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SİYASET BİLİMİ VE ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLERİ
ANABİLİM DALI**



**THE CHALLENGES TO BUILD SOCIAL COHESION IN CONFLICT-LADEN AREAS:
A'ZAZ CASE IN THE NORTHWEST OF SYRIA (2016-2022)**

Omar Garebo

YÜKSEK LİSANS

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Omar Garebo

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ÖZET

Kuzeybatı Suriye'de Sosyal Uyumun Değerlendirilmesi: Yerel Algıların ve Zorlukların Derinlemesine İncelenmesi Bu tezin temel odak noktası, kuzeybatı Suriye'de sosyal uyumu güçlendirmenin fizibilitesini eleştirel bir şekilde değerlendirmektir. Bu keşif, bölgede aktif olarak faaliyet gösteren yerel otoritelerin, bölge sakinlerinin ve sivil toplum kuruluşlarının (STK'lar) incelikli bakış açılarına dayanmaktadır. Bu dinamiği kapsamlı bir şekilde anlamak için, 25 Önemli Bilgilendirici Görüşmenin (KII) gerçekleştirilmesi, daha geniş topluluk tabanını temsil eden toplam 30 katılımcıyla üç odak grup görüşmesinin düzenlenmesi ve 516 katılımcıdan görüş toplayan bir kamu anketinin başlatılması dahil olmak üzere yapılandırılmış bir yaklaşım kullanıldı. Araştırma, çeşitli topluluk sektörlerinde post-veri toplamayı takip ederek, bulguları titizlikle analiz etmek ve böylece belirtilen hipotezleri incelemek için gelişmiş Excel metodolojilerini kullandı. Analitik yolculuk, sosyal uyumun sağlanmasını engelleyen sayısız zorluğu ve engeli gün yüzüne çıkardı. Anket bir zorunluluğun altını çizdi: Tüm bölgesel aktörler arasında kapasite geliştirme ihtiyacı. Ayrıca, başta ekonomi ve güvenlik sektörleri olmak üzere acil müdahale ve revizyon gerektiren bazı kritik alanlara da vurgu yapıldı.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yerel Konseyler –Suriye Geçici Hükümeti – Çatışma – Tahliye – Birlikte Yaşama – Sosyal uyum.

**T.C.
HASAN KALYONCU UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE EDUCATION INSTITUTE
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**THE CHALLENGES TO BUILD SOCIAL COHESION IN CONFLICT-LADEN AREAS:
A'ZAZ CASE IN THE NORTHWEST OF SYRIA (2016-2022)**

Omar Garebo

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ABSTRACT

Assessing Social Cohesion in Northwest Syria: An In-depth Examination of Local Perceptions and Challenges The primary focus of this dissertation is to critically evaluate the feasibility of fostering social cohesion in northwest Syria. This exploration hinges on the nuanced perspectives of local authorities, residents, and civil society organizations (CSOs) actively operating within the region. To comprehensively understand this dynamic, a structured approach was employed, including conducting 25 Key Informant Interviews (KII), organizing three focus group discussions with a total of 30 participants representing the broader community base, and launching a public survey that garnered insights from 516 respondents across diverse community

sectors following up with the Post-data collection, the research utilized advanced Excel methodologies to rigorously analyze the findings, thereby probing the stated hypotheses. The analytical journey unearthed a myriad of challenges and roadblocks impeding the attainment of social cohesion. The survey underscored an imperative: the need for capacity-building across all regional actors. It also highlighted certain critical areas requiring immediate intervention and overhaul, notably the economic and security sectors.



Keywords: Local Councils – Syrian Interim Government (SIG) – Conflict – Evacuation – Co-existence – Social cohesion.

ÖNSÖZ

Tez, Suriye'nin kuzeybatısındaki sosyal uyumdan ve bunu başarmanın zorluklarından bahsediyor.

Tez süresi boyunca büyük danışmanlığımı üstlenen Dr.Murat Aslan'a tüm kalbimle teşekkürlerimi iletmek isterim.

Öte yandan bedenen yanımızda olmayan, ruhen ve kalple yanımda olan, bu günü hep görmek isteyen sevgili babam **Hamdo**'ya en içten teşekkürlerimi sunmak isterim. Bana sürekli motivasyon ve destek veren harika aileme teşekkürlerimi sunuyorum: **Kawthar, Emine, Hamdo, Hazım ve Derya.**

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Abbreviations and Figures:

Abbreviations:

- IOM:** International Organization for Migration.
- UN:** United Nations.
- UNHCR:** United Nations High Commissioners for Refugees.
- SIG:** Syrian Interim Government.
- SNA:** Syrian National Army.
- IDPs:** Internally Displaced Persons.
- HC:** Host Community.
- SCNE:** Safe, Calm, Neutral Environment.
- HTS:** Hiet Tahrir Alsham.
- SDF:** Syrian Democracy Force.
- ISIS:** Islamic State in Iraq and Sham.
- UNSC:** United Nations Security Council.
- SG:** Salvation Government.
- MoU:** Memorandum of Understanding.
- NWS:** Northwest of Syria.
- NGO:** Non-Governmental Organization.
- INGO:** International Non-Governmental Organization.
- UK:** United Kingdom.
- UNOCHA:** United Nations Office Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs.
- CSO:** Civil Society Organization.
- FGD:** Focus Group Discussion.
- KII:** Key Informant Interview.
- GoS:** Government of Syria.
- CEO:** Chief Executive Officer.
- MEAL:** Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, Learning.

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Introduction

In 2011, the Syrian populace initiated a series of peaceful protests in opposition to the reigning government, its authoritarian regime, and the pervasive influence of its intelligence apparatus. These demonstrations encapsulated the public's discontent with the regime's domestic policies, notably its biased approach to resource management. This mismanagement was evident in the skewed distribution of financial resources across various Syrian communities, underpinned by conspicuous sectarian favoritism.

The Esad regime's response was marked by its severity, as it sought to suppress these demonstrations with force. Many Syrians found themselves imprisoned as a consequence. Notably, the Syrian army's role in curbing these demonstrations represented a pivotal juncture in the crisis. Their involvement not only included acts of aggression against civilian populations within urban centers but also signified a deviation from their traditional role of safeguarding the nation's frontiers. Instead, they shifted their allegiance towards upholding the regime's authoritarian grip.

In a further exacerbation of the situation, the intelligence agencies (El Muabarat) orchestrated a series of assassinations. These targeted not only key opposition figures but also prominent individuals from a cross-section of Syrian communities. Such actions communicated a stark message to the populace, indicating that the Syrian crisis was poised to evolve into one of the most intense conflicts within the Arab Spring milieu, with far-reaching ramifications for the nation's socio-political fabric.

While the Syrian regime maintained a formidable presence in the urban centers, its influence significantly waned in suburban areas. This diminished control was further exacerbated by the regime's noticeable negligence of the countryside and suburban regions. Consequently, these areas became the initial territories to slip from the regime's grasp. Specifically, the northwest region of Syria marked the commencement of this new phase of conflict.

The nature of the civil demonstrations transformed. What began as peaceful protests escalated into violent confrontations. In response, the Government of Syria (GoS) found itself entrenched in an internal conflict against newly established armed factions. Notably, one such group, designating itself as the "Free Syrian Army," defined its primary objective as safeguarding civil demonstrations from potential threats.

In the wake of sustained confrontations between the Government of Syria (GoS) army and indigenous armed factions, a distinctive shift emerged, especially in the northwest regions of Syria. Residents of this area, confronted with a novel conflict and an evolving demographic landscape, sought to introduce measures of governance and oversight. To this end, activists, and armed factions collaboratively instituted local councils to administer and monitor the region.

These local councils swiftly assumed control, followed by substantial displacement and migration waves from various Syrian governorates and cities towards northwest Syria. Amidst the ongoing skirmishes spanning various parts of the country, A'zaz City emerged as a sanctuary for a significant portion of the internally displaced persons (IDPs). They sought refuge in this part of Northwest Syria (NWS), lured by its relative stability and security.

However, the influx and continual resettlement in A'zaz City presented its own set of challenges. These issues not only hampered the prospects of harmonious coexistence but also posed substantial threats to achieving social cohesion among the diverse groups residing in the region.

1.1 Research Background

Owing to the protracted conflict in Syria, numerous waves of displacement and evacuation have emerged. Consequently, a significant number of these displaced populations have sought refuge in Northwest Syria (NWS), predominantly from various Syrian governorates. This influx has rendered the region's social fabric delicate, paving the way for an array of emergent challenges. These challenges have redefined the regional landscape, introducing complexities that necessitate profound comprehension for effective resolution.

Given this backdrop, the local populace grapples with a myriad of obstacles, hindering their pursuit of a stable and fear-free existence. Consequently, the realization of harmonious coexistence within the region remains an elusive goal.

Although residents largely share a common background, persistent challenges and barriers continue to impede the attainment of social cohesion within the region. Such impediments not only fuel tensions and conflicts among different community factions but also jeopardize the prospects of fostering coexistence and ensuring a dignified existence for both Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and Host Communities (HC).

Conversely, Northwest Syria has emerged as a preferred haven for the majority of (IDPs) escaping conflict-ridden areas within the country, driven by the aspiration to secure a safe environment for themselves and their kin. In particular, the A'zaz district stands out as a more favorable sanctuary compared to other regions such as southern Idleb or northern Hamah governorates. Here, evacuees and the displaced often encounter enhanced safety and security. This relative stability not only facilitates opportunities for income generation but also offers a conducive environment for the holistic development of their offspring.

Due to the significant population density in the northwest region of Syria, with approximately 4.1 million inhabitants residing within an area of about 17,000 km², a myriad of challenges has emerged, affecting various community factions. This high concentration has precipitated escalating tensions, resulting in conflicts not only between civilians but also involving armed factions. There were multifaceted reasons underpinning these disputes, and their repercussions were felt across the socio-economic fabric of the region. Additionally, pervasive social stigmas held by distinct community components further compounded these challenges. For instance, internally displaced persons (IDPs) harbored certain preconceptions about the host communities (HC), and reciprocally, the (HC) held analogous biases against the (IDPs). Such prejudiced perspectives exacerbated divisions among the populace. Consequently, each faction became more insular, prioritizing their safety, economic stability, and well-being, often to the detriment of broader community cohesion. Northwest Syria was among the initial regions to

transition out of the Syrian regime's control. This shift brought to the fore numerous challenges for stakeholders aiming to foster social cohesion within their communities. The intricacies of the situation were further amplified with the influx of newcomers who shared limited resources and infrastructure with the host communities (HC). Originally, these resources were scarcely sufficient for the (HC's) needs; hence, their redistribution among a larger populace exacerbated existing difficulties, creating a potential hotspot for conflicts between internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the (HC). A'zaz City emerged as a pivotal sanctuary in northwest Syria, welcoming (IDPs) fleeing hostilities from their native regions and providing them with tools for early recovery. A confluence of factors underscores A'zaz City's primacy. Its strategic location near the Turkish border, its historical significance as a regional business hub, and the presence of an efficacious local authority, capable of orchestrating and maintaining order, contribute to the city's status as a refuge.

1.2 Problem Statement

Persistent internal conflicts in Syria have Created a lot of challenges and obstacles in front of community components to build social cohesion in their regions. Several clashes and conflicts have occurred among the community components particularly among (IDPs) and host communities in the northwest of Syria region for several reasons. Those clashes and conflicts have negatively impacted the social cohesion fabric and destroyed genuine and fair co-existence among community components in (NWS), consequently, rifts have been increased among conflicted parties.

Every segment within the community has formed its own viewpoint regarding other sections, influenced by a multitude of factors and the specific circumstances of the region. The Northwest Syria (NWS) region is navigating through a complex and challenging phase, with numerous external elements adversely affecting the accomplishment of social cohesion. Therefore, it's essential to thoroughly explore the perceptions of each community component, deriving parameters that can facilitate the realization of social cohesion in the northwest of Syria and ensure a fair and genuine living experience for all its inhabitants.

1.3 Research Questions and Objectives

The primary research question is formulated to ascertain the feasibility of establishing social cohesion in northwest Syria at both the micro and mezzo societal levels and to identify the challenges that impede its realization. The central query is articulated as: "Is it feasible to foster social cohesion at the micro and mezzo societal tiers within conflict-ridden areas, aiming for a dignified existence?"

The sub-questions, which will be explored in subsequent chapters, include:

- Does a 'social cohesion' concept, tailored to the Azaz scenario in Syria, exist? What specific parameters can be ascertained for Syria's Azaz context?

- What dynamics influence social cohesion in Azaz?
- To what degree is social cohesion perceived as attainable by the local populace, representative of a conflict-afflicted region?

The overarching objective of this thesis is to elucidate the challenges obstructing the achievement of social cohesion in northwest Syria and to delineate the parameters requisite for fostering a secure and sustainable existence for all community sectors within the region.

1.4 Research Hypothesis

The research posits that challenges obstructing social cohesion in northwest Syria, with a specific focus on the A'zaz case, can be effectively addressed and surmounted by the local community. Given the present state of social cohesion in northwest Syria, there exists a potential to institute and fortify this cohesion across all community segments, thereby fostering a life characterized by fairness, equality, and integrity. Building upon this premise, it is hypothesized that harmonious coexistence between (IDPs) and the (HC) is not only conceivable but also attainable.

1.5 Research Design

This thesis employs qualitative research methodology. In which it reviewed and analyzed studies, research, articles, and reports written around this topic and related topics to shape some knowledge about the current situation of social cohesion in the region and how to arrange steps to achieve it. The analysis included and is not limited to academic articles, essays, scholarly papers, statements from the United Nations, and reports from (UN) agencies actors in the region such as (UNHCR), (UNOCHA), and (IOM). Complementing this literature review, primary data will be collected through interviews encompassing a broad cross-section of the community. Interviewees will include community representatives, personnel from local authorities and councils, as well as members of civil society organizations. Simultaneously, the research published a survey targeting between 500-700 respondents. The survey methodology will adopt a randomized approach, ensuring representation irrespective of respondents' social identities. The survey questions predominantly were multiple-choice, with provisions for respondents to articulate their perspectives on the achievement of social cohesion. Paramount to this research is the commitment to data protection. Respondents were reassured of their anonymity, allowing them to provide candid feedback without reservations. As a final safeguard, interview and focus group discussion (FGD) participants' names were not disclosed in any published materials. Instead, pseudonyms or codes were used, ensuring the utmost safety and security for all participants.

1.6 Research Field and Period

The temporal scope of this thesis spans from 2016 to 2022. This timeframe was chosen primarily because it captures the period of significant evacuations from the eastern Aleppo

governorate. A majority of these evacuees opted to settle in A'zaz City, thereby initiating the construction of their unique social hierarchy independent of the Government of Syria (GoS) influence.

While the broader research context encompasses the northwest Syria region, the study zeroes in on the A'zaz district as its primary case study. The goal is to identify and assess the challenges associated with establishing strong and equitable social cohesion in this specific area.

The selection of A'zaz district is underpinned by multiple factors. First and foremost, A'zaz was one of the earliest regions to fall outside the purview of the Syrian government during the initial phases of the Revolution. Subsequently, it witnessed numerous waves of internal displacements from various governorates. Many (IDPs) gravitated towards the A'zaz district due to its similarities with their places of origin. Additionally, its reputation as a major trading hub in the region presented opportunities for (IDPs) to establish their own businesses. Its proximity to the Turkish border further augments its appeal, offering heightened safety and security compared to other regions.

1.7 Significance of the Study

In conflict-affected areas, fostering social cohesion within impacted communities is of paramount importance. This endeavor necessitates a comprehensive understanding of the prevailing communal dynamics, including how they are shaped by and respond to the complexities of conflict and the broader contextual circumstances. Invariably, areas marred by conflict often exhibit weakened social cohesion. As tensions escalate, the intricate weave of social unity becomes increasingly frayed, leading to a scenario where individual components prioritize their interests, often with scant regard for the collective good.

In northwest Syria, numerous challenges have undermined the foundations of a cohesive community life. Recurrent conflicts and skirmishes have strained inter-community relationships and eroded mutual trust. Additionally, the relentless waves of displacements have further fractured the social fabric, eroding the bonds of unity and cohesion.

This research endeavors to dissect the myriad challenges faced by communities, the subsequent erosion of social cohesion, the conceptual underpinnings of social cohesion, and the pressures that militate against it, particularly focusing on A'zaz City. Through this lens, the study aims to provide a detailed exploration of the prerequisites for instilling social cohesion among disparate community components and the potential pathways to realizing a life anchored in equity and integrity. A pivotal component of this discourse is the damaged social contract among the Syrian populace, a consequence of the protracted political strife. Thus, this study aspires to offer tangible, field-derived insights on how to rejuvenate this social contract, bridging divides and fostering unity.

In closing, A'zaz City stands as an exemplar case for this investigation. It presents a rich tapestry of the Syrian populace, hailing from diverse governorates and backgrounds, and has showcased a commendable track record of self-governance through its local administrative bodies.

2. Societal and Political Situation in the Northwest of Syria

The literature review provides a solid theoretical basis for the study, highlighting the current societal situation in northwest Syria and exploring the dynamics of the conflict. It specifically sheds light on the displacement patterns of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), offering a comprehensive view of forced relocations from various Syrian governorates over the past six years. This, in turn, provides deep insights into the current security situation in the region and how the (IDPs) and the host community are trying to coexist and enhance their living conditions, especially amid ongoing conflicts and significant humanitarian needs.

These factors are pivotal, serving as both connectors and dividers, in achieving social cohesion in the region. Moreover, the literature review provides an overview of the existing governance structures and societal institutions in the targeted area, evaluating their engagement in building social cohesion. It offers perspectives about their present roles and explores strategies to enhance their effectiveness.

Thus, the review paves the way to understand the exact planning required for the region and identifies specific programs aimed at achieving social cohesion. Furthermore, the literature review provides vital information to safeguard groups, individuals, and institutions from any potential security threats, offering solutions to make the region a secure environment - an essential factor for maintaining resident populations and attracting investments. Additionally, the review brings forth expertise in conflict transformation strategies and tools, equipping the study with the necessary mechanisms to navigate through the conflict and build an equitable life for over 4 million Syrians. It guides the implementation of the Safe, Calm, and Neutral Environment Approach (SCNE).

2.1 Safe, Calm, and Neutral Environment (SCNE) Approach

A safe, calm, and neutral environment (SCNE) is crucial, especially as highlighted by the (UN) as a prerequisite for conducting elections in Syria to pave the way towards sustainable conflict resolutions (Caroline, May 22).

The (SCNE) concept, introduced by Dr. Maria Montessori in the education sector, emphasizes creating a serene and secure environment through strategic programs. However, challenges abound due to the international community's reluctance to address the hardships faced by the Syrian people and to find a lasting solution to the Syrian crisis. This reluctance not only turned the region into a source of global threats and concerns but also gave rise to numerous internal security challenges and threats (Omran, December 2016).

2.1.1 Pitfalls of International Responses

Similarly, the lack of international willingness escalated the conflict in Syria, leading to catastrophic destruction in several cities and damaging the social fabric among Syrians, which inadvertently fueled sectarian beliefs (Omran, December 2016). Despite attempts by the (UN) agencies, the European Union, the Arab League, Turkey, and the five permanent members of the Security Council to formulate a road map for the Syrian crisis in 2012, which included the crafting of a new constitution and conducting free and safe elections with the involvement of all Syrians (Daily Sabah, May 2022), there has been no realization of (SCNE) in Syria. Post-2015, northwest Syria has undergone numerous attacks by Russia and the regime forces, causing mass displacements in the region.

2.1.2 Tripartite Initiative: Turkey, Iran, and Russia

On April 4, 2018, the leaders of Turkey, Iran, and Russia gathered in Ankara, aiming to devise a solution and roadmap for the Syrian crisis. Their discussions focused on reducing conflict in four Syrian areas: Damascus, Idlib, Hamah, and Aleppo (Aljazeera, April 2018).

The overarching goal was to equip Syrians with the means to ensure their safety and stability, enabling them to communicate to neighboring regions and the global community that they were transitioning into a recovery and post-conflict period (AL Abdeh, July 2022).

2.1.3 (UN) Advocacy and Challenges of (SCNE)

The (UN) Council in Geneva was the first to advocate for the Safe, Calm, and Neutral Environment (SCNE) approach in Syria (UN letter, 2015). This strategy, detailed in a (UNSC) resolution, aimed at helping northwest Syrians move toward establishing a secure and neutral environment, for several reasons. Firstly, avoiding the creation of additional adversaries was vital, especially in their delicate position during the conflict with the regime. Secondly, they were in the process of establishing a new semi-governmental body in northwest Syria post-crisis and were in pursuit of international recognition.

2.1.4 Displacement and the Struggle of Northwest Syria

Additionally, military operations have displaced people, forcing them to relocate to northwest Syria, an area already grappling with its challenges and under the control of non-state armed groups. This situation accentuates the vulnerability and instability of the northwest Syrian region, which is also confronting the central government in Damascus (AL Abdeh, July 2022). Achieving the (SCNE) approach may be feasible through various steps, including western support to regulate population movements, enhance education, boost trade, and invest in the region (AL Abdeh, July 2022).

2.1.5 Refugees in Turkey and the Security Implications

Over 5.6 million Syrians have fled their country in search of safety due to the ongoing crisis (UNHCR report, 2018). Approximately 3.7 million of these refugees chose Turkey as their sanctuary for various reasons (Syrian Dialogue Center, Immigration, October 2022). Since 2012, Turkey has adopted an open-door policy to welcome Syrians escaping the war.

However, as the conflict worsened and new players like (ISIS) and (PKK) entered the fray, refugee waves surged dramatically (Syrian Dialogue Center, Immigration, October 2022). Thus, the refugee situation exerted significant pressure on Turkey, which accommodated over 3.5 million Syrian refugees, and northwest Syria emerged as a potential threat to the Turkish government. Therefore, devising a sustainable solution in the region is crucial to facilitate a safe and dignified return for Syrian refugees while also safeguarding their human rights and addressing the root of their concerns permanently (Syrian Dialogue Center, Immigration, October 2022).

2.1.6 Terrorism and Security Concerns in Turkey

A series of terrorist attacks in Turkey, with several casualties and injuries, indicates the involvement of (ISIS) and (PKK) militias; for instance, a recent explosion in Istanbul's Taksim Street left six dead and numerous others injured (BBC, November 2022). Following the explosion, Turkish forces implicated the (PYD) in the attack, arresting several suspects who allegedly admitted to receiving training and support from (PYD) and entering Turkey from northwest Syria (BBC, November 2022).

2.1.7. Addressing Global Security concerns

“The continuation of the conflict in Syria is creating a threat for its social cohesion initially and for its neighbors, and for international community” (SSU 2013), several reasons make the (NWS) region a threat source for all above-mentioned parties. Absent of state is a main reason to the spread of crime and terrorism in the region, due to the lack of law institutions, intelligence forces, and a connection that guarantees proper coordination with the international system¹ to be able to do follow up for all cases, so, it makes the region a source of crime and a base for establishing terrorist attacks.

Additionally, the spread of weapons among residents creates concerns in the community and abuses the safety and security of residents. “ It is a big concern for the resident's chaos of weapons, which the weapon holders are going to resolve his problem by power and refuse judgment to law” (Syrup 2022). Most weapon holders do not possess the minimum level of education, resulting in narrow minded perspectives and opinions and a weak logical judgment, hence it is seen that they are resorting to violence using the weapon language in problem solving.

¹ Interpol.

2.1.7.1 EU-Turkey Deal and Its Implications

In addition to the regional concerns previously discussed, there are also global apprehensions regarding the Syrian crisis. In March 2016, the European Union (EU) and the Turkish government struck a deal, with the (EU) committing to financially support refugees in Turkey and shoulder moral and humanitarian responsibilities towards these vulnerable individuals (MPI, April 2021).

The agreement entailed the (EU) providing 6 billion euros to assist Syrian refugees in Turkey through economic development, health support, and voucher assistance (MPI, April 2021), aiming to alleviate pressures related to irregular migration and asylum seekers in Europe.

2.1.7.2 Push Factors: Lack of Safe Environments

The lack of a safe environment is a crucial driving force that propels Syrians to abandon their homes and seek refuge in northwest Syria. Without addressing this issue and establishing a Safe, Calm, and Neutral Environment (SCNE) in the region, this pushing factor remains active (SACD, November 2021).

2.1.7.3 Global Security Concerns Following (ISIS) Incursions

Furthermore, after (ISIS) took control of territories in northwest Syria, global security concerns spiked due to a series of coordinated terrorist attacks across Europe (Global Conflict Tracker, March 2021). This triggered the USA, UK, France, and several Arab countries to broaden their air campaign to include Syria. The Syrian crisis thus evolved into a source of global threats and terror attacks, necessitating a crucial need to devise a long-term solution to prevent future assaults.

