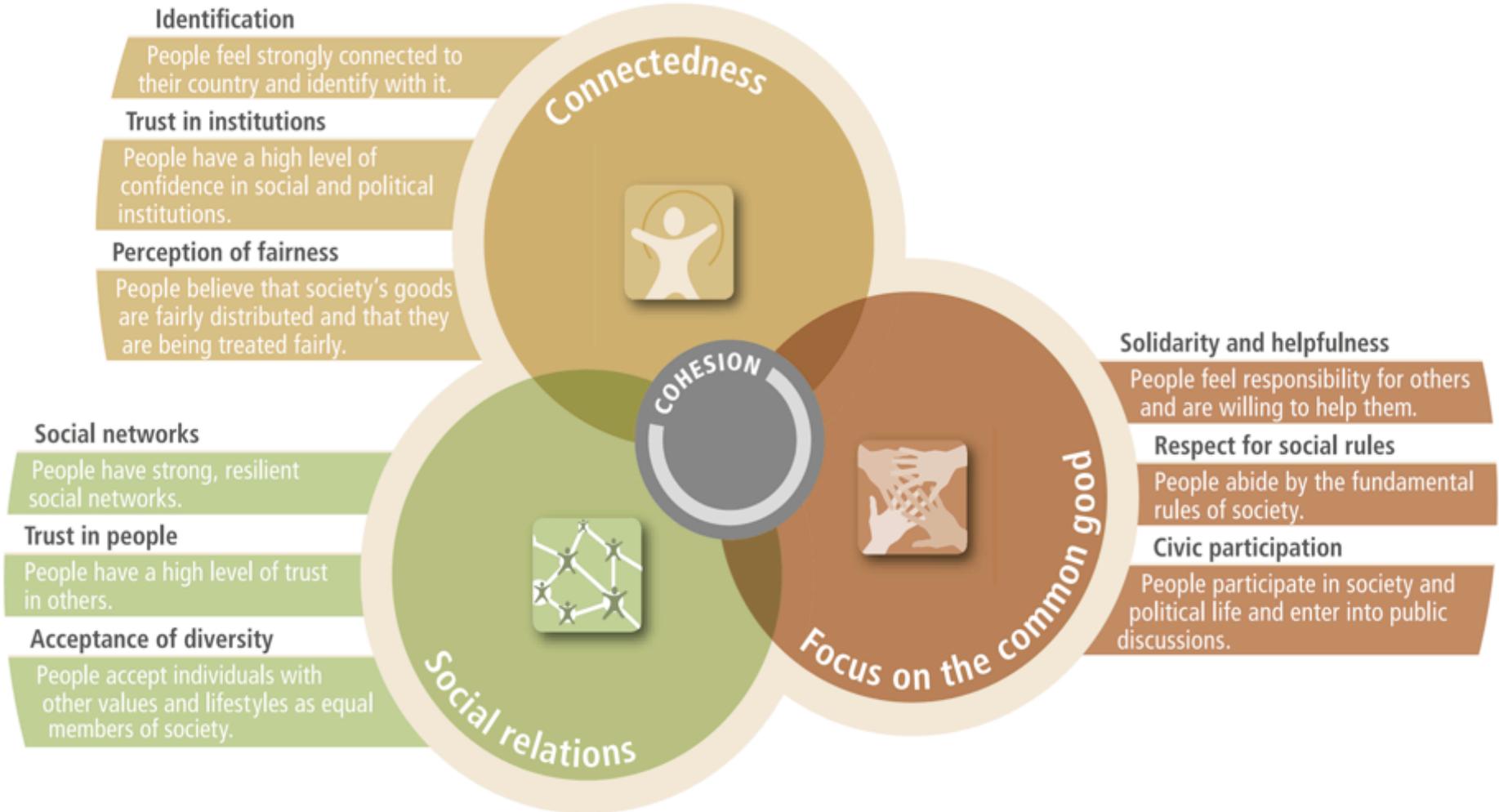
Implementation team: MSDSP KG

3. Methodology and data source

Concept of Cohesion for the index

- The Social Cohesion Radar concept developed at Jacobs University Bremen, with support from the Bertelsmann Stiftung (Dragolov et al., 2013, Dragolov et al., 2016, Schiefer and van der Noll, 2017).

- *Quality of interactions among members of community, defined in geopolitical terms*

- Characterized by
  - Resilient social relations
  - Positive emotional connectedness to community
  - Pronounced focus on common good

- Possible causes or effects
  - Wealth, inequality, ethnic diversity
  - Well-being

Social Cohesion Index:
Three Domains, Nine Dimensions

Identification
People feel strongly connected to their country and identify with it.

Trust in institutions
People have a high level of confidence in social and political institutions.

Perception of fairness
People believe that society's goods are fairly distributed and that they are being treated fairly.

Social networks
People have strong, resilient social networks.

