



*Routledge Studies in Middle Eastern
Democratization and Government*

CLIENTELISM AND PATRONAGE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

NETWORKS OF DEPENDENCY

Edited by
Laura Ruiz de Elvira, Christoph H. Schwarz and
Irene Weipert-Fenner



Introduction: Networks of dependency, a research perspective

Laura Ruiz de Elvira, Christoph H. Schwarz and Irene Weipert-Fenner

The self-immolation of Muhammad Bouazizi, a street vendor in Sidi Bouzid, a small town in the marginalised interior of Tunisia, was the spark of the uprising that triggered an unprecedented wave of mobilisation across the MENA region in 2011. According to his family, after years of constant harassment by police and municipal officers, he faced yet another attempt by corrupt state officials to attain bribes after confiscating his wares – a point had been reached where he could no longer take the ceaseless humiliation. Widely regarded as an act of sheer frustration, fuelled by despair, anger, and a claim to be treated with basic human dignity, his self-immolation brought masses of people to the streets, first in Tunisia and then in other countries across the region.

One common demand in these uprisings was the call for ‘freedom, dignity, and social justice’. Citizens rallied against ‘*al-fasad wa-l-istibdad*’, corruption and tyranny, which for many protesters were deeply interlinked (Gerges 2014: 14). In addition to frustrations with the widespread petty corruption of state representatives, these public outcries also criticised the self-enrichment of elites, who had exploited national resources while the majority of the population suffered under the burden of rising prices, stagnating wages, and rampant unemployment on the one hand, whereas on the other, public education and health services deteriorated and opportunities for social mobility virtually vanished. Employment offering sufficient social protection was indeed largely distributed along clientelist networks instead of according to qualification and merit.

Scholars interpreted the mass protests against these interlinked phenomena as an expression of indignation at the violation of certain tacit political and socioeconomic norms established in the post-independence period in the 1950s and 1960s. At that time, ruling elites expanded the welfare state but expected political loyalty, or at least acquiescence, from their populations – a relationship that is often referred to as the old social pact (Ibrahim 1996; Harders 2003; Desai et al. 2009). In the wake of the neoliberal reforms of the 1980s and 1990s, which entailed the states’ successive withdrawal from performing social welfare functions, informal clientelistic and charitable networks regained importance, but could not compensate for the loss of security felt by middle- and low-income households (Harders 2003; Haenni 2005). An increase in the

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number of socioeconomic protests by workers or unemployed people in Egypt and Tunisia, for instance, (Allal 2010; Duboc 2011; Abdalla 2015) during the 2000s was an early sign that the existing system – formal and informal – was no longer functioning as before. Against this historical background, the uprisings of 2011 were regarded by many scholars as a breakdown of the authoritarian social pacts (Assaad 2011; Hibou 2011; Harders 2013; Zorob 2013; Ruiz de Elvira and Zintl 2014). Since the regimes were increasingly incapable, or unwilling, to deliver socioeconomic benefits, then political loyalty eroded too. However, political processes and social mobilisations do not follow mechanistic patterns of cause-and-effect; they are rather the result of complex symbolic interactions (Goodwin and Jaspers 2004) within specific moral economies (Thompson 1971).

The call for social justice could indeed be found in every popular mobilisation in the region, and yet we still know little about the specific norms and social orders that people in the streets actually called for in 2011. This is related to the fact that, due to the tendency to mainly express moral outrage, elaborated and precise socioeconomic demands often remained at the margins of the protests (Catusse 2013), and that in the ensuing political processes (from democratisation in Tunisia to diverse changes within authoritarian regimes as in Morocco or Egypt) socioeconomic issues were largely marginalised by politicians (Weipert-Fenner and Wolff 2015). As for the academic debate, strong focus has been put on politico-institutional reforms in the respective countries and therefore on formal institutions and their procedural norms (and to violations thereof). The informal dimension of (re)distribution, as well as its power relations from the local to the national level, has hence been relatively disregarded in the literature produced after 2011.

