Are Value Preferences and Social Cohesion Interconnected? The Case of Mexico [1] [2]

¿Están Conectadas las Preferencias de Valores y la Cohesión Social? El Caso de México

Klaus Boehnke[3] [a, b], Adriana Berrueto [c], Georgi Dragolov [a], and Paloma Ocampo Villegas [a]
[a] Jacobs University Bremen
[b] National Research University Higher School of Economics
[c] Gabinete de Comunicación Estratégica

Abstract

Social cohesion, the modern version of the *fraternité* motto of the French revolution, has become a hot social science topic. The paper addresses it from a social-psychological perspective, asking whether individually and societally prevailing value preferences are interconnected with the level of cohesion in society. Mexico serves as the case to examine whether findings for European countries, obtained in the Bertelsmann Social Cohesion Radar, can be generalized to Latin America. Is it true also in Mexico that strong self-transcendence values (Universalism) foster social cohesion, whereas strong self-enhancement values (Power) impede it? A large random probability quota sample (N = 2,003) was gathered to answer the research question. Results showed that, largely, findings from Europe could be generalized to the Mexican context. However, the role of Security values emerged as different. Whereas in Europe such value preferences covaried with low levels of cohesion, in Mexico they were generally associated with higher levels. The authors interpret this as evidence for negative consequences of neoliberal economic policies for social cohesion. Unlike in Europe, strong support for Security values seems to serve as a safeguard against capitalist economic pressures more so than being a sign for an egoistic preservation of one's own lot.

Resumen

La cohesión social, versión moderna del lema *fraternité* de la revolución francesa, se ha vuelto un tópico relevante en la ciencia social. Este trabajo aborda el tema desde una perspectiva socio-psicológica, preguntándose si preferencias en valores individuales o sociales están relacionadas con el nivel de cohesión en la sociedad. México funciona como punto de comparación para ver si los hallazgos en países europeos, obtenidos del Radar de

Cohesión Social Bertelsmann, pueden ser generalizados a América Latina. ¿Será también verdad que en México fuertes valores de auto-trascendencia (universalismo) fomentan la cohesión social, mientras que fuertes valores de auto-promoción (poder) la impiden? Una muestra aleatoria probabilística por cuotas (N=2003) se utilizó para contestar la pregunta de investigación. Los resultados muestran que, en su mayoría, los resultados de Europa podrían ser generalizados al contexto mexicano. Sin embargo, el rol de los valores de conservación resultó ser diferente. Mientras que en Europa dichas preferencias en valores covarían con bajos niveles de cohesión, en México están asociadas con altos niveles. Los autores interpretan esto como evidencia de las consecuencias negativas de las políticas neoliberales económicas para la cohesión social. A diferencia de Europa, un fuerte apoyo a los valores de conservación parece servir como factor de protección ante las presiones capitalistas económicas más allá de ser una señal de tendencias egoístas de preservación hacia lo que uno tiene.

Palabras Clave: Cohesión Social, Preferencias en Valores, Valores de Schwartz, México, Valores de Seguridad

Early traces of the social cohesion concept can be found in the work of historians, philosophers, sociologists, and economists. They all were concerned with the idea of holding society together "as one" and fostering social cooperation. This is very much in line with the present-day understanding of cohesion; it literally means, "sticking together" (cf., Chan, To, & Chan, 2006). The study of social cohesion, thus, amounts to the quest for forces that make social atoms form a society characterized by a "we-feeling" and solidarity. This is not the place to delve deeply into the history of the concept, which can at least be traced back to the French Revolution with its three mottos, "liberté, egalité, fraternité," where the latter addresses the issue of social cohesion. A brief look into the most prominent contributions, however, seems in place.

Durkheim (1952) described the maintenance of social order in societies based on two very different forms of solidarity, *mechanical* and *organic*. Mechanical solidarity is a characteristic of traditional and small-scale societies, where cohesion and the integration of individuals stems from their homogeneity—individuals are connected by similar work, education, religious background, and lifestyle. Contemporary industrial capitalist societies, in contrast, are kept together by organic solidarity. It is a form of social cohesion based on the interdependence of individuals because of specifics of the division of labor. Durkheim argues that the advancement of the division of labor could also bring about disorder and anomie, which

he considers to be pathological aspects of modernity. However, once an advanced stage has been reached successfully, societies become much stronger, and the social bonds are more flexible than in a context of mechanical solidarity.

