

## Department of Anthropology and Sociology (ANSO)

Academic year 2019-2020

### The State: Post-colonial perspectives

**ANSO105- Autumn - 6 ECTS**

[Schedule & Room](#)

### Course Description

The course will focus on the state as an object of sociological and anthropological analyses. Students will be introduced to the Subaltern Studies scholarship on the colonial state as well as to writings using Gramscian and Foucauldian approaches to study modern state power and everyday practices. How can state power be conceptualized? How well do western concepts of the state, sovereignty, bureaucratic rationality, travel to non-western contexts? What forms of violence, legality, welfare characterize the functioning of post-colonial states? What follows from a theorization of state power in terms of its incapacities and weaknesses?

Ethnographies of the post-colonial state in Africa (Comaroffs, Roitman, Mbembe), Middle East (Mitchell), India (Das, Chatterjee, Gupta), Latin America (Coronil) and Central Asia will be used to familiarize students with a variety of theoretical perspectives and conceptual frameworks as well as methodological tools for a study of state institutions, practices and imaginaries. The course will introduce students to questions of law and violence, bureaucracy and corruption, sovereignty and hegemony, bio-power and governmentality as well as neo-liberal transformations of the state in a comparative perspective.

### > PROFESSOR

Shalini Randeria  
[shalini.randeria@graduateinstitute.ch](mailto:shalini.randeria@graduateinstitute.ch)

[Office hours](#)

### > ASSISTANT

Dalia Zein  
[dalia.zein@graduateinstitute.ch](mailto:dalia.zein@graduateinstitute.ch)

[Office hours](#)

## Syllabus

### SESSIONS :

There will be four full day sessions

Friday, 11 October 9:15 am to 6 pm (room P3-506)

Saturday, 12 October 9:15 am to 6 pm (room P3-506)

Friday, 1 November 9:15 am to 6 pm (room P3-506)  
Saturday, 2 November 9:15 am to 6 pm (room P3-506)

**GRADING :**

- 30% classroom participation and group presentation
- 70% Final Paper of 3500-4000 words on topics discussed in the course.  
The final paper must be submitted by **December 30, 2019** (midnight)

**SESSION 1:** Friday, 11 October 2019

**9:15 am – 11 am: The state of the state in anthropology:  
An introduction (Shalini Randeria):**

An overview of the course; What is the state? How can state power and practices be conceptualized? How can state power and practices be studied?

Discussion of our experiences of studying or encountering the state

**Required readings:**

Bouchard, Michel. 2011. "The State of the Study of the State in Anthropology." *Reviews in Anthropology* 40(3): 183-209.

Abrams, Philip. 2006. "Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State." In *Anthropology of the State: A Reader*. Edited by Gupta, Akhil and Sharma, Aradhana. Blackwell Publishing: 112-131.

**Additional readings:**

Brandel, Andrew and Randeria, Shalini. 2018. "Anthropological Perspectives on the Limits of the State", in *Oxford Handbook of Limited Statehood*. Edited by Anke Draude, Tanja A. Borzel, and Thomas Risse. Oxford University Press.

Fassin, Didier, 2015. *At the Heart of the State*, London: Pluto Press.

Ferre, Mariane C. 2013. "Introduction: Localizing the State." *Anthropological Quarterly* 86(4): 957-963.

Ong, Aihwa, *Flexible Citizenship. The Cultural Logics of Transnationality*, Durham:,Duke University Press, 1999

Sharma, Akhil and Gupta, Aradhana. 2006. "Rethinking Theories of the State in an Age of Globalization". in *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader*. Edited by Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta. Blackwell Publishing: 1-43.

**11.15 am - 13:00 am: The State: From modernization theory to post-colonial and post-structural approaches (Shalini Randeria):**

Introduction to the literature; discussion of key concepts and theories esp. Gramscian and Foucauldian approaches; What does it mean to study the state from its margins? How well do western concepts of the state, sovereignty, bureaucratic rationality travel to the rest of the world?

**Readings:**

Das, Veena. 2004: "Chapter 9: The Signature of the State: the Paradox of Illegibility." In *Anthropology in the Margins of the State*. Edited by Das, Veena and Poole, Deborah. SAR Press: 225-252.

