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CULTURAL AND STRUCTURAL CONTINUITIES IN SITUATIONS OF CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT: PERSISTENCE AND TRANSFORMATION OF PATRON-CLIENT RELATIONS*

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die "klassischen" Studien über die Modernisierung haben durch die Trennung von traditionellen und modernen Gesellschaftsformen eine totale Antinomie zwischen Tradition und Entwicklung erstellt.

Die Kritiker dieser "klassischen" Studien unterstreichen die Unzulänglichkeit dieser Postulate und führen erstens auf, dass viele dieser Gesellschaften und Staaten sich nicht in der Richtung wie gewisse moderne "Nation-Staaten" entwickelt haben; zweitens, dass diese Regime nicht unbedingt eine temporäre Übergangsphase auf dem unumgänglichen Wege zur Modernität darstellen; drittens, dass dabei in ihrer Entwicklung eine gewisse interne "Logik" war; und schliesslich, dass dieser Teil der Logik oder des Pattern in Beziehung zu einigen Aspekten der Traditionen dieser Gesellschaften verstanden werden kann.

All diese Erwägungen haben jedoch neue schwerwiegende Probleme geschaffen. Wie können diese Kontinuitäten in Beziehung gebracht werden mit den hervorstechenden Veränderungen in der sozialen Mobilität und Differenzierung, die mit Entwicklung und Modernisierung verbunden sind? Durch welche Mechanismen werden sie aufrechterhalten?

Dieser Artikel zeigt, dass die Studie der Patron-Klient-Beziehungen eine sehr gute Basis für die Erforschung dieser Probleme bildet.

Die Wichtigkeit dieser Forschungen zeigte sich mit der wachsenden Erkenntnis, dass die Beziehungen Patron-Klient nicht dafür bestimmt sind, am Rande der Gesellschaft zu stehen oder mit der Entwicklung und Gründung von demokratischen oder autoritären Regierungsformen oder mit der ökonomischen Entwicklung und Modernisierung, noch mit der Entwicklung des Klassenbewusstseins der unteren Klassen zu verschwinden. Jeder spezielle Typ von Patronat (z.B. die persönliche, teils institutionalisierte und auf einer quasi Verwandtschaftsbasis gründende Zweierbeziehung Patron-Klient) kann unter solchen Umständen verschwinden. Neue Beziehungsformen können alsdann in manigfaltiger Art und Weise und in verschiedenen Gesellschaften auftreten. Sie durchlaufen verschiedene Stufen der ökonomischen Entwicklung und der politischen Regierungsformen und erfüllen wichtige Funktionen in den modernen, mehr entwickelten Rahmen.

Die zunehmende Wichtigkeit dieser Forschungen hängt mit der Tatsache zusammen, dass sie an einige wichtige theoretische Entwicklungen und Kontroversen der Sozialwissenschaften gebunden waren, in denen die Beziehungen Patron-Klient ein grosses Interesse bildeten.

In dieser Studie analysieren wir eine grosse Anzahl von Unterschieden der Beziehungen Patron-Klient. Ihr gemeinsamer Schwerpunkt sind die sozialen Konditionen, in denen sie sich entwickeln und die durch die verschiedenen Stufen der modernen Entwicklung und der politischen Modernisierung hindurchgehen.

Unter den sozialen Bedingungen haben wir die konstante Interaktion zwischen der Struktur der wichtigsten Eliten und ihre Koalitionen gewählt, sowie die überlieferten kulturellen Orientationen und ausgeübten Kontroll-Modalitäten. Es ist die fortlaufende Retroaktion zwischen kulturellen Orientationen, Elitenstruktur und Koalitionen, sowie der durch sie ausgeübten Kontrollmodalitäten auf die Mobilität der Ressourcen, welche ein Schlüsselement der Kontinuität ist, und dies im Blickpunkt der kulturellen und technologischen Entwicklungsprozesse, sowie der politischen Modernisierung.