Tönnies (1957) proposed a basic distinction between *Gemeinschaft* (community) and *Gesellschaft* (society) to describe the type of social ties among people. In a *Gemeinschaft,* social ties belong to personal social interactions, and the roles, values, and beliefs that originate from these interactions. A *Gesellschaft* exhibits indirect interactions, impersonal roles, formal values, and corresponding beliefs. In response to Tönnies, Weber (1978) wrote of *Vergemeinschaftung* (community formation) and *Vergesellschaftung* (society formation). Weber saw *community* rooted in affectual or traditional feelings, and *society* rooted in rational agreements by mutual consent, e.g., a commercial contract.

Drawing heavily on Durkheim, Parsons (1971) saw a necessity for value-normative integration in modern societies. According to him, a society can be integrated in substantive and functional terms only if social interactions are centered around a set of ultimate values, which are shared visions on the desirable state of affairs. For Parsons, common values internalized during the socialization process therefore, are key for holding together the societal community—the integration function which this subsystem plays to maintain the entire society as a social system.

Although it is focused on the centuries-old question of what keeps a society together and what motivates individuals to cooperate, social cohesion as an applied concept in empirical research did not gain much prominence until the 1990s. Then, however, it increasingly received attention. Currently social cohesion is a "hot topic" in academia, public policy, and mass media. The reasons for this can be found in the growing concerns that megatrends such as increasing ethno-cultural diversity (immigration), a widening gap between rich and poor, technological progress, and recurrent financial crises weaken the social fabric of present-day societies.

A review study by Schiefer, van der Noll, Delhey, and Boehnke (2012) screened the relevant academic and institutional sources on theories behind the concept of cohesion (see also Schiefer & van der Noll, 2017). They, first, point to a consensus among scholars that cohesion is a characteristic of a social entity. While individuals' values and behaviors do affect (and are affected by) social cohesion, cohesion itself is *not* a characteristic of individual members of a society. Scholars also agree that cohesion is a graduated phenomenon: There are different degrees of cohesion and social entities can, thus, be more or less cohesive. Next, the level of cohesion is reflected in the attitudes and behaviors of individuals and groups in a given society. Its manifestations encompass the micro, meso, and macro levels of human interaction. Finally, there is consensus that social cohesion is a multidimensional construct (cf., Dickes, Valentova, & Borsenberger, 2010).

Schiefer et al. (2012) do not stop here; they ascertain that there is something like a core meaning of cohesion. From the various definitions that have been proposed, Schiefer et al. identify a small number of domains consensually seen as components of social cohesion, namely intact social relationships, high connectedness to the social entity at stake, and an overarching orientation towards the common good. The authors then formulate a definition in line with the core consensus of current research on social cohesion, which was adopted with slight modifications in the Social Cohesion Radar series of comparative studies on social cohesion of Bertelsmann Stiftung

(cf., Dragolov et al., 2016; Arant, Larsen & Boehnke, 2016; Arant, Dragolov & Boehnke, 2017; Delhey et al., 2018). For the purposes of the present article, we apply this concept, as elaborated below.

Social cohesion is the quality of social cooperation and togetherness of a collectivity, defined in geopolitical terms, that is expressed in the attitudes and behaviors of its members. A cohesive social entity is characterized by resilient social relations, a positive emotional connectedness between its members and the community, and a strong commitment toward the common good.

Social relations are understood as the horizontal network that spans individuals and groups within a society. Connectedness refers to the positive vertical ties among individuals and their social entity of belonging and that entity's key institutions, respectively. A commitment to the common good, finally, is reflected in the actions and attitudes of the members of society that demonstrate solidarity, responsibility for others, and engagement for the community as a whole. These are the three core aspects (in the following called domains) of cohesion.

