

# Research on protests: South Africa, Egypt, Turkey and Ukraine compared

1 July 2016  
Pretoria



## Information Circular

### Human and Social Dynamics (HSD) Research Seminar Series

#### 'Research on protests: South Africa, Egypt, Turkey and Ukraine compared'

**1 July 2016**

**Venue:** The seminar will be linked via the HSRC's video conferencing facilities housed in its offices in Pretoria, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Durban. Various other platforms, including Vidyo links and social media, will provide opportunities for broader engagement.

**Cape Town:** HSRC, 12th Floor, Plein Park Building (opposite the Revenue Office), Plein Street.

**Durban:** The Atrium, 5th Floor, 430 Peter Mokaba Ridge, Berea.

**Pretoria:** HSRC Video Conference, 1st floor, HSRC Library, Human Sciences Research Council, 134 Pretorius Street.

**Port Elizabeth:** Office 103, 1st floor, Fairview Office Park, Greenacres.

*The HSRC seminar series is funded by the Department of Science and Technology (DST). The views and opinions expressed therein as well as findings and statements of the seminar series do not necessarily represent the views of DST.*

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## INTRODUCTION

We look forward to your participation in the Human and Social Dynamics Research Seminar, hosted by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) in collaboration with the Human Sciences Research Council, the South African Research Chair Initiative (SARChI) of the National Research Foundation (NRF), and the University of Johannesburg.. The seminar is scheduled to take place on 1 July 2016 in the video conference rooms of the Human Sciences Research Council in Pretoria, Cape Town, Durban and Port Elizabeth, and will focus on 'Research on protests: South Africa, Egypt, Turkey and Ukraine compared'.

## PURPOSE OF THE HUMAN AND SOCIAL DYNAMICS RESEARCH SEMINARS

The seminar series is designed to:

- Showcase research and knowledge production in the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH), which is generated by the National System of Innovation (NSI);
- Serve as vehicles for disseminating research evidence to wider and diverse audiences;
- Operate as platforms for the sharing of local and international expertise and experience; and
- Promote research and knowledge production in the SSH that benefits and enhances the NSI.

The series aims to achieve the following:

- Disseminate scientific research findings and transmit a body of new knowledge through an interactive process of critical dialogue and collegial critique to the SSH research community and other interested actors in the NSI;
- Provide an avenue for rated and other researchers, including researchers from rural-based universities to engage in knowledge dialogues across faculties and with other interested actors in the NSI;
- Present and discuss new and ongoing research, identify research gaps, and suggest new research agendas in SSH with a view to forging closer links between the research communities in these fields;
- Reinforce the visibility of SSH research to the higher education and science council sector;
- Enhance wider public understanding of the SSH, including the value and status of both individual and team-based research; and
- Strategically promote, develop and coordinate collaborative and interdisciplinary research within and between higher education institutions and science councils.

## BACKGROUND

The South African Research Chair in Social Change, Prof. Peter Alexander and his team at the University of Johannesburg, have been researching community protests since 2009. In a widely cited article, Alexander (2010) showed that these protests were not simply about service delivery, which is how they have been characterised, but amounted to a rebellion of the poor. He established a new research project to investigate the phenomenon, building on insights gained from an earlier study that appeared in the book *Class in Soweto* (2013), recently awarded the National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences prize for best edited book.

The research included qualitative and quantitative methods, with interviews conducted in every province and the construction of the largest database of media reports on protests. Last year, through a Promotion of Access to Information Act application, the team gained access to the South African Police Service (SAPS) data on nearly 160 000 crowd incidents that occurred between 1997 and 2013, about 70 000 of which were protests. This is the richest collection of data ever made available for protest research. An initial report on the data, which

aimed at explaining SAPS's methodology and concepts, showed that SAPS generals and government ministers had misused statistics drawn from the data.

Findings are wide-ranging. They show, for instance, that the number of community protests reached a nadir in 2004 and then took off with an upwards trajectory since that date. The proportion of protests the researchers categorised as either disruptive or violent, has been increasing, while the proportion of orderly protests has declined. Housing issues are the most common complaints raised by protesters.

### **Objective and issues**

The seminar aims at providing an understanding of South African protests within a global and international comparative context. This has not been attempted previously. Analysing South African protests in terms of local dynamics alone provides a limited, and possibly distorted, appreciation of the phenomenon. It is not just in South Africa that there has been an upsurge in public protests during the past decade; it is a global phenomenon implying that important global dynamics are also at work. What might these be? One proposal is that there was an explosion of protests after the 2007/08 economic collapse, and that this event provided the necessary explanation. It probably was a factor but it cannot be the full explanation. In South Africa, the upturn started as early as 2004/05 and in Egypt, the Arab Spring followed three years after the crash.