Nonetheless, social inequalities, corruption, clientelism, and patronage still cause discontent and trigger protests today, for instance in Tunisia (Vatthauer and Weipert-Fenner 2017), Morocco (Masbah 2017; Schwarz 2017), Algeria (Cristiani 2017), Lebanon, and Iraq (Yahya 2017). The surveys of the Arab Barometer actually show that the two most important challenges perceived by the population in the MENA countries are constantly the economic situation and what the Arab Barometer labels ‘financial and administrative corruption’ (Arab Barometer 2011; 2013). (Re)Distribution of wealth through both state and non-state mechanisms and actors thus remains a crucial issue for post-2011 Middle Eastern and North African societies and political regimes. Indeed, quite similar to other world regions (e.g. South-America and Europe; Brun and Diamond 2014; Combes and Vommaro, 2015), clientelist and patronage networks play an important role with respect to gaining access to material and immaterial goods and for the (re)distribution of private and public resources in everyday life (Leca and Schemel 1983; Ayubi 1995).

Despite the ongoing mobilisation against patronage and clientelism, and although these phenomena have long been problematised by Middle East scholars as central features of the political systems and societies of this region, there has been surprisingly little research on the role they played in sparking

the conflicts and in the political transformation of and since 2011. This edited volume takes the grassroots phenomenon of the 2011 uprisings as a point of departure for reassessing clientelism and patronage across the entire MENA region, including those countries where mobilisations were not prominent (e.g. Lebanon or Jordan). How had the relationships within and between clientelist and patronage networks changed before 2011, and how did these changes contribute to the destabilisation of the established political and social order? How did they affect less visible political processes? And *vice versa*: How have the political transformations since 2011 in turn reconfigured these networks in terms of strategies and instruments, and concomitantly what implications has this had for the inclusion or exclusion of new actors? Are specific networks expanding or shrinking in the post-2011 contexts? Do these networks reproduce established forms of patron-client relations or do they translate into new modes and mechanisms?

This edited volume seeks to answer these questions with a broad set of original and empirically-based case studies covering Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and the Gulf monarchies. They analyse different forms of reconfigurations of patronage and clientelist networks and, if given, the corresponding emergence of contentious politics targeting these very networks. They equally explore the interaction with specific political transformations, including changes within and of regimes. Most importantly, they take into account the contingency embedded in these relationships, including a strong focus on the agency of clients and brokers. Instead of regarding the asymmetric power relations that characterise clientelistic relations as static, this book looks at the multiple dynamics that evolve around what we call *networks of dependency*.

By doing so, this book provides the first systematic study of clientelism and patronage across the MENA region after the uprisings of 2011. Taking a comparative, diachronic/synchronic and multidisciplinary perspective, we approach these phenomena as dynamic and contingent social relations based on the exchange of material and symbolic goods and resources between actors with different types of power and asymmetric degrees of leverage, generating (in)formal *networks of dependency*.

Recent literature on clientelism and patronage in the MENA region

Some remarkable works have already used a network approach in order to understand clientelism and patronage in the region. Diane Singerman (1995) in her seminal book *Avenues of Participation*, a political anthropology that looked into the informal community organisation of Cairo's poor neighbourhoods, understood informal networks as 'the political lifeline of community'. Instead of considering them as result of a mere co-optation of citizens by elites and an authoritarian regime, she proposed a grassroots-perspective that highlighted the agency of lower class clients in the formation of clientelist networks:

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Neither state institutions nor the political elite dominate informal networks, although the *shah* consciously strive to incorporate local state bureaucrats and political elites into their networks to facilitate access to public goods controlled by the state.

(Singerman 1995, p. 133)

In addition to this conscious and strategic network building, Asef Bayat (1997, p. 16ff.) introduced the notion of 'passive networks' in order to better understand the agency of the disenfranchised and marginalised subjects of MENA societies. Bayat is not primarily concerned with clientelism and patronage, but his concepts of 'non-movements' and the common strategy of 'quiet encroachment of the ordinary', by which otherwise relatively powerless individuals pragmatically try to improve their lives, imply everyday tacit negotiations with local authorities and the rich. These concepts are thus highly relevant for an understanding of the clients' agency within *networks of dependency*, in particular regarding the aspect of latent communication and, so to say, horizontal proto-organisation among the clients. Referring back to the above-mentioned case of the unlicensed street vendor Muhammad Bouazizi, the concept of non-movements based on passive networks sheds light on the outrage and seemingly 'spontaneous' collective action that can erupt when representatives of the state disrespect the customary entitlements that the passive networks of the marginalised and disenfranchised tacitly acquired by quiet encroachment of the ordinary.

