Social Cohesion, Institutions and Public Policies

By Ihssane Guennoun

"We are thus led to recognize a new reason that makes the division of labor a source of social cohesion." Emile Durkheim, "the Division of Labor in Society " Book II, 1893

Summary

In July 2017, the OCP Policy Center published a collective work entitled Social Cohesion, Institutions and Public Policies directed by Professor Abdallah Saaf, Senior Fellow at OCP Policy Center. This publication is the result of reflections and discussions exchanged during a conference organized on Thursday, October 27, 2016, and which subsequently were transposed into written contributions. On this occasion, the authors set out to shed light on the concept of "social cohesion" by examining its history, implications as well as its implementation in various chapters. As Morocco grows economically, social demands are also rising, thus requiring social cohesion, as a guarantor of social peace.

This Policy Brief aims to revisit the concept of social cohesion, its origin in sociology, to briefly present the societal evolution of Morocco and finally, to highlight the key ideas developed in the book.

I.   Social cohesion: revisiting its origins in sociology

At the origin of the expression, the Latin word 'cohaesio' refers to the notion of togetherness, adhesion and union. Each individual participates in one way or another in maintaining this cohesion through his/her various ties to a society as well as through his/her identification with his/her community and sense of belonging to his/her territory. Social cohesion implies a convergence of common interests, involvement of individuals in social activities and their ability to live in harmony within their community.

In 1893, Emile Durkheim, a famous sociologist, coined the term social cohesion in order to portray a society in which solidarity between individuals is common and social ties are strong. Social cohesion is also expressed through the cooperation of individuals from a same society who identify as belonging to the same social system. Nowadays, social cohesion also refers to the efforts of public decision-makers to implement a social component in public policies. This does not mean that there is an active fight against inequalities and, similarly, the existence of social cohesion is independent from the presence of social conflicts.

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Addressing social cohesion is of interest because integration and exclusion are priority issues for any society wishing to develop while safeguarding the wellbeing of its citizens. Indeed, social cohesion is strongly linked to the level of trust that citizens have in institutions, which encourages them to engage individually for the collective good. Adequate responses to these issues cannot come from outside and must provide concrete solutions based on an understanding of local issues and realities.

Similarly, Henri Bergson spoke of social cohesion as "the need for a society to defend itself against others." [1] According to Bergson, social cohesion helps guard against the negative values stemming from other societies, thus explaining why individuals from the same society establish connections among themselves. Thus, he justifies the love felt towards our fellow citizens as a primitive need to guard against external threats. Social cohesion is then the result of this primitive need.

Moreover, social cohesion is based on a sharing of values, traditions and culture, but also on a shared history. If social cohesion - the common denominator of these elements - does not exist, society may be threatened both externally and internally. When there is social cohesion in a society, it can contribute to its economic development. However, economic development does not necessarily imply the existence of social cohesion.

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Thus, civil society players have a role to play in ensuring social cohesion through existing community associations and organizations. The responsibility of local players such as trade unions, communities, political parties, cultural and financial players is not to be neglected although their influence and numbers have dropped in several countries. The challenge, however, is to instill a sense of responsibility in civil society actors in a context where individual liberties take precedence over the community's interests. Indeed, it is a matter of them feeling concerned by the development of their neighborhood, locality or region. On the other hand, there is a rise in the number of non-governmental organizations and associations working in partnership with public authorities to build and strengthen social cohesion. In an ideal scenario, local players would be able to find solutions to social challenges in their neighborhoods, which they could also propose to the authorities if they do have the ability to implement them.

But what role should public institutions play in social cohesion? Beyond the role of any citizen, the State has a

1. Bergson, Henri. The Two Sources of Morality and Religion. N.p.: N.p., 1932. Http://matiereapenser.free.fr. Web. 01 June 2017. <http://matiereapenser.free.fr/philo/docs/bergson_2sources.pdf>.

responsibility to guarantee social cohesion. It is indeed up to the State alone to establish necessary institutions so as to enable individuals to take control of their cohesion in society. Social cohesion is further strengthened when there are ties between various stakeholders within a society and the government. In addition, a favorable context for citizen participation in social policies contributes to a more effective social cohesion.

II. Morocco: between evolution and social demands

In the past, Morocco was characterized by a society where the common interest took precedence over individual interest. Moreover, Morocco was characterized by a mechanical solidarity as opposed to organic solidarity as put forth by Durkheim's social theory. The concept of 'lejmat' in Amazigh culture speaks volumes in this respect. With the influence of globalization, this trend has nowadays been reversed and has gradually given way to egocentric values. Although Morocco enjoys economic and social development, its growth has not necessarily led to alleviating inequalities.