Trust in people
People have a high level of trust in others.

Acceptance of diversity
People accept individuals with other values and lifestyles as equal members of society.

Solidarity and helpfulness
People feel responsibility for others and are willing to help them.

Respect for social rules
People abide by the fundamental rules of society.

Civic participation
People participate in society and political life and enter into public discussions.

Connectedness

COHESION

Social relations

Focus on the common good

Domain 1. Social relations

1.1 Social networks

- People have strong and resilient social networks
  - e.g., People receive support through friends and acquaintances when they need help
  - e.g., People have strong friendship circles

1.2 Trust in People

- People have a high level of trust in others
  - e.g. People mostly trust others: in general, strangers, etc.

1.3 Acceptance of Diversity

- People accept individuals with other values and lifestyles as equal member of society
  - e.g., People are willing to have neighbors who are different from them

1. Social relations
create cohesion through a network of horizontal relationships between individuals and societal groups of all kinds, which is characterized by trust and allows for diversity.

Domain 2. Connectedness

2.1 Identification

- People feel strongly connected to their geopolitical entity and identify with it
  - e.g., People feel like they are part of their neighborhood, city, country.

2.2 Trust in Institutions

- People have a high level of confidence in social and political institutions
  - e.g., People feel like they can trust local or national politicians, institutions, administrations, councils, etc.

2.3 Perception of Fairness

- People believe that society's goods are fairly distributed and that they are being treated fairly
  - e.g., People feel like their income is fair in comparison to others
  - e.g. People feel like politicians take care of their community

2. Connectedness

promotes cohesion through positive identifi cation with the country, a high level of confi dence in its institutions and a perception that social conditions are fair.

Domain 3. Focus on the common good

3.1 Solidarity and Helpfulness
- People feel responsibility for others and are willing to help them
  - e.g., People take care of their elderly neighbors in need

3.2 Respect for Social Rules
- People abide by the fundamental rules of society
  - e.g., People feel safe in their communities

3.3 Civic Participation
- People participate in society and political life and enter into public discussions
  - e.g., People are active members of local groups or initiatives

3. Focus on the common good
promotes cohesion through actions and attitudes that help the weak, are in keeping with society's rules and allow for a collaborative approach to the organization of society.

What social cohesion is <u>not</u>

- Excluded from this definition of social cohesion are:

  - Material wealth; Social inequality; Well-being; Levels of diversity; Values.

- Measures of cohesion should capture a specific quality of society, rather than favorable living conditions in general

  - This allows us to distinguish between the conditions, components, and consequences of cohesion

Source of the data: Life in Kyrgyzstan Study

- Research-led, independent study since 2010

- Data and questionnaires are open access

- 8,160 individuals in 3,000 HHs from around 100 communities

- Representative: national, rural/urban, North/South

- Five waves: 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2016

- Funded by VWF, DFID and FAO/IFPRI/UCA/IGZ

- *LiK 2016 has all needed information to construct social cohesion index for Kyrgyzstan*

Method of the index construction

Indicator selection...
...through face validity and exploratory factor analysis:
41 indicators, 3-8 per dimension

Scale standardization from 0 to 10

Aggregation from individual level...
...to the level of population points and regions

Measurement of dimensions...
...average of respective indicators per dimension

Formative measurement of social cohesion...
...for the composite index and the three domains

Choice of Indicators

- According to face validity
  - Agreement among team members

- Application of exploratory factor analysis
  - Criteria
    - Loading ≥ 0.40 (or ≥ 0.25 in extreme cases)
    - Cronbach's alpha ≥ (0.10 * number of indicators)
  - 41 indicators (3-8 per dimension)

4. Social Cohesion Index for Kyrgyzstan

Social Cohesion Index for Kyrgyzstan: Main results

- Overall index of social cohesion for Kyrgyzstan stands at **5.9** in a range from 0 to 10.

- Moderate levels of social cohesion, not much extremes

- Naryn features the highest level of cohesion with score of 6.5, while Bishkek has the lowest score of 5.2.

- Strong dimensions
    - Identification; Respect for social rules.

- Room for improvement
    - Social networks; Perception of fairness; Solidarity and Helpfulness.