The Imperative of Social Cohesion and Global Security Consequently, establishing social cohesion and security in northwest Syria is a pivotal step and is demanded on both regional and global scales. Crafting a sustainable solution for the Syrian crisis is imperative to reduce risks and threats emerging from the area and prevent it from becoming a launchpad for future attacks.

2.2 Displacement Patterns in A'zaz District Post-2011

After 2011, the northwest region of Syria, specifically the A'zaz district, experienced significant changes. The regime forces pulled back from most of the area, holding onto a few military sites and certain villages, like the Minnigh military airport and the Shia-populated villages of Nobbul and Azahraa (Anadolu Agency, August 2012). Because some areas were liberated from regime control, the Syrian opposition forces took them over.

These areas not only became bases for military operations but also offered a somewhat safe living space for supporters and their families. A'zaz city became crucial for the opposition forces since maintaining an open supplementary military corridor there was vital for delivering support

and carrying out military operations against the Syrian regime (CNN in Arabic, February 2016). This dynamic made the A'zaz region attractive for internally displaced persons (IDPs) or evacuated Syrians from various governorates, offering them a chance to reside in the northwest, particularly in A'zaz city. Furthermore, the region served as a base for Syrians who shared similar political stances, ideas, or opinions about the regime, whether they were military personnel or civilians.

2.3 Russian Intervention and its Impact on Displacement in Syria

In a pivotal moment in the Syrian crisis, the Russian parliament approved Bashar Al Assad's written request for assistance against "Islamic terrorists" on September 30, 2015, marking a substantial shift in the conflict. This action signified the introduction of external military forces to the conflict, with the Russian army entering the war to support the regime against the opposition (BBC, October 1, 2015). The Russian air force promptly initiated its mission in Syria to back the Assad regime. Operations began in the eastern part of Aleppo city, which was not under regime control and was held by the Free Syrian Army. Following intense military operations, an evacuation of more than 150,000 Syrians from Aleppo city took place. Of these displaced individuals, 75% relocated to Idleb city, while 25% chose the northern rural area of Aleppo, seeking a haven (Maan Tallaa, IDPs and refugees in Syria).

2.4 The Sochi Agreement and Resulting Displacements

Turkey and Russia signed a Memorandum of Understanding, known as the Sochi Agreement, aiming to create a buffer zone in Idlib (Reuters, September 2018). Despite this agreement, the Syrian regime, with support from Russian forces, breached the ceasefire. They initiated a military plan to regain control of rural Damascus, aiming to secure the capital city. Rigorous military operations ensued, resulting in the evacuation of over 80,000 Syrians from the rural Damascus area to the northwest of Aleppo (Aljazeera Studies, 2020). Of these evacuees, 59% moved to Idleb, 6% to the north of Hama, and 25% to the north of Aleppo.

The Sochi Agreement inadvertently influenced the relocation of Syrians from the south to the northwest of Syria, comprising various ethnic and sectarian backgrounds. Additionally, the evacuated Free Syrian Army groups, such as Jaish Al Islam, already harbored significant tension and conflict with the Hieat Tahrir Al-Sham (HTS) group, with clashes having occurred between them in rural Damascus. The relocation of these groups to northwest Syria opened a new chapter of internal conflict and clashes with HTS (Sputnik Agency, April 2018).

2.5 Evacuation of the Northwest Rural of Damascus

On April 19, 2018, the Free Syrian Army groups in Al Qalamoun city, situated in the rural region of Damascus, agreed with the regime and Russia. This agreement had a profound impact on about 5,000 Syrians, prompting their evacuation from their original locations to the northwest

of Syria. Essentially, these individuals were presented with two options: either stay under regime control in their original place or evacuate to the northwest of Syria. They opted for evacuation, choosing not to remain under the regime's control or mercy (Enab Baladi, April 2018).

2.6 Seeking Refuge from Syrian Regime Threats

The Syrian regime and Russia pursued their military initiatives in the urban and rural areas of Damascus to consolidate control over the surrounding regions. The government and Russian forces expanded their dominion south of Damascus city, adhering to a systematic plan to seize control of the area.

Approximately 9,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) were forced to evacuate to northwest Syria due to these operations. Simultaneously, over 35,000 (IDPs) from the northwest rural region of Homs also relocated to northwest Syria (Aljazeera Studies, 2020). Moreover, between July 15 and 31, 2018, over 100,000 Syrians evacuated from the Daraa governorate and Qunaitera region, seeking refuge in northwest Syria (Aljazeera Studies, 2020).

2.7 The New Sochi Agreement and Massive Displacement

From November to December 2019, intense military operations by the Syrian regime and Russia prompted the displacement of approximately 1.5 million individuals from Idleb, the northern parts of Hamah, and western rural Aleppo. These displaced people found temporary solace in the Euphrates Shield and Olive Branch regions, moving northwest within Syria to escape the conflict. An updated agreement was signed by Erdogan and Putin in Sochi, aiming to mitigate the escalating tension in Idleb (Reuters, 2020).

The Table-1 below shows the evacuation from various Syrian governorates to northwest Syria compared to the date between 2016 – 2022.

Table 1 Evacuation Waves to NWS

#	Original Place	From Gov	To	Date	IDPs
1	Homs - old city	Homs	NWS	May 5, 2016	1,500,000
2	Daria	Rural of Damascus	NWS	August 26, 2016	
3	Qudsia and Alhama	Rural of Damascus	NWS	October 14, 2016	
4	Muaadaia	Rural of Damascus	NWS	October 19, 2016	

5	Khan Alshaih-Zakia	Rural of Damascus	NWS	November 28, 2016
6	Al Tal	Rural of Damascus	NWS	December 2, 2016
7	Aleppo city	Aleppo	NWS	December 15, 2016
8	Wadi Barada	Rural of Damascus	NWS	January 29, 2017
9	Al Waar	Homs	NWS	March 18, 2017
10	Four cities	Rural of Damascus	NWS	April 13, 2017
11	Beit Jen	Rural of Damascus	NWS	December 29, 2017
12	Qalamoun eastern	Rural of Damascus	NWS	April 19, 2018
13	Southern Damascus	Rural of Damascus	NWS	May 3, 2018
14	Northern Rural	Homs	NWS	May 7, 2018

Source: Maan Tallaa, IDPs and refugees in Syria.

The table 1 indicates series of random evacuation into the northwest of Syria.

2.8 Community Components Formation in A'zaz District

Following a succession of evacuations into northwest Syria, A'zaz district witnessed the formation of a new demographic map, introducing new actors and factors into the political and societal landscapes. The inflow of displaced Syrians brought diverse experiences, needs, and perspectives, shaping a unique community dynamic within the district.

The table 2 below shows the statistics and community members of Syrians in A'zaz at the district level.

Table 2 Population of the A'zaz district

			Displaced from
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#	Name	No. residents	Aleppo	Idlib	R. Damas	Hama	Other	Total
		33 %	30 %	15%	10%	3%	9%	100%
1	Azaz	80850	73500	36750	24500	7350	22050	245000
2	Shamrock	2762	2511	1255	837	251	753	8370
3	Nedah	292	265	132	3	26	79	885
4	Armoutge	259	236	118	78	23	70	767
5	Al Salama/Sudji	3427	3115	1557	1038	311	934	10383
6	Seagrass	679	618	309	206	61	185	2060
7	Fidyaa	420	382	191	127	38	114	1273
8	Al-malikya	156	142	71	47	14	42	474
9	Jarz	1032	939	469	313	93	281	3130
10	Shamarin	4054	3685	1842	1228	368	1105	12286
11	Mareen	636	579	289	193	57	173	1930
12	Kafr Khashr	348	316	158	105	31	94	1055
13	Sehwarz	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
14	Manq	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15	Yahmoul	532	484	242	161	48	145	1614
16	Al Chrome	819	744	372	248	74	223	2483
17	Tatih	565	514	257	171	51	154	1715

18	Alqalmiya	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
19	Talil Al Sham	3415	3105	1552	1035	310	931	10350
20	Kaljibrin	6154	5595	2797	1865	559	1678	18650
21	Kafr Kalbin	3814	3468	1734	1156	346	1040	11560
22	Neyara	3643	3312	1656	1104	331	993	11040
23	Marnaaz	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24	Yazibagh	1270	1155	577	385	115	346	3850
25	Şeyh Rih	528	480	240	160	48	144	1600
26	Birişa	148	135	67	45	13	40	450
27	Camps							17898 6
Total								529935

Source: Local council in A'zaz January 2023.

Table 2 indicates amount of (IDPs) and (HC) in the A'zaz district region includes and how is (IDPs) percentage bigger than (HC).

Based on data from the Local council in A'zaz as of January 2023, A'zaz district's population landscape reveals that only one-third are original residents or belong to the host community. The remaining two-thirds consist of internally displaced persons (IDPs) evacuated from various governorates, including Aleppo and other regions. Notably, the displaced individuals from Aleppo make up about 30% of the total, a figure that matches the host community's size in A'zaz district, excluding the (IDPs) from other areas.

A significant observation from this data is the concentration of evacuations. The majority of those evacuated arrived in the A'zaz district within a short span of three years, from 2016 to 2018. Such a sudden and substantial influx posed considerable challenges to the region's social fabric, as the unanticipated and unplanned nature of these displacements threatened the existing social cohesion in the host community. Moreover, typically, a high population density can strain a community's resources and infrastructure. This is a common concern even in well-established regions. However, in conflict-affected areas, the situation is even more precarious.

These areas already grapple with scarce resources and fragile infrastructures. When such communities have to accommodate a surge of (IDPs), it further amplifies the stress on these resources and facilities. Consequently, there is a growing and urgent need for economic development, increased resources, and enhanced infrastructure facilities in these regions.

2.9 Security Dynamics in Northwest Syria

The Syrian conflict, which ignited in 2011, significantly fractured the nation's social fabric. This schism manifested ideologically, sectoral, and ethnically, leading to deep divisions within the Syrian community (Omran for Studies Center, October 2017).

As the conflict militarized, it transformed into an armed struggle involving diverse factions. The northwest of Syria is home to 4 million people, and intriguingly, more than half of this number consists of internally displaced persons (IDPs), as reported by (UNHCR) in March 2021. Such a massive influx of (IDPs) presents a formidable security challenge to the prevailing governing structures. This concern is amplified by the fact that many of these (IDPs) are armed and there's a conspicuous absence of consensus or unity among the various groups. The subsequent charts detail the number of casualties recorded between 2019 and 2020 .

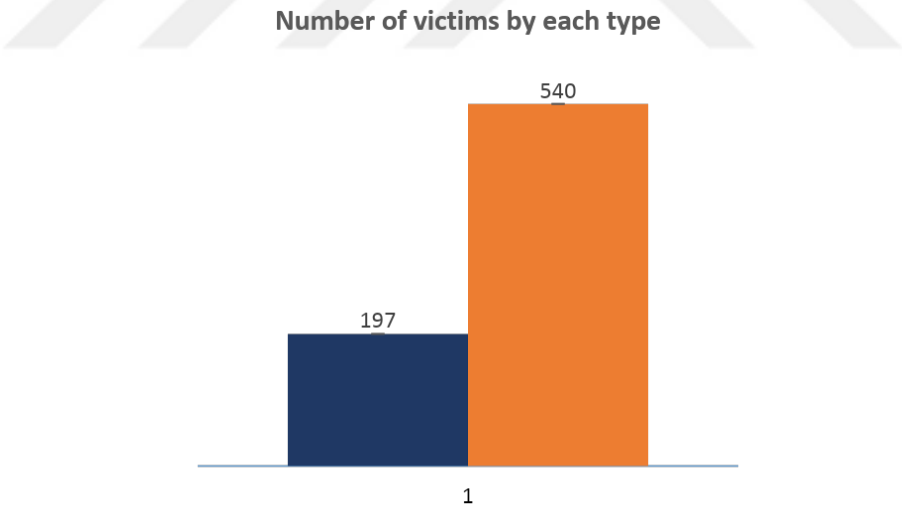


Figure 1 Graph -1

Source: (Tallaa December 2020).

Comparison between 2019 and 2020

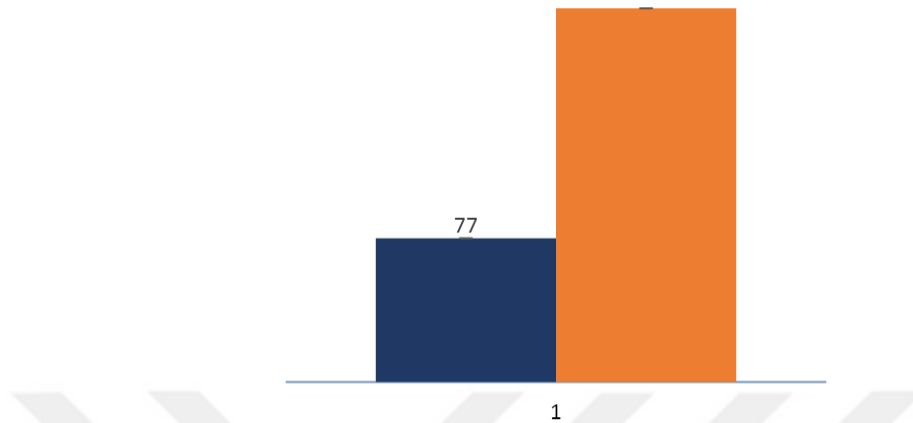


Figure 2 Graph - 2

Source: (Tallaa December 2020).

Graph 1 and 2 is comparison between 2019 and 2020 in number of victims between armed group members and civilians.

The Syrian conflict since 2011 created divisions that not only reshaped the socio-political landscape but also intensified security challenges. According to data from the Omran for Studies Center in October 2017, the societal rifts spanned ideological, sectoral, and ethnic dimensions. The Northwest region of Syria, with a population of 4 million, hosts over 50% (IDPs), as per the (UNHCR's) March 2021 report. This large (IDP) contingent poses notable security challenges, especially given that many of them are armed and there is no unified stance among the groups. In a comparative analysis of incidents between the latter half of 2019 and the first half of 2020, it was observed that incident rates escalated in 2020. Civil entities bore the brunt of these attacks in 75 incidents. Armed groups encountered 70 such incidents, and the Turkish military was targeted in three cases. Additionally, 14 incidents were categorized as unidentified sources (Manaaf Qouman, August 2021).

Notably, in October 2022, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) launched a significant assault on the Syrian National Army (SNA) in Afrin and A'zaz, aiming to wrest control of these strategic cities from the (SNA) (Rena Netjes, October 2022). By the 14th of that month, a ceasefire agreement was brokered between (HTS) and the Third Corps of the (SNA). This accord granted the Third Corps the right to re-establish its base in Afrin while promoting a shared governance structure in Northwest Syria, covering Aleppo and Idleb (Rena Netjes, October 2022). Further, internal discord plagued the (SNA) with internal skirmishes and confrontations with tribes in A'zaz and Al-Bab (AlAsi, January 2023). For many in the region, the persistent infighting dashed hopes of establishing a unified governing body outside the regime's purview (Maan Tallaa, January 2017). Another prevailing security issue is the rampant proliferation of weapons among residents

and (IDPs). Such widespread weapon accessibility has resulted in multiple attacks on civilians, including women and children (Khaled Al Khateeb, October 2018). A decentralized approach to security portfolio management has exacerbated the security situation. A surge in public attacks, notably car bombings in crowded areas, has demonstrated the fragility of governance in the region (Tallaa, January 2017). A poignant reminder of this was the truck bombing in a bustling A'zaz market in January 2017, resulting in 48 fatalities and injuring over 100 (BBC, January 2017). This attack underscored the region's vulnerability and the persistent threat from adversaries.

2.10 Weakness of Security Forces in the Northwest of Syria

The security institutions are recently formed as newborn entities in the northwest of Syria region, it was built from unprofessional staff, and in a complicated situation. So, tremendous efforts are needed to improve its governance/performance and build its capacity to commit and perform its duty in front of the community, save lives and properties of people there and protect the region from attacks. Below is a deep desk review for the status of security forces or institutions, as follows:

2.10.1 Security Structure

The first institutional security formation era faded in northwest Syria for several reasons: the intensity of military operations by the Syrian regime and the re-take lands under its control, which did not allow the governing bodies to take a breath and build their institutions. Raising-up the voices that the time is fighting against the (GoS) time, and it is not good time to build institutions or local governance body, the weapon’s echo was the highest in the northwest of Syrian region, and there was no place for the civil voice that saying to work in parallel and build the internal home.

Lastly, most of the formed local councils desired to be away from the security portfolio and leave it for the armed groups in each village or city to manage this file; the reason behind this decision is that the security management needs funds, skilled and trained staff and that the local council has not. (Tallaa January 2017). The table 3 presents initial security institution structure as follows:

Table 3 Security institution’s functions

Institution	Role
Free Police	Overseeing daily social activities and ensuring order in public spaces such as roads, streets, and markets. They also

	implement decisions and orders made by local councils and courts.
Law Institutions	judging disputes and legal matters using both Islamic and Syrian legal principles.
Armed Groups	Established post-2012, these groups primarily fought against the regime and its allies.
Radical Armed Groups	Consisting of foreign fighters who arrived in Syria from various countries, these groups generally uphold radical or extremist ideologies.
Local Councils	Catering to the civil needs of the residents who elected them. This is evidenced through various departments within the councils such as the social affairs department, services department, legal department, and media department. Their formation was primarily to administer areas freshly liberated from regime control.

Source: It is reflected from Author’s research.

The initial security and governance framework faced challenges, necessitating an overhaul for several reasons. This was to ensure it remained adaptable to the evolving complexities of the crisis and to align with the concerns and demands of the international community. Recognizing these needs, a revamped security structure emerged in the northwest of Syria, specifically within the Aleppo governorate (excluding the Idlib governorate). This structure comprises the following divisions:

- Prime Minister: The National Alliance of Revolutionary Forces and the Syrian Opposition are entrusted with electing the Prime Minister for the Syrian Interim Government (SIG).

- Defense Ministry: Operating under the Prime Minister's oversight, the defense minister holds the primary responsibility of overseeing the security dimension in the northwest of Syria.
- The restructured security framework was anticipated by local residents to effectively address issues like assassinations, bombings, and other security-related incidents. This was crucial for ensuring the safety of those who had relocated from regime-controlled areas to the northwest of Syria (Fiad, June 2022).

The revamped structure has introduced noticeable improvements in the security situation. Despite these enhancements, the local populace retains the hope for an end to external aggressions from the Government of Syria (GoS) and its allies, as well as to put a stop to internal conflicts among the SNA factions (Fiad, June 2022).

2.10.2 Security Needs

The region has seen a dramatic population surge, with a growth rate of approximately 230% since 2004. In contrast, areas under the regime's control have shrunk by about 40% (Ozgizlicik, October 2020). The northwest of Syria has experienced an unexpected and sharp population increase. This rapid population growth carries a plethora of risks, challenges, and potential hazards. It not only impedes the fostering of social cohesion and harmonious coexistence among the diverse community groups but also strains the security forces' capability to maintain a stable and secure environment.

Additionally, the influx of people complicates the delivery of essential services to all residents. Furthermore, external threats from entities like the Syrian regime (GoS), Syrian Defense Forces (SDF), and (ISIS) continue to hinder the northwest Syria (NWS) region's aspirations for development, prosperity, and security. Many attacks and acts of sabotage originate from areas controlled by these entities. Given this context, there is a pressing need to reestablish social cohesion, address the delicate societal fabric riddled with divisions and wounds, introduce security measures to curb prevailing disorder, enforce the rule of law uniformly, and counteract terrorism. These steps are imperative to halt terrorist activities and enable residents to initiate businesses, fostering economic rejuvenation and stabilizing the region for long-term peace and prosperity (Fiad, June 2022; Dosouqi, January 2017).

2.10.3 Weakness Points in the Security Portfolio

The security landscape in the region under the National Syrian Army (SNA) is fraught with several challenges and vulnerabilities. Foremost among these challenges is the varying ideological and operational backgrounds of the armed groups present in the area. While some, like Ahrar Al-Sham, veer towards more extremist viewpoints, others occupy a moderate stance. This ideological divergence, compounded by competitive instincts and resource allocations, poses significant threats to social cohesion, with experts like Fiad (June 2022) warning about its potential

repercussions on the region's future stability and development. Another glaring concern is the palpable inexperience among security personnel.

The situation led to the formation of various armed groups, often spearheaded by individuals with little to no security background. This hasty incorporation of novices into pivotal security roles underlines an urgent need for a more professional and seasoned approach. Additionally, financial hurdles further hamper the development of a sound security infrastructure. With inadequate funds and logistical backing, the sector struggles to lure seasoned professionals, who, in the face of economic challenges, are inclined to seek greener pastures. This environment of 'ad-hocism' permeates the region's strategic outlook. Governance structures in northwest Syria, constrained by myriad challenges, are often seen scrambling to address immediate concerns, sidelining the necessity for a coherent long-term strategy. This short-sightedness is further accentuated by a decentralized approach to security management. With each armed group maintaining its security framework, there's a conspicuous absence of a unified strategy, leading to fragmentation and inconsistency, a concern highlighted by the Omran Center in January 2017. This prevailing insecurity and uncertainty have resonated deeply with the Syrian populace. Reports from sources like Aljazeera Center (March 2020) suggest a growing sentiment among Syrians that finding a solution to the ongoing crisis is becoming an increasingly intricate puzzle. Such instability not only impedes essential service delivery but also magnifies societal rifts, fuels migration, and aggravates the divide among community members, as pointed out by Maan in April 2020.

2.11 Current Local Authority Governance in A'zaz

Upon the retreat of the Syrian regime forces from various areas in northwest Syria, the inhabitants found themselves in a void, devoid of governmental services. In essence, there was an absence of essential services and economic opportunities typically provided by a governing body to its populace. Consequently, intellectuals, armed factions, and activists spearheaded the creation of the initial governance structure in the region (Dosouqi, January 2017). This first attempt at governance faltered for multiple reasons.

Primary among them was the persistent military onslaught by the Syrian regime on territories outside its dominion. Additionally, while numerous armed groups emerged on the Syrian landscape, they exhibited a propensity to meddle in local governance, affecting its decisions (Maan, January 2017). This inaugural governance was comprised of the revolutionary police, local judicial entities, and security branches affiliated with the armed factions (Maan, January 2017). As a move to govern areas free from regime control, several civil organizations in Aleppo city initiated a local council in October 2013 (Aljazeera, October 2013). Subsequently, activists and civil institutions championed the establishment of the "Free Aleppo Governorate Council". This council undertook the responsibility of inaugurating local councils in multiple locations within the territories free from regime influence (Aljazeera, October 2013). The first Syrian interim government was conceived in October 2014. This was facilitated by international efforts aiming to create a functional and representative entity for regions outside regime influence. Its primary purpose was to act as a central body providing essential services and serving as a coordination

point for aid and initiatives directed towards the Syrian people by the global community (SIG website). Given the evolving dynamics in the Syrian situation, a fresh authoritative entity has made its foray into the political arena, taking charge of organizing and directing support efforts.

2.11.1 SIG’s Institutions

Immediately eight ministries were established with the main goal of improving the situation of the Syrian people and supplying them with required and essential services; the ministries are as follows in graph 3:

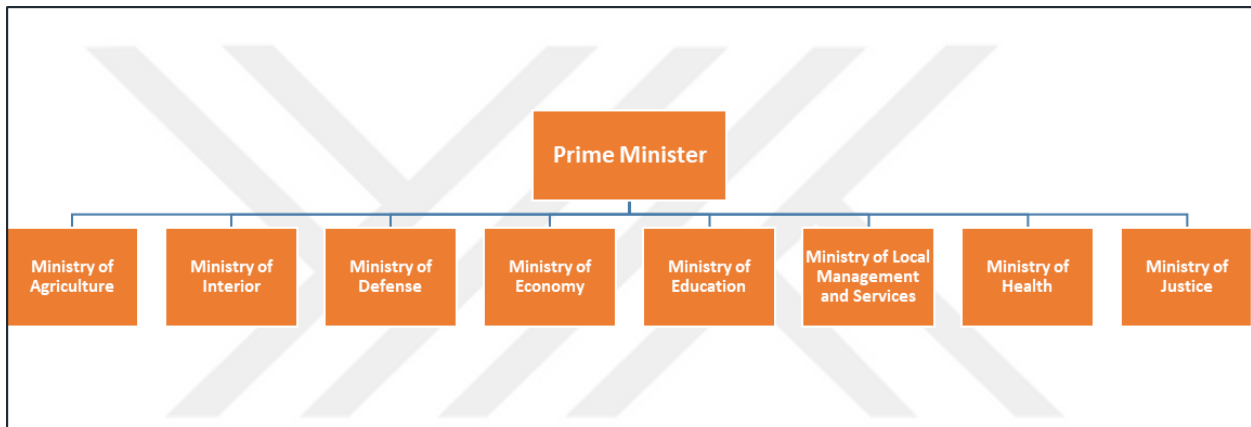


Figure 3 Graph – 3

Source: (SIG official website).