Another trend in the literature has focused on the elites' or the middle-classes' networks while trying to explain the stability of regimes, often from a top-down perspective. Most prominently, Steven Heydemann's (2004) edited book *Networks of Privilege in the Middle East* offered an analysis of the formation and reconfiguration of rent-seeking networks against the background of the economic reform processes since the 1980s. Against the expectations of modernisation theorists, the general argument was that economic liberalisation often merely restructured, if not deepened, the clientelistic practices it was supposed to overcome, and so failed to result in more transparency or accountability. The contributions illustrated the strategic uses of reforms and reform discourses by incumbents and economic elites to advance their political interests. As a consequence of this focus, the book hardly took into account the strata below these elites (e.g. middle classes, Islamic charitable organisations, grassroots associations and tribes) and how they gained access or were excluded from these networks.

In turn, Janine Clark's (2004) book *Middle-Class Networks and Social Welfare in Egypt, Jordan, and Yemen* looked precisely at the middle stratum. It offered a comprehensive account of the activities of 'Islamic social institutions' in these three Middle Eastern countries. Clark argued that these organisations, instead of aiming to recruit the disenfranchised poor, play an important role in expanding and strengthening networks of the educated middle class. Clark thus emphasised the importance of horizontal ties rather than vertical

ties, and hence introduced concepts of social movement theory into the debate on clientelism and patronage in the region.

Further insights into the intricate nature of patron-client relations were gained with respect to Egypt in particular, a context that has attracted significant interest and predominated over other countries. For instance, the works of Cilja Harders (2003) focused on complex networks of informal politics in Egypt on the local level, while Patrick Haenni's book (2005) analysed '*l'ordre des caïds*' (i.e. the big men's order) in Cairo's Imbaba neighbourhood. Haenni shows how the state's difficulties in satisfying social welfare demands in the 1980s paved the way for the return of social philanthropy and clientelistic mechanisms on the micro level, where the *caïds* could act as 'men of good', 'men of money', 'men of services', and 'men of influence' (pp. 288). In the same vein, our author Mohamed Fahmy Menza's (2013) *Patronage Politics in Egypt: The National Democratic Party and Muslim Brotherhood in Cairo* looked at micropolitics in connection to the patronage strategies of these two organisations. Conceptually drawing on Heydemann's networks perspective, he addressed the role of 'lesser notables' in Cairo's Misr al-Qadima quarter during the last years of the Mubarak era. Much like Haenni, his findings underlined the big patrons' dependency on local 'lesser notables' who serve as mediators and do not always act in line with the intentions of both the then-ruling party and the Muslim Brotherhood, but put their own interests and those of their own clients first. In the edited volume at hand, he extends this view and elaborates how the massive power shifts at the national level since 2011, with the ousting of Mubarak and the rise and fall of the Muslim Brotherhood, affected the *networks of dependency* on the micro-level. Another interesting work on Egypt is that of Safinaz El Tarouty (2015). In *Businessmen, Clientelism, and Authoritarianism in Egypt* she once more challenged the assumption that neoliberal reforms would entail democratisation and drew a more nuanced picture of the ambivalent role of businessmen in the political economy of Mubarak's authoritarianism. Contrasting different modes of co-optation by the regime (authoritarian clientelism, semi-clientelism, mutual dependency, patron-broker-client relationships) she highlighted that co-optation and the ensuing relations are dynamic and flexible, while albeit mainly conceiving co-optation as a vertical relationship.