- Some macro-level conditions associated with higher or lower levels of cohesion
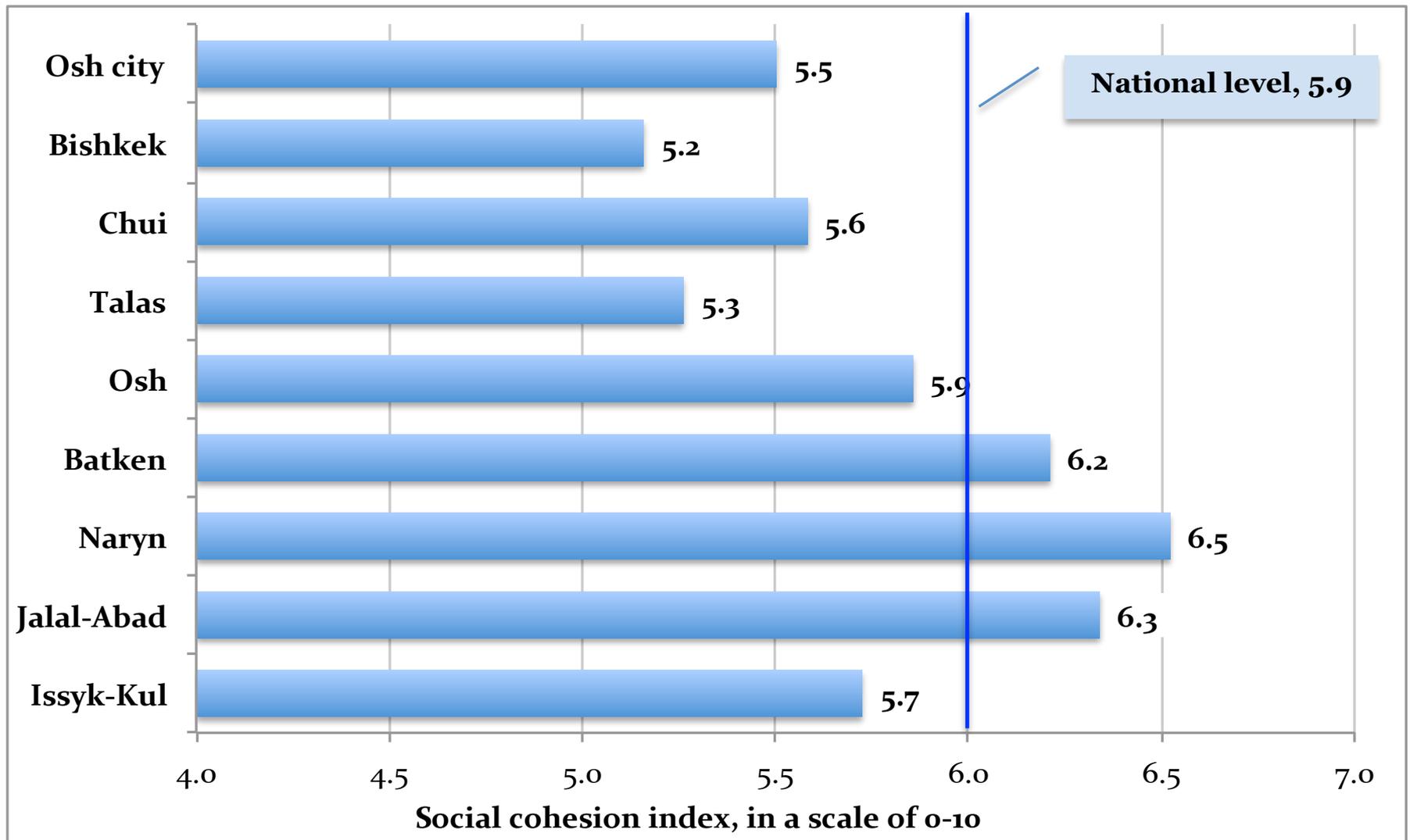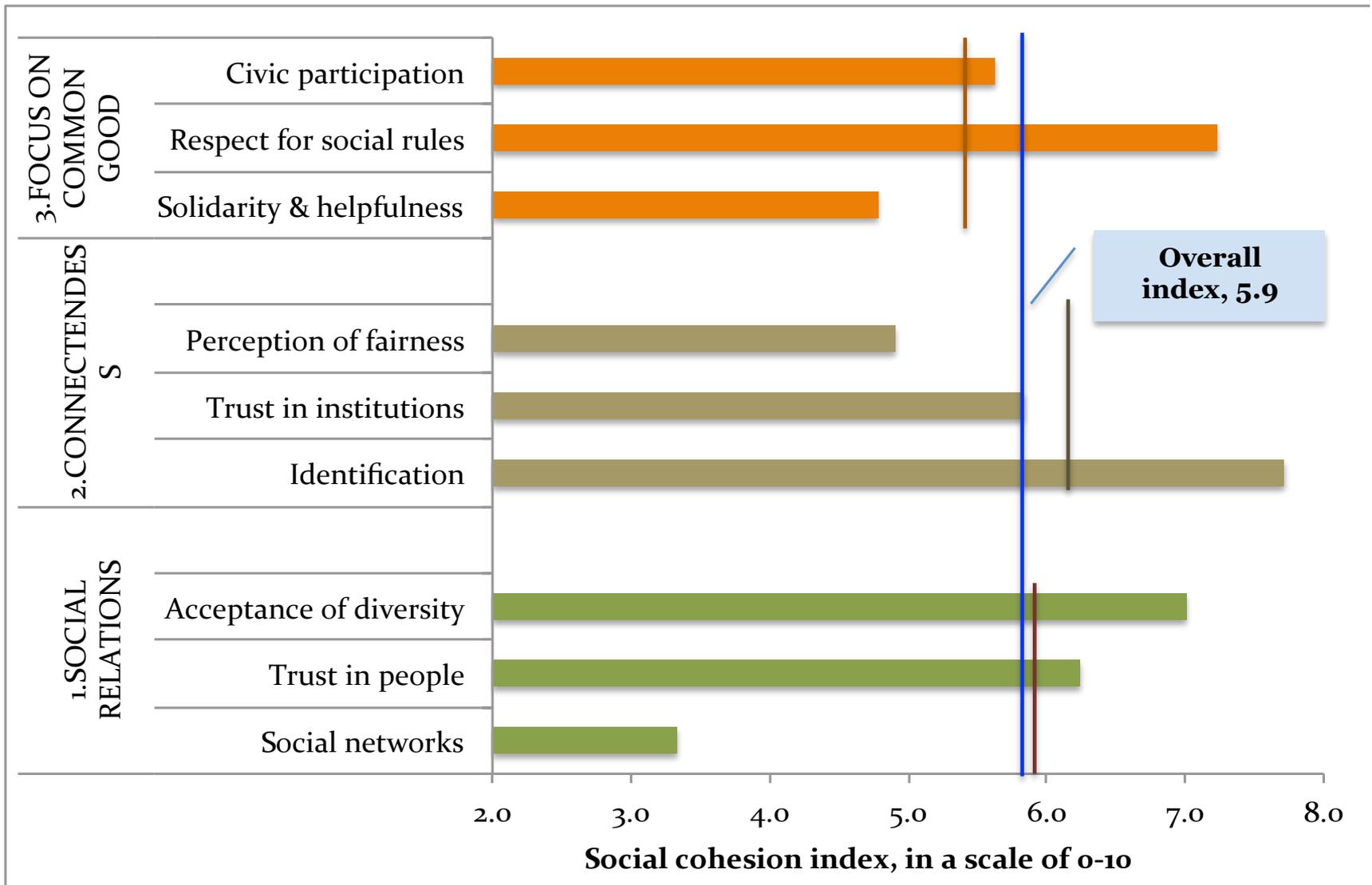
Social Cohesion Index for Kyrgyzstan

