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The Conflict Impact on Social Capital

# Social Degradation in Syria



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# Executive Summary

This report explores the impact of the armed conflict in Syria on social relations. It uses the concept of social capital as an approach to analyzing various aspects of social relations, such as trust, cooperation, and shared values.

The research develops an index to measure social capital based on a critical discussion of the concept, as well as on a multi-purpose field survey that involves quantitative and qualitative indicators covering both the pre- and during-crisis periods. The analysis of this index over time and regions, detailing its components and studying its determinants, helps discern the state of social degradation in Syria. The crisis is considered one of the worst humanitarian disasters since World War II, which has transformed, by the forces of oppression and extremism, from a social movement that advocates freedom, dignity, and social justice into an all-out armed conflict.

1. The research adopts an operational definition of social capital as being social values, bonds, and networks, which have been accumulated within a given society, whether by individuals, communities, or institutions. This accumulation is based on reciprocal trust between and within individuals and communities, which affects and is formed by social institutions that govern public life and facilitate cooperation and solidarity among society members. Social capital entrenches the foundations of social cohesion and integration, and works vigorously to create a free, aware, and productive human being who is capable of serving the common good. Social capital is an integral part of society's wealth and assets that positively affects the quality of life of its individuals.
2. A social capital index for Syria (henceforth, SCI) has been developed in this report based on a Population Survey with 2,100 respondents conducted in 2014. The index

consists of three components: the first is social networks and participation, measured by four key indicators: participation in public decision-making, volunteerism, cooperation in overcoming problems, and women's participation. The second component is social trust, and is measured by two key components: trust between individuals and feeling secured. The third is shared values and attitudes, which is measured by the extent of agreement among community members on a common vision at both regional and national levels, and finally the social status of women. The unit of analysis is a local area that has been designed based on impact of the conflict conditions. The studied areas covered the whole of Syria.

3. The research shows that SCI in Syria has declined by 30 per cent during the crisis, compared to the pre-crisis period. This degradation is a result of notable declines in the three components of the index, albeit to varying degrees. The decline in the social trust component contributed to the overall decline of SCI by 58 per cent, whereas the contributions of the values component and the networks component were at the rates of 22 per cent and 20 per cent, respectively. The governorates in which SCI has declined the most are those that were most affected by war, hostilities, and polarization. The decline was highest in Raqqa, 80 per cent, followed by Hasakah, 52 per cent, and Idlib, 47 per cent. On the other hand, the decline was the lowest in Tartus, around 5 per cent, and less than 10 per cent in Damascus, since these regions were less exposed to destruction due to the armed conflict.



The research shows that SCI in Syria has declined by **30 per cent** during the crisis

4. The findings indicate a decline in the social networks and participation component. Raqqa was the most affected governorate, followed by Idlib, Hasakah, and Deir ez-Zor, each of which has been subjected to large-scale displacement and military operations, which have negatively affected the social fabric in their regions, causing severe degradation in social relations.
- Political oppression, extremism, widespread violence, and exploitation have contributed to the marginalization of women's social participation, despite their transformed role in bearing the economic burden of families and supporting those affected by the conflict.
  - Participation in public decision-making was already weak before 2011, but it has further deteriorated during the current crisis, especially in military operations areas, where military and security forces have replaced any remaining possibilities of effective participation with authoritarian governance and increased persecution of citizens.
  - The crisis led to a severe decline in cooperation between individuals in many studied areas, particularly those where armed forces have spread their control, penetrated local communities, and imposed rules based on fear, subjugation, and hatred of the other. Instead of the formal judicial system, citizens increasingly turn to informal authorities such as local notables, senior security officials, and clerics respectively, as a mechanism of conflict resolution.
  - As for volunteerism, the findings show an increase in the relatively safe areas such as Tartus and Damascus, and an overall deterioration in Raqqa, Daraa and Rural Damascus, where most of their studied areas have been subject to devastation, siege, and hostilities. It is notable, however, that these very areas have also generated some of the most inspiring and humane forms of volunteering, despite the often excessive dangers involved.
5. The research shows that the social trust component in Syria witnessed the most severe decline in comparison to the other components. Compared with pre-crisis conditions, the trust component diminished by 47 per cent. The findings also show significant disparities between different governorates on the level of social trust, especially during the crisis, with the spread of hatred culture and polarization. Levels of interpersonal mistrust have been highest in besieged, destroyed, and contested areas, such as Raqqa, followed by Hasakah, Idlib, Deir ez-Zor, and Aleppo.
- This deterioration primarily resulted from the collapse of feeling secured, which declined at the national level by 59 per cent. Frequent manifestations of violence, such as systematic shelling, arbitrary detention, killings, theft, and kidnappings are major factors contributing to a prevalent sense of insecurity, so are widespread poverty, deterioration of living conditions, expansion of conflict economy, forced displacement, corruption, and fear culture.
  - The crisis has also had a destructive impact on reciprocal trust among individuals, which can be attributed to lack of rule of law, difficult living conditions, and extreme polarization in society.
6. The shared values and attitudes component also declined significantly over the course of the crisis by 20 per cent. This resulted from a clear decline in the indicators of agreement on a future for the area and agreement on a future for Syria, both contributing to the decline of the component by 36 per cent and 35 per cent, respectively, while the decline in the status of women contributed by 29 per cent. The research indicates a significant increase in disparity of shared values and attributes between governorates during the crisis. Raqqa has experienced the highest decline in this component, which reached 66 per cent, followed by Hasakah, at a rate of nearly 40 per cent, mainly due to its conflicting visions and to a lesser extent to the status of women. The governorates of Tartus, Sweida, and Lattakia, on the other hand, have witnessed a less severe decline in this component.

**This deterioration primarily resulted from the collapse of feeling secured, which declined at the national level by 59 per cent**

- The decline in agreement on the future of the area refers to the disruption of social cohesion and integration at the local level. Disagreement within local populations about a vision for the future of their area is attributed to a number of factors, including chaos, differences in political opinions, the absence of elected councils to facilitate the expression of opinions, social and identity polarization, and disagreements on the best way to end the crisis.
  - These factors also largely translate into disagreement on the future of Syria, depicting the degree of social fragmentation on the national level. Disagreements on desired visions for their homeland are confounded by armed forces sabotaging shared values and promoting different forms of repressive governance—from caliphates to autocracies—in the regions they control. Citizens’ experience and exposure to propaganda by these respective actors has a profound influence on their future vision for Syria.
  - The status of women in society has deteriorated during the crisis with consolidating patriarchy. Women have been subject to military attacks, rape, labor in harsh conditions, as well as increased economic responsibility, especially in the case of displaced families and widows. Incidents of underage and customary marriages and trafficking have also become more frequent.
7. The research findings demonstrate the negative effect that direct violence—such as displacement, involvement in violent acts, and discriminatory institutional practices—has on both bridging and linking social capitals. These types of social capital are based on relationships that transcend traditional bonds, and are manifested in the networks component. This component is crucial in building civil relationships that contribute to social harmony and to overcoming violence and resolving disputes peacefully. The findings also show that development indicators such as health, education, and employment are strongly correlated with the shared values and

attitudes component, that these indicators are not directly related to violence, affect the cognitive aspect of a shared vision for the community and the country, and are important factors in building the future social contract. Herein lies the importance of investing in inclusive development as an essential step for creating an environment that is conducive to social cohesion. Moreover, the research shows that conflict economy and conflict-related deaths are the main determinants of feeling secured, while the trust between individuals is affected by conflict economy, discriminatory institutions, forced displacement, and loss of job opportunities.

8. The report provides a policy approach based on an analysis of social capital in Syria and the damage it has gone through due to armed conflict. This approach is based on stopping the deterioration of social capital that is caused by violence at the local and national levels, and envisaging steps that can restore social harmony, taking into account Syrian citizens both at home and abroad. This approach is based on the revival of a social policy which relates to the social capital components, aiming to serve a common good and to which various actors can contribute.
9. A social policy required for inclusive social development should aspire to achieve social justice as its long-term objective by setting sub-goals of ensuring decent and sustainable livelihoods, social integration, and the rights to participation, expression, and public accountability. An alternative social policy for Syria should endeavor to overcome the inequalities and exclusion induced by pre-conflict policies and confront the catastrophic impact of the conflict including destruction, social fragmentation, conflict economy, forced dispersion, and decompose the subjugating institutions to achieve justice for the conflict victims.

**The research findings demonstrate the negative effect that direct violence—such as displacement, involvement in violent acts, and discriminatory institutional practices—has on both bridging and linking social capitals**



# Introduction

The social movement of 2011 aiming for freedom, dignity, and social justice, expressed the immense suffocation that society had reached regarding institutional, economic, and social aspects of development. This, in turn, reflected a sharp contradiction between existing institutions and society's aspirations. Internal subjugating powers, political oppression, fanaticism, and extremism, in addition to external forces, have all played a crucial role in militarizing the conflict, using violence, and investing in politics of identity and conflict economy (SCPR 2016).

Due to the intense fighting and its catastrophic consequences on the humanitarian, social, and material levels, the Syrian crisis is considered one of the worst humanitarian disasters since World War II. The conflict has now continued for over six years, without reaching any humanitarian solution or political settlement. Several local, regional, and international parties have been involved in prolonging and fueling the conflict through various wars waged on multiple fronts, in which all types of weapons have been used, including those prohibited by international humanitarian law. The conflict has also been characterized by repeated violations of human rights, including killing, torture, looting, detention, intimidation, and forced displacement. This is in addition to the destruction and besiegement of cities without any guarantee of civilians' right to protection. On the social level, incitements to clash of identities, murder, and dehumanization of the other are among the most dangerous practices of Syrian conflict. These have overshadowed the noble goals of freedom, dignity, and justice, and allowed for the prevalence of a culture of futility that serves the continuation of fighting between conflicting parties.

The Syrian tragedy and rampant violence in the country have contributed to a destructive transformation of institutions, led by the warring subjugating powers. This transformation has produced new institutions that serve both local and cross-border economies of violence, which have increased suffering of Syrians and re-distributed resources and power in favor of

warlords' interests. Moreover, armed confrontations have killed and injured hundreds of thousands of Syrians, including children, women, youth, and elderly, and have forced millions of them to become refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Thousands have also been detained, kidnapped, and tortured. Syrian families have lost their breadwinners, especially the young ones, while the country descended to the lowest possible levels of security and standard of living.

High rates of displacement, asylum, and migration have led to significant changes in the structures of society and families, as well as a disintegration of social bonds and relationships. Added to that is the loss of capabilities, the profanation of dignity, the exposure to deprivation and hardship, and threats to life. All of this has resulted in the collapse of the sense of security and social trust. Many IDPs and refugees have lost their properties, resources, and livelihoods; some have also lost their official documents. Most refugees have been denied decent living conditions and been forced to highly depend on international and local humanitarian aid. This has negatively affected them psychologically and socially, deteriorated their relationship with the host communities, and contributed to the formation of "new" communities, social relations, and values (SCPR 2016).

As a result, social capital has undergone a great deterioration, as manifested in the disintegration of social bonds and networks due to high levels of

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polarization and the spread of various types of religious, sectarian, national, ethnic, and ideological fanaticism. In addition, social trust has decreased on several levels: the trust between individuals, the general sense of security due to incidents of kidnapping, detention, forced disappearance, an upsurge in crimes like theft, murder, looting, and exploitation of children and women, not to mention escalation of fighting, and the third level which is the collapse of trust in institutions. The conflict caused huge differences between individuals and communities regarding shared values and visions of the future, at both local and national levels. Women's status and participation in social life has also declined compared to the pre-crisis period. This went along with a severe deterioration in human capital at the levels of health, education, rehabilitation, and capacity building, as well as a decline in the standard of living, which has been affected by rising violence, prevalent chaos, and exorbitant prices during the long years of the conflict.

### Objectives and Scope

This research seeks to diagnose the impact of armed conflict on social relations, in light of the destructive forces that have led to the spatial, economic, and social reformation of local populations, both inside and outside Syria. In this regard, the concept of social capital was chosen as a framework for analyzing various aspects of social relations such as trust, cooperation, and shared values.

The significance of this research lies in its critical discussion of the concept of social capital, and in its attempt to develop a composite index to measure it. Additionally, this research is based on a field survey that includes quantitative and qualitative indicators for analyzing social capital, both before and during the Syrian crisis. This research aims, inter alia, to provide an in-depth understanding of the crisis's impact on social capital. This requires identifying a detailed social capital index that measures changes over time and geographical disparities between different regions, thus diagnosing the social advantages or deteriorations that emerged as a result of the crisis. Such an analysis of a composite index of social capital would provide policy makers, specialists, key actors, and public opinion with an initial and intensive view of the social situation under armed violence.

In this context, based on a critical literature review, the research presents an operational definition of social capital and its components within Syrian context. It also introduces a detailed study of the social capital index's components, the methodology of their construction, and the selection of their detailed indicators. Furthermore, the research focuses on identifying the determinants of social capital, based on econometric models, and measuring the relative importance of each of these determinants within the context of armed conflict. Finally, the research presents a number of evidence-based recommendations and alternatives for overcoming the impact of the crisis on social capital.

The research reflects the challenge for understanding social capital, its dimensions, and its relation to economic, social, and political variables. It is also a starting point for further study of social capital, its interconnections in Syria, and the pivotal role it plays, whether during the conflict or in its aftermath, in many political, social, and economic issues. Social capital is crucial to mend major humanitarian fences in Syrian society; to develop the tools needed to build social solidarity among Syrians inside and outside; and to help create a new social contract that ensures the stability of society and the state.

The first chapter of the research sets out the complexity of defining social capital, and the different schools that have been interested in defining it. In doing so, it reviews the main literature and studies that have tried to measure it. This chapter continues to frame the scope of the research as it explains the methodology that was used to suggest an operational definition within the Syrian context, and which facilitates the measurement of social capital—despite the complications of measurement addressed by much of the literature in this field. The second chapter focuses on analyzing the survey's findings and explaining the sub-indicators and the social capital index in detail. The third chapter provides an econometric analysis of the determinants of social capital including economic, institutional, livelihood, and violence factors. Finally, the last chapter sets out the main findings and conclusions of the research, offering a number of recommendations and alternatives for enhancing social capital in order to overcome

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**The research focuses on identifying the determinants of social capital, based on econometric models**

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the conflict and to rise above the repercussions of the humanitarian disaster in Syria.

### **Research Limitations**

This research is conducted under the conditions of armed conflict that contribute to a climate of fear, anxiety, polarization, displacement, and instability, all of which greatly affect the possibility of verifying the accuracy and credibility of the gathered data. This is despite the considerable effort that has been made in the design and implementation of the survey, not to mention the innovative ways of verification. Dealing with the findings cautiously, and considering the limitations, is a crucial issue recommended by the research team.

The debate on the concept of social capital and its different uses required the research team to develop an operational definition of the concept and its components, which is relevant only to this research and does not necessarily cover all the social aspects that result from each armed conflict.

Attempting to build composite indices for measuring qualitative and quantitative indicators, and to normalize and measure different developmental phenomena, is a contentious issue as well, and many have reservations about the possible oversimplification of complex phenomena and the potential biases in the design of composite indices. Nevertheless, the team emphasizes the advantages of indices, as they are decomposable across components and regions; they can highlight most urgent deficits with high priority; they employ the same tool and methodology to measure social phenomena across all regions of Syria; and they can be corrected using

sensitivity tests. The index can also help with identifying the relationship between social phenomena and economic, health, educational, demographic, and institutional determinants.

Additionally, given the inability to carry out field surveys at the household level due to population fragmentation and security conditions, they were carried out through three key-informants with specific characteristics from each studied area, bringing the total number of key-informants to about 2,100 across all regions of Syria. Despite triangulation of the three respondents' findings at the regional level, there are potential biases in expressing the nature of social relations among the inhabitants of that region. Notably, the question about the pre-crisis period may be affected by the bias of war atrocities, and thus result in exaggerating the positive aspects of the past or forgetting how exactly things had been in 2010.

Since the survey was carried out in 2014, and the conflict has continued during the period of carrying out this research, major and catastrophic changes are absent from the analysis. The research, however, lays the groundwork for a similar study which could compare 2014 and 2017 for example, trying to understand the social dynamics during this period.

It should be noted that analysis at the national or local level does not replace the detailed case studies of particular regions, based on the focus and scope of the research or the importance of the studied phenomenon; nor it does replace statistical studies at the individual and household levels using random sampling. The next step of this research is to focus on specific regions through in-depth case studies.



Chapter One:

# Literature Review and SCI Measurement Methodology



# I. Literature Review

The definition and measurement of social capital constitutes many challenges related to the concept itself; it has been used in diversified, wide, or narrow scopes, all according to the objectives of whichever study is dealing with the concept. Researchers also faced challenges regarding the quantification of the concept of social capital; and what is the appropriate methodology for analyzing it; and to what extent quantitative analysis and survey findings can explain the dynamics of social relations in the society.

The most fundamental pillars of social capital are relationships, networks, and social bonds that are characterized by their dynamism, distinctness, and diversity from one society to another, even within a single country or region. This makes it difficult to reduce and quantify them entirely. However, this does not negate the possibility of measuring significant aspects of social capital and its components, or of determining its relationship to various variables. Therefore, most studies have emphasized the necessity of expanding field research and in-depth interviews with specialists, and of organizing constructive dialogues to deepen the notion of social capital and help understand society with all its classes, groups, and individuals. All of this would aid in the search for an appropriate way to enhance social capital in order to serve the common good and help people overcome the crises plaguing them.

## **The Concept Origin: Bourdieu, Coleman, Putnam**

The concept of social capital has attracted many researchers. It is of particular interest because it focuses mainly on the positive aspects of how society's members and communities interact with each other, rather than on the negative aspects. It also attempts to draw attention to non-monetary forms of capital, which may be a source of power and influence; also it creates options for non-economic solutions to current social problems (Portes, 1998).

The literature on social capital includes a wide range of definitions, concepts, and methods of

measurement. Several studies have contributed to elaborating on this concept, reflecting the importance of social life as the core of the development process. Many other researchers, however, have treated the concept of social capital as a final value in its own right. Thus, the literature focused mainly on a number of specific variables in order to explain the concept (Fine, 2010) without looking at its developmental role conceptually and practically. Furthermore, in 1918, Mary Austin defined social capital as the measure of a group's potential (Farr, 2007).

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1983) began with the notion that there is such a thing as non-economic capital, comparing social capital with other forms of economic, cultural, and symbolic capital. He also compared it with other social concepts such as power, but stressed that social capital is an individual feature. It can be acquired by an individual through "purposeful actions," and then transformed into economic gains, depending on the type of social connections, relations, and networks that individual enjoys and on the strength, stability, and sustainability of these connections (Nasr and Hilal, 2007). In a similar vein, Gary Becker presents an understanding of social capital as rational interactions taking place between individuals that have the potential to become social capital (Becker, 1996).

In contrast, Coleman presented the institutional dimension of the social capital concept, characterizing it as a rational choice connected

to economic development. His definition emphasizes trust, both between individuals and between individuals and institutions, as an important component of social capital. In his reading, the concept reflects the principle of reciprocity in society and is linked to democracy and social development. Moreover, his definition of social capital clearly emphasizes that it is a set of direct and indirect resources produced by social networks, based on trust, within family, friends, and community members (Coleman, 1988).

Trust would later play an important role in social capital literature, especially in the late 1990s. One of the most prominent writers in this field is Fukuyama, who made a distinction between two types of societies: one that is patriarchal and based on familial and kinship ties; and another that is based on high levels of trust, which characterize a variety of social interactions that promote individual belonging to more than one community (Fukuyama, 1999).

Furthermore, Putnam defined social capital as a civic virtue that manifests in individual behaviors and is dependent on political participation, respect for law, and cooperation. This definition highlights the relationship between democracy, civil society, good governance, and sustainable development. Putnam considered social capital to be an interaction between individuals and social networks, a reciprocity, and a level of trust established by such networks. Political participation and reciprocal cooperation are, therefore, considered to be the most important indicators of social capital, whereas a decline in these indicators indicates a decline in social capital (Putnam, 1995).

One of the most relevant criticisms of Putnam's definition of social capital is that it is subject to outside influences, such as government policies, or to unpredictable factors, such as external interference (from corruption and wars), which contribute to a decline in individual political participation. It is also difficult to measure and control people's choices that reflect their individual preferences, so what Putnam considered a decline in social capital could be explained by the different choices that individuals make to express their values. As Navarro noted, what

Putnam interpreted as a decline in social capital within the United States' trade unions was actually just a reflection of repression and a transformation of the balance of power between social classes, not a deterioration of cultural and social values (Navarro, 2002). Grix (2001) and Urry (2002) argued, on other hand, that the concept and indicators adopted by Putnam fail to take into consideration the era of technological revolution that influenced individuals' movements, channels of interaction, and participation in social life.

Putnam's analysis of social capital has raised many questions regarding its impact on society. For example, it is difficult to explain a decline in the trust index, as it could be due to either weak institutional performance, or to poor trust in the government or the system as a whole (Nasr and Hilal, 2007). In this context, Alesina and La Ferrara (2002) found that the most significant indicators that may lead to a decline in the trust index is belonging to a group that has historically been discriminated against, or certain individual characteristics of society members, such as income and education levels, or degree of homogeneity in society.

The social capital concept of Coleman, Putnam, and Fukuyama was used in the 1990s as an expression of a sense of trust towards others, and of the values of solidarity and reciprocity. More importantly, it was considered a communal capital. This distinguishes it from Bourdieu's initial definition, for he considered it to be individual capital, determined by the networks, relationships, and types of knowledge possessed by an individual—enabling him/her to acquire varying advantages resulting from discrepancies in ownership of this type of capital.

Various studies (Putnam, 2000; Gittel and Vidal, 1998; Szreter and Woolcock, 2004) have identified three types of social capital. The first is bonding social capital, which Putnam described as being personal and based on protection, referring to relationships amongst members of a network who are somehow similar to one another, such as family and friends. The second type is bridging social capital, which refers to relationships amongst individuals who do not necessarily belong to a

The literature on social capital includes a wide range of definitions, concepts, and methods of measurement. Several studies have contributed to elaborating on this concept, reflecting the importance of social life as the core of the development process

homogeneous group or correspond to one another in age, economic status, or education; instead they are brought together by other bonds, such as work relationships or shared knowledge. The third type is linking social capital, which is based on individuals' relationships with institutions and various types of organization, such as governmental and non-governmental institutions, political parties, and corporations. This latter category is the weakest type of network or link, despite having, with bridging type, the highest output value and providing the necessary space for developing new ideas, values, and expectations (Woolcock, 2001; Szreter and Woolcock, 2004).

Putnam believed that each type of social capital provides different benefits to society, from protection to employment, safety, and social progress. However, what is missing from his analysis is that these benefits depend on a number of factors, like individual characteristics that distinguish people, such as gender, age, social status; or other variables such as education, nationality, and religion. This means that dissimilarities with regards to these relationships, in terms of strength and steadiness, leads to dissimilarities and disparities in the benefits themselves, due to the fact that the opportunities provided by social networks are unequal (Nasr and Hilal, 2007).

The World Bank has published a series of studies on social capital that deal with the concept's definition, utility, role in development projects, methods of measurement, as well as the relating economic, social, and institutional variables. In this context, the World Bank has defined social capital as the institutions, relationships, and norms that constitute social interaction in a given society, emphasizing that social cohesion is a key factor in sustainable economic development<sup>1</sup>.

The World Bank considers that social capital is not only an institution that governs society, but also a bond that adds value and creates connections within society. This is why it has added official governmental institutions and

relationships to its own definition. The government, official politics, the rule of law, the judicial system, and civil and political rights are all part of the structure of social capital. However, the World Bank makes a distinction between horizontal and vertical networks, emphasizing the fact that horizontal networks are the ones that give form to a society's identity and main goals, while vertical relationships only achieve narrow goals that do not serve the whole society (Dasgupta, 1999; Grootaert and Bastelaer, 2001). To the latter category, the World Bank adds state institutions, the ruling regime, the government, and everything that is attached to the state, including civil society (such as parties, unions, associations, etc.) in addition to institutions of the private sector such as corporations.

Many researchers have argued that the World Bank's concept of social capital is vague, loose, and abstract. It complicates the understanding of social capital while eliminating its specific meaning, which hinders its ability to aid in analyzing and understanding the connections and interrelationships of individuals and communities, and confuses society mechanisms with the state and its institutions (Nasr and Hilal, 2007). It is important to note that state institutions (security and financial institutions, laws, and the judicial system) do affect social relationships and bonds, trust between individuals and communities, the values and norms that govern society, and the level of solidarity and cooperation between individuals and communities. Likewise, these social relations and bonds affect the state institutions, as in collective action or revolutionary movements. However, this mutual impact should not lead to confusing social capital with institutions, especially formal ones.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has provided the following definition of social capital: "networks together with shared norms, values, and understandings that facilitate cooperation within or among groups." Put together, these social networks and relations that are

1. See <http://www.worldbank.org/prem/poverty/scapital/SChowmeas1.html>



governed by shared values, norms, and understandings engender social trust and enable individuals to cooperate and work together (OECD 2001).

The existing literature raises many problematic points, as it views society as an independent entity from external international and regional factors, which greatly affect the relationships between individuals and communities in any society. Also absent from most literature are the political relations that produce injustice, inequality, marginalization, and subjugation. In addition, social capital should be distinguished from other non-economic types of capital, such as symbolic capital and cultural capital. Whereas social capital is based on social relationships and networks that connect individuals and communities, as well as on the mechanisms and motives by which these relationships are formed, other types of non-economic capital depend on the accumulation of knowledge and culture. Another challenge presented by the literature is the latent reference of social capital, which is an individual or social privilege, and which determines the mechanisms of social capital's accumulation and return. The literature further raises many problematic questions. For example, is social trust a major component of social capital or a result of the interaction of individuals and communities among themselves? What is the conceptual framework of social capital? To what extent does it include state institutions and systems of governance? What kind of networks does social capital include? From this, the role of social capital can be identified as a social carrier that helps society to confront challenges and disasters, empowering individuals and communities even in the absence of a state. The literature also raises the issue of finding an operational definition through which social capital could be measured so as to facilitate the study and analysis of social relations.

### Conceptual Framework

Based on the above literature review, the research presents a conceptual framework that leads to an operational definition of social capital. This approach stems from a consideration of the concept of social capital as having a dual character: subjective and objective.

The subjective character of social capital derives from the subjectivity of individuals, communities, and societies, which are seen as active agents in and of themselves. It also derives from the moral nature of its implicit characteristics, such as altruism, sympathy, and tolerance, which are distinct from self-interest, as well as justice, liberty, and other humanist precepts. These ideas constitute social values, such as reciprocal recognition and respect, trust, cooperation, free sharing, motivation to collective and voluntary action, seeking the common good, and the capacity to communicate constructively. They also form social networks that affect institutional structures and processes, leading to social interdependence and human communication. The subjective character of social capital makes it all the more difficult to study and compare different societies and their distinct historical paths, patterns of social relations, and values.

On the other hand, the objective character of social capital is defined by social phenomena, such as networks and civil society organizations. From that perspective, the concept is used as a tool of analysis to diagnose social problems, such as intolerance, discrimination, differentiation, violence, and moral degradation; to detect the movement of those contradictions, which are inherent in social existence; and to predict the trajectory of this movement. Diverse social relationships, bonds, and networks form the main component of social capital, given that communities and societies are relational structures and social systems.

Social capital can be identified by the following characteristics, which offer a preliminary definition:

1. It is historical and public, thus justifying the search for a public social capital, whether for a small community or for the society as a whole, which is not just a sum of small communities and individuals. Focus on the social character of social capital is, however, the basis upon which individuals and communities interact with one another.

**Social capital carries intangible value rather than any objective means for economic gain. It yields social revenues that can provide solutions to social problems in general, and in times of crises in particular**

**Social capital is based on social relationships and networks that connect individuals and communities, as well as on the mechanisms and motives by which these relationships are formed, other types of non-economic capital depend on the accumulation of knowledge and culture**

2. The social relationships that constitute social capital are inseparable from either their motives, be they conscious or unconscious, or their patterns of thinking, perception, representation, appreciation, or even from the actions that they harbor, their ends, and their environment.
3. Social capital is varied and constantly changing. It also fluctuates depending on the stability and balance of family and social life, the flexibility of the political system, and the extent to which the rule of law is in effect and respected.
4. Social capital carries intangible value rather than any objective means for economic gain. It yields social revenues that can provide solutions to social problems in general, and in times of crises in particular.
5. Social capital reflects power relations in society, with several senses of the word "power": from the strength of personality and its ability to influence and be influenced, to the power of knowledge, the power of money, the power of social prestige, and other forms of power, including brute force.
6. Social capital affects and is affected by the weaving of social associations, organizations, and institutions, as well as their structures, functions, and mechanisms; especially that these associations, organizations, and institutions, despite being different from one another, constitute the arenas in which the exercise of public life takes place. The integrity, transparency, and participatory nature of these organizations and institutions, in addition to their ability to function, to be reviewed, and to be held accountable, is a fundamental factor in the development of effective social capital.

consider social values, relationships, bonds, and networks, seen interacting together, as social capital, which necessarily affects patterns of growth in civil society, as well as the structures, functions, and mechanisms of associations, organizations, and institutions; it is also necessarily affected by them. Moreover, social capital contributes to the formation of shared public space.

Social capital can be categorized into either inherited capital, which is pre-established links between members of traditional communities, such as the extended family, clan, or ethno-sectarian group, maintaining their cohesion and promoting their differentiation; or renewable capital, which leads to the growth and development of these communities, and potentially to disintegration of traditional communities. Renewable capital is the possible and infinite capital, because the forms of social relationships and their contents are infinite, constantly changing and being renewed, just as knowledge, culture, science, technology, and the means of production change and are renewed. Renewable social capital does not negate inherited social capital, as it can cultivate the latter in order to serve the common good. Contrary to material capital, the more social capital is consumed and expended, the more it grows and accumulates. This is a fundamental difference, because social capital can lead to a decrease in exploitation, injustice, and oppression, and to a reduction of the disparities between social groups, by way of a dialectical engagement with other types of capital. For it is based on interdependence, peaceful resolution of social conflicts, and contribution to human development. Therefore, it can contribute to the deepening of social transformations and the consolidation of relations in accordance with the human values and principles of equality, freedom, and justice.

In the light of these characteristics, we can

**Social capital can lead to a decrease in exploitation, injustice, and oppression, and to a reduction of the disparities between social groups**

## II. The Social Capital Index: Methodology

### Operational Definition

Based on the conceptual approach mentioned above, the social capital that we are considering can be defined as those social values, bonds, and networks, which have been accumulated within a given society, whether by individuals, communities, or institutions. This accumulation is based on reciprocal trust between and among individuals and communities, which affects and is formed by social institutions which govern public life and facilitate cooperation and solidarity among society members. Social capital entrenches the foundations of social cohesion and integration, working vigorously to create a free, aware, and productive human being who is capable of serving the common good.