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RÉSUMÉ

Les études "classiques" sur la modernisation, par les distinctions faites entre sociétés traditionnelles et sociétés modernes, ont postulé une totale antinomie entre tradition et développement. Les critiques soulignaient l'insuffisance de ces assumptions : nombre de ces sociétés et états ne se sont pas développés dans le même sens que certains états-nations modernes; ces régimes n'ont pas nécessairement constitué une phase "transitionnelle", en suivant une voie inévitable aboutissant à ce type de modernité. Elles suggéraient que leur développement suivait néanmoins une certaine "logique" interne; elles soulignaient qu'une part au moins de cette logique pouvait être comprise en fonction de quelques aspects des traditions de ces sociétés.

Cependant, toutes ces considérations ont posé quelques nouveaux problèmes cruciaux : comment de telles continuités peuvent-elles être liées à des changements notoires dans la mobilisation sociale et la différenciation inhérents au développement et à la modernisation ? Quels sont les mécanismes par lesquels elles sont maintenues ?

Cet exposé montre à quel point l'étude des relations patron-client offre un très bon terrain pour l'exploration de tous ces problèmes.

L'importance de ces études s'est révélée à mesure que l'on se rendait compte que les relations patron-client ne sont pas destinées à rester en marge de la société, ou à disparaître avec le développement et l'établissement de régimes démocratiques ou autoritaires, ou avec le développement économique et la modernisation; ni avec le développement de la conscience de classe dans les couches inférieures. Tout type particulier de patronage (p. ex. la relation personnelle dyadique patron-client semi-institutionnalisée, à base quasi parentale) peut disparaître dans de telles conditions. De nouveaux types de relations peuvent alors apparaître sous une grande variété de formes, dans nombre de sociétés différentes, traversant différents niveaux de développement économique et types de régimes politiques, et remplissant d'importantes fonctions dans ces cadres modernes plus développés.

L'importance grandissante de ces études est due au fait qu'elles étaient liées à quelques-uns des principaux développements théoriques et controversés en sciences sociales — dans lesquels les relations patron-client constituaient un important centre d'intérêts.

Dans ce travail, nous analysons une grande variété de relations patron-client, leur noyau commun, les conditions sociales dans lesquelles elles se développent et qui passent à travers différents niveaux de développement économique et de modernisation politique.

Parmi ces conditions sociales nous avons retenu l'interaction constante entre la structure des principales élites et leurs coalitions, les orientations culturelles qu'elles transmettent et les modes de contrôle qu'elles exercent. C'est la continuelle rétroaction entre orientations culturelles, structure des élites et coalitions et modes de contrôle exercés par elles sur le flux de ressources qui constitue un élément crucial de continuité — par le biais de processus de développement technologique et structurel, ainsi que de modernisation politique.

I

The study of patron-client relations provides a very good way to approach one of the most central problems in studies of modernization and development — namely that of the place of cultural-societal continuities in the process of modernisation and development.

The "classical" studies of modernisation have, as is well known, conflated the distinctions between traditional and modern societies and that between tradition and modernity, and have accordingly assumed a total antinomy between tradition and development.¹

These assumptions were later on very strongly undermined by further research which has shown that first the mere destruction of traditional forms did not necessarily assure the development of a new, viable, modern society, and that

¹ For a further analysis of the development of these assumptions see Eisenstadt (1973a).

very often the mere disruption of traditional settings — be they family, community or even sometimes political settings — tended to lead to disorganization, delinquency and chaos rather than to the setting up of a viable modern order.

In addition to this awareness of possible negative effects on the process of modernization by the destruction of tradition, it was realized that in some countries, such as Japan, Holland, or England, modernization had been successfully undertaken under the aegis of traditional symbols — such as the Crown or the symbols of aristocracy in Britain or the traditional symbols of provincial life in Holland. It was also realized that in many cases in which the initial impetus to modernization was formed under the aegis of anti-traditional elites, these groups tried very soon, even if haltingly, to revive the more traditional aspects and symbols of society.

Second, this research has emphasized what may be called the systemic viability of the so-called transitional systems. This recognition was first most clearly represented in the writings of Fred Riggs, especially in his work on the Sala model (primarily based on his studies of the Philippines and of Thailand).² In his work Riggs attempted to show how, under the impact of forces of modernization coming from the West, a previously traditional system tended to develop into a new type of social or political system; and that such a new system, often described as “transitional”, develops systemic characteristics and properties of its own, creating its own mechanism of stability and self-perpetuation.