	Social cohesion index, in a scale of 0-10
South*	6.1
North*	5.8
Rural	5.9
Urban	5.8
National	5.9
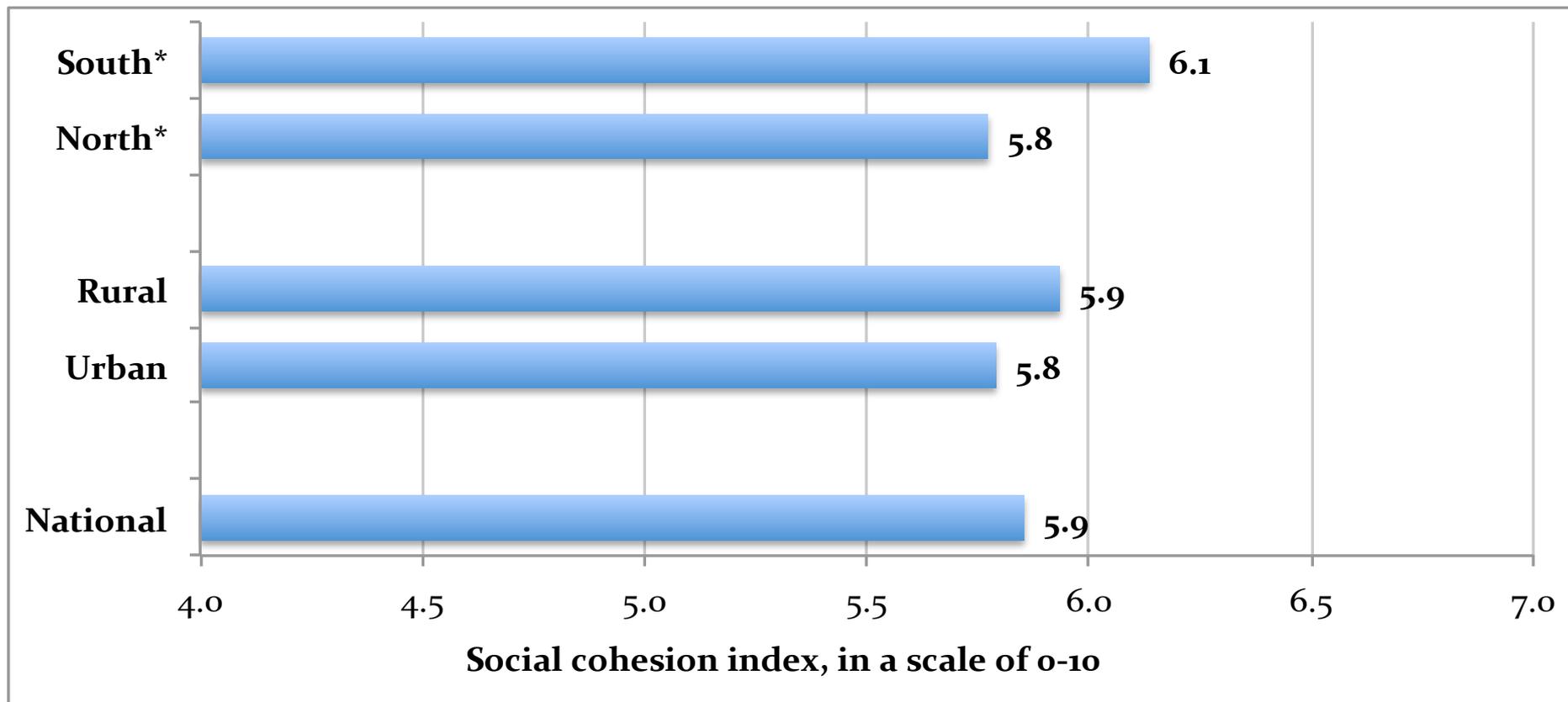
Source: Life in Kyrgyzstan Survey 2016