Each of these three domains, in turn, unfolds into three dimensions: Social relations are measured by the strength of social networks, the degree to which people trust each other, and the extent to which diversity is accepted. Connectedness is measured in terms of the strength of people's identification with their residential social entity, the degree to which they trust that entity's major institutions, and their perception of fairness in it. A focus on the common good manifests itself in the level of solidarity and helpfulness, people's willingness to abide by social rules, and civic participation.

Compared to other academically well-received approaches to cohesion, the concept that the present article uses strengthens one important aspect, the focus on to the common good, as it is neither entirely "horizontal" nor entirely "vertical;" it rather connects or complements the two. Figure 1 offers a graphic display of the conceptual approach.

One advantage of using the above-outlined Bertelsmann definition of cohesion is that it deliberately excludes material wealth, social inequality, *values*,
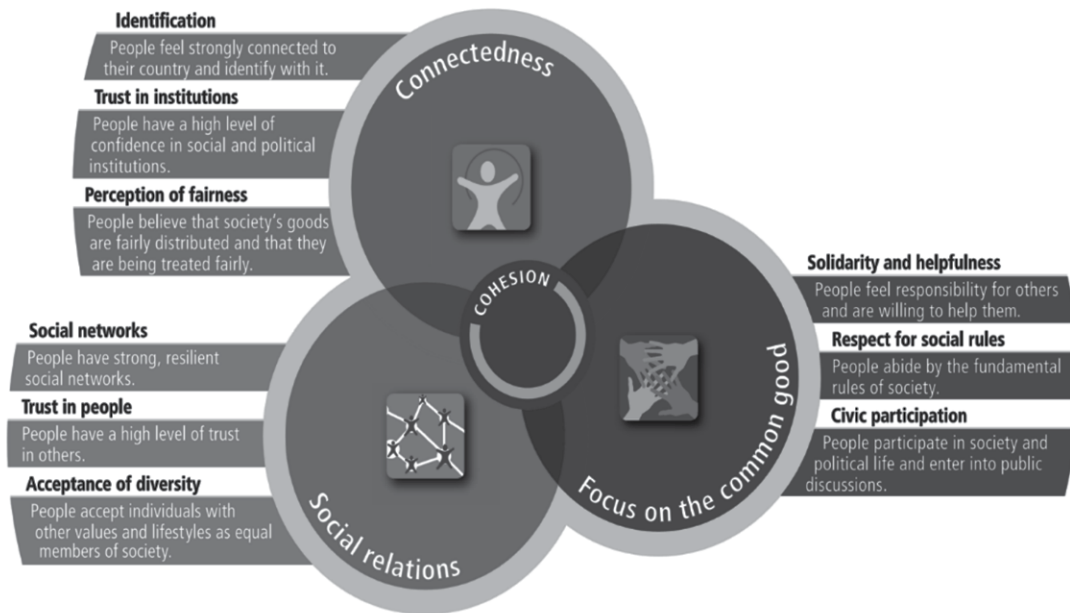
Figure 1. The Bertelsmann Social Cohesion Concept

and well-being, despite the fact that these factors may play an important role in other authors' definitions (cf. Janmaat, 2011). Grounded in substantive conceptual reasons (cf. Dragolov et al., 2016), this streamlining focuses the concept on the key aspects of social cohesion only, thereby enabling a systematic empirically driven differentiation with respect to conditions, components, and consequences of social cohesion. Particularly in light of the aims of the present article, the application of the Bertelsmann concept makes it possible to investigate which values affect (and are affected by) social cohesion.

The relationship between values and cohesion has not been explained in depth yet. Although researchers agree that individual values and behavior affect (and are affected by) social cohesion, it is debatable whether social cohesion in modern, diverse and complex societies needs indeed homogeneity of values. The evidence provided in this paper cannot answer the question. It only attempts to shed light on (a) the relationship between value preferences of individuals and the—perceived—level of social cohesion in their residential social entity, and (b) the aggregate value climate in that social entity and the degree of social cohesion measured for it. We do so by analyzing data from a representative survey conducted in Mexico,

which encompasses data on social cohesion and on value preferences assessed within the theory of values introduced by Schwartz (1992). Figure 2 depicts the classical Schwartz Value Circumplex model for individual-level values.

