

## Department of Anthropology and Sociology (ANSO)

Academic year 2020-2021

### The State: Post-colonial perspectives

**ANSO105 - Autumn - 6 ECTS**

**The course will take place virtually via Zoom**

### 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

The course will take place virtually via zoom. The times given below are Geneva times (i.e. CET). We will take a 30 minute break between the two sessions every day.

I will be available for consultations from 3.30 to 4.30 every day after class.

## GRADING:

- 10% attendance
- 30% classroom participation and group presentation
- 60% Final Paper of 3500-4000 words on topics discussed in the course.

The final paper must be submitted by **December 30, 2020 (midnight)**

**N.B:** The syllabus is subject to modifications as we would like to add a movie discussion session. We welcome your suggestions on movies related to the topics addressed in the course, so that we can choose one or two suitable ones. Please bring your ideas for movies that are easily available for each of you to watch individually to the first class on 18<sup>th</sup> September. The movie(s) would be watched outside of class hours prior to the discussion.

18 September 2020

### **12-1:30 pm 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 your 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.

Ferme, 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.

## **2-3.30 pm 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:**

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.

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. 85.

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.

19 September 2020

(We will discuss together the texts in the following two sessions but if you would like to make an individual or a group presentation on these readings and dates please contact the TA)

## **12-1:30 pm Theoretical Approaches**

### **Readings:**

Scott, James C. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. Yale University Press. Chapters 2 and 3  
Accessible online through IHEID Library site

Coronil, Fernando. 2001. "Smelling Like a Market." *The American Historical Review* 106(1): 119-129. (Review of James Scott, *Seeing Like a State*)

Scott, James C. 2009. *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. London: Yale University Press

Randeria, Shalini. 2010. "Opting for Statelessness", *European Journal of Sociology* 51(3): 464-469. (Review of James Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (2009)).

## **2-3:30 pm Foucault on Governmentality**

### **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.

2 October 2020

## **12-1:30 Bourdieu: on the State**

### **Readings:**

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.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 2014. *On the State: Lectures at the Collège de France 1989-1992*. Edited by Champagne, Patrick; Lenoir Remi; Poupeau Franck and Rivière, Marie-Christine. Translated from French by Fernbach, David. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Selected Chapters:

- "The state as viewpoint on viewpoints" & "The two meanings of the word ,state"" ( 25. January 1990)
- "The two faces of the state" (15. February 1990)
- "The two meanings of the word state" (17 January 1991)
- "symbolic power..." along with the sections immediately before and after (7. February 1991)
- "Logic of the genesis and emergence of the state: symbolic capital" (21. February 1991)
- "The double face of the state: domination and integration" (14. Mars 1991).

## **2-3:30 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; Veters, 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.

3 October 2020

(GROUP PRESENTATIONS)

### **12-1:30 pm State, Market, Development**

#### **Readings:**

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.

### **2-3:30 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 Vulgarity in the Postcolony." In *The Anthropology of the State: a Reader*. Edited by Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta. Blackwell Publishing: 381-395.

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

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

16 October 2020

### **12–1:30 pm Everyday Practices of the State (I): Bureaucracy**

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

Accessible online through IHEID Library site

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.

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

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

### **2-3:30 pm Everyday Practices of the State (II): 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.

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.

Reno, William, 1995. *Corruption and State Politics in Sierra Leone*, Cambridge: Cambridge University 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  
Accessible online through IHEID Library site

17 October 2020

### **12-1:30 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.

### **2-3:30 pm 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.

20 November 2020

### **12-1:30 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

### **2-3:30 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.

21 November 2020

### **12- 1:30 pm Gender and the State**

#### **Readings:**

Brown, Wendy. 2006 "Finding the Man in the State" In *Anthropology of the State: A Reader*. Edited by Gupta, Akhil and Sharma, Aradhana. Blackwell Publishing: 187-210

Haney, Lynne and Pollard, Lisa. 2003. "Introduction: In a Family Way: Theorizing State and Familial Relations", In *Families of a New World Gender Politics and State Development in a Global Context*, Edited by Haney, Lynne and Pollard, Lisa. New York: Routledge: 1-14.

Roseblatt, Karin Alejandra, 2003. "Chapter 7: Forging Families: Gender, Reform and the Popular Front State in Chile". In *Families of a New World Gender Politics and State Development in a Global Context*, Edited by Haney, Lynne and Pollard, Lisa. New York: Routledge: 119-138.

Zheng, Wang. 2005. "State Feminism? Gender and Socialist State Formation in Maoist China" in *Feminist Studies* 31(3) 519-551.

Thelen, Tatajana and Alber Erdmute, (eds) 2017 *Reconnecting State and Kinship*: Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.



**2-3:30 pm Concluding session: regional comparisons, methodological approaches and theoretical differences**

**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.