Available data suggests that over the past ten years, South Africa has experienced more strike days per capita and more protests per capita than any other country. If this is the case, why? Unfortunately, the data is inadequate and what exists is conditioned by local concepts, methodologies and experiences. Qualitative assessments are required to even make sense of the existing numbers. Moreover, any international account of protests must consider the size of mobilisations as well as their numbers. This picture changes entirely, in particular in Egypt, where protests loom much larger and more significant than what we have witnessed locally. Therefore, to help us explore the international and comparative dimensions, we need inputs from other countries.

Drawing on contributions from elsewhere highlights another feature of recent popular mobilisations. Many, perhaps most, have ended in reversals and repression. The most obvious examples are Syria, Egypt, Turkey and Ukraine.

In South Africa, we have counted that more than 40 people were killed by the police in community protests since 2005, and we could add the Marikana Massacre to this total. However, we have not witnessed the bloodshed that has occurred in other countries and there is no sign of a downward shift in the level of insurgency. What lessons can be drawn from the major setbacks that have occurred for democracy movements? Were the protests a mistake? Did benefits outweigh the disadvantages? Are a different, more co-ordinated politics required? Again we need inputs from around the world to address critical questions.

The seminar will provide a foundation for general discussion by offering an overview with emphasis on South Africa, followed by papers on Ukraine, Egypt and Turkey.

## PROGRAMME

**Venue:** Video Conference rooms, Human Sciences Research Council (Pretoria, Cape Town, Durban and Port Elizabeth)

**Date:** 1 July 2016

**Rapporteur:** Dr Seán Morrow, Ngomso Research, Writing and Editing Service

**Chair:** Dr Sepo Hachigonta, Director for Multilaterals and Strategic Initiatives, National Research Foundation (NRF)

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**08:30 - 09:00** Registration, Tea and Coffee

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**09:00 – 09:10** Introduction

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**09:00 – 09:10** **Welcome and opening remarks**

*Dr Konosoang Sobane, Human Sciences Research Council and Prof. Peter Alexander, South African Research Chair in Social Change, University of Johannesburg*

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**09:10 – 10.45** Session 1

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**09:10 – 09:30** **South Africa within a global context**

*Prof. Peter Alexander, South African Research Chair in Social Change, University of Johannesburg*

**09:30 – 09.50** The struggle against counter revolution in Egypt

*Dr Sameh Khairy Naguib Mikhail, American University in Cairo and School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, England.*

The 2011 revolution in Egypt, with its mass occupations particularly in Tahrir square, was of world historical significance. It showed a level of revolutionary initiative among the working class and youth across the country that was able to overcome the police and force the resignation of the dictator, Hosni Mubarak. However, the betrayals by the reformist opposition, both Islamist and secular, allowed the military and security apparatuses of the old regime to regroup and organise a counter-revolutionary mobilisation. This culminated in the military coup of July 2013, the arrest of over 60 000 activists, a series of unprecedented massacres with over 4 000 killed and over 1 000 death sentences in the first year after the coup. Draconian laws have been put in place, making any form of demonstration against the regime punishable by long prison sentences.

Despite this level of repression there has been a growing cycle of protest against the regime in the past year that has been gathering momentum. This paper will examine the challenges and prospects of the growing opposition to the military regime in Egypt.

**09.50 – 10:10**

**Gezi movement: Revolution or counter-revolution?**

*Prof. Ferhat Kente, Department of Sociology, Istanbul Sehir University, Turkey*

A few environmental activities against the demolition of Gezi Park in Istanbul in favour of the construction of a shopping mall, which was repressed by a brutal police intervention, inflamed violent protests throughout the month of June 2013. These protests for the “right to the city” turned into a matter of life and death for the “regime”. The movement against the radical capitalist urban policies of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP in English or AK Parti in Turkish), a product of the Turkish Islamist movement, was used to brand the movement as “counter-revolution provoked by foreign forces”. The government led a massive campaign of targeting and blaming the violence on the movement to strengthen the electoral base of the neo-liberal and conservative economic politics of AKP.

**10:10 – 10:30**

**Protests, counter-protests, and regime change in Ukraine**

*Dr Volodymyr Ishchenko, deputy director, Kyiv Polytechnic Institute, Ukraine*

I will present a prospective collective project, analysing the (Euro) Maidan protests in Ukraine in 2013-14, their repression and anti-Maidan counter-mobilisation from the perspective of contemporary contentious politics studies. I will touch on three crucial questions of mobilisation, radicalisation, and the regime collapse.

Why did Ukrainians mobilise on a massive scale on the issue of choosing between EU and Russia, especially while previously, social-economic protests were typically small, local and dispersed?

How was the growing discontent with the former president Viktor Yanukovich rule channelled into a geopolitical and nationalist competition? If the typically weak Eastern Europe civil society was not able to bring the masses to the street against Yanukovich, which social networks and institutions facilitated the mobilisation? Were they available for anti-Maidan counter-protests later and what consequences did this fact have for the scale and development of the protest?