How do people's values interact with social cohesion? Do the guiding principles people follow in their lives (i.e., their value preferences) preform (perceived) social cohesion, or does the degree of social cohesion
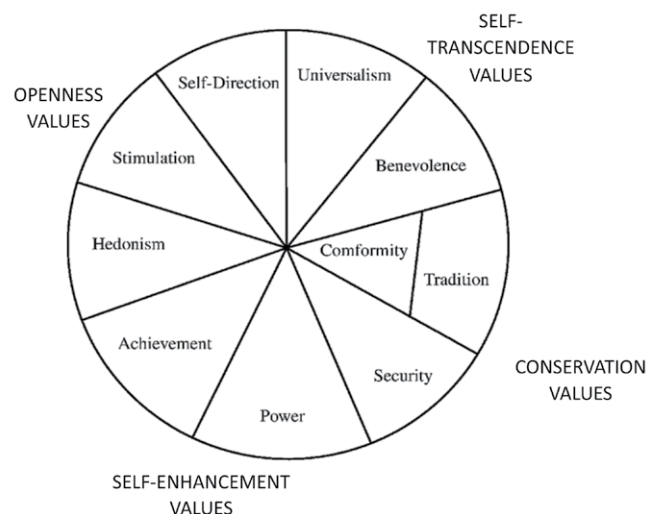

Figure 2. Schwartz Value Circumplex (Individual-Level Values)

experienced in a geopolitically defined social entity shape people's value preferences? We approach the response to this preliminary research question by conducting two types of analyses, one on the individual level, and the other on the aggregate level of the 31 Federal States of Mexico plus the Capitol District. On the individual level, we relate value preferences to perceived levels of social cohesion. On the aggregate level, we relate the average value climate in a federal state to the level of social cohesion in the state.

Boehnke et al. (2016) related social cohesion scores to value preferences for European countries based on data from the European Social Survey (ESS). They showed that high preferences of self-enhancement and of conservation values were typically associated with *low* levels social cohesion. High levels of social cohesion were positively associated with self-transcendence and openness values. We now enlarged the scope of Dragolov et al.'s (2016) study of Anglo and European OECD countries to Mexico, one of the only three Latin American OECD members (Chile and Colombia being the other two member states). To assess value preferences, the present study employed Schwartz's Portrait Values Questionnaire as used in the European Social Survey (ESS). Thus, our research can be seen as a test whether findings from the Dragolov et al. study generalize to Mexico.

In summary, our hypotheses—regardless of level of analysis—read:

Social cohesion is positively related to openness and to self-transcendence values. These values stand for openness towards others and engagement for their interests, both being integral parts of social cohesion.

Social Cohesion is negatively related to conservation and self-enhancement values. These values stand for outperforming others and preserving one's own lot, both standing against solidarity and helpfulness as well as interpersonal trust.

Method

Participants

The present study was conducted by *Gabinete de Communicación Estratégica*, Mexico City, under the leadership of the second author as a face-to-face

quota survey. The study had 2,003 participants. Of them 826 (41%) were men and 1,177 (59%) were women. The average age of the sample was 37. All 31 states of Mexico and Ciudad de México were represented proportionally with a minimum sample size of ten respondents. A list of how many participants came from which state can be taken from Table A in the Appendix. That table also documents the relative distribution of value preferences in the 32 Mexican federal entities.

Materials and Procedures

Among other instruments, the study contained items that measured social cohesion in a way compatible with the above-elaborated conceptualization. Table 1 reiterates the dimensions of social cohesion assessed in our measurement concept and offers the items meant to measure it. The table also documents scores for the items, rescaled to a range from 0 (intended to denote very weak cohesion) to 100 (very strong cohesion).

According to the conceptual considerations by Schiefer et al., social cohesion is a formative index. It should not be misunderstood as a reflective index. Its aggregation follows the 'basket of goods' logic used, for example, to determine consumer price indices. Aggregation should thus not be seen as the calculation of a scale score. It just serves as an aid to data interpretation, when domain scores were calculated by averaging the three dimension scores that make up the respective domain. In a final step, the three domain scores were averaged to an overall social cohesion score.