Note: North calculated without Bishkek; South without Osh city.

Social Cohesion Index: Regional Differences

National level, 5.9

Region	Index
Osh city	5.5
Bishkek	5.2
Chui	5.6
Talas	5.3
Osh	5.9
Batken	6.2
Naryn	6.5
Jalal-Abad	6.3
Issyk-Kul	5.7

Social cohesion index, in a scale of 0-10

Source: Life in Kyrgyzstan Survey 2016

Social Cohesion Index: Domains & Dimensions
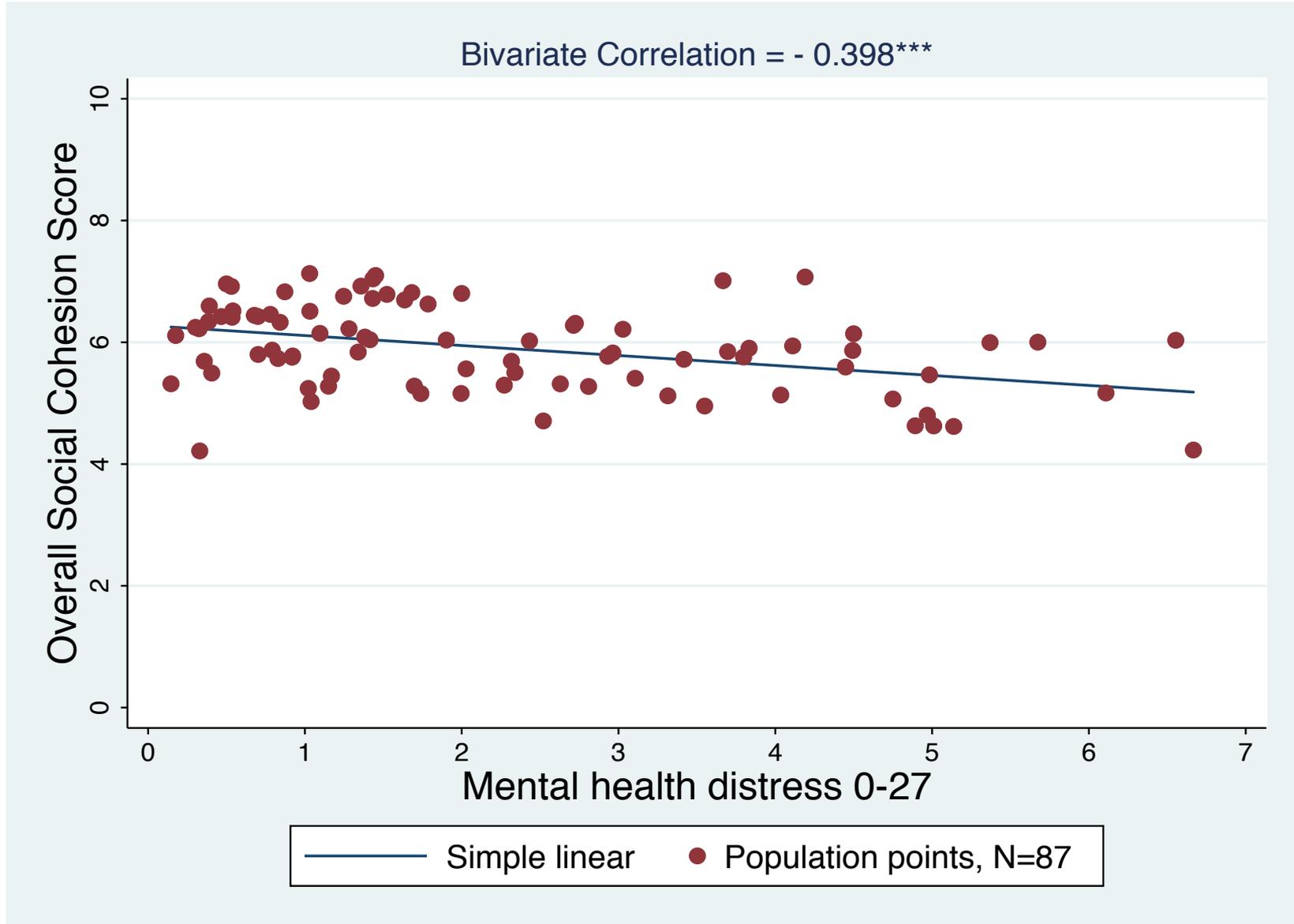