These considerations have added a new dimension to the understanding of the variability of modern and modernizing societies and to the consequent growing recognition of their ability to develop in directions which do not necessarily lead into any given “end-stage” as envisaged by the initial model of modernization, as well as comprehension of the great importance of tradition and historical continuities in shaping these directions.

Even in the first stages of research on modernization it was realized that some of the differences between the concrete structural and symbolic contours of different modern societies might be related to different historical traditions.

Perhaps one of the most important — albeit somewhat recent — developments in this context was the growing rise of the concept of “patrimonialism” to describe the political regimes of several of the New States.³

The use of the term “patrimonial” to depict these various regimes implied a reaction to the inadequacies of the central assumptions of the major studies of modernization, as well as of the later concepts like those of “breakdown”, “political decay” or “transitional societies”.

It emphasized the inadequacy of these assumptions by showing first, that many of these societies and states did not develop in the direction of certain modern nation-states; second, that these regimes did not necessarily constitute a temporary “transitional” phase along an inevitable path to this type of modernity; third, by indicating that there was yet some internal “logic” in their development; and, last,

² Riggs (1961, 1962, 1964, 1966).

³ See Eisenstadt (1973b).

by emphasizing that part at least of this logic or pattern could be understood in relation to some aspects of the traditions of these societies.

With the advancement of research such continuities were identified in many central institutional spheres and complexes, such as patterns of intergroup conflicts, of structuring of social hierarchies and patterns of stratification, patterns of political crises and modes of dealing with them.⁴

II

All these developments have, however, posed some new crucial problems – the most important among which was how are such continuities related to obvious changes in social mobilization and differentiation attendant on development and modernization?

Second – what are the mechanisms through which they are maintained and third – how can they be explained?

The study of patron-client relations provides a very good ground for the exploration of all these problems. Here, first of all, the very development of these studies is of interest.

In the late fifties and early sixties the study of patron-client relations was in most of the social sciences – anthropology, sociology and political sciences – in a rather marginal position. It dealt with types of social relations or organizations which were seen as greatly differing the “corporate”, kinship and territorial groups so strongly emphasized in anthropological literature or from universalistic-bureaucratic or market frameworks which were usually portrayed in sociology or in political science as epitomes of modernity and rationality. Patron-client relations – although fascinating – were seen as rather marginal in their respective societies and were studied in the framework of the respective traditional concepts, frameworks and concerns of these disciplines. Since then the study of patronage and patron-client relations has burgeoned into a very central place in all these disciplines⁵. This change was connected first with the extension of the objects of these studies from relatively limited, dyadic, interpersonal, semi-institutionalized relations between a single patron and usually one or at most several clients to a much greater variety of types of social relations and organizations. These ranged from semi-institutionalized personal dyadic or tryadic relations in small communities or in more organized settings (such as various bureaucratic agencies) to relatively loose, less rigidly prescribed social relations, often organized in complex networks and connected by different types of brokers, as well as to loose cliques and factions in political machines – in all of which there took place a less struc-

⁴ Eisenstadt (1974).

⁵ For works done in this stage see Eisenstadt and Roniger (1980). For illustrations of the conceptualization of patron-client relationships since the late sixties see for instance Wolf (1966a), Weingrod (1968), Sociologische Gids (1969), Kaufman (1974), Lemarchand and Legg (1972), Graziano (1975), La Fontaine (1975), Gellner and Waterbury (1977), esp. the following papers: Gellner (1977), Scott (1977), Weingrod (1977) and Waterbury (1977); Davis (1977) and Schmidt et al. (1976).

tured exchange of various services and resources and in which the element of solidarity between the patrons and the clients was much weaker.

Second, these studies encompassed a very wide range of societies throughout the world, in the Mediterranean, the Near East, Latin America, India, Southeast Asia and other parts of the world⁶.

Third, the centrality of these studies became connected with the growing awareness that patron-client relations are not destined to remain in the margins of society or to disappear with the development and establishment of democratic or authoritarian regimes or with economic development and modernization or with the development of class consciousness among the lower strata; and that while any single type of patronage, as for instance the personal semi-institutionalized kinship-like personal dyadic patron-client relationship, may disappear under such conditions, new types of such relations may appear, and that they can be found, in a great variety of forms, in many different societies, cutting across different levels of economic development and types of political regimes, and seemingly performing important functions within such more developed modern frameworks⁷.