To assess value preferences, the Schwartz's Portrait Value Questionnaire was used in the 21-item version also utilized in the European Social Survey.[4] This instrument portrays individuals by describing their value preferences and then asking respondents how similar the described person is to them on a scale from '1' (*not at all like the respondent*) to '6' (*very much like the respondent*)—reversed from the original poling in the ESS. For further analyses, data were ipsatized, i.e. the respondent's mean rating

---

4 https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/docs/round8/fieldwork/spain/spanish/ESS8_questionnaires_ES_spa.pdf

across all 21 items is subtracted from each single value preference and then a constant (4) is added to bring scores back to the initial value range of the response scale ('MRAT-correction'). The instrument offers three items for Universalism and two items for all other values. Table 2 presents definitions for the ten values assessed by the instrument (Schwartz, 1992) and gives MRAT-corrected means for the ten values. Values are grouped into the higher-order value types that Schwartz assumes to be adequate descriptors of the two dimensional space that his value theory spans.

As briefly elaborated in the introduction, data are to be subjected to analyses on the individual level and on the level of the 32 federal entities of Mexico. In order to prepare the value preference data for the latter analyses, individual-level data were not simply averaged to state-level means, but were transformed to the seven culture-level values that Schwartz (2006) proposes for aggregate-level analyses: Harmony, Embeddedness, Hierarchy, Mastery, Affective Autonomy, Intellectual Autonomy, and Egalitarianism. Details on the transformation procedure are documented in Table B in the Appendix. Table 3 documents means

for the state-level value preferences, scores being aggregated to the state-level and then averaged across the 32 federal entities.

Results

In order to test the exploratory hypotheses, we conducted simple correlational analyses, a procedure advocated by Schwartz for all initial work on relationships of value preferences with other constructs. As spelt out in the introduction, the to-be-tested hypotheses were: Social Cohesion is positively (but not always significantly) correlated to Self-Transcendence (UN, BE) and Openness (SD, ST, HE) values, whereas it is negatively (but not always significantly) correlated to Self-Enhancement (PO, AC) and Conservation (TR, CO, SE) values. Transformed to the state-level, the hypotheses then propose that Social Cohesion is positively related to Affective Autonomy, Intellectual Autonomy, Egalitarianism, Harmony, and Embeddedness, while being negatively related to Hierarchy, and Mastery.

Table 4 documents correlation coefficients for the individual-level data. It not only reports findings for

Table 1
Domains and Dimensions of Social Cohesion

Domain	Sample Item	Mean (rescaled)
	Dimension	
Social Relations		
Social Networks	How many people do you have with whom you can discuss intimate and personal matters?	38.8
Trust in People	Most people can be trusted vs. you cannot be too careful.	47.2
Acceptance of Diversity	Gays and lesbians are free to live life as they wish.	70.5
Connectedness to the Social Entity		
Identification	How emotionally attached are you to Mexico?	87.3
Trust in Institutions[a]	How much do you trust the National Electoral Institute?	36.7
Perception of Fairness	The government should reduce differences in income levels	63.3
Focus in the Common Good		
Solidarity and Helpfulness	How often have you helped strangers in past four weeks?	36.4
Respect for Social Rules	How safe do you feel walking alone in your local area after dark?	41.2
Civic Engagement	How interested are you in politics?	37.9

[a] In the assessment of 'Trust in Institutions' scores for four institutions were obtained and averaged: Congress, judicial system, presidential institution, and political parties.

the overall Social Cohesion scores but also for the three cohesion domains separately. Findings in line with the stated hypotheses (as far as the sign of the correlation is concerned) are set in **bold**; findings not in line with the hypotheses are set in *italic*. Findings for the single dimensions can be found in Table C in the Appendix.

