



DEPARTMENTAL SEMINAR

Looking Back at Africa's Constitutional Past, Learning from Mistakes, and Reflecting on the Future

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Bio:

Jan Erk has recently joined the Africa Institute for Research in Economics and Social Sciences (AIRESS) at the Faculté de Gouvernance, et Sciences Économiques et Sociales (FGSES) of Morocco's new Université Mohammed VI Polytechnique (UMPS), established with the explicit goal of addressing the policy challenges the African continent faces. Professor Erk holds two doctorates, a PHD in Political Science from McGill University, Canada and an LL.D. in Public Law from University of Pretoria, South Africa. His work covers a number of themes within the field of

comparative law and governance- with a particular focus on constitutional politics across Sub-Saharan Africa. Professor Erk was previously the Jan C. Smuts fellow at the University of Cambridge and remains a life member of Clare Hall (college) at the same university. He is the former editor of the journal *Regional and Federal Studies*.

Abstract: The focus of this talk is the ten years between 1957 and 1967 which brought in tectonic changes to the African continent. The post World War II years witnessed first an accelerated move towards injecting a variety of constitutional measure bringing more home-rule to the colonies. (Con)federal unions among colonies was one common path to bring home rule to the colonies in the form of more representative political institutions. Yet soon after interdependence, the new national governments elected on majoritarian principles assumed full control and undid most of the previous initiatives. Confederations were dissolved, federal constitutions gave way to unitarist ones, and in some of the newly independent federations secessionism sparked civil wars. By the end of the ten years, new geopolitical dynamics had arrived, national politics became centralised, and federalism was all but extinguished.

The views of speakers do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Political Science or that of the University of Stellenbosch.

TO BE CHAIRED BY PROF. NICOLA DE JAGER

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Time: 12:15-13:30

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