Hansen, Thomas Blom, and Finn Stepputat. 2001. *States of Imagination: Ethnographic Explorations of the Postcolonial State*. Duke University Press.

Gramsci, Antonio. 2006. "State and Civil Society" In *the Anthropology of the State: A Reader*. Edited by Gupta, Akhil and Sharma, Aradhana. Blackwell Publishing: 71-85.

**Lunch Break (1-2 pm)**

**2:00 pm – 3.30 pm: Studying the state at its margins: the case of the sponsorship system and migrant labour in Lebanon (Presentation and Discussion led by Dalia Zein, TA)**

**Readings:**

Das, Veena, and Poole, Deborah. 2004: "Chapter 1: State and its Margins: Comparative Ethnographies." In *Anthropology in the Margins of the State*. Edited by Das, Veena and Poole, Deborah. SAR Press: 3-33.

Thelen, Tatjana; Vetter, Larissa; von Benda-Beckmann, Keebet. 2014. "Introduction to Stategraphy: Toward a Relational Anthropology of the State" *Social Analysis*, 58(3) 1-19

Degu Belay, Yeshiwas. 2014. "Migration and State Responsibility: Ethiopian Domestic Workers in Lebanon", *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 4(5).1-8.

**4:15 pm – 6:00 pm**

**Guest lecture by Vinh-Kim Nguyen (ANSO, IHEID)**

**Readings:**

Geissler, P. Wenzel. 2015. "Introduction: A Life Science in its African Para-State" in *Para-States and Medical Science: Making African Global Health*. Edited by Geissler, P. Wenzel. Durham: Duke University Press.

M. Kelty, Christopher. 2017. "Too Much Democracy in all the Wrong Places: Toward a Grammar of Participation", *Current Anthropology* 58(15) S77-S90.

Prince, Ruth and Brown, Hanna. 2016. "Introduction: The Politics & Ethics of Voluntary Labour in Africa" in *Volunteer Economies: The Politics and Ethics of Voluntary Labour in Africa*. Edited by Prince, Ruth and Brown, Hanna. Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer.

## SESSION 2: Saturday, 12 October, 2019

### **9:15am -11 am: Populism in Latin America (Guest Lecture by Rafael Sanchez, ANSO IHEID)**

#### **Readings:**

Sanchez, Rafael. 2016. *Dancing Jacobins: A Venezuelan Genealogy of Latin American Populism*, New York: Fordham University Press.

Mazzarella, William. 2019 "The Anthropology of Populism: Beyond the Liberal Settlement", *Annual Review of Anthropology* 48(1)

### **11:15 am - 1:00 pm: Foucault on Governmentality**

(We will discuss together the texts in the following session but if anyone would like to make an individual or group presentation on these readings please let the TA know)

#### **Readings:**

Foucault, Michel. 2000. "Governmentality' in Power" in *Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984, Vol.3*) Edited by Paul Rabinow, James Faubion and Robert Hurley. New York: The New Press: 92-107.

Dean, Mitchell. 2010. *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society*. London: Sage.

Fassin, Didier. 2011. "Policing Borders, Producing Boundaries. The Governmentality of Immigration in Dark Times." In *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol.40, 213-226.

### **Lunch Break (1-2 pm)**

### **2 pm - 3.30 pm State, Law and Development I (Deval Desai, Albert Hirschman Centre on Democracy) Guest Lecture**

#### **Readings:**

World Development Report, 1989. *Financial Systems and Development: World Development Indicators*. The World Bank. 4 pages.

World Development Report, 1997. *The State in a Changing World*. The World Bank. 13 pages.

World Development Report, 2002. *Building Institutions for Markets*. The World Bank. 9 pages.

World Development Report, 2011. *Conflict, Security and Development*. The World Bank. 14 pages.

World Development Report, 2017. *Governance and the Law*. The World Bank. 10 pages.

#### **4.15 pm – 6 pm State, Law and Development II (Shalini Randeria)**

##### **Readings:**

Randeria, Shalini, 2007. "The State of Globalization: Legal Plurality, Overlapping Sovereignities and Ambiguous Alliances between Civil Society and the Cunning State in India", in: *Theory, Culture and Society*, 24(1): 1-33.

