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**BACKGROUND PAPER FOR THE
WORLD DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2013**

Social Cohesion: Theoretical Debates and Practical Applications with Respect to Jobs

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Introduction and key messages

This paper was written on request of the World Bank team preparing the World Development Report 2013 on Jobs, to enable grounding of the chapter on social cohesion and the interface with employment and jobs in the non-economic social science (particularly sociological) literature. We present a number of broad and more specific definitions of social cohesion, limitations and implications for data and analysis. We then discuss, and hypothesize about a number of ‘pathways’ between social cohesion and jobs, and then try to connect these to a number of policy options and challenges.

As the WDR notes, the word ‘job’, has many varied and complex meanings. To some extent it only really gets clear meaning in context. The boundary between a ‘job’ and a set of activities which are ‘not a job’ can be legal or normative (criminal activities are not generally perceived as ‘jobs’, neither is bonded labor or slavery). Our understanding of the term does include self-employment, family farms and other forms of organization of labor which do not involve an individual selling labor as a commodity. Broadly we follow here the characterization in the WDR: ‘jobs are activities that generate income, monetary or in kinds, without violating human rights.’¹

In industrial society jobs are generally perceived as determining the place of different individuals in terms of social status, power relationships and relative wealth. According to this understanding it is intuitively obvious that a plentiful supply of good quality jobs—distributed in a way which is perceived as fair—is essential to a peaceful, happy society. Our review of the literature tends to focus on complexities (both analytical and policy-related)—but nothing invalidates that fundamental insight. The jobs agenda is fundamental for human social well-being.

At the outset of this paper it is important to emphasize that little of the literature reviewed here finds or even looks for clear unidirectional correlations; thus, when we describe ‘pathways’, there is typically a two-way flow. In all cases, context is critical, and few sociologists would (anymore) try to look for correlations that have applicability beyond specific cultural and institutional settings. While we focus on the sociological literature, it is important to highlight that the governance and institutional literatures ought to be drawn in for a more comprehensive understanding, as many of the social development indicators are likely to influence economic outcomes through institutional quality.

General reflections that emerge from our review include:

- Sociology may not provide direct hypotheses regarding what a cohesive *society* is, in relation to any specific definition (of the kind that might be necessary to generate quantitative indicators). The Grand Theories of sociology focus on the large socio-economic transformations, notably the transition to capitalism and urbanization. Generalizing accounts regarding the links between economic transformation and social relations and cohesion have generally been discredited, though approaches have continued to influence schools of thought.

¹ World Bank 2012 forthcoming.

- The Development Policy literature tends towards explicitly normative definitions of social cohesion—as in OECD (2011) where cohesion is clearly addressed through a perspective which favors equity—using a language of social inclusion, social mobility and social capital to elaborate this.
- Inclusion and exclusion are two sides of the same coin. Social network (capital) analysis highlights how networks (including ethnic and religious) are enabling as well as limiting, including in terms of jobs and entrepreneurship. A useful distinction is made between strong and weak ties, where the latter may be necessary to transcend social/class boundaries, and emphasis on dynamic nature of networks.
- Sociology provides limited insight about how states/governments can promote cohesion, and whether a focus on jobs to promote cohesion has been or can be successful. However, the social policy literature provides strong suggestions that the mode of organizing public policies (particularly, universalism) play an important role in creating national unity.
- The literature on conflict and social cohesion places a strong emphasis on the importance of inter-group relations—on overcoming perceptions of grievance held by social groups which can become the basis of conflict, and on actions which can help to overcome such perceptions (e.g. by building citizen identities which cross-cut social difference or by conflict resolution approaches).

It is worth emphasizing that social cohesion as a concept cannot really be separated from the generation of shared values, identities and norms. A degree of social consensus on norms and values in the following areas is not just associated with—but actually inherent and constitutive of social cohesion:

- *Social membership/national citizenship*—a clear sense of who belongs (community, nation) is necessary to establish clarity around the basic rights and obligations which govern social interaction.
- *Fairness and equity*—different societies have different levels of tolerance for inequality and for variations in equality of opportunity and social mobility. Such norms change over time, sometimes rather rapidly.
- *Security of access to livelihoods and basic services*—Social insurance cushions individuals against a relative loss of income or wealth; social assistance may intend to ensure that no individual can dip beneath a ‘social floor’; a guarantee of livelihoods may be accompanied by a degree of guarantee of certain basic services; education can be a key instrument for building a common national identity.
- *The role of the state* is critical to and cuts across these three issues: it legitimizes national membership/citizenship (and the conditions of access for outsiders), and it embodies national norms around fairness and to different degrees ensures individuals/household access to basic livelihoods and services.

The fundamentally normative character of the concept suggests a need to take sides in formulating a definition. It is not hard to think of examples of societies that are (crudely) cohesive in their capacity to generate exclusionary and xenophobic values, norms and actions. A concern with social cohesion can lead to an inherently conservative perspective—where contestation, conflict, challenge, or even social change can be seen as working to undermine cohesion and stability. For the concept to be useful as a policy tool to support progressive developmental change, it needs to avoid a *bias to the established social and political order* and a *bias to cultural and social homogeneity*. This does not make it useless as a means of guiding policy. Social cohesion can stand for the elements of social progress which include human security and solidarity, and can be both constitutive to development, and instrumental to other elements of development, for example the ability of social groups to sustainably improve living standards, or the ability of representative institutions to facilitate economic reforms.

In policy terms the cohesion we seek enables peaceful contestation, voice, respect for cultural difference and broadly speaking builds the freedoms of both individuals and groups (in the sense of Sen, *Development as Freedom* 1999). Social cohesion thus also implies the capacity of societies to manage social change peacefully, inclusively, and with a view to enhancing individual and group freedoms.

The paper continues in section 2 to examine a range of issues which bear on the analysis of causal pathways between jobs and social cohesion. The significance of context is emphasized, and possible positive pathways from (plentiful, good quality) jobs to enhanced social cohesion are examined in four major areas: socialization, participation, social justice and aspiration. Before that, we provide a broad discussion of the way social sciences have approached social cohesion, typically related to fundamental societal transformations, to situate the more specific discussion on the links between jobs and social cohesion. Section 3 reviews the challenges for policy makers in applying goals of social cohesion to job-creation policies and reflects on the potential to use a jobs agenda to address durable inequalities and the social dynamics of migration.

1. Definitions, implications for research

“There is no unanimous position on whether social cohesion is a cause or a consequence of other aspects of social, economic and political life. For some analysts and policy-makers, the condition of social cohesion in any polity is an *independent variable*, generating outcomes. For others, social cohesion (or the lack thereof) is the *dependent variable*, the result of actions in one or more realms” (Beauvais and Jenson 2002).²

This conclusion was reached in the context of a relative—compared to the broad range of the interest of WDR—limited review of the literature on social cohesion in the Canadian and OECD context. And the question on cause and consequence is only one of the many questions—and one which we return to in the second part of this paper—that immediately emerge in the question

² We have greatly benefited from the excellent literature review prepared by Jimena Luna, which directed us to many of the recent debates and writings on the subject. To ensure that we reflect properly the main sociological theories, we have drawn on the list of most influential books prepared by the International Sociological Association (<http://www.isa-sociology.org/books/>).

of defining social cohesion.³ Other, inevitable differences occur depending on the focus of attention, including the unit of analysis,⁴ and the elements of societal interaction that is the primary focus.⁵

Social cohesion and social theory

Some of the main sociological theories and theorists are shown in the following table, depending on these main differences (this is for illustrative purposes for this paper only, there is not one or accepted way to bring this diversity together).

Table 1 Axes of social cohesion

	Identity	Economic interest	Status	Interdependent spheres
Group	Ibn Khaldun Migration analysis Erving Goffman (and 'identity economics')	Social capital literature (Granovetter, Lin, Coleman, etc) Economic sociology, Simmel, Toennies.	Bourdieu: individuals invest in relationships Social network/resource theory	Bourdieu—social capital as fungible
Class		Marx—class in itself and for itself Veblen—Leisure Class	Weber—merit as binding division of labor Symbolic interactionism	
State	'Civilization' (Norbert Elias) Cohesion as public policy concept (Hulse and Stone 2007)			Weber—modern bureaucracy Habermas—critical rationality (communicative action) Social contract theories
Society	Durkheim—group life as antidote to anomie			Parson—functionalism

Note: 'individual' is not one of the axes in this table; the reason for this is that the units of analysis in the left column typically are defined in relation to individuals (Friedkin (2004)), a procedure that as footnote 3 highlights has been defined as the core of 'sociological imagination.'

³ "Investigators interested in developing a general theory of social cohesion are confronted with a complex body of work that involves various definitions of social cohesion, specialized literatures on particular dimensions of social cohesion (e.g., membership turnover, organizational commitment, categorical identifications, interpersonal attachments, network structures), and lines of inquiry focused on the social cohesion of specific types of groups (e.g., families, schools, military units, and sports teams)" (Friedkin 2004: 409).

⁴ The need to understand simultaneously 'inner life' and the 'external career' of individuals, and 'history and biography and the relationship between the two' was the core of the 'sociological imagination' as proposed by C. Wright Mills (1959). The need to understand individual action in its social context remained central in the work of Anthony Giddens (1978) for example, and is the central to the 'identity economics' of Akerlof and Kranton (2010) who draw on the work of the sociologist Erving Goffman (1995). Research on social capital similarly stretches from a focus on individuals to communities and nations; see Portes (1998) for a review of the use of the notion in sociological theory.

⁵ Social cohesion "cannot be reduced to what happens to be only one of its dimensions, for instance, the reduction of differences, cleavages and inequalities between groups of people" (Hulse and Stone 2007).

Social cohesion is such a core concept to sociology, comparable perhaps to ‘markets’ for economists, that it’s impossible to do justice to the broad literature within the scope of this paper—and, perhaps, as Alejandro Portes in 1998 remarked about the notion of social capital, “does not embody any idea really new to sociologists”. In many cases, the question of social cohesion has emerged in the social science literature as response to transformations that were deemed to undermine the social fabric. One generally traces the interest in social cohesion back to **Emile Durkheim**, particularly his *De La Division Du Travail Social*. However, earlier references can be found in the writing of **Ibn Khaldun**, regarded by some as the (15th century) father of sociology, and whose concept *asabiyah* is generally translated as social cohesion. Written in times of manifold conflicts, Khaldun regarded *asabiyah* as the solidarity of small groups (tribes), that have the power to promote broader social integration, through a number of stages, which can be (has been) compared to the role culture plays in facilitating integration of immigrants.⁶ Khaldun was however pessimistic about the capacity of such small groups to maintain their solidarity after they obtain control (through conquest) of a larger social formation. Once a tribe becomes the foundation of a ruling dynasty he regarded its disintegration, over a period of three to four generations, as inevitable.