Indeed, economic growth has not led to a transformation of production systems that would have triggered social changes necessary for the wellbeing of individuals.[2] Thus, it is clear that one of Morocco's challenges is to positively correlate economic prosperity with social cohesion. According to social theory, this challenge is based on two main factors. On the one hand, the state is struggling to manage the social needs of citizens, especially in the rural world, and on the other hand, Morocco's economic development model does not meet the imperatives of women and youth's inclusion in the labor market and does not take into account social inequalities[3].

The Moroccan state is faced with other challenges, which call upon it to reassure its citizens. With the combined effect of volatile growth and inadequately managed urbanization, new social expectations are rising among citizens, hence the need for social dialogue.

The combination of all of these elements is therefore compelling the government to respond by integrating a social dimension into its policies. To this end, Morocco has implemented social policies on housing, education and poverty eradication.

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Moreover, since the late 1990s, Morocco has gradually opened up by granting more freedoms to citizens. In this favorable context, a civil society began to emerge most notably through various social movements and associations.[4] More recently, the country witnessed protest movements focused on political and social demands. According to the model of inflationary spiral of expectations[5], the more a country improves economically, the more the expectations of its population grow. This has been born out because the country's economic development model concentrated wealth in the hands of one category of society, which has led to the exclusion of other social classes. As a result, many segments of society no longer feel that they are part of the same society, which has considerably weakened the mechanisms that protected social cohesion in Morocco.

Nevertheless, social cohesion is a construct based on a common heritage comprised of a set of ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic elements. It is not an end in itself but rather a trajectory that adapts and is reinforced as societal diversity is consolidated.

2. Jaidi, Larbi. "Economic and Social Change in Morocco: Civil Society's Contributions and Limits," in The Arab transitions in a changing world: building democracies in light of international experiences. Ed. Senén Florensa. Barcelona: Institut Europeu de la Mediterrània, 2016. pp.145-164. Print.

3. Larbi Jaidi, Economist and Senior Fellow, OCP Policy Center

4. Saaf, Abdallah. "Du Mouvement Associatif Marocain : Le Récit Et Le Sens." (Morocco's associative movement: history and meaning) OCP Policy Center. P.B., 30 Nov. 2016. Web. 04 June 2017. <http://www.ocppc.ma/publications/du-mouvement-associatif-marocain-le-r%C3%A9cit-et-le-sens>.

5. Mohamed Cherkaoui, "L'État et la Révolution. Logique du pouvoir monopoliste et mécanismes sociaux dans L'Ancien Régime de Tocqueville," (The State and the Revolution. Monopolistic power rationale and social mechanisms in the Ancien Régime de Tocqueville), European Journal of Social Sciences [Online], XLI-126 | 2003, posted on 30 November 2009, accessed on 1 October 2016. URL: http://ress.revues.org/536; DOI: 10.4000 / res.536

III. Overview and highlights of the book

At Pr. Abdallah Saaf's instigation, the collective book on Cohésion Sociale, Institutions et Politiques Publiques[6], brings together several experts interested in the topic of social cohesion in Morocco. It focuses on the social fragmentation resulting from fragile social cohesion as well as on the challenges of consolidating social cohesion against a backdrop of conflict-ridden social relations. Thus, the book examines the processes of construction and consolidation of social cohesion as well as the role of government and civil society players in strengthening it.

In addition, the authors attempt to explore the link between institutions and public policies and social cohesion. Divided in two parts, the book first presents the challenges of social cohesion from an economic and social perspective, and secondly, focuses on the issues of social cohesion at the institutional level.

In the first section, several issues relating to the economic and social aspects of social cohesion are discussed, beginning with the historical foundations of social cohesion in Morocco as described by Abdelmajid Kaddouri, historian and former Dean of the Faculty of Arts of Casablanca. He portrays the historical evolution of Morocco, emphasizing Amazigh identity, Islam and Arabization and the influence of Andalusian and Western culture. All these elements contribute to enabling an understanding of how social cohesion is reinforced in Morocco, which is the topic of the second part of the chapter. By presenting Islam as a religion, which plays an important role in social cohesion, the author refers to the example of Friday prayer and the pilgrimage to illustrate the gathering of believers around the same mass practice.