Shared values and ethics are considered the essence of social capital, as they consolidate public and private freedoms; preserve human dignity, independence, and freedom; and direct efforts and actions towards the common good in a way that does not contradict the individual goals, ambitions, aspirations of independent, free, aware, and productive members. In this way ethics and values reinforce civil relations and contribute to individual emancipation from immediate kinship bonds that reflect a community's immaturity (Russell, 2009). Likewise, social bonds and networks are also considered the core of social capital, as they help individuals integrate into and communicate with society; promote voluntary work that is productive and conscientious; and strengthen social trust, which leads to social cohesion and solidarity on the basis of reciprocal respect and shared public goals. When individualistic values, that contradict the common good, prevail, the individuals separate from their communities, find no alternative way to connect with the world and with others, and lose control over

themselves, their resources, and their capabilities. Those individuals end up regressing and returning to their primary bonds that are manifested in family, tribe, or ethno-sectarian community, which leads to increased fanaticism. The more human beings fail to achieve personal fulfillment and develop their energies and capabilities, the more feelings of fear and insecurity are fostered, and the more values of submission, dependency, enslavement, and subjugation are fostered in society as well. This boosts fanaticism, tribalism, and sectarianism, and causes society members to surrender their own cause in favor of stronger forces that subjugate them, their choices, abilities, and resources. These forces can be a group of reactionary social structures or authoritarian regimes (Barakat, 2006).

The operational definition adopted throughout the report for its analysis echoes many other studies in the literature by emphasizing that social capital is a collective social product, constructed and accumulated by society through interactions and relationships between and within different individuals and communities. This accumulation occurs on the basis of the ethics, values, norms, and understandings which govern a given society, and which are founded on a certain degree of reciprocal trust that promotes solidarity, cooperation, integration, and cohesion in society. Typically, social capital is divided into three main components: relationships and social networks; social trust; and shared values and norms, and the principle of reciprocity.

### Methodology

Interest in social capital has led to multiple attempts to formulate the concept and to standardize its methods of measurement, despite the various measurement difficulties

**The social capital that we are considering can be defined as those social values, bonds, and networks, which have been accumulated within a given society, whether by individuals, communities, or institutions**

2. For a detailed discussion of the measurement of social capital, see Claridge (2004): <http://www.socialcapitalresearch.com/literature/operationalisation/measurement.html>

associated with the challenge of defining the concept and separating social capital from its results and sources. However, without measuring social capital, its characteristics and possibilities would remain unknown (Durlauf, 2002). Measuring social capital helps identify the factors that contribute to its promotion and those that lead to its deterioration. The Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress, which presented a new approach to understanding wealth, individual life quality, and sustainability, has shown that social capital is an integral part of any society's wealth and assets that positively affects the quality of life of its individuals (Stiglitz et al., 2009).

Many efforts have been made to reach consensus to measure social capital, in terms of conception and tools that would enable international comparison and help analyze its relationship with other developmental variables (Nasr and Hilal, 2007). The OECD has provided a framework for measuring social capital that is based on four approaches to the concept: personal relationships, social network support, civic engagement, and trust and cooperative norms (Scrivens and Smith, 2013).

Social capital can be measured at individual, organizational, or societal levels. When measuring at the societal–local or national–level, composite indices consisting of a number of indicators are used to reflect the society's social capital. Putnam's study and the World Bank's study are both examples of this, measuring social capital at the societal level (Acquaah, 2014).

The existing literature highlights challenges involved in using the aggregation of individual data in order to measure a social phenomenon. Social trust, for instance, cannot be measured by aggregating trust at the individual level. Furthermore, many studies recommend using several indicators and variables to measure social capital, including developing composite indices, which allow for a more accurate approach to the concept (Van Deth, 2003).

The process of constructing a composite index goes through several stages, including the identification and selection of indicators

that reflect the main components of social capital, different methods for standardizing, weighting, and aggregating indicators. The last stage is conducting sensitivity tests (Laursen et al., 2007). The process of developing composite indices involves a large number of methodological challenges. These include a reliance on expert judgment, which often goes along with some uncertainty, and the rough attribution of weights to sub-indicators, which is another challenge in the construction of a composite index (World Health Organization, 2017).

### Construction of the Social Capital Index

The importance of measurement is even more evident in the context of armed conflict, where it becomes increasingly important to discern new, war-time interactions and to direct interventions towards mitigating or overcoming the impact of violence on social capital. In this context, the research team has designed research tools for the population survey at the community and national levels, where it has been able to construct an index for social capital based on its main components.

The selection of indicators, and consequently the formulation of the questionnaire for the population survey (the social level), is largely based on literature review and consultation with experts. The questionnaire included questions about social networks, trust, values, and norms, the unit of analysis being the local community. Based on a study at the level of the studied areas, encompassing the whole of Syria, the employed survey mixed methods that suit the conditions of conflict.

The survey methodology involved lengthy interviews with three key informants in each of the 698 studied areas. Quantitative and qualitative questions were used to inquire into the population's status in each region, determining its demographic, economic, and social situation both prior to the crisis and during the period of the survey, mid-2014. The survey included certain criteria for data merging at the studied area level, such as redoing the questionnaire in case of a clear contradiction between its three forms. Appendix 1 elaborates more on the survey's methodology (SCPR, 2016).

According to the operational definition, a social capital index can be determined using an aggregate scale with three equally weighted components. The composite indicators within each component are also equally weighted (Table 1).

The first component, concerned with social networks and participation, can be measured through four key indicators: participation in public decision-making, volunteerism, cooperation in problem-solving, and social participation of women. The second component, social trust, is measured through two key indicators: trust among individuals, and feeling secured. The third component, relating to values, norms, and the principle of reciprocity, is measured by the degree of consensus among community members on a common vision of the studied area, by the degree of consensus among them on a common vision at the national level, and finally by the social status of women.

**Table 1: Social Capital Index (SCI), its components and indicators**

Components	Indicators
Social Networks and Participation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Participation in Decision-Making</li> <li>2. Cooperation in Overcoming Problems</li> <li>3. Volunteerism</li> <li>4. Women's Participation</li> </ol>
Social Trust	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Trust Among Individuals</li> <li>2. Feeling Secured</li> </ol>
Shared Values and Attitudes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agreeing on a Vision for the Studied Area</li> <li>2. Agreeing on a Vision for Syria</li> <li>3. The Status of Women</li> </ol>

Source: Syrian Center for Policy Research.

**In calculating SCI, its components, and its indicators, this report relies on the data provided by the 2014 Population Survey**

It should be noted that SCI can be calculated both at the national level and all other geographical levels, including governorates and sub-districts. It also measures social capital before and during the crisis, which leads to a deeper understanding of the social situation in Syria and the impact of the crisis, with the aim of contributing to the development of appropriate future strategies and policies.

In calculating SCI, its components, and its indicators, this report relies on the data provided by the 2014 Population Survey (Appendix 1) for both the pre-crisis (2010) and during-crisis

(2014) periods. The index, which helps analyze social capital in Syria and the impact the crisis had on it, was designed according to the following components and indicators:

**1. Social Networks and Participation (four equally weighted indicators):**

- Participation in Public Decision-Making: The extent to which participation in the process of making a decision related to the interests of all residents within a given region is available to all individuals, effectively and without excluding anyone; measured on a five-point scale: Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always.

- Cooperation in Overcoming Problems: Assistance offered by others in the event of either a general problem or a problem specific to some community members; measured on a five-point scale: Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always.
- Volunteerism: The prevalence of voluntary work and the contribution of all individuals, without excluding anyone; measured on a five-point scale: Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always.
- Women's Participation: The extent to which women participate in public social activities, such as initiatives in education, health, and social solidarity; measured on a three-point scale: Poor, Average, Good.

**2. Trust (two equally weighted indicators):**

- Trust Among Individuals: The prevalence of trust among community members in a number of manifestations, such as the low number of legal cases between individuals, the scarcity of incidents of fraud, the tendency to create economic partnerships, and the ease with which borrowing occurs between individuals; measured on a five-point scale: Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always.
- Feeling secured: The extent of freedom from incidents such as killing, theft, violence, and kidnapping, in addition to the ability to move freely; measured on a five-point scale: Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always.

**3. Shared Values and Attitudes (three equally weighted indicators):**

- Agreeing on a Vision for the Studied Area: The extent to which a vision of a desirable future for the region exists, in either a written or implicit form; measured on a five-point scale: Total Disagreeing, Considerably Disagreeing, Somewhat Agreeing, Considerably Agreeing, Completely Agreeing.
- Agreeing on a Vision for Syria: The extent to which a vision of a desirable future for Syria exists, in either a written or implicit form; measured on a five-point scale: Total Disagreeing, Considerably Disagreeing, Somewhat Agreeing, Considerably Agreeing, Completely Agreeing.

**The indicators were weighted in the overall index based on the precedent set by similar studies and on expert consultations. The research arrived at simple formulas that depend upon the equal weighting of main dimensions**

- The Status of Women: The general view of women's role at the familial and communal levels; measured on a three-point scale: Poor, Average, Good.

The indicators were weighted in the overall index based on the precedent set by similar studies and on expert consultations. The research arrived at simple formulas that depend upon the equal weighting of main dimensions. Sensitivity tests were applied to the index by changing the weighting of components. The results indicated that there were few significant differences, not exceeding 8 per cent in their highest values.

The components were constructed after normalizing all of their indicators into values between zero and one, in addition to weighting them according to the population number, based on Population Survey 2014, of the studied area when aggregated at the governorate level or the national level. The three components also took values between zero and one, and SCI was formulated as follows:

$$SCI_t = 1/3 (SP_t) + 1/3 (ST_t) + 1/3 (VN_t)$$

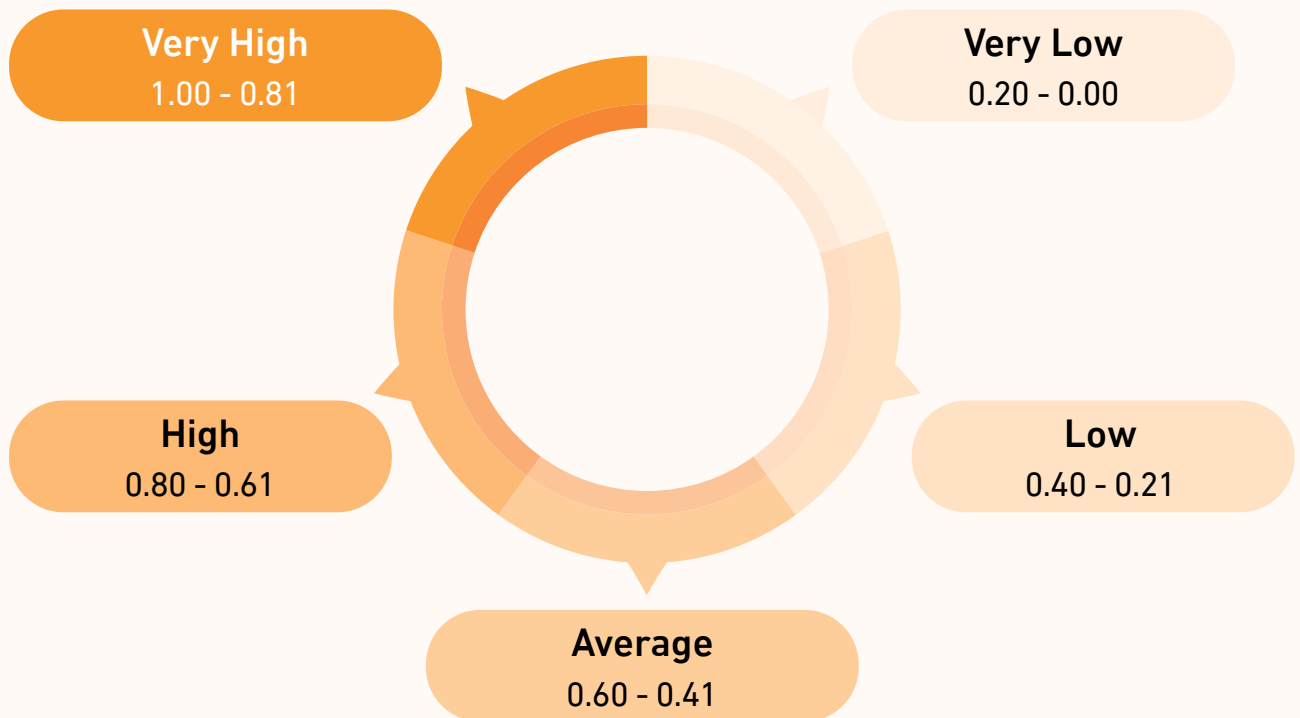
SCI<sub>t</sub> for social capital index. It takes a value between 0 and 1, where zero indicates a lacking social capital and one that it is functioning at its best.

SP<sub>t</sub> for social networks and participation component. It takes a value between 0 and 1, where zero indicates a lacking component and one that it is functioning at its best.

ST<sub>i</sub> for social trust component. It takes a value between 0 and 1, where zero indicates a lacking component and one that it is functioning at its best.

VN<sub>i</sub> for shared values, norms, and attitudes component. It takes a value between 0 and 1, where zero indicates a lacking component and one that it is functioning at its best.

The composite index of social capital and its components take values from 0 to 1, which can be classified as follows:









Chapter Two:

# Characteristics of Social Capital Indicators

Halim Barakat describes Syrian society as a multicultural society that has maintained integration and cohesion for a long time through a network of social relationships that are based on a number of cultural, religious, social, and ethical factors. It has managed to preserve a multiplicity of distinct identities and a variety of interests, while also adjusting and striving to establish a central state and common understandings about the fundamentals that are necessary to achieve social integration.

Nevertheless, the Syrian society has always suffered from internal conflict throughout its history, due to either external interference, or the hegemonic control of a single religious minority or majority over power and wealth, or a lack of both democracy and full recognition of cultural, religious, and ideological diversity (Barakat, 1984). In general, successive political upheavals have shown that Syrian society is in a transitional era that faces a chronic crisis between traditional and conservative ideologies and cultures, on the one hand, and modernity on the other; between forces of partitioning and fragmentation and forces of unification, integration, and inclusion; not to mention continuous external interferences. It is a society in a state of constant confrontation and permanent conflict, and the recent crisis has witnessed the role of subjugating powers in fueling and investing in the differences and contradictions to sustain the conflict and subordinate society.

Syrian society, like others in the region, suffers from many factors such as dependence in the sense that Halim Barakat describes in his book on alienation (2006), where a society loses control over its resources and capabilities, and becomes subordinated to its institutions. In addition, it suffers from dangerous levels of submission to autocratic and inhuman regimes, which deprive both individuals and the overall society of its will, purpose, and plan for change. Social relations, on the other hand, appear to be solid, but are mostly informal and largely based on basic kinship bonds that contradict with civil and formal relations.

In addition, the Syrian society is affected by a multiplicity of regional loyalties and affiliations

that sometimes prevail over national affiliations. This has made it vulnerable to internal divisions and conflicts that have historically been exploited by regimes, ruling elites, and external forces, all serving their interests that are incompatible with the interests of its communities and individuals. These traditional relations and affiliations, which are based on trust, cooperation, and solidarity among members of one community contain a contradiction: the factors that are expected to enhance trust at the community level have been used to serve elite interests at the expense of overall national interests. The bonding and traditional relations have been preserved through reactionary and metaphysical powers, political authoritarianism, and hierarchies among individuals and sectarian, tribal, and ethnic communities that have ganged up against others using wealth and power (Barakat, 2006).

In this context, this research uses the concept of social capital in an attempt to analyze the prevailing social relations in the Syrian society, as well as the values and norms that govern these relations and affect the values of cooperation, solidarity, and trust among both individuals and communities. The concept of social capital is used as an approach to analyzing and understanding the dynamics of the social crisis. It should be noted that the analysis is based primarily on a characterization and examination of social relations at the community level, and not at the individual or familial level. The following sections provide a descriptive analysis of the nine sub-indicators used to construct the social capital index, followed by a discussion of the overall index SCl.

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**Social relations appear to be solid, but are mostly informal and largely based on basic kinship bonds that contradict with civil and formal relations**

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**the analysis is based primarily on a characterization and examination of social relations at the community level, and not at the individual or familial level**

# I. Social Networks and Participation

Existing literature has used a variety of different criteria to identify the nature of social networks and community participation. One of these criteria is the community's organizational life, such as service in local organizations or clubs, or membership in different communities. Another one is the engagement in public affairs, such as voter turnout or public meetings on educational, cultural, or service issues. The third criterion is community volunteering, such as working in non-profit institutions or instances of volunteering (Putnam, 2000). Some studies considered volunteerism as part of the shared values component and not networks (Nasr and Hilal, 2007), while others considered it to be separate from other components, a component in its own right (Putnam, 2000).

This study considers the networks component to be composed of four main criteria: participation in public decision-making, cooperation in overcoming problems, volunteerism, and women's participation. The report draws on this definition in order to identify the nature of social networks and interaction of individuals in society, particularly through their participation in decision-making at the local level, their cooperation in problem-solving, the extent of their involvement in voluntary work, and the social role of women.

## Participation in Decision-Making

According to the Researcher Guide that was adopted in the 2014 Population Survey, this indicator enquires into the extent to which participation in the process of making decisions related to the collective interests within a given region is available to all individuals, effectively and without exclusion. This is measured using a five-point scale: Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always. Here, the concept of participation includes participation in decision-making at both the formal, governmental level and the local, informal one.

The findings show that, at the national level, the index of participation in decision-making within a given region has decreased on average from 0.59 before the crisis to 0.44 during (Figure 1). Variations are also remarked across different governorates and regions before and during the crisis. The pre-crisis findings indicate that the indicator of participation in the governorates of Quneitra, Sweida, and Raqqa falls under the "High" category before the crisis; these governorates are characterized by the predominance of family, clan, or tribe influence (Batatu, 1999). These pre-modern relations, which are characterized by their firmness and fixity, have been relied upon for employment opportunities in formal institutions. Conversely, the weakest functioning was in Hasakah (0.50), which is an ethnically diverse governorate, and which has suffered from prejudice against Kurdish people. The two political and economic capitals, Damascus and Aleppo, suffered from the lowest rates of participation. These governorates are characterized by more civil forms of relations, where traditional and primary kinship relations and bonds tend to decrease in favor of more modern ones. The low rates in Damascus and Aleppo indicate the poor status of civil participation, which derives from horizontal relational structures, and reflect the hegemony of an authoritarian state apparatus.

**Variations are also remarked across different governorates and regions before and during the crisis. The pre-crisis findings indicate that the indicator of participation in the governorates of Quneitra, Sweida, and Raqqa falls under the "High" category before the crisis; these governorates are characterized by the predominance of family, clan, or tribe influence**

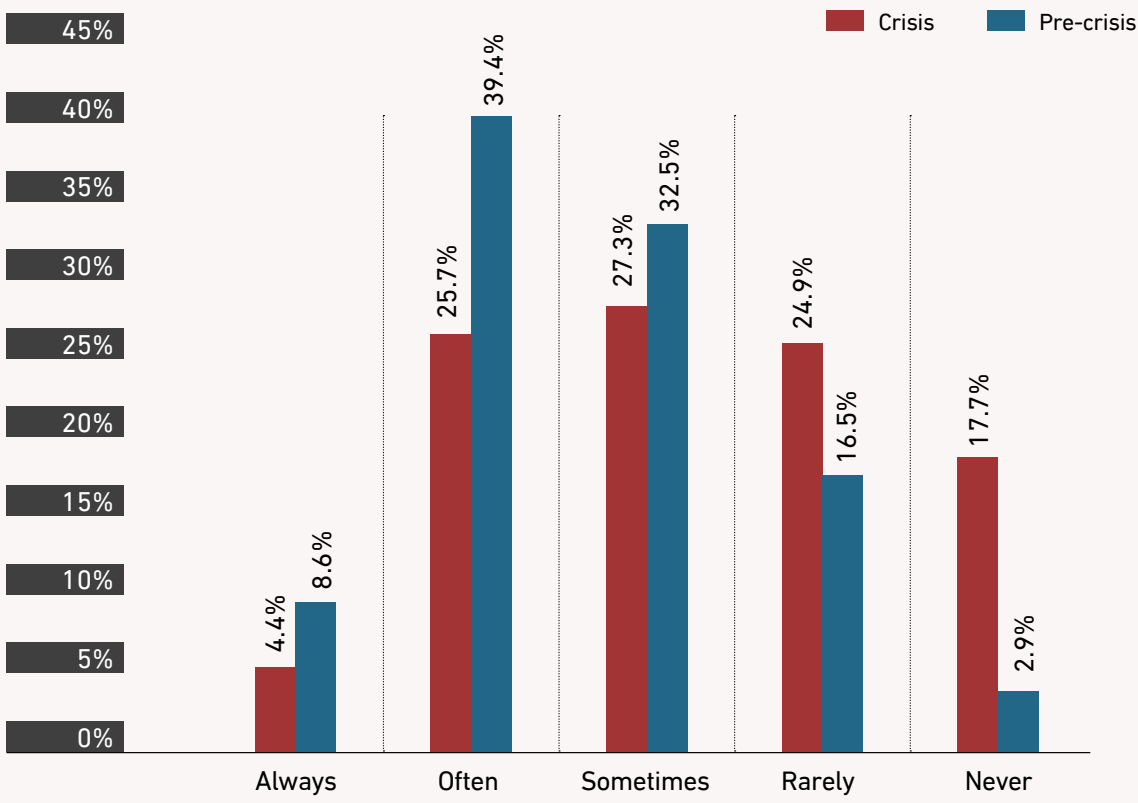
**The low rates in Damascus and Aleppo indicate the poor status of civil participation**

It is worth mentioning that, due to political oppression, participation in decision-making was already low, but it has further deteriorated during the current crisis, especially in military operation areas, where military and security forces have removed the possibility of participation, and where persecution and subjugation of citizens prevail. The participation indicator has declined in all governorates where formal and informal institutions have undergone a fundamental change in roles. Public institutions have disappeared and been replaced in many regions by local non-state authorities. The conflict has changed the role of many institutions and transformed them into tools of exclusion, subjugation, and use of people as part of the war machine. We also point out that the most affected governorates were Raqqa, Hasakah, Deir ez-Zor, Idlib, and Aleppo. This highlights the role of the armed conflict and its disastrous effects on mechanisms for participating in making decisions that concern the residents of each studied area. Regarding the reasons for this decrease in participation observed in the survey,

respondents emphasize the subjugation powers' control over decisions, decreased trust in institutions, the lack of a sense of security, and the armed conflict. Many respondents from the regions in Damascus pointed out that "nobody participates in making decisions. They are in the hands of influential people and are subject to the intervention of popular and party committees." In the neighborhoods of Aleppo, respondents stated that "the militants are the decision-makers," while in Idlib, participation in decision-making "was subject to discrimination and favoritism before the crisis, and during the crisis it has been in the control of militants." It is noteworthy that, with the onset of social movement, many regions witnessed an improvement in participation, which was reflected in the emergence of many civil organizations and initiatives that resulted in arrangements related to informal elections at local levels. However, with the outbreak of the armed conflict, subjugating powers hindered these steps and most Syrians were excluded from participation once again.

**the most affected governorates were Raqqa, Hasakah, Deir ez-Zor, Idlib, and Aleppo. This highlights the role of the armed conflict and its disastrous effects on mechanisms for participating in making decisions that concern the residents of each studied area**

**Figure 1: Participation in decision-making process (before and during the crisis)**



Source: Population Survey 2014, and calculations of SCPR.

### Cooperation in Overcoming Problems

According to the Researcher Guide that was adopted in the 2014 Population Survey, this indicator is concerned with the following question: In the event of a general problem for some community members, or one that is specific to one individual, do others generally help to tackle it? Some examples are if one of the residents gets into financial trouble, or is robbed or mugged, or if there is a general problem like a food-shortage in the region. The question's explanation shall illustrate the main reasons for the state of cooperation among community members. This indicator is measured using a five-point scale: Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always.

Nasr and Hilal (2007) used a similar indicator by asking about the extent to which people can rely on others in the event of an emergency. They also classified it within the networks component, whereas much of the research has used a more empirical approach to measure the level of cooperation. This indicator was not directly referred to in Putnam's methodology (Putnam, 2000).

The survey findings show that the index of cooperation in overcoming problems within local communities has declined from 0.75 before the crisis to 0.63 during it (Figure 2). The numbers were relatively high before the crisis, especially in the governorates of Sweida, Rural Damascus, Deir ez-Zor, Tartus, and Daraa, while they were the lowest in Lattakia, Damascus, Hama, and Homs, indicating a decline in cooperation levels when comparing large cities to smaller towns and rural areas, where traditional community relations are more entrenched. The crisis has affected relationships of cooperation in a fundamental and sometimes contradictory manner. The conflict has

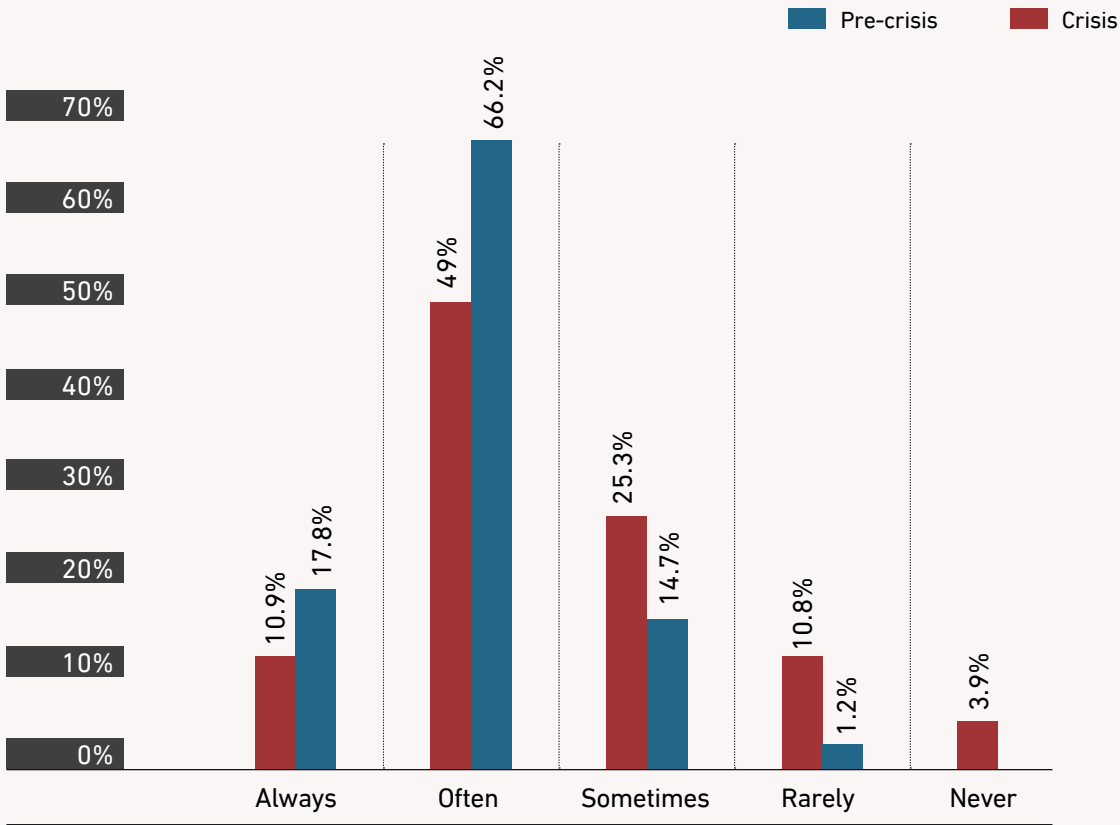
multiplied the suffering of individuals at all humanitarian, social, and economic levels. Despite the sense of social solidarity and mutual support that had been evident in the beginning of the social movement, the subjugating powers' exploitation and politics of identities, and their use of armed forces to subjugate society, have led to severe societal divisions and an absence of rules and moral values. At a later stage, the economic and social situation worsened, and the gap between society and the dominating powers increased, leading to a return to pre-modern bonds such as blood-ties and ethno-sectarian lines of affiliation, which weaken horizontal social relations.

Value of the indicator of cooperation among individuals to overcome problems has declined in most governorates, especially those that have suffered from fighting, such as Raqqa, Idlib, Deir ez-Zor, Daraa, Rural Damascus, and Aleppo. Meanwhile, the space available for cooperation is relatively wider in regions which have been less affected by the fighting and which have received IDPs, such as Damascus, Tartus, and Sweida. In fact, the cooperation indicator in Damascus improved from 0.68 before the crisis to 0.73 during it. It did the same but to a lesser extent in Tartus and Hama, where the levels of cooperation during the crisis underwent a slight increase. Some people in Hama reported that "the people of the region are trying to cooperate as much as they can to overcome the impact of this crisis." On the other hand, the level of cooperation between individuals has declined significantly, especially in areas where there have been large displacements, and which have been subject to armed conflict, systematic shelling, and the domination of militant armed groups such as ISIS. For example, Raqqa witnessed a major collapse in the level of cooperation between individuals during the crisis, as its index declined from 0.77 to 0.25. In Hasakah, which is characterized by ethnic and national diversity, the cooperation indicator declined from 0.75 to 0.48, as the forces in power multiplied and people's visions for the future diverged; some reported that the level of cooperation has declined "due to divisions of people and differences of opinion among the population." The same is true in Idlib and Deir ez-Zor, which has been devastated by the armed conflict.

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**Despite the sense of social solidarity and mutual support that had been evident in the beginning of the social movement, the subjugating powers' exploitation and politics of identities, and their use of armed forces to subjugate society, have led to severe societal divisions and an absence of rules and moral values**

**Figure 2: Cooperation in overcoming problems (before and during the crisis)**



Source: Population Survey 2014, and calculations of SCPR.

These findings raise many questions about the reasons for these varied levels of cooperation. Studies suggest several factors, such as the structure of the studied community, the nature of social relationships, networks, and economic and political relations, also the degree of trust between and among the individuals and communities (Field, 2003); in addition to the role of social networks, relationships, connections, communal and institutional activities, and prospects for collective action (Edwards, 2001). Sacconi and Antoni (2010) argue that the accumulation of social capital depends on the total returns that can be expected by the actors trying to cooperate in a social network. Edwards (2001) argues that organizational and individual connections, on the one hand, and communal and civil activities, on the other, play a key role in predicting the viability of collective action and its social return. Therefore, cooperation and collective action among individuals for the sake of a specific goal requires, first, a satisfactory level

of mutual trust, and second, integration within the social structure in order for social networks and relationships to function effectively. Eventually, this accumulates through the repetition of experiences between individuals and communities, and it in turn promotes the values of trust and effective cooperation between them.

In many regions, relationships between individuals and the values of reciprocal cooperation and trust have been shattered during the crisis. This is considered one of the most significant factors that is demonstrated by the survey findings. The spread and domination of armed parties and security forces that penetrated society further contributed to dismantling social connections and relations, and created an atmosphere of mistrust, imposing social, economic, and political orders that are founded upon fear, subjugation, hatred of the other, and the politics of identity, as in Raqqa, Homs, and Aleppo.

It is possible to understand the nature of social networks through identifying the actors that people rely on to solve problems, who typically take part in the decision-making process. It is common in Syrian society for individuals and communities to overcome their problems through a set of well-established traditions that are inherited from family, friends, and neighbors, where local notables such as clerics, sheikhs, and other prominent figures intervene in order to resolve problems and disputes, as a first option before resorting to official judicial bodies that regulate public law in society. Although such norms and customs vary between centers and peripheries, and between urban and rural areas, as well as from one region to another, this behavior is indicative of the type of networks and relationships that establish societal structures, and of the nature of shared relationships and prevalent norms and cultures in society.

Besides, new types of relationships have emerged since the beginning of the 1970s,

sometimes based on people affiliated with the ruling regime, who have relied on their official authority and a network of client-relations; or grounded in the power of the security apparatus, which has penetrated traditional bonds and exploited them in order to further its influence. Important examples are the senior members of the Baath Party in each governorate and region, senior officials, senior members of local councils, and senior security personnel or army officers. These figures have become the principal authorities that cooperate in overcoming problems, especially with respect to money and private or public property, in exchange for monetary or in-kind compensation (Hinnebusch, 2012). One can argue that these authorities have replaced and marginalized traditional decision-making figures. In fact, the former often allied with the latter in order to achieve its own interests, affecting the overall structure of society, and prevailing social relations as well as trust between different individuals and communities.