Randeria, Shalini and Ciara Grunder, 2011. "The (Un)making of Policy in the Shadow of the World Bank: Infrastructure Development, Urban Resettlement and the Cunning State in India" in *Policy Worlds. Anthropology and the Analysis of Contemporary Power*. Edited by Sue Wright et al. New York: Berghahn Books: 187-204

Randeria, Shalini, 2008. "Global Designs and Local Lifeworlds: Colonial Legacies of Conservation, Disenfranchisement and Environmental Governance in Postcolonial India", in: *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, 9(1): 12-30.

#### **SESSION 3: Friday, 1 November 2019**

##### **(GROUP PRESENTATIONS)**

##### **09:15am -11 am: State, Market, Development**

Ferguson, J. 2006. "The Anti-Politics Machine" in *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader*. Edited by Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta: 270-287.

Mitchell, Timothy. 2002. *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-politics, Modernity*. University of California Press.

Part I Chapter 2: Principles true in every country

Part III Chapter 7: The Object of Development

Chapter 8: The Market's Place

Mitchell, Timothy, 2006. "Society, Economy, and the State Effect" In *The anthropology of the State: A Reader*. Edited by Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta: 169-186.

Nandy, A. 2007. "Development and Violence" in *The Romance of the State and the Fate of Dissent in the Tropics*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

### **11.15 am -1:00 pm: (II)legality of State Power: Law, Sovereignty, Emergency**

#### **Readings:**

Chatterjee, Partha. 2004. *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World*. Columbia University Press: 53-80.

Comaroff, Jean, and John L. Comaroff, 2006. Introduction in *Law and Disorder in the Postcolony*. University of Chicago Press: 1-56. (Accessible online through IHEID Library site)

Mbembe, Achille. 2006. "The Banality of Power and the Aesthetics of Vulgarly in the Postcolony." In *The Anthropology of the State: a Reader*. Edited by Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta. Blackwell Publishing: 381-395.

Roitman, Janet. 2006. "The Ethics of Illegality in the Chad Basin." *Law and Disorder in the Postcolony*: 247-272.

### **1-2 pm Lunch Break**

### **2pm –3.30 pm: Everyday Practices of the State: Bureaucracy, Corruption**

Bayart, Jean-François. 1993. "The state in Africa: the Politics of the Belly." Wiley: 249.

Blundo, G and Olivier de Sardan, 2006. Everyday Corruption in West Africa, in: *Everyday Corruption and the State*, Zed Books.

Herzfeld, Michael. 1992. *The Social Production of Indifference: Exploring the Symbolic Roots of Western Bureaucracy*. Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press.

Gupta, Akhil. 2012. *Red tape: Bureaucracy, Structural Violence, and Poverty in India*. Duke University Press.

Part I Chapter 2 : The State and the Politics of Poverty

Part II Chapter 3 : Corruption, Politics and the Imagined State

Part III Chapter 5 : «Let the train run on paper» : Bureaucratic Writing as State Practice

Accessible online through IHEID Library site

Gupta, Akhil. 2006. "Blurred boundaries: The Discourse of Corruption, the Culture of Politics, and the Imagined State." In *The Anthropology of the State: a Reader*. Edited by Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta. Blackwell Publishing: 211-242.

Olivier de Sardan, 2013. "The Bureaucratic Mode of Governance and Practical Norms in West Africa and Beyond", in: *Local Politics and Contemporary Transformations in the Arab World*, Palgrave. Edited by Bouziane, M. and Harders, C.

Reno, William, 1995. *Corruption and State Politics in Sierra Leone*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rozakou, Katerina. 2017. "Nonrecording the "European Refugee Crisis" in Greece: Navigating through Irregular Bureaucracy." In *Focaal* 77 : 36-49.

#### **4.15 pm- 6:00 pm: From Welfare States to Neoliberal States**

Kalir, Barak. 2017. "State Desertion and "out-of-procedure" Asylum Seekers in the Netherlands. " in *Focaal* 77: 63-75.

Lan, Shanshan. 2017. "China gives and China takes. African traders and the nondocumenting states." In *Focaal*, 2017(77), 50-62.

Muehlebach, Andrea, 2012 *The Moral Neoliberal. Welfare and Citizenship in Italy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Thelen, Tatjana, Larissa Vetter, and Keebet von Benda-Beckmann, 2018. *Stategraphy: Toward a Relational Anthropology of the State*. NY/Oxford: Berghahn.