Fourth, the growing centrality of these studies was connected with the fact that they became closely related to some of the major theoretical developments and controversies in the social sciences – a connection which made the study of patron-client relations an important focus of such theoretical debates.

On the most general theoretical level the analysis of patronage has become, in all social science disciplines, closely connected with the major outcries against prevalent “functionalist”, systemic and “developmentalist” – evolutionary emphases in anthropology, sociology and political science in general, and against the assumptions of the “classical” studies of modernization and development which were, as is well known, so closely related to the structural-functional school in sociology in particular⁸.

This connection with the major theoretical controversies could be most clearly seen in the major themes that developed in the studies of patron-client relations and in the attempts to define more precisely their central distinguishing core. The first such theme, stressed in many of these studies, was – as against the strong emphasis, to be found both in “classical” functionalistic anthropology and in the structural-functional school of sociology on groups and their needs and

⁶ Thus in Southern Europe patron-client relations are widely present in Spain, Italy (especially in Southern Italy, Western Sicily and Sardinia), Greece, Portugal and Malta; in the Middle East, especially in Turkey, Morocco, and Lebanon; in Southeast Asia, especially in Burma, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines and Malaya; in Latin America, especially in the Andean countries, Mexico and Brazil; and in sub-Saharan Africa. On these patterns see Eisenstadt and Roniger (1980). For bibliographical references on these major areas of clientelism see Roniger (1981).

⁷ See for instance Ike (1972), Galjart (1967), Allum (1973), Khalaf (1977). For a broad treatment of the adaptability of patron-client relations see Powell (1970), Lemarchand and Legg (1972), Scott (1969, 1972) and Legg (n. d.).

⁸ These controversies are analysed in great detail in Eisenstadt and Curelaru (1976, 1977).

boundary maintaining mechanisms — the stress on the importance of personal and interpersonal relations, quasi-groups, networks and power relations⁹.

This stress on interpersonal relations and exchange became connected in the study of patronage with the upholding of several dimensions of social structure and action which were seen as neglected both in classical functional anthropology and structural-functional approaches in sociology as well as in the prevalent studies of modernization. The most important of these dimensions were those of autonomy of the dimension of power and the concomitant stress on the relations between the distribution of power, the flow of resources and the structure of social relations in society, and on such aspects of the structure of interpersonal relations as hierarchy, asymmetry and inequality, and the autonomy of some aspects of the symbolic dimension of human activity. These latter were seen as manifest in the close relations of patron-client relations to such concepts as “honor”, or to some spiritual dimensions of themes of interpersonal relations found in friendship and ritual kinship; and to some specific perceptions of social order — as embodied for instance in the image of “limited good” which was claimed by Foster to be characteristic of peasant societies¹⁰.

III

Of crucial importance in this context has been the distinction between such relations constituting the central institutional mode of a society — of the structuring of the flow of resources, of exchange and power relations and of their legitimation — as against their constituting, to use Landé's term, only an addendum to such mode¹¹.

This implies first that while many of the concrete organizational aspects of patron-client relations — such as the dyadic or tryadic networks of brokers, and the like — can be found in many different societies, yet their full institutional implications and repercussions develop only when they become part or “manifestation” of the central mode of regulation of the flow of resources and processes of interpersonal and institutional exchange and interaction in a society or a sector thereof and can be best understood in relation to the broader — often macro-societal — setting in which they take place.

Second, this major distinction is borne out by the fact that, in those societies — above all several Mediterranean, Latin American and Southeast Asian ones, in which such clientelistic relations constituted part of the central mode of institutional arrangements — they persisted despite great changes in the levels of economic development and the structure of political organization, and in their own

⁹ For the emphasis put on interpersonal relations and exchange by scholars who dealt with patron-client relations see Wolf (1966a), Boissevain (1974), Mayer (1966), Pitt-Rivers (1973), Landé (1976b) and Scott (1976).