The process of industrialization and capitalist development of course also gave rise to the writings of **Marx and Lenin**. What Durkheim (see below) saw as different modalities of solidarity, was conceptualized primarily as class conflict by Marx, and the conflict that was rooted primarily in economic structure as primary driver of what Marx saw as inevitable societal progress, through a series of stages. These views have continued to be influential, notably, Marx’s idea of dialectic development (differences as driver of change), and the idea of stages of development, particularly in China (though combined there with a rather different conceptualization of the role of the state to maintain cohesion⁷). Marx’s focus on economic structure depicted religious (‘opium’) and cultural phenomena as secondary, as ‘false consciousness’, while much of the subsequent sociology has taken symbolic value much more seriously as societal binding forces (notably, Berger and Luckman’s emphasis that what’s defined as real is real in its consequences). Also, Marx’ assumption that social networks would merge with the modern economy has been disputed as a core strand of sociological analysis (Granovetter 2005: 36).

Durkheim’s writings must be understood in the context of societal transformation, and he was particularly concerned with two different types of solidarity, that manifested themselves in the process of industrialization in Europe. Primitive societies were marked by mechanical solidarity and a strong collective ethos based on relatively homogeneous patterns of life and work. Advanced capitalist society, on the other hand, with its complex division of labor was marked by organic solidarity based on merit, respect for different roles within the labor force, and with a need for moral regulation. Durkheim thought of the transition between the two as disorderly and marked by ‘anomie’ and pathologies, but this would gradually be overcome. Contrasting sharply with liberal and economic emphasis on individuals as profit-maximizing beings Durkheim’s emphasis on society as an integrated system, with sanctioning capacity of group rituals, has

⁶ <http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/tvbk/ch25.htm>.

⁷ See Kelly (2006) for an interesting discussion of the Chinese state’s conceptualisation of social harmony, which is reflected in both its national and international ideologies.

informed the writings of sociologists like Robert Merton and Talcott Parsons, and a strand of analysis known as functionalism.

Max Weber like Marx and Durkheim was primarily concerned with the implications of the transformation to capitalism, and for example the link to religious beliefs (notably, Protestant asceticism, which he saw as reinforcing capitalist development, an analysis that has been used—and criticized—in relation to capitalist development elsewhere, e.g. in Indonesia). In contrast to Marx, he saw the emergence of modern rationality, as a binding force in the newly emerging social order, and the modern bureaucracy as the embodiment of that rationality.⁸ Industrial sociology, as defined by Etzioni (1958) for instance, builds on Weber's insights (and that of Parsons), and includes empirical research to better understand, for example, worker's 'irrational' behavior like output restrictions.

Jurgen Habermas draws on Weber and Marx, and a range of other social science and linguistic theories, to analyze the possibility of reason and emancipation in modern institutions and human capacities, highlighting the institutionalization of critical rationality in the public sphere. *Communicative action* describes the process in which actors seek to reach common understanding and coordinate actions through reasoning and cooperation. In doing so, they draw on commonly shared definitions of a 'lifeworld'—but Habermas' idea of rationality explicitly avoids an over-deterministic interpretation of what a shared culture or norms are. While Habermas does not relate directly to, for example, the social capital literature (Bolton 2005), his work is of great value to understand processes of socialization, or the dynamic processes through which groups structure individuals' action while these actors engage in a constant re-articulation of that life world (or the 'production of meaning', in the words of Paul Willis—see below),

Bourdieu is arguably the most important sociologist at the basis of the social capital literature that surged in the 1990s (Portes 1998; the economist Glen Loury used the term earlier). He focused on the benefits to individuals that accrue from the participation in groups, and the need for individuals to invest in these relations (with different types of capital being fungible). Subsequent work drawing on the notion of social capital to analyze the way individuals interact with broader groups and the benefits they derive from this includes James Coleman's, Nan Lin's and Mark Granovetter's,⁹ and we will come back to some of this work later.

Another highly influential stream of work using the organizing concept of social capital derives from **Putnam's** seminal analysis of civic traditions in Italy (1993). The central question of enquiry in this study was to determine the conditions for creating strong, responsive, effective representative institutions. Famously northern Italy had more of these than southern Italy and Putnam concluded that the central enabling condition was the existence of more social capital (measured through the density of local associations such as sports clubs, bands, hunting associations etc.—all of which have to be officially registered in Italy and are therefore easily used for detailed quantitative analysis). It is worth noting that in Putnam's formulation social capital is more a characteristic of societies than groups. If you live in a highly 'civic' region

⁸ 'Critical analysis', like that of the philosopher Foucault has emphasised the disciplining nature of the modern state, its 'civilizational' drive (Norbert Elias, Abraham de Swaan), including in colonial contexts (Edward Said).

⁹ Granovetter (2005) is a useful article highlighting how economic analyses can draw on neighbour social sciences insights on social structure. In his view (p.35) the question how the economy interacts with other social institutions tends to be sidestepped in social theory i.e. not just in economics).

such as Emilia-Romagna you will benefit from having a more effective and responsive set of public institutions than if you live in a less ‘civic’ region such as Calabria, even if you don’t belong to any local associations yourself.

Since Durkheim, a concern with economic change as a threat to social cohesion repeats frequently,¹⁰ often with a degree of romanticization of the past. Writings on social exclusion, in the French context defined as the ‘rupture of social bonds’ (and the inclusion policies with a strong emphasis on restoring the social contract), emerged as a concern over the most-marginalized, and grew in the context of the rise of unemployment and the decline of the post-War European model of full employment.¹¹ The OECD’s concern with social cohesion, since the 1990s, has been directly informed by concerns over the impacts of globalization, which has arguably enhanced intra-country inequalities, reduced job and employment security, and brought disparities and its discontent much more prominently into public debates and old and new forms of media.¹²

A large literature has developed since the 1970s focusing on ethnic minorities in European and North American economies, and concerns have moved from discrimination, to the role and strength of networks, to a celebration of diversity which has emphasized that ethnic identities and restricted networks can enhance integration and productivity, to a (post 9/11) concern about the failure of multi-cultural policies that would have led to ghettoization and lack of integration.¹³ This broad literature, again, demonstrates the importance of context both in terms of empirical regularities (e.g. in terms of identity-jobs links) and in the way public debates are framed (diversity versus assimilation). But empirical studies in this genre can be very helpful in formulating hypotheses regarding links between networks and jobs, particularly in relation to the inclusion-exclusion dynamics of networks, and how productive yet limited benefits within networks can be transcended.

Though sociology usually has society or groups in the centre of analysis, social cohesion has been defined (and measured) at the level of individual-level indicators as well (Friedkin 2004). These include “(a) individuals’ membership attitudes (their desire or intention to remain in a group, their identification with or loyalty to a group, and other attitudes about the group or its members); and (b) individuals’ membership behaviors (their decisions to sever, weaken, maintain, or strengthen their membership or participation in a group, their susceptibilities to

¹⁰ Kilroy (2012) refers to the work of Simmel and Tonnies, who following Marx, were concerned with the social atomisation that would result from the division of labor. Meso-level studies have focused on social connections and problems in industrial settings—see Dudwick (2012).

¹¹ Silver (1998); Plan de Cohésion Sociale (2004). It appears that the French conceptualisation of disadvantages has become very influential in the European debate—this does not appear directly related to efforts to create a European identity (in the sense that national public policies have fulfilled that function).

¹² Giuliano and Spilimbergo (2009) find that individuals who have experienced a recession in the formative age of 18-25 years tend to believe less in personal effort, perceive stronger inequalities, and have less confidence in public institutions; in: <http://www.osloconference2010.org/discussionpaper.pdf>. Altindag and Mocan (2010) using survey data for 69 countries across the world (including developing countries) indicates that personal joblessness experience translates into negative opinions about the effectiveness of democracy and increases the desire for a rogue leader. In: <http://www.osloconference2010.org/discussionpaper.pdf>.

¹³ And in popular debate this has been linked to violence/terrorism, though most of the evidence appears to suggest this was not a result of lack of integration: 9/11 was not by ethnic minorities, and UK and Dutch attacks were by people well-integrated in local societies.

interpersonal influence, and other behavioral indicators of commitment and attachment to the group).”

In terms of data and methods, the sociological literature has been fairly evenly divided in more qualitative and quantitative approaches. Efforts to assess different aspects of social cohesion across nations or contexts are of course more recent. The Indices of Social Development now housed at ISS The Hague is probably the most comprehensive efforts. It synthesizes—at national level—data from amongst others the World Values Survey, regional barometers, Civicus, Global Civil Society, and Minorities at Risk. It categorizes these into civic activism, clubs and associations, inter-group cohesion, and inter-personal safety and trust.¹⁴

Social cohesion in social policy literatures

In order to address social cohesion as a policy goal some key issues need to be addressed. The first concerns values. Social cohesion as a concept cannot really be separated from the generation of shared values, identities and norms. A degree of social consensus on norms and values is not just associated with, but actually inherent and constitutive of social cohesion. Public institutions (particularly institutions that provide services) generally play an important role in generating and maintaining these norms and values.

The generation of social cohesion implies, in the first place, a set of rules around *social membership and/or national citizenship*. A clear sense of who belongs (whether to a community or a nation—the two can be overlapping but also conflictual) is necessary to establish clarity around the basic rights and obligations which govern social interaction. The link between citizenship and social policy has been central, for example, in the UK social policy literature (Marshall 1950). Marshall’s foundational insight linking social policy and citizenship was that the realization of civic and political rights for citizens was conditional on the fulfillment of a minimum level of economic and social rights.

Second, any degree of social consensus involves norms around *fairness and equity*. Different societies have different levels of tolerance for inequality and for varying equality of opportunity and social mobility.¹⁵ Such norms are dynamic and tolerance for increasing inequality is likely to be greater in societies which are experiencing sustained improvements in living standards for all than under conditions of recession (a point which is easy to demonstrate from current political discourse in stagnant OECD economies), but inter-OECD differences also demonstrates the importance of context, culture and path-dependence.