**Table 2: Community figures/institutions consulted by residents to overcome problems during the crisis**

	No one	Security officials	Prominent community figures	Clerics	Heads of extended families	Judiciary	Sharia courts	Armed groups leaders	YPG
Damascus	1.24%	32.23%	24.18%	3.65%	4.21%	30.46%	4.03%	0.00%	0.00%
Aleppo	2.87%	15.22%	25.60%	22.55%	13.10%	11.09%	8.70%	0.88%	0.00%
Rural Damascus	0.00%	16.50%	31.72%	18.31%	13.42%	10.97%	8.99%	0.10%	0.00%
Homs	0.00%	28.97%	25.97%	14.86%	6.35%	22.51%	1.34%	0.00%	0.00%
Hama	0.00%	26.22%	26.98%	10.12%	14.30%	22.38%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Lattakia	0.00%	27.58%	17.66%	9.89%	14.10%	30.47%	0.15%	0.15%	0.00%
Idlib	0.00%	7.63%	30.16%	27.23%	10.52%	7.08%	17.38%	0.00%	0.00%
Hasakah	0.00%	3.19%	27.06%	9.91%	14.76%	3.24%	21.96%	6.56%	13.32%
Deir ez-Zor	0.00%	3.56%	32.20%	27.79%	29.33%	2.49%	4.64%	0.00%	0.00%
Tartus	0.00%	32.32%	20.53%	6.98%	13.49%	25.19%	1.48%	0.00%	0.00%
Raqqa	0.00%	0.00%	19.34%	26.65%	0.00%	0.00%	54.01%	0.00%	0.00%
Daraa	0.00%	16.28%	35.08%	19.29%	17.91%	9.54%	1.80%	0.10%	0.00%
Sweida	0.00%	21.08%	28.76%	14.63%	23.86%	10.57%	1.09%	0.00%	0.00%
Quneitra	0.00%	4.35%	33.33%	15.19%	28.98%	18.15%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Syria	0.61%	18.29%	26.91%	16.30%	13.24%	14.99%	8.01%	0.67%	0.99%

Source: Population Survey 2014, and calculations of SCPR.

Table 2 demonstrates that those prominent figures who enjoy high social standing are ranked first as authorities in overcoming problems (26.9 per cent), followed by senior security officials (18.3 per cent). Clerics are ranked third (16.3 per cent), followed by the judiciary (15.0 per cent) and lastly heads of the families (13.2 per cent). These findings reflect a lack of confidence in either the judiciary system or the broader role that the law and official institutions play in society—for they have been replaced by informal relations. The table also shows the main function of vertical networks, which emphasizes the power of traditional networks and societal relationships through the influential community figures (from either the community or the family) and religious actors, to whom about 57 per cent of the population resorts on average. The second entity exercising power in terms of influence are the security and military forces, which play a direct role in the populations' community life. This reflects a deviation in these apparatus' roles, from maintaining security and safety to being a tool that interferes with the lives and affairs of the population, away from the rule of law and judicial proceedings. These findings indicate that traditional and security forces have disrupted the judicial system, and thus halted the work of one of the most important state authorities. This deterioration has been further exacerbated by virtue of the armed conflict, wherein chaos and fighting have prevailed and traditional and military forces have had the upper hand, even with social issues. Particularly noteworthy in this context is the phenomenon of sharia courts that have spread in the regions controlled by opposition forces. These courts vary in form and content in terms of legal or religious points of reference, as well as modes of operation. But they generally reflect a major setback during the conflict, since many have reverted to a pre-modern judicial system, which is neither based on a human rights charter nor regulates the affairs of citizens with unified legal rules.

Despite some similarities, the cooperation index demonstrates a clear disparity between governorates, which reflects the complex nature of the armed conflict. At the local level, the survey findings show that personalities with high social status play a major role in solving

problems in most governorates except Damascus, Tartus, and Lattakia where security forces have the greatest influence. In Raqqa, sharia courts play the most prominent role; in addition, clerics occupy an important position as actors in problem solving in Aleppo, Idlib, Rural Damascus, Daraa, and Raqqa. This indicates the fragmentation of mechanisms for addressing people's problems, and the deep variations across regions and governorates. The return to traditional mechanisms, and the strengthening of the role of security and military forces, constitute major future challenges to developing peaceful and democratic modes of conflict-resolution within Syrian society.

### Volunteerism

Some studies have considered volunteerism to be a separate component of social capital and a healthy indicator of community safety and progress (Putnam, 2000). What is meant by volunteerism, as it was included in the survey's questionnaire, is activities related to the region's common good, if any, and whether they are available for everybody to contribute to without any exclusion on the basis of social, cultural, or professional affiliation. The question's explanation illustrates the main reasons for not participating, as well as for the absence or the spread of volunteering activities.

Participation in voluntary work is of great importance in Syrian traditions and society overall. It is not limited to traditional frameworks, but also occurs in horizontal relations, and in rural and urban areas alike. Voluntary work takes place in Syrian customs as different forms of behavior and habits. It does not necessarily take organized forms, and is instead found in many small details of everyday life and social events, such as weddings, funeral services, and incidents of natural disasters. However, volunteering was already at modest levels before the crisis, due to poor community participation under the constraints imposed on community activity by autocratic institutions. During the crisis, voluntary activities have increased, as many young people have been motivated to take part in non-systematic voluntary work, especially in regions that received IDPs from regions of conflict, or in regions suffering from armed conflict, where medical aid, food, and clothing have been

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**These findings indicate that traditional and security forces have disrupted the judicial system, and thus halted the work of one of the most important state authorities. This deterioration has been further exacerbated by virtue of the armed conflict, wherein chaos and fighting have prevailed and traditional and military forces have had the upper hand, even with social issues**

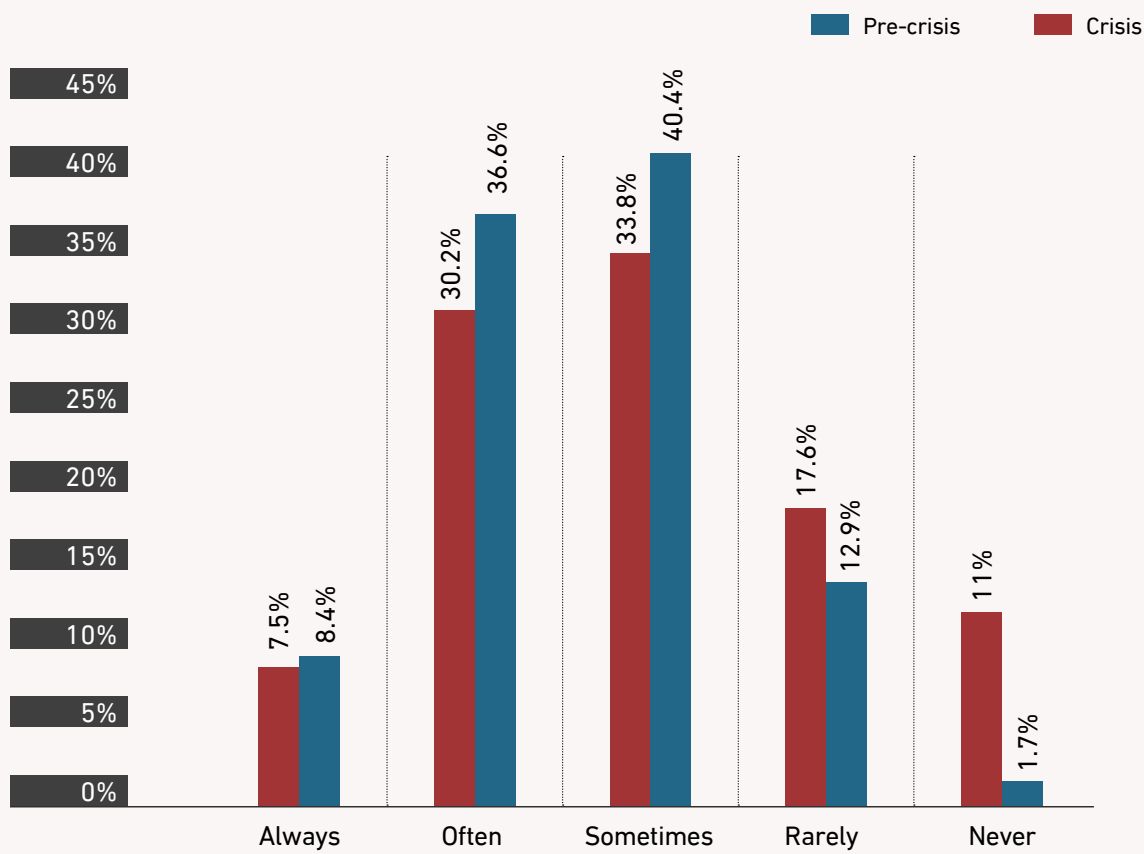


Despite the challenges associated with volunteering in conflict areas, it has played a major role in alleviating the suffering in these regions, where people themselves engage in the work, often in cooperation with international and local organizations

provided. In addition, local organizations and councils have been formed to help individuals overcome the human suffering they are experiencing. Hundreds of volunteering initiatives in which youth have participated have also been established in order to provide shelter and other basic survival needs, with services ranging from psychosocial support, to education and health services, to providing food and clothing. Many of these activities were observed during field visits to centers for IDPs, and through interviews with children, parents, representatives from NGOs, and the youth involved in these activities. Despite the challenges associated with volunteering in conflict areas, it has played a major role in alleviating the suffering in these regions, where people themselves engage in the work,

often in cooperation with international and local organizations. However, the harsh nature of the conflict and the aggravation of subjugating powers have constrained these initiatives and exposed them to excessive danger, including killing and forced disappearance. Moreover, these powers have used available humanitarian aid and resources to pursue their own objectives, controlling and subjugating the vital community forces. This co-optation has included favoring loyalists and reallocation of remaining material or nonmaterial resources for fueling violence. In this context, the survey findings indicate that in general the level of community participation in volunteering work has slightly decreased in Syria from 0.59 before the crisis to 0.51 during the crisis (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Participation in volunteering work (before and during the crisis)



Source: Population Survey 2014, and calculations of SCPR.

certain rural areas. This raises many questions about the poor performance of horizontal civic structures for citizens in general, and for women in particular. It should be noted that the enormous suffering experienced by women during this conflict may affect their view towards their pre-crisis participation, as expressed by the survey respondents. Many tend to see periods prior to the fighting in a positive light and often exaggerate while comparing to the current war-fraught situation.

At the level of governorates during the crisis, the findings show that there has been a decline affecting all governorates except Tartus, where the women's participation indicator has not changed. For instance, Raqqa witnessed a collapse in women's participation, as did Deir ez-Zor and Idlib. Among the reasons reported by respondents in a number of neighborhoods in Aleppo were "patriarchal society, and fear for women from kidnapping and other dangers." The decline has been less severe in Homs, Damascus, and Sweida. Some areas of Hama have also witnessed "remarkable participation by women in relief and medical response work." There are significant differences between areas within the same governorate, as is the case with Amouda and Al-Qahtaniyah, in Hasakah governorate, where women's participation is better in the former as compared to the latter. The findings also show a decline in women's participation in the regions that have witnessed heavy armed conflict, largely affecting women's role in community participation. Furthermore, the politics of identity and the spread of extremism have contributed to the exclusion of women. Many studies and testimonies bear witness to the horrors of the war with regards to women, for whom murder, mutilation, human-trafficking, enslavement (literally), and rape, as well as underage marriage, have all been fairly widespread. The fear factor, according to the survey, has played a key role in the decline in women's participation in social life. Freedom of movement is limited as manifestations of violence lead to concerns about safety, not to mention the "control of extremists who violate women's freedom through their dominating institutions, and even use force to impose lifestyles on women and on society" (Sharbaji and Koujan, 2016).

The findings show a disparity in the level of volunteerism across regions and governorates, which has further increased during the crisis. Participation in volunteer work has gone up in the regions of Tartus, Homs, Sweida, and Damascus, as work with IDPs increased because of the relative safety that workers in these regions enjoy. A number of respondents in Damascus and Sweida reported that "many contribute to relief work and provide necessities to those from the stricken areas." On the other hand, participation has declined in Raqqa, Daraa, and Rural Damascus, some of whose respondents pointed to "people distancing themselves from one another as a result of the conflict." The findings indicate that the regions which experienced destruction, siege, and combat operations, and whose residents suffered increasingly, are the ones with lower volunteerism rates. This is a result of fear in the first place, and of an increased need to meet the demands of one's own daily life in the second.

### **Women's Participation**

This study innovatively employed the indicator of women's social participation as a component of the social network index. This stems from the significance placed on women's participation in patriarchal societies, where women are excluded from equally and actively participating in social issues, causing them to seek indirect and informal forms of participation. In the context of the survey, the indicator is concerned with the participation of women in public social activities, including their participation in civic voluntary work such as education, health, and social solidarity initiatives, as well as public cultural events. The explanation illustrates the reasons for the current and former status of women's social participation.

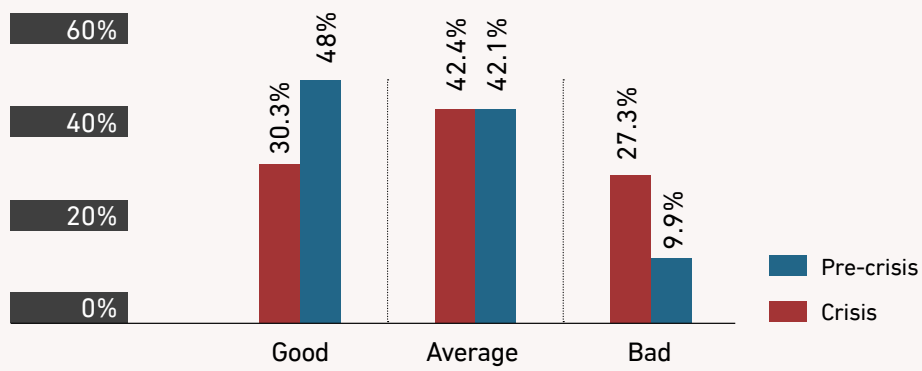
The findings show that women's social participation at the national level has declined sharply from 0.69 before the crisis to 0.51 during (Figure 4). Before the crisis, women suffered from various forms of marginalization at several levels: legal (e.g. personal status law), social, economic, and political. Their social participation varies considerably between governorates and regions. It is important to note the poor participation in major governorates such as Aleppo and Damascus, as opposed to the relatively high levels of participation in

**Oppression, fanaticism, and extremism have contributed to marginalizing the social role of women. Meanwhile, their role in bearing the burden of their family has increased. They work to help those who have been affected and injured by the conflict, as well as marginalized social groups such as IDPs**

certain rural areas. This raises many questions about the poor performance of horizontal civic structures for citizens in general, and for women in particular. It should be noted that the enormous suffering experienced by women during this conflict may affect their view towards their pre-crisis participation, as expressed by the survey respondents. Many tend to see periods prior to the fighting in a positive light and often exaggerate while comparing to the current war-fraught situation.

At the level of governorates during the crisis, the findings show that there has been a decline affecting all governorates except Tartus, where the women's participation indicator has not changed. For instance, Raqqa witnessed a collapse in women's participation, as did Deir ez-Zor and Idlib. Among the reasons reported by respondents in a number of neighborhoods in Aleppo were "patriarchal society, and fear for women from kidnapping and other dangers." The decline has been less severe in Homs, Damascus, and Sweida. Some areas of Hama have also witnessed "remarkable participation by women in relief and medical response work." There are significant differences between areas within the same governorate, as is the case with Amouda and Al-Qahtaniyah, in Hasakah governorate, where women's participation is better in the former as compared to the latter. The findings also show a decline in women's participation in the regions that have witnessed

**Figure 4: Women's social participation (before and during the crisis)**



Source: Population Survey 2014, and calculations of SCP. R.

heavy armed conflict, largely affecting women's role in community participation. Furthermore, the politics of identity and the spread of extremism have contributed to the exclusion of women. Many studies and testimonies bear witness to the horrors of the war with regards to women, for whom murder, mutilation, human-trafficking, enslavement (literally), and rape, as well as underage marriage, have all been fairly widespread. The fear factor, according to the survey, has played a key role in the decline in women's participation in social life. Freedom of movement is limited as manifestations of violence lead to concerns about safety, not to mention the "control of extremists who violate women's freedom through their dominating institutions, and even use force to impose lifestyles on women and on society" (Sharbaji and Koujan, 2016).

Oppression, fanaticism, and extremism have contributed to marginalizing the social role of women. Meanwhile, their role in bearing the burden of their family has increased. They work to help those who have been affected and injured by the conflict, as well as marginalized social groups such as IDPs, while at the same time clinging to their rights and refusing to be treated as refugees. "How could we become refugees? This is our land, our homes, and our lives" (Syrian League for Citizenship, 2017). Nevertheless, the suffering of women has been ongoing during the crisis, as some fanatical forces in the community and their pre-modern social manners have grown increasingly. In most of the country's regions and governorates, however, women's groups and civil associations, all of

which have contributed to civil and political work in its various forms, have formed many initiatives during the crisis. Women in these regions have had an active role in social and service activities, such as civil defense, alternative education centers, psychosocial support, etc. Women’s participation in these activities has risen to the extent that they can be considered genuine partners in the various social service fields. This is a phenomenon that many attribute to the degree of women’s awareness and interaction with institutions that contribute to the re-building of local communities across Syria (Amin, 2016).

**Social Networks and Participation Sub-index**

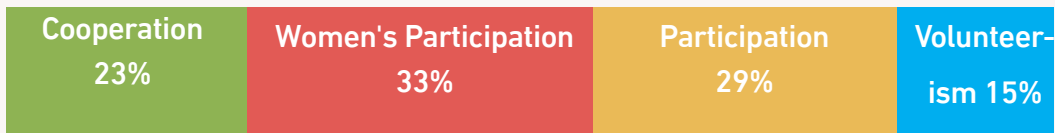
The social networks and participation sub-index was composed based on the above-mentioned four indicators (participation in decision-making, cooperation in overcoming problems, volunteerism, and women’s participation). It is the first component of the social capital index. This component was configured after the four

indicators were normalized to values between zero and one, in addition to being weighted by the population size of the studied area when calculating at the governorate and national levels.

The findings show that the social networks and participation sub-index and its contents have clearly declined during the crisis at the national level. The overall sub-index declined from 0.66 before the crisis to 0.52 during. As for its indicators, findings indicate that, to the overall decline in the networks and participation sub-index, the decline in women’s social participation contributed the most by 33 per cent, while each of the decision-making, cooperation, and volunteerism has contributed to that decline by the percentages of 29 per cent, 23 per cent, and 15 per cent respectively. This demonstrates the uneven impact of the armed conflict, and the gravity of the enduring crisis with its attending repercussions on the efficacy of social networks and participation (Figure 5).

to the overall decline in the networks and participation sub-index, the decline in women’s social participation contributed the most by 33 per cent

**Figure 5: Relative contributions to the decline in Social Networks and Participation Sub-index by its indicators**



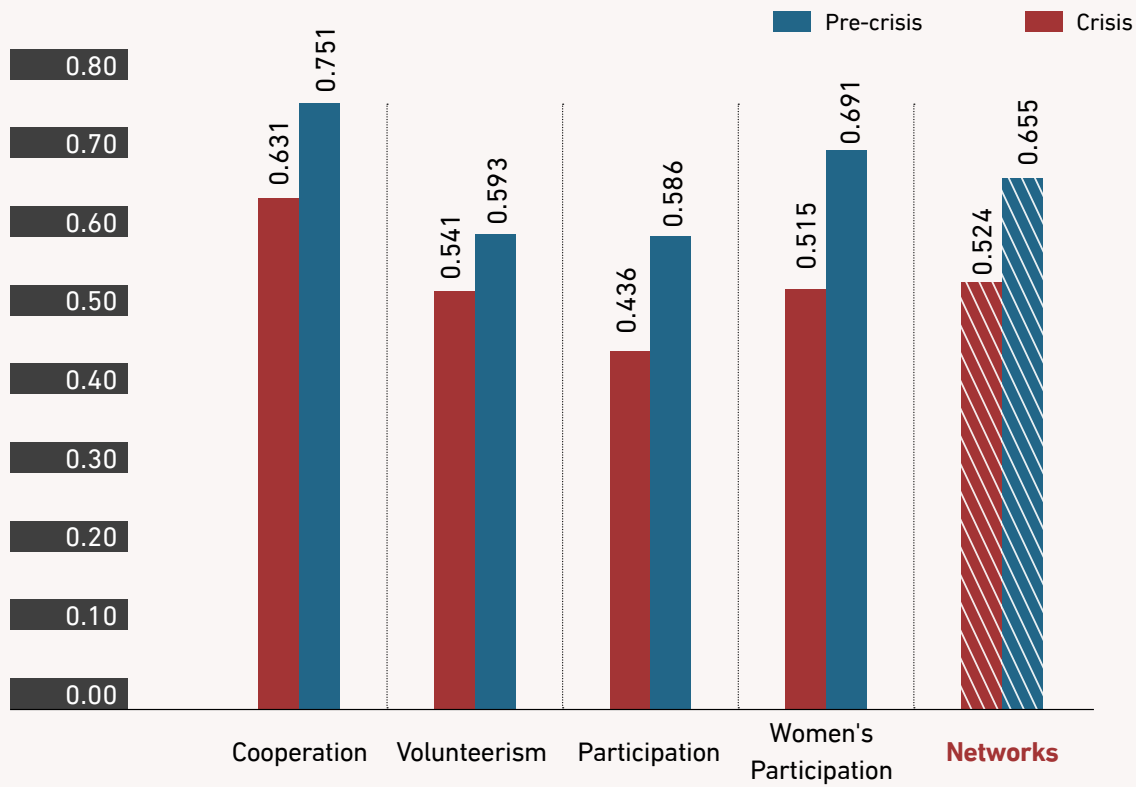
Source: Population Survey 2014, and calculations of SCPR.

Despite the decline of all indicators, the cooperation of individuals to overcome their problems has remained very high compared to the other indicators, which brings attention to the need for this type of social relationality for overcoming the devastating effects of conflict. However, the cooperation at the studied area level does not necessarily reflect cross-regional cooperation; it can sometimes be the reverse. The interaction can remain local, and, with the spread of polarization, the relations may be hostile to interaction with other regions and individuals. Herein lies the importance of highlighting the growing relationships between specific local groups or communities (vertical relationships) at the expense of social capital at the national level (horizontal relationships).

Communal fanaticism may encourage solidarity on the basis of blood-ties, the region, or religion, all at the expense of solidarity at the civil level among different citizens without exclusion. Examples of this are the findings of both al-Wa’er and al-Zahra’ in Homs, which differ in their social structure and in the circumstances they have been exposed to during the crisis. An increased cooperation within formerly rebel-held al-Wa’er, therefore, does not mean cross-regional cooperation. It is also noteworthy that participation in decision-making was the weakest-performing component, which indicates the nature of dominant political and social forces. The hegemony of subjugating powers leaves no place for participation.

the cooperation of individuals to overcome their problems has remained very high compared to the other indicators, which brings attention to the need for this type of social relationality for overcoming the devastating effects of conflict

**Figure 6: Social Networks and Participation Sub-index and its indicators at the national level (before and during the crisis)**

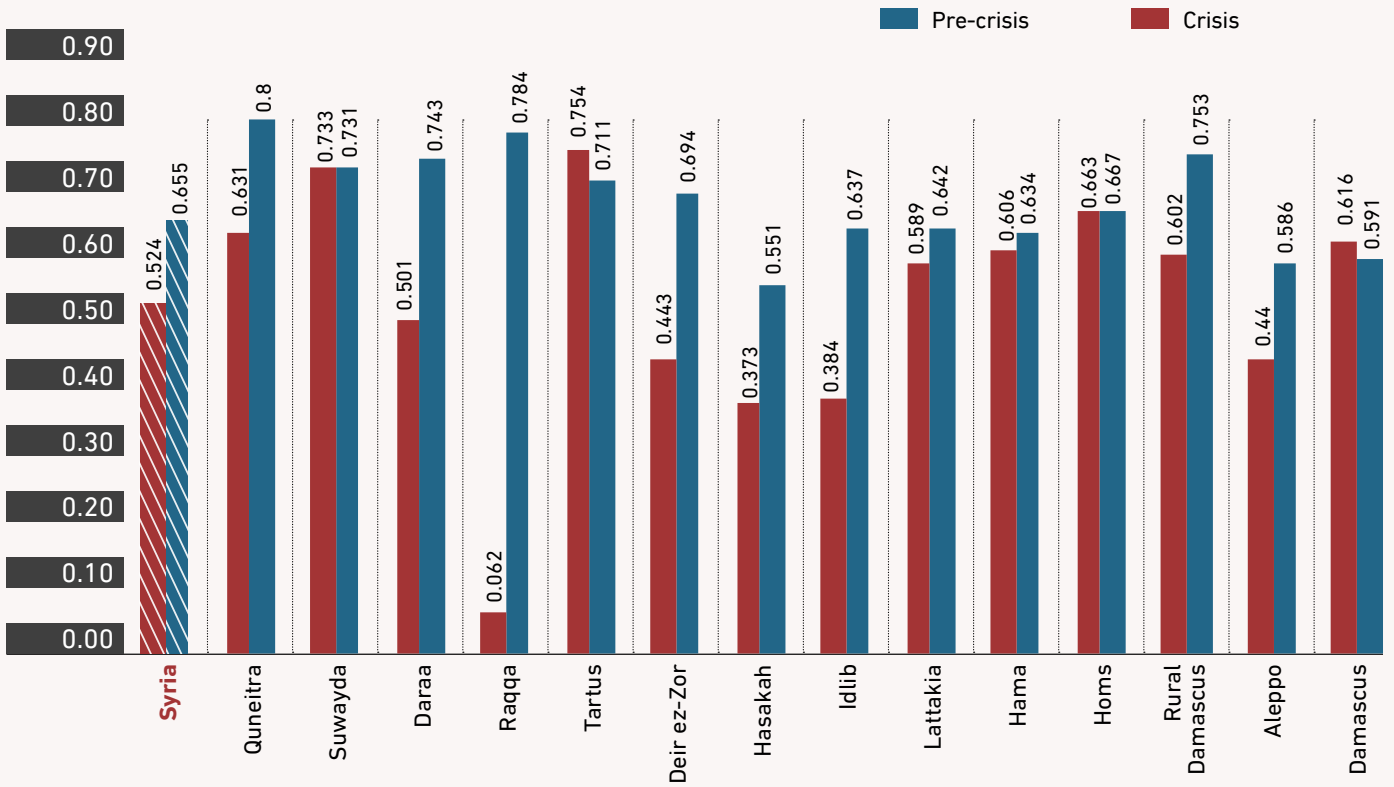


Source: Population Survey 2014, and calculations of SCPR.

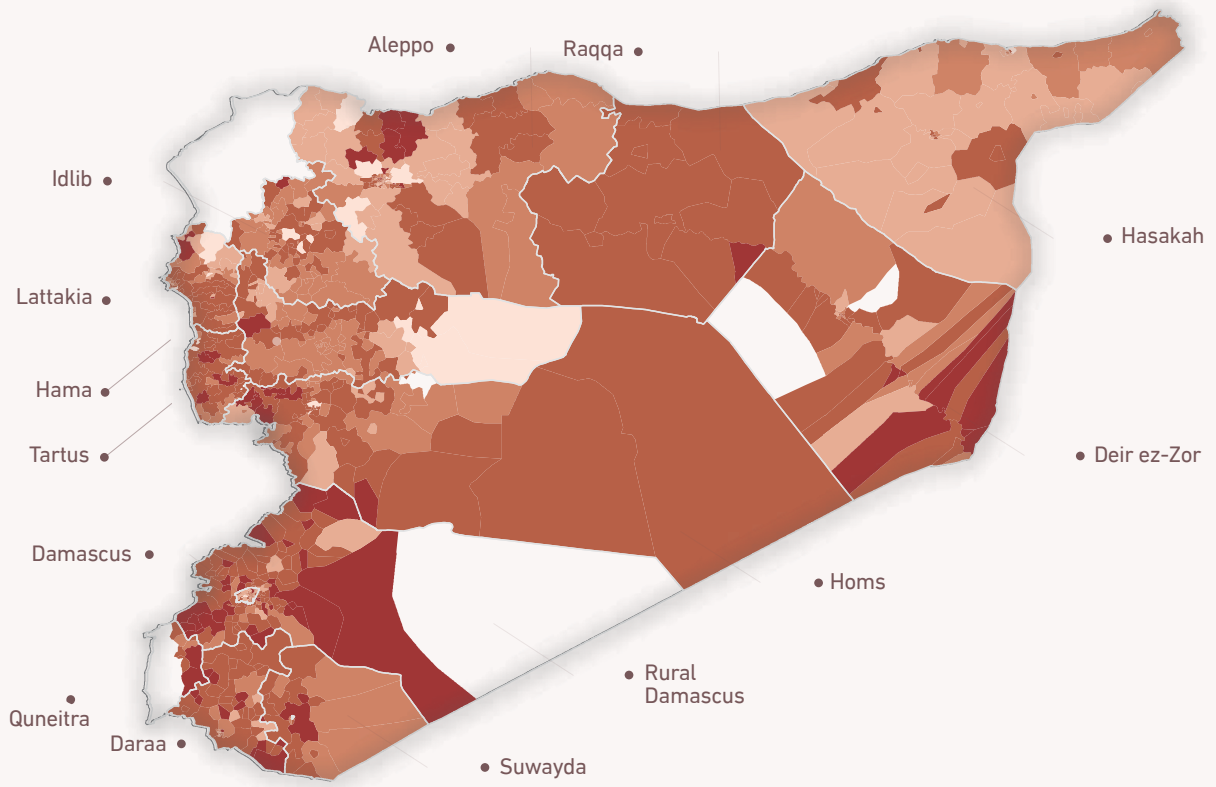
Relative dissimilarities between the governorates in the social networks and participation component were observed before the crisis, but disparities have increased severely during the crisis. This reflects the distinct nature of social relations between the governorates. They increase in the smaller governorates, which often show a greater degree of harmony among individuals. Figure 7 shows that Aleppo and Damascus are among the governorates with the smallest stock of strong and participatory relations and volunteerism, as compared to other governorates. The social networks and participation component has improved slightly in Damascus during the crisis, which can be explained by increased involvement in voluntary work, especially in aiding IDPs who have sought refuge in the capital governorate. One of the governorates that has been most damaged by the crisis with regard to social networks and

participation is Raqqa, which has been tremendously affected due to the control of the Islamic State (ISIS). This has contributed to reducing the effectiveness of social connections, relationships, and networks, and to negatively affecting people's capacity to volunteer, cooperate with each other to overcome problems, or to participate in decision-making, not to mention to allow for the social participation of all community members, male and female. Raqqa is followed by Idlib, Hasakah, and Deir ez-Zor, each of which has been subjected to large-scale displacement and military operations, which have negatively affected the social structure in their regions, causing severe deterioration in social relations (Appendix 3). On the other hand, it is noted that both Tartus and Sweida, which have not been subjected to large-scale combat operations, have seen relatively higher levels of active social networking and participation.