Daniel Corstange's (2016) *The Price of a Vote in the Middle East* offers a different perspective when looking into clientelism and communal politics in Lebanon and Yemen. Based on mixed methods – mainly qualitative interviews with party politicians and quantitative surveys with their constituencies – Corstange develops a theory of ethnic monopsony, claiming that patrons who do not face competition from other patrons within their ethnic community tend to provide less services, a phenomenon that is more predominant in rural than in urban settings. Largely following a top-down perspective and conceiving of ethnic favouritism as a vertical relationship, he emphasises the patrons' preference for durable ties with their clients. Although Corstange's research is based on data collected before 2010 and does not take the changes

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after 2011 into account, his concept of ethnic monopsony points to important aspects regarding the fragility and the durability of patronage relations.

Another approach to studying elections and informal local redistributive politics is *Clientélisme et patronage dans l'Algérie contemporaine* by Mohammed Hachemaoui (2013). This work focuses on the case of Algeria and comes in the wake of a rich literature in French on the topic of the *notables*, the *zāïms*, and the *caïds* (e.g. Ben Nefissa and Arafat 2005; Haenni 2005; Mermier and Mervin 2012) as well as on that of Islamist partisan and social networks. Hachemaoui offers an ethnographic account of vote buying and co-optation by the ruling party in two municipalities of the country in the elections of 2004. He distinguishes between three channels of clientelism – tribalism, maraboutism, and fraternities – and thereby focuses on the role of ‘invented traditions’ in the sense of Hobsbawm in particular.

More recently and albeit not exclusively focused on the MENA region, Amin Allal, Myriam Catusse, and Montserrat Emperador Badimon have provided another relevant book contributing to the debate on clientelism and patronage. Their edited volume *Quand l'industrie proteste. Fondements moraux des (in)soumissions ouvrières* (2018) comprises eight chapters, three of which are case studies on Jordan, Lebanon, and Tunisia. These chapters analyse different forms of clientelist relations in the industrial sector, which they study through the lens of the social conflicts, the demands, and the moral economies that they generate.

Most of these works show a clear trend to conceive of clientelism and patronage as dynamic network relationships that go beyond the traditional dyadic patron-client connection. The argument we put forward in the present edited volume is precisely in this vein, but it also aims at filling certain gaps evident in the scholarship outlined above. Namely, whereas Clark confines her research to Islamic actors and Harders and Haenni to Egyptian informal politics, the contributions to Heydemann's book look exclusively at top-down reform processes and their repercussions on the ground. As for works published after 2011, they mostly focus on Egypt and concentrate on a few types of actors. The compilation at hand is the first edited volume that not only contributes case studies from seven countries (Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Gulf monarchies), but does so in combination with a wide spectrum of categories of clientelist ties (top-down, horizontal, bottom-up, centre-periphery, coercive-volitional) and types of actors (ruling parties, tribes, unorganised protesters, civil society associations, religious networks, and armed organisations), while addressing the current debates on clientelism and patronage in the MENA region.

We intend not only to provide empirically rich and detailed analyses of these specific countries but also to engage with major debates in comparative politics and political sociology by offering an interdisciplinary conceptual approach that can ‘travel’ across place and time. These debates have hardly taken the experiences of the Middle East and North Africa into account (e.g. Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007; Abente Brun and Diamond 2014), thus almost

catering to vague notions of some sort of ‘Arab exceptionalism’. And yet MENA countries offer interesting insights, particularly now that the protests of 2011 exposed the constituencies’ indignation with clientelism and corruption, the fragility of some clientelist networks as well as the adaptability and persistence of others – dynamics that hitherto had been too often overlooked. The 2011 events thus contradicted certain studies on the ‘degrees and patterns of clientelist exchange variation across and within states’ (Hicken 2011: 298), which regarded collective action of multiple clients against patrons as unlikely (Lyne 2007). Several case studies in this book show when and how the collective action of clients becomes possible and, moreover, politically relevant. The current trend of focusing on elections in the study of patron-client relations delivers interesting insights (e.g. Auyero 1999; Chandra 2007; Lust 2009), yet fully understanding these networks needs to go well beyond that and implies taking the everyday life of a constituency into account.