Precisely which resources helped to support and sustain mobilisation and counter-mobilisation for many months? Why did Maidan protesters radicalise so quickly and so extremely? Pointing to the government repressions is hardly a sufficient explanation as in the past the repressions were usually successful in containing and destroying protest movements rather than otherwise. Particularly, in Ukraine during Yanukovich rule, there were cases of brutal and nonetheless successful repressions against the protests but only the repression of the Maidan protest camp produced the popular uprising.

Why were protesters able to overthrow the government? Why did it fail to repress Maidan even when it turned into the armed uprising in February 2014? Why did the protesters, who captured arms in the Western regions, not meet any serious resistance?

How did the collapse of the repressive apparatus in the Eastern regions facilitate the quick radicalisation of anti-Maidan mobilisations that culminated in the separatist revolt in Eastern Ukraine, combined with Russian intervention and in the ongoing civil war?

The talk will also introduce Ukrainian protest and coercion data - a continuing project producing a unique dataset of almost 50 000 (at the moment) protests, repression and concession events reported by 200 Ukrainian media since the end of 2009, covering the whole period of Viktor Yanukovich rule as well as the recent years. I will discuss how it can help to answer the above questions.

10.30 – 10.45 Questions to speakers and replies

10.45 – 11.15 Tea/Coffee break

11.15– 13:00 Session 2

11.15 – 11.40 Questions to speakers and replies (to continue)

11.40 – 12.00 **Comparative reflections**

*Prof. Peter Alexander, South African Research Chair in Social Change, University of Johannesburg*

*Dr Sameh Khairy Naguib Mikhail, Soas University of London*

*Prof. Ferhat Kente, Department of Sociology, Istanbul Sehir University, Turkey*

*Dr Volodymyr Ishchenko, deputy director, Kyiv Polytechnic Institute, Ukraine*

12.00-13.00 *Comparative discussion*

13.00 -13.15 Session 3

13.00 -13.15 Closing comments and departure

13.15 – 14.00 **LUNCH**

-----Departure -----

## VENUES

This seminar may be attended via the HSRC video conferences in Pretoria, Cape Town , Port Elizabeth and KwaZulu-Natal. The speakers will be located in Pretoria. Details are as follows:

**Cape Town** : HSRC, 12th Floor, Plein Park Building (Opposite Revenue Office), Plein Street, Cape Town. Contact Jean Witten, Tel (021) 4668004, or JWitten@hsrc.ac.za or Carmen August, Tel (021) 4668099, e-mail: caugust@hsrc.ac.za

**Durban** : The Atrium, 5th Floor, 430 Peter Mokaba Ridge, Berea, 4001 , Contact Ridhwaan Khan, Tel (031) 242 5400, cell: 083 788 2786 or RKhan@hsrc.ac.za , or Hlengiwe Zulu at e-mail HZulu@hsrc.ac.za

**Pretoria** : HSRC Video Conference, 1st floor HSRC Library Human Sciences Research Council, 134 Pretorius Street, Pretoria. Arlene Grossberg, Tel: (012) 302 2811, e-mail: acgrossberg@hsrc.ac.za

**Port Elizabeth**: Office 103, 1st floor, Fairview Office Park, Greenacres. Nomfanelo Plaatjie. Landline: 041 393 9500, Cell: 071 978 6222. , e-mail: nplaatjie@hsrc.ac.za

Maps with directions to the HSRC offices in Pretoria, Cape Town and KwaZulu-Natal can be found at the following website - <http://www.hsrc.ac.za/en/contact>

Various platforms including Video links and the use of social media will provide opportunity for broader engagement.

You may also join via Vidyo on your computer or mobile device via the link:

<https://hsrc-vc.tenet.ac.za/flex.html?roomdirect.html&key=GGKGXLnInSbnn5Mspk7JfF1qu8>

Facebook ( for both days):

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1715244478741736/>

Website links:

30 June:

<http://www.hsrc.ac.za/en/events/seminars/rebellion-of-the-poor>

- #CommunityProtests
- #CivilUnrest
- #ServiceDelivery
- #poverty
- #inequality
- #poor
- #protests
- #protestors
- #unrest
- #ClassinSoweto
- #PeterAlexander
- #Inequality
- #Sociology
- #Humanities
- #SocialSciences
- #NSI
- #identity

1 July

<http://www.hsrc.ac.za/en/events/seminars/research-on-protests>

- #ArabSpring
- #DemocraticUprisings

- #Euromaidan
- #Crimea  
#RussianIntervention
- #AntiProtestLaws
- #GovernmentCorruption
- #HumanRights

The relevant Twitter handles:

**[@dstgovza](#)**

**[@go2uj](#)**

**[@mediauj](#)**

**[@HSRCza](#)**

**[@Policyprocesses](#)**

**[@children\\_pan](#)**

#### **REGISTRATION**

The registration desk for the workshop will be located in the foyer of the video conference rooms (see above).