A comprehensive review and analysis of the security management in the region dominated by the National Syrian Army (SNA) reveals several vulnerabilities:

- **Diverse Backgrounds of Armed Groups:** The armed groups overseeing security come from a multitude of backgrounds. Some lean toward extremist views, such as Ahrar Al-Sham, while others may be on the more moderate spectrum. This diverse background, combined with differing loyalties and competition for resources, adversely affects social cohesion, endangering the region's future stability and growth (Fiad, June 2022).
- **Inexperience of Security Personnel:** Many members of the security institutions lack the requisite experience for their roles. Due to the upheaval, many individuals, without a background in security, formed armed groups. These groups often brought in untrained individuals to head essential security roles, indicating a dire need for professionalism and expertise.
- **Financial Constraints:** Insufficient funds and logistical support impede the establishment of a robust and modern security apparatus. The inability to compensate personnel adequately makes the sector unattractive to potential professionals, many of whom seek opportunities elsewhere to weather the tough economic climate.

- Lack of Long-Term Vision: The region's strategic planning is reactive rather than proactive. Governance bodies in northwest Syria operate on an ad-hoc basis, responding to immediate challenges without a clear long-term vision due to various impediments.
- Decentralized Security Management: Each armed group operates its security force and structure, leading to a disjointed and fragmented approach to security. There's a lack of cohesion and a standardized strategy for addressing security threats and concerns (Omran Center, January 2017).

Furthermore, the declining security situation contributes to a prevalent sentiment among Syrians that resolving the Syrian crisis appears increasingly complex and uncertain (Aljazeera Center, March 2020). The instability not only hampers the provision of essential services but also exacerbates societal divisions, drives migration, and deepens the chasm among community members (Maan, April 2020).

The ministries under the Syrian Interim Government (SIG) began delivering services to the Syrian populace, commensurate with their available resources and capabilities (SIG website).

In May 2016, the Syrian alliance elected a new panel and appointed Dr. Jawad Abou Hatab as the new Prime Minister. With his medical background, Dr. Hatab took the bold decision to relocate all (SIG) offices to northwest Syria (Jusoor, July 2017). This move aimed to bring the (SIG) closer to the people it represented and expand its service outreach beyond northwest Syria to other regions (Jusoor, July 2017).

The Syrian Interim Government (SIG) faced a myriad of obstacles in its endeavors to provide essential services to its citizenry. A significant roadblock was a severe financial crisis.

Prime Minister Abou Hatab's disclosure highlighted the gravity of this situation, the (SIG) had not received any external financial support for over a year, leading to a dire situation where, by August 2017, all employment contracts within the (SIG) had to be converted to volunteer agreements. Furthermore, the emergence of the Salvation Government, notably concentrated in Idlib and primarily influenced by Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), posed another layer of complexity. With (HTS's) financial backing, the Salvation Government became equipped to offer essential services in Idlib, effectively splitting northwest Syria into two distinct territories, each with its own governance system.

This resulted in a divided governance scenario where both the (SIG) and the Salvation Government (SG) grappled for legitimacy, as documented by Jusoor in July 2017. Diplomatically, the (SIG) grappled with challenges too. Efforts to forge relationships with regional and international governments often met with resistance. A notable instance was Jordan's decision to not host Prime Minister Abou Hatab and its denial of his proposal to establish a governmental entity for areas in southern Syria that remained outside the Syrian regime's control. Community engagement also proved elusive for the (SIG). Its primary challenge lay in consolidating the diverse inhabitants of northwest Syria under its umbrella. The (SIG's) inability to rally comprehensive community support implied that they couldn't secure the fealty of various armed factions or establish dominance over crucial border checkpoints. This shortfall in allegiance

gravely hindered (SIG's) efforts to muster funds, which were pivotal for the provision of indispensable services. As emphasized by Jusoor in July 2017, the delivery of these services was quintessential, forming the bedrock for nurturing trust and loyalty among the region's populace.

Altogether, these impediments offer a lens into the intricacies confronted by nascent governance systems in regions riddled with conflict, especially when tasked with filling the governance vacuum created by a retreating dominant regime.

2.11.2 Establishment of Local Councils

In 2013, local councils emerged in territories beyond the control of the Syrian regime (Al Jazeera, October 2013). These councils were envisioned as alternative governmental bodies, intended to fill the governance void post-liberation from the Syrian regime. Their primary role was to oversee and administer these liberated zones, ensuring essential services were provided to the residents (Omran Center, November 2020). The administrative structure of a local council included various service departments such as humanitarian affairs, education, health, and civil services (Local Council of A'zaz archive).

These departments tirelessly worked towards meeting the fundamental needs of the populace. With time, an office for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) was also established to cater to those who had relocated within the jurisdiction of these local councils (Local Council of A'zaz archive). Being nascent governmental entities, the local councils quickly became hubs for citizens to validate their civil agreements and contracts.

They also became the certifying authorities for (NGOs) to initiate their humanitarian projects (Omran study, November 2020). In a significant administrative move, local councils in northwest Syria began issuing identification cards to residents, aiming to streamline civil administration and bolster security (Watan, August 2018). This initiative symbolized the unified effort of local councils across the region.

Collaborating with Turkish institutions, the councils ensured that this critical database was safeguarded against cyber threats and physical damages (Watan, August 2018). Progressing further, plans were put in place to issue vehicle registration plates and driver's licenses (Watan, August 2018).

All these endeavors underscored the councils' commitment to ameliorating living conditions and consolidating their legitimacy. Post the inception of the Syrian Interim Government (SIG), the local councils were integrated into the (SIG) structure, operating under the purview of the Ministry of Local Management (SIG website). However, these councils grappled with challenges.

A significant issue was the limited experience and human resource constraints among the council staff. The influx of (IDPs), with evacuees from varied Syrian regions, exerted immense pressure on these councils, amplifying their operational challenges (Al Bashir, March 2022).

A survey by the Next Day organization, covering four of the five extant local councils in northwest Syria, pinpointed financial constraints as a primary impediment. The scarcity of funds hampered their transformation into legitimate tax-collecting entities capable of financing pivotal projects—water supply, electricity, road maintenance, educational costs, and more. Such financial self-reliance could potentially pave the way for further investments and regional prosperity (Al Bashir, March 2022). The survey also highlighted a trust deficit between the councils and the populace. Building trust is fundamental, as it can catalyze developmental initiatives, uplifting living standards and enhancing regional security (Next Day report, November 2020).

2.11.3 Police's Institutions

Following the failure of the initial attempt to establish police and security institutions in northwest Syria, attributed partly to escalating militarization of the conflict with the Damascus government (GoS), a pressing demand emerged to construct a renewed framework for these institutions (Tallaa, January 2017). The initial architecture comprised of revolutionary police, local justice courts, and armed groups' security offices. However, the revamped model was streamlined to two entities: the Free Civil Police and the Military Police.

These institutions were distinct in their affiliations. The Military Police fell under the purview of the defense ministry, whereas the Free Civil Police was established by professional officers who had defected from regime institutions to northwest Syria. These defectors subsequently set up the Free Civil Police, an autonomous entity with its board and chairperson, tasked with delineating the institution's strategy. The board resolved to maintain the Free Civil Police's independence, primarily because the Syrian Interim Government (SIG) institutions were predominantly based outside Syria, lacking tangible presence within the region (Enab Baladi, December 2016). In July 2016, seeking to bolster the presence and authority of (SIG) institutions in the area, the Prime Minister of (SIG), Mr. Jawad Abou Hatab, proposed managing these institutions directly from within Syria. This involved relocating all high-ranking officials and ministers to be based in northwest Syria (Enab Baladi, December 2016). This move was positively received by the Free Civil Police board, prompting collaborative efforts with the (SIG).

Funding for the Free Civil Police, since its inception in 2014, came from a consortium of countries, namely the UK, Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, and the U.S. The funds were channeled through the Adam Smith company. This external financial support emboldened the Free Civil Police to maintain their autonomy, resisting integration with other governmental or quasi-governmental factions of the Syrian opposition (Rozana, August 2018). However, when British media outlets reported that a portion of the funding might have inadvertently supported radical armed factions in northwest Syria, the UK government promptly ceased its backing. This decision acted as a domino effect, leading all other supporting nations to suspend their assistance to the Free Civil Police by September 2018 (Rozana, August 2018).

Subsequent to this collective withdrawal, the original structure of the Free Civil Police dissolved. A reformed version, affiliated with the SIG, emerged, amalgamating both former members and new recruits from the Syrian National Army (SNA) (The New Arab, May 2020).

2.11.4. Challenges Facing Police Institutions in Northwest Syria

In northwest Syria, the police institutions, with a workforce of about 10,000 officers and members, face an array of challenges despite their numbers (The New Arab, May 2020). Foremost among these is the pressing concern of security and safety among the region's residents. This apprehension stems from several factors:

- **Lack of Skilled Staff:** The region has been the epicenter of numerous car-bomb attacks targeting both civilians and police institutions. A significant challenge is the scarcity of experienced and trained personnel capable of preempting and handling such threats effectively.
- **Conflict with Armed Groups:** The relationship between police institutions and certain armed factions in the region remains tenuous. This conflict has opened up several security gaps, complicating the challenge of maintaining order. At the heart of these confrontations is the police's efforts to enforce the law against some members of these armed groups involved in illicit activities. As a result, the region has seen a tragic loss of many from the police institutions (The New Arab, May 2020).
- **Financial Constraints:** Perhaps the most overarching challenge is the shortage of funds. The remuneration for the members of the police institutions is modest, often insufficient to cover their basic and familial obligations. This financial strain can lead to potential integrity issues within the force. There have been instances where staff, due to their dire financial straits, resort to extracting bribes from residents and travelers. This financial vulnerability also risks the unchecked transit of prohibited or potentially hazardous items and materials from areas controlled by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) or the regime, into the northwest region of Syria.

Such challenges not only undermine the efficacy of the police institutions but also erode the trust and confidence of the very community they are sworn to protect and serve. Addressing these challenges necessitates both immediate remedial measures and long-term strategic planning.

2.11.5 Civil Society Organizations

Amidst the escalating conflict between the Syrian regime and free army groups, the civilian population found themselves trapped in dire circumstances, struggling to access basic necessities like food, water, and shelter. Recognizing the profound humanitarian crisis unfolding, the United Nations Security Council took an unprecedented step by passing Resolution 2139 on February 22, 2014. This resolution permitted the delivery of humanitarian assistance to regions beyond the control of the Damascus government without requiring its explicit permission, marking a significant departure from traditional protocols (UN Security Council Resolution, February 22, 2014). Endowed with this mandate, both (UN) agencies and numerous non-governmental organizations (NGOs) set forth to extend vital humanitarian support, essential services, and emergency relief to these affected regions (Security Council Report, February 2014). This influx of assistance had a profound and positive impact, not only addressing immediate needs but also

helping to insulate civilians from the harshest effects of the conflict. Fueled by Resolution 2139, a plethora of (NGOs) and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) emerged, initiating a wide range of humanitarian projects aimed at sustaining and empowering local communities. These organizations not only provided immediate relief but also embarked on programs to fortify community resilience, helping locals to better navigate the challenges posed by the ongoing conflict. A few of the organizations that have made significant contributions in the region include the Stabilization Support Committee, World Vision, (UNOCHA), (UNICEF), (UNHCR), Human Care Syria, and dozens of humanitarian actors.



3. Methodology and Theoretical Framework

Northwest Syria, particularly the A'zaz district from 2016 to 2022, serves as a profound case study in the complexities of social cohesion amidst conflict and displacement, highlighted by the significant influx of internally displaced persons (IDPs) into A'zaz. This influx necessitated the establishment of peaceful coexistence and collaboration in a region burdened with challenges that impede social cohesion. The study aims to dissect the dynamics within A'zaz, focusing on the factors that both unite and divide its diverse Syrian communities. Amidst the region's turmoil, IDPs from different Syrian regions converged in A'zaz, sharing a collective aspiration for a liberated Syria free from the Assad regime's control, and longing for freedom, human rights, and a modern sociopolitical structure. The research delves into the roles of historical, cultural, and political factors as connectors and dividers within these communities, influencing the overall strength of social cohesion. The objectives of this study are multifaceted: to assess the level of cohesion and peaceful coexistence among A'zaz's various groups, to identify the challenges faced by both (IDP) and host communities, and to propose viable, long-term solutions, while also considering the broader implications of these dynamics for the future of Syria. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the thesis employs qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, including conducting in-depth interviews, surveys, and focus group discussions with a cross-section of the community in A'zaz. This includes (IDPs), host communities, and individuals of varying genders, while also considering interaction diversity by including (IDPs) from different Syrian governorates such as Aleppo, Hamah, Idlib, Homs, and Damascus. Complementing this primary data, the study incorporates secondary data from existing literature, reports, articles, and other relevant research, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of the state of social cohesion in this conflict-impacted region.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

In the landscape of the northwest of Syria, establishing social cohesion is not just an academic exercise but a lifeline for the people who call this region home. Northwest Syria, with its tapestry of cultures, aspirations, and memories, stands as a testament to resilience amid the ever-looming shadows of internal and external threats.

The main topic of the thesis is "The Challenges to Build Social Cohesion in Conflict-laden Areas: A'zaz Case in the Northwest of Syria (2016 – 2022)," seeks to unravel the intricate layers of social cohesion in A'zaz, raising pivotal questions:

- Is the overarching concept of 'social cohesion' applicable to A'zaz in Syria? If so, what unique parameters are distinctly representative of this region?
- What dynamics mold, influence, or disrupt the tapestry of social cohesion in A'zaz?
- Given the tumultuous backdrop, how do the perceptions of A'zaz's denizens reflect on the feasibility of genuine social cohesion in such a conflict-laden terrain?

The three above-mentioned questions have been divided to sub-questions and used in the surveys, interviews, and (FGDs), it has been asked to the participants to reach out to the answers from the wide representative community components.

3.2 Institutional Approach

To comprehensively dissect the aforementioned variables and dynamics, this thesis seeks to discern the feasibility of applying social cohesion concepts in the region. It aims to contextualize a unique theory tailored for the Syrian crisis. This customized theory will be sensitive to the cultural nuances of northwest Syria, ensuring that the concept of social cohesion resonates with the region's inherent values and traditions.

The qualitative case study approach serves as the primary investigative lens for this endeavor. It relies on the analysis of data amassed from interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and public surveys. This method aids in understanding the key actors and factors instrumental in the process of social cohesion. Moreover, it offers insights into the dynamics, interactions, and reciprocities among these stakeholders. The study will engage with pivotal figures within the community to garner a holistic and impartial understanding of the thesis's subject matter.

Supplementary information on the status of social cohesion within the case study area will be employed as needed to bridge any knowledge gaps. Such secondary data might include research previously conducted in the same thematic area. The objective here is to leverage existing work on the topic to augment the thesis's depth and breadth.

Taking the A'zaz district between 2016 and 2022 as a case study offers a microcosmic view of the larger northwest Syrian context. Most neighborhoods and communities within this region exhibit analogous characteristics and share common facilitators and barriers to social cohesion. The unfolding historical context, commencing from 2011 and spanning the duration of this study, provides a robust backdrop to interpret evolving trends. This historical perspective empowers researchers to anticipate how different actors and community members might respond to specific variables, paving the way for more informed and strategic interventions.

3.3 Research Methods

Crises invariably cause rifts and fractures within communities and nations, especially those engulfed in internal conflict. Among the various ramifications, social cohesion often bears the brunt. Every community's reaction to a crisis is shaped by unique actors and inherent characteristics. Addressing these fissures necessitates sustained efforts to negate the crisis's adverse effects, imbue positive community practices, and equip communities to navigate their challenges. No one-size-fits-all solution exists for such predicaments. Delving deeper into conflict dynamics, understanding cultural sensitivities, and decoding community responses are pivotal to shaping comprehensive strategies that foster social cohesion, promote equitable living, and nurture coexistence.

The northwest of Syria stands as a paradigm of these challenges. This region has metamorphosed into a melting pot of diverse groups, many of whom have been displaced from different parts of Syria. Such haphazard congregation, especially against the backdrop of scarce resources, economic duress, and frequent conflicts, strains social cohesion. Further complicating

matters are the armed factions that often resort to combative solutions. Residents find themselves trapped in the crossfire, rendering any form of long-term planning virtually impossible.

Furthermore, the populace of northwest Syria grapples with feelings of isolation, tasked with forming a cohesive community comprised of individuals from various governorates. As older societal contracts dissipate and new power dynamics emerge, there's an exigent need for these communities to coalesce, pursue individual enterprises, and model a vision of Syria free from authoritarian shackles.

Given the intricacies of this landscape, this thesis employs a qualitative research approach, leveraging in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and public surveys to distill insights. Primary data sourced from community leaders, local council staff, members of the Interim Syrian Government (SIG), civil society representatives, military personnel, and professional unions form the study's backbone. These participants, representing both the indigenous population and internally displaced persons (IDPs), embody the grassroots of this nascent community. Complementing this is secondary data from civil society organizations, offering an enriched perspective.

Harnessing this wealth of information, the thesis aims to discern the nuanced dimensions of social cohesion within the Syrian context. It meticulously examines events, evaluates their implications for social cohesion, and scrutinizes the roles of various community segments in the resolution process. The overarching goal is to draft a roadmap for bolstering social cohesion, transforming communities into robust, resilient entities capable of withstanding adversities. This plan delineates the milestones and strategies for fostering unity, curbing inter-community conflicts, and bridging societal divisions.

3.4 Population and Sampling

The complexities surrounding the establishment of social cohesion in conflict-stricken areas, especially in northwest Syria, are immense. Ensuring fair, honest, and inclusive living conditions and promoting coexistence amid such challenges necessitates an exhaustive understanding. This thesis undertakes this mammoth task by relying on robust sampling techniques to accurately gauge the pulse of the population.

Given that A'zaz has a total population of approximately 500,000, this research adopts a tri-tiered data collection strategy:

Key Informative Individuals (KIIs): This involves intensive interviews with 25 prominent individuals. These individuals are earmarked based on their deep insights, experiences, and contributions in the region.

Focused Group Discussions (FGDs): Three separate discussions are conducted, each encompassing distinct demographics, summing up to 30 participants. These discussions aim to harness collective insights, narratives, and experiences, painting a broader picture of the on-ground realities.

Online Public Survey: Targeting between 500-700 respondents, this expansive online survey aims to capture the sentiments, opinions, and perspectives of the broader population, ensuring statistical significance and a holistic view.

Criteria for Participant Selection:

Participant selection is methodical and grounded in criteria that ensure a well-rounded and inclusive representation:

- Ensure the diversity of representation like male, female, (IDPs), and (HC).
- The participants must be part of civil society organizations.
- The participants must be from a public institution.

Ensuring diversity in participants' backgrounds as a validation step to ensure that all collected information that has been collected from different perspectives. On the other hand, it is so important to stand on the perception of each community components about challenges which prevent social cohesion building and what are the steps to prioritize the process.

3.4.1 Participations' Information

The following tables include detailed information about the participant in the data collection of the thesis. As the thesis conducted three different methods ²to collect data. The thesis ensured to target a wider range of the community grassroots and components because it is a more ensuring way to listen to the voices of all community components and to know about their perceptions on challenges of social cohesion achievement, and it is an appropriate way to stand on perception of all community components about building social cohesion and set a work plan.

Due to data protection, there was not any publishing for the name of participants or any mentioning to them in a public way. In the data collection process, there was a commitment by the author in front of all participants about this approach in addition to ensuring the integrity of the information as this method puts the subject at ease and increases their honesty and unbiased.

3.4.1.1 KII Interview Participants

In table 4, coded information about the participants in the interviews, it is indicating participant's position and background in the community. Additionally, the same process has been followed in the beginning of section, it been followed here also.

² Survey, (FGDs), and (KII).

Table 4 Participants in the interviews

Date	Code	Category	Position	Background	Inter-Time
16-April-2023	AS-1	CSO member	Coordinator	IDP	41 minutes
26-April-2023	AM-2	SIG	Economy	IDP	40 minutes
06-May-2023	AR-3	Aleppo council	Head	IDP	40 minutes
6-May-2023	AH-4	Politician	Head	HC	50 minutes
18-April-2023	AM-5	SY Plus	CEO	IDP	40 minutes
2-May-2023	AH-6	Military	General	IDP	30 minutes
2-May-2023	AA-7	Geneva call	Trainer	IDP	90 minutes
18-April-2023	AN-8	CSO	CEO	HC	30 minutes
18-April-2023	WO-9	Media	Journalist	IDP	50 minutes
10-May-2023	ALH-10	2020 Idea	CEO	IDP	30 minutes
25-April-2023	AO-11	NGO	Office manager	HC	31 minutes
6-May-2023	BN-12	Legal	General manager	IDP	35 minutes
10-May-2023	BZ-13	CSO	CEO	IDP	25 minutes
18-April-2023	IB-14	Legal	Lawyer	IDP	60 minutes
3-May-2023	JA-15	Legal	President	IDP	37 minutes
6-May-2023	MB-16	UN	Coordinator	IDP	20 minutes
18-April-2023	GN-17	Media	Coordinator	IDP	20 minutes
18-April-2023	MM-18	Media	CEO	IDP	38 minutes
10-April-2023	MKH-19	Military	Head of office	IDP	55 minutes
16-April-2023	MM-20	Legal	Lawyer	IDP	50 minutes
19-April-2023	MY-21	University	Student	IDP	75 minutes
6-May-2023	SD-22	CSO	CEO	IDP	28 minutes
19-April-2023	WD-23	LC	Head of	IDP	39 minutes

25-April-2023	ZH-24	Legal	Lawyer	IDP	32 minutes
26-April-2023	MHJ-25	NGO	Officer	IDP	35 minutes

Source: It comes from author's research.

Table 4 shows the diversity in selection of data collection tool in interview of Key informative individuals, which there are (IDPs) and (HC). On the other hand, there was a diversity in positions and background of the participants, which included participants from military institutions, (CSOs), (LCs), law institutions, and from media agencies.

The purpose behind this diverse selection is getting data and information from different resources of different community components.

3.4.1.2 Focused Group Discussion Participants

In the duration between 9-11 May 2023, three focused discussion groups have conducted in the A'zaz district to gain more information about the thesis topic and benefit from interactive discussion of activists, civil society members, and stakeholders. Where 30 participants shared and exchanged their thoughts, ideas, and voices about social cohesion challenges in the region, and how can achieve it. In table 5 coded information about participants in the sessions:

Table 5 List of Participants in the (FGDs)

Date	Code	Position	Category	Background
9-May-2023	01-AH	Office Manager	CSO	IDP
9-May-2023	02-HA	Office Manager	NGO	IDP
9-May-2023	03-HO	Field Coordinator	NGO	HC
9-May-2023	04-AS	School Manager	Education	IDP
9-May-2023	05-ST	Project Manager	NGO	Circassian
9-May-2023	06-RZ	Specialist	NGO	HC
9-May-2023	07-MSH	Office Manager	University	HC
9-May-2023	08-AM	Minister	SIG	IDP

9-May-2023	09-WA	Journalist	Media	IDP
9-May-2023	10-RT	Office Manager	NGO	IDP
10-May-2023	11-WO	Media officer	NGO	HC
10-May-2023	12-NH	CEO	CSO	IDP
10-May-2023	13-AA	Project officer	INGO	HC
10-May-2023	14-YH	MEAL officer	CSO	HC
10-May-2023	15-AO	Office manager	LC	HC
10-May-2023	16-FA	Trainer	Media agency	HC
10-May-2023	17-HS	Negotiator	GB	IDP
10-May-2023	18-EA	Coordinator	CSO	IDP
10-May-2023	19-DS	Team Leader	CSO	HC
10-May-2023	20-AR	CEO	CSO	IDP
11-May-2023	21-HB	Project Manager	CSO	HC
11-May-2023	22-AAW	Office Manager	NGO	HC
11-May-2023	23-WA	Center manager	CSO	HC
11-May-2023	24-MH	Head of council	Education	IDP
11-May-2023	25-SH	Member	Association	HC
11-May-2023	26-ABN	Head	Association	HC
11-May-2023	27-SK	Manager	CSO	IDP
11-May-2023	28-AKTH	Officer	CSO	IDP
11-May-2023	29-NR	Office manager	Alliance	IDP
11-May-2023	30-RKH	Social Worker	NGO	HC

Source: It comes from author's research.

Table 5 emphasized the same process used in (KII) data collection tool, which in (FGDs) data collection tool, the thesis used same approach.