Networks of dependency as a research perspective

To achieve this, we take up the network approach developed in earlier works while shifting the focus towards the mutual dependency between the different actors involved. The concept of *network*, employed in the social sciences to understand political, economic and social interactions between individuals as well as groups, and to assess the resource and information flows between them, enables a line of questioning and analysis that goes beyond vertically-structured dyadic and triadic schemes. The network necessarily directs attention to the complex, asymmetric and multifaceted character of the social relations that we take as units of analysis. Embedding actors within their patterns of interactions and social context, which includes historical legacies, social and economic structures, and the state’s very basic capacity to implement policies, generates insights into the (re-)distribution of power and the impact their actions have on, sometimes barely discernible, social and political processes.

The notion of *dependency*, in turn, emphasises the fact that clientelist and patronage relations are, while asymmetric, reciprocal and thus mutually binding. By stressing the patrons’ political, economic, social, and sometimes affective dependency on clients and *vice versa*, it highlights the often-ignored agency of the latter, opening up a perspective on the constant re-negotiation of clientelist relations (Briquet 1997; Briquet and Sawicki 1998). This includes the contentious actions of clients against patrons, competition amongst patrons, as well as the agency of excluded clients, who demand a re-inclusion into the networks of dependency and the benefits they distribute.

Far from being a mere ‘infrastructure’ between the actors, *networks of dependency* also frame the meaning of the established relations themselves. With every affirmation or renegotiation of the respective relationship by the involved patrons, brokers, and clients, mutual obligations are acknowledged or reinterpreted, social and political identities performed. Accordingly, this

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approach requires taking the dimension of the actors' values and beliefs into account, as well as their subjective perception of clientelist networks and of state-society relations (Singerman 1995; Auyero 2001; Catusse and Zaki 2009). Seminal works on the subject like Eisenstadt and Roninger (1980) indeed emphasise that patronage and clientelism are only effective if they can rely on normative assumptions, such as an alleged 'friendship' between patron and client, which camouflages the exploitive aspects of such asymmetrical power relations.

Networks of dependency, thus, in spite of their inbuilt asymmetry, work only if they follow the specific norms of appropriateness that have become hegemonic in a specific context, norms to which patrons and clients alike are bound. Petty corruption is hence very uncommon in a place where patronage, family rule and business are regarded as 'normal', for example, in the Gulf countries. In the same vein, daily bribes might be perceived as annoying but regarded as inevitable, as in many republics in the MENA region, where at the same time ruling elites, who dominate politics and the economy, live in luxury and try to pass on their power to their sons, are regarded as an affront (like in Egypt where Husni Mubarak allegedly prepared his son Gamal for his succession during the 2000s).

With this perspective, the conceptual approach of *networks of dependency* speaks to other notions frequently debated in the context of the MENA region (and beyond), such as that of the authoritarian social contract (cf. Harders 2003) and the moral economy approach (Thompson 1971; Scott 1977; Pripstein Posusney 1993). The perspective we propose here implies indeed an understanding of social relationships and agency that transcends atomistic concepts of actors, narrowly defined as driven by individualistic utility maximisation, without however falling into the opposite trap of conceiving them as merely 'irrational', for example when they are perceived as sticking to 'traditional' cultural practices disintegrated by the modernisation process. Instead, norms and beliefs are contextualised, analysed as a connector between rational choices and the mobilisation of emotions in dealing with social inequality and (shifting) power relations in the neoliberal era. This perspective helps to understand at which point, and against which specific socio-historical background, the actions of patrons or brokers are perceived as unjust and provoke indignation, capable of triggering protest and other forms of contentious collective action by the clients – as seen in the 2011 uprisings (see in particular Mohammad Yaghi's contribution to this volume).

And yet looking at clientelism and patronage from the perspective of *networks of dependency* is not a plea for limiting the analysis to the local level and to its specific historicity and socio-cultural characteristics. Today more than ever, the local is interconnected with the national, international and transnational levels, thus adding to the complexity of these very networks (see Birkholz and Zeidan). Likewise, the relation between centre and periphery within a nation state can take different shapes, for instance a marginalised periphery with its patrons trying to act as brokers to the head of the state and channel some

resources to neglected areas (see Suárez-Collado). The periphery can also be crucial for ruling from the centre, depending on the legitimacy basis of the respective ruling elite. Regional patrons who want to meet the expectations expressed by their support base might need to push the head of state to comply with their demands and thus threaten to withdraw support (Melián Rodríguez). All these spatial dynamics are fundamental to political rule, which can be thereby strengthened and/or undermined by shifts within and between *networks of dependency*.

