TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE SPATIAL ASPECTS OF SOCIAL COHESION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Tholang Mokhele
Gina Weir-Smith
Introduction

• South Africa - diverse country in terms of race, culture and religion.
• The South African nation - people are united by a shared commitment to the principles of diversity, equality and justice.
• Social cohesion in relation to the place - urban & rural
• In urban areas, there are boundaries due to standards of living
  – the spatial concentration of the unemployed
  – disadvantaged areas - socially cohesive and socially excluded at one and the same time.
Introduction Cont...

• Migration also contributes towards social cohesion.

• In rural areas, the presence of extended families plays a major role in social capital and cohesion.

• There are two questions that will be addressed:
  – Does social cohesion have a spatial extent?
  – If yes, what socio-economic factors can be used to characterise social cohesion spatially?
Methods

• Datasets
  – South African poverty data 2006
  – Community Survey 2007
  – Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2007
  – South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2009
• The reason for using 2006 and 2007 datasets
  – Roughly time-compatible to the SASAS 2009.
• Crime data not available.
For SASAS, the two selected questions were grouped to obtain a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’:

- The first question was: “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you cannot be too careful in dealing with people?”
  - Respondents had to indicate their answer on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means “too careful” and 10 means that “most people can be trusted”.
  - Values of 0-4 coded ‘no’ while 6-10 coded ‘yes’.
The second question was: “People of different racial groups do not really trust or like each other”.

- Respondents had to indicate their answer in a range of options ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”.

- ‘Strongly agree’ and ‘agree’ responses coded to form the ‘yes,’ while ‘disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’ form the ‘no’ response.

- Respondents who indicated neither ‘agree’ nor ‘disagree’ - excluded.
Results

• A low SAIMD score - area which is worse off.
• Figure 1 shows that many municipalities with lowest rankings (0 – 50) were in the Eastern Cape – The former Transkei and Ciskei areas.
• Similar case in KwaZulu-Natal – in former KwaZulu area
• In North West - 5 municipalities with lowest ranking while Mpumalanga and Limpopo had 2.
• No municipalities in the Western Cape, Northern Cape, Free State and Gauteng in lowest ranking.
Figure 1: SA Index of Multiple Deprivation
Results Cont...

• High unemployment (>50%) – in Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, few in Northern Cape, Mpumalanga and Limpopo.

• In general,
  – urban areas experienced a lower unemployment than rural areas
  – none of the capitals were located in a high unemployment municipality (50.1% to 73.8%).
Results Cont...

- The highest poverty rate category (65.1% to 79.9%) - Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Free State.

- Western Cape and Gauteng - no municipalities in the highest poverty rate category.

- All metros have fewer than 35%, except Nelson Mandela bay.
Figure 2: Percentage people in poverty in 2006
• Figure 3 - low the percentage of respondents felt that most people can be trusted across the country.
  – Maximum value of 33.4% (KwaZulu-Natal which is worse off).
  – In contrast, the Western Cape which is well off, also have a high percentage of people (31.2%)
  – Turok et al. 2006 found similar results in UK state of the cities study.

• Gauteng had a lower proportion of people (24.4%)
  – Migration and urbanization.
Figure 3: Percentage respondents who trust other South Africans in general
Results Cont...

• Very high levels of racial distrust were recorded in North West (90.6%), Limpopo (80.1%) and Mpumalanga (73.9%) (Figure 4).
  – North West is characterised by high levels of poverty (above 35% of the population), high levels of no schooling, unemployment of more than 25%.

• The lowest levels of racial distrust were recorded in KwaZulu-Natal (51.5%) and in the Free State (61.7%).
Figure 4: Percentage respondents who distrust other racial groups

Legend

Racial Distrust
% Yes responses
- 61.5 - 65.0
- 65.1 - 70.0
- 70.1 - 73.0
- 73.1 - 80.0
- 80.1 - 90.6
Conclusion

• It seems that social cohesion has spatial extent – high relation between social cohesion and a specific location.

• The spatial extent of social cohesion - seen in areas of high multiple deprivation, high unemployment, low education and high racial distrust.

• It is therefore recommended that further research be undertaken to find out exactly why this trend exists.

• In addition, more spatially detailed research is required to confirm our preliminary findings.
Acknowledgements

• This paper was part of the research funded by the Programme for Support Pro-Poor Policy Development (PSPPD), a partnership programme of The Presidency (South Africa) and European Union.
THANK YOU