3.4.2 Public Survey

In the data gathering phase, a public survey was carried out within the thesis's targeted area. The survey was crafted to encompass all thesis-related questions, resulting in a comprehensive set of 77 questions. The Kobo tool application was employed for the survey due to its widespread accessibility, enabling individuals in the target area to easily participate using their mobile devices. The survey was made available from April 16, 2023, and concluded on April 23, 2023, garnering feedback from 516 respondents. Details about the participants gender can be found in the graph 4 below:

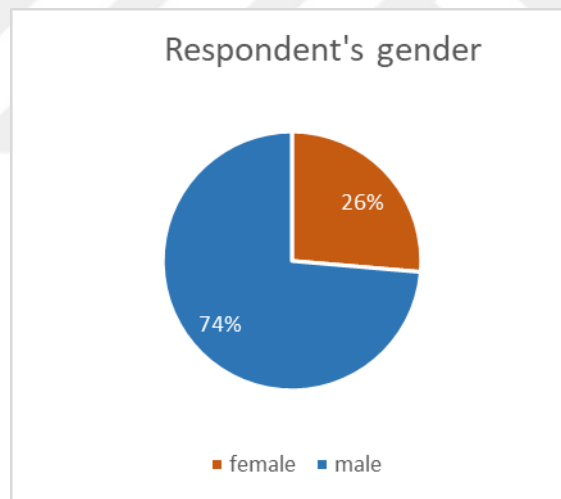


Figure 4Graph – 4

Source: Published Survey by the author.

Generally, most of respondents in public survey are female with 74%, and just 26% are male.

In Graph 5, we can see the education level of the respondents in the published survey:

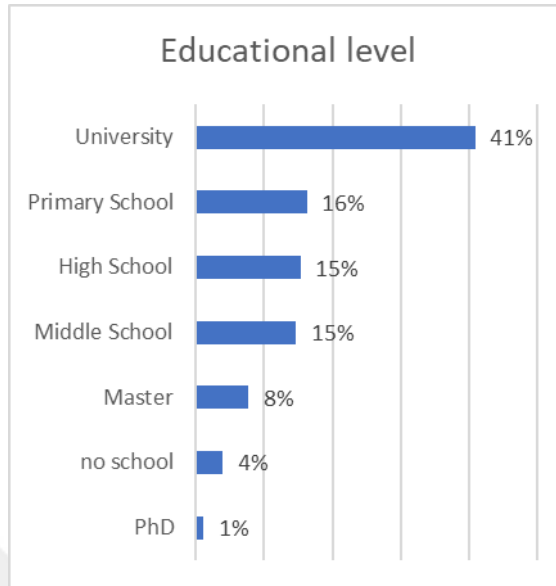


Figure 5Graph – 5

Source: Published Survey by the author.

In graph 5 shows us that 41% of respondents in the survey are educated people on university level, while 16% of respondents were coming from primary school education level, then, 15% came from secondary school, 8% from higher level of education like master’s degree and just 1% from PhD.

Upon completion of the survey, the thesis processed and analyzed the gathered data using the Excel application. This method streamlined the thesis process, enabling me to effectively incorporate insights to further the research topic. Since respondents completed the survey independently, it ensured that the responses were candid, direct, and unbiased. This approach facilitated the extraction of genuine insights into the thesis questions and provided valuable solutions to pressing issues impacting social cohesion in the region.

4. Conceptualization Applicable Social Cohesion for Northwest of Syria – A’zaz Case

For the reasons previously outlined, A’zaz district was chosen as the case study for this research. A’zaz exhibits many characteristics conducive to fostering social cohesion. Various data collection methods were employed with the district's inhabitants to gauge the current state of social cohesion in the area, understand its conceptualization, and determine ways to enhance it. Using the gathered data, this chapter delves into analysis and validation, aiming to address the research questions. Within the chapter, there's an overview of the existing governance structure in the district and an exploration of its role and participatory strategies. Additionally, the chapter evaluates societal components and their contributions to the realization of social cohesion.

4.1 The Current Population in A’zaz

In A'zaz, there are about 500,000 residents, graph 6 indicates percentage of respondents in the survey based on their status, about 47 % of (IDPs) and 53 % are from (HC).

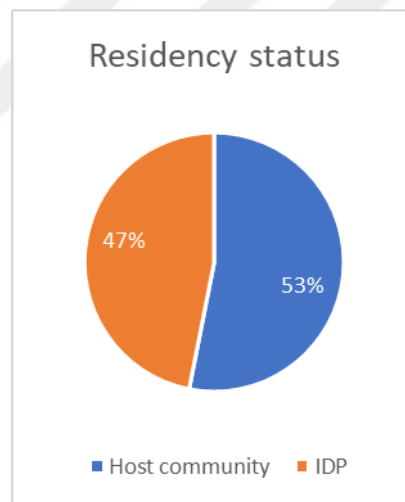


Figure 6Graph – 6

Source: Published Survey by the author.

It means that the percentage of participants from displaced and host communities was close to half and half.

The (IDPs) hail from various Syrian governorates, with a significant portion, approximately 44% of the total (IDPs), originating from Aleppo City. This migration occurred after multiple evacuations and displacements from Aleppo City to northwest Syria. In contrast, about 14% of the (IDPs) are from the Damascus governorate, roughly 13% from Homs, and the remaining 29% from diverse locations such as Deir-Ez-Zor, Al-Raqqah, and Daraa governorates. When surveyed about their places of origin, the respondents indicated as follows in graph 7:

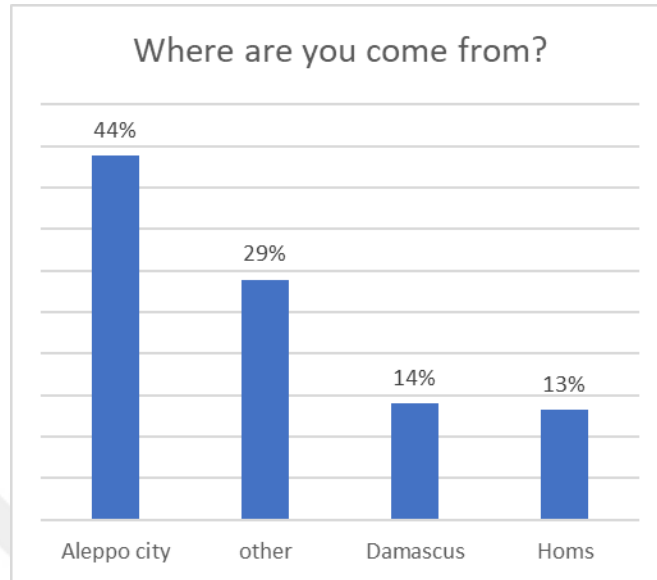


Figure 7Graph – 7

Source: Published Survey by the author.

The graph 7 shows that most of (IDPs) in the A'zaz district were coming from Aleppo city due to sampling of the respondents in the survey, about 44% from Aleppo city and 14% from Damascus, while 13% from Homs, finally, 29% came from different Syrian governorates.

The population figures point out the number of people or residents in the region and it indicates the hierarchy of the community in the region, and what are the community components in the A'zaz district.

4.2 Current Social Cohesion Situation

"A'zaz stands out as a region with better social cohesion in northwest Syria in comparison to other districts, and this can be attributed to multiple factors." (AH-10). "The strength of social cohesion in the region becomes evident during times of adversity or threat, but it seems to diminish in other situations." (AM-2). Drawing from the collected data, approximately 47% of the survey respondents expressed that A'zaz possesses a moderate level of social cohesion. Nevertheless, there remains significant room for enhancement, especially in fostering relationships among all community members. The subsequent graph 8 provides a comprehensive view of the current state of social cohesion:

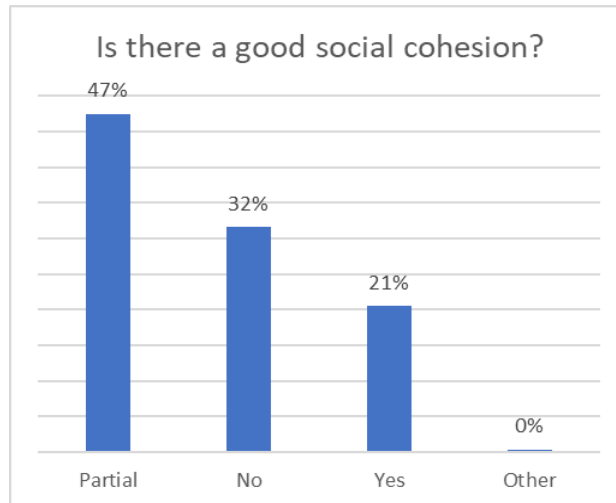


Figure 8Graph – 8

Source: Published Survey by the author.

People's contentment with social cohesion in A'zaz is mixed and largely hinges on the intentions and actions of local authorities and armed factions. These entities have the power to significantly influence the process of bolstering social cohesion by emphasizing unifying factors and diminishing divisive elements in the community.

From the conducted Focused Group Discussions (FGDs), participants highlighted several areas of weakness in social cohesion. A notable concern was the underrepresentation of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) within Local Councils (LCs) and other governmental entities. This underrepresentation fosters feelings of disparity, amplifying divisions between the (IDPs) and the Host Community (HC).

Moreover, the lack of consistent law enforcement for all community members means that (IDPs) often feel compelled to assert their rights forcefully, further perpetuating a sense of neglect and unfairness. Additionally, there's an evident void in policies regarding equitable resource distribution between (HCs and (IDPs)). This absence fosters an environment where perceived injustices thrive and disrupts the harmony between different community factions. The nonexistence of a well-defined resource-sharing framework hinders the implementation of developmental and early recovery projects. Such initiatives could potentially enhance employment opportunities, thereby alleviating numerous challenges.

Regrettably, there's a prevalent tendency towards regional favoritism, overshadowing the spirit of inclusive citizenship. Discrimination based on city, tribe, or clan affiliation is rampant, with people favoring those from their backgrounds over others. "There exist Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) that predominantly cater to a specific group, making it difficult for members from other communities to gain access." (AS-1).

When survey respondents were questioned about encountering challenges related to social cohesion within the host community, roughly 49% confirmed facing issues, while 51% reported no such challenges. The subsequent graph 9 elucidates these percentages.

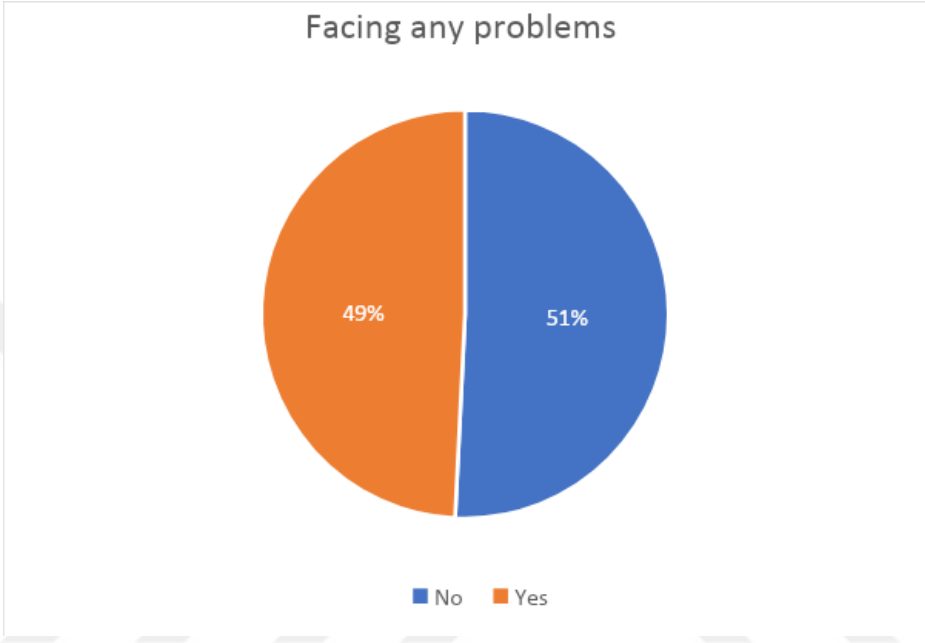


Figure 9Graph – 9

Source: Published Survey by the author.

Conversely, a significant 68% of survey participants expressed a need for enhancing social cohesion in A'zaz, suggesting there's substantial room for improvement. On the contrary, 23% believe that the current state of social cohesion is satisfactory and requires no alterations. This sentiment is echoed by one of the respondents, who remarked, "Social cohesion in A'zaz is superior when compared to other districts in the northwest Syrian region" (ALH-10). A smaller segment, making up 9%, feels that while there is a need for some changes, they should be minor, attributing this to an already satisfactory level of social cohesion present in the district. The subsequent graph 10 provides a detailed breakdown of these percentages.

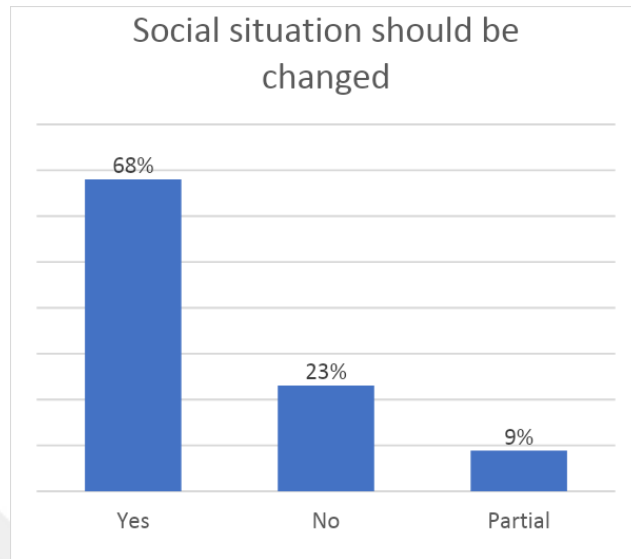


Figure 10 Graph – 10

Source: Published Survey by the author.

As a result, from graph 10, most people in the A’zaz city are seeing that should be a change in the region on social cohesion level.

4.3 The Role of Law and Justice Institutions

Official justice institutions in the A’zaz district are divided as illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6 Functions of Courts in A’zaz

Institution	Explanation
Ordinary Courts	It belongs to the Ministry of Justice within the (SIG)
Military Courts	It is under the administration of the Ministry of Defense belongs to the (SIG)
Police Courts	Civilian police belong to the Ministry of Interior of the (SIG) and apply the execution of law and the decisions of the courts.
	Military Police under the supervision of the Ministry of Defense of (SIG)
	Prisons

Source: It comes from the author’s research.

In the northwest region of Syria, the formal legal institutions mirror the approach of the (GoS) in terms of court structure and the legal materials employed to resolve disputes between parties. One respondent opined, "The foundation of the justice institutions is adequate" (BN-12), whereas another noted, "The challenge doesn't lie within the legal institutions themselves, but rather in the lack of initiative to implement them" (AO-11).

From a theoretical perspective, the rule of law and the realization of justice stand as foundational pillars for achieving social cohesion. These elements not only ensure the rights and fundamental freedoms of every community member but also foster trust among different community factions, making them indispensable for the successful attainment of social cohesion.

However, while the official justice institutions may have a clear hierarchical structure, they grapple with myriad challenges that hinder the enhancement of social cohesion. Participants during data collection sessions highlighted multiple impediments in the path of law enforcement. Primarily, the ineffectiveness of the courts stands out; their rulings often go unenforced, revealing an apparent disconnect between justice and executive entities.

Following a survey that sought to uncover the underlying reasons for the diminished role of justice institutions, responses varied. Graph 10 shows a significant 47% of respondents attributed the issue to the local authorities' lack of willingness to strengthen law enforcement. In contrast, 28% believed that the limited expertise of staff in legal institutions was the crux of the matter. 20% of respondents identified interference by armed factions as the primary obstacle, while a smaller 5% cited various other reasons, including concerns about the independence of these justice bodies.

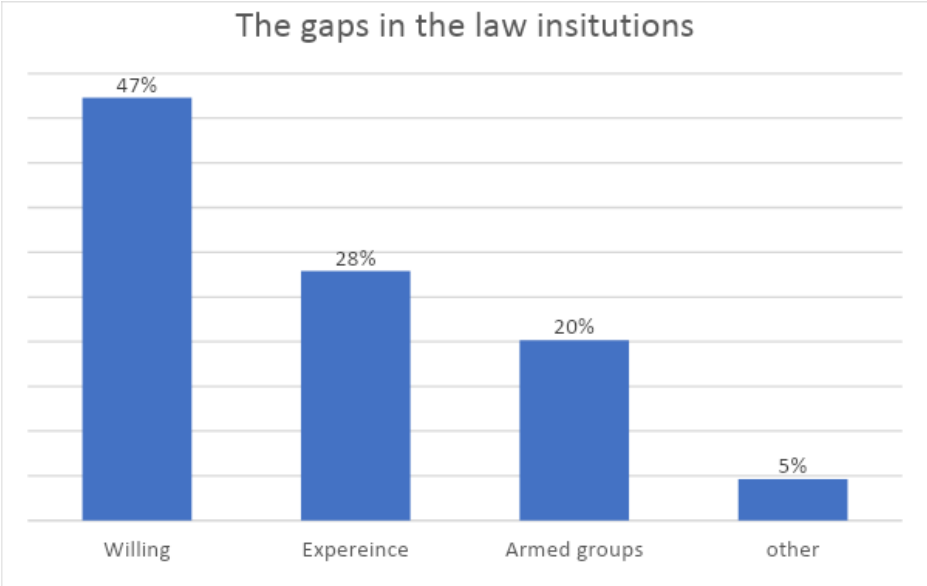


Figure 11Graph – 10

Source: Published Survey by the author.

Armed groups, operating from a position of strength, often sidestep formal judicial processes, believing they can assert their rights directly through the use of force, rendering the courts redundant in their view. As illustrated in the subsequent chart, 39% of such entities typically avoid court proceedings altogether. Meanwhile, graph 11 indicates a slightly lower percentage at 34% opt to utilize the courts but only when they anticipate a favorable verdict for their claims.

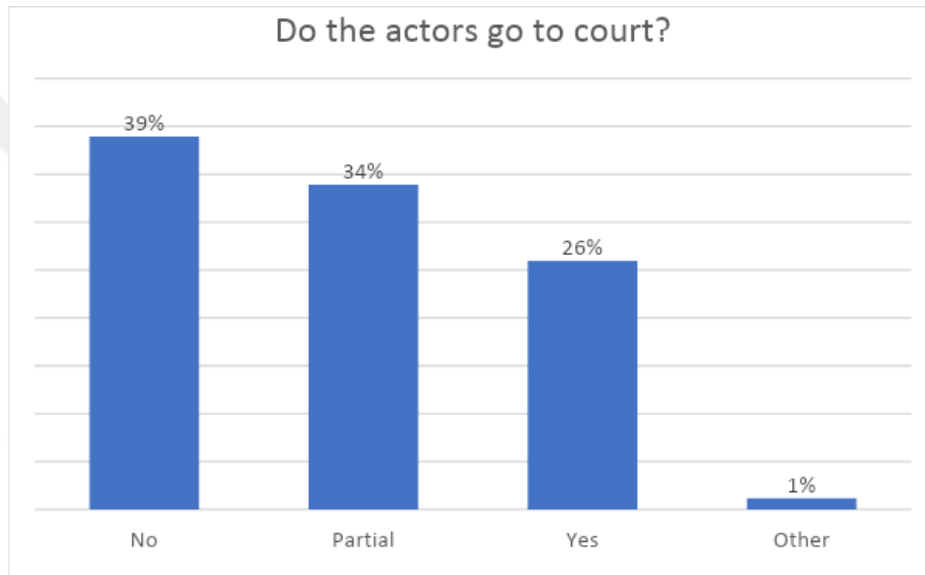


Figure 12Graph – 11

Source: Published Survey by the author.

As summarized from graph 11, most of residents in the region objected to going to the courts to obtain their rights, the percentage about 39%, while 34% saw that the going to courts is partial and related to winning the cases or not.

When participants of the survey were questioned about the reasons armed groups typically avoid the courts, their responses were as follows in Graph 12:

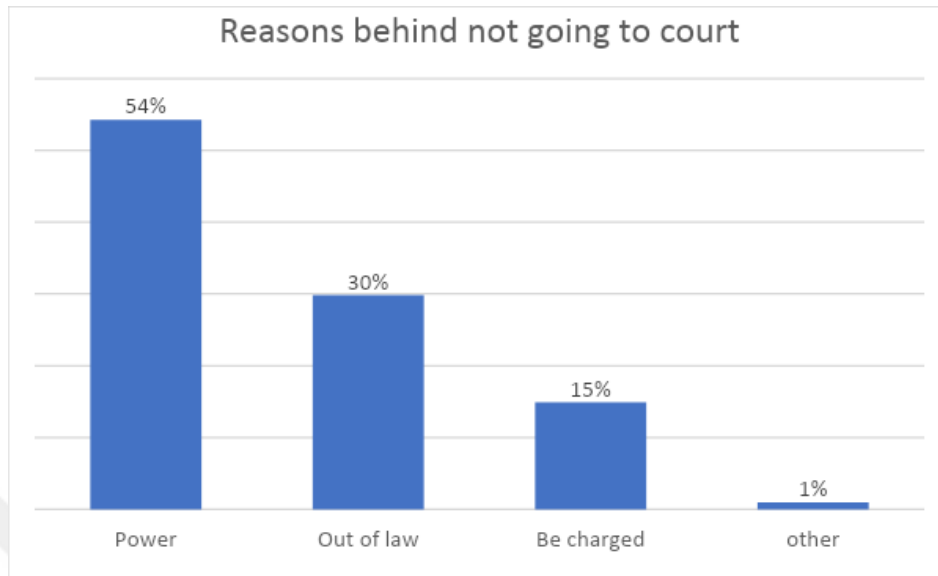


Figure 13 Graph – 12

Source: Published Survey by the author.

From the collected data, graph 12, is evident that 54% believe the primary reason armed groups avoid the courts is due to their reliance on raw power, 30% felt it's a deliberate choice to remain outside the legal system, and 15% avoid courts to evade potential blame or charges.

Furthermore, the financial limitations faced by the judicial system, particularly the insufficient compensation for judges and legal staff, have raised concerns about their commitment and independence. One participant noted, “The prevalence of bribes among legal staff weakens the enforcement of the law” (MB-16). Discussions in the focus groups emphasized the importance of increasing financial support for court personnel by the Syrian Interim Government (SIG).

Moreover, the inconsistency in laws and judicial processes across different cities has been highlighted, underscoring the necessity for standardization (GN-17).

In the absence of a concerted effort by local authorities to strengthen the rule of law in northwest Syria, the ongoing state of chaos, rising discrimination, and the proliferation of social injustice are inevitable. This weakening of judicial institutions also has a cascading effect, compromising the efficacy of the civilian police force. Consequently, numerous confrontations between the civilian police and armed groups have eroded public trust in the police, negatively influencing perceptions about their capabilities. This has, in turn, weakened the enforcement of the law and reduced the chances of establishing social cohesion in the region.

Reflecting these challenges, the survey results show in Graph 13 that a majority, 56%, of respondents would refrain from approaching a police station to lodge a complaint, whereas 44% stated they would.

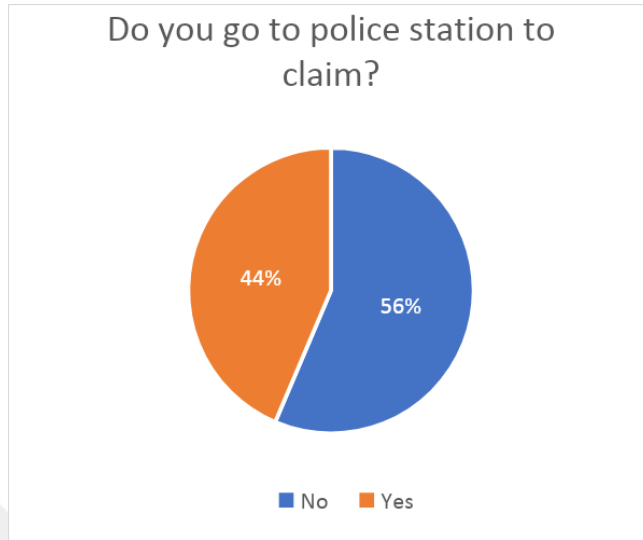


Figure 14Graph – 13

Source: Published Survey by the author.

Of the 44% in graph 14 who reported approaching the police station with a complaint, almost half (49%) confirmed that their issue was resolved satisfactorily. On the other hand, 38% stated that their problems remained unresolved. A smaller segment, 12%, felt that their concerns were addressed but only to a partial extent. This data highlights the varying degrees of effectiveness and efficiency within the policing and justice system in the region.