Regarding temporal aspects, the conceptual approach of *networks of dependency* makes a case for a mid- to long-term perspective. This entails studying how these networks emerge, expand, contract, succeed, or fail through time. As Tine Gade's contribution to this book illustrates in the case of the Lebanese Future Movement, the attempt to create clientelistic ties with a constituency only through an *ad hoc*, short-term incentive of vote buying that re-occurs just every few years is bound to fail when clients prefer patrons with higher social embeddedness in the community, even if less material resources are distributed this way. Likewise, Fahmy Menza stresses the role of lesser notables as pragmatic and durable intermediaries between the grass-roots level, the upper echelons of the Egyptian regime, and Islamist organisations; while power relations within these structures might shift, the brokers on the local level are very likely to stay, since they rely on a network of durable relationships that they can employ flexibly. In fact, as stressed by comparative works on clientelism, iteration is the major characteristic of clientelism that distinguishes it from forms of outright corruption, such as bribes (Eisenstadt and Roniger 1984; Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007: 9). The delivery of benefits and loyalty is a wager on the future and is tied to expectations and trust, emotional components which can erode. From an actor's point of view, a longer time frame allows the other side's behaviour to be monitored. Likewise, from a researcher's perspective, it creates the possibility to track how both sides adjust their behaviour, whether they are moved to increase or decrease their investment of resources or search for alternatives.

Such an approach overcomes simplistic dualist models structured around rupture/continuity or stasis/change. The benefits are potentially significant: It enables us to discern and follow the less visible transformations in these relations as well as any attempts to overcome, revive, or rebuild them. Moreover, *networks of dependency* open a perspective on informal politics and their interplay with formal political institutions and actors, for instance the role of tribes and lesser notables and their connectedness to ruling parties and elites (Fahmy Menza and Melián Rodríguez), or to politically-connected firms (Gürakar and Bircan). Political change, we argue, whether taking place incrementally or in more volatile forms of rupture such as the uprisings of 2011, can therefore be more comprehensively understood when these (sometimes competing) networks are taken into account.

More specifically, we study and document the complex and diversified nature of *networks of dependency* along six aspects:

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- 1 The variety of actors in terms of the degree of formalisation and position within *networks of dependency*, such as businessmen, civil society activists, international organisations employees, (lesser) notables, members of the elite, militia members, party members, thugs / petty criminals, tribe members, voters;
- 2 The provision of material and symbolic goods and services (including shifts in quantity and quality of resources), such as jobs, housing, loyalty, money, partisan support, physical coercion, regional autonomy, services, symbolic and affective resources;
- 3 The patterns of relationships and social ties: *assabiyya*, co-optation, friendship, kinship, partisanship, partnership;
- 4 The nature of power relations: asymmetric – reciprocal, coercive – volitional, horizontal – vertical, top-down – bottom-up;
- 5 The types of networks: army networks, civil society organisations, (international) enterprises, (international) NGOs, kinship networks, mafia networks, militias, political parties, religious networks, tribes;
- 6 The dynamics within and between networks: cooperation, competition, conflict, domination.

Moreover, the *networks of dependency* approach takes into account the different degrees of (*in*)*formality* of these networks (official / institutionalised, informal, clandestine) and their variation along the dimensions of *spatiality* (local – translocal, regional – transregional, national – transnational, centre – periphery) and *temporality* (long-term relationship, occasional interaction, one-time encounter). These variations also depend on the *political context*: On the one hand the current political situation (stability, instability, political crisis), and on the other the different historical backgrounds, i.e. postcolonial regime and state-building trajectories (authoritarianism – hybrid regime – democracy, monarchy – republic, rentier state – resource poor country, fragile/failing state – limited statehood – strong state, (post-) conflict context).

