



THE 13th EISA ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM
REALISING DEMOCRATIC GAINS THROUGH SOCIAL COHESION IN AFRICA

Johannesburg, South Africa

20-21 November 2018

Tuesday

20 November 2018

08:30-09:00 REGISTRATION

WELCOME, OFFICIAL OPENING AND KEYNOTE ADDRESS

09:00-09:15 Welcome Remarks

09:15-09:45 Keynote Address and Official Opening: The impact of democratic stagnation on social cohesion in African states

09:45-10:15 GROUP PHOTO FOLLOWED BY TEA BREAK

SESSION 1: DEFINING SOCIAL COHESION

The starting point of the symposium will be an exploration of the evolution of the concept of social cohesion. The speakers in this first session will consider various interpretations of the concept and how it relates to the democratic state. In the post-colonial period several states undertook nation building exercises in an effort to build cohesive societies under new regimes. The session will explore the assumption that social cohesion contributes to stronger states or even democratic consolidation. Reflecting on what is being referred to as a 'rolling back of democracy', the session will also contemplate the possible impact a decline in democracy might have on the cohesiveness of societies within African states. Finally, considering this relationship between social cohesion and democracy, the session will outline the value of and challenges in developing a conceptual framework for a social cohesion measure for Africa.

- 10:15-10:35 The development of current interpretations and applications of social cohesion theory
- 10:35-10:55 Constructing cohesive societies: nation-building experiments in Africa
- 10:55-11:15 Developing a means of measuring and assessing social cohesion in African societies
- 11:15-11:50 DISCUSSION SESSION

SESSION 2: THE STATE AND SOCIAL COHESION

There is an assumption that the type of social relationships and interactions within a socially cohesive society are linked to and indeed compliment democracy. In this session speakers will unpack this assumption, examining the levels of social cohesion in different types of states in Africa. The relationship between the state and its citizens, particularly around the provision of welfare, is a complicated one exacerbated by issues such as ethnic diversity and economic inequality.

- 11:50-12:10 Inclusive democracy: the influence of the state on the abilities and opportunities for citizens to participate in the political system
- 12:10-12:30 Polarised societies: Economic disparity, social cohesion and democracy
- 12:30-12:50 The effect of taxation on social mobilization and democratic governance
- 12:50 – 13:30 DISCUSSION

13:30-14:30 LUNCH

SESSION 3: SOCIAL COHESION IN A GLOBALISING WORLD

In 2016 the World Economic Forum ranked large-scale refugee flows as its global risk of highest concern. The last two decades have witnessed increasing numbers of people moving from one state to another. There are changes in the composition, orientation and dynamics of international migration, affecting the societies from which people originated as well as the societies where people settle. There is often a perception in recipient states that immigrants add pressure on local communities and strain welfare systems (schools, housing and other services). This session will explore trends in migration globally and within Africa and interrogate some of the assumptions and misperceptions around migration. The session will also consider how various states are dealing with the effects of migration, and how these lessons might be applied within an African context.

- 14:30-14:50 The impact of the international migration crisis on social cohesion
- 14:50-15:10 Regional responses to migration integration frameworks
- 15:10-15:30 The national social cohesion project and the emergence of xenophobia in South Africa
- 15:30-16:15 DISCUSSION

16:15-17:15 TEA AND END OF DAY ONE

Wednesday

21 November 2018

08:30-09:00 REGISTRATION

SESSION 4: SOCIETAL INTERACTIONS AND INFORMAL DEMOCRACY

Vigorous associational life is a valuable element within a democratic state. Community ties and networks together with the civil, political, and institutional characteristics of the society, determine the quality of life of citizens in a state and their ability to achieve both individual and societal goals. In this session speakers will explore the ideals of trust and tolerance of diversity within society and how their presence or absence affects the quality and quality of civic commitment and political participation.

09:00-09:20 The development of social capital in the MENA region

09:20-09:40 Entrenched identities and exclusive social capital as obstacles to political participation

09:40-10:00 The mobilisation of civic networks for positive political change

10:00-10:40 DISCUSSION

10:40-11:00 TEA BREAK

SESSION 5: ELECTIONS AND SOCIAL COHESION

Starting from the assumption that countries with a lower level of social cohesion tend to exhibit weaker electoral and democratic processes, this session will consider the impact of elections on social cohesion in African states. It is often the case that ideological and policy arguments barely register in political campaigns. Politicians often tend to fall back on appeals to ethnic, religious or regional loyalties, at times with disastrous societal effects. The speakers in this session will consider the short term democratic gains through elections on the longer-term objective of social cohesion in societies where there are, for example, high levels of income inequality, a history of divisive identities or consecutive flawed election processes.

11:00-11:20 The influence of the perceptions of social mobility on voter and party behavior

11:20-11:40 Competing and divisive identities in elections and the long-term consequence for social cohesion

11:40-12:00 Elections and social cohesion in post-conflict states

12:00-13:00 DISCUSSION

13:00-14:00 LUNCH

SESSION 6: SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS AND CLOSING

14:00-14:30 Summary of proceedings and way forward

14:30-14:45 Vote of Thanks and Official Closing

15:45-16:00 TEA

END OF DAY TWO