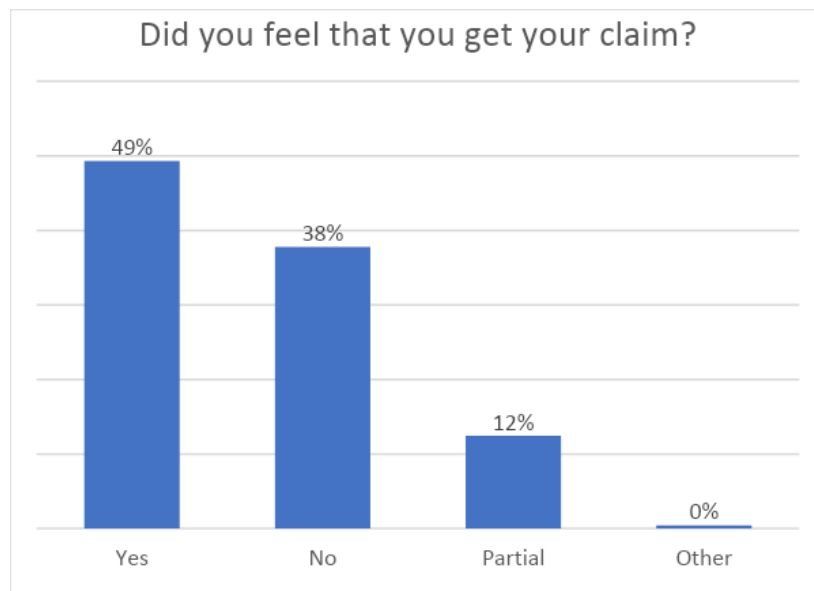


Figure 15Graph – 14

Source: Published Survey by the author.

In the presented data, graph 15 indicates 47% of the respondents believe that there's a lack of genuine intent in the region to uniformly implement the rule of law across all community groups. Following this, 28% emphasized the need for more qualified and seasoned professionals in legal institutions.

A concerning absence of systems and policies for accountability, such as those against corruption, bribery, and nepotism within justice institutions, has been observed. The lack of performance evaluations for staff members, coupled with the dearth of measures to hold individuals accountable, has rendered consequences for misconduct virtually non-existent.

This absence of accountability has inadvertently paved the way for an increase in criminal activities among the populace. A prevailing sentiment seems to be that individuals can commit crimes and eventually evade any retribution or punishment. Such circumstances directly undermine the principles of social cohesion. The resulting disputes and a deep-seated sense of discrimination among the citizens only serve to perpetuate discord and disparity in the community. Ultimately, social cohesion and harmony become the primary casualties in such an environment.

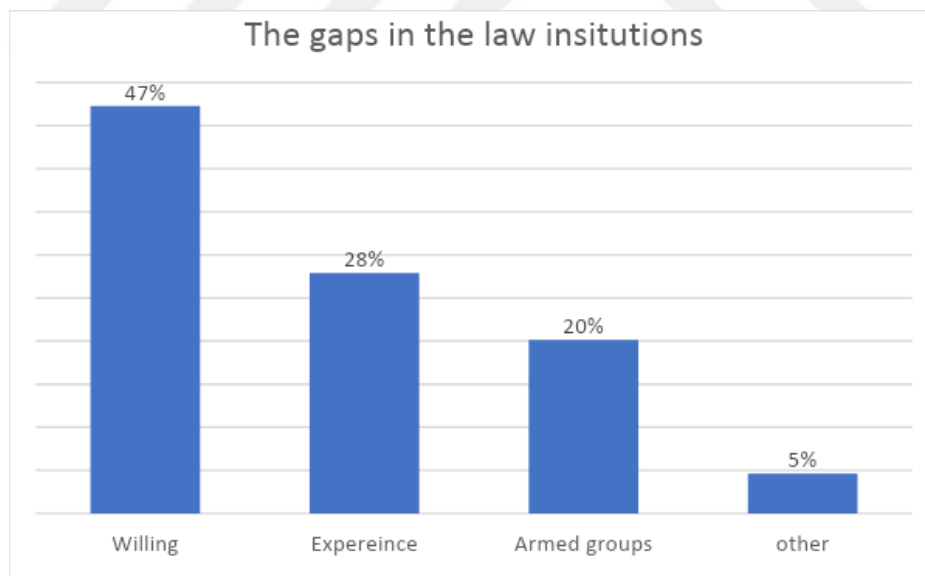


Figure 16Graph – 15

Source: Published Survey by the author.

"To ensure a robust legal system, it's crucial to place the right individuals in positions of decision-making," stated (WD-23). Additionally, (ZH-24) emphasized the importance of setting

up new courts within A'zaz City to prevent the inconvenience of traveling to "Alra'ee city" for certain legal matters.

In parallel, there's a growing call to enhance the role of non-official justice mechanisms in the region, as voiced by (02-HA). Currently, the area boasts various non-formal justice institutions that encompass mukhtars, tribal leaders, faith leaders, and community figureheads. It's imperative to streamline and synchronize their roles, ensuring they contribute constructively to achieving social cohesion.

4.4 Actors Impacting Social Cohesion in the Region

The analysis highlights the presence of various actors, entities, and institutions pivotal in fostering social cohesion within the A'zaz City. As emphasized by (MB-16), "Every individual, especially the educated, has a duty towards ensuring social cohesion."

The research has identified and grouped these actors based on their distinct roles and identities.

4.4.1 Semi-Governmental Institutions (SIG)

Several semi-structured bodies in A'zaz have the potential to positively influence social cohesion, particularly those with semi-governmental attributes. They serve as the official establishments focused on safeguarding the rights and lives of the populace, aiming to ensure safety for all residents. These entities are formally linked to the Ministry of Interior within the Syrian Interim Government (SIG). Their core mandate revolves around upholding the rule of law, addressing instances of violations, settling disputes, and directing culprits to the appropriate judicial authorities.

Additionally, the local councils (LC), which fall under the purview of the Ministry of Local Administration in the (SIG), have the capacity to significantly boost social cohesion. They extend vital services to every segment of society, be it the native residents or the displaced populace. These councils can spearhead comprehensive social cohesion efforts through active collaboration with a variety of institutions, spanning areas like the Syrian National Army (SNA), education, health, and the economic sectors.

Furthermore, the (LC) can bolster the functionality of official justice mechanisms in the region, promoting synergy between the decisions of the (LCs) and the established justice institutions.

4.4.2 Institutions and Bodies of Civil Society

Post the onset of the Syrian crisis, with the diminishing influence of the Government of Syria (GoS), the civil society sector began to flourish. This resulted in a notable expansion in the scope of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). Consequently, a plethora of (CSOs), volunteer groups, grassroots initiatives, advocacy coalitions, associations, and Non-Governmental

Organizations (NGOs) emerged in the northwest of Syria. These institutions have since become intrinsic to the societal landscape, actively shaping its dynamics.

- Free Aleppo Lawyers Association

The Free Aleppo Lawyers Association stands as an autonomous entity, established by opposing judges and lawyers. Distinctively, it is not tied to any political or governmental framework and is established and financially sustained by the lawyers themselves. Given its nature, the association holds significant potential in fostering social cohesion in the A'zaz region. The local inhabitants harbor a deep trust for the association, stemming from its transparent and democratic electoral processes. This trust is further enhanced by the diverse representation within the association, where various backgrounds find a voice. Serving as a bridge between the general populace and legal entities such as courts and police, the association remains closely connected to the people.

- Civil Society Organizations in the Region

Civil society organizations operate with vigor in the region. Numerous entities, teams, and civic groups are actively rolling out humanitarian aid initiatives and civilian projects. These undertakings play a pivotal role in heightening community consciousness, reshaping certain entrenched customs, and laying down the foundational stones for genuine social cohesion. Such initiatives promote unity among various societal elements, potentially bridging divisions and fortifying the bonds that unify the community.

Furthermore, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) channel international funds into the region, ensuring a steady influx of foreign currency. These projects, in turn, generate revenue for marginalized community segments, acting as a buffer against societal challenges and problems.

During the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), when participants were quizzed on the role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and (NGOs) in fostering social cohesion, graph 16 indicates that 47% believed in (CSOs) played a supportive role. This belief is anchored in the financial prowess of these (CSOs) in catering to the fundamental needs of the populace and integrating knowledgeable and proficient individuals in the social cohesion process. Conversely, 33% opined that (CSOs) negatively impact social cohesion.

Their rationale hinged on the perceived regional biases of (CSOs) in their project locations, staff hiring practices, and the transient nature of their projects. The prevailing sentiment among this group was that the region would benefit more from long-term projects to bolster its capacities and yield desired outcomes.

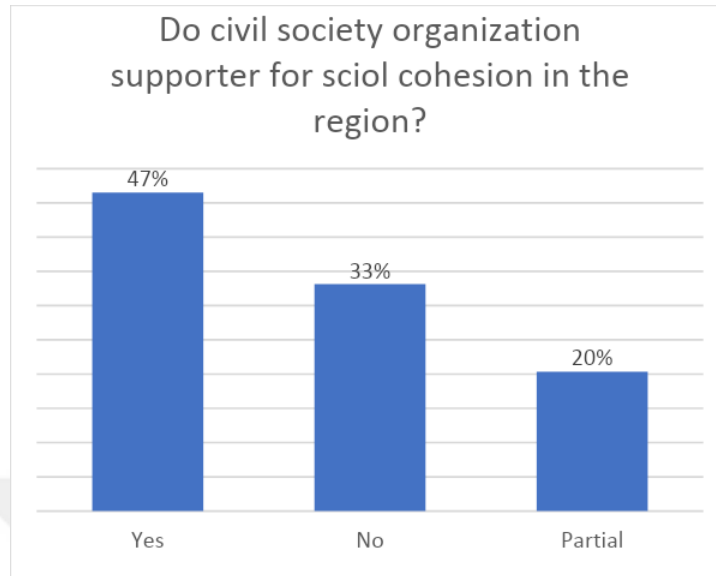


Figure 17Graph – 16

Source: Published Survey by the author.

- Syrian Tribal Council

A significant portion of the A'zaz region's residents is affiliated with tribes and clans. "Regrettably, many of the active tribal and clan members possess limited formal education, with some even lacking literacy," noted MHJ-25. However, their profound commitment to tribal customs, traditions, and regulations, combined with their fierce loyalty, implies they often heed the calls of their leaders unconditionally.

The tribal elders and dignitaries, who also serve as political leaders, play a pivotal role in mediating disputes and conflicts amongst tribe members and outsiders. "Recently, a consolidated council representing various tribes and clans was formed, with its headquarters situated in the A'zaz district. This council has made notable strides in fostering social cohesion, especially in mediating issues between displaced and local communities," observed 03-HO.

The council offers a semblance of spiritual leadership to all inhabitants, irrespective of their origins. Additionally, the fact that many tribal members are armed implies they hold considerable sway in escalating or defusing tensions amongst armed factions. "It's essential to recognize that these tribes and clans abide by a traditional verbal law rooted in ancient Arabic values, which can momentarily bridge legal vacuums in the region until a comprehensive regional law is enacted," mentioned 04-AS.

- Individual Community Leaders

Within the A'zaz district, numerous individuals wield considerable social influence. This group includes notables, mukhtars, religious figures, media personalities, and certain intellectuals. "These community stalwarts often enjoy the trust of both the grassroots community and local governance structures," stated AA-07. Their existing positive involvement in community dispute resolution and problem-solving is commendable. As highlighted by the collected data, participants acknowledged the potential of these community leaders in promoting a culture of tolerance, mediating regional and community-level disputes, fostering a collective sense of purpose among diverse community sections, and playing a significant role in realizing social cohesion.

4.5 Security and Economy File in (NWS)

Security and economy are two important files in the social cohesion portfolio, which affect societal situation negatively or positively.

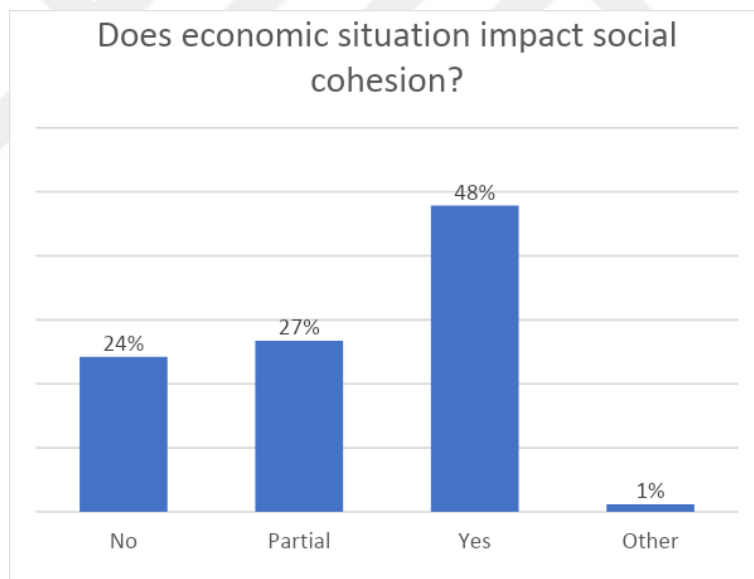


Figure 18Graph – 17

Source: Published Survey by the author.

In the survey conducted, graph 17 indicates that 48% of participants believed that the realization of social cohesion is influenced by security and economic situations. Meanwhile, 27% felt that there's only a partial connection between the two, and 24% felt there's no connection at all.

AM-02 stated, "In the absence of security, injustice prevails." Elaborating on the importance of security and economy in fostering social cohesion, (09-WA) from (FGD1)

expressed, "These two are fundamental pillars for any society, but they're even more crucial in the A'zaz district. The region's ongoing conflict with the GoS has deeply impacted both the security and economy."

22-AAW from (FGD3) added, "The interplay between security and economy can either foster harmony or spark conflicts within communities. It can even escalate conflicts among armed factions." Similarly, 23-WA from (FGD3) highlighted the economic aspect, noting, "The dearth of job opportunities and diminished incomes can propel individuals towards negative behaviors."

AO-011 shed light on the economic challenges, remarking, "The rapid devaluation of the local currency against the US Dollar – a staggering 400% in a short span – has severely undermined the purchasing power of families." Emphasizing the need for economic stability, MY-21 said, "A'zaz district needs stringent economic regulations. There should be zero tolerance for any activities detrimental to the economy, given its paramount importance nowadays."

Security remains a concern for the A'zaz city, plagued by attacks from Vehicles Born Improvised Explosive Devices (VBIED). This not only jeopardizes the residents' safety but also hinders investment opportunities, compelling potential investors to seek more stable regions for business endeavors.

BN-012 concluded, "Every community member has a role to play in bolstering the security and economy of the (NWS). There's a pressing need for awareness campaigns led by local authorities, aiming to enlighten people on the significance of these twin pillars and their role in societal stability."

The precarious security situation in the region has directly impacted on its economic policies. As 28-AKTH noted, "Without a sense of safety and security, the environment isn't conducive for growth or for undertaking economic activities like investment, trade, launching factories, setting up companies, and initiating private or small-scale projects."

Furthermore, ensuring job opportunities can act as a deterrent against security threats. 29-NR believes that "Employment opportunities can prevent the youth or those without jobs from gravitating towards extremist factions or participating in acts of terrorism." The economic challenges also touch upon education, as 30-RKH observed, "Given the economic strain, parents often prioritize having their children contribute to household income rather than sending them to schools."

The diminished sense of security in the A'zaz region has fostered a climate of disorder among its inhabitants and has led to a proliferation of arms. This unchecked spread of weapons has hampered efforts towards achieving social cohesion, igniting disputes, skirmishes, and tensions among various community groups. 24-MH emphasized, "Addressing and resolving the economic challenges is pivotal, as it's nearly impossible to curb criminal activities and provide a sense of security without stabilizing the economic framework of the region."

4.6 Societal Challenges

The data reveals a myriad of societal challenges that impede the achievement of social cohesion in the region. These challenges intensify societal fragmentation and widen the existing rifts between different community components one of the most pronounced issues is the administrative disunity.

The absence of a cohesive administrative structure thwarts centralized decision-making, causing fragmentation and inefficiency, as noted by 19-DS. This lack of unity hampers the effective enforcement of laws and organized operations of the civil society sector, as emphasized in FGD2. Another concern is the overreach of the Syrian National Army (SNA) into civil matters, exemplified by instances where they bypass the rule of law, suggesting the urgency of demarcating boundaries between the military and civilian realms, as highlighted by AN-08.

This situation is further complicated by the weak formal regional justice and policing institutions that falter in protecting the human rights and freedoms of the residents, a point brought forward by 10-RT.

The security landscape is marred with incidents like kidnappings, arbitrary arrests, and assassinations, which erode the social fabric, as underscored by MB-16. Simultaneously, economic challenges loom large, with mounting unemployment, poverty, and crime rates, particularly affecting the internally displaced persons (IDPs) in camps, a sentiment echoed by BN-12.

This dire state of affairs is exacerbated by the reluctance in the populace to partake in activities that could uplift civil society, primarily due to concerns about safety, as highlighted by 01-AH. Another layer of complexity is added by the intermittent conflicts between armed groups, which intensify societal divisions, a concern reiterated by MB-16. A significant societal challenge also arises from the unwavering loyalty to tribes and clans, often sidelining the ethical stance of their actions, as pointed out by 11-WO. The glaring absence of developmental initiatives that cater to capacity-building for the populace, especially the youth, signifies the pressing need to infuse programs instilling essential life skills, as mentioned by 10-RT. Concurrently, deeply ingrained customs, particularly those detrimental to women and girls, aggravate societal woes, with sources like 06-RZ and JA-15 expressing concern over the same.

Differences in traditions between (IDPs) and host communities further fuel conflicts, a sentiment captured by AM-2. The stranglehold over resources by certain merchants, coupled with increasing rental rates by host communities, further widens the rift between (IDPs) and (HCs), as mentioned by ALH-10. Lastly, the resistance to democratic norms by some local authorities, who seemingly harbor illusions of unending power, epitomizes the challenges faced in the region, a perspective offered by AH-4.

4.7 Learning from Global Instances

The present dynamics in northwest Syria are relatively recent, having emerged due to the internal conflict that began in 2011. This means that Syrians primarily need to address their challenges independently, especially given their mistrust towards the (GoS).

In the survey, graph 18 indicating that participants expressed diverse views on the best approach to address the Syrian conflict. Nearly half, or 45%, of the respondents see merit in looking to solutions from other global conflict scenarios as potential avenues for resolution in Syria. A significant 29% advocate for a blended approach, emphasizing that while external solutions might offer insights, it is crucial to adapt them in line with the Syrian context and cultural nuances. On the other hand, a quarter of the participants, accounting for 25%, voice skepticism about the efficacy of replicating any external strategies, attributing their reservations to the distinct nature of the Syrian conflict. Interestingly, a small fraction, 1% of the respondents, shed light on a local conflict resolution initiative in Maarit Nouman city, as mentioned by AA-7, suggesting that such grassroots efforts could serve as notable examples to guide future endeavors.

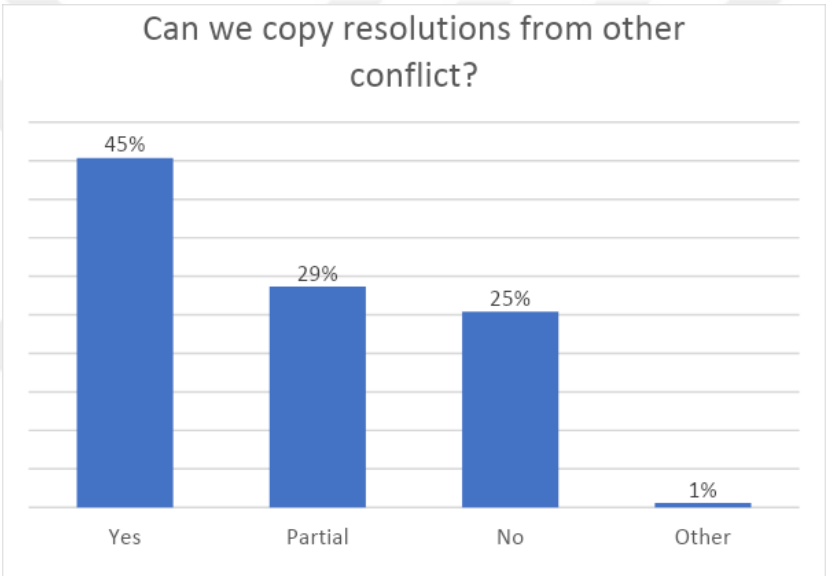


Figure 19Graph – 18

Source: Published Survey by the author.

Conversely, while there are distinct differences in global conflicts such as those in Rwanda, Lebanon, and Iraq, they still bear similarities to the Syrian situation. Solutions from these contexts might serve as a template. However, it's essential to account for Syrian cultural nuances and tailor any approach to suit the specific needs and dynamics of the region (AH-4).

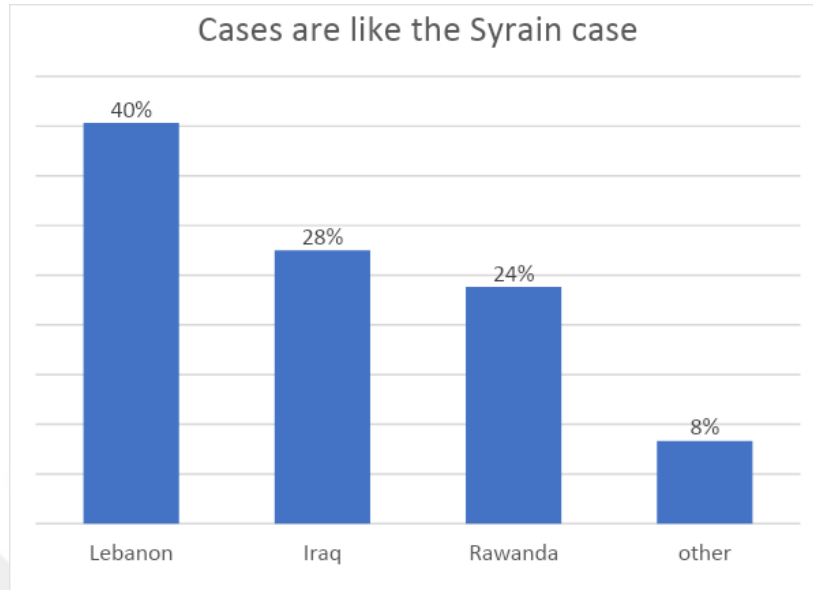


Figure 20Graph – 19

Source: Published Survey by the author.

In graph 19, approximately 40% of survey respondents felt that the conflict in Lebanon mirrors the situation in Syria, suggesting the possibility of adapting its resolution measures. Meanwhile, 28% looked towards the solutions implemented in Iraq, around 24% cited Rwanda, and a smaller fraction, 8%, brought up other cases like Singapore, South Africa, and Germany.

The Syrian population is grappling with unprecedented challenges, necessitating innovative strategies to foster community rebuilding through a renewed social contract (AH-6).

The A'zaz local council's data reveals that the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) closely matches the local host community. Generally, the economic conditions of the host community surpass those of the (IDPs). A crucial reason for this disparity is that many IDPs, having been displaced multiple times, couldn't transport their assets. Any proposed solution must account for these disparities (07-MSH).

While several global conflicts might resemble Syria's, transplanting those resolutions onto the Syrian context without adjustments is deemed implausible by some, like AK-1. In the regional sphere, Iraq achieved consensus among its diverse communities, agreeing on a power-sharing government that spans ethnicities, sects, and religions, underpinned by international accords. The situation in Lebanon, marked by sectarian warfare, saw international intervention that culminated in the Taif Agreement in Saudi Arabia. Although these resolutions have their fragilities, they, at least, concluded the civil unrest.

The Rwandan conflict, from a global perspective, bears some similarities to Syria's, but differences in international community involvement render it non-analogous. The significant distinction between Syria and other cited instances is the international community's unified stance in other conflicts. In contrast, the Syrian crisis witnesses divisions, alliances, and even military interventions by nations backing various factions within Syria (22-AAW).

Survey feedback also highlighted certain non-negotiables, key themes, or issues that must be addressed in any forthcoming resolution endeavors.