Third, the provision of *security of access to livelihoods and basic services* is critical to social norms around social cohesion. Historically, social insurance has been the ‘safety rope’ in the

¹⁴ www.indsocdev.org. The fifth index is gender equality but this says little about social relations, and a future 6th index will show group disparities. It is doubtful (but a worthwhile exercise for empirical as well as methodological reason) whether aggregating the ISDs into one would yield meaningful results.

¹⁵ Even definitions of equality/equity matter: research shows that US citizens compared to Europeans tend to have a higher degree of acceptance of inequality in terms of outcomes, because of the belief in equality of opportunity (the belief does not necessarily match reality). Research showed that in Scandinavia popular assessment regarded a top-and-bottom income ratio of 4-to-1 as just, compared to 12-to-1 in the US (Esping-Andersen 1999: 7), Dallinger (2010). In a special issue of *Work, employment and society*, Rubery (2011) argues European citizens still look to the state to ensure their social citizenship right.

terms described by Sumarto et al (2001)—which provided a guarantee that a given individual (like a climber on a rock face) would not fall more than a given distance in terms of their standard of living. Social assistance has been the ‘safety net’ which would ensure that no individual can dip beneath a ‘social floor’. In the context of a contemporary view of citizenship, the guarantee of livelihoods is accompanied by a degree of guarantee of certain basic services.¹⁶ The role of education is notable, as primary education has been, at least since the establishment of the Napoleonic model in France, a key instrument for building a common national identity.¹⁷ Other key social provision—health, pensions—tend to be central elements of what is often termed a social contract.

The role of the state is critical to and cuts across these three issues. It legitimizes national membership and citizenship, and the conditions of access for outsiders. It embodies national norms around fairness and equity, both in structuring public debate and in policy implementation. States finally ensure, to a greater or smaller extent, individuals/household basic livelihoods and services.¹⁸

The fundamentally normative character of the concept suggests a need to take sides in formulating a definition. It is not hard to think of examples of societies that are (crudely) cohesive in their capacity to generate exclusionary and xenophobic values, norms and actions. In policy terms the cohesion we seek enables peaceful contestation, voice, respect for cultural difference and broadly speaking builds the freedoms of both individuals and groups (in the sense of Sen, *Development as Freedom* (1999)). In accepting that social cohesion as a policy goal encompasses this rather broad terrain of progressive social norms and values, there is a risk that the definition becomes very broad—this is arguably the case with many of the institutional definitions in box 1.

Some formulations draw a closer linker between social cohesion as an enabling condition for peace and human security than others. In a detailed review of evidence and literature on the issue of societal dynamics and fragility the Social Cohesion and Violence Prevention team of the World Bank emphasize the significance of the *convergence of groups* in a society (“...at its essence social cohesion embodies a convergence across groups that provides an overarching structure for collective life that helps ensure predictability and even certainty, even if it does not guarantee that all groups agree on all issues.”—World Bank (2012)). There is a particular focus in this work on the holding of grievance (or perceptions of unjust treatment) by specific social groups as a factor which undermines social cohesion. Another useful theme in this work is the argument that rigid relationships (and social identities) may hinder the capacity of societies to maintain social cohesion under conditions of rapid change. Such change can challenge gender roles, relationships between the generations, and the basis of social membership (where migration is a key factor).

¹⁶ Gacitua-Mario et al. (2009).

¹⁷ See Brown (2005) for Malaysia, in context of ethnic diversity.

¹⁸ The social policy literature (Esping-Andersen 1990, 1999) applies a notion of decommodification as indicator of the balance between services provided through the market and by state institutions.

Box 1 Definitions of social cohesion

The sociological literature offers a range of understandings of social cohesion, for example:

The “capacity of societies, not merely groups and networks, to peacefully manage collective action problems” Woolcock (2011)

Easterly et al (2006) see the lack of social cohesion as based on “the nature and extent of social and economic divisions within society (income, ethnicity, political party, caste, language, etc.) which create societal cleavages”

“Groups are cohesive when group-level conditions are producing positive membership attitudes and behaviors and when group members’ interpersonal interactions are operating to maintain these group level conditions. Thus, cohesive groups are self-maintaining with respect to the production of strong membership attractions and attachments. a causally interrelated phenomena focused on individuals’ membership attitudes and behaviors, which deals with the social processes that link micro and macro-level outcomes and ultimately impact individual behavior” (Friedkin 2004: 410).

“...the forces holding the individuals within the groupings in which they are” (Moreno & Jennings 1937)

“...the total field of forces which act on members to remain in the group” (Festinger et al. 1950, p. 164)

“...the resultant forces which are acting on the members to stay in a group” or “the attraction of membership in a group for its members” (Back 1951)

“Social cohesion is viewed as a characteristic of a society dealing with the relations between societal units such as individuals, groups, associations as well as territorial units” (McCracken 1998)

Definitions by institutions

a cohesive society is one that “works towards the well-being of all its members, minimizing disparities and avoiding marginalization” and entails “fostering cohesion by building networks of relationships, trust and identity between different groups, fighting discrimination, exclusion and excessive inequalities, and enabling upward social mobility” (OECD 2011).

“a cohesive society is a mutually supportive community of free individuals pursuing common goals by democratic means” (Council of Europe 2004).

“Social cohesion is the capacity of a society to ensure the welfare of all its members, minimising disparities and avoiding polarisation. A cohesive society is a mutually supportive community of free individuals pursuing these common goals by democratic means (European Committee for Social Cohesion, 2004).

social cohesion is a “set of social processes that help instil in individuals the sense of belonging to the same community and the feeling that they are recognized as members of the community” (French Commissariat General du Plan 1997).

“the dialectical relationship between mechanisms of social inclusion and people’s reactions, perceptions and attitudes to ways in which these mechanisms operate in producing a sense of belonging in society” (United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC).

“Social Cohesion describes the nature and quality of relationships across people and groups in society, including the state. The constituency of social cohesion is complex, but at its essence social cohesion implies a convergence across groups in society that provides a framework within which groups can, at a minimum, coexist peacefully. In this way social cohesion offers a measure of predictability to interactions across people and groups, which in turn provides incentives for collective action.” (Social Development Department, World Bank 2012, forthcoming)

Related notions

“shared societies are stable, safe and just and based on the promotion and protection of all human rights...including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons” (Club de Madrid 2009).

As has been noted in the review of the sociological literature, a concern with social cohesion can lead to an inherently conservative perspective—where contestation, conflict, challenge, or even social change can be seen as working to undermine cohesion and stability. For the concept to be useful as a policy tool to support progressive developmental change, therefore there are two traps to avoid—a *bias to the established social and political order* and a *bias to cultural and social homogeneity*. This might be taken as implying that the concept is sufficiently beset by traps and difficulties to be effectively useless as a guiding discourse for policy. Ultimately this would be the wrong conclusion. Social cohesion can—in a positive sense—stand for the elements of social progress which include human security (an absence of the threat of violence or coercive force) and solidarity. As such it can be seen as both constitutive to development, and instrumental to other elements of development (for example the ability of social groups to sustainably improve living standards). At the heart of social cohesion as a guiding principle of policy should be the development of norms, values and institutions which enable change. The orientation that social cohesion needs to capture as a policy goal, therefore, is *the capacity of societies and social groups to peacefully and inclusively navigate social change, while enhancing individual and group rights and freedoms*.

To conclude our review of social theory, social policy and the implications for understanding social cohesion, table 2 below outlines three variants or options (in broad terms) for framing social cohesion as both a policy goal and a (crudely) measurable phenomenon. These are better seen as ‘schools of thought’ than precise definitions. The table seeks to outline in each case the theoretical grounding of the approach to defining social cohesion, the implications in terms of conceptual, policy and measurement concerns.

Table 2 Options for defining social cohesion for policy analysis

Approach to Definition	Analytic/conceptual implications	Policy implications	Implications for measurement & quantification
Capacity of societies to peacefully manage collective decision-making (WDR 2013)	Emphasizes institutions which mediate varying views into an outcome (e.g. elections, institutions of collective bargaining). Also emphasizes institutions of leadership.	Suggests an emphasis as a policy goal on the building of institutions for conflict resolution and democratic decision-making.	Emphasis on the existence of institutions which a) mediate conflict peacefully b) provide leadership and authority without recourse to violence. Measures of trust in institutions, other social groups, would indicate conditions for formation of such institutions.
Capacity of societies and social groups to peacefully and inclusively navigate social change—while enhancing group and individual freedoms (authors)	Emphasizes the capacity of societies to deal with (rapid) processes of change—and takes the enhancement of freedom as the goal of development. This clarifies a normative base which is implicit in other definitions which use the qualifier ‘inclusive’.	Suggests building of an inclusive model of citizenship; a capacity to re-model social relationships to empower women, youth, girls and minority groups as social and economic change opens new possibilities.	Key indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low levels of social exclusion • Empowerment of minority, disadvantaged groups • Low levels of violence • Institutions for peaceful management of rapid change
Social inclusion + social capital + social mobility (OECD Perspectives on Global Development 2012)	A broad definition which—in comparison to other definitions—places high relative stress on indicators of equity/equality—and a relatively low stress on the absence of violent conflict.	Using this definition OECD draw a broad set of policy directions covering fiscal policy, the policy process, employment and labor market policy, education, gender, migration etc.	Indicators—various, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inequality • Employment • Values, attitudes relating to civic participation

2. Pathways between jobs and social cohesion

In the following sections, we map pathways between the outcome of social cohesion and the general area of jobs. The term ‘pathways’ is used as a metaphor to capture directions of causality, and we describe these as ‘stylized’ both because these linkages are deeply context specific, and because they mostly if not always are part of multi-directional interactions between variables. The primary definition that we use in looking at the causal pathways is the one outlined at the end of the previous section—the capacity of societies and social groups to peacefully and inclusively navigate social change, while enhancing individual and group rights and freedoms.

Before getting into the discussion of the potential pathways it is important to discuss the ways in which ‘jobs’ may be specified for analytic and descriptive purposes. We will then proceed to discuss the significance of context in determining causality, before proceeding to look at specific pathways in each direction.

