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Beyond institutional blueprints: hybrid security provision and democratic practice in Mali

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PROPOSITIONS

Beyond Institutional Blueprints: Hybrid security provision and democratic practice in Mali

Thesis

1. In Mali, a 'heterarchical' political order, in which the state is just one of the institutions amongst many non-state equals shaping public authority has replaced the postcolonial 'hierarchical' order, in which the state constituted the supreme institutional locus of authority in society.
2. Cross-border dynamics played a major role in reshaping Mali's political order as high-value kidnapping, drugs and weapons smuggling and Jihadist networks boosted opportunities for non-state armed groups to enhance their authority beyond the state.
3. In northern and central Mali, the 'ballot' – or the ability to be elected by people – is giving way to the 'bullet' - or the ability to protect people - as a primary source of authority.
4. The top-down architecture of the Malian peace process has privileged armed groups to the detriment of other prominent stakeholders and ordinary citizens in society. In the absence of a more inclusive approach, peace will remain elusive.
5. The performance of Malian political parties and parliament has weakened more than enhanced state legitimacy in the period between 1992 – 2012.
6. Enabling a larger formal role for religion in the political sphere would improve the anchorage of Malian democracy into society and thereby increase its contribution to state legitimacy.

Academic field of the thesis

7. While remaining influential in policy circles, the 'democratic transition paradigm' echoes out-of-date modernisation discourse and should be aborted. Politics are not in transition towards a single end-goal of democratic consolidation. Many are lost in transition. Democratisation is an open-ended process.
8. The prominent patrimonial approach to political authority in Sub-Saharan Africa, based on the exchange of support versus material favours between patrons and groups of clients ("*Patronage*"), needs to be revised. People rely on multiple patrons who legitimise their authority in a multidimensional way by mobilising both material and immaterial resources ("*Patronage Plus*").
9. The fragile state label reflects a broader habit of defining developments across the African continent as deficiencies. It represents the state in terms of what it lacks. A more fruitful analytical perspective focuses on the *history* of statehood practices, rather than studying them in *analogy* to normative standards.
10. Entering into dialogue and negotiations with home grown (labelled) Jihadists should become a prominent part of broader efforts geared towards decreasing intercommunal tensions and promoting stability in Mali and the wider Sahel region.

Other subjects

11. The Dutch vaccination strategy during the COVID-19 pandemic is poorly aligned to the core strategic objective of reducing pressure on the Intensive Care Units in the hospitals.
12. Every depression, by definition, is a postnatal depression.