Source: Life in Kyrgyzstan Survey 2016

Potential Determinants and Outcomes

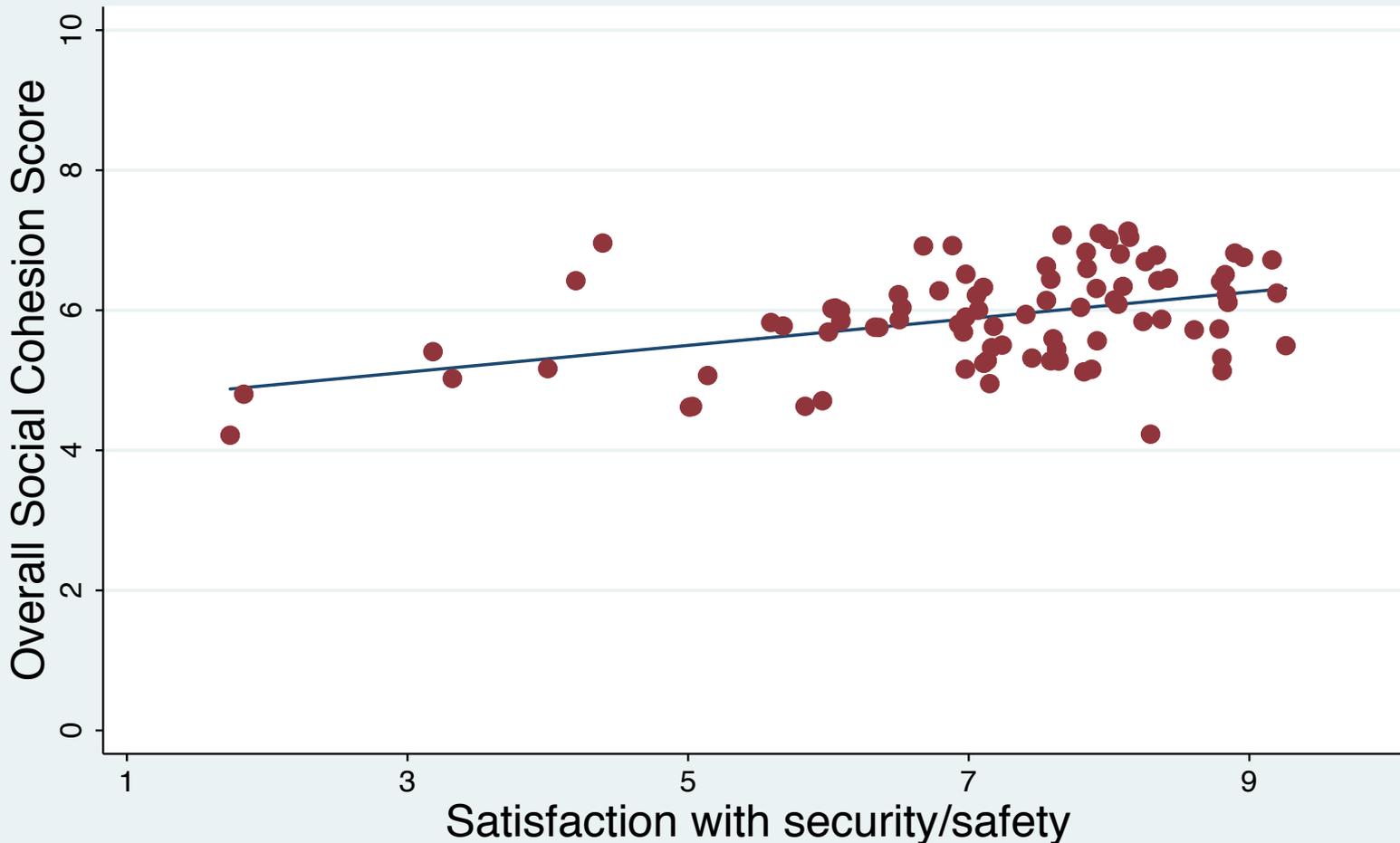|	Correlation with Social Cohesion Index	
	r	p
Number of languages of communication	0.183	*
Exposure to living abroad (1+ months)	0.205	*
Level of mental stress	-0.398	***
Share of religious population	0.178	*
Proportion of community population who are unemployed	-0.367	***
Rating of household's economic situation compared to others in community	0.235	**
Satisfaction with community security	0.422	***
Total number of shocks experienced in last 12 months	-0.251	**
Number of shocks related to community issues	-0.357	***