As noted in the introduction, in order to include all forms of work in an analysis (including the informal sector) it is necessary to take a broad scope for defining what constitutes a job. This is sensible insofar as there are no real grounds for excluding some forms of work from the analysis. But it differs from the everyday—and sociological—use of the term in significant ways. The term, in common usage, is generally understood to involve the sale of labor as a commodity. So what has been termed ‘petty commodity production’ (including family farming) is not normally seen as a ‘job’. In political discourse ‘job creation’ is often more restricted than that—referring to the creation of formal sector employment opportunities often with associated regularity and social security benefits. Including household-based enterprises within the scope (whether agricultural or other) creates a degree of ambiguity around the concept, as a family farmer can never really lose their ‘job’ (unless they lose access to land or sufficient capital to operate). They can however find themselves operating at a level of utilization of labor—and satisfaction of basic needs—which is incredibly low. If the rains fail, if seeds or other assets are in short supply, if the parcel of land is too small, then there may be a great deal of surplus labor time (which is likely to be used in other ‘informal’ activities, or in migrant labor). Sociologists may stress that the economic valuation of these ‘low productivity’ activities may contrast with a subjective or socio-psychological valuation, as jobs.

We also need to be aware that almost any posited positive pathway between jobs/employment and beneficial outcomes will not happen if jobs are extremely exploitative, repressively organized or physically or psychologically hazardous. However, what constitutes, say, hazardous jobs is not a given in a broader sociological sense. Mining is a clear example of a dangerous and often exploitative occupation, but the economic activity has been at the basis of both strong local communities¹⁹ and symbols of good citizenship.

Tracing causal linkages between jobs and social cohesion is therefore challenging—because both sides of the equation are hard to pin down (perhaps inevitably so). On the jobs side, specifically, there are the following challenges: people in struggling household enterprises (including family farms) may be assumed to be in ‘jobs’ when they are in fact chronically under-employed—all the

¹⁹ Even ‘MacJobs’ have varying representations (Gould 2011). See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McJob> for the way MacDonalds objected to the term, coined by Amitai Etzioni in The Washington Post.

way to a point where the existence of the ‘job’ is debatable; the fact that someone is engaged in activity associated with earning a livelihood covers such a vast range of circumstances (including at the extreme negative end criminality, brigandage, sex work etc.) that any linkage at a general level between jobs and any dimension of social cohesion is hard to establish. The concept of ‘adverse incorporation’ is a worthy reminder at this point that not all forms of integration into social relations are beneficial. As summarized usefully by Geoff Wood (2000: 19), conditions of adverse incorporation arise when “[poor people] are obliged to manage [their] vulnerability through investing in and maintaining forms of social capital which produce desirable short-term, immediate outcomes and *practical* needs while postponing and putting at permanent risk more desirable forms of social capital which offer the *strategic* prospect of supporting needs and maintaining rights in the longer term” (emphasis in the original). Falling into bonded labor is an obvious example of this.

A further point to note is that simply drawn causal pathways—while analytically convenient—don’t describe the world very well in many cases. The insights from ‘complexity theory’ are worth taking on board in relation to this (see Ramalingam et al (2008)). Some of the key insights from complexity science are as follows:

- Change is not always linear—often there are ‘threshold events’ where there is a radical change in the scale or direction of a result without a similar radical change in the scale or direction of the factors acting to cause it. *For example*, the loss of formal legal employment opportunities in a community may proceed gradually for a given period of time without fundamentally affecting social relations. But at a given point criminal activities may take root through gang formation when there is no longer a critical mass of socially legitimate ‘jobs’ for young people—resulting in a major shock to social cohesion at the community level.
- Feedback processes promote and inhibit change within systems in unpredictable ways. *For example* incidents of violence in a given area may create stigma and a reluctance to invest which discourages job creation, feeding back into further decline, but also a public response that recreates unity, and possibilities for reconstruction
- The way that systems (including social institutions) self organize in response to a given stimulus is unpredictable and highly variable. *For example*, communities may respond to declining formal job opportunities by creating a vibrant informal economy. As a result individuals may develop a lower level of interest in formal job opportunities.
- The range of interdependent factors relating to any given relationship (e.g. the relationship between jobs and social cohesion) may be so complex as to make any empirical observation of direct causality unreliable. *For example*, an apparently well intentioned job creation scheme may provoke discord if it is perceived to be directed at a group who are favored by political elites.

This last point is perhaps the most important one to consider. The development literature shorthand for complexity is to point to the importance of ‘context’—social, political, cultural, environmental and economic, which we consider briefly below.

Significance of context (including political, social and historical context)

Context will affect the ‘social cohesion outcomes’ of changes in the supply of jobs of different kinds and qualities in many ways. It will also affect the outcomes in terms of job creation of changes in the level and kind of social cohesion.

A powerful example of the significance of context is supplied by Dudwick (2012) considering ethnographic work on the experience of Bangladeshi women moving into factory work in the textile industry by Hossain (2011) and Kabeer with Kabir (2009) Amin et al (1998) and Kibria (1995). In a context where social institutions restrict women’s autonomy through dress codes, conventions of not handling cash, and prohibitions on mobility, the impact of a wage-earning job (even under quite tough conditions) can produce a strong positive transformation. In a striking passage from Amin et al (1998) a young women outlines her freedom of dress, movement, and greater latitude in choosing her marriage partner as reasons why the journey to become an urban factory worker had been a worthwhile choice for her. Conversely, for women whose freedoms are less restricted in their communities of origin such a job may have a very different, and much less transformational, meaning. Moreover, such changes are not necessarily unidirectional: Elmhirst (2002) describes how men tried to regain some of the patriarchal power from which young female migrants in Indonesia tried to escape.

Similarly the meaning of jobs in terms of social and political status varies between places and in different times. Dani (2005) describes how the historic political prestige of miners was a major contextual challenge for the design of mining sector reform in Romania—which was necessary to meet EU accession criteria linked to the phasing out of subsidies to mine operation. Needless to add the transition from a perception of coal mining as a job of labor elites to a dying industry with no future has been common in many parts of the world over the last thirty years.²⁰ The decline of a political project (whether industrial social democracy or communism) can have a serious impact on the identity and status of many categories of workers.

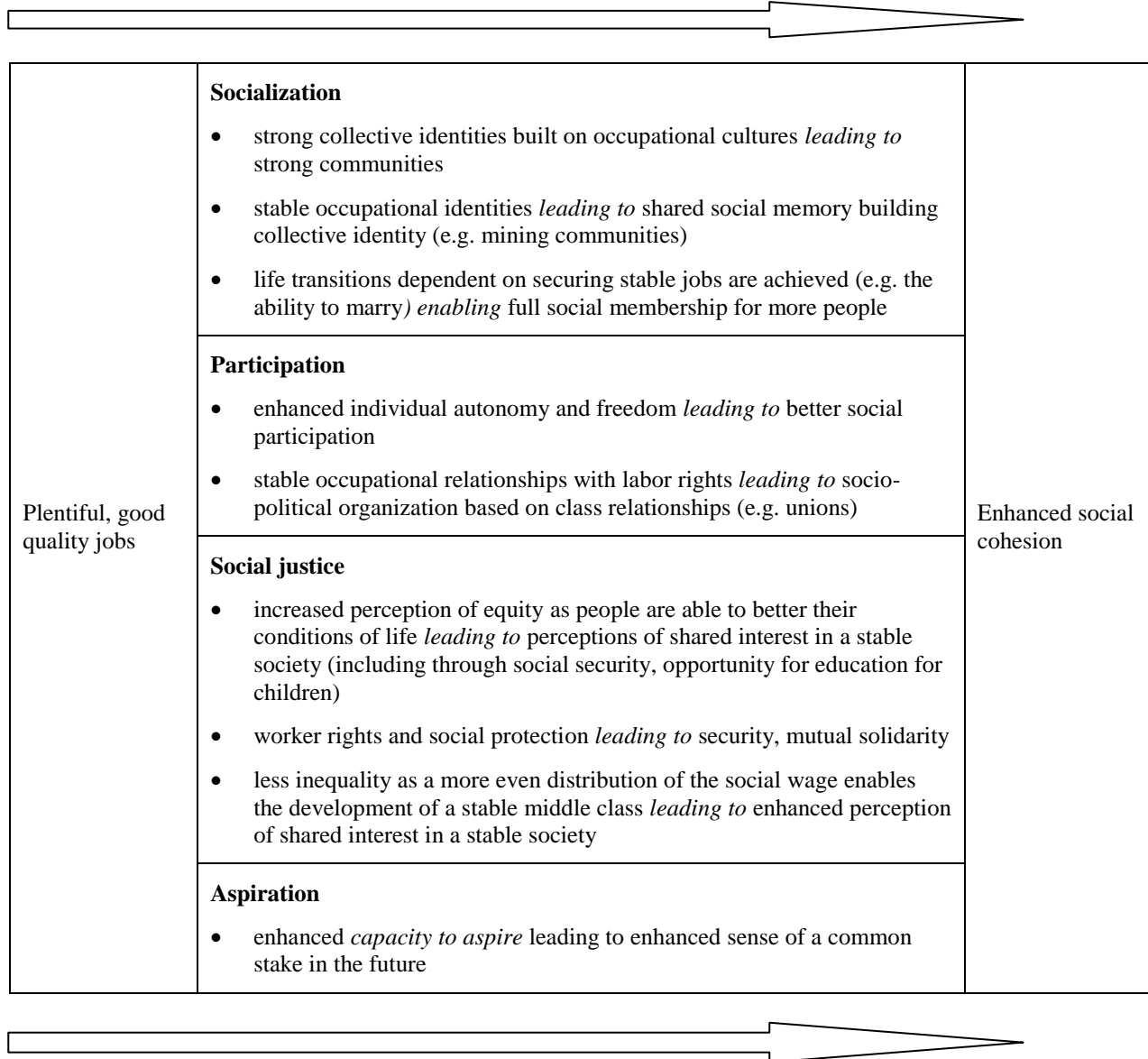
²⁰ Parry (2003) describes the changing meaning of work in the context of restructuring of mining in South Wales.

Pathways from jobs to social cohesion

Figure 1 illustrates 4 major groups of stylized channels of causation between a situation of ‘plentiful good jobs’ and enhanced social cohesion, namely *socialization*, *participation*, *social justice* and *aspiration*.

Figure 1

Stylized Pathways from Jobs to Social Cohesion



We will now consider each of these broad impact channels and assess their significance.