Concerning the overall score for (perceived) Social Cohesion, seven out of ten signs of correlations were in line with the expected associations as formulated in our hypotheses. For the social cohesion domain score Social Relations, eight signs of correlations were in line with the hypotheses. For Connectedness, only five correlations had the predicted sign, whereas for Focus on the Common Good again eight signs were correctly predicted. Using the binomial test at a significance level of p ≤ .10 , this result means that the null hypothesis has to be retained for the overall

Table 2
Mean Scores for Schwartz Individual-Level Values

Higher-Order Value Type Value Type	Definition	Mean (MRAT-corrected)
Self-Transcendence Values		
Universalism (UN)	Understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature.	4.8
Benevolence (BE)	Preserving and enhancing the welfare of those with whom one is in frequent personal contact.	4.5
Conservation Values		
Tradition (TR)	Respect, commitment, and acceptance of the customs and ideas that one's culture or religion provides.	4.4
Conformity (CO)	Restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms.	3.9
Security (SE)	Safety, harmony, and stability of society, of relationships, and of self.	4.6
Self-Enhancement Values		
Power (PO)	Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources.	2.7
Achievement (AC)	Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards.	3.4
Openness Values		
Hedonism (HE)	Pleasure or sensuous gratification for oneself.	3.2
Stimulation (ST)	Excitement, novelty and challenge in life.	3.8
Self-Direction (SD)	Independent thought and action—choosing, creating, exploring.	4.4

Table 3
Mean Scores for Schwartz' State-Level Values

Value Type	Core Values	Mean (MRAT-corrected)
Harmony	Unity with Nature/World at Peace	1.1
Embeddedness	Social Order/Obedience/Respect for Tradition	0.3
Hierarchy	Authority/Humility	-1.3
Mastery	Ambition/Daringness	-0.7
Affective Autonomy	Pleasure/Excitement in Life	-0.5
Intellectual Autonomy	Broadmindedness/Curiosity	0.4
Egalitarianism	Social Justice/Equality	0.6

score and for the domain score for Connectedness, whereas for Social Relations and for Focus on the Common Good, our hypotheses were supported (p = .05). The social cohesion domains Social Relations and Focus on the Common Good were found to be related to the values of the Schwartz value circumplex as expected. Universalism and Self-Direction values exhibited most positive and Power values most negative correlations.

Table 5 reports correlations for the state-level. It documents simple correlations between the overall Social Cohesion score, the three domain scores and the seven state-level value priorities that Schwartz assumes. Coefficients for the nine single dimensions of social cohesion can be found in Table D in the Appendix.

For state-level analyses, findings were similar. For the overall Social Cohesion score, all seven correlations had the predicted sign (p < .01). This was also the case for Focus on the Common Good. For Social Relations six correlations had the predicted sign, whereas for Connectedness only four did. The prior

result is significant on the p ≤ .10 level, whereas the result for Connectedness is insignificant.

Discussion

The present paper addressed the question to what extent value preferences are interconnected with social cohesion in Mexico. Starting point of the paper was the finding by Boehnke et al. (2016) that in European countries value preferences (as assessed within the framework of Schwartz's value circumplex) emerged as 'perfectly' related to values around Schwartz's circumplex (see Figure 2). Values on one half of the circle—from tradition to achievement—were negatively (but not always significantly) related to social cohesion in Europe, whereas values on the other half of the circle—from hedonism to benevolence—were positively (but also not always significantly) related to social cohesion. To what extent does this finding generalize to one of the only three Latin American OECD countries, Mexico? The study reported here used the same measurement strategy as was used by

Table 4

Correlations of Individual-Level (Perceived) Social Cohesion with Value Preferences

Higher-Order Value Type	Correlations			
Value Type	Social Cohesion (Overall)	Social Relations	Connectedness	Focus on the Common Good
Self-Transcendence Values	.11**	.05*	09**	.10**
UN	.13**	.08**	.11**	.09**
BE	.03	-.00	.02	.04
Conservation Values	.05	-.03	.15**	.01
TR	-.01	-.03	.04	-.02
CO	-.00	-.04*	.07**	-.01
SE	.10**	.03	.15**	.05*
Self-Enhancement Values	-.18**	-.06**	-.09**	-.12**
PO	-.14**	-.07**	-.11**	-.11**
AC	-.07**	-.04	-.03	-.07**
Openness Values	.01	.07	-.11**	.03
HE	-.04	.04	-.12**	-.03
ST	-.01	.01	-.08**	.05*
SD	.07**	.08**	.01	.05*
No. of correctly predicted signs of correlations	7 (*p* = .17)	8 (*p* = .05)	5 (*p* = .62)	8 (*p* = .05)

Note: ** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$

Dragolov and colleagues. For value preferences, the 21-item PVQ from the European Social Survey was used. To assess social cohesion, a short instrument modelled after the measurement concept of the Bertelsmann Social Cohesion Radar was employed, which matched the approach by Dragolov et al. (2016), except for the number of indicators altogether used to assess social cohesion.