Social Cohesion and Unemployment

Bivariate Correlation = -0.367***
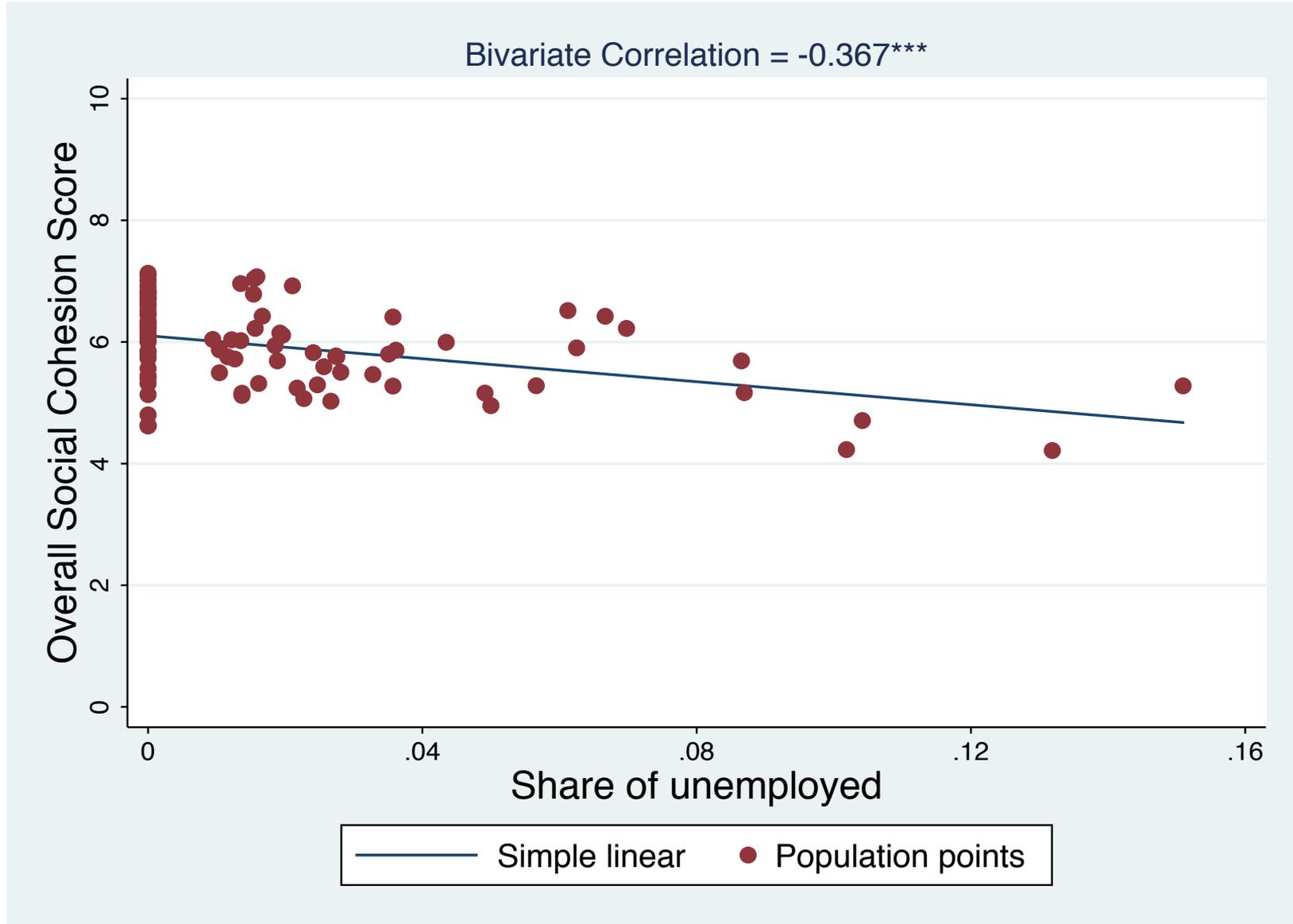
Social Cohesion and Mental Health