Registration commences at 8:00 on 1 July 2016. On arrival, delegates and guests should register and collect their workshop bags from the registration desk. The registration desk will be open for general information enquiries throughout the workshop.

#### **WORKSHOP DOCUMENTS**

On registering, delegates will be provided with supporting documentation at the workshop in their workshop packs, including the workshop programme, abstracts and biographies.

#### **PRESENTATIONS**

All presenters must please see that their PowerPoint slides are loaded onto the computer systems in advance of their session. Mr Thabo Stamper (cell: 076 628 3579, E-mail: [TStamper@hsrc.ac.za](mailto:TStamper@hsrc.ac.za)), from the IT unit, will be assisting at the event.

Should you have any additional material you would like to make available to delegates, please bring along about 70 copies.

A printer will be available for a limited number of copies.

#### **INTERNET ACCESS AND COMMUNICATION FACILITIES**

Please note that it is not possible to provide a sufficient number of computers and work stations to cater for everyone expected to join us. We therefore recommend that you bring along your own laptop, and 3g for internet access.

#### **THE WEATHER**

At the moment, the weather in Pretoria is cold and wet. You may expect average temperatures of 10°C to 23°C during your visit. For more accurate information, visit the South African Weather Bureau's website:

<http://www.weathersa.co.za>.

**EXHIBITIONS**

Please support the exhibitors in the foyer of the Amethyst, where HSRC Press books will be available to view.

**PARKING**

Durban and Port Elizabeth: Parking is available

Pretoria: Limited parking is available in the Pretoria offices on a first - come basis. Delegates may also park at the City Place Parkade around the corner from the HSRC in Sophie de Bruin (previously Schubart Street) (see attached map), and these delegates may receive vouchers at the seminar to cover their parking cost.

Cape Town: The HSRC is unfortunately not able to provide casual parking, however there are parkades available in the close proximity of the office.

#### KEY CONTACTS DETAILS FOR YOUR VISIT

Events manager: **Ms Arlene Grossberg**, Tel 012 302 2811, Cell: 078 168 2996, E-mail: [acgrossberg@hsrc.ac.za](mailto:acgrossberg@hsrc.ac.za),  
**Ms Carolina Roscigno**, cell: 0825705312, E-mail [croscigno@hsrc.ac.za](mailto:croscigno@hsrc.ac.za)

IT: **Mr Thabo Stamper** cell: 083 993 6657, E-mail: [TStamper@hsrc.ac.za](mailto:TStamper@hsrc.ac.za)

Registration desk: **Ms Happy Solomon** 073 553 2930, E-mail: [HSolomon@hsrc.ac.za](mailto:HSolomon@hsrc.ac.za), Ms Zuzi Khuzwayo, E-mail:  
[ZKhuzwayo@hsrc.ac.za](mailto:ZKhuzwayo@hsrc.ac.za), Eugene Ravhuanzwo, e-mail: [ERavhuanzwo@hsrc.ac.za](mailto:ERavhuanzwo@hsrc.ac.za)

Travel and accommodation:

**Rahab Singwane**

Travel Adventures International, Email: [rahab@travadv.co.za](mailto:rahab@travadv.co.za)

Cell: 082 593 4385, Tel: +27 (0) 12 460 7421

Our After Hours Number 082 419 6661

Docex 293, Pretoria

#### Have we forgotten something?

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions or need further information about your trip

We look forward to seeing you soon!

We hope that you have an enjoyable and successful workshop.

## **ADDENDUM A**

Maps with directions to the HSRC offices in Pretoria, Cape Town and KwaZulu-Natal can be found at the following website - <http://www.hsrc.ac.za/en/contact>

### **Pretoria office**

#### **Street Address**

134 Pretorius Street

Pretoria

South Africa 0002

**Tel:** +27 (0)12 302 2000

The GPS co-ordinates for 134 Pretorius Street are:

S 25°44.881'

E 28°11.097'

### **Cape Town Office**

#### **Street Address**

14th floor

Plein Park Building

69-83 Plein Street

Cape Town

South Africa 8001

**Tel:** +27 (0)21 466 8000

### **Durban office**

#### **Street Address**

HSRC 5th floor

The Atrium

430 Peter Mokaba Ridge (\*Note: still 430 Ridge Road on Google Maps)

Berea, Durban

4001

**Tel:** +27 (0)31 242 5400

### **Port Elizabeth office**

#### **Street Address**

Office 103, 1st Floor

Fairview Office Park

Greenacres

**Tel:** +27 (0)41 399 8700

**Fax:** +27 (0)41 399 8711