Socialization

The issue of socialization is covered in other background papers for WDR 2013, and we define socialization here as the (continuous) process through which individuals become full members of a particular group, sharing its norms and values. Kilroy (2012) emphasizes the importance of jobs in terms of socialization, given simply by the fact that many/most people spent most of their waking hours at work. It is also the most likely place for social mixing (i.e. relationships across groups), much more so than social life, and may promote (new) interdependent relationships, and ‘affective trust’. Social cohesion is also often manifested through jobs, and stereotypes and/or lack of trust may inhibit cooperation. Much of the literature appears to suggest—in our view—the strength of interdependence between jobs and cohesion. For example, the same type of job can reinforce exclusionary practices and labor market and shop-floor segmentation, and can help to dissolve those, including when management defines this as a way to enhance productivity.²¹

It is important here too to highlight the negative pathways of socialization, how high rewards or lack of alternatives prompt activities and networks—and group norms—that are inwardly very cohesive but have negative impacts on broader society.²² Sociology and social psychology, for example the work by Merton or Coleman, may help to categorize reasons behind ‘deviance’, for example distinguishing the extent to which rejection of norms, or acceptance of norms but lack of ways to achieve accepted aspirations.

The pathways noted above based on strong collective identities which build shared occupational cultures through strong social memory are a particular concern of Standing (2011). He argues that increasingly the world of work is occupied on a global scale by what he terms the ‘precariat’.²³ To an extent his characterization of the precariat is based on intuitively obvious elements of the ways global labor markets are changing—increases in casualization, insecure forms of employment and levels of informal employment which are, he argues, increasing in developed economies (obviously already very high in many developing countries). But—in addition to these work-specific vulnerabilities—Standing identifies elements which are core to his characterization of the precariat which tie in directly to the inability of the roles they fulfill to provide paths of socialization into stable social identities:

“Besides labor insecurity and insecure social income, those in the precariat lack a work-based identity. When employed, they are in career-less jobs, without traditions of social memory, a feeling they belong to an occupational community steeped in stable practices, codes of ethics and norms of behavior, reciprocity and fraternity.” (p.12)

²¹ Slightly different in focus, but the experience of the London Metropolitan Police around what came to be known as ‘institutional racism’ may be illustrative here (which is not to say that all divisions that operate within work places are racist or discriminatory).

²² Some of this may be brought out in the Mexico case study. White collar crime is important as illustration here: <http://aabss.org/Perspectives2011/ChristieHustedOCDII.pdf>.

²³ See also the discussion on ‘MacJobs’ discussed above. The key concern here does not appear to be that of socialisation, but rather whether dead-end jobs enhance young adults’ prospects.

It is difficult in any clear empirical sense to be sure of the proposition that people in insecure, changeable roles cannot develop ‘traditions of social memory.’ Migrant fruit pickers in California did develop such traditions (as well as strong social movements and labor organizations) in the face of highly insecure traditions of work.²⁴ But there was arguably continuity in the nature of roles and relationships which enabled social relations to become rich and collective political action to become strong. It is hard to see the current trends outlined by Standing—which entails a faster turnover in workplace roles and relationships—producing a similar kind of social mobilization to Californian migrant fruit pickers in the post-war years. And arguably the case of the fruit pickers is unusual even in its time—insecure and casualized workers in the service sector in the twentieth century rarely generated the same level of collective action. Fundamentally, then, there is merit to the argument that the connection between jobs and social cohesion depends on characteristics of the employment relations concerned which enable durable social bonds and identities to be constructed. However these characteristics are complex and not easily reducible to simple variables.

The case study for WDR 2011 by Huang and Wang using survey data of migrants on rural migrants in Guangdong concludes that there are social effects from employment. Migrants’ legal knowledge, social ties, empowerment, risk aversions and expectations of government tend to be positively impacted by experience of employment, including its duration, and job characteristics. This illustrates that *the kind of job* and context that are important as the job itself. Accordingly the assumption that rural migrant workers start with a ‘blank slate of social attributes’ would need further exploration, as most migration literature shows that migrants usually come to specific locations through social networks.

A second significant dimension of socialization noted in figure 1 above is the ability to complete a full social transition to adulthood, which in many societies means the ability to marry. This is raised by Dudwick (2012) who draws on accounts from Singerman (2007) to show that the dearth of public sector or good private sector jobs has forced many educated young people in Egypt to delay marriage and having children and downgrade their expectations for independent living arrangements after marriage. In 2004 the costs of a marriage in an urban milieu in Egypt were such that a low income man and his family would have to save their entire earnings for five years or more to pay their expected two-thirds of the cost—and even the best paid men must work two full years.

Work—taking a broad definition—can also be an arena for socialization into roles which may undermine social cohesion. Examples of this include criminal gangs, networks and forms of work which damage the individual’s psychological ability to function as a full member of society (sex work, for example). This implies a further dimension of the concept of ‘adverse incorporation’ outlined above. Work can be a channel for undermining the capacity of both social groups and individuals to cope inclusively and peacefully with social change.

²⁴ For an account of the rise of union activism among migrant farm workers in California see Pawel (2010). Experiences with other ‘membership-based organizations’ specifically of poor people are described in the volume edited by Martha Chen et al. (2007), including that of SEWA in India, organisations of waste pickers, and South African trade unions and their relations to informal sector workers,

The absence and loss of jobs, of course, has serious social implications, and implications for social stability.²⁵ The classic case study Marienthal showed the visible effects of loss of employment in an industrial Austrian town, not just on individuals, but on the community as a whole, including a sense of loss of time. Inspired by this study, a group of Dutch sociologists (Engbersen et al.) explored the impacts of unemployment in four cities in the Netherlands in the 1980s, and they observed large cultural differences in responses across four localities, which they categorized using a framework developed by Merton and Douglas.²⁶

Dudwick (2012) summarizes a range of case material which demonstrates the negative impact of unemployment on social ties, social status, self-esteem and general well-being.²⁷ A common theme in this work is the reduction of people's capabilities to be full members of their societies—as distrust grows and social engagement declines:

“Perhaps surprisingly, job loss, even across societies as different as the United States, Guyana, Bulgaria, or Argentina, has surprisingly consistent effects on individuals and their communities. Loss of face and self-respect, particularly among men, has been linked to depression, and tensions in the family associated with violence, divorce or abandonment. Across communities, job loss appears to foster distrust, not only towards former employers or government authorities suspected of being indifferent or complicit, but also among neighbors, former colleagues and friends. When unemployment is widespread and prolonged, its impacts reverberate within communities, where the impacts may be visible for decades.” (Dudwick (2012), p11)

OECD (2011) provides cross-country comparative survey data that reinforces the strong correlation between life satisfaction and different categories of employment status (p 156, figure 6.1). Controlling for country difference, the level of reported life satisfaction of those in full time employment is significantly higher than those in all other categories (part-time employment, out of the workforce, underemployed, self-employed and unemployed); the life satisfaction of the unemployed is, unsurprisingly, the lowest.

Participation and civic engagement

When livelihoods are under stress the broader society can experience complex stresses in terms of its ability to organize—for example smaller numbers of individuals may be attaining the status of full social membership of kin or wider social groups, as with the example from Egypt given above. Similarly the capacity of individuals to increase their personal autonomy may be enhanced considerably by jobs (as is the case with the Bangladeshi women described by Dudwick, Hossain and others above). This changes the pathways for civic engagement, and may be presumed to increase the individual's scope for political participation and civic engagement (though it does not necessarily mean that will happen).

²⁵ Note, for example, the concern of the Chinese government regarding rural migrants returning to their home villages during the 2008 crisis, and more continuously regarding unemployment of—typically—urban, young and skilled workers.

²⁶ Merton had categorised types of behaviors based on acceptance or rejection of social goals and the institutionalised means of achieving them

²⁷ Including Pappas (1989) *The Magic City*, World Bank (2004), Cichero et al (2002), Kabakchieva et al (2002).

The primary organizational pathway between jobs and civic participation concerns the development of labor organization. Kilroy (2012) notes that one of the significant social impacts of jobs in the context of Trinidad is the increased salience of cross-cutting social identities—a point which has very broad historical resonance and is the basis of much of the grand theory of the transition to modern capitalist modes of political, social and economic organization. These cross cutting identities can become the basis of class or occupationally based forms of organization. In the form of labor movements these have clearly influenced the construction of contemporary state institutions throughout the world. Typically, ‘laborist’ or social democratic institutions in European countries have strong roots in labor organization—a strong example being the British Labor Party. In turn these institutions have played a major role in the historical transition in many societies from ‘vertical’ political aggregation (on the grounds of patronage, clientelism, or particularistic social identifies) to ‘horizontal’ political aggregation (on the grounds of class interest).

Indian labor studies (including historical analyses) portray a slightly different picture, as optimism that caste identities would evaporate as workers from different backgrounds merged in large factories did not materialize. Caste and other identities (including gender) reappeared in the industrial environment, often structuring in part—and often through a ‘re-invention of tradition’—the labor process.²⁸ While not all such social identities necessarily signify a lack of social cohesion as defined here, incidents of religious (‘communal’) riots show that such identities can be mobilized in an extremely negative manner.²⁹

Social justice

As is noted by OECD in its review of *Social Cohesion in a Shifting World*: “..rising income inequality is a warning bell to policy makers that social cohesion is at risk. Inequality can hamper further growth, breed social resentment, and generate political instability by fuelling populist and protectionist sentiments.” (2012 p.94) The OECD study—with its emphasis on ‘inclusion’—at times incorporates low levels of inequality into its definition of social cohesion, which we do not.³⁰ From our perspective the salient aspect of the area of equity/inequality concerns perceptions of fairness and justice—and particularly whether markets and other institutions act to deliver jobs in a way which is perceived as fair.

There are two key dimensions to a perception of distributive justice and fairness in relation to jobs:

- Is a reasonable proportion of the wealth of the society perceived as available for access through employment (as opposed to dividends, interest or rents)?
- Is the process of obtaining decent jobs perceived as reasonably fair (i.e. broadly merit-based and not restricted by the operation of patronage, prejudice and discrimination)?

²⁸ See the classic work on Bombay’s industry by Raj Chandervarkar.

²⁹ Spencer (1992). Espeland (2007) for Uganda.

³⁰ Recent empirical research in China is relevant here, as it shows that not rising inequality (*per se*) but perceptions of mismanagement and corruption by officials is the key driver behind social unrest (Whyte 2011). The official goal of 8 per cent GDP/pc/py is driven by the fear that below that level job creation will fall short, this threatening social stability.