¹⁰ On the concept of honor, as found in societies in which also patron-client relations can be found see Peristiany (1965), P. Schneider (1969), Campbell (1964), and J. Schneider (1971). On the Image of Limited Good see Foster (1965, 1972) and Gregory (1975).

¹¹ Landé (1976a).

concrete organizational form. Indeed, the major institutional frames of among others, Brazil or the Andean countries in Latin America, Thailand and the Philippines in Southeast Asia, and Southern Italy, Western Sicily, Spain, Turkey and Lebanon in the Mediterranean basin, retained some very strong clientelistic dimensions despite the growing incorporation of local settings within the sphere of influence of national and supranational market economies and of central political administrative forces in these societies¹².

In the history of these societies we can discern several types of patron-client relations which are, on the whole, related to different "stages" of their national or sectoral development – but which can also, to some degree, coexist side by side according to the differential development of different sectors of such societies. Thus first of all are the more "traditional" localized patron-client networks which exist in conditions of tenuous penetration of market forces into peripheral – especially agrarian – areas. Such peripheral settings are characterized first, by a 'seigneurial' appropriation of basic sources, the means of livelihood and above all of lands and their lease to peasants in the form of fragmented and small strips in return for labor, cash or rents in kind; second, by the development of precapitalistic forms of organization of work in the frame of rent capitalism; third, by land-owners' and merchants' monopsonic positions of access to peasant labor and to large parts of their production. This in turn was usually associated with a low level of mechanization and of technological and capital investment, the existence of few credit facilities, and a low degree of development of communications. The low capacity of landless workers and minifundist peasants to draw a livelihood in a relatively independent way, the precariousness of agricultural contracts, and the multiplicity and crisscrossing effects of multiple, part-time occupations among peasants were also conducive to the emergence of the 'captive' clienteles that are characteristic of such localized clientelistic networks. The differential distribution of contracts with big landowners among rural people, along with the lack of free movement and open alternatives for livelihood seem to have induced an interest on the part of privileged (permanent, resident) workers in the maintenance of prevailing power domains.

The forms of organization of clientelistic relations became transformed with the marketization of the economies, by processes of accelerated urbanization and

¹² On these countries see for instance, for Brazil Brumer (1976), Galjart (1964), Greenfield (1977), Leal (1978), and Hutchinson (1966). On the Andean countries, see Heath (1973), Hermitte and Bartolomé (1977) and Guasti (1976). On Thailand see Hanks (1962), Rabibhadana (1975), Riggs (1966) and Shor (1960). On the Philippines see among others Landé (1965), Nowak and Snyder (1974). On Italy and on Southern Italy and Western Sicily in particular see Graziano (1980), Zuckerman (1975), Tarrow (1976b), Allum (1973), Boissevain (1966a), Blok (1974), Hess (1973) and Giordano and Hettlage (1979). On Spain see Pitt-Rivers (1954), Kern (1973) and Romero-Maura (1977). On Turkey see Kudat (1975), Ozbudun (1975) and Sayari (1977). On Lebanon see Khalaf (1977) and Gubser (1973). On other areas and further references on which the cases presented below are based see the bibliography included in Eisenstadt and Lemarchand (1981).

the expansion of regulatory extractive and even sporadic mobilizational activities of the central administration. All these developments had several consequences for the structuring of clientelistic networks.

In the first place, landowners and local potentates came to emphasize more entrepreneurial activities and instrumental arrangements in their power domains. Secondly, the development of stronger socio-geographic mobility implied a diversification in the sources of livelihood of the broader strata of population. The economic role of the urban private sector and of the center as dispenser of public and private goods and as employer grew in importance. Third, these developments often were paralleled by the penetration of the political and administrative organs of the State.

All these trends curtailed the role of traditional patrons both as controllers of access to sources of livelihood as well as within the frame of broader coalitions — as the political controllers of peripheral social forces. Similarly, the various political developments, which accompanied the expansion of electoral franchise and expansion of administrative forces, seemingly expanded the political power of the periphery.

These developments were related to the transformation of the nature of the clientelistic conditions affecting patron-client relations — especially to the weakening of monopolistic power domains, to the development of a greater variety of clientage alternative avenues, the creation of new sources of bargaining for clients such as votes and organizing skills.

