

Transformation in Patronage, Service Delivery and Social Contract between
States and Citizens in Karachi, Pakistan

Citizens' access to public goods depends on some combination of cost and subsidy, the latter of which is mediated by ideational notions of welfare (top-down) and instrumental demands of political capital (bottom-up). Thirty years after the wholesale export of neoliberal economics to the developing world, the distribution of public utilities is a patchwork of private and state-owned enterprises. I argue that privatization in weak democratic contexts does not circumscribe opportunities for patronage but modifies and may even enhance them, channeling newly "privatized" goods and services through existing political hierarchies. Secondly, I hypothesize that ideational notions of welfare that welcome market operators fundamentally alter citizens' reserves of political capital in the future. Using a mixed-methods approach, I test this theory using the privatized provision of electricity in a globalized megacity. Drawing on public welfare models developed by behavioral economists and comparative political economy theorists, as well as the literature on clientalism, I suggest that the privatization of public goods fundamentally alters citizens' relationship with the state, and with each other, increasing the costs of collective action and lowering institutionalized incentives for solidarity.

This dissertation uses variation in the quality of electricity provision under a private utility firm in Karachi, Pakistan, a city of 21 million, to illuminate this transformation in patronage, service delivery and the social contract between states and citizens. I hope to use a mixed-methods approach in my dissertation, establishing first the historical institutional process of privatization of electricity, the variation in delivery between neighborhoods, and finally the mechanisms that are employed in working around the formal legal structure of service delivery. The first part of the project requires archival work, collecting sources of utility provision and legal documentation, and elite interviews to process-trace pathways to privatization. I will interview bureaucrats, politicians, utility company insiders and union leaders to suggest that the timing and process of privatization is deeply political, and reveals shifts in support base for political parties. Second, I draw on rich experimental and survey methods to sample, survey and play on-site distribution "games" with participants, first to measure utility usage and cost, and then to measure attitudes on redistribution and welfare. I use quantitative spatial analysis to identify key sites of variation in service delivery, and develop matched pairs of neighborhoods that are equal on socioeconomic measures but vary in their access to utilities. Finally, I will employ participant-observation methods at these selected field sites (the Federal Ombudsman's office in Karachi and the local councilor's home in my selected neighborhood, to name a few) where I can observe the day-to-day petitioning of and interaction with the state via the need for a privatized public good, electricity.

I have already received awards from Georgetown's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences for January-May 2018. These have covered the initial part of my research, including the survey design and piloting stage. I have applied for and expect to receive additional grants for the survey itself. The American Institute for Pakistan Studies Grant will cover the costs for follow-up visits between August-December 2018. This will include the cost of a return ticket from Washington, DC, and living and transport costs in Karachi, where commuting times to peripheral neighborhoods vary from an hour to four hours a day. The AIPS grant will enable me to continue my engagement with these

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communities and allow a deeper and multi-faceted, participatory understanding of the lived experience of citizenship.