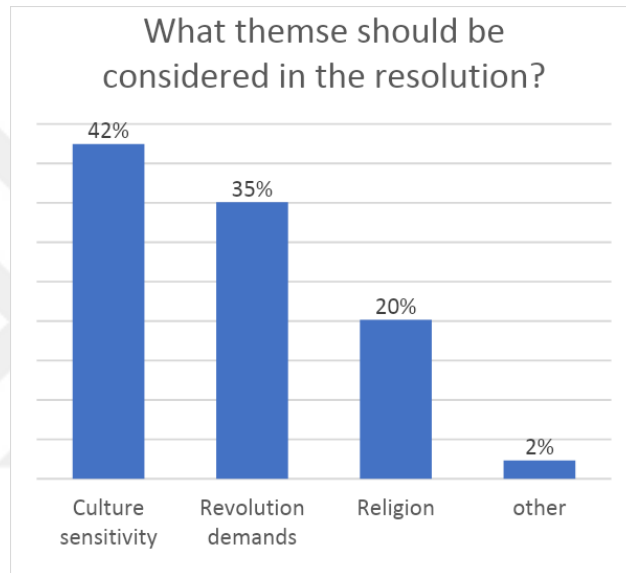


Figure 21Graph – 20

Source: Published Survey by the author.

In graph 20, 42% of survey participants emphasized the need for any resolution to respect and incorporate Syrian cultural nuances. Given Syria's rich tapestry of religions, sects, ethnicities, and doctrines all coexisting within its borders, it's imperative that all these groups are involved in the resolution process and that their concerns are addressed. Meanwhile, 35% of respondents highlighted the necessity to acknowledge the aspirations of the 2011 revolution.

The Syrian populace initially rallied for freedom and dignity, and any potential solution must recognize their sacrifices. Given that the country has mourned over a million lives and seen twice as many injured in its quest for change, reverting to pre-2011 conditions is not viable. These immense sacrifices should guide any negotiation or reconciliation talks. Additionally, 20% of those surveyed voiced religious reservations. In essence, the Syrian situation is distinctive, and careful evaluation and consultation are pivotal to devising a holistic resolution.

4.8 Parameters of Social Cohesion Achievement

Given the complexity of the Syrian crisis, dubbed as one of the gravest of the century, defining the parameters for social cohesion in the A'zaz district is inevitably challenging. Through extensive data collection, this thesis outlines key attributes and benchmarks required for fostering social cohesion and promoting justice, transparency, and harmony across all sections of the community.

“There is an imperative need for establishing a sturdy governance structure with inclusive representation. A broader or public assembly, encompassing both (IDPs) and (HC) from all strata, is pivotal” (AM-2). The subsequent chart delineates the predominant challenges faced in bridging the gap between (IDPs) and (HC).

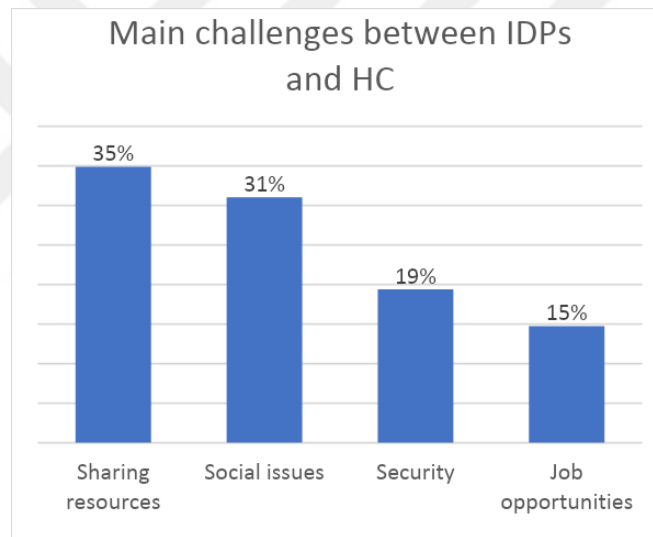


Figure 22Graph – 21

Source: Published Survey by the author.

Graph 21 reveals that resource allocation stands as the primary challenge in the region, with 35% of respondents highlighting resource sharing, particularly economic resources, as their top concern. Concurrently, 31% feel that social divisions remain a key issue, suggesting enduring differences within the community. Additionally, 19% indicate security concerns, stemming from the fact many were forced to vacate their homes due to security threats. These concerns not only hinder long-term stability but also lead people into adopting unfavorable behaviors as protective measures. On another note, 15% believe that the dearth of employment opportunities spurs tension between (IDPs) and (HC).

Building on that, as delineated in section 4.2, nearly half (47%) of the surveyed participants recognize the existence of certain degrees of social cohesion within the region. Nonetheless, there's an expressed need to amend or eradicate certain detrimental behaviors to fully realize social cohesion.

It's emphasized, "A collective consensus amongst all community elements is crucial to enhance social cohesion and nurture a mutual spirit of collaboration" (AH-4).

Furthermore, the subsequent graph 22 outlines the residency duration for (IDPs) within the A'zaz district. Specifically, 43% have lived there for 3-5 years, 28% for under 3 years, 22% between 6-9 years, and roughly 7% have called it home for over a decade.

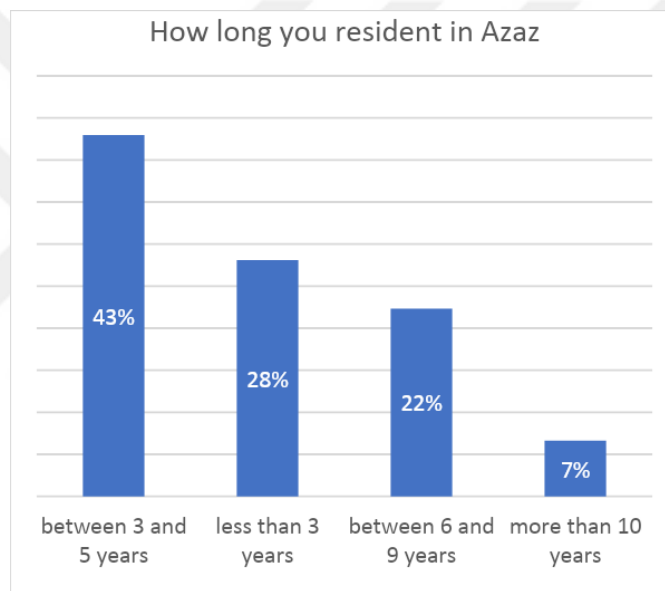


Figure 23Graph – 22

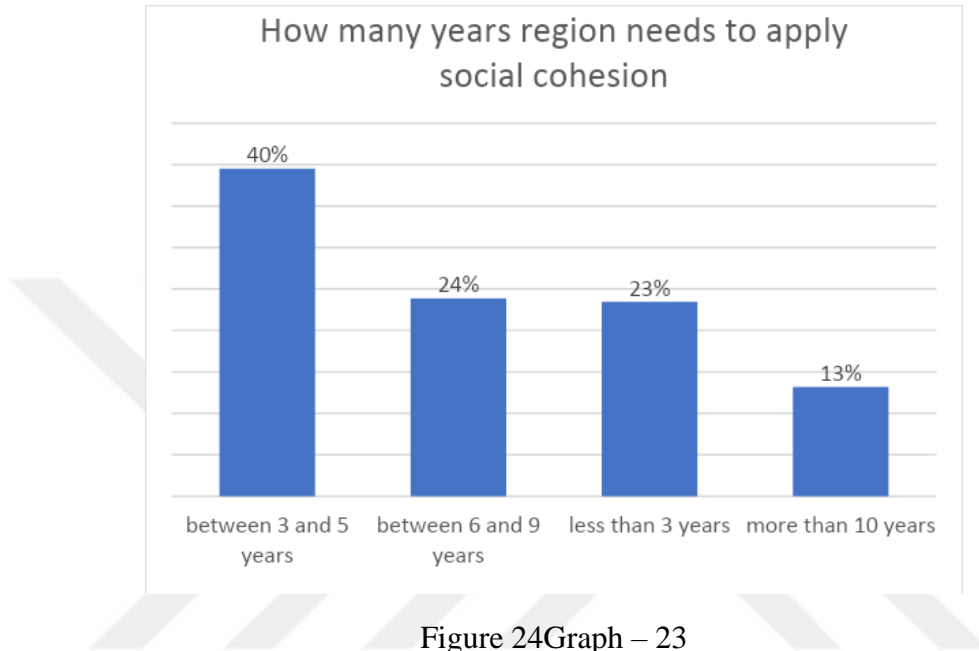
Source: Published Survey by the author.

Based on data collection, the respondents mentioned that there are several steps to reach social cohesion in A'zaz district.

4.8.1 Improvement of Economy

Participants in the data collection process concurred that the realization of social cohesion requires a prolonged effort. "The embodiment of social cohesion necessitates the widespread adoption of the principle of justice among all community sectors," (IB-14) emphasizing the urgency to shift residents' perceptions and rectify negative stereotypes about others. "There exists

a shared foundational understanding among all community groups in the (NWS). They collectively aspire to close the chapter on the era of turmoil and pave the way for growth and progress," (MB-16) highlights.



Source: Published Survey by the author.

In graph 23, roughly 40% of the surveyed individuals believe that achieving full social cohesion among all community segments in the region will take between 3-5 years. Conversely, 13% think the process will extend beyond a decade, while 24% anticipate a 6–9-year timeframe.

Inquiring about the foundational step towards fostering social cohesion, the thesis in graph 24 revealed that a significant 56% felt the primary focus should be on enhancing the economic conditions of residents in northwest Syria. Close behind, about 40% asserted that a shift in cultural perspectives is crucial for cultivating a just, transparent, and harmonious environment for all community members.

One respondent stressed the importance of proactive efforts, saying, "It's vital to host numerous workshops and bring in community figureheads to instill a change in societal attitudes and encourage a culture of mutual acceptance" (AO-11).

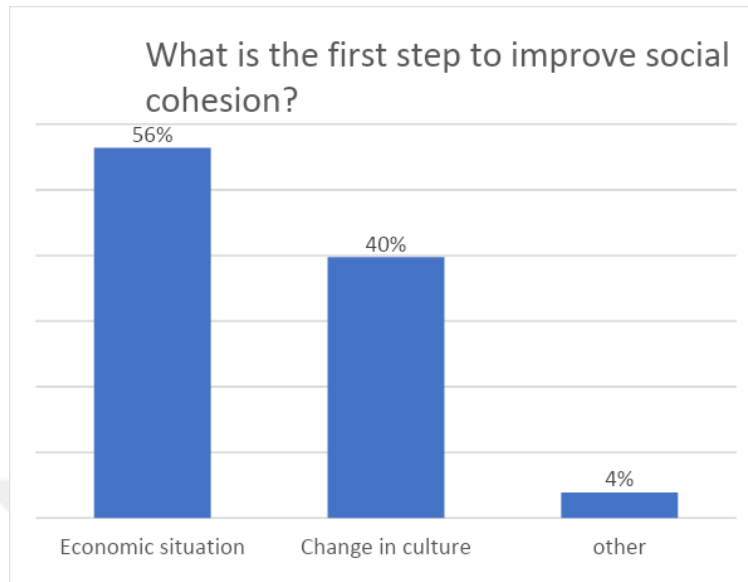


Figure 25 Graph – 24

Source: Published Survey by the author.

Economic well-being forms the crux of any community's livelihood. As one respondent noted, "There's a pressing need to ramp up development initiatives in the area, with an emphasis on job creation, particularly for the youth. They are, after all, the agents of transformation" (27-SK).

4.8.2 Prioritizing the Education Sector

"Education is a primary concern for parents and caregivers in the region, impacting almost every household" (AO-11). "The education system is comprehensive, so every aspect of it needs attention. Vocational training should be made available for adults and young people, beginning at the secondary school level" (29-NR). Given the toll the crisis has taken, particularly on children, adults, and the youth, "there's a pressing need to invest in human resources within the educational sector. The region has a wealth of educated and skilled individuals who are well-equipped to drive the transformation" (MM-18).

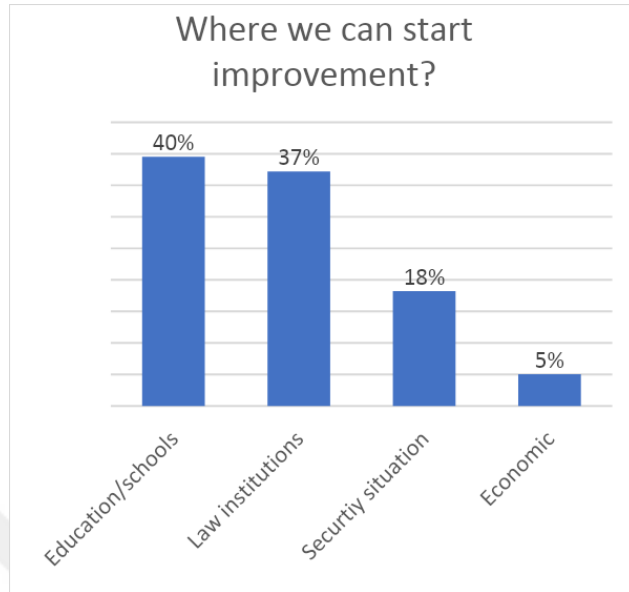


Figure 26Graph – 25

Source: Published Survey by the author.

The survey in graph 25 reveals that 40% of respondents consider the education sector crucial for implementing social cohesion. Meanwhile, 37% believe that reform should begin with the legal institutions. Furthermore, 18% emphasize the importance of the security situation over other factors. A minority, 5%, reiterated the significance of the economic sector.

"It's imperative to distinguish between civil society and the military. Armed groups should not interfere in the lives of civilians. Their primary responsibility should be safeguarding borders," states (MM-20).

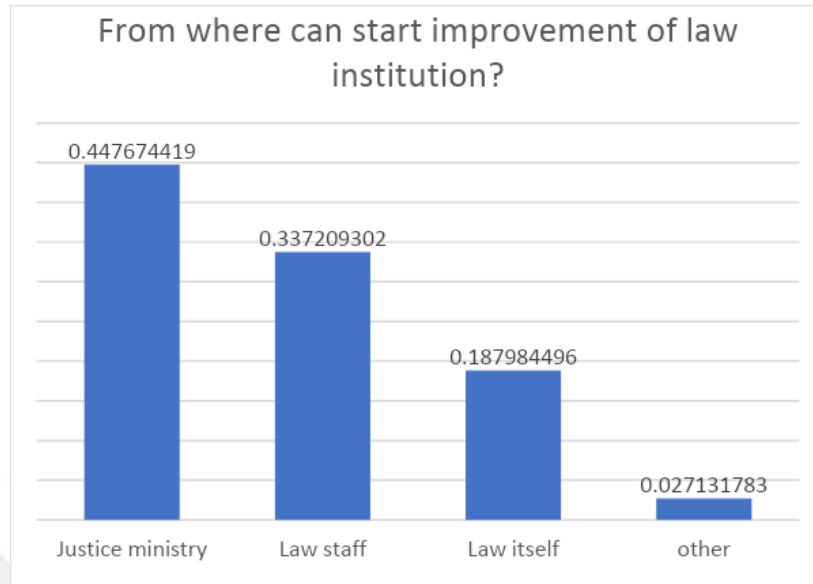


Figure 27Graph – 26

Source: Published Survey by the author.

The survey results suggest a significant inclination towards strengthening the rule of law as a foundation for social cohesion. In graph 26, a majority of the respondents believe that the starting point for enforcing the rule of law should come from the ministry of law of (SIG). This sentiment is backed up by the belief that there's a pressing need to enhance the capacity of law enforcement personnel through training and awareness programs. The statement, “Increasing law institution staff's capacity and supporting universities or generating new staff” from (AA-7) underscores this sentiment.

The third prevailing opinion highlights the necessity for revisiting and updating existing legal frameworks. This stems from a perceived breakdown in the social fabric of the region due to ongoing clashes and conflicts. As (JA-15) points out, these disturbances have disrupted the established social contract between the diverse community components. To remedy this, there's an expressed need to bring the region's inhabitants together under a renewed, more inclusive social contract that respects and upholds the rights of every individual.

Furthermore, there's an emphasis on nurturing the idea of active citizenship. The current observation, as highlighted by (AA-7), suggests that community components are primarily operating in their self-interest rather than prioritizing the collective good. Hence, instilling the value of active citizenship and ensuring that everyone works for the greater communal benefit becomes essential.

Lastly, the role of advocacy campaigns emerges as crucial in reinforcing the importance of adherence to laws and regulations. Such campaigns can serve dual purposes - not only can they

help in the widespread dissemination of legal standards but can also play a part in eradicating discriminatory practices. As (IB-14) suggests, the ultimate aim should be the uniform enforcement of laws, ensuring equality and justice for all community components.

4.8.3 Who Can Lead the Process

For effective implementation of social cohesion in the region, decisions must be initiated by local authorities. This is because they hold the necessary influence and resources to instigate change. By leveraging their innate understanding of the community, they can initiate and spread these strategies throughout the community.

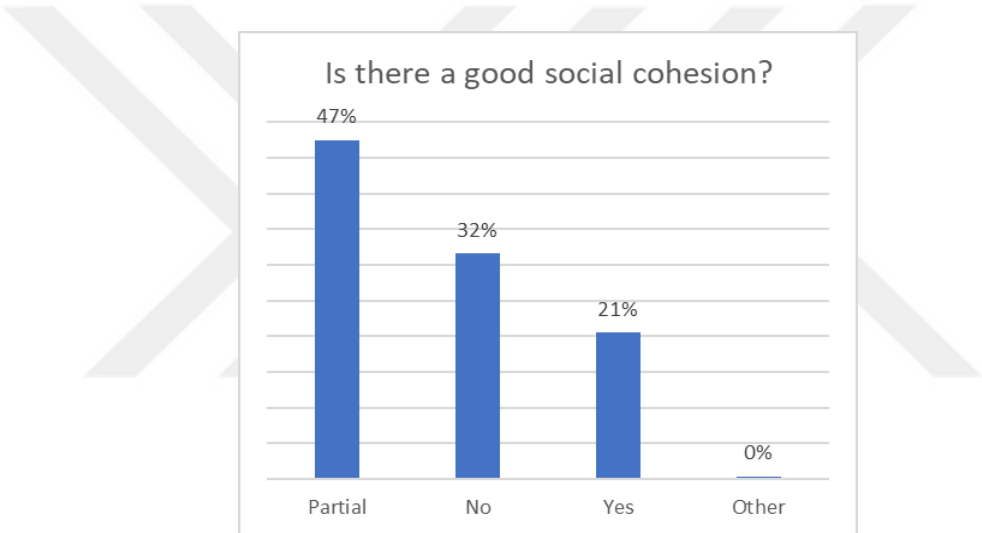


Figure 28Graph – 27

Source: Published Survey by the author.

Graph 27 indicates that nearly half (47%) of those surveyed believe that some level of social cohesion is present within the community, and an additional 21% fully believe in its existence. Combined, this suggests that around 68% of respondents would potentially back efforts aimed at bolstering social cohesion. However, it's noteworthy that 32% feel that the community lacks social cohesion entirely. Given these findings, a subsequent question was posed to respondents, inquiring about the institutions or entities best positioned to spearhead the initiative towards achieving social cohesion.

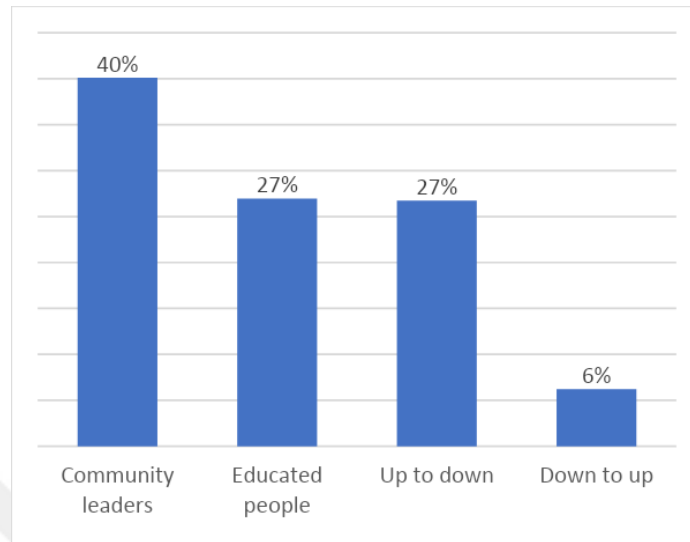


Figure 29Graph – 28

Source: Published Survey by the author.

In graph 28 indicates that 40% of survey participants believe that community leaders are best positioned to initiate the social cohesion process, given their influence and decision-making capacity. On the other hand, 27% feel that the educated members of the community should helm this effort, emphasizing that the change must stem from the community's decision-makers, and isn't necessarily tied to a formal directive by any particular institution. It's a holistic shift within the community, and the community itself holds the power to make that call.

Similarly, 27% are of the opinion that the social cohesion process should follow a top-down approach, with local authorities and key decision-makers taking the lead. Conversely, a smaller segment, 6%, advocates for a bottom-up strategy, arguing that since it involves altering cultural norms, mindsets, and principles, the initiative should encompass and be driven by all sectors of the community.

4.9 Conclusion:

The assessment of social cohesion in northwest Syria, particularly in the A'zaz city, reveals that while there is a presence of social cohesion, it is not at an ideal level. This is primarily due to various challenges and barriers within the community that hinder its full realization. A significant issue is the lack of enforcement of the law, where there seems to be reluctance from local authorities and other stakeholders to apply it effectively. This deficiency in law enforcement leads to increasing divisions among community members, resulting in numerous conflicts and disputes in the community of A'zaz, there are several key institutions such as the Syrian Interim Government (SIG), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and informal community leaders. These

groups have the potential to play a significant role in enhancing social cohesion and fostering stronger relationships among all segments of the community. Moreover, the realms of security and economy are crucial in influencing social cohesion, either positively or negatively, as they directly affect the everyday needs of the residents.

In conclusion, the study finds that there is potential to develop social cohesion in the region and address the community's most pressing challenges.



5. Customization of Social Cohesion in A'zaz

The chapter delves into the feasibility of establishing social cohesion based on the perceptions of all community segments. It analyzes the existing level of cohesion across various community strata and offers an in-depth exploration of challenges and barriers that hinder the achievement of robust social cohesion in the region. Furthermore, the chapter identifies both the strengths and weaknesses present within these communities and suggests solutions to address them. Notably, the proposed solutions are derived directly from the community members themselves, reflecting their unique characteristics and understanding of what's required for cohesion.

The chapter also evaluates the progress and potential of building social cohesion from the community's viewpoint. Through this lens, the research assesses the community's readiness for a transition towards fostering a life characterized by fairness, integrity, and harmonious coexistence amongst its diverse components. The thesis also debates the current state of social cohesion in the region and identifies the transformative changes needed for the community to advance in this direction.

5.1 Challenges on Social Cohesion Road

In A'zaz city, societal challenges persist that hinder the achievement of social cohesion. "The community remains deeply entrenched in certain traditions and customs that act as barriers. For instance, prioritizing tribal allegiance over civic loyalty obstructs the path to social cohesion," expressed (AM-2).

There's a pressing need to address and evolve these traditions to pave the way for greater unity. "Moreover, the continued displacement destabilizes the community fabric, weakening social cohesion, which in turn jeopardizes sustainable solutions," stated (JA-15). Trust issues between the local authorities and community members also persist, as "local authorities haven't yet gained full legitimacy in the eyes of the community," mentioned by (WD-23). To build mutual understanding and dispel misconceptions, (AN-8) emphasized the importance of "establishing open communication channels between (IDPs) and (HC)." A significant concern is the prevailing environment, which is "not conducive to human rights and fundamental freedoms. This climate of insecurity stifles civil society and makes individuals or groups apprehensive about their safety," voiced (22-AAW).

5.2 Culture Needed for Social Cohesion

Given that the A'zaz district's population is a blend of (HC) and (IDPs) in almost equal proportions, it's imperative to cultivate a fresh communal culture. This new culture should emphasize mutual acceptance amongst all societal factions.

A subsequent diagram provides insights into the prevailing relationship dynamics between (HC) and (IDPs). Approximately 35% of participants perceive the treatment as acceptable,

contrasting with 32% who find it unsatisfactory. Thus, there's a pressing need to reshape perceptions and foster mutual respect. Only a mere 7% regard the treatment as positive. Evidently, efforts must be intensified to bolster social acceptance across all sections of the community.

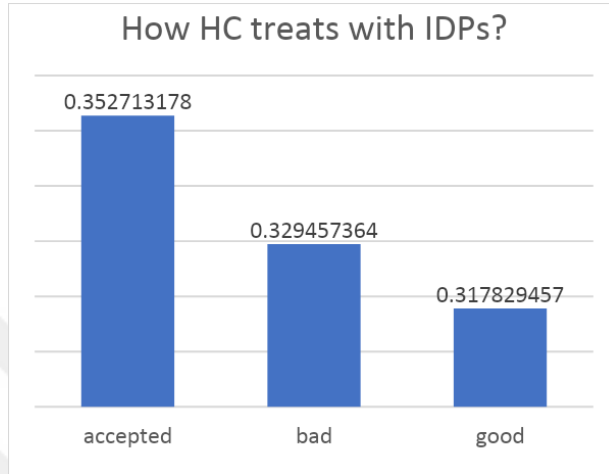


Figure 30Graph – 29

Source: Published Survey by the author.