Ticktin, Miriam. 2016. "Sexual Violence as the Language of Border Control: Protecting Exceptional Difference." In *Feministische Studien*, 34(2): 284-304.

#### **SESSION 4: Saturday 2 November, 2019**

##### **(GROUP PRESENTATIONS)**

#### **9:15 am -11 am: The State and Violence: Imaginaries and Practices**

##### **Readings:**

Coronil, Fernando. 1997. *The Magical State: Nature, Money, and Modernity in Venezuela*. University of Chicago Press.

Kapferer, Bruce, 2005. "New Formations of Power, the Oligarchic-Corporate State, and Anthropological Ideological Discourse", *Anthropological Theory*, 5(3): 285-299.

Mbembé, J-A. 2001. *On the Postcolony*. Vol. 41. University of California Press. Chapters 1 and 2 (Accessible online through IHEID Library site).

Mbembé, J-A., and Libby Meintjes, 2003. "Necropolitics." *Public Culture* 15(1): 11-40.

## **11.15 am- 1 pm: The Colonial State**

### **Readings:**

Guha, Ranajit. 1997. *Dominance without Hegemony: History and Power in Colonial India*. Harvard: University Press.

Kaviraj, Sudipta. 2010. "A State of Contradictions: The Post-Colonial State in India", in: *The Imaginary Institution of India*. New Delhi: Permanent Black: 210-234.

Nandy, Ashis. 2007. "The State: The Fate of a Concept" in *The Romance of the State and the Fate of Dissent in the Tropics*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press:

Scott, D. 1995. "Colonial Governmentality", *Social Text*, 43, Autumn Issue: 191-220

## **1 – 2 pm Lunch Break**

## **2 pm- 3.30 pm: Can post-colonial approaches analyze transformations of state power and practices in the post-socialist context?**

### **Readings:**

Chari, Sharad, and Katherine Verdery, 2009, "Thinking between the Posts: Postcolonialism, Postsocialism, and Ethnography after the Cold War. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*" 51(01): 6–34.

Moore, David Chioni, 2001. "Is the Post- in Postcolonial the Post- in Post-Soviet? Toward a Global Postcolonial Critique" *PMLA* 116(1): 111–128.

Dunn, Elizabeth Cullen, and Michael S. Bobick, 2014. "The Empire Strikes Back: War without War and Occupation without Occupation in the Russian Sphere of Influence: The Empire Strikes Back". *American Ethnologist* 41(3): 405–413.

## **4.15 pm - 5:00 pm: Concluding session: regional comparisons, methodological approaches and theoretical differences**

## **5.15 pm - 6 pm: Feedback on the seminar**

### **Some background readings:**

Adams, Julia, 2005. *The Familial State. Ruling Families and Merchant Capitalism in Early Modern Europe*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Althusser, Louis, 1970. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)" in *the Anthropology of the State: A Reader*. Edited by Gupta, Akhil and Sharma, Aradhana. Blackwell Publishing: 86-112.



Bayart, Jean-François, Stephen Ellis et Béatrice Hibou, 1998 *The Criminalisation of the State in Africa*, Oxford, James Currey

Bayly, Chris, 2004. *The Birth of the Modern World. 1780-1914. Global Connections and Comparisons*, Oxford: Blackwell

Evans, P., Rueschemeyer, D., & Skocpol, T. 1985. 'Introduction – Bringing the state back in: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research' in *Bringing the State Back In*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.: 3-44.

Fabian, Johannes, 1983, *Time and the Other. How Anthropology Makes its Object*, New York, Columbia University Press,

George Steinmetz, 1999, *State/Culture. State Formation after the Cultural Turn*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press.

Sanchez, Rafael, 2016 *Dancing Jacobins. A Venezuelan Genealogy of Latin American Populism*, New York: Fordham University Press

Tilly, Charles, 1985. 'War Making and State Making as Organized Crime" in Evans, P., Rueschemeyer, D., Skocpol, T. *Bringing the State Back In*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 169-192.

Tilly, Charles, 1990. *Coercion, Capital and European States. A.D. 900-1990*, Oxford: Blackwell.