To meet the first of these propositions is easier in an expanding economy than a contracting one. Critical to the perception of a society where the distribution of wealth is working progressively is a growing middle class.³¹ Kharas (2010) argues that the ‘global middle class’ is likely to grow greatly in developing countries in the next twenty years. Taking a metric of an annual level of per capita household consumption between 10 and 100 dollars PPP per day³² he estimates that the size of the global middle class will increase from 1.8 billion people in 2009 to 4.9 billion by 2030. In this time Asia’s share of the ‘global middle class’ will increase from 23 to 66 percent. The growing concern with inequality visible in developed countries with stagnating growth is also evident in some developing countries where segments of the middle class (notably educated youth) grow frustrated as expectations for their future life-path are not met.³³

The literature covering issues of patronage, prejudice and discrimination affecting the process of selecting individuals for job opportunities and treatment in the workplace is extensive covering developed and developing countries. Discrimination may take various forms—direct and open, indirect and disguised (e.g. enforcement of dress codes which rule out certain groups), and is generally interpreted to include harassment and victimization within the workplace as well as discrimination in the selection process.³⁴ Discrimination may apply on grounds of gender, age, ethnicity, race, religion, culture-specific categories such as caste, or various forms of stigma associated with culturally specific sites or characteristics (often location of residence, particularly for the urban poor)³⁵. In a striking recent analysis Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen demonstrate that between 1990 and the present day India has simultaneously done very well in terms of growth and increasing per capita incomes—and *fallen behind every other South Asian country* (with the partial exception of Pakistan) on a range of key social indicators (2011). They attribute this to ‘power imbalances old and new’:

“None of this is entirely new, and much of it reflects good old inequalities of class, caste and gender that have been around for a long time. For instance, the fact that not even one of the 315 editors and other leading members of the printed and electronic media in Delhi surveyed recently by the Centre of Developing Societies belonged to a scheduled caste or scheduled tribe, and at the other end, 90 percent belonged to a small coterie of upper castes that make up only 16 percent of the population, obviously does not help to ensure that the concerns of Dalits and adivasis are adequately addressed in public debates.”

Tackling forms of discrimination and exclusion with deep historical roots is a challenging policy problem, which has been addressed through a range of approaches including: measures to redress historical bias through positive discrimination; measures to diminish prejudice through public education; approaches to the delivery of social policy on a universalistic and citizenship basis in order to erode the social dynamics of stigma (which can be attached to policies designed to target

³¹ One of the classics in sociology on middle classes is Thorsten Veblen’s *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899); the current optimism about a growing middle class seems quite in contrast with the more pessimistic vision of Veblen.

³² This is, as Kharas acknowledges a crude metric. It is designed to exclude those who are considered poor in the poorest advanced countries (e.g. Portugal) and rich in the richest advanced country (e.g. Luxembourg). P. 12

³³ See Dudwick (2012) for a summary of literature on Egypt – and issues with youth unemployment.

³⁴ UK Government guidance (directgov)

³⁵ Bennett, Lynn (2007) *Unequal Citizens: Gender, Class and Ethnic Exclusion in Nepal*. World Bank;

specific groups); measures to empower disadvantaged groups socially and politically so they can themselves challenge prevailing exclusionary attitudes.³⁶

In policy terms perhaps the most difficult issues to address in relation to social justice and the provision of jobs concern the ways in which low-quality, hazardous or demeaning conditions of labor reflect and even structure power relations within a society (e.g. caste) which are fundamental to rigid hierarchies that allow little scope for mobility and change.

Clearly a notion of social cohesion which embraces diversity and inclusionary practices requires effective policy instruments to ensure that processes of acquiring and remaining in jobs are non-discriminatory and fair—and are perceived to be so.

Aspiration

The notion of the ‘capacity to aspire’ is derived from Appadurai (2004) who outlines it as a navigational capability that enables people to envision futures which are different and better than the present conditions they enjoy. The existence of plentiful good quality jobs—and non-discriminatory conditions for access to those opportunities—may facilitate the capacity to aspire among poor people. In order to make this happen however, following Appadurai, engagement will also be needed to change the ‘terms of recognition’ which marginalized groups experience. Specifically “whenever an outside agent enters a situation where the poor (and poverty) are a major concern, he or she should look closely at those rituals through which consensus is produced both among poor communities and between them and the more powerful. This process of consensus production is a crucial place to identify efforts to change the terms of recognition.” While Appadurai’s ethnography concerns housing and comes from Mumbai—it is easy to see that the rituals which occur at the point where people are included or excluded from the opportunities to secure jobs are critical to the terms of recognition. Some cultures are famously upbeat about social mobility and the right of all to aspire to reaching high positions.

But this is far from universal. Paul Willis’s (1977) classic work on working class children demonstrates how absence of upward mobility is internalized (children are socialized as working class kids), and the youth’s actions reinforce this as self-fulfilling prophecy (there is no point in getting education). These class distinctions may be starker in the UK than for example continental Western Europe.

Appadurai’s work suggests that cultural change (as well as economic and political change) would be needed in many situations to generate cohesion based on the perception that job opportunities are part of the common stake that poor people share with others in a common future.

Approaches to changing the terms of recognition for excluded groups should not be seen as restricted to rituals and arenas which bring together employers and potential employees. At least

³⁶ In the case of India, the extent to which affirmative action has led to progress remains an issue of debate. Two issues seem of relevance for the discussion here: 1) some would argue that affirmative action has focuses on social sector, by and large neglecting labor and product markets (SK Thorat); 2) as the quote from Dreze and Sen implies, the institutions that are mandated to address inequalities themselves are subjected to the persistent inequalities (see Dani and de Haan 2008).

as significant may be attempts to change perceptions of social groups in order that they can be taken seriously as entrepreneurs—and overcome prejudices which may prevent a black entrepreneur in the UK, the USA or South Africa (for example) from accessing contracts or credit.³⁷

Pathways from social cohesion to jobs

We have focused primarily on causal pathways through which the quality of employment in a society may influence the level and form of social cohesion. We will consider in less detail the potential pathways in the other direction—which are no less important, though risk being somewhat less tangible.

Broadly speaking the literature suggests two different levels of causal pathway between social cohesion and the generation of plentiful good quality jobs. One set of factors focuses on the ‘societal’ level (and notably how social cohesion produces social stability which in turn underpins growth, which in turn may produce jobs), and the other on the detailed weaving of the social fabric (through social networks which make individuals more productive through various social group effects).

Macro social cohesion, growth and jobs

A recent report from the World Bank (2012) *Societal Dynamics and Fragility* focuses on the ways in which a range of factors at the level of societal processes may produce fragility, which in turn makes the provision of a range of public and private goods problematic. The document defines fragility as a problem not only of state capacity but also of dysfunctional relationships across groups in society, including the relationship of different groups with the state. They argue that fragility should be seen as a continuum, along which societies can experience extreme state failure and violent conflict at one end, and a more cohesive society moving up the continuum. The key elements which the report highlights are as follows: the significance of the perception of unfairness in the treatment of social groups (rather than inequality per se) as a key driver of fragility; the importance of rigid boundaries around group membership as a factor which can exacerbate perceptions of injustice; the importance of the role of the state in creating a positive dynamic between different groups, and facilitating effective contact between institutions of different kinds. Colombia’s Victim’s Law is presented as an example of a state initiative which simultaneously addresses perceptions of group-based grievance and reaffirms the social contract between state and citizens. The World Bank report builds heavily on work by Frances Stewart and others at the Centre for Research on Inequality and Social Exclusion (CRISE) which has emphasized the significance of civil conflict as a factor impeding development, and the role of horizontal (group-based) inequalities in catalyzing such conflict.³⁸ The links between reduced fragility and better quality jobs are intuitively strong—although this literature does not focus on the jobs problematic as such.

³⁷ Arguably much of the work promoting ethnic minority entrepreneurs applies Appadurai’s perspective on the importance of changing the ‘terms of recognition’. In the USA the National Black MBA Association has been active since the seventies and a number of other national and local organisations support African-American businesses and entrepreneurs.

³⁸ See for example Frances Stewart (2000).

Various other analyses posit links between some aspects of social cohesion (however defined) and economic growth (Foa (2011), Easterly et al. (2006)). Easterly for example presents evidence from cross-country regressions that measures of “social cohesion,” such as income inequality and ethnic fractionalization, endogenously determine institutional quality, which in turn casually determines growth. This argument is at a level of abstraction above the concern of this paper (with the link between social cohesion and jobs). Evidently growth, in turn, will be one factor determining the availability of high quality jobs.

Of longer term interest would be the linkages between high levels of social cohesion and the ability of a given society to achieve transitions towards job-rich growth—alongside promoting institutions necessary to ensure that jobs are high quality (well paid, respectful of the rights and dignity of workers, etc.). OECD (2011) considers evidence for some plausible pathways from social cohesion to job-rich growth—starting with a broader definition of social cohesion than the one presented here. The fiscal domain of public policy in particular is significant—as high levels of social solidarity are likely to lead to stronger investment in the life chances of all citizens on an equitable basis.

Social networks at the micro level

Networks are a key concept and have been subject to much social science research. Nan Lin (1999) for example refers to the ‘social resource theory’ (linked to the notion of social capital), and a substantial amount of research has established that access to and mobilization of ‘embedded resources’ enhances the potential of status improvement, but is also contingent upon on initial positions in social hierarchies and extensity of social ties. Referring to the social capital literature, directly relevant here, Portes (1998) distinguishes three basic functions of social capital, and Granovetter (2005) three aspects of social networks in relation to economic outcomes:

Social capital is a source of **parental and kin support**, with the family as primary source of support, and studies highlighting disadvantages of children in for example single-parent households.

Social control, is built on norms (ideas about the proper way to behave) in small groups (such as immigrant communities) but also in larger political movements (notably, extremist). In many writings the decline of primordial institutions and the need for alternatives in the modern state is highlighted.³⁹ Group norms and cultures shape skills and productivity, in positive and negative ways.⁴⁰ Willis’ classic study *Learning to Labor* describes how a working class culture among youth provided a distinct culture of non-compliance, which as we noted above tended to reinforce class boundaries.⁴¹ Labor studies have shown how informal arrangements operate at shop-floor level, which employers are often aware of, but may not be able to change. Freeland’s

³⁹ Coleman (1987, 1990).

