

Room: Central Asia
(Ground Floor)

07.-08.11.2023
Bonn, Germany



**PERILS AND PROMISES:
SOCIAL COHESION AMIDST THE GLOBAL
POLYCRISIS**

CONFERENCE



Social
Cohesion
Hub



IDOS

German Institute
of Development
and Sustainability

“Perils and Promises: Social Cohesion amidst the Global Polycrisis”

Conference
6-8 November 2023, Bonn/Germany

Background

Social cohesion enables societies to work together. As such, it is not only a prerequisite for achieving a globally sustainable future, but also a critical factor in shaping the resilience of societies to shocks. At present, social cohesion is high on the agenda of policy makers and researchers. There is a widespread need and awareness that social cohesion needs to be proactively strengthened as it is under threat in many societies around the world. The prevailing global polycrisis places great demands on citizens and societies. Multiple shocks such as climate change, the disruption of global value chains, political polarization and international wars are amplifying each other through complex interactions. The confluence of these crises challenges the ability of political leaders and societies to act collectively. Social cohesion promises to help address and overcome these challenges. IDOS' research and policy advice has sought to better understand what promotes social cohesion and how to build it effectively. Together with our partners, we have been working to build a community of social cohesion champions at the intersection of science and policy.

Objectives

This conference aims to strengthen the community of researchers, policy-makers and practitioners working on social cohesion. To this end, it will provide evidence and lessons learned. This should enable conference participants to better understand and explain the role of social cohesion in times of cascading crises.

- How can societies strengthen their cohesiveness?
- When and why does social cohesion erode?
- How can social cohesion help in fostering crisis resilience?
- How can development cooperation contribute to social cohesion in times of polycrisis?

Interactive sessions will allow participants to tackle these guiding questions as well as related sub-questions.

For further information, please contact the Social Cohesion Team @ IDOS
social_cohesion@idos-research.de

Programme

Public Roundtable - 6 November 2023

17:30 – 18:00	Arrival of Participants @Deutsche Welle, Registration
18:00 – 19:30	Roundtable Event
	<p>The Future Ahead: How Can Societies Steer Through the Polycrisis?</p> <p><u>Description:</u> The world is currently in the throes of multiple cascading crises. The Covid-19 pandemic, ongoing geopolitical tensions and wars, an energy crisis, declining food security, natural disasters as harbingers of climate change and many other antecedent and subsequent social, economic and ecological pressures are intertwined in a global polycrisis. This comes at a time when the just and sustainable transformation of our societies is more urgent than ever. Therefore, it is pertinent to ask what boundaries the current cascading crises put upon future outlooks and how these boundaries can be pushed back.</p> <p><u>Guiding Questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How does the polycrisis of today limit our outlooks on living in just and sustainable societies in the future?• What scenarios of the future are still attainable and what efforts are needed now to put them into reality?• What will be foreseeable repercussions for the social cohesion of societies?• How do social tensions limit our ability to steer through the polycrisis? <p><u>Speakers</u></p> <p><i>Jayati Ghosh</i>, Professor, University of Massachusetts Amherst / co-author of “Earth4All”/Club of Rome</p> <p><i>Joseph Asunka</i>, Director, Afrobarometer</p> <p><i>Jennifer McCoy</i>, Professor, Georgia State University</p> <p><i>Heriberto Tapia</i>, Research and Strategic Partnership Advisor, United Nations Human Development Office</p> <p><i>Patrick John Barron</i>, Global Lead for Social Cohesion and Resilience/Acting Lead for Community and Local Development, The World Bank</p> <p><u>Moderator:</u> Julia Leininger, IDOS</p>
19:30-21:00	Reception with fingerfood