Core findings of the present study can be summarized as follows. First of all, it must be stated that interconnections between value preferences are weak to moderate only. Individual-level correlations between values and (perceived) social cohesion do not exceed $r = .18$; state-level correlations go up as high as $r = .43$. Considering that the individual-level sample is very large (N = 2,003), a correlation of size $r = .18$ is not a negligible result, and so is a correlation of size $r = .43$ neither negligible for an aggregate sample of N = 32. However, sizable interconnections look different, even against the fact that Boehnke et al. (2016b), who conducted multi-level analyses for 30 European states, reported similar, if not sometimes smaller effect sizes.

Secondly, the general pattern of correlations between values and social cohesion matched the pattern found by Boehnke et al. (2016b) for European countries. On the individual level, Universalism and Self-Direction values were the strongest positive predictors of—overall—Social Cohesion; Power values—also for Mexico—emerged most strongly

negatively related to social cohesion. It became evident, however, that Social Cohesion—as a formative index—is not uniformly related to value preferences in the way portrayed in the Dragolov et al. study. It emerged that the social cohesion domain Connectedness was in principle unrelated to value preferences. At the same time, Security values were often related *positively* to Social Cohesion, whereas they were predicted to relate *negatively*. A closer look at the single dimensions of social cohesion on the individual level suggested that of all nine of them only the dimension 'Solidarity and Helpfulness' was systematically related to all values (as would be expected in light of Schwartz's assumption of a circumplex relationship between all values). Security values as such seem to be responsible for at least one crucial difference between Mexico and Europe. As in Europe, it was indeed the case that Universalism, Self-Direction, and Benevolence were positively related, and Power negatively related to the nine dimensions of social cohesion. However, Security values—assumed to be negatively related to Social Cohesion—exhibited six positive correlations (three of them significant): If security values were high among citizens of Mexico, perceived social cohesion also tended to be high. The same finding (with slightly lower sizes of coefficients) emerged for Conformity values. On the state level, only for Hierarchy values the relationship was clear-cut: Except for the Connectedness domain and among it the Trust in Institutions dimension,

Table 5
Correlations of State-Level Social Cohesion with Aggregated Value Preferences

State-Level Value Type	Correlations			
	Social Cohesion (Overall)	Social Relations	Connectedness	Focus on the Common Good
Harmony	.13	.25	-.16	.13
Embeddedness	.05	-.07	.11	.10
Hierarchy	-.37	-.26	-.32	-.33
Mastery	-.39	-.43	.02	-.42
Affective Autonomy	.21	.31	.11	.08
Intellectual Autonomy	.20	.33	-.13	.20
Egalitarianism	.35	.24	.18	.39
No. of correctly predicted signs of correlations	7 (p = .01)	6 (p = .06)	4 (p = .50)	7 (p = .01)

Hierarchy value preferences were always negatively related to Social Cohesion.

Limitations of the present study must be sought in the selection of items for measuring social cohesion. Not in all cases may the selection of single items from the Bertelsmann Social Cohesion Radar have been the wisest decision. And beyond: A one-item per dimension measure, utilized for eight of the nine dimensions of Social Cohesion may have jeopardized reliability of the data to a certain degree. On the other hand, only using a short Social Cohesion instrument enabled us to obtain such a large sample of Mexican to participate in our study.