Bivariate Correlation = - 0.398***

Overall Social Cohesion Score vs Mental health distress 0-27

Legend: Simple linear — Population points, N=87

Social Cohesion and Satisfaction with Community Security

Bivariate Correlation = 0.422***

Dynamics of Social Cohesion: Some Dimensions

Trust in people   Trust in institutions   Respect for social rules
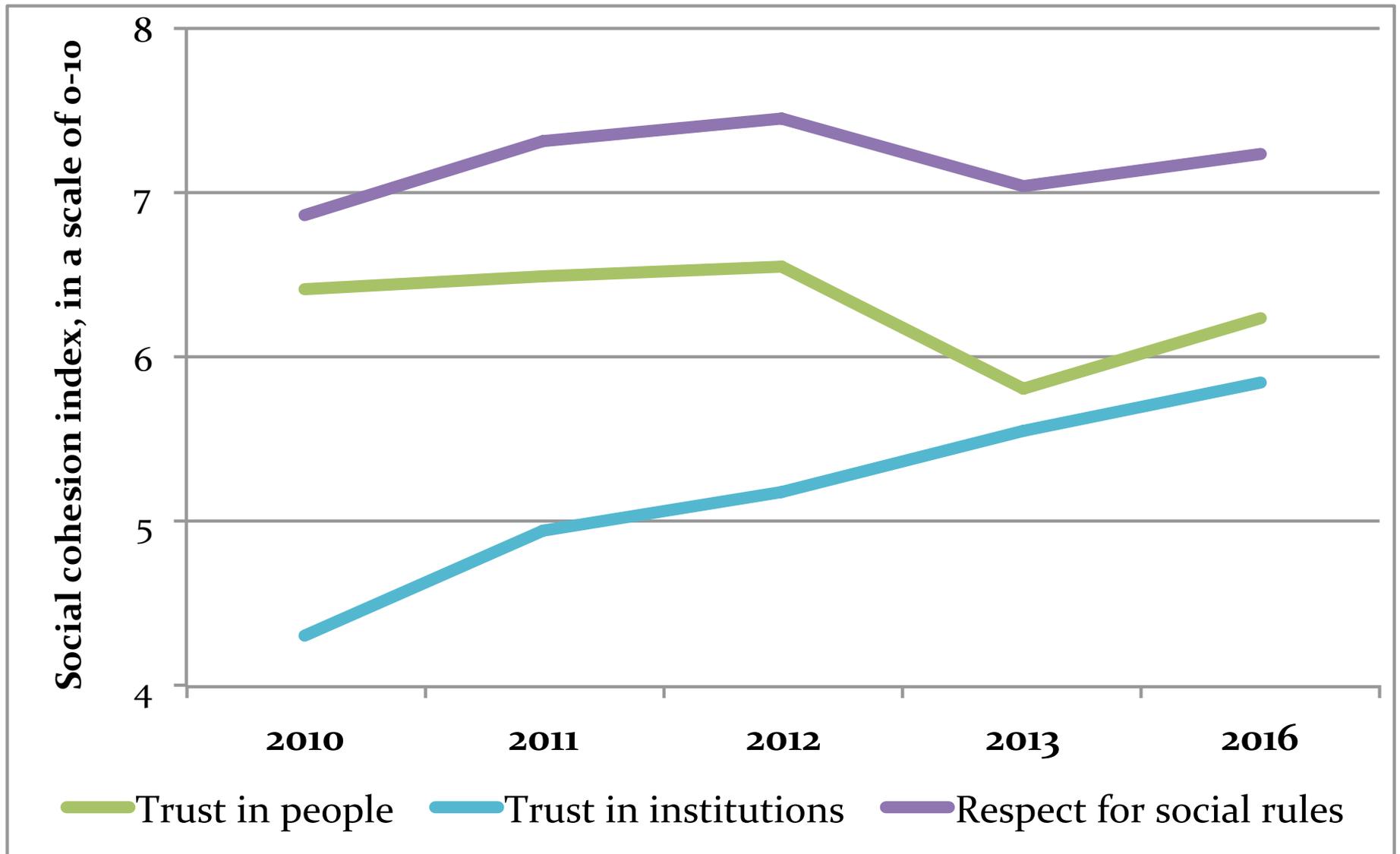
Source: Life in Kyrgyzstan Survey 2010-2013, 2016

Social Cohesion Index: Implications and Applications

- Relevance to SDG16: *Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels*

- It is a soft development outcome which is useful for evidence based policy making and analysis

- Contribution to the Social Cohesion Project findings

- Contribution to the literature on social cohesion

Summary

- In this research project, we construct social cohesion index for Kyrgyzstan …

- .. using the individual level data from LiK Study.

- The overall index is moderate; with rural and south region communities featuring higher level of cohesion.

- Some macro-conditions are associated with lower or higher level of social cohesion

- The index is useful for monitoring and analysis of development progress, incl. SDGs.

- This work is in progress and planned to be published as a report.

Thank you!

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