The region grapples with deep-rooted issues of regionalism, where appointments often hinge on loyalties, relationships, and corrupt practices. "There's a pressing need to place the right individuals in appropriate roles based on their competencies," (AS-1) highlighted, asserting that choosing qualified individuals is integral to fostering trust between the community and local authorities.

Graph 29 reveals distinct sentiments among participants. A significant 44% believe that fostering social acceptance across all community sectors is crucial. Meanwhile, 34% underscore the importance of bolstering the sense of citizenship, asserting that rights and responsibilities should pivot around civic identity rather than extraneous factors.

In the economic sphere, graph 30 indicates that 17% stress the urgency of enhancing the financial landscape, while a smaller portion of 5% point out the necessity for political representation. "To ensure effective oversight, there's a call for the formation of a committee comprising representatives from all community segments to monitor and evaluate the strides made in social cohesion," suggested (AA-7).

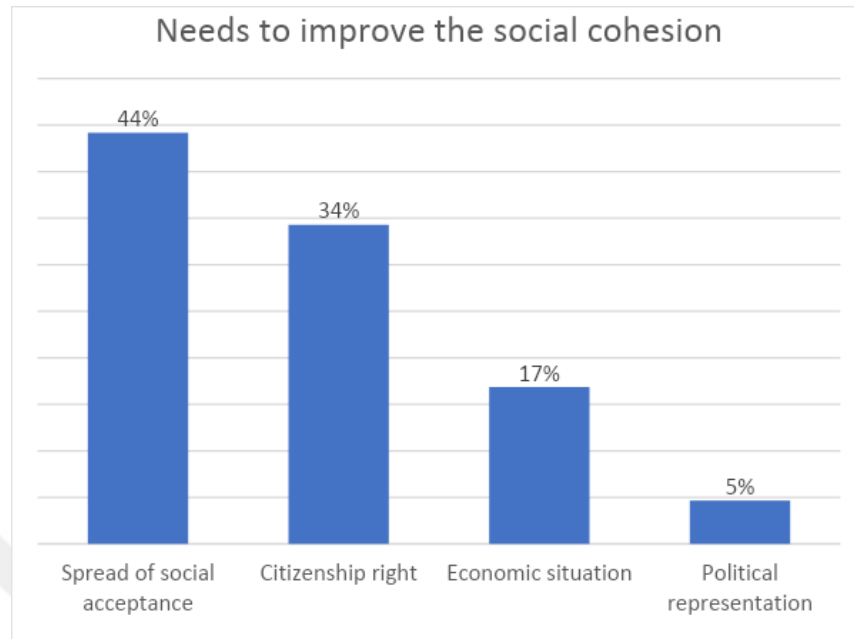


Figure 31 Graph – 30

Source: Published Survey by the author.

"Women play a pivotal role in our community. As such, it's essential to reshape prevailing perceptions about them and broaden their involvement in the region. Establishing a women's forum could be instrumental in addressing their concerns and amplifying their contributions in the community," emphasized (02-HA). Meanwhile, another perspective highlighted the importance of capacity building for members of the (SNA): "They must undergo awareness sessions aimed at emphasizing human rights, fundamental freedoms, and allegiance to the nation over individuals," (09-WA) pointed out. Further, the significance of community leaders in this cohesion journey is evident, as (07-MSH) stated, "Creating a structured program for these leaders, focusing on governance, strategic planning, and group collaboration, is paramount since they spearhead the social cohesion initiative."

5.3 Enhancing Capabilities of Community Representatives

The governing entities in the region are relatively nascent, lacking extensive experience in effectively administrating the local populace. Many of these governance bodies have assumed power without a formal electoral process. Consequently, there's an imperative need to enlighten them via educational programs.

A subsequent graph 31 sheds light on the local community's appetite for capacity building. A significant 64% of participants expressed the importance of engaging the community in dialogue

promoting coexistence. Conversely, 26% deemed awareness initiatives redundant, while a moderate 10% believed in a selective approach to such programs.

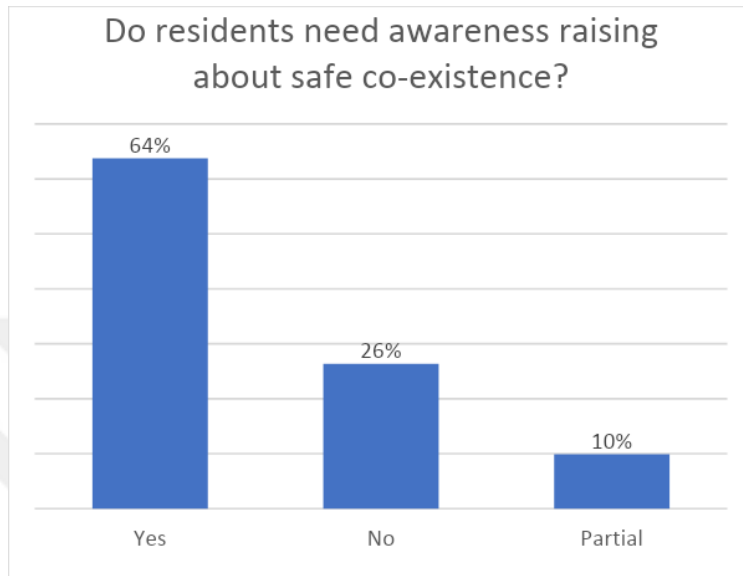


Figure 32Graph – 31

Source: Published Survey by the author.

Out of the 25 participants interviewed in the (KII), a mere 4 believed there wasn't a necessity for external support in capacity building. They advocated for the local governance body to spearhead the change process, collaborating with community stakeholders such as Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), academicians, skilled professionals, and tribal leaders. However, the majority felt the need for external collaboration to leverage their expertise.

"There's an undeniable requirement for collaboration with the international community. Their experience in conflict resolution and community reconstruction post-conflict is invaluable. Moreover, we face significant financial constraints in our region, making it imperative to maintain ties with international entities," voiced (05-ST).

Yet, trust issues seem to plague collaborations between non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local players. "The prevailing lack of trust is rooted in the absence of transparency and the perceived resilience of local bodies. As a result, many (NGOs) hesitate to collaborate with these local entities, fearing a breach of their organizational principles," highlighted (25-SH).

5.4 Tribes and Clans Contribution

Tribes and clans play a prominent role in the region, particularly among displaced community members. "Their influence on social cohesion can be both beneficial and detrimental," observes (12-NH). The effectiveness of these tribal and clan networks largely relies on the awareness and education of their members (13-AA).

These tribal affiliations, deeply rooted in history, carry with them shared values such as justice, respect for the elderly, fairness, and assistance for the vulnerable. Members are often tightly knit under the leadership of the tribe, respecting, and following decisions made by the tribal chief. "Such unanimous adherence to tribal decisions makes it easier to implement social cohesion initiatives within these smaller, more cohesive units rather than a broader group," notes (AH-4). However, while these affiliations offer many advantages, certain challenges need addressing:

- "There's a pressing need to improve education levels, particularly among women and girls within these tribes and clans," points out (15-AO).
- Blind allegiance to tribal affiliations often supersedes justice, a detrimental practice that must change (WD-23).
- Many tribe members traditionally engage in livestock farming. Introducing them to other skillsets will diversify their income sources and enhance job opportunities (AM-5).

There's also a need to reform certain outdated tribal customs, such as practices of revenge, denying inheritance rights to women, and lack of emphasis on citizenship and the rule of law. Awareness campaigns targeting these issues are crucial (AH-4).

5.4.1 Tailored Programs for Tribal Leaders

To effect genuine change within these tribes, it's pivotal to empower their leaders. "Tribal chiefs, being the primary decision-makers, should be targeted with specialized capacity-building programs," suggests (AA-7).

Training these leaders in conflict management, mediation, social cohesion, human rights, and fundamental freedoms can be instrumental. As (BZ-13) opines, they already perform such roles in their communities, so advanced training can further amplify their positive impact.

Furthermore, integrating tribal leaders into educational advocacy campaigns can aid in addressing issues such as child education and early marriages for girls (AO-11). Their deep understanding of the tribal psyche positions them as invaluable assets in fostering social cohesion (WO-9).

In conclusion, the presence of tribal and clan leaders is indispensable. "Being pillars of stability within communities, they play a vital role in resolving issues and should be involved in all community-building endeavors," affirms (SD-22).

5.5 (SIG) Role in Social Cohesion Application

The Syrian Interim Government (SIG), recognized as the region's paramount executive authority, operates under the National Coalition of Revolutionary and Opposition Forces, garnering international legitimacy to act on behalf of its people. The (SIG) encompasses various ministries and hierarchical bodies responsible for sectors such as Justice, Defense, Education, Health, Economy, and Agriculture.

The SIG is noted for its diverse representation, including Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), Host Communities (HC), Arabs, Kurds, and Turkmen, ensuring a broad spectrum of voices and perspectives are included (MY-21). To reinforce the (SIG's) regional role and contribute to long-term social cohesion, stakeholders highlight the necessity of establishing a robust internal administration within each ministry, emphasizing coordination, and minimizing bureaucratic hurdles (03-HO).

The Justice Ministry and its affiliated institutions, such as the military judiciary, are highlighted as crucial in managing relations between conflicting armed groups, thereby safeguarding human rights and fundamental freedoms. This necessitates building trust between formal justice institutions and the public, as well as implementing accountability mechanisms to facilitate community feedback (AS-1).

In terms of civil society engagement, there is a call for organizing the sector through a dedicated ministry or directorate. This body would guide Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in their efforts, lead recovery and development projects, and ensure that humanitarian relief efforts are efficiently executed without redundancy, targeting the most vulnerable populations (13-AA).

Particular attention is drawn to the (IDP) community, underscoring the need for specific policies and regulations to address their challenges and integrate them with the host community. This approach aims to promote social cohesion and inclusion (17-HS).

Economically, the (SIG) is identified as a pivotal entity in developing economic plans and investment policies, driving early recovery, reducing unemployment, and ensuring equal employment opportunities for all community members (AS-1). Furthermore, the (SIG) is tasked with creating a secure environment for the media, protecting journalists, and upholding their rights.

Enhancing community participation in decision-making and supporting local council elections are also deemed crucial. Ultimately, the (SIG) holds the responsibility of leading the region toward democracy and social cohesion (22-AAW).

5.6 (CSO)'s Role in Social Cohesion

Civil society organizations (CSOs) function as crucial indicators of a community's health and resilience, acting as the societal lungs. Their existence and active participation are essential in every community, serving multiple roles including third-party monitors of administrative and local authority performance. (CSOs) have the capability to exert pressure and advocate for change in response to issues or abuses perpetrated by local authorities.

Additionally, (CSOs) play a significant role in development and early recovery sectors, contributing to the overall progress and stabilization of communities. The chart below would likely illustrate the community's perceptions of the role (CSOs) play in implementing and fostering social cohesion.

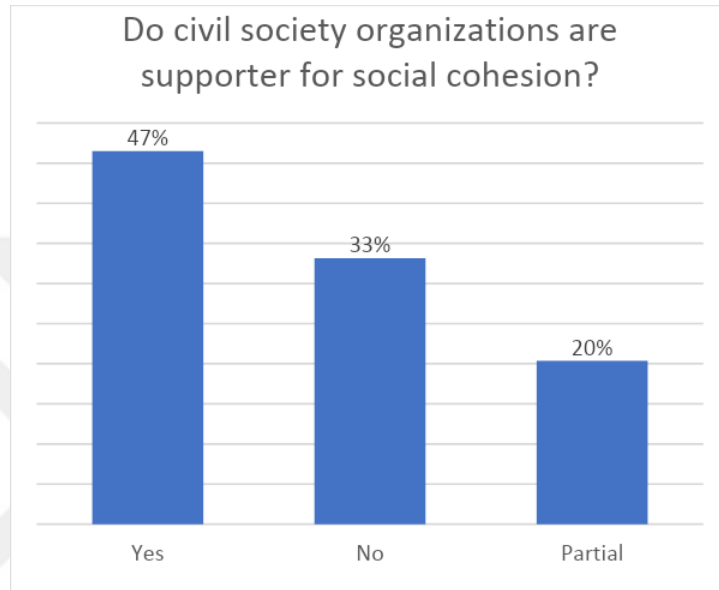


Figure 33Graph – 32

Source: Published Survey by the author.

In graph 32, approximately 47% of respondents view (CSOs) as positive contributors to social cohesion, highlighting their financial and human resources as significant supports. On the contrary, 33% perceive (CSOs) negatively, citing their potential to create rifts and challenges within community groups, particularly through discriminatory employment practices and biased project location selections. The remaining 20% see the role of (CSOs) as partially positive, acknowledging their financial contributions to the region and their general support of the community.

The commentary provided by various individuals underscores the multifaceted nature of (CSOs') impact on communities. One respondent (01-AH) emphasized the importance of spreading awareness about social cohesion, respect for others' rights, and acceptance of diverse opinions to create a harmonious and accepting community. Another individual (21-HB) highlighted the role of (CSOs) in supporting and organizing initiatives, especially those related to women's support groups, while advocating for the integration of human rights principles.

Attention to internally displaced persons (IDPs) is also deemed crucial, with an emphasis on enhancing their social and political participation and ensuring fair representation in decision-making processes (18-EA). The establishment of laws against discrimination and racism is also suggested.

The relationship between (CSOs) and the Syrian National Army (SNA) is highlighted as vital, emphasizing the need for educational initiatives within military and police institutions to foster a respect for law and understanding of their roles (AA-7).

Furthermore, the capacity building of community leaders in peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and governance is deemed necessary, alongside the creation of advocacy channels to enhance communication between leaders and community members (WO-9). Ensuring the safety and security of media personnel and activists is also considered crucial (MHJ-25).

In conclusion, the contributions of (CSOs) are viewed as essential in revitalizing communities and rebuilding social cohesion in the region. Their diverse roles, ranging from financial support to capacity building and advocacy, highlight their integral position within the community fabric.

5.7 International Community Role

The involvement of the international community in regional development during conflict periods is a nuanced and sensitive topic. A subset of respondents from Key Informant Interviews (4 out of 25) argued that the region possesses enough experienced and skilled individuals to independently achieve social cohesion, suggesting a lack of necessity for international involvement. To gain further insight into the community's perception of the international community's role in social cohesion, a survey was conducted.

The results showed a division in opinion: 49% of respondents viewed the international community's role as beneficial to building social cohesion, highlighting its positive impact. On the other hand, 34% believed that the international community contributes negatively, associating it with the emergence of disputes and tensions in the region.

In graph 33, the remaining 18% saw the international community's impact as partially positive, recognizing its contribution in terms of financial and consultancy support. These varied responses underscore the complexity of international engagement in conflict-affected regions, emphasizing the importance of prioritizing local needs and perspectives in such collaborations.

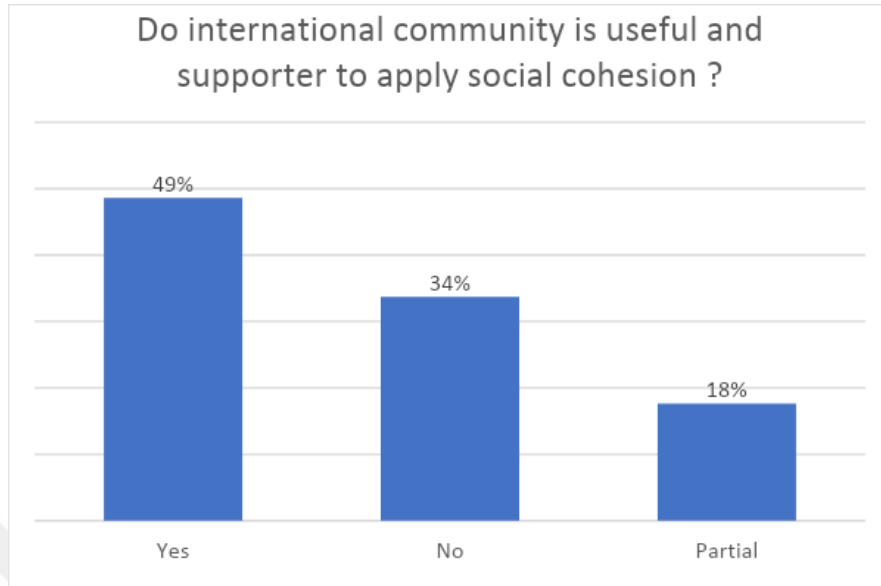


Figure 34Graph – 33

Source: Published Survey by the author.

Building on the previous inquiry regarding the role of the international community in fostering social cohesion, the thesis presented a follow-up question to gauge public opinion on the necessity of international support. The ensuing data, illustrated in the chart below, reveals a majority of 60% of respondents acknowledging a need for international community support. In contrast, 27% of respondents expressed a belief that there is no requirement for any form of support or contribution from the international community, highlighting a desire for complete self-reliance.

A smaller segment of the population in graph 34, 13%, occupied a middle ground, recognizing a partial need for international support but emphasizing the importance of maintaining the region's independence. This distribution of opinions reflects the varied perspectives within the community, illustrating the delicate balance between seeking external assistance and preserving regional autonomy.

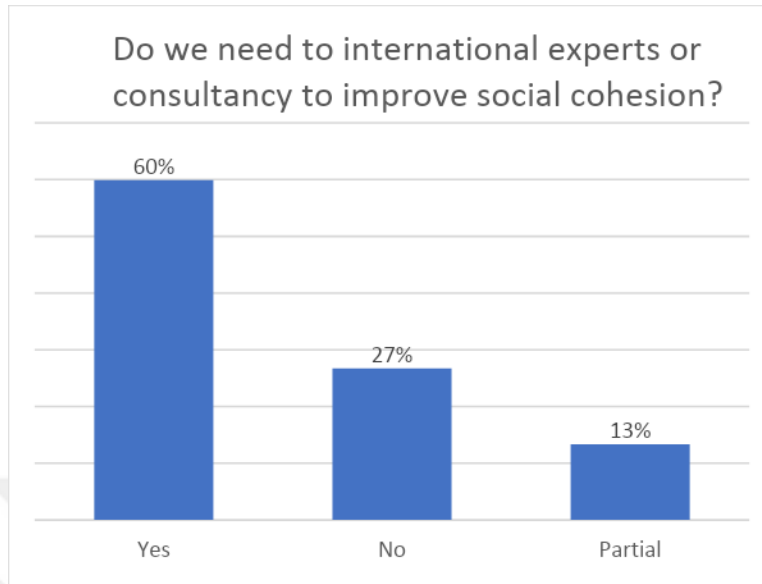


Figure 35Graph – 34

Source: Published Survey by the author.

(WO-9) highlighted the region's need for support from the international community in establishing a robust governance structure. This support could materialize through consultancy services, drawing on global precedents in governance, and the provision of financial grants to aid in the development process. On the other hand, (MM-20) underscored the significance of international recognition as a form of support. Such recognition could facilitate the accreditation of educational institutions in the region and empower local authorities to issue official documents like passports.

Furthermore, a notable proportion of respondents, specifically 6 out of 25 in the Key Informant Interviews (KII), emphasized the necessity for financial assistance from the international community. They posited that such support is crucial for rejuvenating the region's economic landscape, addressing pressing concerns, and ultimately improving the living conditions of the residents. This collective input sheds light on the diverse ways in which international engagement could contribute positively to the region's development and governance.

5.8 Mitigation of Internal Clashes Among Armed Groups

The Syrian Interim Government has taken significant steps towards consolidating various armed factions in the region under a single entity, the Syrian National Army (SNA). The (SNA) operates under the administrative jurisdiction of the Ministry of Defense of the Syrian Interim Government (SIG). Despite these efforts, the region has witnessed ongoing clashes among

different (SNA) factions, the military police, and local tribes and families, exacerbating social divisions and undermining efforts to build social cohesion.

To explore potential solutions to this issue, the thesis surveyed community members, asking them how to reduce hostilities and conflicts among these groups. A majority of respondents, 63%, emphasized the importance of consolidating the armed groups into a strong, unified entity, highlighting that accountability and adherence to the law within the (SNA) ranks are crucial for maintaining order and stability.

Meanwhile, in graph 35, 20% of the participants believed that relocating military bases and checkpoints out of urban areas could help reduce interactions between armed groups and minimize conflicts. Additionally, 16% of respondents suggested that shifting the loyalty of armed group members from their immediate leaders to the nation itself could be an effective strategy to mitigate clashes and foster a sense of national unity.

These responses collectively underline the community's desire for a more cohesive and disciplined military structure, emphasizing the need for both structural changes and shifts in individual loyalties to achieve lasting peace and social cohesion in the region.

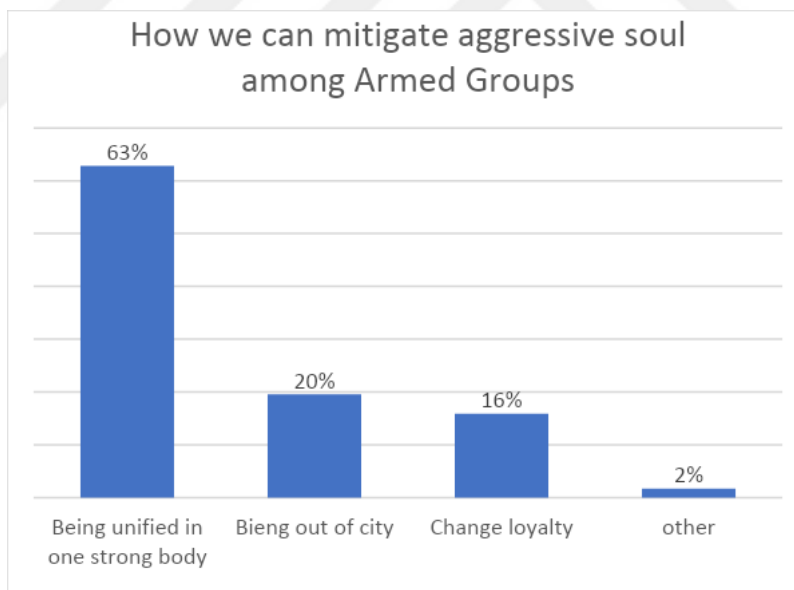


Figure 36Graph – 35

Source: Published Survey by the author.

The Syrian National Army (SNA) faces significant challenges related to the lack of awareness among its members regarding human rights and fundamental freedoms, as highlighted by (AA-7) which estimates that 70% of (SNA) members are not well-versed in these critical

concepts. This is compounded by issues of illiteracy within the ranks, preventing members from making informed and logical decisions when following orders from their leaders.

One of the prevalent issues contributing to clashes and instability is the bearing of weapons by (SNA) members inside cities and communities. (AM-2) emphasizes the urgency of legalizing and regulating this practice, advocating for strict laws to curb the chaotic and dangerous phenomenon of unchecked weapon bearing. He notes that numerous clashes have occurred as a direct result of this lack of regulation and control.

(WO-9) sheds light on another critical issue within the (SNA), pointing out the prevalence of regional loyalties that supersede allegiance to the (SNA) itself. This regionalization within the armed forces leads to fragmented loyalties and undermines the unity and effectiveness of the (SNA).

To address these challenges, it is imperative to conduct comprehensive awareness-raising sessions and capacity-building programs for all (SNA) members. These initiatives should focus on instilling a strong understanding of human rights, fundamental freedoms, and the importance of national loyalty. By doing so, the (SNA) can work towards establishing a more disciplined, informed, and cohesive military force, ultimately contributing to stability and social cohesion in the region.

5.9 Conclusion

The thesis resulted that there is availability to build social cohesion in the A'zaz city on perception on the community components, but it needs a long-term program for all local stakeholders. As A'zaz city is a destination for a lot of Syrian escaping from regime area, those (IDPs) have mutual dream to build a healthy and robust Syrian community away from regime control.

All actors in the community have to change, develop, and increase their contribution in the community to build social cohesion. Depending on the conducted data collection in the thesis, the participants emphasized that there should be a long-term plan for the local stakeholders to move them from negative impact to positive impact.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The results obtained through in-depth interviews, surveys, and focus group discussions (FGDs), will be concluded to what was reached by analyzing previous data collection and research. This part will be divided into conclusion and recommendation for researchers, students, scholars, who want to feed social library by studies field based. On the other hand, the recommendation feeds all stakeholders who may be interested in the field.

6.1 Conclusion

In conclusion, there is a possibility to structure social cohesion in the northwest of Syria region which will lead to a genuine, fair, and co-existent life for all residents in the future is based on the community component's perception.

