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February 26-29 KENYA

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International Collaborative Governance

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In the post COVID-19 era, the trend in public administration discourses has been to emphasize a permanent situation of crises as the hallmark of contemporary times: more sanitary crises could be expected, the war in Ukraine and Sino-American tensions would revive Cold War type of security risks, and the overrun of global warming thresholds would lead to an increasing occurrence of extreme climatic episodes. Such discourses tend to call up on the acronym VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous), the idea of “poly-crises storms” or on the COVID-19 era’s concept of new normal.

This discourse then takes two divergent paths. One portrays vulnerable societies and organizations on the verge of collapse and reaffirms the centrality of public service and of its values to weather the storm. The times are fearful, but government is there to guide and serve you! An emphasis on the distinctive cultural values is needed to legitimize the verticality of power in national contexts, its corollary being a deglobalization agenda.

Others de-emphasizes the exceptional character of contemporary crises. Instead, the continuity they see in the growing complexity of society and public action warrant a further step towards the third public administration paradigm. It is grounded in horizontality between actors whose different rationalities, legitimacies, origins, and interests are harnessed to develop innovative approaches to contemporary challenges. They turn the VUCA acronym VUCA to stress actual feasibility over fear: Vision, Understanding, Clarity and Agility.

It is in this second stream that the IIAS-KSG Mombasa Conference 2024 is situated. **It projects the Western collaborative governance agenda in the global scene where it fits with Global South discourses for more inclusive global governance and calls the synthesis International Collaborative Governance.**

Collaborative Governance

Since New Public Management emerged as an intellectually articulated attack on the dysfunctions of bureaucracy, the field of public administration has been in search for a third way that keeps government in the driving seat while making the now necessary concessions to the modernizers. In his seminal paper on NPM, Hood (1991) would call lambda-type PA this yet unknown species.

Moore (1995)’s public value concept forever blurs the distinction between public and private organizations. Public value is value delivered to the public on the entire public production chain – which one being an empirical and political question. Public value is an alternative bottom line to profit for organizations.

From here flows a double role for the public service. It helps define public value in the local context on the one hand. Denhardt & Denhardt (2000) distill a “New Public Service”

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concept, where the “primary role of the public servant is to help citizens articulate and meet their shared interests rather than to attempt to control or steer society.” Scholarly concerns for inclusion, participation and representative bureaucracy are directly related to the need to achieve the largest consensual basis possible for public action.

Inspired by the tradition of Lipsky that puts emphasis on organizational and individual agency necessarily leading to implementation gaps, the second stream shares the same concerns on the public value delivery side. As many other others, Osborne's (2006) New Public Governance paradigm is concerned with interorganizational performance, while Bovaird's (2007) coproduction concept invites to focus on shop-level interaction patterns.

Most recent works (Brandsen et al., 2018; Sørensen & Torfing, 2011; Torfing, 2019) examine interaction settings on the entire policy cycle, and the design functions public authorities have regarding those settings.

In this conference, we stick to Ansell & Gash's (2007) version. They define **collaborative governance** as “*a governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programs or assets.*”

International Governance

While a decisive shift seems to occur in scholarly public administration towards an attention to local contexts, horizontal decision-making and policy implementation at national levels, the same move is hardly happening on the international scene.

The **global governance system** only marginally evolved since it was designed after 1945: the military global affairs remain the exclusive jurisdiction of WWII winners gathering in the UN Security Council, Bretton Woods institutions and their main shareholders remain in firm control of economic global affairs, and the Federal Reserve dominates global monetary policy.

In economic affairs, the global policy has been dubbed as the **Washington consensus**. In exchange for temporary debt relief in a context of global inflation and skyrocketing price of the US dollar, developing countries were prescribed balanced budgets, reduced expenditures, especially regarding subsidies, low rate, and non-increasing taxes, market-based interest rates and exchange rates, import liberalization, debt-equity swaps and related privatization, deregulation and the imposition of property rights regimes (Williamson, 1990).

In every place where they were applied, these policies led to **private indirect government** (Mbembe, 2001). By lack of any sovereignty or performance, only patrimonialism (i.e.: confusion between public and private affairs) could legitimize authoritarian leaders, the national economy delinked from the global one (Kvangraven et

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al., 2021) to become overwhelmingly informal, and the state is only one actor in competition with others for its control through proxies.

Reincorporating East-Asian developmental states miracles in its toolboxes (World Bank, 1997) via a detour through North's (1990) institutional economics, the Bretton Woods institutions acknowledged that **governance matters**. Consequently, development policies will be increasingly centred on topics such as capacity building as necessary conditions for the Millennium Development Goals.

Key concept in this era is **decoupling** (Bratton & Walle, 1994; Meyer & Rowan, 1977): when faced with environmental pressures to do A while B is the feasible or desirable option, institutions do B while pretending and ceremonially complying A. This global trend towards hypocritical window-dressing is at its peak in the contemporary times of Paris objectives and Sustainable Development Goals.

On the ground, the reality of governance is probably closer to the description made by Olivier de Sardan (2011): a saturated institutional space, where actors of different kinds and nationalities, having different sources of legitimacies and rationalities, are **competing for control** of various abstract territories. A context very similar to the one used to advocate for collaborative governance in Western public administration.

International Collaborative Governance

The IIAS-KSG-ADMIN Mombasa Conference 2024 accordingly invites representatives of national and international institutions interested in public administration, public policy and global governance, schools of governments, NGOs, scholars and students of universities and interested individuals to contribute to a discussion on International Collaborative Governance.

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Objective

The objective of this conference is to bring together a diverse group of professionals, academics, and experts to share their insights, experiences, and research findings related to international collaborative governance. The conference seeks to deepen the understanding of collaborative approaches to governance, highlight successful strategies, identify challenges, and explore the potential for enhanced cooperation among nations and international organizations.

It more specifically seeks to:

- ☐ Achieve a greater convergence between the scholarly fields of public administration and development studies;
- ☐ Promote horizontal relations between the West and the Global South, and between the public, private and civil society sectors;
- ☐ Provide scientific contributions in the fields of collaborative governance and international governance taken separately;
- ☐ Provide a global forum for exchange of knowledge and practices between public administration and development professionals

Call

To achieve these objectives, the organizers of the IIAS-KSG Mombasa Conference 2024 are inviting the members of their respective networks submit three kinds of contributions:

- ☐ Abstracts, of 500 words maximum, covering the research question(s), its societal relevance, the theoretical framework, data collection methods, empirical evidence collected and main findings and contributing to the overall theme of “International Collaborative Governance”;
- ☐ Call-for-papers, of 1,000 words maximum, indicating a title, the chairpersons with their institutional affiliations and if applicable the supporting institution, situating the topic in a scholarly or institutional field, and indicating the form requirements the full papers will have to comply with. The chairpersons will be in charge of reviewing the submissions received in answer to their call
- ☐ Panel proposals, of 500 words maximum, indicating a title, identifying the panelists and describing the questions they will address together and individually.

Practicalities

The deadline for submitting call-for-papers is set on October 31st, 2023. The received call-for-papers will be published together with the present main one, and the deadline for both will be set on December 15, 2023.

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Interested authors are invited to visit <https://www.conftool.org/iias-ksg-mombasaconference2024>. They should create an account, and go to the submissions menu.

Submitting a contribution entails a principal commitment to participate in the Conference, and to pay the registration fees to be communicated later. Please note that the travel and participation fees will be at charge of the participants. The organizers don't foresee in hybrid or fully virtual sessions.

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