First Day - 7 November 2023

8:00 – 9:00	Arrival of Participants @IDOS, Registration
09:00-9:30	Welcome Remarks
	<p><i>Anna-Katharina Hornidge</i>, Director IDOS</p> <p><i>Christoph Rauh</i>, Deputy Director General, Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)</p> <p><i>Armin von Schiller</i>, Project Lead</p>
9:30 – 10:55	Introductory Session: World Café
	<p><u>Description:</u> This session sets the scene for the conference. It sheds light on the state of the art in social cohesion research and connects it to the notion of polycrisis and global development.</p> <p><u>Format:</u> Two inputs followed by a ‘World Café’-discussion</p> <p><u>Guiding Questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the interactions between social cohesion and different crises/shocks?• World Café - Social cohesion in 5 different societal challenges: “Populism & the ‘Crisis of Liberal Democracy’”, “War & Conflict”, the “Cost-of-Living crisis”, “Migration & Forced Displacement”, “Climate Change”<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ How do these challenges affect social cohesion?○ How does social cohesion help in coping with these challenges? <p><u>Speakers</u></p> <p><i>Michael Lawrence</i>, Cascade Institute</p> <p><i>Ilke Dagli-Hustings</i>, Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development (SeeD)</p> <p><u>Moderator:</u> <i>Julia Leininger</i>, IDOS</p>
10:55 – 11:15	Coffee Break

11:15 – 12:45 Social Cohesion in Context

Description: Social cohesion is a universal concept that plays out differently in society, depending on the context. This session aims to understand how social cohesion can be understood on different scales and in various contexts. It does so by bringing together comparative cases studies that analyze the content and use of common concepts of social cohesion in African countries. Our main goal is to identify particularities of African concepts as well as detect commonalities and differences between (non-)African concepts.

Guiding Questions:

- What is the mainstream understanding of social cohesion?
- What is the meaning and relevance of social cohesion in different contexts?
- Does social cohesion play out on different scales? How do they interact?

Speakers

Ghadafi Saibu, IDOS

Joseph Chunga, University Malawi

Saïkou Oumar Sagnane, University Bayreuth

Elie Wortmann-Kolundžija, Frankfurt/Brussels

Discussant: *Ulf Engel, University Leipzig*

Moderator: *Yabibal Walle, IDOS*

12:45 – 13:30 Lunch Break

13:30 – 15:00 Parallel Sessions I

Economic Effects on Social Cohesion

Description: The world has recently experienced a myriad of crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the growing debt crisis in low- and middle-income countries, the war in Ukraine and the associated sharp rise in energy and food prices, and the deepening climate crisis. These crises can test social cohesion, but also strengthen ties between different groups. This session attempts to examine the impact of some of these economic trends, such as globalization, urbanization and economic crisis on social cohesion.

Social Cohesion, Autocratization and Polarization

Description: Autocratization and rising anti-pluralism in all world regions has become a noticeable trend. This 'crisis of liberal democracy' often goes hand in hand with rising polarization and socio-political tension. Populist, anti-pluralist and authoritarian political actors exploit and thrive on such unbreachable gridlock within societies, thereby further undermining social cohesion and eroding democratic standards. This session explores the vicious cycle between socio-political change and polarization and how it can be overcome.

<p><u>Guiding Questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent do economic trends such as globalization, urbanization and financial shocks influence social cohesion? • What can policymakers do to prevent the erosion of social cohesion in times of crisis? 	<p><u>Guiding questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does polarization materialize in different political regime settings? • What are the political causes and consequences of polarization and autocratization? • How can building social cohesion help to strengthen and protect democracy and <i>vice versa</i>?
<p><u>Speakers</u></p> <p><i>Italo Colantone</i>, Bocconi University</p> <p><i>Frank Borge Wietzke</i>, Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals (IBEI)</p> <p><i>Tekalign Sakketa</i>, IDOS</p> <p><i>Yabibal Walle</i>, IDOS</p> <p><u>Moderator:</u> <i>Tina Zintl</i>, IDOS</p>	<p><u>Speakers</u></p> <p><i>Pasha Dashtgard</i>, American University</p> <p><i>Simon Primus</i>, University of Erlangen</p> <p><i>Rachel Gisselquist</i>, United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU WIDER)</p> <p><i>Salvador Forquilha</i>, Instituto de Estudos Sociais e Económicos (IESE)</p> <p><i>Julia Köbrich</i>, German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA)</p> <p><u>Moderator:</u> <i>Christopher Wingers</i>, IDOS</p>
<p>15:00 – 15:30 <i>Coffee Break</i></p>	
<p>15:30 – 17:00 <i>Parallel Sessions II</i></p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Inequality, Poverty and Social Cohesion</p> <p><u>Description:</u> It is often argued that high and increasing inequalities put societies under stress, therefore making them more prone to social conflicts. Also poverty is likely to influence social cohesion through various channels. However, there is limited evidence of the linkages between inequality, poverty and social cohesion in low- and middle-income countries. This session contributes to fill this gap, by discussing the different pathways that connect these important phenomena, by showing new empirical evidence and, finally, by deriving policy recommendations on how to enhance the social cohesion potential of social policies.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Social Cohesion, Violent Conflict and State Fragility</p> <p><u>Description:</u> While the current polycrisis is challenging for countries and societies across the globe, fragile and conflict-affected states are particularly vulnerable. On the one hand, political institutions and institutional change, such as elections, constitutional reform or transitional justice could make an important contribution to dealing with such shocks. On the other hand, certain political institutions may also have destabilizing effects in fragile contexts. This panel will bring together research and policy insights on different political institutions and societal peace in fragile and conflict affected contexts.</p>