Figure 7: Social Networks and Participation Sub-index by governorate (before and during crisis)

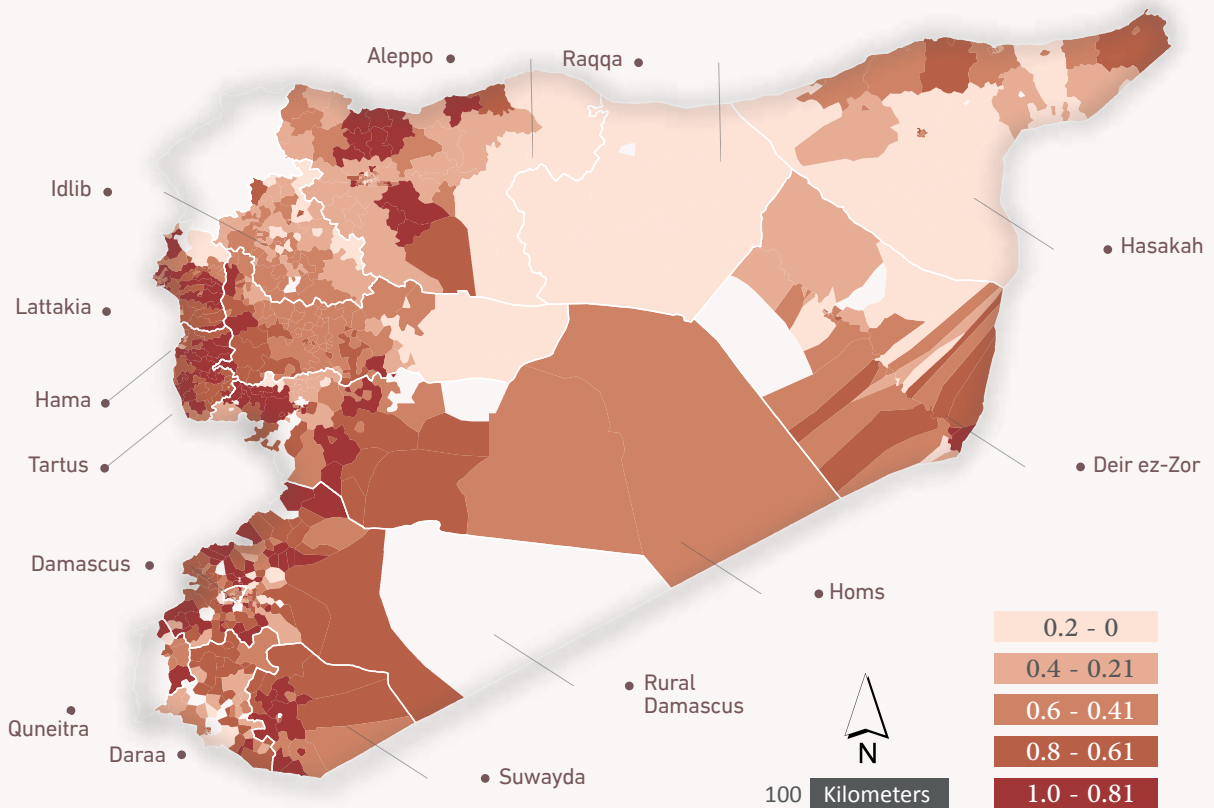


Source: Population Survey 2014, and calculations of SCPRI.



Social Networks and Participation Sub-index by governorate (before the crisis) ▲

▼ Social Networks and Participation Sub-index by governorate (during the crisis)



## II. Social Trust

Social trust is a cumulative process that is developed and acquired through reciprocal experience between individuals and communities. The more experiences and the more positive their returns, the greater and stronger the trust among society members becomes. According to Stone (2001), trust is acquired through reciprocal relationships in voluntary institutions, family, state, and even in political institutions. Delhey and Newton (2003) subdivided the concept of trust into two broad categories, considering it as property of individuals or property of societies. According to them, voluntary associations and networks bind societies together, as well as other social aspects such as internal conflicts or democratic stability. The authors argue that demographic characteristics and individual socio-psychological characteristics cannot explain trust, which is rather explained by subjective and objective measures of overall social conditions, and by the strength of informal social organizations.

Trust varies depending on time, place, and examined context. It can be part of personal characteristics like identity, or a process of accumulation that results from experiences among individuals, or be based on institutional foundations (Anheier and Kendall, 2002). The nature of the prevailing institutions and relationships can contribute to strengthening trust, as with democratic systems and civic participation (Fine, 2010).

Furthermore, social trust also assumes consistency between moral values and interests, social and political practice, and the principles of justice and citizenship. Social justice is particularly important for trust, as it relates to rights, liberties, wealth, privileges associated with power, and social conditions. Trust is also considered essential to human dignity, as is equal access to choice and opportunities (Homans, 1964).

According to Coleman (1988), social exchange enriches social capital by creating norms that

become cohesive and sustainable through the dissemination of a general social culture that contributes to shaping the structure of society and its prevailing relationships. This process in turn enhances trust and facilitates the flow of information. This applies to both horizontal and vertical relationships, as both contribute to overcoming the problems of collective action. The specific type of vertical relationships, however, such as family, tribe, or ethnicity, does not contribute to supporting trust and cooperation in society as a whole, unlike horizontal civil modes of relationality. Most modern literature considers social trust as a major component of social capital, and it uses field surveys or empirical research to measure it (Fine, 2010). For example, in his research on the criteria of social trust, Putnam employed two questions: Do you agree that "most people can be trusted" and that "most people are honest" (Putnam, 2000). Nasr and Hilal (2007) used more direct questions, dividing trust into two types: trust in individuals and trust in institutions.

This research focuses primarily on interpersonal trust, and on the factor of security that enhances social trust in general. The feeling secured component carries a problematic dimension. The more a society loses its sense of security, the more it depends on and holds fast to traditional kinship bonds and social orders, and the more it moves away from civic relationships. Traditional bonds foster a sense of security and enhance a version of social trust that is founded on basic, traditional, and patriarchal bonds (Fromm, 1994).

### Trust Among Individuals

According to the Researcher Guide that was adopted for the survey, this indicator enquires into trust among society's individuals. It is clearly defined as the trust that manifests in few judicial proceedings occurring between individuals in society, a scarcity of incidents of fraud, the tendency to create economic partnerships, and the ease with which



borrowing occurs between individuals. The indicator's explanation illustrates the main reasons for the status of trust among the society's individual members.

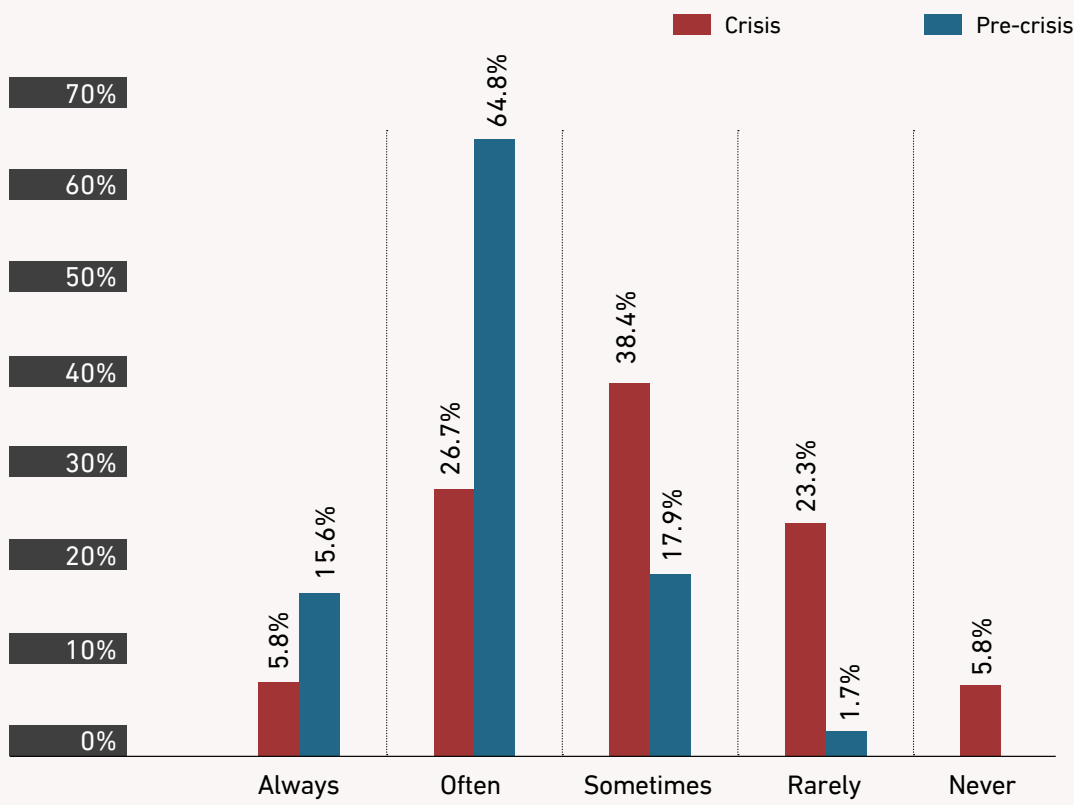
One of the most important factors that dictates the level of social trust in Syrian society is the strength of traditional bonds and relationships, such as family, clan, and tribe, in each region and governorate. These bonds are characterized by their strength, continuity, and resistance to disintegration. They have been made even stronger through economic partnerships, where business is dominated by mid-size family companies, and through resorting to socially influential figures and traditional leaders for conflict resolution. One of the most serious consequences of these bonds, however, is the

proliferation of nepotism, and the interference of familial, sectarian, tribal, and ethnic relationships into all forms of social, political, and economic life (Hinnebusch, 2012).

The survey findings indicate that the trust among individuals index has severely declined during the crisis, falling from 0.74 before to 0.51 during; this illustrates the destructive impact that the crisis has had on reciprocal trust among individuals (Figure 8). It is also noted that there is significantly more variation and difference in the levels of trust between various governorates during the crisis, compared to the pre-crisis period, as levels of mistrust have increased in the areas and regions that were besieged and destroyed. The deterioration reached its peak in Raqqa, followed by Hasakah, Idlib, and Deir ez-Zor.

**the trust among individuals index has severely declined during the crisis, falling from 0.74 before to 0.51 during**

**Figure 8: Trust among individuals (before and during the crisis)**



Source: Population Survey 2014, and calculations of SCPR.

## **The expansion of oppression and the exacerbation of intolerance led to social disintegration, occurring as a result of the subjugating powers' use of killing, intimidation, siege, and the monopolization of resources and services. Massive destruction led to an increase in demand for basic needs, without the possibility of forming community organizations that represent public interests, because of widespread intimidation and exploitation**

Among the reasons for mistrust, as noted in the survey, are the influx of a large number of newcomers to a region, the spread of many negative social phenomena such as theft and kidnapping, wide political polarization, and the role of militarism. A number of respondents pointed out that levels of trust have declined as a result of "the arrival of huge new populations" in some neighborhoods of Lattakia, and "fear and hesitation to trust others due to the prevailing conditions" in a number of Idlib regions. Even the governorates that cite relatively high levels of trust among individuals, such as Tartus, Damascus, Lattakia, and Hama, witnessed a deterioration in this indicator compared to pre-crisis conditions, despite being relatively safe areas. Moreover, trust among individuals varied considerably within each governorate, even those which did not witness major hostilities such as Tartus and Sweida.

The type of relationships in each governorate reflects this change in the level of interpersonal trust. Table 2 above, which illustrates the authority figures that are resorted to by individuals in order to overcome their problems, helps to identify influential local actors. Various security forces, prominent community figures, heads of families, clerics and sheikhs play a major role in solving problems, while the judiciary ranked low, indicating the absence of the rule of law or mistrust of formal judiciary.

The expansion of oppression and the exacerbation of intolerance led to social disintegration, occurring as a result of the subjugating powers' use of killing, intimidation, siege, and the monopolization of resources and services. Massive destruction led to an increase in demand for basic needs, without the possibility of forming community organizations

that represent public interests, because of widespread intimidation and exploitation. The spread of communal fanaticism, the politicization of humanitarian aid, and forced displacement have all weakened the bonds of trust among individuals and incited the emergence of conflict-related opportunistic groups that throw their power around with the use of weaponry and monopolization. All of this has undermined values related to altruism and solidarity.

### **Feeling Secured**

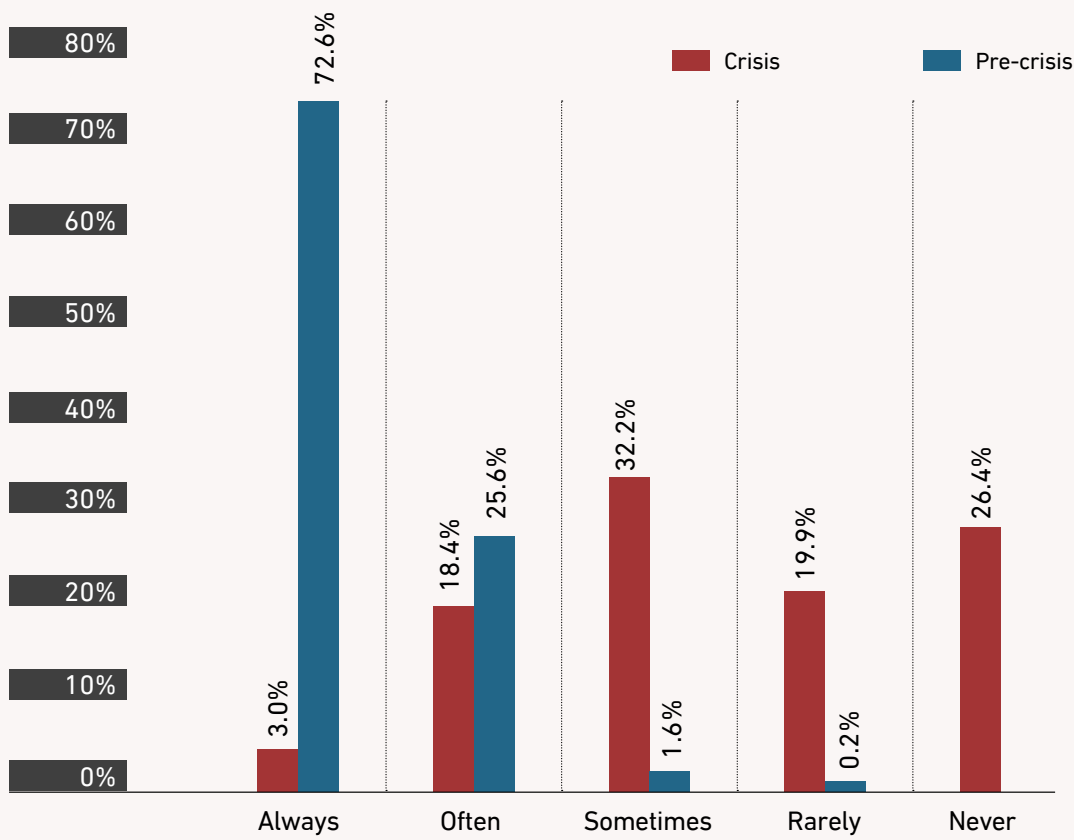
Individuals and communities experience a specific sense of insecurity as a result of perceived or actual risks, which is connected to how aware they are of these risks. The degree of sensitivity of societies to the sense of security varies depending on the degree and types of risks, as well as a range of economic, social, and political factors in every society. Although a sense of security is considered one of the factors that enhances social trust among individuals and plays a role in facilitating and increasing the efficacy of social networks, relationships, and bonds, it has been also been associated with fear by social psychological analysis, especially in communities living under the rule of oppressive regimes. Fear leads individuals to return to primary kinship bonds, such as the family or tribe, and to rely on friends, acquaintances, and intimate relations to serve as a source of security, as opposed to strangers or other communities. Therefore, the rise in the security index actually contributes to social trust at the community level, but not necessarily at the macro level. The concept of security is fundamentally related to the prevalence of crime in its various forms. The higher the levels of crime in a country, the greater the sense of danger and insecurity (Fromm, 2001).

According to the Researcher Guide that was adopted for the Population Survey, the concept of security with which this research is concerned is related to freedom from incidents such as killing, theft, violence, and kidnapping, in addition to the ability to move freely. The indicator's explanation illustrates the main reasons for deterioration or improvement in society's security status.

The findings indicate that the overall national feeling secured indicator has dropped significantly from 0.93 before the crisis to 0.38 during (Figure 9). The prevalent sense of insecurity is attributed to many causes, including bombings, killings, destruction, forced displacement, poverty, repressive practices, a lack of humanitarian protection, corruption, and the inefficiency of official institutions. The findings also show that the governorates which are most subjected to insecurity are, respectively, Raqqa, Aleppo, Hasakah, Deir ez-Zor, and Idlib. On the other hand, the governorates that have not been exposed to a great deal of fighting or destruction are characterized by a higher sense of security, despite a significant decline when compared to the pre-crisis rates.

**the overall national feeling secured indicator has dropped significantly from 0.93 before the crisis to 0.38 during**

**Figure 9: Feeling secured (before and during the crisis)**



Source: Population Survey 2014, and calculations of SCPR.

The survey observed the rise of negative phenomena in society before and during the crisis, such as killing, kidnapping, theft, smuggling, royalties, and monopoly by "war merchants" who have taken advantage of internal conditions under sieges imposed by conflicting parties (Table 3), contributing to the massive collapse of the security index during the crisis. The findings indicate that most of the examined regions suffer from these phenomena.

**Table 3: A comparison of the prevalence of negative social phenomena before and during the crisis by governorate (scale from 0 to 10 where 0 indicates minimal prevalence of the phenomenon)**

	Murder		Kidnap		Theft		Smuggling		Royalties		Monopoly	
	before	during	before	during	before	during	before	during	before	during	before	during
<b>Damascus</b>	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.5	0.5	2.3	0.3	0.9	0.0	0.1	0.7	2.4
<b>Aleppo</b>	0.0	2.4	0.0	2.5	0.2	3.9	0.1	1.8	0.1	1.2	0.6	3.6
<b>Rural Damascus</b>	0.0	1.5	0.0	1.9	0.4	3.6	0.4	1.8	0.0	0.9	0.2	2.5
<b>Homs</b>	0.3	5.2	0.1	3.0	0.7	3.9	1.5	2.1	0.0	1.1	0.9	3.6
<b>Hama</b>	0.3	1.9	0.0	2.1	1.1	3.3	0.6	2.1	0.4	1.4	1.0	3.7
<b>Latakia</b>	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.4	2.0	0.1	0.1	0.4	1.5	0.6	3.3
<b>Idlib</b>	0.1	2.0	0.0	2.0	0.7	2.8	0.7	3.6	0.0	1.0	0.8	4.1
<b>Hasakah</b>	0.1	1.6	0.0	2.0	0.9	3.7	1.3	5.0	0.0	0.9	0.7	4.2
<b>Deir ez-Zor</b>	0.3	1.8	0.0	1.1	0.5	2.6	0.5	3.2	0.1	1.0	0.5	3.4
<b>Tartus</b>	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.4	0.8	2.4	1.2	1.0	0.0	0.1	1.3	4.3
<b>Raqqa</b>	0.7	2.3	0.0	1.5	0.6	3.3	0.3	3.2	0.0	2.7	0.5	2.5
<b>Daraa</b>	0.2	1.7	0.1	1.7	1.0	2.8	0.3	1.6	0.1	0.5	1.4	3.6
<b>Sweida</b>	0.0	0.4	0.0	1.1	0.7	1.8	0.3	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.7	2.7
<b>Quneitra</b>	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.9	1.0	2.6	1.2	1.8	0.5	2.0	0.5	2.8
<b>Syria</b>	0.1	1.9	0.0	1.8	0.6	3.2	0.5	2.0	0.1	1.0	0.7	3.3

Source: Population Survey 2014, and calculations of SCPR.

Other factors have also contributed significantly to this severe decline in the sense of security, such as the increased hostilities, systematic shelling, arbitrary detention, and destruction of entire cities, in addition to the exploitation of children and trafficking of women.

### **Social Trust Sub-index**

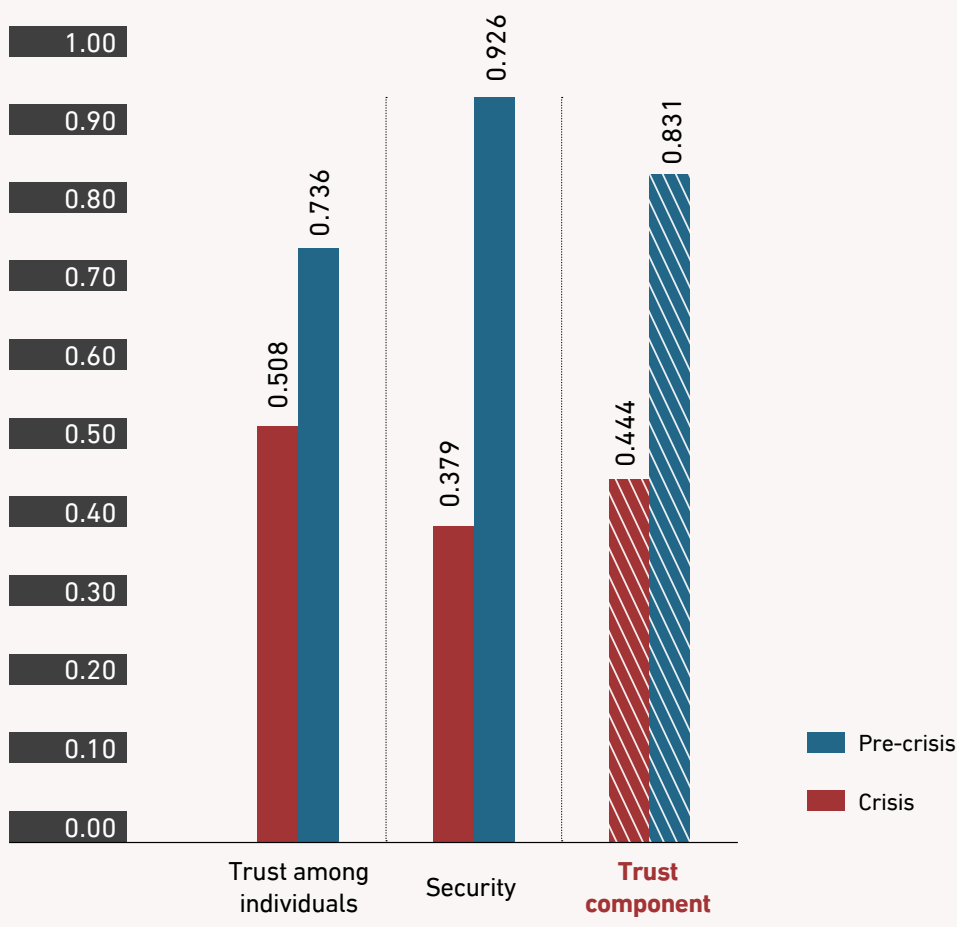
The social trust sub-index was composed based on the two above mentioned indicators (trust among individuals and feeling secured).

It is the second component of the social capital index SCI. This component was configured after the two indicators were normalized to values between zero and one, in addition to being weighted by population size of the studied area when aggregating at the governorate and national levels.

The findings indicate a significant decline in the social trust component in Syria during the crisis. Compared to the pre-crisis period, this index dropped by around 47 per cent to reach

a low of 0.44. This deterioration in the trust sub-index has resulted first from a drop in the feeling secured, which witnessed a decline at the national level that reached around 59 per cent, arriving at less than 0.38, which is classified as poor. Secondly, this component has also been negatively affected by an approximately 31 per cent decrease in trust among individuals, which can be explained by armed conflict and difficult living conditions, as well as by extreme polarization in society caused by the crisis (Figure 10).

**Figure 10: Social Trust Sub-index and its indicators at the national level (before and during the crisis)**

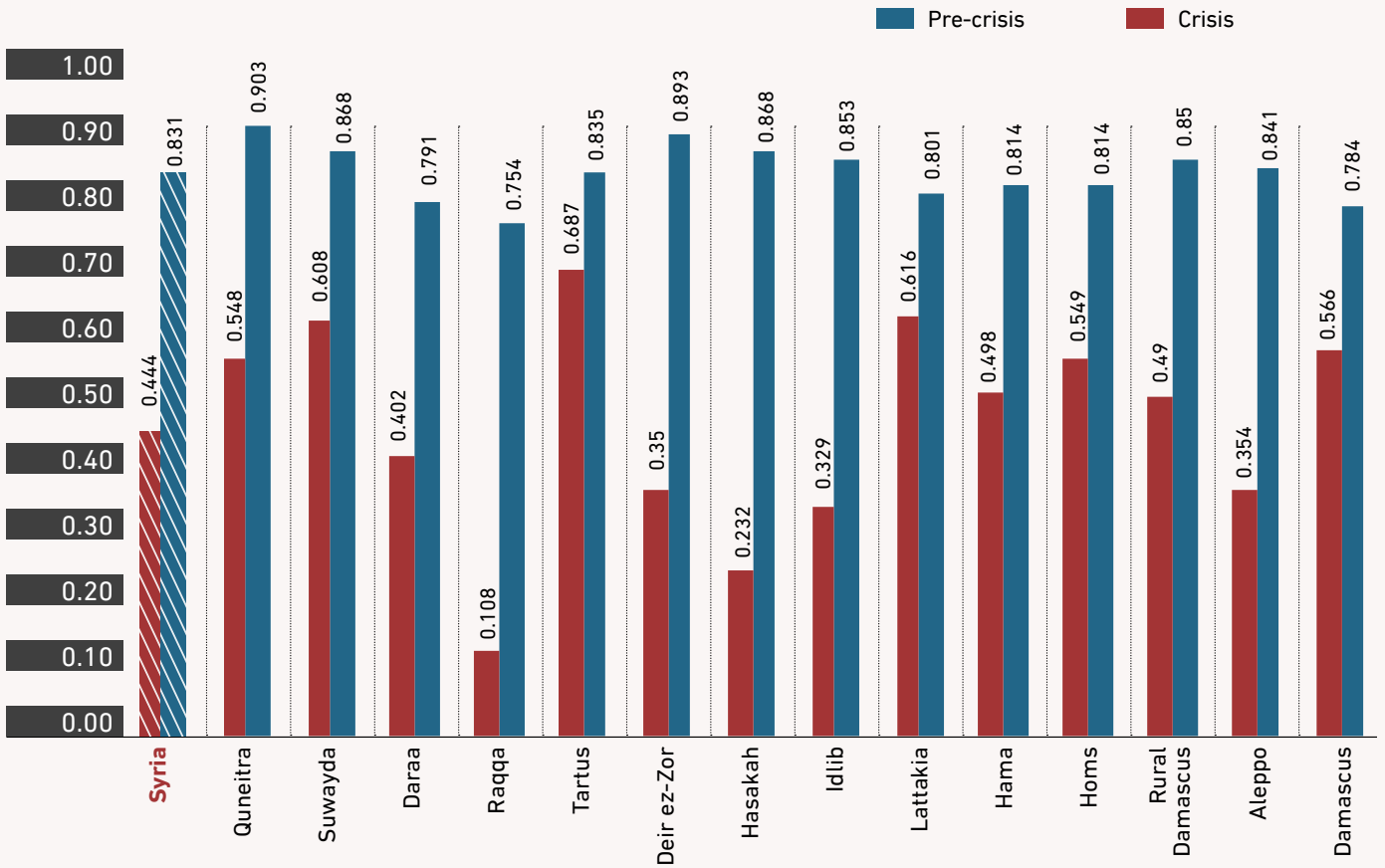


Source: Population Survey 2014, and calculations of SCP. R.

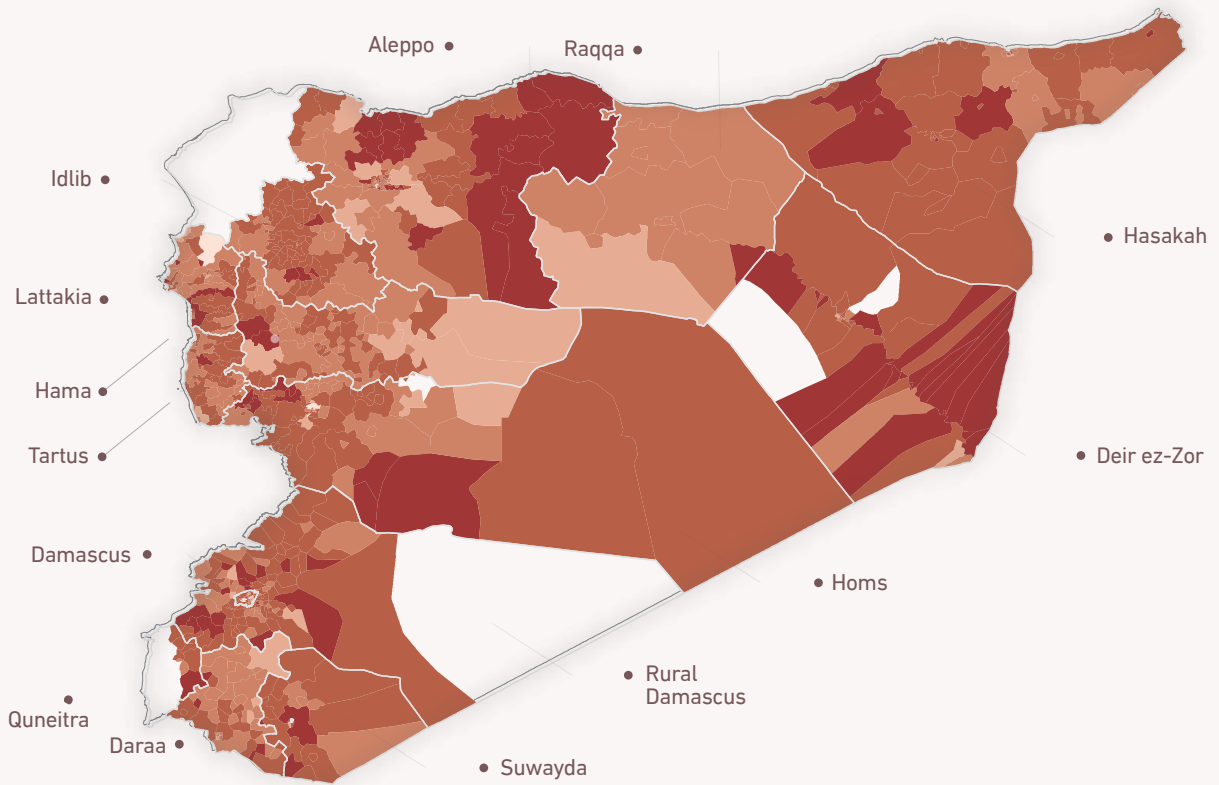
The findings show a significant variation between different governorates in the level of social trust, especially during the crisis. In this period, fanatical discourse and extreme polarization have spread, reinforcing divisions, insecurity, and mistrust among individuals. Among the regions where trust has been most dramatically compromised are areas of conflict, which have also experienced polarization and violence. The highest decline in the social trust component was found in Raqqa, followed by Hasakah, Idlib, Deir ez-Zor, and Aleppo (Figure 11). All governorates witnessed a significant deterioration in social trust, but the least affected were Tartus and Sweida, where the drop did not exceed 18 per cent (Appendix 4).

