



Workshop

Patronage and the State as ‘politics-in-conjunction’

February 9-10, 2021

Organizers:

Jamal Ali Bashir (Graduate School “Society & Culture in Motion”, University of Halle-Wittenberg)

David Kananizadeh (Graduate School “Society & Culture in Motion”, University of Halle-Wittenberg;
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Theme:

In social scientific engagements with modern statehood, patron-client-relationships are on a rather complicated footing, regularly framed as state apparatuses’ wicked other. Whereas the modern state is understood as working through a bureaucratic process that facilitates a fair distribution of resources, patron-client-relationships emerge as “corrupt” and “ineffective” (cf. Asiimwe 2013). However, as more recent contributions (Chatterjee 2004, 2011; Piliavsky 2014; Lyon 2019) have tried to show, often enough, it is exactly these networks that keep states “working” and provide them with legitimacy by mediating between state apparatuses and citizens in complicated ways. In this workshop, we will contribute to these debates by interrogating the relationship between patronage and the state as ‘politics-in-conjunction’, i.e. exploring the ways patronage and the state are politically productive in relation to each other. Hereby, we focus on exploring the critical moments in which actors navigate between these two registers – patronage and the state – in holding politics accountable for the ways resources are distributed.

We understand patron-client-relationships as a form in which people “invest” (Thévenot 1984) to engage the uncertainties of resource scarcities and related constraining conditions (Scott 1972). By asking how equivalences are established in these relationships, we will inquire into the reciprocity at work therein, into how exchanges of service are measured, and into the materialities of measurement (cf. Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]). Rather than engaging patron-client relationships merely as an ideal type, we will investigate the negotiations necessary to stabilize such relationships and their frequent contestation. While patronage as a system of exchange can be mobilized to problematize the distribution of resources, often enough, patron-client-relationships are themselves criticized by the actors involved with reference to other institutionalized forms (e.g. Scott 1985; Van der Linden 1997; Mannathukkaren 2010; Bolten 2013; Murphy 2017). Here, we interrogate patron-client-relationships not as isolated, but deeply entangled with other social institutions (e.g. kinship, gender, class) and principles of sociality, through which actors creatively navigate to make claims, pursue negotiations and contest resource flows. These moments of contestation provide fruitful insights into the ways patronage is accounted for and how these accounts relate to other regimes of accountability, like the technical-financial accounting through which, ideally, the modern state distributes its resources (cf. Luhmann 1983 [1969]). It is exactly in these moments in which actors translate between these different regimes, where notions of the common good are negotiated (cf. Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]). In what ways, then, do patronage and modern statehood supplement each other in accounting for the flows of resources and the inequalities produced therein?

Format and organization:

The workshop will be based on the discussion of pre-circulated papers. Papers will be introduced by the author with a short presentation followed by intensive discussion with the invited discussants. Due to the current Corona-Pandemic, the workshop will be conducted online. If you are interested in joining the workshop, please register with David Kananizadeh (david.kananizadeh@scm.uni-halle.de).

Program:

Day 1, February 9

- 09.00 – 09.30 Introduction “Patronage and the State as Politics-in-Conjunction”
David Kananizadeh & Jamal Bashir
- 9.30 – 10.15 *State Formation and Patron-Client Relations in Southeastern Baluchistan, Pakistan*
Jamal Bashir (SCM, Uni Halle)
- 10.15 – 10.30 Break
- 10.30 – 11.15 *(De)politicising infrastructure: reconfigurations of patronage through reforming urban mobility and built environment*
Denys Gorbach (Maxpo Center of Coping with Instability in Market Societies)
- 11.15 – 11.30 Break
- 11.30 – 12.15 *Formations of Contested Agency and Changing Clientelism: Agricultural Intermediaries, Syrian Migrants, and Women Agricultural Laborers in Muğla, Turkey*
Elçin Turan (Uni Köln)
- 12.15 – 12.45 Wrap-Up – Discussion led by Prof. Dr. Nicolas Martin (University of Zurich)
- 18.00 – 19.30 Guest Lecture **Patronage Politics: Virtue or Necessity?**
Prof. Dr. Nicolas Martin (University of Zurich)

Day 2, February 10

- 09.00 – 09.15 Introduction & Warm-Up
David Kananizadeh & Jamal Bashir
- 9.15 – 10.00 *Patrons of Crisis: the role of Malawian civil servants in disaster relief interventions*
Tanja Hendriks (Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh & Department of Social Anthropology, University of Oslo)
- 10.00 – 10.15 Break
- 10.15 – 11.00 *Accounting for disaster politics in Sierra Leone: The disaster response to the August 14-mudslide in Freetown, 2017*
David Kananizadeh (SCM, Uni Halle & LOST Research Group)
- 11.00 – 11.15 Break
- 11.15 – 12.00 Concluding Session – discussion led by Dr. Anais Menard (Max Planck Institut)