⁴⁰ The ‘culture of poverty’ debate (Lewis 1966, Wilson 2009) emphasises how deprivation shapes attitudes and beliefs, which would reinforce that deprivation.

⁴¹ Importantly, Willis stresses the need to avoid determinism: “I see Learning to Labor—and my more recent work—as studies of forms of cultural production of meaning in everyday life. In this respect, I always feel pushed into a sociological strait-jacket when people take the outcomes of my work in terms of resistance or anomie, because my point is the general production of meanings within a context.”
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Willis_%28cultural_theorist%29.

study of General Motors highlights managers' perception of the need to maintain informal social orders, even at the direct cost of efficiency. Labor studies of colonial-era industries in India noted similar arrangements, including the role of middlemen responsible for migration, recruitment, and shop-floor organization (Morris 1965). There is much research also on the way management tries to use and promote informal relations, to enhance productivity (see also Kilroy 2012).

Social networks affect the flow and quality of **information**, of course directly relevant for job searches, possibilities for socio-economic mobility. There is an abundant literature on the importance of personal networks for migrants' job search activities (Granovetter 2005: 37), at national and international level, and how these networks have been used as management recruitment strategy as well as individuals' job search, and how this links to segmentation of labor markets and the creation of (not necessarily negative) stereotypes. There is also evidence that people who entered jobs through networks were less likely to quit their job quickly—presumably because they had better information about the jobs, and were more likely to fit in the job environment.

Thirdly, social capital can play a role as a **source of benefits** beyond the immediate family, and networks and important source of **reward and punishment**, with much literature focusing on this form of social capital providing access to jobs, entrepreneurship, and (upward) mobility. It is relevant to point out that findings have been radically different. Much research points out that strong ties have contributed to significant benefits (notably, in immigrant communities). But Granovetter (starting in 1973) has highlighted the '**strength of weak ties**', i.e. the influences outside the immediate circle to serve as access to employment for example.⁴² Also, concepts of networks need to emphasize dynamics and change, for example as networks may facilitate mobility, which thus changes the network structure (and can feed into future mobility).⁴³

Portes (1998: 15) further emphasizes that research on social capital—and a similar argument applies to a concept of social cohesion—needs to include understanding the negative consequences of social capital, such as the possibility that groups exclude non-members or are formed in opposition to mainstream society, the drain on resources (that could possibly be invested) by friends and relatives,⁴⁴ and the pressure towards conformity. Portes further highlights the risk that research can produce poorly thought-through moralizing statements about the desirability of social capital.

3. Challenges for policymakers

This paper has reviewed the implications of social theory for the analysis of linkages between jobs and social cohesion. We have established a definition of social cohesion based on the capacity of societies to inclusively and peacefully manage social change; this state capacity is

⁴² Granovetter (2005) further distinguishes as analytical categories the density of networks, 'structural holes' i.e. how networks are bridged, and the inter-dependence of economic and non-economic action. Apart from impact on labor markets, he also discusses links between social structure and prices, and innovation (where he also strongly emphasises the potential or need of resources outside the inner circle.

⁴³ Granovetter (2005: 37); one would expect that new social media may have significantly changed these dynamics.

⁴⁴ This point was highlighted by Simmel, Weber, Geertz, and Granovetter. It is demonstrated in research on entrepreneurs in Burkina Faso's capital, by Grimm et al. (2011), which also hypothesises that provision of social security can thus have growth-enhancing effects.

built from inclusive norms and values, effective institutions for handling conflict in peaceful and inclusive ways. On the jobs side of the equation a key element is institutions (including markets) which enable the fair distribution of opportunities to obtain and remain in good quality jobs. The potential scope of the discussion is vast so the remaining section is designed to provide pointers rather than definitive answers to the question of how policies can be promoted which make jobs work for more social cohesion—and in turn make social cohesion work to produce more good quality jobs.

The potential policy scope of both social cohesion and jobs is essentially ‘all of government’ so rather than attempting a comprehensive overview of public policy issues we frame this largely as challenges to policy makers. Moving from a ‘bad jobs equilibrium’ to a ‘good jobs equilibrium’ may involve a fair bit of social and political turbulence—as it is likely to entail processes of economic transformation which will have losers as well as winners.⁴⁵ An explicit concern with social cohesion may be a beneficial perspective for policy makers (including political leaderships) through encouraging them to look for inclusive growth paths. This may mean developing social contracts (in the sense of pacts with the electorate) where the disruption of economic change is balanced by a commitment to regulate markets and provide social protection for the broad based benefit of all citizens. As Rodrik (2011) has argued, the disruption of economic transformation is only likely to be tolerated (particularly in democratic societies; but also a concern for autocratic governments) if there is confidence that the process is fair and broadly beneficial. Hence the fact that those countries which are most open to the rest of the world in terms of trade and investment tend to have a set of institutions (for regulation and social protection) which are more developed and more effective than those that are not.

The challenge for policy makers in many situations is to promote change which enhances (or re-creates) social cohesion. In the rest of this section we examine the key issues relating to four themes which emerge from the literature reviewed here: the significance of political context; addressing durable inequalities; immigration and the challenge of facilitating cohesion in a changing cultural landscape; and the need to keep a focus on both workers in wage employment and the self-employed.

Managing political dynamics

The first key point emerging from this review is the significance of the **political context** for initiatives designed to further social cohesion through the provision of jobs. Labor based organizations can of course be a major factor in determining this context, so as is often the case, the causal linkages are complex and multi-directional.

The example of the rural employment guarantee movement in India is discussed by Norton (2011), observing that this huge initiative (which reaches more than 50 million households with a rights-based approach to the provision of a minimum guaranteed level of employment) has been built on an extensive alliance of civil society activists, academics, supporters in the legal system and elements of the leadership of the Congress Party.⁴⁶ Any attempt to analyze it as a piece of technocratic social policy design would clearly miss the point. The scheme is the outcome of a long process of struggle—in which policy and academic actors with a commitment to

⁴⁵ Thanks to Carrie Turk (peer reviewer) for suggesting this formulation.

⁴⁶ See also Macauslan (2008).

transforming the ‘terms of recognition’ of India’s poor and excluded have made common cause with a bottom-up social movement. And despite the success of this coalition in bringing forward legislation and effective implementation structures in some states it is clear that the struggle is far from complete—in many of India’s states the scheme is not yet effective and facing difficulties of corruption and political opposition. From a rights perspective, there are a number of elements of the literature on MGNREGA⁴⁷ which are worth highlighting. Firstly the scheme has spread understanding of rights and protections which go beyond the simple orbit of the scheme itself, such as the existence of the minimum wage. It is widely recognized that where employment guarantee provisions have been effectively implemented they have helped to raise rural wage rates (Sjoblom and Farrington (2008)). There is also a persuasive theme in the literature that the offer of employment on a rights basis, and through public institutions, has enhanced the dignity of conditions of work, particularly for women (Khera and Nayak 2005).

The element of MGNREGA with large transformative potential for Indian society is its potential to promote collective action.⁴⁸ Dreze and Khera (2009) use the example of the social mobilization of Dalits in Madhya Pradesh to illustrate that collective action stimulated through the struggle to realize the employment guarantee has enabled benefits to be obtained on a wider scale as a result of the organized support to collective action which has been generated. The framing of employment guarantees—where rights are asserted on the basis of citizenship—offers the promise of social cohesion on the basis of horizontal bonds for collective action rather than the various forms of ‘adverse incorporation’ into working relations which the caste system offers to Dalit groups.

The social guarantee movement, built as it is on the mechanism of public works, forms part of a raft of **social protection policies** which are highly relevant for the question of jobs and social cohesion. Social protection has become important in the international development agenda since the last 1990s, prompted by the negative impact of recurrent crises, by the felt need to reach poor people more effectively, and by the documented success of programmes in Latin America and elsewhere. There is a growing body of literature that looks at the impact on both labor markets and what we may call social cohesion—our concern here is with the latter, but the labor market angle is closely related, as we argue below. Hickey (2011) reviews the arguments that link social protection to social contract, concluding normative efforts to promote social contracts need critical reflection and unpacking, and that debates on social contracts are embedded in specific ideologies and traditions.⁴⁹

There is evidence that points at the extent to which social protection schemes enhance (aspects of) social cohesion. Polanyi’s ‘great transformation’ describes the role of social protection in European history since the 1930s, Peter Lindert (2004) describes social protection as a critical component of OECD countries’ political and economic history (also Szreter 2007), while De Swaan for example describes how elites’ fears have driven expansion of social policies, and the creation of the Bismarckian welfare state was driven by political concerns regarding the rise of

⁴⁷ The Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Act, to give it its full title.

⁴⁸ This was earlier highlighted for the Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Scheme (Joshi 2005).

⁴⁹ A focus of social contract theory emerged in European political thought in 17th/18th century, focusing on political authority and legitimacy broadly. Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau developed varying forms of social contract theory to define political authority, and obligations and limitations for of rulers and subjects. John Rawls extended this to all social and political institutions.

the left. Social funds at times have had explicit—and often implicit—objectives to enhance the social contract, including in post-conflict contexts. The expansion of South Africa’s social security post-apartheid is a critical element of redressing historical inequities, and building a modern nation; as with India’s new schemes, importantly, these efforts are embedded in a rights-based framework.⁵⁰

A critical feature of the new generation of social protection programmes is that they are de-linked from labor status, thus forming an alternative to ‘traditional’ social security schemes that typically have been associated with the formal sector (with a distinct gendered impact). Recent contributions by Santiago Levy (2008) argue that this implies a subsidy to the informal sector, therefore may negatively impact productivity, and that there is a need to universalize social protection. While hotly debated in the Latin American context, his ideas chime well with the strand of social policy literature that has argued that universal social policy has been a critical component of economic modernization as well as nation building (in the way, arguably, the NHS is a critical part of contemporary British identity and culture). Even if this argument is accepted in principle, concerns regarding difficulty/impossibility to implement universalization are likely to predominate under situations of fiscal stress.