**The findings indicate a significant decline in the social trust component in Syria during the crisis, this index dropped by around 47 per cent**

Figure 11: Social Trust Sub-index by governorate (before and during the crisis)

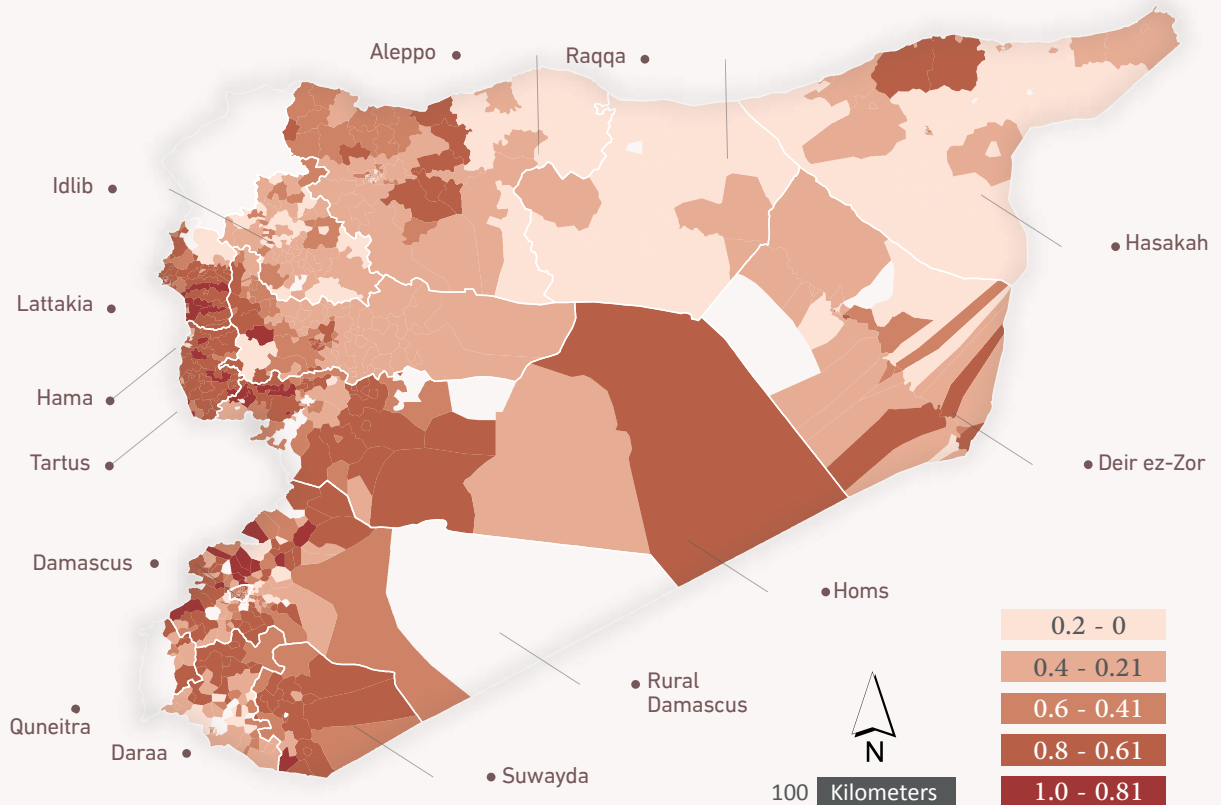


Source: Population Survey 2014, and calculations of SCPRI.



Social Trust Sub-index by governorate (before the crisis) ▲

▼ Social Trust Sub-index by governorate (during the crisis)



### III. Shared Values and Attitudes

A society may seem cohesive when there are no forces trying to radically change the structure of authority and powers' distribution, but this cohesion is not necessarily a healthy one. Social cohesion is based on the strength of relations within communities and between individuals, harmony in their goals and visions, and agreement on common public interests. In its most primitive form, loyalty to the community promotes fear of enemies and dangers. This loyalty has developed, naturally or deliberately, to form coalitions and alliances that are today called nations. In the past, loyalty had been to the tribe and its leader; but, at a later stage, due to wars and competing interests, societies began to be grouped together as loyalists and followers to a given regime or state authority. Loyalists are those who support the regime, whereas followers adhere to it because of fear and concern for their interests and survival; thus, fear has replaced solidarity with the community. There are other types of loyalties that lead to the apparent cohesion of society, such as regional, ethnic, religious, or sectarian ones, but these do not necessarily depart from traditional frameworks that impede societal development (Russell, 2009).

In contemporary societies, the concept of citizenship, which equates individuals in their rights and duties, has evolved within representative and democratic regimes that are granted legitimacy by the people, and are based on social participation as well as the separation of powers, ensuring not to aggravate authority. A human rights charter was internationally agreed upon, followed by the agreement on social, economic, and cultural rights that should be accorded to all people. Transnational movements have emerged all over the world to defend these rights, thus enhancing solidarity, public liberties, and common interests. However, this normative framework has been confronted by a development of parallel national and international subjugation political and economic powers, which have entrenched hegemony, exploitation, and marginalization through new means.

Contemporary Syrian culture is the result of various interacting civilizations that flourished throughout history. It is characterized by three main environments: Bedouin, rural, and urban. These vary in their cultural and moral heritage, enriching social capital in terms of relationships, values, and norms that promote the values of solidarity, cooperation, and altruism. Syrian society is also characterized by multiple identities and affiliations that affect the values and customs of each of its communities. Thus, groups vary ideologically, religiously, ethnically, or regionally. These variations determine the level of agreement on shared collective visions, depending on the group to which an individual belongs, or the adopted faith or ideology (Barakat, 1984).

Given the complexity of relationships among individuals and communities, and the diversification of cultures, values, and attitudes, the study of social capital through a number of indicators is difficult and carries the risks of biases and misinformation. In this context, the research does not attempt to dissect the affiliations or cultures which characterize Syrian society, and which have become increasingly divided during the crisis. Rather, it attempts to deduce the degree of agreement on shared visions and values among individuals and communities at the local, regional, or national level. The level of contradiction between agreeing and not agreeing on regional and general visions reflects, in part, the extent to which the community is either divided or cohesive and integrated. This research considers society's view of women's status as a fundamental factor that explains and reflects many of society's prevailing values.

This dimension includes values and criteria that relate to the degree to which the majority of individuals and groups in each studied area are in agreement about a collective vision for the future of the area, a collective vision for the future of Syria, and the status of women in society.



The results indicate that the population's level of agreement on a unified vision for the future of their areas declined from 0.69 before the crisis to 0.53 during

### Agreeing on a Vision for the Area

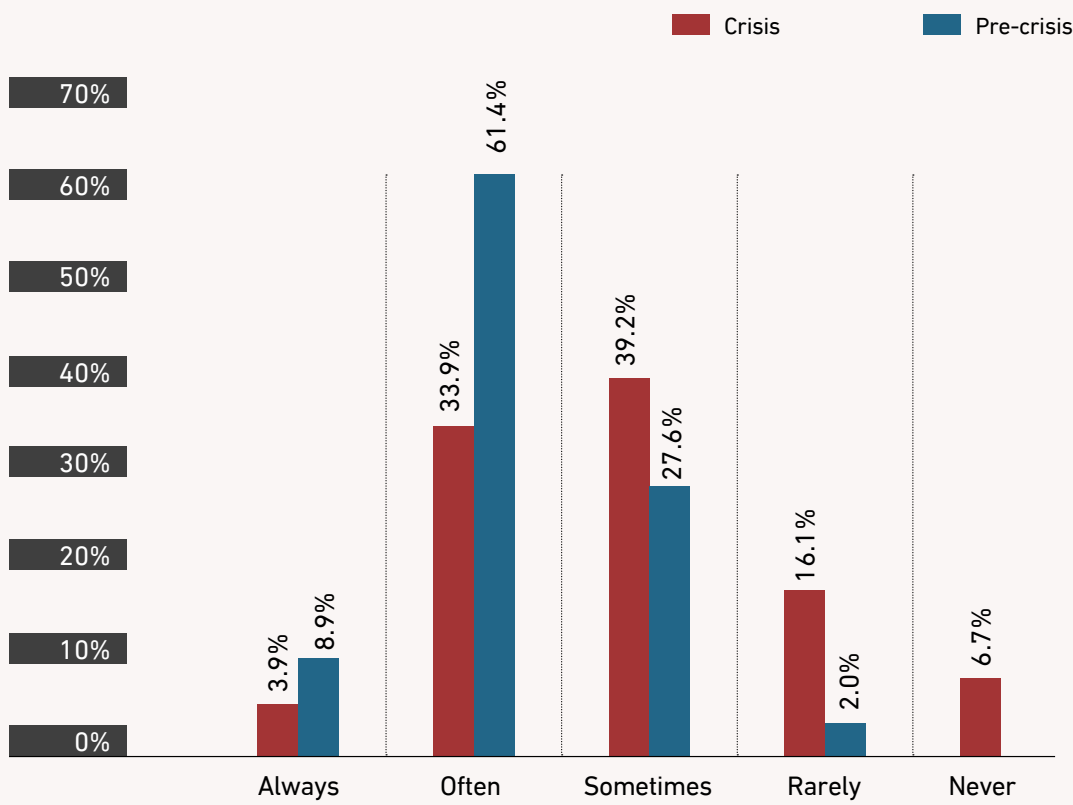
According to the survey, a vision at the area level means that there is a perceived and desired future for the studied area, in either a written or implicit form. One example of such a vision is that the area will become industrially specialized, and will enjoy education and health services available to all, as well as social solidarity between all of its inhabitants. The indicator's explanation illustrates the main reasons for either disagreement about or the complete inexistence of a future vision.

The indicators of agreement or disagreement between individuals about the future of their area reveal the nature of prevailing general values and norms, and the degree of social cohesion and integration surrounding the

issue of common goals. The preferences, expectations, and commitments of individuals are integrated into their outlooks on the future of their area, which help understand the structure of social capital as well as the cultural and knowledge foundations of society.

The results indicate that the population's level of agreement on a unified vision for the future of their areas declined from 0.69 before the crisis to 0.53 during. This decline included all governorates except Damascus (Figure 12). These findings are indicative of upheaval deterioration in social cohesion at the local level during the crisis, which is attributed to extreme polarization, and to an overall decline in living standards, health, education, and other economic and social indicators.

Figure 12: Agreeing on a vision for the area (before and during the crisis)



Source: Population Survey 2014, and calculations of SCP. R.

There is considerable variation between governorates in the degree of agreement among the population about the future of their area; the area agreement indicator increased from 0.64 to 0.67 in Damascus, but fell sharply from 0.73 to 0.58 in Aleppo, indicating the way in which different circumstances and experiences have characterized these two cities during the crisis. Aleppo has been subject to difficult conditions due to war, such as military offensives mounted by various parties, the systematic looting of commercial and industrial zones—not to mention residential areas. Additionally, the city was divided by dominant powers, and this accompanied besiegement and destruction. A number of respondents from Aleppo have pointed out the “strong differences of opinion among individuals within a single area as a result of the conflict and the prolonged state of crisis.” Agreement among the population on a single future vision for their area deteriorated significantly in Raqqqa, Idlib, Deir ez-Zor, and Hasakah where many respondents from its areas pointed out that “the crisis has exacerbated the divergence of visions, as a result of political and ethnic disputes.” The level of general agreement in the remaining areas was not good either, with most communities losing consensus on a future vision for their areas.

The lack of agreement about a vision for the future in a given area is attributed to a number of factors, including chaos, disagreements on politics, the absence of elected councils to express public opinions, polarization in some communities, the dominance of subjugating powers over the areas, and finally disagreements on the required solutions to end the crisis. On the other hand, the points of agreement among the population of each area mainly revolve around improving infrastructure, living conditions, and services; supporting the agricultural and industrial sectors; restoring security; and the necessity of ending the crisis. For example, respondents in some areas of Idlib pointed to “the existence of general consensus among individuals in the society about how their areas should be developed.”

### Agreeing on a Vision at the National Level

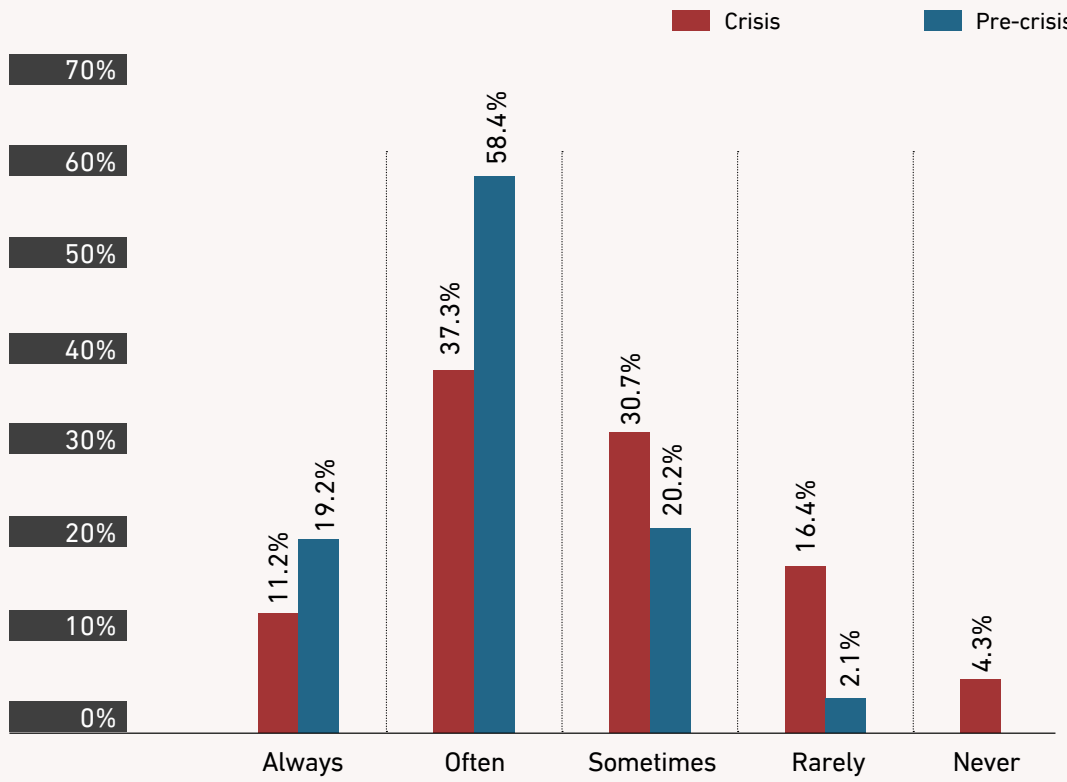
A vision at the national level means that there is a perceived and desired future for Syria, in either a written or implicit form. One example of such a vision is how the area’s individuals will generally seek for Syria to move into the future in terms of its regional position, political participation, social harmony and solidarity, and welfare and development. The indicator’s explanation illustrates the main reasons for not agreeing to such a vision.

The results reflect the extent to which the country has become fragmented, as the national agreement indicator declined from 0.74 before the crisis to 0.58 during. This fragmentation is manifested by several contradicting factors, from the model and form of governance, to national geography, to the role of the state and international relations (Figure 13). The armed conflict has led to the emergence of different types of powers that are militarized and erect fanaticism and hatred. Despite disagreeing on future projects, ranging from caliphates to autocracies, these powers all agree on excluding civilians and rejecting democracy. Civil forces that seek justice, freedom, equal opportunities, and intellectual and cultural openness remain the weaker party. Regional and international forces have played a crucial role in promoting different futures for Syria, resulting in society’s further scattering and fragmenting. The findings also show wide disparities between governorates, which have deepened during the crisis. In Damascus, agreement has risen during the crisis from 0.70 to 0.76, as the repercussions of the crisis have “unified the vision of the area’s population in favor of a stable and secure country,” as reported from a neighborhood in Damascus. On the other hand, agreement has dropped in all other governorates, especially in Idlib, Hasakah, Deir ez-Zor, Raqqqa, and Rural Damascus. These are the regions that suffered from the presence of opposing loyalties and have been subjected to “extreme polarization due to political disagreements,” as noted in some areas in Hasakah, not to mention the intensity of hostilities.

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**Different Syrian regions have been subject to different political, economic, and social systems. Subjugating powers have sabotaged shared values either directly, by force, or indirectly, through the promotion of cultural forms that contribute to disintegration, alienation from the other, and resignation to submission**

Figure 13: Agreeing on a vision for Syria (before and during the crisis)



Source: Population Survey 2014, and calculations of SCPR.

Different Syrian regions have been subject to different political, economic, and social systems. Subjugating powers have sabotaged shared values either directly, by force, or indirectly, through the promotion of cultural forms that contribute to disintegration, alienation from the other, and resignation to submission. Addressing these imbalances requires extraordinary efforts to recover social dialogue and create an environment that respects human life and personality. Only in this way would society be able to learn how to overcome the impact of the destruction it has faced, and return to envisioning a better future.

### Women's Status in Society

Respect and appreciation of women reflect many social values regarding reciprocal respect, appreciation and respect for human dignity, and rejection of social subjugation

and oppression, discriminatory, and exclusionary values. This indicator was therefore adopted as one of the shared values and attitudes indicators.

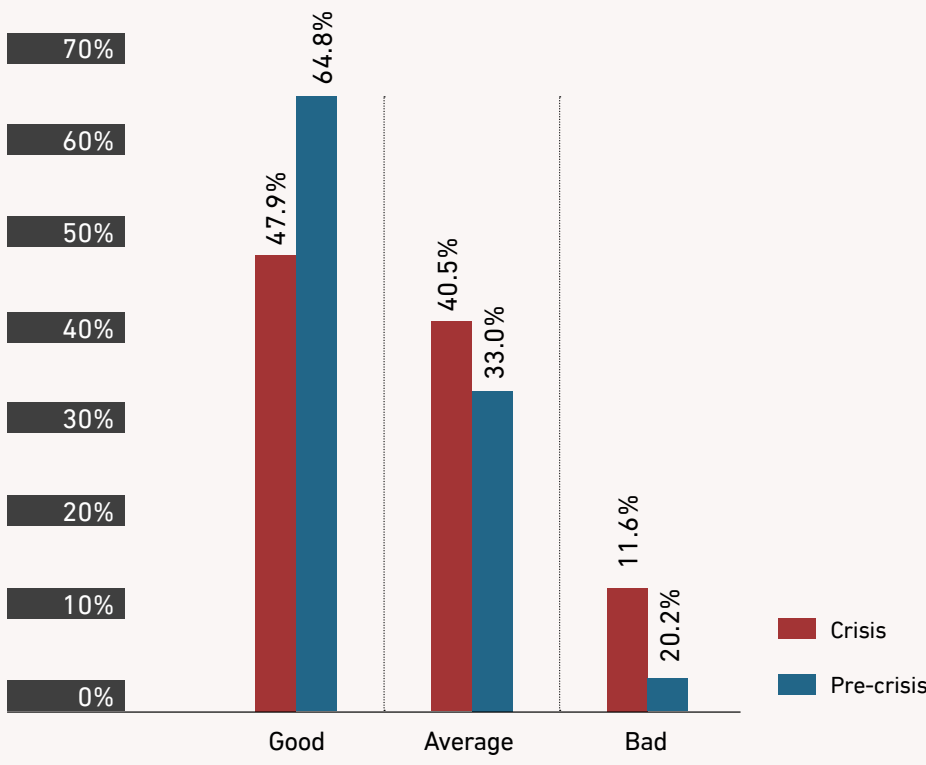
Institutions, networks, and values in Syria have usually been dominated by a male character, despite relative improvements for women in the pre-crisis period on the levels of education, health, and living conditions. During that time, Syrian society witnessed a contradiction between support for empowering women and attitudes for excluding and marginalizing them. The narrow public realm and the lack of public freedoms played a key role in slow improvement and sometimes regression regarding the role of women, as in their decreased participation in economic activity between 2001 and 2010. The findings of the survey demonstrate the negative impact of

the crisis on women, as the status of women indicator declined from 0.81 before the crisis to 0.68 during it (Figure 14). During the crisis, women have been subjected to detention, kidnapping, rape, labor in harsh conditions, and also increased economic responsibility—especially in the case of displaced families or widows. In addition, women have been affected by more frequent incidents of underage marriage, customary marriage, trafficking, and other forms of exploitation. All of this is a result of “deteriorating moral conditions and a poor security situation,” as expressed in some neighborhoods of Aleppo, in addition to the fact that the “crisis is consolidating patriarchy,” as reported by one respondent in Idlib. Moreover, women have been shown mainly as victims of war instead of focusing also on their effective role in society during and after the conflict.

The results at the governorate level indicate that Raqqa has witnessed the highest level of deterioration in women’s status in society, followed by Homs, Deir ez-Zor, and then Idlib. On the other hand, the highest rated status of women was recorded in Tartus.

women have been subjected to detention, kidnapping, rape, labor in harsh conditions, and also increased economic responsibility—especially in the case of displaced families or widows. In addition, women have been affected by more frequent incidents of underage marriage, customary marriage, trafficking, and other forms of exploitation.

**Figure 14: Status of women in society (before and during the crisis)**

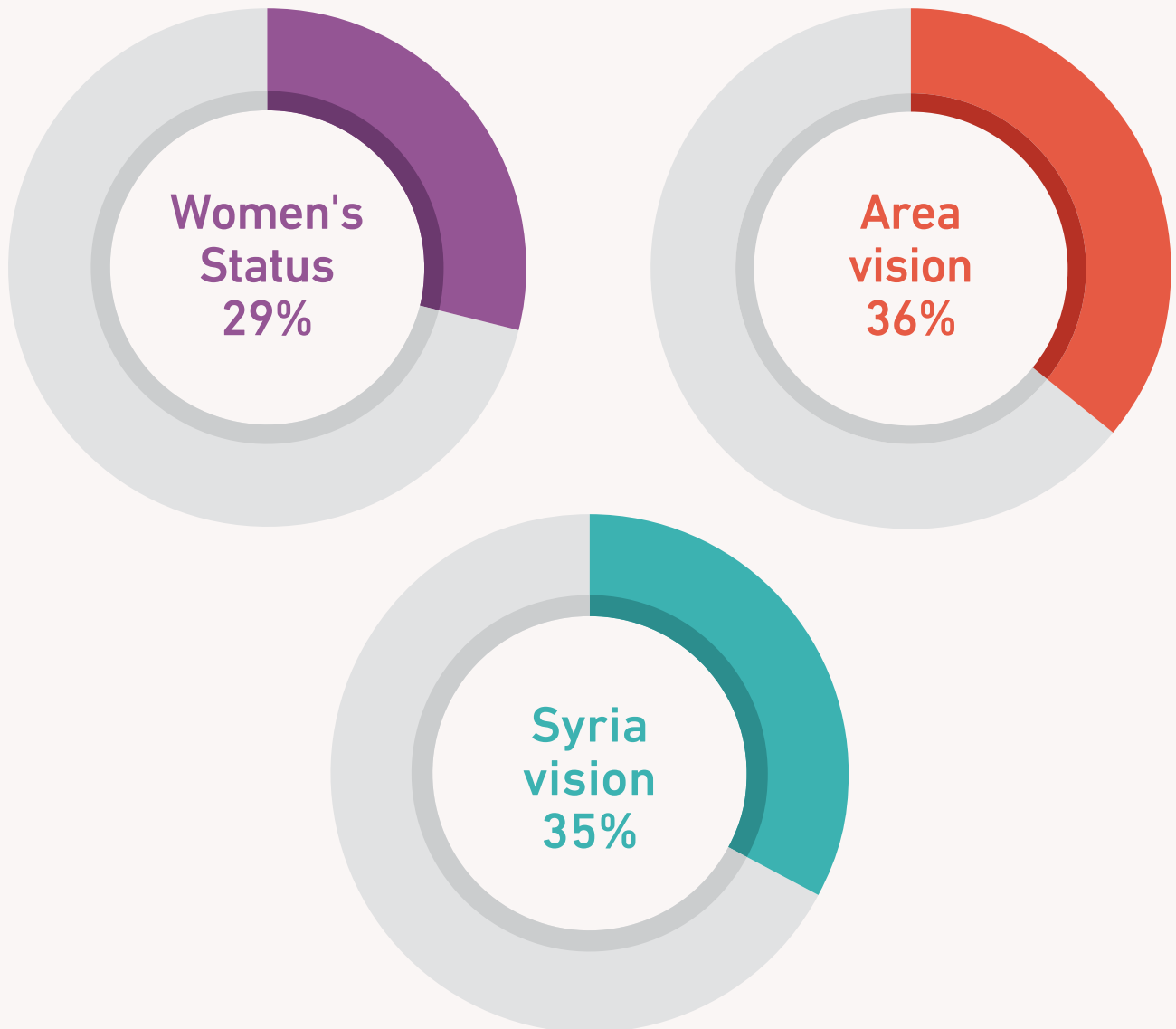


Source: Population Survey 2014, and calculations of SCPR.

**Shared Values and Attitudes Sub-index**

The shared values and attitudes sub-index was composed based on the three aforementioned indicators (agreeing on a vision for the region, agreeing on a vision for Syria, the status of women in society). It is the third component of the social capital index. This component was constructed after the stated indicators were standardized to values between zero and one, in addition to being weighted according to the population size of each studied area when calculating at the governorate and national levels.

Figure 15: Relative contributions to the decline in Shared Values and Attitudes Sub-index by its indicators



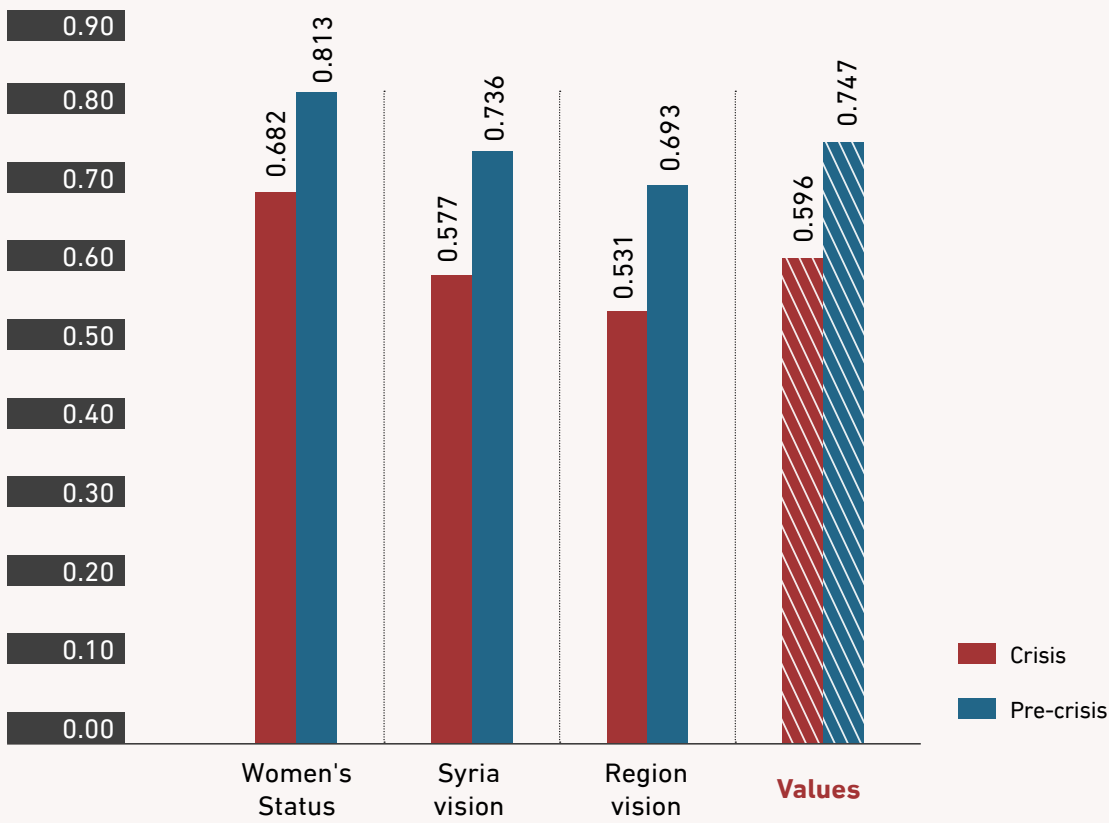
Source: Population Survey 2014, and calculations of SCP. R.

**The findings demonstrate a significant decline in the values and attitudes sub-index in Syria during the crisis, decreasing by about 20 per cent**

The findings demonstrate a significant decline in the values and attitudes sub-index in Syria during the crisis, decreasing by about 20 per cent to reach 0.6 compared to 0.75 in the pre-crisis period (Figure 16). This decline resulted from a clear drop in the indicators agreement on the future of the area and agreement on the future of Syria, which contributed to the decline by 36 per cent and 35 per cent respectively, while a deterioration in the status of women in society contributed to the decline in the sub-index by 29 per cent (Figure 15). This reflects the intensification of disagreements between society members regarding their visions for the area and the country, which can be attributed to the ongoing crisis, armed conflict, multiple subjugating powers, and conflicting ideological trends. The results also show a decline in the status of women during the crisis, which signals the exploitation, suppression, and harsh living conditions that women are experiencing.