Two final questions arise. The most general one is, "What does the evidence mean?" The second one is the question of policy implications. In response to the first question, two points spring to the forefront: The basics of a relationship between value orientations and social cohesion generalize from European OECD countries to Mexico. A value climate dominated by Hierarchy and Mastery values is detrimental for social cohesion. Individuals that cherish strong power values are 'antagonists' of social cohesion. Individuals holding Universalism, Self-Direction, and Benevolence values are 'protagonists' of social cohesion. The puzzle lies in the role of Security values. Security values usually stand for a low degree of flexibility, and foster distrustful social interaction. In Mexico, these values are high on the current-day agenda. There are many people for whom they are a concern of first order. At the same time, high Security values go along with higher levels of (perceived) social cohesion. This may suggest that people who experience high levels of security concerns are more prone to match up with other citizens in the current political situation in Mexico (instead to—as in Europe—just fear for their own little lot).

Policy advice is fairly easy to formulate, but—as usual—rather difficult to implement. Differences in effect sizes (stronger correlations on the state level than on the individual level) suggest that modification of the prevalent value climate in the country seems more success-prone than attempting to modify people's value orientations by starting something like Value Education for young Mexicans. According to Schwartz'

(2008) world map of value preferences, Mexico is a country with a non-extreme value climate. None of the seven culture-level value orientations seems to exhibit very high scores in Mexico. In the current study, the country seems to have moved towards the Hierarchy and Mastery poles. Herein lies the crux of current day Mexican affairs and at the same time possibly the key for policy interventions: *No*, we do not always need to be better in comparison to others, and *no*, it does not help social cohesion just to accept the existing hierarchy structures. The climate of neo-liberalism that some authors see as clearly on the rise in Mexico for several decades (Laurell, 2015) obviously has a certain destructive potential for social cohesion.

References

1. Boehnke, M., Dragolov, G., Ignácz, Z.S., Lorenz, J., Delhey, J., Boehnke, K., & Unzicker, K. (2016). Individual values and social cohesion. In G. Dragolov, Z.S. Ignácz, J. Lorenz, J. Delhey, K. Boehnke, & K. Unzicker, *Social cohesion in the western world. What holds societies together: Insights from the Social Cohesion Radar* (pp. 98-103). Cham (CH): Springer International.
2. Chan, J., To, H. P., & Chan, E. (2006). Reconsidering social cohesion: Developing a definition and analytical framework for empirical research. *Social Indicators Research, 75*(2), 273-302.
3. Dickes, P., Valentova, M., Borsenberger, M. (2010). Construct validation and application of common measure of social cohesion in 33 European countries. *Social Indicators Research, 98*(3), 451-473.
4. Dragolov, G., Ignácz, Z.S., Lorenz, J., Delhey, J., Boehnke, K., & Unzicker, K. (2016). *Social cohesion in the western world. What holds societies together: Insights from the Social Cohesion Radar.* Cham (CH): Springer International.
5. Durkheim, E. (1952). *Suicide, a study in sociology* (Translated by John A. Spaulding and George Simpson; edited with an introd. by George Simpson). London: Routledge & K. Paul.
6. Janmaat, J. G. (2011). Social cohesion as a real-life phenomenon: Assessing the explanatory power of the universalist and particularist perspectives. *Social Indicators Research, 100*(1), 61-83.
7. Laurell, A. C. (2015). Three decades of neoliberalism in Mexico: The destruction of society. *International Journal of Health Services, 45*(2), 246–264.

8. Parsons, T. (1971). *The system of modern societies*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

9. Schiefer, D & van der Noll, J. (2017). The essentials of social cohesion: A literature review. *Social Indicators Research, 132*(2), 579–603.

10. Schiefer, D., van der Noll, J., Delhey, J., & Boehnke, K. (2012). *Cohesion Radar: Social cohesion in Germany—a preliminary review*. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Foundation.

11. Schwartz, S. H. (1992). Universals in the content and structure of values: Theory and empirical tests in 20 countries. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, 25*, 1–65.

12. Schwartz, S. H. (2006). A theory of cultural value orientations: Explication and applications. *Comparative Sociology, 5*, 137-182.

13. Schwartz, S. H. (2008). *Cultural value orientations: Nature and implications of national difference*. Moscow: National Research University Higher School of Economics Press.

14. Tönnies, F. (1957). *Community and society* (with a new introduction by John Samples). New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books.

15. Weber, M. (1978). *Economy and society*. Berkeley: University of California Press.