This is because there is already social cohesion in the northwest of Syria, but it is not on the satisfactory level for the residents. So, there is a need to start a social cohesion process by community leaders, in which they have the trust of all community components, and they can influence and convince a wide range of the residents to straightforwardly to overcome social cohesion challenges and give up all negative attitudes and believes.

On the other hand, semi-governmental organizations like (SIG), (CSOs), free police, and (SNA) can significantly contribute in overcome societal challenges and improve level of social cohesion in the northwest of Syria, because they have positive impact on the political and societal situation in the region, due to their connection with international community and availability of obtaining fund for long-term investment projects.

Furthermore, security, economy, and education files are the most crucial files for the inhabitants, and it should be the priority for the local authorities and all stakeholders in the region to provide it for all community members, those files have influence against all resident's life on daily basis. On the other hand, the lack of security, economy, and education among the residents is creating a trigger element for radical organizations to hire youths in its terrorist operations.

The collected data concluded that there should be an enhancement to the role of law and the law enforcing agencies to enforce all residents to go to courts to resolve all issues by law not on their own accord. because using matters into their own hands will generate more and more problems and increase rifts in social cohesion fabric eventually prevent achieving it.

Due to availability of surpass social cohesion's challenges, there is a possibility to build social cohesion in the northwest of Syria region based on community's perception which will take About 5 to 10 years, because most of local authority's institutions have to develop their governance adequately, stop favoritism in employment due to regionalism, relatives, and bribery

Furthermore, the spread of social acceptance is a suitable culture among community components to melt rifts between (IDPs) and (HC) and pave the road of social cohesion achievement. Rather than expanding representation of all community components in local authority's councils, as example in local councils, is an advanced step to eliminate injustice feeling

by (IDPs) and un-representative categories. Social acceptance is a fit tool to ensure diversity of residents in (NWS) and take into consideration differentiation of background among all community components.

There should be a long-term capacity building plan for local authority members, community leaders, and tribes and clan leaders in human rights and fundamental freedoms, negotiation, and mediation, which it is a mandatory tool to activate in the targeted community as well as playing a professional role in problem solving and mitigate clashes among armed groups.

Therefore, there is a good opportunity to achieve social cohesion in a conflicted area on micro and medium level in northwest of Syria region A'zaz case.

6.2 Recommendations

1. **Conducting in-depth examination for connector and divider elements related to social cohesion status in (NWS) region:** Future examination for connector and divider elements for social cohesion in the northwest of Syria region is very vital, which it will lead researchers/scholars to analyze the relationship between prominent challenges and its causes. The (NWS) region is suffering from internal and external challenges, those challenges have different reasons and causes, so, in-depth or expansion in study this phenomenon will give good answers to prevent or end social cohesion challenges.
2. **Conducting structured-focused- monitoring on community leader capacity:** As seen in the thesis, the community leader has a pivotal role in achieving social cohesion in the region. Those community leaders are being a target for (CSOs) to build their capacity. It will be added value if any researcher/scholar conducts structured-focused- monitoring on contribution of community leaders on resolving problems in the region and being positive element in conflict transformation process.
3. **Studying international community's requirement in resolving social cohesion challenges in (NWS) region:** In the thesis, there were two opinions about benefiting from the international community, on opinion is thinking that international community's contribution is negative, and the social cohesion achievement should be among residents only, and the other opinion is seeing there should be a benefiting from international community. So, the thesis recommends researchers/scholars to evaluate the international community's contribution in detail and draw a list for required aspects from international community to do/avoid. In this case, the requirements of the international community will be clear, and can obtain trust from local residents to international community.

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7.1 Annexes

7.1.1 Public survey contents

في الرابط أدناه، استبيان بسيط عبارة عن رسالة ماجستير في العلوم السياسية والعلاقات الدولية، وأرجو القيام بتعبئة الرابط بالمعلومات اللازمة و تحويلها لكل شخص في محيطك.

..... رأيك يهمنا و هو مفيد جدا لكي نحصل على نتائج جيدة في رسالة الماجستير

<https://ee.humanitarianresponse.info/x/eUdws6Wv>

!!! شكرا سلفا على المشاركة

<p>المقدمة Introduction</p>	<p>الاستبيان لن يأخذ أكثر من 10 دقائق !!! الاستبيان عبارة عن اطروحة ماجستير في جامعة حسن كاليونجو، والهدف من الاستبيان هو الحصول على معلومات كمية حول موضوع الأطروحة، ومن خلال هذا الاستبيان نكفل ضمان سرية المعلومات والبيانات التي يدي بها الأشخاص في الاستبيان، لكن يكون هناك أي نشر للمعلومات خارج سياق استخدام الأطروحة وضمن البحث العلمي فقط. كل الشكر والامتنان لأولئك الذين استجابوا للاستبيان وكانوا سبب في نشر العلم والمعرفة ، مع ضمان كامل الخصوصية والأمان It will take up to 10 minutes. .It is a survey for the academic thesis to obtain a master's degree at Hasan Kalyoncu; the purpose is to get quantitative data about social cohesion status in A'zaz. The survey will not share information third part with one hundred percent privacy and data information security appreciate any help you can provide.</p>
<p>السؤال الرئيسي Main Question</p>	<p>هل بالإمكان التأسيس لمجتمع متماسك وقوي على المستوى الأول والثاني في منطقة شمال غرب سوريا – اعزاز من اجل الوصول إلى وضع جيد وعادل ومستقر لكل القاطنين فيه Is it achievable to structure social cohesion at the micro and mezzo societal levels in conflict-laden areas for an honest life?</p>
<p>sub-question A</p>	<p>من خلال اطلاعك وثقافتك، هل هناك نظرية تماسك مجتمعي موجودة في العصر الحالي او سابقا، قابلة للتطبيق في اعزاز؟ وما هي المعايير والمحددات او خارطة الطريق التي يمكن تحديدها في اعزاز؟ بناءً على ذلك Is there any 'social cohesion concept applicable to the Syrian Azaz case? What parameters can identify specifically to Syria's Azaz?</p>
<p>1. A</p>	<p>Is there a good social cohesion? هل هناك تماسك مجتمعي جيد في اعزاز؟</p>
<p>A</p>	<p>Yes نعم</p>
<p>B</p>	<p>No لا</p>
<p>C</p>	<p>جزئي partial</p>

	D	أخرى other
.2	A	هل انت راض عن الوضع الحالي? Are you satisfied about current situation?
	A	نعم Yes
	B	لا No
	C	جزئي partial
	D	أخرى other
.3	A	How long you resident in A'zaz? منذ متى وانت مقيم في اعزاز
	A	سنتين 7 - Seven years
	B	سنتين five - Five years
	C	سنتين 3 - 3 Years
	D	أخرى other
.4	A	Where are you come from ? من أي محافظة او مكان قدمت إلى هذه المنطقة
	A	مدينة حلب Aleppo city
	B	حمص Homs
	C	دمشق Damascus
	D	أخرى other
.5	A	What is your job right now ? ما العمل الذي تقوم به حاليا
	A	لايوجد None
	B	عمل طويل الالمد Long term job
	C	عمل قصير الالمد Short-term job
	D	أخرى other
.6	A	Did you faced any problem there? هل تعرضت لمشكلة في مكان اقامتك الحالية
	A	نعم Yes
	B	لا No
	C	مشاكل صغيرة Small size problem

	D	other أخرى
.7	A	Do you think the social situation should be changed? هل تظن أن الوضع الاجتماعي يجب ان يتحسن
	A	Yes نعم
	B	No نعم
	C	partial جزئي
	D	other أخرى
.8	A	Where can we start improvement? من أين نستطيع البدء في التحسين
	A	Education/schools مجال التعليم والتربية
	B	Law institutions مؤسسات القانون والقضاء
	C	Security situation المؤسسات الامنية
	D	Economic الاقتصاد
.9	A	What are main challenges between IDPs and HC? ما هي أبرز المشاكل التي تحصل بين النازحين و المقيمين
	A	Sharing resources مشاركة المواد
	B	Social issues المشاكل الاجتماعية مثل العادات والتقاليد
	C	Security الأمن
	D	Job opportunities فرص العمل
.10	A	What are main identities in A'zaz ? ما هي الهويات الأساسية الموجودة في اعزاز حاليا
	A	Arab عرب
	B	Turkman تركمان
	C	Iraqi عراقيين
	D	other أخرى
.11	A	How these identities live together ? كيف تتعايش هذه الفئات المجتمعية مع بعض
	A	Percentage of resources sharing توزيع الموارد بشكل نسبي بين السكان المقيمين
	B	Social dialogue الحوارات الاجتماعية
	C	Social acceptance القبول الاجتماعي

	D	أخرى other
.12	A	كيف يتعامل المجتمع الأصلي مع النازحين القادمين من مناطق اخرى ؟ How the host community live with IDPs ?
	A	Good جيد
	B	Bad سيئ
	C	Discrimination التمييز بين النازح والمقيم
	D	أخرى other
.13	A	هل سبق وأن ذهبت إلى محكمة او مخفر للتقدم بشكوى بشكل عام ؟ Did you go to police station to complaint?
	A	Yes نعم
	B	No لا
.14	A	كيف كان التعامل معك ؟ How do they deal with you?
	A	Fair عادل ومنصف
	B	Unfair غير عادل
.15	A	هل شعرت بأنك قد أنصفت في المعاملة ؟ Did you feel that you got your claim?
	A	Yes نعم
	B	No لا
	C	partial جزئي
	D	أخرى other
.16	A	هل تلجأ للمحاكم لحل ؟ Do you go to law institutions to judge your claims ? المشكلات الناجمة عن العلاقات الاجتماعية مع الاخرين والخلافات
	A	Yes نعم
	B	No لا
	C	partial جزئي
	D	أخرى other
.17	A	إذا كانت الإجابة لا ، الرجاء توضيح ما السبب وراء ذلك ؟ If No, please justify why ?
	A	

B	
C	
D	
.18	A Who are most influence actors in the region? ما هي القوى الفاعلة في المنطقة والتي لها القدرة على التأثير في القرار?
A	Local council المجلس المحلي
B	Armed groups الفصائل
C	SIG institutions مؤسسات الحكومة المؤقتة
D	other أخرى
.19	A Do these actors go to court to claim ? هل هذه القوى تتحاكم إلى القانون في الخصومات والشكاوى?
A	Yes نعم
B	No لا
C	partial جزئي
D	other أخرى
.20	A Who are institutions have impact on applying social cohesion? ما هي الاجهزة او المؤسسات الرسمية التي لها دور في تحقيق التماسك المجتمعي برايك?
A	Court المحكمة
B	Community leaders قادة المجتمع
C	Police
D	Local council المجلس المحلي
. 21	A What is a gap in the law institutions to be a tool for achieving social cohesion? ما ذا ينقص القضاء ليكون وسيلة لحماية التماسك المجتمعي
A	الخبرة Experience
B	Willing الرغبة في التغيير
C	Armed groups الفصائل
D	other أخرى
.22	A What is a gap for police and security forces to be supportive in social cohesion achieving? ما الذي ينقص جهاز الشرطة والأمن ليكونوا عامل تحقيق التماسك الاجتماعي
A	Skilled staff الفريق المختص والمدرب

B	Willing الرغبة في التغيير
C	Loyalty الولاء
D	other أخرى
.23	A What is the reason behind don't go to court? ما السبب الذي يدفعها إلى عدم التحاكم القانوني
A	Be charged أن يكون عليها الحق وهي الظالمة
B	Out of law القيام بأعمال خارجة عن القانون
C	Power امتلاك القوة والسلطة
D	other أخرى
.24	A ما هو المطلوب برأيك حتى يكون هناك تحسن في التماسك المجتمعي و التعايش المشترك في المنطقة التي تقيم فيها؟ What is needed as you see to improve social cohesion and co-existence in your region?
A	Spread of social acceptance انتشار القبول الاجتماعي
B	Citizenship right حقوق المواطنة
C	Economic situation الحالة الاقتصادية
D	Political representation التمثيل السياسي
.25	A هل هناك تجارب مماثلة تدعم بها رأيك ووجهة نظرك؟ As you see, Are there cases like Syrian case?
A	Rwanda حالة رواندا
B	Lebanon حالة لبنان
C	Iraq الحالة العراقية
D	other أخرى
.26	A How many years do we need to apply social cohesion? كم المدة اللازمة برأيك لتحقيق التماسك المجتمعي
A	Five years five سنين
B	Seven years - 7 سنين
C	Ten years ten سنين
D	other أخرى
.27	A What is the first step to improve social cohesion? ما هي الخطوة الأولى لتحسين التماسك المجتمعي

A	Change in culture تغيير ثقافة المجتمع
B	Economic situation تحسين الحالة الاقتصادية
C	other أخرى
.28	What are most obstacles preventing social cohesion? Mention three ما أبرز التحديات برأيك التي تعيق التماسك الاجتماعي؟ حدد 3 تحديات تكربها
A	Lack of resources قلة الموارد
B	Discrimination التمييز
C	Political representation خلل التمثيل السياسي
D	Clashes and conflict among armed groups الاشتباكات بين الفصائل
.29	Do economic situation impact social cohesion? هل يؤثر الاقتصاد على التماسك المجتمعي
A	Yes نعم
B	No لا
C	partial جزئي
D	other أخرى
.30	From where can we start the change? من أين نبدأ بالتغيير
A	Educated people الناس المتعلمة لتقود عملية التغيير
B	Community leaders قادة المجتمع
C	Up to down من الأعلى للأسفل
D	Down to up من الاسفل للأعلى
.31	Can we copy resolutions from other conflicts? هل نستطيع تطبيق كامل خطوات التماسك الاجتماعي في بلدان أخرى لمنطقتك
A	Yes نعم
B	No لا
C	Adapt with Syrian culture تكيف حسب الثقافة السورية
D	other أخرى
.32	What we should be careful in Syrian case? ما الذي يجب مراعاته حسب السياق السوري
A	Religion الدين

B	Culture sensitivity الحساسيات الثقافية بين كل المكونات
C	Revolution demands مطالب الثورة
D	other أخرى
ا ل س ؤ ال ال ف ر ع ي ال ث ا ن ي B- Sub- question	إلى أي حد يمكن التأسيس للتماسك المجتمعي في المجتمع حسب الوضع الاجتماعي الحالي في المنطقة 3 ؟ To what extent the social cohesion can be established per the perceptions of the local public that represents a conflict-laden area?
.1 B	Count three obstacles to apply social cohesion ? مشاكل رئيسية في سبيل تطبيق تحقيق التماسك المجتمعي
A	Regionalization المناطقية
B	Economic الاقتصاد
C	Radicalization العنف والتطرف
D	other أخرى
.2 B	Is there a general will accept a solution in your region? هل هناك روح القبول للآخرين في منطقتك؟
A	Yes نعم
B	No لا
C	partial جزئي
D	other أخرى
.3 B	IS there general will among community components to co-exist together? هل هناك رغبة للتعايش المشترك بين مكونات المجتمع؟
A	Yes نعم
B	No لا
C	Want to back to their original place أريد العودة إلى مدينتي الأصلية التي هجرت منها
D	other أخرى
.4 B	What is needed to apply safe co-existence among community components? ما المطلوب برأيك لتحقيق التعايش السلمي بين كافة فئات المجتمع؟
A	Fair sharing resources التوزيع العادل للموارد
B	Activate citizenship spirit تفعيل روح المواطنة بين كل المكونات

C	Avoid hate speech تجنب خطاب الكراهية
D	other أخرى
B	As you see, what are three elements we need to build strong and cohesive community? أمور نحتاج إليها لبناء مجتمع متماسك قوي ومتكاتف three برأيك ، ماهي
.5	
A	Feeling representative part in the community الشعور بأنني ممثل بشكل جيد في المجتمع
B	Fair in duties and responsibilities among all العدالة في توزيع الواجبات والمسؤوليات بين الجميع على قدم المساواة
C	Sharing resources fair way مشاركة الموارد بشكل عادل
D	other أخرى
B	Who are actors can lead the change ? من هي الجهات القادرة على أخذ القرار للمضي في التماسك المجتمعي
.6	
A	Armed Groups الفصائل
B	Local council المجلس المحلي
C	SIG الحكومة المؤقتة
D	other أخرى
B	Do residents need awareness raising about safe co-existence ? هل يحتاج السكان او المقيمون إلى توعية او توجيه بخصوص التعايش السلمي
.7	
A	Yes نعم
B	No لا
C	Not all لا يريدون
D	other أخرى
B	هل هناك حاجة للاستعانة بخبرات اقليمية او دولية لتحسين الظروف الحالية وتحسين المجتمع؟ Do we need to international experts or consultancy to improve current situation and improve social cohesion?
.8	
A	Yes نعم
B	No لا
C	Restricted بشكل مقيد ومحدد
D	other أخرى
B	Do current actors can apply for honest co-existence? هل التشكيلات المجتمعية الحالية مفيدة لتحسين التعايش السلمي
.9	

A	Yes نعم
B	No لا
C	Partial جزئي
D	other أخرى
.10	B هل تستطيع هذه التشكيلات أن تلعب دور إيجابي في التعايش السلمي have a positive impact ?
A	Yes نعم
B	No لا
C	Partial جزئي
D	other أخرى
.11	B Is the international community helpful and a supporter of applying social cohesion? هل المجتمع الدولي مفيد للتماسك المجتمعي وداعم له ؟
A	Yes نعم
B	No لا
C	Partial جزئي
D	other أخرى
.12	B Do civil society organizations support social cohesion in the region? هل المنظمات الانسانية داعم ومحفز للتماسك المجتمعي
A	Yes نعم
B	No لا
C	Partial جزئي
D	other أخرى
.13	B برأيك، ماهو اللازم لتخفيف المعارك الجانبية بين الفصائل والقوى العسكرية الموجودة في المنطقة؟ As you think, how we can mitigate clashes among armed groups?
A	Spread of diverse culture نشر ثقافة التنوع
B	Doing advocacy to be in frontlines against regime العمل على أن تكون الفصائل في خطوط التماس ضد النظام
C	Get out from political race الخروج من الحياة السياسية وتركها للاجسام السياسية الاخري
D	other أخرى

14	B	How we can mitigate aggressive soul among them? كيف من الممكن أن يخفف الاحتقان والمشاكل فيما بينها
	A	الخروج من المدن Being out of city
	B	أن تكون موحدة تحت قيادة قوية Being unified in one strong body
	C	تغيير الولاءات Change loyalty
	D	أخرى other
15	B	Can civil society do intervention in this conflict ? هل يستطيع المجتمع المدني التدخل لحل هذه المشاكل
	A	Yes نعم
	B	No لا
	C	جزئي Partial
	D	أخرى other
16	B	What are the tools to do ? ما الأدوات التي تلزم المجتمع المدني ليكون ايجابيا في حل النزاع
	A	الحشد والمناصرة Advocacy
	B	ثقافة حقوق الانسان Human rights and fundamental freedoms sessions والحرريات العامة
	C	تقوية المجتمع المدني Strengthen civil society existing
	D	أخرى Other
ا لخاتمة Thank you !!!		<p>نكرر هنا الحفاظ على الخصوصية وعدم استخدام المعلومات الموجودة أعلاه إلا في مجال البحث العلمي، وعدم الإشارة إلى أسماء او مناطق او اي نعرات اقليمية او طائفية من شأنها أن تسبب مشاكل مجتمعية.</p> <p>كل الشكر لكم ولوقتكم الثمين الذي لولاه لما تم هذا البحث</p> <p>Again and again, we are one hundred percent committed to protecting data security, and all the collected information will be used for search and academic purposes, and committed that this survey will not do more or broader harm to the community.</p> <p>Thank you so much for your time.</p>

7.1.2: FGDs and KII questions

أسئلة جلسات النقاش المركزة & المقابلات الفردية & الاستبيان

سؤال البحث الرئيسي:

هل بالإمكان التأسيس لمجتمع متماسك وقوي على المستوى الأول والثاني في منطقة شمال غرب سوريا – اعزاز من اجل الوصول إلى وضع جيد وعادل ومستقر لكل القاطنين فيه؟ هذا هو السؤال الرئيسي الخاص بالرسالة والذي سنحصل على الإجابة له من كل العمليات بشكل عام وشامل، لذلك لا داعي من سؤاله للأشخاص المشاركين.

السؤال الفرعي الأول:

من خلال اطلاعك وثقافتك، هل هناك نظرية تماسك مجتمعي موجودة في العصر الحالي او سابقا، قابلة للتطبيق في اعزاز؟ وما هي المعايير والمحددات او خارطة الطريق التي يمكن تحديدها في اعزاز بناء على ذلك؟ هذا هو السؤال الفرعي الأول، والذي استعضنا عنه بعدة اسئلة نحاول الاجابة عليها من خلال توجيه السؤال للمشاركين.

- 1- ما هو الوضع الحالي للتماسك المجتمعي الموجود في اعزاز؟
- 2- ما هو التركيب الاجتماعي الحالي في مدينة اعزاز من ناحية السكان وأماكنهم الأصلية، و الخلفية الاجتماعية لهم حسب خبرتك ومعرفتك؟
- 3- ما هو دور المؤسسات القانونية القائمة في التأثير على التماسك الاجتماعي حاليا؟ وبنظرك كيف يمكن تحسين الفاعلية والهيكلية الحالية؟
- 4- من هم الفاعلون بنظرك الذين يستطيعون لعب دور فعال في عملية تطبيق التماسك المجتمعي؟
- 5- ما هي انواع التماسك الاجتماعي التي يمكن أن تطبق في مجتمعك حسب طبيعة المجتمع والظروف الحالية؟ هل بالإمكان نسخ أي تجربة أخرى من مناطق نزاع أخرى؟
- 6- برأيك، ما هي الخطوات اللازمة لتحقيق التماسك المجتمعي في اعزاز؟
- 7- ما هي الحوادث/ التحديات حسب رأيك، التي تجعل من التماسك المجتمعي ضعيفا؟
- 8- هل كل من ملف الأمن والاقتصاد يؤثران في التماسك المجتمعي؟ كيف؟
- 9- هل نستطيع برأيك نسخ حالات من مناطق نزاع اخرى ونمشي على نفس الخطوات لنبني مجتمع متماسك من حولنا؟

السؤال الفرعي الثاني:

إلى أي حد يمكن التأسيس للتماسك المجتمعي في المجتمع حسب الوضع الاجتماعي الحالي في المنطقة؟ هذا هو السؤال الفرعي الثاني، والذي استعضنا عنه بعدة اسئلة أدناه، نحاول الإجابة عليها من خلال توجيه الاسئلة التالية للمشاركين.

- 1- ما هي المشاكل والتحديات في المجتمع برأيك التي تعيق التماسك المجتمعي؟
- 2- كما تعتقد، ما هو المطلوب لبناء وتأسيس مجتمع يقبل الآخرين ويتعايش أعضاؤه مع بعض بشكل سلمي؟
- 3- ما هي الثقافة و التنوع المطلوب في المجتمع لتحقيق التماسك المجتمعي مستقبلا؟
- 4- هل تعتقد أن القوى والهيئات والمؤسسات المحلية الموجودة حاليا قادرة على تحقيق التماسك المجتمعي بنفسها؟ هل نحتاج إلى دعم من القوى الخارجية لتحقيق التماسك المجتمعي وما هو نوع الدعم؟
- 5- ما هو الدور الذي من الممكن أن تلعبه العشائر و مجالس القبائل لتحقيق التماسك المجتمعي؟
- 6- ما هو الدور المتوقع من الحكومة المؤقتة لتعزيز وتحقيق التماسك المجتمعي؟
- 7- ما هي انواع الدعم الذي ننتظره من المجتمع الدولي لتحقيق التماسك المجتمعي؟
- 8- كيف نستطيع تخفيف النزاع والاشتباكات بين الفصائل الموجودة في المنطقة؟

ÖZGEÇMİŞ

KİŞİSEL BİLGİLER

Adı Soyadı : Omar Garebo
Uyruğu : Suriye

EĞİTİM

Derece	Adı	Bitirme Yılı
Üniversite	: Şam Üniversitesi	2006
Yüksek Lisans	: -	-
Doktora	: -	-

İŞ DENEYİMLERİ

Yıl	Kurum	Görevi
2014	İnsan Bakımı Suriye	Proje Yöneticisi
2017	Dünya Vizyonu Uluslararası	Proje Koordinatörü
2019	Daha İyi Bir Gelecek Vizyonu	Proje Yöneticisi
2020	Bahar Organizasyon	Program koordinatörü
2022	Adalet ve Sürdürülebilir Kalkınma	Programları Müdürü
2023	Onsur Organization	Programları Müdürü

UZMANLIK ALANI: İnsani Yardım Uzmanı

YABANCI DİLLER: İngilizce – Arapça

BELİRTMEK İSTEĞİNİZ DİĞER ÖZELLİKLER: Yok

YAYINLAR: Yok