<p><u>Guiding Questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the relationship between inequality and social cohesion in Africa? • What are the social cohesion effects of a mismatch between social protection beneficiaries and societal perception of who deserves to be targeted? <p><u>Speakers</u></p> <p><i>Francesco Burchi</i>, IDOS <i>Kate Pruce</i>, Institute of Development Studies, Brighton <i>Daniele Malerba</i>, IDOS</p> <p><u>Moderator:</u> <i>Esther Schüring</i>, Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)</p>	<p><u>Guiding questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What role do political institutions play for societal peace in fragile and conflict affected contexts? • How can international development cooperation (effectively) promote societal peace and help overcome fragility and violence? <p><u>Speakers</u></p> <p><i>Karina Mross</i>, IDOS <i>Abbey Steele</i>, University of Amsterdam <i>Charlotte Fiedler</i>, IDOS <i>Adrienne Lemon</i>, Search for Common Ground <i>Yonas Adeto</i>, Addis Ababa University & National Peace Commission</p> <p><u>Moderator:</u> <i>Charlotte Fiedler</i>, IDOS</p>
<p>17:00 – 17:30 Wrap Up</p>	
<p><u>Facilitators:</u> <i>Tekalign Sakketa</i>, IDOS & <i>Daniel Nowack</i>, IDOS</p>	

Conference Dinner (by invitation only)

Second Day - 8 November 2023

8:30 – 09:00	Arrival of Participants
09:00 – 10:30	Taking Stock: Lessons Learnt From Fostering Social Cohesion
	<p><u>Description:</u> This session is dedicated to exploring the complexities of fostering social cohesion in diverse contexts, encompassing both global south and north. Specifically, it looks into the current state of the art on the different types of social cohesion interventions, assessing their effectiveness and identifying areas where knowledge gaps still exist. By delving into what has proven effective and ineffective, and where we need to expand our understanding, the session aims to pave the way for future progress in fostering social cohesion.</p> <p><u>Guiding Questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What types of interventions promote social cohesion? • What do we know about social cohesion interventions? Where are extant knowledge gaps? • Which points of leverage for interventions exist in different sectors/spheres, e.g. in public administration? • Which interventions prove effective, which ineffective? <p><u>Speakers</u></p> <p><i>Carlos Scartascini</i>, Inter-American Development Bank <i>Lily Tsai</i>, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Governance Lab <i>Danielle Reiff</i>, Peacebuilder <i>Ryan Sheely</i>, Mercy Corps</p> <p><u>Moderator:</u> <i>Karina Mross</i>, IDOS</p>
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee Break
11:00 – 12:30	What's next? Future Tasks in Research and Politics in Light of the Global Polycrisis
	<p><u>Description:</u> It will be crucial to sustain and foster social cohesion in order to overcome current cascading crises while realizing a just and sustainable transformation. Yet, the backdrop of this challenge is a world in which polarization and autocratization are on the rise. In the context of this challenge, we will focus in this session on the possible extant and future policies that are relevant to realize a just and sustainable future. We will also identify the knowledge and research gaps that need to be tackled in order to help the implementation of these policies.</p> <p><u>Format:</u> Brief, broad inputs to stimulate final fishbowl-discussion</p>

Guiding questions:

- How can societies be protected against polarization and autocratization in times of crises?
- Which policies should societies implement to overcome cascading crises?

What are the existing knowledge gaps for implementation of these policies?

Key Input for Kick-off

Karin Carvalho Adams, Delibera Brasil

Vera Hartmann, Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW Development Bank)

Moderator: *Daniel Nowack, IDOS*

12:30 – 14:00 ***Light Lunch***

Departure of Participants