This multilevel approach reveals that *networks of dependency* indeed play a central role in state-society relations and remain very much interwoven with the state and its capacity to implement (re-)distributive measures, whether it be in resource-rich countries, such as the Gulf monarchies, or in resource poor countries that have undergone the transformation from state-controlled to market economies. On this issue, the general literature debates if privatisation and liberalisation – i.e. the partial withdrawal of the state from the economy and from the social sphere – actually harms clientelist relations (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007), or if the latter are simply adapted to the logics of the market (Roniger 2004:367). While we support the idea that such major structural changes indeed impact on clientelist relations, we also argue, as mentioned above, that this takes place in far more complex ways and in different contexts of the state-society nexus. The contributions in this volume stress the agency of the involved actors, their normative preferences as well as the different strategies they pursue (with intended and unintended consequences,

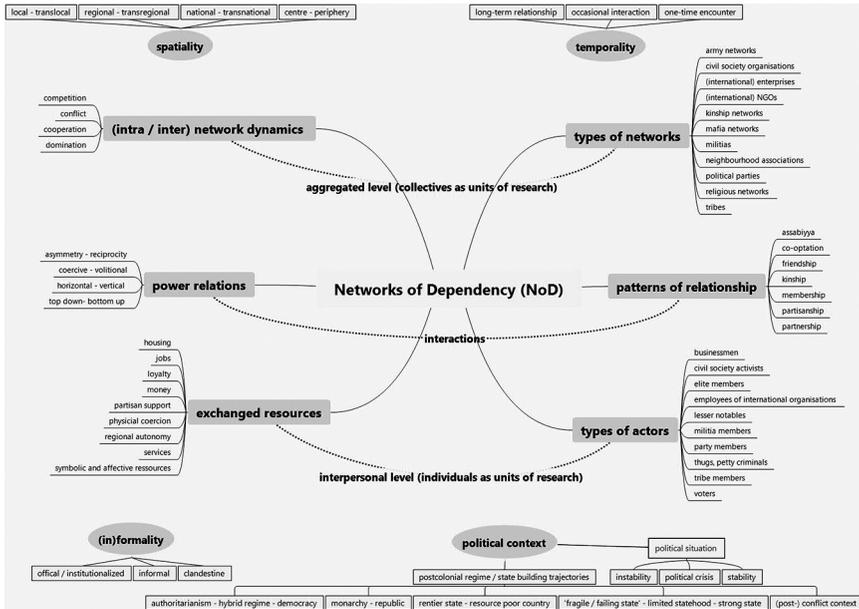


Figure 0.1 Networks of dependency

with the successful adaption to the new economic structures and examples of failure). They thus reveal a range of trajectories resulting from changes to the role the state plays in the region.

In sum, the multilevel conceptual approach of *networks of dependency* allows us to investigate how clientelist relations may contribute to political stability (creation of loyalty, dividing the opposition between co-opted and excluded forces) but can also nourish demands and, sometimes, lead to instability and new windows of opportunity (e.g. protests and breakdowns of social pacts, cases of failed co-optation and clients' contention against the reduction of distributed resources or the relation of dependency as such), thus politicising or de-politicising social issues.

Outline of the book

The book starts with two major conceptual discussions. The first chapter explores how clientelist and patronage relationships change along vertical lines from the local to the transnational level. Sina Birkholz critically assesses the current state of the general theoretical debate in patronage and clientelism and argues for the need of a multi-layered perspective given the transnational dimension of favouritism and *networks of dependency* in the MENA region. In turn, the second chapter, by Matthew Gray, discusses how to theorise the variations in the politics of patronage, clientelism, and corruption that take place in the Gulf monarchies, which due to their resource wealth are often

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regarded as prime, yet static, examples of these phenomena. Furthermore, this chapter includes a discussion of the rentier-state concept.