**The findings demonstrate a significant decline in the values and attitudes sub-index in Syria during the crisis, decreasing by about 20 per cent to reach 0.6 compared to 0.75 in the pre-crisis period**

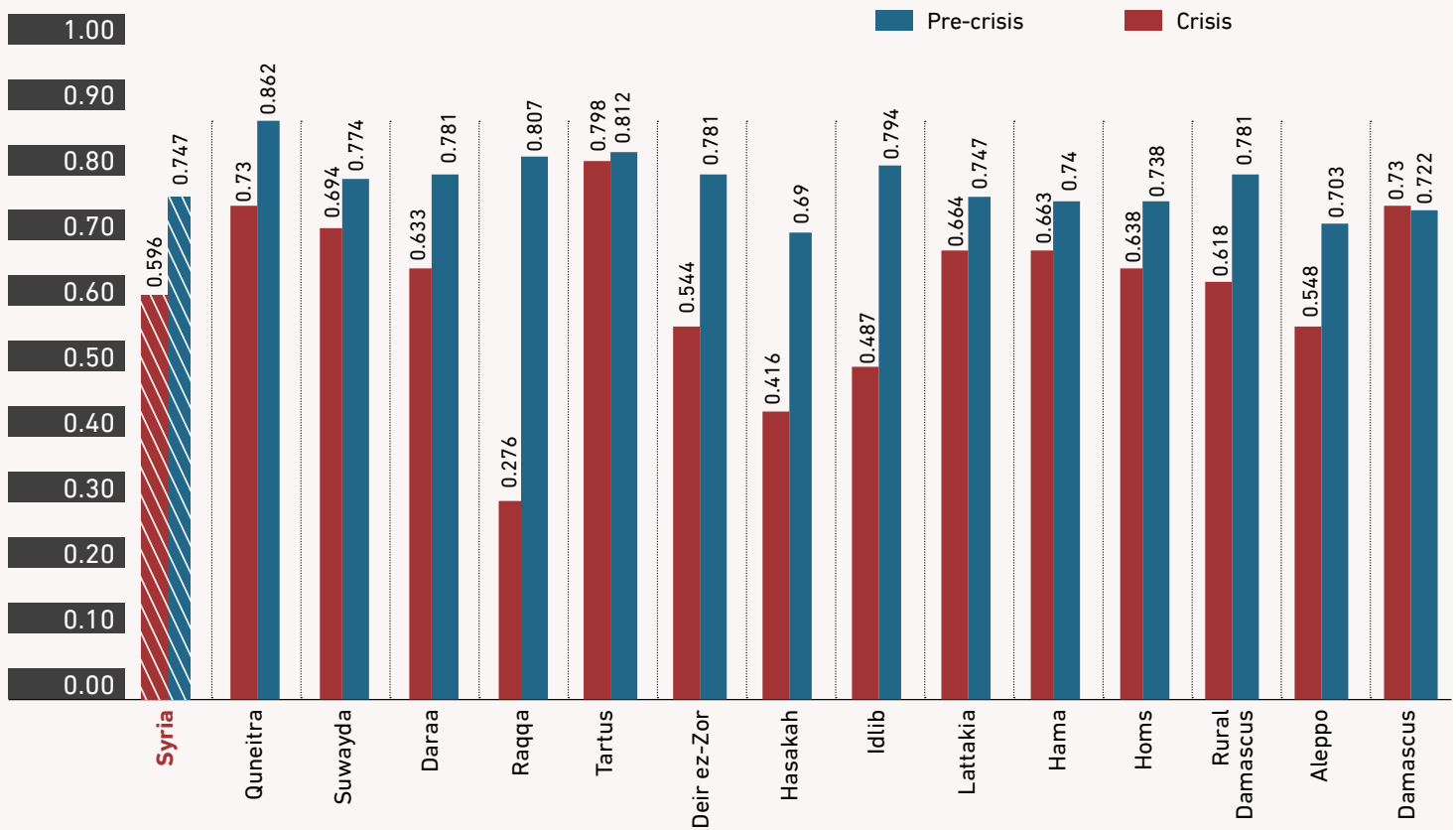
**Figure 16: Shared Values and Attitudes Sub-index and its indicators on the national level (before and during the crisis)**



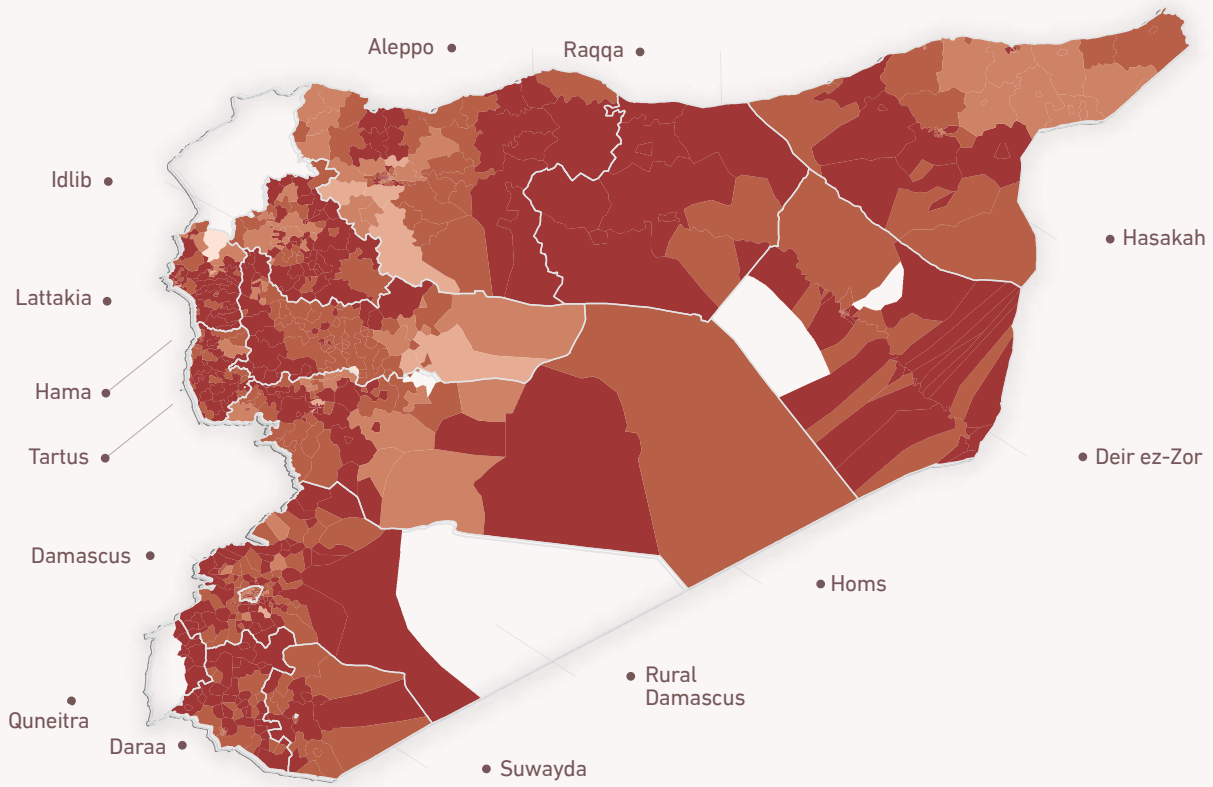
Source: Population Survey 2014, and calculations of SCP. R.

These findings indicate a significant increase in differences between Syrian governorates during the crisis in terms of shared values and attitudes. This is due to the fact that polarization disproportionately affects individuals' visions for their respective areas and for the country, between and within the various areas. The institutions that are controlled by the various subjugating powers impose different restrictions on women, influencing their status in society. Raqqa witnessed the highest decrease in the values and attitudes sub-index compared to the rest of the governorates, dropping by 66 per cent and reaching 0.28. Hasakah governorate also witnessed a decline in this component by about 40 per cent, which was mainly influenced by the divergence of visions for the future and to a lesser degree by the status of its women (Figure 17). On the other hand, the governorates of Tartus, Sweida, and Lattakia witnessed a less severe decline in this component (Appendix 5).

Figure 17: Shared Values and Attitudes Sub-index by governorate (before and during the crisis)

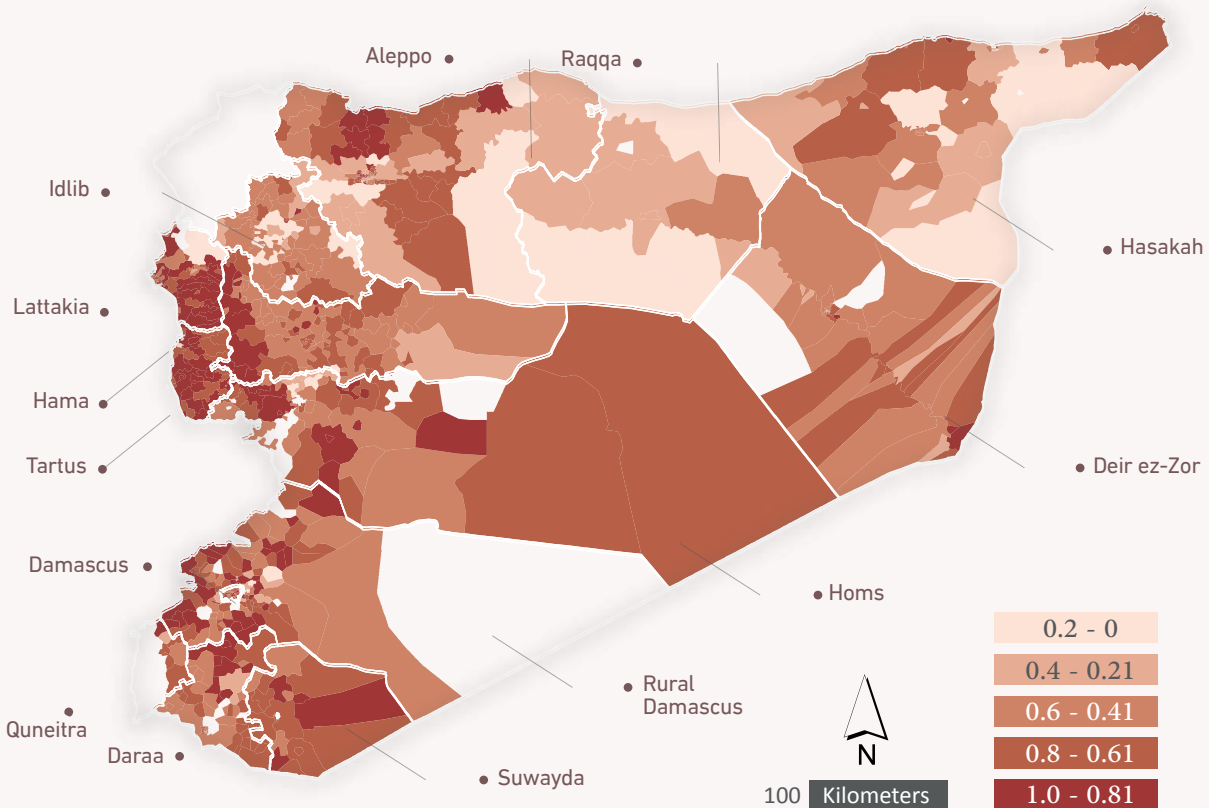


Source: Population Survey 2014, and calculations of SCPR.



Shared Values and Attitudes Sub-index by governorate (before the crisis) ▲

▼ Shared Values and Attitudes Sub-index by governorate (during the crisis)





## IV. Social Capital Index

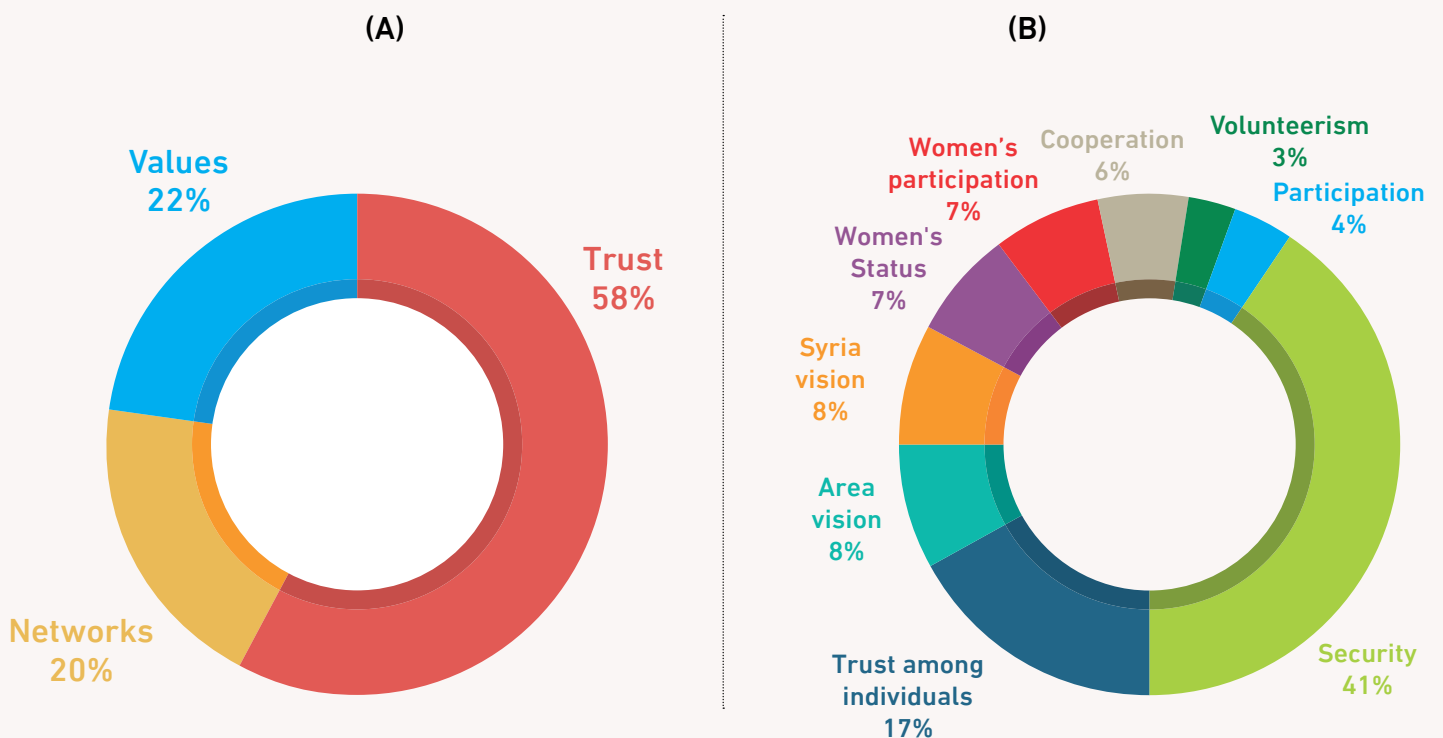
The social capital index consists of three sub-indices and nine indicators; four indicators for the social networks and participation, two for the trust, and three for the shared values and attitudes. SCI can be calculated at the national level, as well as other geographical levels, including governorates, districts and studied areas.

The results indicate that SCI in Syria has declined by about 30 per cent from 0.74 before the crisis to 0.52 during it. The three components of the index have all declined, albeit in varying degrees; the decline in both

social networks and participation and shared values and attitudes sub-indices was about 20 per cent, while decrease in the social trust sub-index reached 47 per cent. The latter drop is the most significant decline among the various components of SCI, reflecting, on the one hand, a large-scale mistrust among society members in the studied areas, and on the other hand a huge decrease in the overall sense of security, due to an increase in violence, killing, crime, kidnapping, detention, a growing culture of hatred and rejection of the other, and other negative social phenomena associated with armed violence (Figures 18, 19).

**The results indicate that SCI in Syria has declined by about 30 per cent**

Figure 18: Relative contributions to the decline in SCI by (A) sub-indices and (B) indicators



Source: Population Survey 2014, and calculations of SCPR.

It is important to bear in mind that the survey was conducted during the crisis, which provoked respondents to compare between pre-crisis and crisis periods at all levels. This may influence the social capital indicators, especially with regard to the concepts of a feeling secured and trust between individuals. Both of these indicators have been severely affected by the security and armed conflict situations, constituting a potential bias that may be manifested in exaggerations about the positive features of the past. Additionally, the sub-indices and indicators are not entirely independent variables, and this may affect the assessment of the role of each indicator in the decline of SCI.

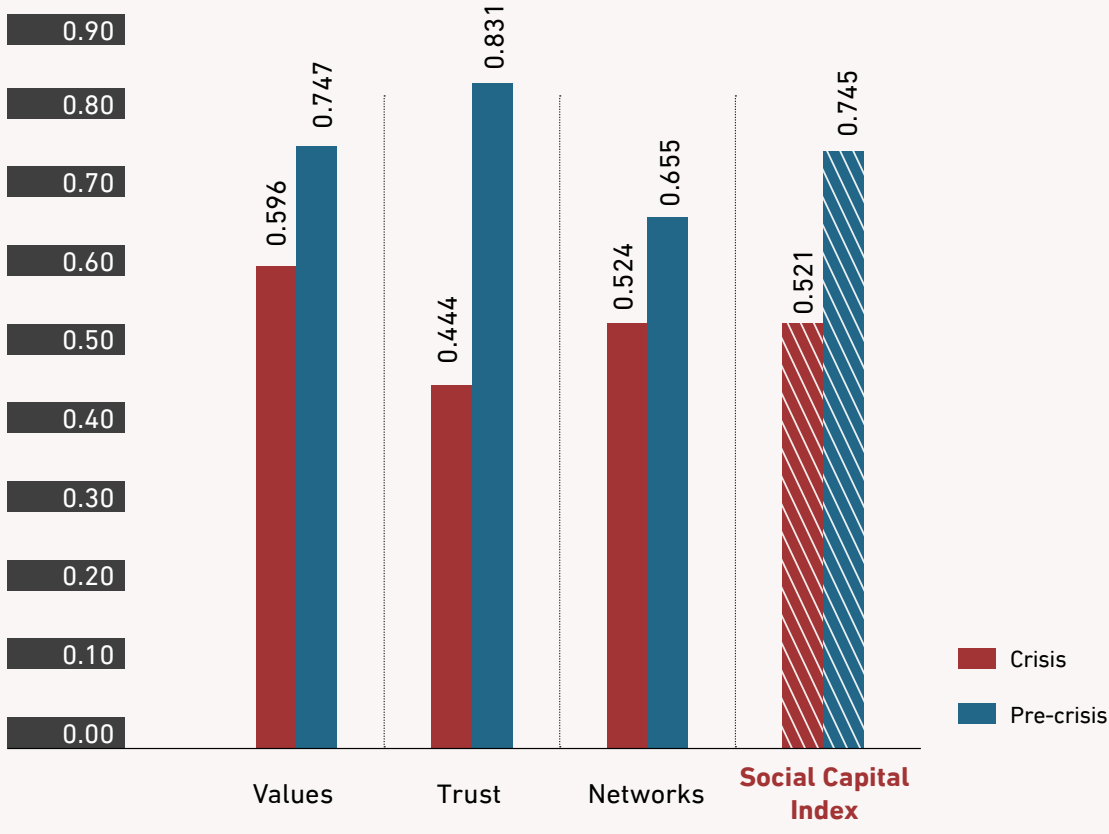
Figure 20 shows the relative similarity in the pre-crisis SCI at the governorate level. However, considerable variations in the index are observed between areas after the crisis, due to different economic and political

circumstances, the security, military and combat situations, the extreme disparities in quality of life, and the collapse or reconstruction of social structures following the mass displacement in Syria's different governorates and areas.

It is noted that the governorates in which SCI has declined the most are those that were widely affected by war, hostilities, and polarization. The decline was the highest in Raqqa, 80 per cent, followed by Hasakah, 52 per cent, and Idlib, 47 per cent. On the other hand, the decline was the lowest in Tartus, around 5 per cent, and in Damascus, less than 10 per cent (Appendix 2), since these regions are characterized by exposure to lower levels of conflict-related destruction, and they have been major destinations for IDPs from various Syrian areas as well. The nature of relationships and networks in these areas varies between civil and traditional bonds.

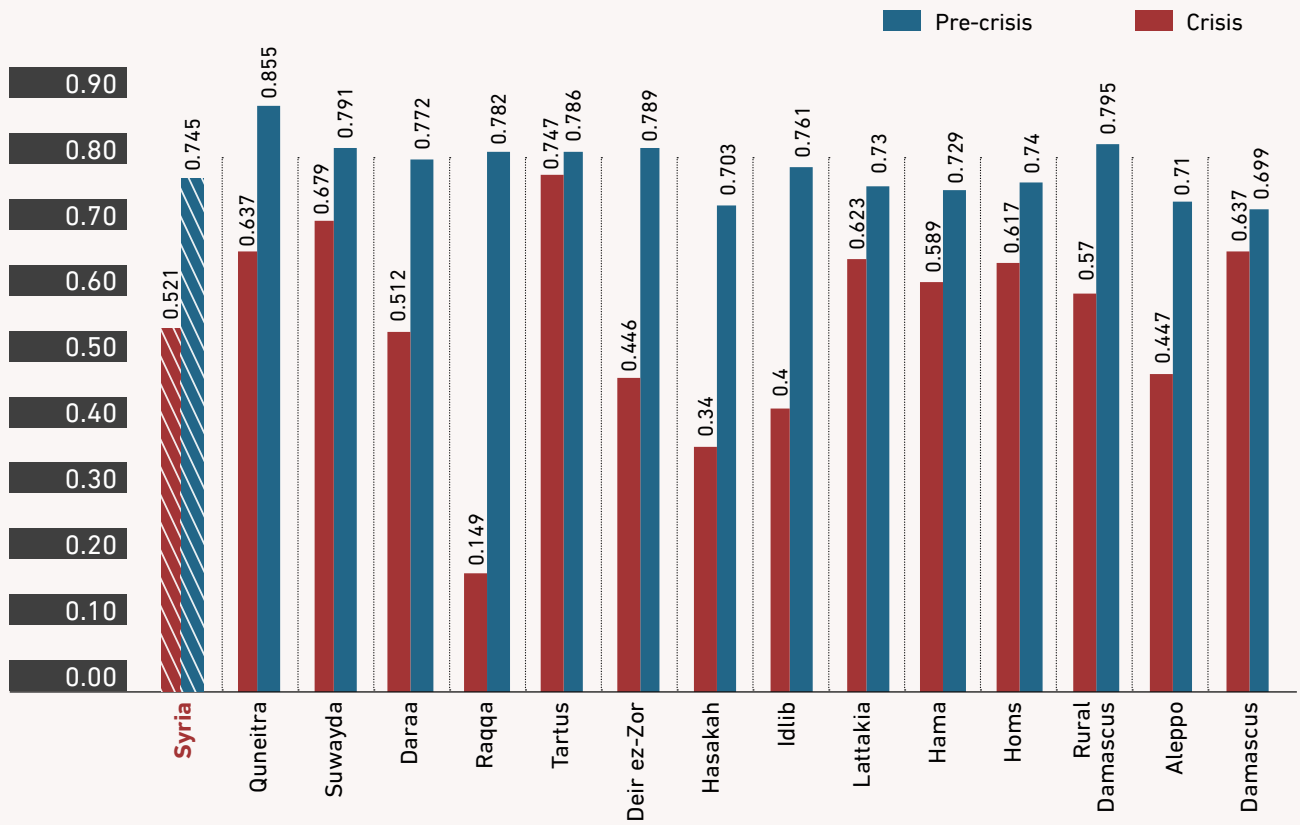
**The governorates in which SCI has declined the most are those that were widely affected by war, hostilities, and polarization**

**Figure 19: SCI and its components at the national level (before and during the crisis)**

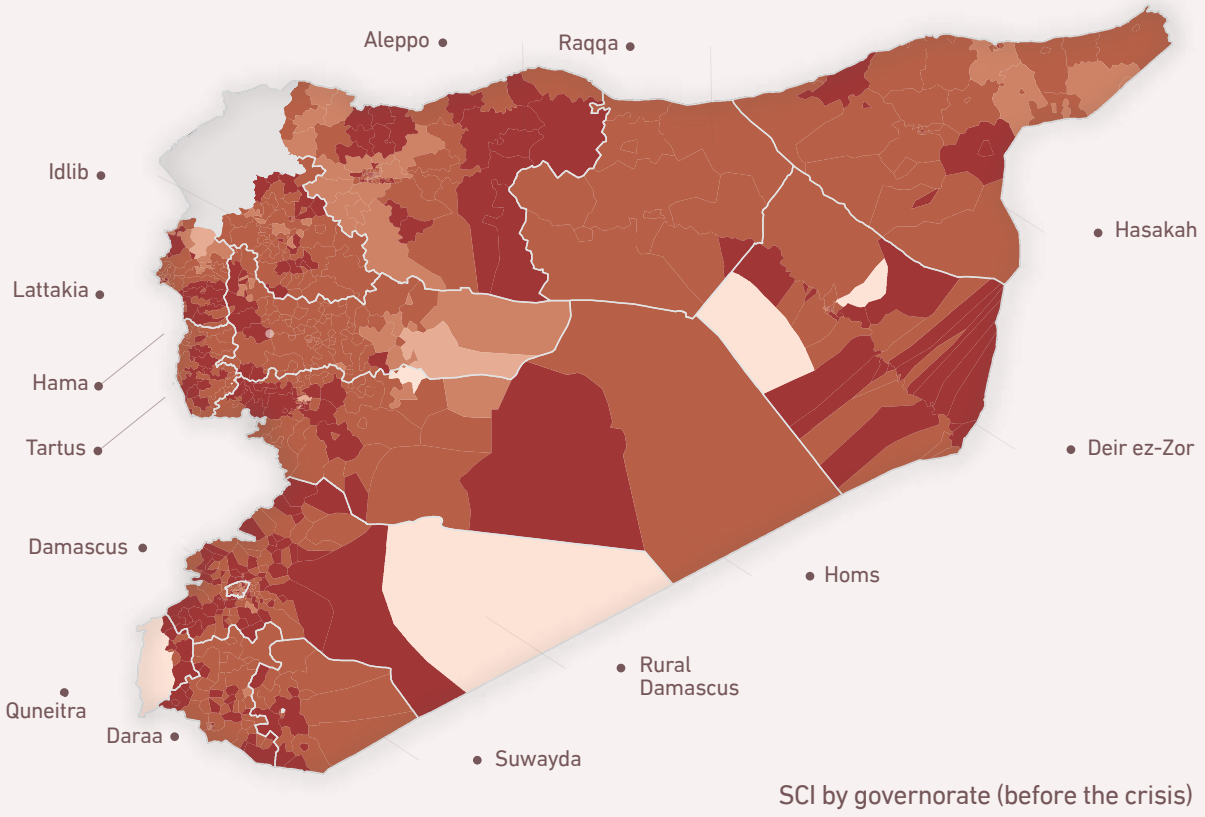


Source: Population Survey 2014, and calculations of SCPR.

Figure 20: SCI by governorate (before and during the crisis)

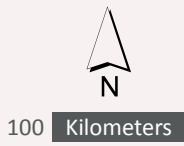
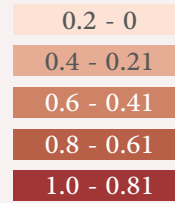
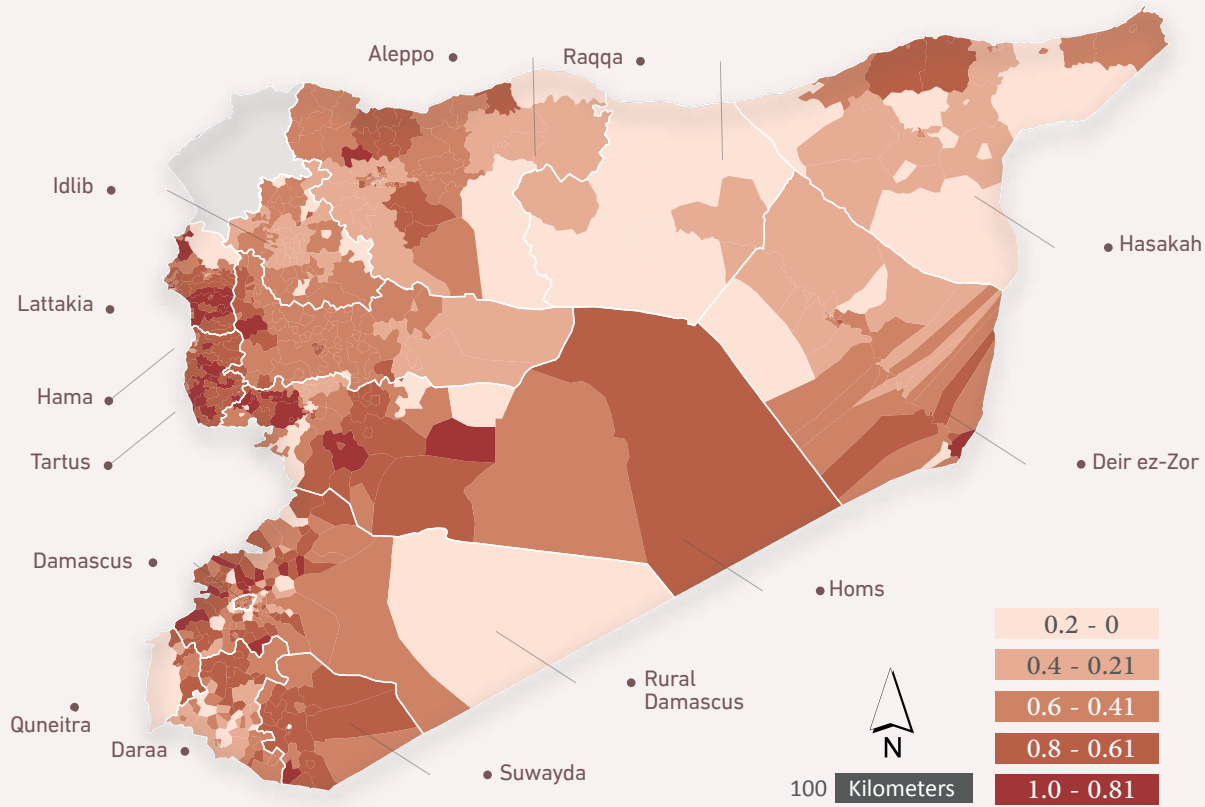


Source: Population Survey 2014, and calculations of SCP. R.



SCI by governorate (before the crisis) ▲

▼ SCI by governorate (during the crisis)





Chapter Three:

# Determinants of Social Capital in Syria (an Econometric Study)

The concept of social capital in the existing literature raises many questions about its relationship with a number of social, economic, and institutional indicators, such as health, education, poverty, social justice, the decline of trust in governmental institutions and the judiciary, as well as with demographic variables such as internal or external migration. It also raises questions regarding the relationship between the social dimension of society and individual demographic characteristics such as gender, age, educational status, and social standing, in addition to the relationship between the social, cultural, intellectual dimensions of society, and notably the role of religion, nationalism, and dominant forces vis-a-vis social capital and how they affect each other.

Many literatures suggest that social capital is influenced by a number of factors at the level of individual psychological, economic, and social characteristics, as well as at the macro level of society (Parts, 2013). Individual factors that motivate individuals to invest in social capital, such as income, education, gender, social status, number of children, personal experiences, and values, vary from person to person (Christoforou, 2005; Halman and Luijkx, 2006). According to several studies, however, the overall factors that influence social capital are dictated mainly by the level of development, the quality and extent of justice in formal institutions, the distribution of resources, social polarization, and various types of cooperation and trust among society members.

At the individual level, many studies have found that high levels of income and education correlate with a high probability of individual membership in various groups and increased reciprocal trust between individuals (Knack and Keefer, 1997; Denny, 2003; Helliwell and Putnam, 1999; Paldam, 2000). As for education, it is regarded as a factor that contributes to the development of employment opportunities for the entire society, either by

providing access to social networks and personal connections, or through the accumulation of values, ethics, and social awareness that fosters a sense of citizenship, social cohesion, and cooperation among members of each society. In contrast, some other studies argued that education has a negative effect on volunteering, since higher opportunity cost of time is associated with increased education (Parts, 2013).

At the macro level, studies suggest a positive correlation between social capital components such as membership (Christoforou, 2005), trust, and civil action (Knack and Keefer, 1997). Costa and Kahn (2001) demonstrate the negative effect of income inequality on social capital after controlling for many factors such as social fragmentation. Christoforou (2005) also found that inequality in resource distribution negatively affects the "membership in groups" indicator and leads to a decline in trust and tendency towards social isolation. Some research has also suggested that unemployment negatively affects reciprocal trust and desire among individuals to join social groups (Brehm and Rahn, 1997; Christoforou, 2005).

Studies have also found that religion can foster informal networks, social norms, and trust within the religious community, but it negatively affects general trust as a result of intolerance (Putnam, 1993; La Porta et al., 1996); ideology plays a similar role to religion (Knack and Keefer, 1997; Whiteley, 1999). On the other hand, institutional changes towards inclusion and democracy reinforce the process of producing social capital to a certain degree, but it takes time even in modern democracies (Misztal, 1996; Van Deth, 2003).

Social capital is also associated with a number of factors such as education and health (Smith, 1997), trust in political institutions (Brehm and Rahn, 1997), the level of satisfaction with government performance, political participation (Putnam, 1993), labor networks (Hezlett and Gibson, 2007), cooperation and reciprocal support (Grootaert and Bastelaer, 2002), and the role of information technology and homogeneity in reinforcing the bonding, linking, and bridging forms of social capital at both social and institutional levels (Lin, 2001; Costa and Kahn, 2003).

Many literatures have addressed the relationship between social capital and armed violence. One study of Guatemala suggests that structural social capital (social networks

and civil society) increases individual vulnerability to violence by conflicting forces, while cognitive social capital (trust, values, and norms) offers protection from exposure to violence (Dinesen et al., 2013). Another study, of the Ivory Coast, shows that violence has severely affected social capital, measured by trust and social participation (Keho, 2009). A study of the long-term impact of violence on social capital in Peru indicates that exposure to violence in childhood leads to a decline in trust in formal institutions, but it does not affect trust in non-governmental institutions. The study also finds that violence reduces cooperative behavior and social capital (Malasquez, 2016). In Colombia, violence has led to a decline in participation in social activities, and deliberate killings have had a more negative effect than terrorist attacks, as community members refrain from appearing or participating in public lest they be assassinated (Rubio, 2014). Violence can lead to increased bonding social capital (based on regional, ethnic, or tribal bonds) in exchange for a decline in bridging social capital (based on horizontal relationships), which is a recipe for the renewed outbreak of violence (Aghajanian, 2012). To analyze the correlation between violence and social capital in Syria, the following will study the determinants of social capital and its components by using an econometric model.