The links between the practice of political management/leadership and jobs exist on many levels. There is a common strand in the literature on China which suggests that social order is (precariously) maintained through rapid economic growth leading to burgeoning employment possibilities—the benefits of which offset to a degree the lack of formal political freedoms. But the nature of employment institutions can structure more fundamentally the nature of political participation. For example, Guy Standing (2011) refers to the model of ‘industrial citizenship’ meaning a laborist political system in which social entitlements (‘social rights’, so-called) have been tied mainly to the performance of labor. This is particularly characteristic of north European states where much service provision is modeled on forms of social insurance founded in production identities formed during early phases of industrialization. As argued earlier historical pathways which determine different cultural values will affect the ways in which employment policy may reinforce the social contract (and thus social cohesion at a state level). There is no blueprint for the ‘right’ policy mix to get the jobs agenda working with the aim of building social cohesion. But the evidence does back up (albeit somewhat loosely and impressionistically) the proposition that successful societies care about both a fair distribution of good jobs, and about maintaining social cohesion. Successful political projects with an inclusive character will always be likely to seek to build on the connection between the two.

Addressing ‘durable’ inequalities

A key element of public policy frameworks which have sought to promote inclusion in access to jobs in many contexts has been the use of **positive discrimination mechanisms** (such as quotas) to lever open job markets which have traditionally been closed to particular groups or social categories. For example, since Independence, government policy in India has tried to address the

⁵⁰ Ferguson (quoted in Hickey 2011) notes “in spite of an undoubted commitment to a rather extreme set of neo-liberal macro-economic policies”, the country “has a large and apparently expanding system of social assistance, anchored by a state-supplied old-age pension”—much of the social science and historical literature would emphasise the congruence of liberal economic policies and provision of social policies.

country's deep rooted discrimination on the basis of caste and 'tribal' (Adivasi) identity, as well as gender. Affirmative action is implemented in a range of sectors and modalities: fiscal allocation to districts, general economic empowerment schemes, and 'reservation' in educational and political and administrative institutions. While initially law makers thought discrimination could be addressed within a decade or two, caste and reservation have become and remained a key feature of India's political and administrative systems, with caste becoming particularly prominent, including through extension of benefits to a larger number of caste categories, and the return of caste in the 2011 Census (recent initiatives in Nepal seem to follow very much Indian ideas and practices, highlighting about 100 caste identities). Poverty analysis has shown that disparities between social groups continue to persist, and observers have concluded that political empowerment has not been associated with socio-economic transformation. Good evaluation of impact of the various efforts has remained relatively limited (in itself, arguably, a sign of the relative lack of accountability/responsiveness of the policies).

Unlike South Africa and the US, positive discrimination in India has not been introduced in the private sector. Efforts have concentrated on 'reservation' of jobs in the public sector, with occasionally (like in 2004, when the new Congress-led government emphasized the need to make growth more inclusive) some surge in discussion about extending this to the private sector, and reportedly some interest by large companies to introduce a diversity policy in their recruitment. Existing literature is divided (and politicized!) over the impacts of the policy. On the positive side, it has brought individuals from deprived groups into positions they would otherwise not achieve, possibly thus providing role models for others (though there is little evidence of this), and it certainly has been a venue for strengthening the voices of deprived groups. On the negative side, 'reserved' jobs can have the following negative effects: maintaining stigma; the practice has been criticized for negating merit; it may have created a 'creamy layer' and benefits have not spread to a majority of individuals within deprived groups (with the share of public sector jobs low and possibly declining with economic reforms); and it has been fiercely contested politically (as the flip side of the articulation of voice, of course).

Affirmative action highlights some of the most difficult questions around social cohesion (and productivity, but the former is more significant in our view), including around the 'capacity to manage' conflict (and the political necessity to implement these, notably Malaysia). In the Indian case, the implementation of affirmative action need to be seen in the context of the post-colonial social compact (formed in the years before Independence), and is now embedded in the specific context of the political democracy. This has ever-more strongly articulated the different social identities (quite contrary to initial intentions), while equality of opportunities is still far from being achieved. While some of the literature warns against policies that highlight the expression of identities, and much social science literature no longer celebrates diversity, the force of identities remains overwhelmingly large, and interaction with labor markets will remain a key issue.

Immigration

Achieving social cohesion in eras of large cross-border population movements is a policy challenge in both sending and receiving communities. Employment is critical to the problematic as labor migration is the predominant motivation for such movements outside of situations of conflict or disaster. Different models of immigration offer a different prospectus for social

cohesion. For example the German ‘guest worker’ model of the post war years established a clear demarcation of the limits of the status, falling short of full citizenship or even the right to bring family members. Historically the UK has offered immigrants from former colonies the option of moving towards full citizenship, although policy makers have increasingly moved in recent years to close this space.⁵¹ Freedom of movement within the EU on an entitlement basis allows workers to move on a long-term basis to other countries without being obliged to seek national citizenship to take up job opportunities. By contrast the US operates with a large level of tolerance for illicit labor markets.

Integration of migrants is a multi-dimensional process, in which a) jobs play an important role, and b) shared values/acceptance and trust are critical for labor market chances. Discrimination is common, and sometimes has resulted in creation of economic niches, which in the long-run can have integrative force. Recent successful immigration policies include those of Canada, which uses a point-system to accept migrants, and provides training and labor market information for migrants to succeed—but still based in an expanding economy and labor market, and its model for multi-cultural integration is now also increasingly facing political challenge. Continental European policies, by contrast, have been much criticized, not least because some aspects of the standard policies may have reinforced ghettoization.

Large flows of migrants are a striking challenge to the capacity of societies to inclusively and peacefully manage rapid social change. Anti-discrimination measures are significant—but as noted by OECD (2011) they are not the limit of effective policy. Effective inclusion policy also requires attention to improving perceptions of immigrant groups among the established populations and fostering positive cross-group relations. The range of measures needed to promote labor market mobility will include attention to skills, education and support to entrepreneurship (including credit and financial services).

In periods of economic growth the policy challenge may be to create new relations and bonds across different cultural groups in a period of rapid social change. In periods of recession retaining a fragile consensus around a new cultural landscape for national identity is a tougher challenge, but arguably more important.

Finally it is worth noting that there are rather different challenges to maintaining social cohesion in societies that export people for labor migration. In these environments policy makers may be blamed for the lack of opportunities to work provided to young people as communities hollow out—with working age adults leaving and children and older people remaining. Policies that enable out-migrants to remain an active part of their home communities (for example through ease of remitting cash) may have a major role to play in maintaining cohesion under these conditions.

Workers and employers and self-employed

Much of the policy literature focuses on workers, and people outside the labor market, as beneficiaries of social policies that have broader impacts than the material benefits. But the mechanism for promoting virtuous jobs-cohesion circles has to be equally concerned with

⁵¹ See Sen (2000) for a discussion of different models for incorporation of migrant communities.

employers. The context of jobs are as important as jobs itself, and indeed much of industrial sociology has focused on ways in which managerial strategies can enhance the meaning of jobs and enhance more cohesive work-floor organization. Further, corporate social responsibility has an important role in setting norms within economic activity, often (but not only) seen as operating in the absence of active state regulation and enforcements. Through CSR (unlike philanthropy), businesses aim to positively impact employees and communities, integrated into their business operation, including in human resource management (Bhattacharaya et al.).

Moreover, particularly in low-income contexts, only a small proportion of jobs are in the form of wage employment, and jobs policies need to be equally engaged with self-employed. As the Tunisian case of the harassed informal sector worker which was the catalyst for the so-called 'Arab Spring' demonstrated, provision of basic rights and security for self-employed and small business owners is equally important. Cooperatives and federations of farmers may provide useful examples of institutions that provide not only business support, but also form pillars of cohesive societies. SEWA⁵² has been an outstanding example of an organization that has for decades tried to improve the situation of women in the informal sector, often resisted by formal trade unions, and in the testimonies of members, enhanced respect and being part of an organization feature as prominently as the material benefits. While SEWA has had an influence on (and promoted) some similar forms of organizations elsewhere, these examples have remained perhaps too limited given the predominance of an 'informal sector' in most poorer countries.

4. Conclusions

Our very rapid and necessarily selective review of the sociological and related literatures provides a number of insights regarding social cohesion. A first one is of deep context-specificity, and unpredictability even within one context. Apparently cohesive societies in cases have erupted in violent conflict, and the public systems that one would expect to manage these potential conflicts at times have reinforced these conflicts.

At the same time, some of the 'pessimism' of classic sociology about decline of social cohesion, notably in the context of great transformation such as urbanization and industrialization, has not in the end proved justified. Social structures have much resilience, and communities have the capacity to regenerate. And as the literature on international migrations shows, particularistic group identities are not necessarily incompatible with other and broader forms of integration and identity.

While the social arena of work has center stage in much of the sociological literature, the ways in which this relates to social cohesion are extremely complex, and causal path-ways are typically multi-directional. Much sociology recognizes work as central to communities' identity (which can be equally true for self-employment and wage employment), and much analysis focuses on the negative impacts on communities of main sources of livelihoods disappearing. There is clear

⁵² The Self-Employed Workers' Association grew out of the women's wing of the Textile Labor Association, India's oldest trade union. Starting in Gujarat SEA has always focused on informal sector workers and has achieved significant campaigning successes at state, national and international levels.

evidence of how social networks enable *and* limit opportunities for work, and how work can enhance networks and sharing of values beyond narrow communities. But the links between jobs and cohesion are multi-faceted, as communities attribute values to particular kinds of jobs, even if these may seem to be degrading and dangerous.

We can conclude with an intriguing paradox. Jobs in industrial society are clearly central to the place of individuals in terms social status, relative wealth and power relations. Without doubt then the existence of good jobs, perceived as fairly distributed, must be a central component of social cohesion. But in practice, the interaction between the world of work and the generation of cohesive societies and institutions does not lend itself to the identification of simple, linear causal pathways in either direction. Political context is always critical—and the interactions of different factors show all the classic feature of complexity theory—multi-directional pathways, threshold events, and unpredictable self-organizing responses. As we stressed at the beginning of this review, the generation of share norms and values is a constitutive part of social cohesion. If these norms and values are broadly inclusive, equitable and tolerant of difference then the outcomes associated with a ‘cohesive society’ should be broadly favorable to a long-term trajectory of poverty reduction. But crude ‘cohesion’ (in the sense of group solidarity) may also coexist with norms and values which are hierarchical, exclusionary—even xenophobic. To form a useful policy direction (consistent with developmental goals) around the notion of social cohesion therefore requires moral clarity—and a willingness to engage with the fundamentally normative elements of the conceptual terrain.

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