The second section includes four contributions that look into changes in state-society and patron-client relations over time against the background of neoliberal restructuring in the region. Esra Gürakar and Tuba Bircan analyse the redistributive politics of the Mass Housing Administration in Turkey, seeing it as an example of how the ruling AKP allocated state resources according to clientelist logics in spite of their otherwise widely-hailed liberal economic policies. The chapter serves as an example of how new patrons can ascend and solidify their position via the means of formal electoral politics. In the subsequent contribution, Mohamed Fahmy Menza studies patron-client relations on the local level of Cairo. Since Sadat's *infitah* reforms in the 1970s, lesser notables and Islamic social institutions have increasingly replaced the state in terms of welfare provision. Fahmy Menza explores how the political changes in the national leadership post 2011 have affected these local *networks of dependency* and situates these changes in the long ongoing power dynamics in Egypt since the beginning of neoliberal reforms. He highlights the ability of *networks of dependency* to adapt to macro-political changes, including ruptures such as the 2011 ousting of Mubarak. Mohammad Yaghi then shifts attention to contention against *networks of dependency*. He combines the examination of slogans used during the 2011 demonstrations with narrative interviews of activists to argue that protesters in Egypt and Tunisia revolted against what he calls the imperative nature of 'competitive clientelism'. He embeds the conflict and the contentions raised into his analysis of how clientelism and patronage had changed during neoliberal times, turning into a set of relationships enforced on clients, leaving them with no other option but a life perceived as an ongoing violation of their basic human dignity. In the last chapter of this section, Tine Gade takes the case of the Future Movement in Lebanon to retrace the development of patron-client relations since the Lebanese civil war, highlighting that private businessmen who became major political actors in the post-war context mainly resorted to strategies like vote buying, but failed to maintain or create similar ties of loyalty to those achieved by former patrons who had regular close contact to their clients. She clearly shows how patrons' strategies can fail when the values and beliefs on the clients' side are disrespected.

The third section concentrates on the role of brokers in both patron-client and state-society relations. Ángela Suárez-Collado looks both into the phenomenon of 'associative clientelism' in the Moroccan Rif region and into the role of local elites in brokering ties with the *Makhzen* – the monarchy's network of patronage and control. She explores the agency of brokers and their challenging role to mediate between a contentious population and a central power, for a long time regarded as the political enemy. Diana Zeidan explores the reconstruction projects undertaken in the south Lebanese border region after the 2006 war and shows how they are embedded in Hezbollah's political and confessional strategies, which had meanwhile adapted to a logic of

neoliberal governmentality. She argues that international aid, discretely channelled to Hezbollah as an efficient actor on the ground, at the same time strengthened Hezbollah's role and shifted it from a *de facto* broker between international donors and local population to the perception on the ground that it was in fact the actual patron, which led to a further politicisation of the reconstruction process. Lastly, Luis Melián Rodríguez sheds light on the patron-client dynamics that structure Jordanian politics by analysing the intermediary role played by tribes before and during the so-called 'Arab Spring', including an episode of open criticism levelled at the king. His contribution underlines the mutual dependency in clientelist and patronage relationships that tie even a king to the expectations of brokers and clients.

Conclusion

All of the case studies included in this book illustrate that patron-client relationships are neither static (as a simple pillar of rule of a resilient authoritarian regime) nor do they evolve in a linear way, i.e. towards strengthening or weakening a political regime. Likewise, they do not disappear in the context of liberalised markets, but adapt to changing macroeconomics, sometimes successfully, sometimes not. Macrostructures cannot account for the existence or various dynamics identified here in patron-client relations. The studies therefore support the plea to give more importance to in-case variation and micro-processes (cf. Hoffmann et al. 2013; Schwedler 2015). Yet, patronage and clientelism are of course interlinked with political regimes and economic systems, albeit in more complex ways. Studying them as *networks of dependency* helps to disentangle these complexities by systematically considering all relevant actors, their values and beliefs as well as their interactions. A mid- to long-term perspective reveals not only non-linear trajectories that can include major ruptures, such as the uprisings of 2011, but also continuities in spite of major changes, such as the ousting of a head of state and even substantial regime change. In short, in the MENA region as in other countries, *networks of dependency* – in all their variation – are an essential element of the populations' everyday reality. They will continue to be part of the dynamic and ambivalent reconfigurations of regimes and societies from Morocco to Turkey, Lebanon, or Egypt, but most probably will also continue to be contested, albeit maybe in less spectacular ways than in 2011.

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