# I. Methodology and Mathematical Model

This section is concerned with research on the determinants of social capital and its relationship to social, economic, and institutional variables, as well as the impact that the Syrian crisis has had upon it. Accordingly, a model of regression (ordinary least squares) was developed and weighted by population size. The total SCI was used as a dependent variable while a set of key independent variables were added. This reflects the relationship between social capital and certain variables, but it does not necessarily indicate causality. The research was based on the data provided by the Population Survey (2014) during the crisis, and the model was subjected to appropriate tests to verify the robustness of the model and the significance of the findings.

In the model, SCI was used as a dependent variable, as well as a number of independent variables based on the literature and estimations of the research team in line with the state of conflict in Syria, where there was no complete theoretical model for the determinants of social capital.

The following independent variables were selected:

- 4. H for access to health services, indicating the public health situation.
- 5. E for enrollment in education, indicating the educational situation.
- 6. U for unemployment, indicating the economic situation.
- 7. VE for involvement in violence-related activities, indicating the relationship with economies of violence.
- 8. Ins for equal treatment of individuals by institutions, indicating the relationship with institutions.

- 9. Death for crisis-related death, indicating levels of violence.
- 10. Idp for the proportion of internally displaced persons within the population, indicating the demographic situation.
- 11. Finally, Moh to control for governorates which cannot be measured by the above variables, such as cultural differences.

$$SCI_i = c + H_i + E_i + U_i + VE_i + Ins_i + Death_i + Idp_i + Moh_i + \epsilon_i \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

This model was implemented with each of the three components of social capital; each of the following determinants were tested:

Social Networks and participation component determinants (NI):

$$NI_i = c + H_i + E_i + U_i + VE_i + Ins_i + Death_i + Idp_i + Moh_i + \mu_i \dots \dots \dots (2)$$

Social Trust component determinants (Trust):

$$Trust_i = c + H_i + E_i + U_i + VE_i + Ins_i + Death_i + Idp_i + Moh_i + \epsilon_i \dots \dots \dots (3)$$

Shared Values and attitudes component determinants (Value):

$$Value_i = c + H_i + E_i + U_i + VE_i + Ins_i + Death_i + Idp_i + Moh_i + \epsilon_i \dots \dots \dots (4)$$

The purpose of selecting these variables is to diagnose the relationship between different developmental variables and social capital. Conflict is more than just violence and murder, it also dynamically creates a different political, social, and economic "regime," thus changing the nature of mutual influence between different factors. For example, the conflict has gradually formed new economies which differ radically from pre-crisis economies, and which influence the behaviors and attitudes of individuals and transform their needs and priorities.



## II. Results Analysis

After testing the model in its four formulas, the following was concluded (Table 4):

- Health situation: Social capital has a positive and statistically significant relationship to the state of health (access to health services), which reflects the health situation in the area. In other words, an increase in social capital is associated with improved access to health services, and social capital has been negatively affected by the loss of health services in certain areas. It is shown that this correlation is positive for all components, but it is most significant as a determinant of the shared values and attitudes component.
- Educational situation: Social capital has a positive and statistically significant relationship to the state of education (enrollment in education); thus, a rise in social capital is associated with higher enrollment rates, and the more an area is deprived of education, the lower the levels of its social capital. Upon analyzing the determinants of the various SCI components, it is noted that the correlation is only significant in the shared values and attitudes component.
- Economic situation: Social capital has a negative and statistically significant relationship with the unemployment variable, in other words, a rise in the number of people who have lost their jobs has a negative and significant effect on social capital. It is noted that the relationship is strongest in the social trust and shared values and attitudes components, while it is weakest in the social networks and participation component.
- Economics of violence: The findings of the regression analysis show that an increase in the percentage of those involved in illegal activities is accompanied by a significant decrease in social capital. The findings include all three components of SCI, but are more significant in the social networks and the values and attitudes components than in the trust component.

**a strong and negative relationship between social capital and an increase in the number of direct and indirect crisis-related deaths. Violence is more significantly, negatively, and strongly correlated with the networks and the trust components than with the shared values and attitudes component**

- Institutional situation: Social capital has a positive and statistically significant relationship with equal treatment of all individuals of society at the institutional level; thus, an improvement in the institutional environment is positively related to social capital. A significantly stronger relationship is observed with the social networks component compared to the values and attitudes and the trust components, respectively.
- Demographic situation (IDPs): During the crisis, social capital has had a negative and statistically significant relationship with the increase in the proportion of internally displaced persons to the population as a whole within a given area. The relationship is not significant with the social trust component. This means that an increase in the proportion of IDPs to the total population is not associated with a decrease in sense of security and trust between individuals, but it is negatively associated with the social networks and the shared values and attitudes components.
- Violence (mortality): The findings of the regression analysis show a strong and negative relationship between social capital and an increase in the number of direct and indirect crisis-related deaths. Violence is more significantly, negatively, and strongly correlated with the networks and the trust components than with the shared values and attitudes component.

**Social capital has a positive and statistically significant relationship with equal treatment of all individuals of society at the institutional level**

## **the negative and statistically significant effect that direct violence—such as displacement, involvement in violent acts, and discriminatory institutional practices—has on both bridging and linking social capitals**

- **Governorates:** In addition to the above variables, the findings show that SCI is significantly lower in Idlib, Hasakah, Deir ez-Zor, and Raqqa as compared to Damascus, indicating that there are additional factors in these governorates that cannot be explained by the above variables alone, such as cultural features, ethnic and national diversity, and the level of pre-crisis development.

The above findings demonstrate the negative and statistically significant effect that direct violence—such as displacement, involvement in violent acts, and discriminatory institutional practices—has on both bridging and linking social capitals. These types of social capital are based on relationships that transcend traditional bonds, and they manifest in the social networks and participation component. This component is crucial in building civil relationships that contribute to social harmony and to overcoming violence and resolving disputes peacefully, while development factors related to health, education and employment are not as significant in this component. Accordingly, the dismantling of structures and institutions of violence is a crucial factor in the re-creation of social capital that is based on relationships, and the longer the periods of exposure to violence, the greater the chances that social harmony will erode.

The findings also show that development indicators such as health, education, and employment are strongly correlated with the shared values and attitudes component; thus, indicators that are not directly related to violence affect the cognitive aspect of a shared vision for the area and the country, and are important factors in building the future social contract. Herein lies the importance of investing in inclusive development, as this is an essential step for creating an environment that is conducive to social rapprochement. The

transition from fragmented to comprehensive education that includes the value of solidarity also plays an important role in bringing together polarized groups, and paves the way for the restoration of an important aspect of social capital.

Moreover, the decline in health, education, and employment clearly affects the status of women in society, as well as women social participation, in addition to the effect of involvement in violence, discriminatory institutions, and displacement. Thus, the importance of understanding the indirect effects of violence on development factors becomes apparent, as they play an important role in the exclusion and exploitation of women.

The main factors associated with feeling secured are deaths resulting from the crisis and involvement in violence, whereas trust between individuals is additionally influenced by discriminatory institutions, displacement, unemployment, and involvement in violence, but is not significantly affected by deaths. Trust among members of small communities, which are connected by familial, religious, and regional ties, increases whenever loss of life increases, as an expression of solidarity in opposition to the perceived other. This weakens linking and bridging social capitals, as evidenced by the negative correlation between IDPs and trust among individuals within the studied area.

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Table 4: Determinants of social capital during the crisis

	SCI		Social networks and participation		Social Trust		Shared values and attitudes	
	Coefficient	Standardized coefficient	Coefficient	Standardized coefficient	Coefficient	Standardized coefficient	Coefficient	Standardized coefficient
<b>Access to health services (reference category "Bad")</b>								
Average	0.050***	0.1148	0.053**	0.1033	0.032	0.067	0.065***	0.1392
Good	0.039**	0.0952	0.038	0.0796	0.040*	0.0874	0.039*	0.0892
<b>Enrollment in education</b>	0.001***	0.1104	0.001	0.0682	0.000	0.042	0.002***	0.1914
<b>Rate of loss of jobs (Reference category "None")</b>								
Low	-0.055***	-0.1350	-0.015	-0.031	-0.062**	-0.1368	-0.089***	-0.2031
Medium	-0.093***	-0.2051	-0.051*	-0.0951	-0.102***	-0.2039	-0.127***	-0.2595
High	-0.062**	-0.0896	-0.031	-0.038	-0.059*	-0.0779	-0.095***	-0.1285
Very high	-0.126***	-0.1356	-0.075*	-0.0687	-0.174***	-0.1697	-0.129***	-0.1293
<b>Involvement in illegal work (Reference category "None")</b>								
Poor	-0.074***	-0.1804	-0.083***	-0.1726	-0.034**	-0.0742	-0.106***	-0.2391
Medium	-0.121***	-0.2179	-0.133***	-0.2039	-0.053**	-0.0862	-0.177***	-0.2970
High	-0.232***	-0.2556	-0.246***	-0.2315	-0.169***	-0.1690	-0.280***	-0.2873
<b>Equal treatment of all society members by institutions (reference category "Never")</b>								
Rarely	0.036*	0.0684	0.096***	0.1528	0.037	0.062	-0.023	-0.040
Sometimes	0.084***	0.1860	0.129***	0.2434	0.064**	0.1280	0.059**	0.1224
Often	0.139***	0.3154	0.194***	0.3741	0.140***	0.2879	0.083***	0.1763
Always	0.174***	0.2416	0.202***	0.2395	0.207***	0.2603	0.113***	0.1456
<b>Proportion of IDPs</b>	-0.112***	-0.1207	-0.192***	-0.1759	-0.040	-0.039	-0.106***	-0.1056
<b>Mortality ratio by population</b>	-0.384**	-0.0676	-0.415**	-0.0623	-0.407**	-0.0650	-0.330*	-0.0542
<b>Governorates (reference category "Damascus")</b>								
Aleppo	-0.019	-0.038	-0.014	-0.023	-0.062**	-0.1098	0.017	0.031
Rural Damascus	0.009	0.015	0.073**	0.1079	-0.016	-0.025	-0.031	-0.050
Homs	0.012	0.016	0.073**	0.0791	0.003	0.003	-0.039	-0.046
Hama	-0.001	-0.002	0.022	0.027	-0.020	-0.026	-0.006	-0.008
Lattakia	-0.026	-0.032	-0.038	-0.039	0.035	0.038	-0.076**	-0.0847
Idlib	-0.102***	-0.1228	-0.097***	-0.0996	-0.126***	-0.1370	-0.084**	-0.0935
Hasakah	-0.119***	-0.1399	-0.075*	-0.0750	-0.177***	-0.1890	-0.105***	-0.1148
Deir ez-Zor	-0.094***	-0.1090	-0.089**	-0.0877	-0.129***	-0.1360	-0.064*	-0.0690
Tartus	0.086***	0.0921	0.108***	0.0981	0.102***	0.0985	0.049	0.049
Raqqa	-0.283***	-0.2605	-0.331***	-0.2594	-0.283***	-0.2356	-0.236***	-0.2020
Daraa	-0.021	-0.019	-0.005	-0.0037	-0.087**	-0.0732	0.030	0.026
Sweida	0.058	0.042	0.114**	0.0701	0.061	0.040	-0.001	-0.001
Quneitra	0.052	0.016	0.057	0.015	0.034	0.009	0.066	0.019
Constant	0.531***		0.479***		0.474***		0.639***	
<b>Observations</b>	<b>659</b>		<b>659</b>		<b>660</b>		<b>660</b>	
<b>Correlation</b>	<b>0.642</b>		<b>0.538</b>		<b>0.517</b>		<b>0.549</b>	
<b>Log-Likelihood</b>	<b>465.094</b>		<b>276.070</b>		<b>302.831</b>		<b>343.018</b>	

note: .01 - \*\*\*; .05 - \*\*; .1 - \*;





Chapter Four:

# Alternatives and Suggested Policies

# I. Justice and Dismantling the Constituents of Violence as the Core of Resolution

The prolonged years of the Syrian tragedy have massively damaged society and subjected it to dissolution, rupture, dispersion, and devastation. The demands that society made since March 2011 revolved around freedom, dignity, and social justice, but because of armed conflict, they have resulted in further oppression, injustice, tyranny, humiliation, and an abysmal fall in living standards, health, education, and social situation.

The report shows the extent of disintegration and fragmentation in social relations and networks, and their transformation into relations and networks dominated by oppression, fanaticism, and extremism. Society's value system and collective principles deteriorated, and social trust among individuals and communities, and between those and the institutions that regulate public life, crumbled in most Syrian areas and cities. This was a result of widespread detention, kidnappings, thefts, killings, forced disappearances, and other negative incidents. However, despite the bleak Syrian situation, it is necessary to highlight some phenomena that reflect the society's response to this dire stage the country is witnessing in all regions, whether those controlled by the regime or by other parties. In the stricken cities and areas, as well as in the relatively safe cities that have attracted large numbers of IDPs, civil organizations have multiplied on all levels: living, educational, medical, and relief. These civil groups are opposed to sectarian or ethnic communities, and the regions and cities in which they are flourishing have not witnessed incidents of intolerance or sectarian practices, despite the tremendous polarization that is being promoted and practiced by all conflicting parties.

In the coming period, Syrian society will face herculean challenges in terms of halting the violence. Continued violence creates new factors that can further erode the social fabric. The research demonstrated the increasing role of the deteriorated developmental factors, along with the armed conflict and its direct role in violence and exclusion, as forces for disintegration and disruption of social networking. Attempts to resolve the conflict, to facilitate the return of refugees and to rebuild civil peace, cohesion, and social integration, are complicated by the ongoing absence of public space and by the subjugation policy of siege, displacement, and the denial of life's basic necessities. Curbing violence, halting the rapid decline in quality of life, education, and health, reconstructing stricken towns and cities, restoring infrastructure, and alleviating deprivation and poverty, all require extraordinary work by the Syrian society, whose role has been marginalized by the warring subjugating powers. It is therefore necessary to rebuild institutions on the basis of justice, citizenship, democracy, the rule of law, inclusion, and accountability; to remove constraints on public liberties, freedom of expression, and the production of knowledge; to solve urgent issues such as the problem of detainees, kidnapped, forced disappeared persons, and the exploitation of women and

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children; and to combat negative phenomena such as theft, infringement on private property, kidnapping, arbitrary detention, forced disappearance, and the proliferation of weapons. Dismantling the structures of political, military, fanatical, and extremist subjugation is the cornerstone of overcoming the tragedy and ensuring that it will not be repeated in the future.

In this section, the report focuses on possible policies, measures, and alternatives that could help increase and activate social capital, thus restoring trust among individuals and communities and contributing to the rebuilding of networks and relationships between them. In turn, this would reinforce reciprocity, cooperation, and social solidarity and establish a new system of values and social principles that departs from extremism, fanaticism, revenge, and spitefulness. These proposals call for the creation of a public space that would help build civil networking connections among citizens and ensure their fair and effective participation in establishing political and social institutions that would guarantee social harmony and cultural progress.

The starting point remains the most difficult. This is due to the complexity that led Syria into this global humanitarian crisis. Armies, militias, and all types of weapons are being used. While regional and global dimensions overlap, the human dimension is marginalized to an unprecedented extent. Moreover, political oppression, extremism, and fanaticism have overwhelmingly aggravated, and local and international resources have been squandered to fuel the violence. The conflict economies in

Syria have become transnational, and have created an obstinate conflict that is generously funded. Experiencing the greatest refugee crisis since World War II, the Syrian civil society continues to be excluded by various means, while its social capital is systematically sabotaged.

The research approach is founded on the idea of justice, which is the cornerstone for rebuilding trust and strengthening bonds in any society that wishes to overcome a disaster and build a future. In *A Theory of Justice* (1971), Rawls defines a just and fair society as one in which individuals enjoy equal rights in the context of processes and arrangements adequate to guarantee them basic rights, including liberties for all. Such a society also takes into account social and economic inequalities in order to provide equal opportunities, and its greatest benefits go to its least privileged members. Basic rights, or what Rawls calls "primary goods," are personal rights and liberties, opportunities, wealth, and respect human dignity. To reach this just and fair society, it is necessary to select just principles with which to build the basic structure of society that affects the behavior of individuals. Following the selection of fundamental principles, comes the constitutional stage, in which institutions that are consistent with the principle of justice are established for the purpose of reaching just social orders, processes, and arrangements (Rawls, 1971). But can this ideal society actually be attained? What guarantee is there that people would unanimously agree on the concepts and principles of justice and the limits of freedoms? What exactly is the form

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and function of the institutions that would create these conditions on the ground? Do we really have to focus on the form of institutions, or should institutions simply achieve what society and individuals aspire to? Institutions may not be as ideal as Rawls wants them to be, but particular social alternatives can be reached. For example, Rodrik (2008) coined the term “second-best institutions” to refer to those institutions that have been tested in certain countries that chose to depart from mainstream institutional models. Furthermore, Sen’s *The Idea of Justice* considers justice to be largely related to the way people live, not only to the nature of the institutions surrounding them, and therefore there should be focus on the daily reality of people’s lives, and on actual ways of assessing justice that carry many far-reaching implications for the concept of justice (Sen, 2009), especially with regards to the suffering that is being experienced by Syrian society.

One of Sen’s most important steps for salvaging an unjust society is to start from the recognition of grievances and the identification of injustice, and then to work for their elimination in order to concretely enact justice rather than theorizing a just and ideal society. Sen also emphasizes the idea of social choice, which is based on relative assessments rather than ideals which are the just institutions as described by Rawls. He also emphasizes the importance of considering the multiplicity of logical and seemingly contradictory motivations, the variety of interpretations and interventions, and the reasonable permissibility of partial solutions, as well as stressing the role of public discussion in social choice. Social choice theory is concerned with the rationales of social judgments in the light of people’s preferences, priorities, desires, and concerns, such as the grievances of poverty, detention, and the liberation of women, rather than higher or ideal options. This opens the way for possible alternatives (Sen, 2009).

The determinants of individual and social behavior directly contribute to shaping people’s ways of life, and to facilitating their capability to identify common values and priorities, particularly through what Sen called open public discussion, or social dialogue. Reaching

the state of social dialogue or public discussion requires that freedom of expression, the right to knowledge, and the foundations of enlightenment values be upheld. Thus, there is a need to focus on understanding democracy insofar as it has the ability to enrich rational participation by providing an appropriate environment for interactive dialogue, and not as the mere semblance of democratic institutions. Moreover, individuals and communities, regardless of their sects and affiliations, can cooperate with one another if they share one common and agreed-upon political concept of justice, which Rawls defines as fairness in *Political Liberalism* (1993). The role of institutions is of particular importance, in addition to the citizens’ ability to adapt to fair institutions and willingness to act on them. When people believe in the fairness of institutions, they respond more effectively to the execution of procedures that determine their behavior. This is especially true if they are re-assured of fair practices by the commitment of others to these institutions, in which case trust among individuals enhances and a sense of belonging increases as these institutions prove sustainable (Rawls, 1971). It seems that all of this would be possible once an appropriate path for establishing these institutions, based on a realistic interpretation of people’s behavioral standards and principles, is discovered (Sen, 2009).

Aristotle looked at justice through the lens of morality, dividing it into distributive justice, based on the fair distribution of resources after accounting for readiness, competency, and capacity; and corrective justice, the category which is more relevant to the Syrian situation, as it functions to restore rights to those who have been stripped of them. Aristotle emphasized on temperance to achieve justice, where there is no undue excess or restraint, and no overreaching or downplaying of demands. This is necessary in order to break with utopias and radicalism in seeking justice (Johnston, 2011).

Understanding the process by which social capital accumulates, even in its simplified forms, is hugely helpful in determining how to influence and stimulate the components of social capital. This process can be summarized

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as follows: the crystallization of social capital's components begins with opening dialogue and public discussion on the basis of freedom of expression and knowledge between individuals, communities, and various institutions, with the aim of agreeing on shared values, principles, aspirations, and goals. These should be based on the common values that are recognized in international and humanitarian law to promote justice, the preservation of public and private rights, and human dignity and liberty. They should also stem from the specificity of each society and its relationships with other societies. These values can lay the foundation for an appropriate environment in which to establish initial social

trust, which allows for cooperation, solidarity, integration, and cohesion where new networks, bonds, and relations are built, all based on reciprocal respect and the principle of civil citizenship. The more interaction between people is consistent with the shared principles and values that have been agreed upon, the more social capital accumulation increases towards the promotion and development of these values. This would, in turn, enhance social trust among different communities and individuals, and lead to the flourishing of civil relationships, networks, and organizations that contribute to the common good without contradicting individual private liberties (Figure 21).

**Figure 21: The process of social capital's accumulation**



Source: Syrian Center for Policy Research.

## II. Recommendations and Alternatives

What are the social priorities that Syrian society should begin with in order to establish commonly agreed upon principles and values that are compatible with people's choices? Which ones could realize their aspirations, preferences, and desires within the parameters of shared public interests? And what about when we consider all the destruction and fragmentation this society has experienced? What are the policies and mechanisms that would activate the role of civil society and empower social relationships and bonds on the basis of citizenship, justice, reciprocal respect, the guarantee of private and public liberties, and the rights to expression and knowledge? How can social trust be built up around its two pillars: trust among individuals and communities and the institutions that govern public life; and the recovery of security and stability that are based on preserving the lives of individuals and protecting their public and private rights according to the human rights charter?

The research does not claim to answer these questions. Rather, it provides a policy approach based on an analysis of social capital in Syria and the damage it has gone through due to armed conflict. This approach is based on stopping the deterioration of social capital that is caused by violence at the local and national levels, and envisaging steps that can restore social harmony, taking into account Syrians both inside and outside the country. This approach is a preliminary one that paves the way for social policy, and various actors can contribute to its formation. It aims to serve the common good, and it can also serve as a platform for negotiations in which civil society plays a key role in setting the priorities of social and institutional policies and in ensuring that these priorities are raised in the various domains of political negotiation, such as those in Geneva for example.

Social policies that would promote social development must aspire to achieve social justice as its long-term objective by setting sub-goals of ensuring decent and sustainable livelihoods, social integration, and the rights to participation, expression, and accountability. For instance, achieving social development depends

on reducing structural inequalities in wealth, influence, and social status (Dani and De Haan, 2008).

Prior to the crisis, Syria had suffered from a lack of social policies in a broad sense, as these were limited to the provision of social services such as health, education, and subsidies on basic goods. Since the 1990s, as in most developing countries, more reliance was placed on social safety nets, following the severe damage caused by the "structural economic reform" programs that were implemented in Syria before the crisis. This was accompanied by growing exclusion and economic and social inequality at various levels, and the absence of political or social institutions that could reduce distortions in social integration both horizontally across communities, and vertically vis-a-vis the state and market—what the Syrian Center for Policy Research called "institutional bottlenecks" (SCPR, 2013). The social aspect, manifested in representation, participation, and social integration has always been absent. It has been deemed a part of the "political" sphere, thus made untouchable and immutable by the authoritarian nature of official institutions. The broader arena of development policy has been

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**The social aspect, manifested in representation, participation, and social integration has always been absent. It has been deemed a part of the "political" sphere, thus made untouchable and immutable by the authoritarian nature of official institutions**

**The research proposes certain features for social policy by focusing on the key goals of decent living, social integration, participation, and expression**

dominated by economic policies that follow the neoliberal approach and reinforce inequality, resulting in negative social consequences related to the deterioration of justice and social integration since before the crisis. Hence, the proposed social policies are intended to overcome the roots of the crisis in Syria by promoting social integration, equal opportunities, and the development of inclusive institutions and accountability measures.

In addition to the aforementioned challenges, the Syrian conflict, which began as a social movement demanding civil liberties and transformed into an armed conflict where many international and regional dimensions have overlapped, constitutes a major humanitarian disaster. It has greatly exacerbated the extent of suffering in Syrian society, causing loss of life, injuries, displacement, kidnapping, and the destruction of economic structures, including wealth that was accumulated over generations, in addition to environmental destruction, and the increased aggravation of subjugating powers in their formal and informal forms, both socially and politically. This research has illustrated the enormous damage that has occurred to social capital and its various components (social networks and participation, social trust, and shared values and attitudes). The war has turned fellow citizens into fierce enemies, while subjugating powers have received all kinds of political, financial, and human support, both regionally and internationally, in order to continue the fighting. This renders social policy much more complicated and challenging, especially in light of the ongoing conflict.

The features of the proposed social policies are aimed at contributing to breaking out of the state of armed conflict and social fragmentation, and to overcoming the effects of violence and polarization within an integrated developmental framework that does not settle for just restoring stability, but also works to strengthen the foundations of sustainable and inclusive developmental growth. The research assumes that determining social policy during times of fragmentation will be a complex process, based on lengthy dialogues to be shared in by many actors throughout the process, from design to implementation. It also seeks to integrate

economic, political, and environmental dimensions into policy suggestions. For example, justice cannot be effectively promoted from a social perspective while the economic structure remains grounded in inequality and exclusion.

The research proposes certain features for social policy by focusing on the key goals of decent living, social integration, participation, and expression. In a related study, SCPR discussed the concept of "human protection," which includes a developmental process that would ensure investment in capacity-building, the provision of decent jobs and equal opportunities, as well as respect for human personality and dignity (Arab NGO Network for Development, 2014). This research focuses in an integrated approach on providing an appropriate environment for the formation of social capital, which would be reflected in greater harmony and integration among different groups and between individuals, communities, and institutions. Such an environment requires a shift towards formal and informal institutions that are characterized by inclusion, responsiveness, and accountability.

This research also demonstrates the general determinants of social capital during the conflict. Social capital is positively correlated with improved levels of education, health, employment, and standards of living, and negatively correlated with killing, displacement, economies of violence, and authoritarian and unjust institutions. Therefore, these determinants must be taken into consideration when proposing possible alternatives. The following are preliminary features that would strengthen each of the social capital components, in order to promote further social integration based on the principle of social justice.

### **Social Networks and Participation**

It is of the utmost importance that society begins to put an end to violence, enhance security, open up public discussion, and guarantee civil liberties. These steps will be strategic priorities for developing the current values and understandings that would help attain a new mode of social relations and escape from the traps of communal fanaticism, extremism, and

exclusion. This research clearly shows that discriminatory institutions, involvement in violence-related activities, and displacement are key factors that contribute to the deterioration of social capital. This requires:

- Stopping violence in all its forms, restoring security to the lives of citizens, preserving their dignity and individuality, releasing detainees, and revealing the fates of those who have been forcibly disappeared via fact-finding committees.
- Transforming the role of institutions from oppression and violence to inclusion, efficiency, and accountability. This requires the efforts of all actors defending the society's priorities, and recognition that existing institutions cannot continue to function except on the basis of constant violence and oppression.
- Changing the role and functions of public institutions and considering their reform as an entry point to build networks and relations between Syrian based on citizenship; and this enhances social trust. The importance of not building discriminatory institutions based on current fragmentation resulting in sectarian and ethical subsections that lead to additional deterioration in the linking social capital.
- Dismantling the structures of violence that have led large groups of both Syrian and non-Syrian citizens to engage in the killing machine. This has proved to be one of the most significant factors in the decline of cooperation and social networking. Various subjugation powers support this structure of violence, which exploits material and nonmaterial resources. Therefore, its dismantling will require an institutional change that would allow for expanding the roles of social forces and stakeholders, and lead to holding key persons responsible for the outbreak and the continuation of violence and destruction.
- Addressing the consequences of the demographic imbalance that has resulted from the crisis and manifested in the displacement, deaths, and dispersion of family members; and working to build social networks within the communities of IDPs

and refugees, as well as between them and their host communities, including joint action, volunteerism, representation, and participation.

- Guaranteeing the right of participation and participatory decision-making in the public and private sectors, political parties, and civil society through democratic means, and focusing on women's social, economic, and political participation as an essential part of the social recovery that is required to reduce structural inequalities and build social integration.
- Opening up of spaces of dialogue and public discussion through democratic and inclusive means, and guaranteeing the right to peaceful demonstration, assembly, and the establishment of various political parties and civil organizations, which would have dialogue among themselves, as well as between them and the public institutions. All of this would help society to reach a public national vision that establishes a future social contract, is in harmony with the aspirations of individuals and communities, and envisages recovery from this disaster, including how to compensate for the enormous moral and material damages.
- Developing a reconstruction strategy that ensures the appropriate environment for social cohesion, and an opportunity for Syrians to work together in understand the conflict and overcoming its human, knowledge, and developmental impacts.
- Activating the role of the media in promoting the values of transparency and responsibility, as well as guaranteeing freedom of expression, knowledge, publication, printing and access to and circulation of information. Moreover, activating the role of society to confront the investment of media by the subjugating powers in identity politics, hatred, and rejection of the "other."
- Ensuring public and private freedoms, preserving private property and property rights, the restoration of rights and compensating those who have lost property due to the crisis.

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**Transforming the role of institutions from oppression and violence to inclusion, efficiency, and accountability**

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**This research clearly shows that discriminatory institutions, involvement in violence-related activities, and displacement are key factors that contribute to the deterioration of social capital.**

**Developing a reconstruction strategy that ensures the appropriate environment for social cohesion, and an opportunity for Syrians to work together in understand the conflict and overcoming its human, knowledge, and developmental impacts**

- Promoting a culture of communal peace and citizenship based on intellectual and cultural pluralism, respect for different religions, cultures, and ideologies, and the rejection of fanaticism and extremism, thus establishing civil relationships and bonds that would contribute to the accumulation of social capital.
- Ensuring the right of individuals to participate in decision-making and free voting at the local and national levels.
- Empowering local civil society and community organizations by facilitating their establishment process, and the dissemination of information and funding to ensure their continuation and sustainability, and to encourage voluntary work.

Therefore, the priorities for working to strengthen the social networks and participation component are inextricably tied to providing an institutional environment that allows for the effective and inclusive participation of all. Activating this environment, however, necessitates first stopping the violence and killing, and second pushing for social dialogue that would contribute to building institutions in a participatory manner. This would reinforce everyone's participation in the process of public decision-making, provide appropriate conditions for women's effective participation in public action, develop cooperative relations between society members and various communities, and encourage volunteer work in service of the society.

The findings indicate a substantial difference between areas in terms of the social networks component and the way it was impacted by the crisis. Therefore, attention to promoting and activating this component needs a plan of action focused on the above requirements at the national level. Priority should be given to the regions whose social relations have been most affected, such as Raqqa, Idlib, Hasakah, and Deir ez-Zor, each of which was subjected to massive violence and hostilities that displaced thousands of its residents and led to a severe rupture of social networks.

