Unravelling Public Authority: Paths of Hybrid Governance in Africa

The meaning and policy implications of ‘hybrid governance’ were debated in a recent workshop at the London School of Economics, entitled ‘Unravelling Public Authority: Paths of Hybrid Governance in Africa’. Held on 6-7 December 2013, this workshop involved international collaboration between the Department of International Development and the Institute of Development Policy Management (IOB, University of Antwerp), with significant support and engagement from the IS Academy Human Security and Fragile States (Wageningen University) and the Justice and Security Research Programme (LSE). The workshop brought together specialists from Europe and Africa to explore the empirical realities of hybrid governance in a range of fragile and more dynamic African contexts, focusing on the factors that shape positive as well as negative paths of hybrid governance in contemporary Africa.

Drawing on current empirical research in a range of fragile and more stable African states, including DR Congo, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Somaliland, South Sudan and Uganda, participants explored what hybrid governance means, how it operates, and what it offers to national officials, development practitioners, and local populations. Discussions centred around a number of key issues exploring the differential understanding, power dynamics and implications of hybrid governance arrangements in varying national contexts. The research and debates emerging from the workshop have been examined by Kate Meagher, Tom De Herdt and Kristof Titeca in a research brief that considers how to improve the effectiveness of hybrid governance as an analytical and policy tool.

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