The example of Zawiyas is also underscored as an example of social solidarity built on common beliefs and practices. Lastly, the Moroccan dialect, which is rooted in both Amazigh and Arabic serves as a tool to reinforce ties between citizens. Mustapha El Mnasfi and Meryem El Anbar tackle the challenges of citizen participation and social policies. Mohamed Ait Lemkeddem proposes a study of how social entrepreneurship constitutes an

essential vector for social cohesion given its structure, organization and mode of governance. A chapter by Hassan Danane is also dedicated to cultural pluralism, in which he focuses on individual autonomy as the basis for the emergence of a new type of social bond.

Finally, this first part would not have been complete without an analysis of Morocco's integration within its international and regional context. This is precisely what Mohammed Haddy does by describing the country's regional and international context and thereby introducing different levers of social cohesion.

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In the second part, the authors shed light on the institutional challenges of social cohesion. Thus, in her chapter, Aicha El Aidouni describes the efforts to promote social cohesion in Morocco between 2011 and 2016 using the National Human Development Initiative (INDH) as an example. In the next chapter, Ouafae Essalhi examines the link between social cohesion and conflict of laws, thus seeking to establish the legal status of the concept in private international law. To this end, she studies the form and merit requirements for the marriage of Moroccans living abroad. In her chapter, Bouchra Sidi Hida conducts a case study of the city of Marrakech in which she analyzes the process of urbanization from the point of view of social cohesion. In addition, as they constitute crucial institutional spaces for the perpetuation of social cohesion, the role of local authorities needed to be addressed. Thus, Christophe Mestre focuses on local authorities, offering lessons from the field as well as conditions for stronger links between local authorities and social cohesion. He also emphasizes the need to step up decentralization, which he believes is a prerequisite for addressing current social cohesion challenges.

Lastly, Jean Michel Caudron proposes an interesting approach in which he wonders whether the Moroccan experience does not constitute a third way between the "welfare family" and the welfare state. In his attempt to

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6. "Social Cohesion, Institutions and Public Policies." Directed by Abdallah SAAF, OCP Policy Center. P.b., 13 July 2017. Web. 12 Oct. 2017.

answer this question, he describes the process of aging of Moroccan society, the emergence of an old-age policy in Morocco and also studies an analysis of the National Survey on the elderly (ENPA) in Morocco conducted in 2006.[7]

Beyond the subjects it deals with, this book therefore offers a genuine reflection on the concept of social cohesion and invites readers to consider ways to participate in its consolidation. Nowadays, social cohesion in Morocco faces several challenges that Driss Guerraoui[8] summarized in four elements in an article published in the daily newspaper, L'Economiste[9]. He refers to the crisis in the education sector, the fact that social protection is not universal, the persistence of unemployment, and finally, governance issues in public policies in terms of social action and solidarity. Given these challenges, several possible ways forward are proposed in the book, notably social and solidarity-based economy or social entrepreneurship, as a way for citizens to contribute to reinforcing social cohesion. In short, social cohesion should not be seen as an end in itself but rather as a process in continuous improvement.

7. High Planning Commission, Center for Demographic Study and Research. Analysis of Results from the National Seniors Survey ENPA 2006. Rep. Elderly People In Morocco: Profile, Health And Social Reports, Web.

8. Secretary General of the Economic, Social and Environmental Council

9. Guerraoui, Driss. "La Cohésion Sociale Au Maroc : Les Quatre Menaces Majeures Par Driss GUERRAOUI." (Social Cohesion in Morocco: The Four Major Threats). L'Economiste. P.b., 12 Mar. 2016. Web. 04 June 2017. <http://www.leconomiste.com/article/959422-la-cohesion-sociale-au-maroc-les-quatre-menaces-majeurespar-driss-guerraoui>.

About the author, Ihssane Guennoun

Ihssane Guennoun is a Junior Program Officer at OCP Policy Center where she manages various projects and events. She also contributes to the Geopolitics and International Relations program through research and manages all the center's publications. Prior to that, she was a trainee for six months at the German Marshall Fund of the United States, Brussels Office, where she contributed to the activities of the Wider Atlantic program. She has graduated with a double degree Master in International Relations and Affairs from EGE, Rabat, Morocco and Sciences Po, Aix-en-Provence, France with a focus on International Economic Relations. Her areas of interest include security issues in the Sahel region as well as West Africa's economic and political development, including Morocco.

About OCP Policy Center

OCP Policy Center is a Moroccan policy-oriented Think Tank whose mission is to contribute to knowledge sharing and to enrich reflection on key economic and international relations issues, considered as essential to the economic and social development of Morocco, and more broadly to the African continent. For this purpose, the Think Tank relies on independent research, a network of partners and leading research associates, in the spirit of an open exchange and debate platform.