### **Social Trust**

The two pillars of the social trust component, trust among individuals, and feeling secured,

are reinforced through experience, which helps build trust on the one hand and cement relationships on the other. Social trust is closely linked to justice among different individuals and communities, and to security, stability, and social welfare. This requires the following:

- The cessation of killing and all engagement in violence, both of which represent the most serious factors that negatively affect the safety of citizens and hence trust among individuals. This requires putting pressure on the forces that are interested in continuing the violence, preventing the erratic proliferation of weapons, and emphasizing support for a peaceful political path, which allows for wide participation, towards a just solution.
- Maintaining safety and security, and dealing with incidents of kidnapping, theft, killing, and the use of arms outside of the law, thus enhancing social trust and a sense of security.
- Establishing an independent and impartial judicial institution that would address outstanding and difficult issues such as the cases of victims of torture, kidnapping and political prisoners, and guaranteeing fair trials.
- Focusing on the principle of the separation of executive and legislative powers and on the independence of the judiciary; justice cannot be achieved under a political system where one entity seizes all forms of authority.
- Regulating local public authorities that represent the people on a democratic basis while adopting a decentralized system that allows for broader participation and representation, thus enhancing society's trust in its representatives. Moreover, developing dialogue to understand the status of the fragmented institutions resulting from the conflict, and to reach a mutual vision in merging the non-state actors within an inclusive institutional framework.
- Determining an economic strategy within a developmental framework that would create decent employment opportunities, with the goals of sustainable and inclusive reconstruction, reducing the role of violence-related institutions. In addition, to ensure the preservation of private

**The priorities for working to strengthen the social networks and participation component are inextricably tied to providing an institutional environment that allows for the effective and inclusive participation of all**

property from looting, theft, unjust expropriation, and assault, guarantee the restoration of rights, and compensate for war-inflicted losses by all means possible.

- Developing a humanitarian protection strategy that ensures health and education for all, and confronts poverty, deprivation, and disease.
- Giving the cause of the IDPs sufficient attention to aid them in either returning or integrating into their new communities, including providing them with material and moral support.
- Paying attention to the issue of refugees, preserving their right to return without restrictions, ensuring their right to participation in decision-making and creating visions for the future at the national level, giving them the option to return to their areas and having their rights restored.

A sense of security plays a pivotal role in the social trust component. Consequently, stopping violence and combating negative social phenomena such as killing, kidnapping, and theft is a priority for strengthening this component. Additionally, the sense of security is reinforced by providing humanitarian protections such as health, education, decent work, as well as political and economic participation. The trust among individuals indicator, which is the other pillar of the social trust component, increases through the prioritization of the rule of law and the creation of an independent and just judiciary. As for the regional level, work on the regions where trust has collapsed as a result of heavy fighting and extreme polarization must be a priority. These regions include Raqqa, Idlib, Deir ez-Zor, Hasakah, and Aleppo, but this does not detract from the need to work towards the above proposed points in all governorates.

### Shared Values and Attitudes

Agreeing on shared values and attitudes is one of the key factors that could ensure social integration and cohesion and stimulate collective action and solidarity, which is one of the most important prerequisites for achieving development. As this research clarifies, if an agreement within local communities about their values is achieved in opposition to the values of others, this may lead to a negative impact on

social capital. Agreeing on visions at all local and national levels is linked to overcoming the roots of the conflict and laying the foundation for a future based on equal opportunities and capability, which requires:

- The future vision is related to the creation of new social contract that focuses on guaranteeing wide social dialogue based on knowledge, justice, equal citizenship, and insistence to reconstruct the country. Accordingly, new institutional structures will be built with functions that develop Syria and achieve social cohesion.
- Expanding participation in designing development strategy at the local and national levels, with focus on overcoming violence and achieving comprehensive and inclusive development based on the optimal investment of remaining national resources. Such programs and plans should be grounded in the principles of fair distribution of wealth, social harmony, and enhancing welfare.
- Developing policies and programs that are based on the wide participation of individuals and communities within institutions that they trust, with the goal of working together for the future as a way to combat the effects of the conflict.
- Respecting cultural diversity, protecting the freedom of expression and thinking, and eliminating all types of discrimination based on religion, region, belief, or gender.
- Adopting economic policies that offer alternatives to neoliberal policies that contributed to the exacerbation of inequality and developmental deterioration since before the crisis, and to the empowerment of warlords and war merchants during the war at the expense of people who bear the burden of the conflict. The proposed alternative policies would be based on inclusive growth, the utilization of human capital, participation, and institutional efficiency. They would also work on correcting the disastrously imbalanced distribution of wealth that has been produced by the conflict.
- Developing market institutions to be more

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**Regulating local public authorities that represent the people on a democratic basis while adopting a decentralized system that allows for broader participation and representation, thus enhancing society's trust in its representatives**

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**The future vision is related to the creation of new social contract that focuses on guaranteeing wide social dialogue based on knowledge, justice, equal citizenship, and insistence to reconstruct the country**

**Adopting economic policies that offer alternatives to neoliberal policies that contributed to the exacerbation of inequality and developmental deterioration since before the crisis, and to the empowerment of warlords and war merchants during the war at the expense of people who bear the burden of the conflict**

competent, accountable, and inclusive such that they open the way for efficient and effective private investment, depart from capitalist favoritism and exploitation, and expand opportunities and options for productive work, thus reducing unemployment rates and encouraging Syrians abroad to return and participate.

- Reinforcing the economic role of civil and communal societies so that they can contribute directly to reconstruction, through a voluntary or cooperative approach, in order to be a key player in future development and to advocate for social priorities. This will enhance vertical integration with institutions and bring individuals and communities closer together.
- Rehabilitating the educational structure and revising educational curricula, which would qualitatively enhance education; restoring the functionality of the schools that are out of service; and rehabilitating educational personnel, so that they could live up to the coming stage in enhancing education. This would account for the current state of education, which has dropped dangerously in terms of both quality and quantity, and which has suffered serious losses in school years and increased during the crisis dropouts.
- Restructuring the health system, providing health services for all, rehabilitating hospitals and medical centers, and establishing special centers for war victims, the disabled, and those who are sick due to serious environmental pollution and psychological traumas; as well as working to activate health programs concerned with child vaccination campaigns, control of war-caused epidemics, and ensuring the safety of medical personnel and neutralizing them from all forms of conflict.
- Developing policies and programs to address poverty and resource deprivation, which has reached unprecedented levels during the crisis, in both direct and indirect ways.
- Opening up space for public discussion and interactive dialogue at the local level between society members, communities, and various institutions;

assembly, peaceful demonstration, and free expression, thus facilitating the process of reaching common visions, goals, and aspirations at the local level.

- Developing inclusive development programs at local levels, in accordance with the local resources of each region or city, its needs and priorities, as well as the national vision for development.
- Reconstructing the destroyed infrastructure, institutions, and utilities, and encouraging local industrial, agricultural, and service sectors; this guarantees wide participation in construction and converges different visions.
- Developing programs for building the capacities, competencies, and qualifications of all society members, especially those most affected by the conflict, including the injured, the poor, and the IDPs; and providing specialized institutions to provide society members with psychosocial support, thus accelerating the process of integration into society.

Accordingly, enhancing the means and mechanisms of participation in the design and implementation of plans and strategies at the local and national levels is a priority for lifting the shared values and attitudes component of social capital. Participation reduces divergences and increases consensus on future visions for the society. In addition, providing participation for all gives women an active role in society. One of the priorities for promoting this component is to facilitate peaceful assembly and demonstration by individuals to express society's views on existing strategies and policies as a means of evaluating and correcting the performance of institutions by removing all of the obstacles that currently inhibit individuals from exercising their right to assembly. This would enhance a sense of collective belonging and the ability to influence public decisions. As for the regional level, the priority should be given to work in Raqqa, which has seen a significant decline in the status of women, and in Hasakah, where the difference in local and national visions has negatively affected the shared values and attitudes component.

**Opening up space for public discussion and interactive dialogue at the local level between society members, communities, and various institutions**

# Conclusion



## the importance of reviving social policies that are based on justice, sustainable and inclusive development, and alternative solutions for social development

This research presents a general picture of the concept and measurement of social capital in Syria that deteriorated rapidly as a result of the armed conflict, which has expanded to encompass almost all of the country's regions and cities, resulting in the worst humanitarian crisis since World War II. Because of the aggravation of political oppression and extremism forces, the conflict has affected the vast majority of individuals and communities, and led to catastrophic social and humanitarian consequences. The crisis dismantled existing relationships and networks, and it has rebuilt social bonds based on various forms of extremism, fear, and subordination. The conflict has also led to a decline in social trust to extremely low levels, both in terms of the decline in trust among individuals and the lack of a sense of security, which has been perpetuated by growing violence and negative incidents such as kidnapping, detention, killing, theft, and the exploitation of women and children. This is to be added to deepened discord between individuals and communities at the level of shared values and common understandings, ranging from identity to aspirations and future goals.

Social capital, with its different components (networks, trust, and values) has been severely damaged. The conflict caused the disappearance of entire communities and the re-formation of new ones, all imposed by the reality of displacement, asylum, and emigration. Herein lies the importance of reviving social policies that are based on justice, sustainable and inclusive development, and alternative solutions for social development, which would vary based on each community, its circumstances, and characteristics. An essential starting point for social integration and cooperation between society's individuals and communities is beginning the process of determining social policies; ones that activate social relations and networks and promote the principles and foundations of cooperation and solidarity. The research has initiated attempts to discern

possible solutions on the basis of justice, equity, and the development of alternative institutions to those that are based on tyranny and violence. The cessation of violence and the opening up of social dialogue are therefore urgent needs to begin the restoration and promotion of social capital and achieve social development.

This research has presented a new approach to social capital in light of the Syrian conflict, designing a multi-sectoral field survey to measure the concept at the local, regional level, then developing composite sub-indices to measure the social capital index and its components, and finally examining each component and the impact that the conflict has had therein. The research has also presented an econometric study of the determinants of social capital and its components, such as the demographic, health, educational, economic, and institutional situations, in addition to degrees of violence. Based on its findings, it eventually presented an overview of the socio-political characteristics that would enable an exit from the dark tunnel of the conflict and begin social development that could realize social integration, decent living, participation, and representation.

There are many questions and approaches that still need to be examined and further researched: Is it possible to directly influence the formation of social capital? What is the nature of social capital in a refugee community? Does widespread participation in the aftermath of a conflict necessarily lead to reduced polarization and enhanced solidarity? What is the role of foreign actors in eroding or strengthening social capital? Would accountability lead to restoring social trust? What is the role of culture in social capital? Thus, the subject of social capital within violent conditions is a fertile ground for further research that could help provide alternatives to various actors, and most particularly to Syrian society itself; and this research is a modest step forward.

**The cessation of violence and the opening up of social dialogue are therefore urgent needs to begin the restoration and promotion of social capital and achieve social development**

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# Appendices

# Appendix 1: Population Field Survey

## Methodology of Field Survey

The Population Status Survey 2014 aims to provide a comprehensive database in order to diagnose and understand the demographic, economic, social, and institutional status of the population in Syria, in addition to analyzing the impacts of the crisis, including the following objectives:

- Describe geographical distribution of the population in terms of IDPs and residents in their areas, and monitor their movement.
- Identify the key population demographic characteristics across the whole of the country.
- Illustrate the economic status of the population in terms of employment opportunities, economic activities, and the main sources of income.
- Describe living conditions in terms of housing conditions, public services, and infrastructure.
- Diagnose the population health and educational status.
- Analyze inequality, deprivation, and poverty status.
- Monitor the key social characteristics of population.
- Identify and assess the role of de facto institutions.

Given the exceptional nature of the survey under the complex circumstances of the armed conflict, the survey team worked to develop a tailored methodology to produce qualitative and quantitative indicators that describe the de facto dynamic situation. Consequently, multiple stages of the survey were developed including the use of available secondary data and then obtaining data from key informants present and active in the studied areas. Thereafter, many

steps have been conducted to cross-checking of the data. The approach was flexible, in order to monitor to the new conflict-related phenomena from demographic, economic, social, and institutional angles. In this context, consultations with researchers from different disciplines were conducted to agree on the technical framework for implementation and the research tools such as the research questionnaire, the researcher guide, the merging guide, and the form of emergency cases report for the purpose of this survey. Consultations also were conducted to ensure access to hot areas and to set a mechanism for full coverage of all governorates. The survey was conducted in partnership between the Syrian Center for Policy Research, the Central Bureau of Statistics, the Commission for Family Affairs and Population, and a team of independent researchers, in collaboration with the Planning and International Cooperation Commission, the National Social Aid Fund, and several NGOs such as the Syrian Arab Red Crescent.

The research covers all residents and displaced people, in all of Syria. The fieldwork was conducted through questions directed to key informants in their areas, taking into account the following:

- Identifying the geographical study unit based on the "sub-district" in all areas of the Syrian governorates, and "neighborhood" for the city centers, where three key informants were interviewed in each studied area.
- Consulting the governorate team and the survey core team about the extent of homogeneity (based on impact of the crisis on the humanitarian and physical aspects) in the sub-district or neighborhood. In the event of lack of homogeneity, the sub-district was separated into several study zones (based on clusters of villages) and, thus, resumes the survey on this basis.

- Preparing a list of researcher observations to be attached with the questionnaire. In the event of the researcher's inability to access the studied area for security reasons, the available secondary data were the basis for data cross-check. However, the presence of researcher and key informants at site at the studied area is the basis for the survey.
  - Conducting fieldwork in the hot areas through the following steps:
    - When possible, rely on researchers from the studied areas.
    - Interview people who are familiar with the situation; interviews can be conducted outside the areas.
    - Interview key informants via electronic means or telephone if personal meeting is not possible.
    - Maintain continual communication during the survey period to monitor dynamics and changes.
  - Determining selection criteria for the key informants, including being well-informed of the studied area, and being objective regardless of their affiliations; in addition, having access to updated information and data related to the studies' themes including socio-economic, demographic, and institutional ones. The selection criteria for the key informants included the following:
    - Being a citizen of the governorate, preferably from the studied area.
    - Being interested in, and well-informed of, circumstances in the studied area.
    - Representing the local community.
    - Representing a variety of intellectual and professional backgrounds.
    - Engaging in public action for public good.
    - Representing women and different age groups.
- trained by the research team and have the following duties:
- Prepare the plan of action in terms of implementation and time framework in coordination with research team.
  - Determine the scope of work in terms of geographic areas and the available secondary data in each governorate based on the research team preliminary recommendation.
  - Collect the available secondary data and information about the governorate.
  - Nominate the key informants in accordance with the agreed-upon criteria with the core team.
  - Conduct interviews with the key informants, with full commitment to the researcher guide, and complete researcher observation list.
  - Prepare reports on emergencies in case they occur, in coordination with the research team,
  - Provide the research team with verified information and data.

A set of criteria was adopted for the selection of the researchers who will work on the survey; the research is non-traditional and is conducted under complex and dangerous circumstances. The Central Bureau of Statistics Researchers selected and formed the field teams. Invitations were extended to independent researchers who showed interest in participating in the survey, in addition to volunteers from civil society. A desk selection was conducted in the first phase; the final selection was carried out subsequent to the training sessions. The criteria for selecting the researchers were that they be resident in the studied governorate; hold at least a secondary school certificate; have working experience in research, statistical and fieldwork, especially in the social sciences; be committed to scientific authenticity, and objectivity; be willing to work as a volunteer; and be able to communicate effectively.

### Survey Team

The survey team includes experts, researchers, specialists, administrators, and representatives of the partners. The team includes three basic working groups: the research team, the field team, and the technical team.

The field team includes governorate teams, which are formed of the team coordinator and a number of field researchers; they have been

The core team conducted daily assessment and follow-up of the teams' performance and made several field visits to verify the quality of work.

The governorate coordinators also followed up the researchers' performance. For instance, a large number of one governorate's team was excluded because they were not committed to the survey's standards; consequently the team had been reshaped. Another stage of assessment of the teams' work was conducted during the questionnaires' verification, which resulted in returning some questionnaires to the field and consequently excluding some researchers.

Four intensive training workshops on the survey's mechanism of implementation were held to clarify the objectives of the population status survey, the survey methodology, and the work. Descriptions of the questionnaire and the researcher guide were interactively provided, in addition to clarifications of the mechanism and rules of the merger and research code of ethics. The researchers received pre-crisis secondary data on the studied areas, which included information on population, education, population structure by age and gender, employment status, and the household expenditure and firms' distributions to understand the studied areas. Furthermore, preliminary tests were carried out on the selection of studied areas.

### Survey Tools

Several survey tools were used, the first of which were secondary information and data, including all official and non-official publications, studies, and reports relating to the studied areas. The research team worked to benefit from the available formal and informal secondary data. Many sources were provided by the Central Bureau of Statistics about the pre-crisis period, as they were working on surveys on the labor force, household income and expenditure, the family health, industrial firms, population censuses, and data on national accounts, education, and vital records.

The main tool of the survey was the questionnaire, which contained quantitative and qualitative questions prepared in accordance with the main themes of the

research and, hence, covered the demographic, economic, social, and institutional aspects. The research and technical teams designed the questionnaire with the participation of the governorate teams to ensure practicality and provision of the required data and indicators as targeted in the research. The technical and research teams developed the questionnaire and the researcher guide to ensure accurate description of the questions. The questionnaire included a section for the researcher's observations. It was prepared so that a researcher should be able to record the indicators and prominent phenomena in the studied area, enabling comparison with key informants' answers as a means of verification. It is worth noting that each questionnaire was completely filled by a single key informant and not more than one; the key informant is entitled to collect information from whomever he/she deems fit for the purpose, but the researcher does not ask more than one key informant to complete a specific questionnaire.

After completing the three questionnaires for each studied area, these questionnaires were merged into a new questionnaire, according to the merging guide, by the governorate team's coordinator and the researchers' team involved in the studied area. In case of inconsistency in any of the qualitative answers or significant differences in the quantitative ones (more than 10 per cent) or in the explanation, reference is made to the key informants for reassurance. If the discrepancy in the results persists, additional questionnaires were conducted with new key informants to reach more objective understanding of the studied area. Conducting the merging process by the field team is intended to avoid relying on averages and exclude the questionnaires that show bias or lack of understanding of the studied region from the field; this process was carried out before data entry.

The teams were directed to prepare the emergency report for monitoring changes that occurred in the studied area during the research period, immediately after the completion of the areas' questionnaires;

henceforth, to update data that changed as a result of the emerging circumstances. The research team also prepared the research code of ethics, a set of conditions that must be adhered to by the participants in the survey to ensure the confidentiality of the data, the safety of researchers and key informants, and the objectivity of results.

### Implementation of Fieldwork

Distributed among the research team, the technical team, and the field team, more than 250 researchers, experts, supervisors,

verifiers, coordinators, programmers, and administrative assistants worked on the field survey. Each team identified the studied areas starting from the level of districts—and neighborhoods within urban centers—with the possibility of breaking down the district in case of lacking homogeneity in terms of the impact of the crisis. The number of examined regions reached 698, distributed across all governorates. Table A shows the increased number of regions in the larger, more populated, and more affected governorates.

**Table A: The examined regions, questionnaires, and duration of interviews of respondents by governorate**

	Examined regions	Total questionnaires	Average interview duration (respondent/hours)
Damascus	55	220	5.86
Aleppo	138	552	3.85
Rural Damascus	100	399	2.40
Homs	45	180	5.19
Hama	43	172	4.44
Lattakia	50	200	4.66
Idlib	47	188	5.24
Hasakah	40	160	3.28
Deir ez-Zor	45	180	4.73
Tartus	37	148	4.82
Raqqa	12	19	4.31
Daraa	57	228	3.24
Sweida	22	88	3.33
Quneitra	7	28	5.14
Syria	698	2762	4.10

Source: 2014 Population Survey and the calculations of SCPR

The governorate teams selected the key informants who met the required criteria and communicated with them. When any key informant made an apology before the start of the interviews or in case of not completing the questionnaire, an alternative key informant was selected to reach three key informants for each area, while maintaining the integrity and security of the key informants free of any risks under the extreme conditions taking place in the country. The process of key informants' selection from varied intellectual, cultural, and political backgrounds entailed crucial challenges, especially to ascertain that they are non-polarized or engaged in violence acts; the diverse combination of the field teams played a major role in meeting this challenge.

Three questionnaires were collected from three different key informants from each studied area except for the Raqqqa governorate, as it was difficult to reach three key informants in all its areas. Then the field team in each governorate merged the questionnaires. It is worth mentioning that one of the research terms forbade any one researcher to interview all three key informants from the same area, to avoid the researcher's bias.

Most of the interviews were conducted between April and June of 2014, while some required revisiting to the field in July and August. Most of the questionnaires required more than one interview with the key informant; some cases required three interviews with the same informant, as a result of the complexity of the questionnaire, which required time from key informants to collect and verify the necessary information.

The average time of the interviews to complete one questionnaire was 4.1 hours (Table 1), which entailed great efforts by the researchers and the key informants. Taking the prevailing circumstances in each area, the time varied between governorates and regions, and this time does not include the time for questionnaire-merging, which was executed by the researchers' team in the governorate. The key informants have kindly devoted so much time to complete the questionnaires and have worked on the survey without any kind of financial incentives.

52 per cent of the interviews were conducted inside the examined regions and 48 per cent outside. It was not possible to conduct interviews inside certain regions that suffer compelling circumstances such as in the Deir ez-Zor, Aleppo, Raqqqa, Rural Damascus, Idlib, Hama, and Daraa governorates.

95 per cent of the interviews were conducted face-to-face with respondents, 4 per cent via telephone, and only 1 per cent were conducted online. The high percentage of personal interviews is due to the flexibility in the interview location. In case of necessity, the interview was made available outside the studied area, but when the direct interview was awkward in some areas, the electronic means were used.

The average age of key informants was 46 years at the national level, and ages ranged between 19 and 83 years. Their age was associated with the key informants' standards in terms of their work in public affairs and their extensive acquaintance of the studied area. The gender balance between female/male was not achieved in the selection of key informants, as the ratio of females among total key informants was only 8 per cent, partly on account of the current circumstances of the crisis, and on account of the social role of women, which includes a clear bias against them. However, the survey team tried to meet balance in the formation of the governorate teams, as females' participation reached 39 per cent of the total researchers.

The educational level of the key informants was advanced and considerably consistent with the selection criteria to meet the survey's different goals in understanding the studied areas. The portion of university degrees and institutes certificate holders reached 65 per cent; those with secondary school certificates were 23 per cent; those with basic education certificates were 11 per cent; and elementary school graduates or below were about 1 per cent.

After the completion of key informants' interviews, the field teams in the governorates merged the questionnaires of each studied area in accordance with the merging guide

and sent all questionnaires to the research team. Teams worked collectively to scrutinize the detailed questionnaires and to check whether they were comprehensive and dedicated to the set criteria and merger standards. The teams also verified whether the explanation of key informants (comments) complemented the quantitative data and were consistent with the researchers' observations. In the event of major discrepancies, the questionnaires were returned to the field to modify the observations. In the case of minor discrepancies, a phone call to communicate with the field teams was sufficient for adjustments. After this stage, the coding team worked on the preparation of the encoding lists for the questions in order to facilitate the entry process and the subsequent analysis, such as encoding the term "Other" or encoding new economic activities in various areas, as well as the integration of coding in the entry program by the technical team.

The technical team of the Central Bureau of Statistics prepared the entry process software, which included some of the initial verification rules. The Central Bureau of Statistics team carried out the digital entries for all questionnaires, i.e., the field and merged questionnaires, in addition to entering the explanation for the merged questionnaires. Pursuant to this process, the research team designed a program to verify the accuracy of data and merger, upon which they produced reports of the detailed observations. The entry team and the research team worked to adjust the reports in accordance with the specific rules or by returning them to the field teams.

The survey produced more than a hundred indicators for each studied area, enabled for clustering at the level of the districts, regions,

governorates, and country. The processing software to analyze the results was prepared by technical and research teams to include data and indicators of demographic, economic and living conditions, education, health, and social and institutional sections. The teams produced and verified data at the level of the areas studied. The multi-discipline team also worked on the analysis of the results of the population, economic, and social issues.

The report used the following software for data entry: (CSpro) for the production of indicators; (SPSS 21), for data analysis; (Stata 12, Eviews 7), also used (MORTPAK 4.3) and (Population Analysis System PAS) to conduct analysis and demographic projections, in addition to (ArcGIS 10.2. 2) for maps production.

In general, the report adopted a comprehensive methodology to approach the population issue based mainly on rights. It adopted the broad concept of development as an expansion of people's choices, fair opportunities, and the right to empowerment and participation. It relied also on the efforts of a large group of experts to review the population issue before the crisis. The survey implementation was carried out under the complex circumstances of the crisis, developing the methodology and tools to reflect the challenges that resulted therefrom. A comprehensive field survey in terms of geographical coverage and the issues being addressed was carried out. The report relied on fieldwork to diagnose the population status during the crisis in terms of various developmental aspects, taking advantage of the relevant literature and the in-depth background papers that had been prepared in the context of this research framework.

## Appendix 2: Social Capital Index and its components by governorates (before and during the crisis)

	Before the crisis				During the crisis			
	SCI	Components			SCI	Components		
		Networks	Trust	Values		Networks	Trust	Values
Damascus	0.699	0.591	0.784	0.722	0.637	0.616	0.566	0.730
Aleppo	0.710	0.586	0.841	0.703	0.447	0.440	0.354	0.548
Rural Damascus	0.795	0.753	0.850	0.781	0.570	0.602	0.490	0.618
Homs	0.740	0.667	0.814	0.738	0.617	0.663	0.549	0.638
Hama	0.729	0.634	0.814	0.740	0.589	0.606	0.498	0.663
Lattakia	0.730	0.642	0.801	0.747	0.623	0.589	0.616	0.664
Idlib	0.761	0.637	0.853	0.794	0.400	0.384	0.329	0.487
Hasakah	0.703	0.551	0.868	0.690	0.340	0.373	0.232	0.416
Deir ez-Zor	0.789	0.694	0.893	0.781	0.446	0.443	0.350	0.544
Tartus	0.786	0.711	0.835	0.812	0.747	0.754	0.687	0.798
Raqqa	0.782	0.784	0.754	0.807	0.149	0.062	0.108	0.276
Daraa	0.772	0.743	0.791	0.781	0.512	0.501	0.402	0.633
Sweida	0.791	0.731	0.868	0.774	0.679	0.733	0.608	0.694
Quneitra	0.855	0.800	0.903	0.862	0.637	0.631	0.548	0.730
<b>Syria</b>	<b>0.745</b>	<b>0.655</b>	<b>0.831</b>	<b>0.747</b>	<b>0.521</b>	<b>0.524</b>	<b>0.444</b>	<b>0.596</b>

Source: Population Survey 2014, and calculations of SCPR.



## Appendix 3: Social Networks and Participation component by governorates (before and during the crisis)

	Before the crisis					During the crisis				
	Networks sub-index	المؤشرات الفرعية لمكون الشبكات				Networks sub-index	المؤشرات الفرعية لمكون الشبكات			
		Women's participation	Participation	Volunteerism	Cooperation		Women's participation	Participation	Volunteerism	Cooperation
Damascus	0.591	0.661	0.507	0.511	0.684	0.616	0.627	0.508	0.604	0.727
Aleppo	0.586	0.497	0.520	0.573	0.753	0.440	0.275	0.407	0.471	0.606
Rural Damascus	0.753	0.758	0.699	0.738	0.817	0.602	0.600	0.555	0.582	0.669
Homs	0.667	0.760	0.641	0.539	0.728	0.663	0.733	0.573	0.658	0.687
Homs	0.634	0.676	0.589	0.564	0.707	0.606	0.622	0.511	0.580	0.713
Lattakia	0.642	0.798	0.567	0.537	0.666	0.589	0.735	0.479	0.531	0.609
Idlib	0.637	0.689	0.563	0.566	0.730	0.384	0.328	0.245	0.427	0.535
Hasakah	0.551	0.499	0.497	0.452	0.755	0.373	0.417	0.202	0.395	0.481
Deir ez-Zor	0.694	0.743	0.600	0.637	0.795	0.443	0.353	0.329	0.476	0.613
Tartus	0.711	0.944	0.577	0.539	0.785	0.754	0.952	0.555	0.700	0.812
Raqqa	0.784	0.978	0.660	0.733	0.766	0.062	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.250
Daraa	0.743	0.919	0.640	0.645	0.767	0.501	0.599	0.470	0.348	0.593
Sweida	0.731	0.858	0.672	0.568	0.828	0.733	0.821	0.612	0.685	0.813
Quneitra	0.800	0.831	0.757	0.852	0.761	0.631	0.662	0.521	0.739	0.603
<b>Syria</b>	<b>0.655</b>	<b>0.691</b>	<b>0.586</b>	<b>0.593</b>	<b>0.751</b>	<b>0.524</b>	<b>0.515</b>	<b>0.436</b>	<b>0.514</b>	<b>0.631</b>

Source: Population Survey 2014, and calculations of SCPR.

## Appendix 4: Trust component by governorates (before and during the crisis)

	Before the crisis			During the crisis		
	Trust sub-index	Indicator		Trust sub-index	Indicator	
		Security	Trust among individuals		Security	Trust among individuals
Damascus	0.784	0.894	0.675	0.566	0.557	0.574
Aleppo	0.841	0.953	0.730	0.354	0.158	0.550
Rural Damascus	0.850	0.957	0.743	0.490	0.443	0.536
Homs	0.814	0.884	0.743	0.549	0.511	0.588
Hama	0.814	0.891	0.738	0.498	0.393	0.604
Lattakia	0.801	0.944	0.658	0.616	0.701	0.532
Idlib	0.853	0.953	0.753	0.329	0.338	0.321
Hasakah	0.868	0.992	0.743	0.232	0.208	0.256
Deir ez-Zor	0.893	0.959	0.827	0.350	0.222	0.477
Tartus	0.835	0.905	0.765	0.687	0.693	0.681
Raqqa	0.754	0.766	0.741	0.108	0.066	0.151
Daraa	0.791	0.861	0.722	0.402	0.383	0.422
Sweida	0.868	0.948	0.788	0.608	0.597	0.620
Quneitra	0.903	0.985	0.822	0.548	0.453	0.643
<b>Syria</b>	<b>0.831</b>	<b>0.926</b>	<b>0.736</b>	<b>0.444</b>	<b>0.379</b>	<b>0.508</b>

Source: Population Survey 2014, and calculations of SCPR.

## Appendix 5: Shared values and attitudes component by governorates (before and during the crisis)

	Before the crisis				During the crisis			
	Values sub-index	Indicator			Values sub-index	Indicator		
		Region vision	Syria vision	Women's status		Region vision	Syria vision	Women's status
Damascus	0.722	0.641	0.699	0.825	0.730	0.669	0.756	0.766
Aleppo	0.703	0.730	0.776	0.602	0.548	0.581	0.609	0.455
Rural Damascus	0.781	0.742	0.746	0.855	0.618	0.563	0.535	0.756
Homs	0.738	0.665	0.671	0.879	0.638	0.639	0.643	0.633
Hama	0.740	0.674	0.681	0.865	0.663	0.544	0.577	0.870
Lattakia	0.747	0.606	0.761	0.875	0.664	0.533	0.688	0.771
Idlib	0.794	0.681	0.802	0.900	0.487	0.383	0.367	0.712
Hasakah	0.690	0.638	0.696	0.735	0.416	0.336	0.320	0.592
Deir ez-Zor	0.781	0.710	0.739	0.894	0.544	0.457	0.484	0.690
Tartus	0.812	0.680	0.778	0.978	0.798	0.645	0.757	0.994
Raqqa	0.807	0.711	0.711	1.000	0.276	0.075	0.500	0.253
Daraa	0.781	0.676	0.703	0.964	0.633	0.525	0.561	0.812
Sweida	0.774	0.673	0.742	0.908	0.694	0.596	0.591	0.896
Quneitra	0.862	0.750	0.837	1.000	0.730	0.523	0.746	0.923
<b>Syria</b>	<b>0.747</b>	<b>0.693</b>	<b>0.736</b>	<b>0.813</b>	<b>0.596</b>	<b>0.531</b>	<b>0.577</b>	<b>0.682</b>

Source: Population Survey 2014, and calculations of SCPR.







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