Yet, despite all these developments, clientelistic arrangements, albeit organized in new ways, tended to persist, not only in the margins of these societies but also in the very central cores of their institutional structure.

The major resources distributed by the central agencies or market forces — employment (which was often scarce), public services, access to administration and to public goods — were still regulated by clientelistic-particularistic criteria and relations. They were dispensed by different patrons — be they individual politicians, administrators, or organized bodies like parties, trade unions or their representatives. In return they received votes or some types of loyalty and even some personal services — although these were already of smaller importance than in traditional patronage.

Such patrons — whether individuals or party or union activists — often manipulated their positions to build a personal following and gain access to official positions in the administration for example, and then used the resources controlled through incumbency in them to build a greater clientelistic network.

But naturally the structure of such clientelistic relations differed here greatly from those in the more traditional settings. Instead of the limited, directly personal relations to one patron, there developed complicated networks of patrons, brokers and clients, often organized in pyramidal chains that may pervade administration and political organizations, relating networks to the center of society.

The concrete organizational forms of such networks varies greatly in different societies or sectors thereof — and it would be impossible to provide here a full

picture of all of them, although some illustrations will be given below. What is important to stress at this point of our discussion is that all these new patterns of clientelistic brokerage, which emerged in connection to economic developments and political transformations, did not change substantially the core features of clientelistic mediation.

IV

A closer look at some clientelistic settings will illustrate in greater detail the point made above in a general way¹³.

Thus, for instance, in the Spanish regions of Andalusia and Castilla, local powerful men known as *caciques* did until the middle nineteenth century control landshort peasants and the growing rural proletariat of *braceros* by the grant of land leases for sharecropping and employment opportunities. These very limited networks were used by the landed elite to confront the attempts of different administrations whose policies were as a threat to their predominance as well as to confront class revolt at least until the creation of the armed corps of *Guardia Civil* in 1844. With the expansion of the Liberal regime since the 1840s, and the increased conflicts within the civil and military political elite, local *caciques* competed for effective vertical connections with higher ranking politicians. There emerged patterns in which patrons received protection and immunity in 'spoils' and manipulation of social forces at the local and regional levels in return for support and gathering of votes for central forces. This kind of clientelistic network which developed in its full form from the Restoration of 1874 to the advent of the Primo-de-Rivera regime in 1923, assumed a pyramidal clustering: From the Ministry of Interior or the two great parties, through provincial *caciques* acting as civil governors, deputies and wealthy members of the elite, to district and local politicians such as majors and richmen and from them to local *caciques* in the *pueblos* and villages. In such a way the center got its control over the periphery by surrendering its direct control and the gap between its image of control and reality widened. Finally, the Liberal regime collapsed as a result of 'its abuses'; this was accompanied by a strong distrust of the social policies initiated from above and to the presentation of radical demands and anarchic movements that lead to polarization of society afterwards. In the authoritarian Franquist regime that emerged after the Spanish Civil War, instances of intercession and sponsorship (the well known "*enchufe*") and the delivery of particularistic favours by powerholders in the administration remained central in approaching bureaucratic loci of decision making.

In Central Italian Mezzadrian zone, patron-client relations were focused until the 1950s around patrons whose local base of power was strengthened by the monopolization of contacts with the regional and national system within which agricultural communities were incorporated. Most patrons were *mezzadria* landlords, the *signori*, that maintained alone close personal and regular contacts with

¹³ See the bibliography on these countries quoted above.

their peasant partners. Other patrons occupied professional administrative local positions of authority as schoolteachers pharmacists and tax collectors; most of these bureaucrats and professionals were nonlanded members of landed families. Locally patrons were a source of economic assistance, protection and information about the outside world. They delivered medicines and helped clients to obtain medical services; they provided collective services such as the derivation of funds and charities to groups of followers arranged in organizations sponsored by the patrons. In the first stages of unification of Italy, these *mezzadria* landlords controlled access to the administration and the resources it commanded: Patrons interpreted the law, offered advice, intervened on the client's behalf through their contacts with officials, and gave *raccomendazioni* so that clients should contact someone in higher circles of power. Direct participation in national political life was often reserved to patrons; the major and the administrative council of communities were selected from among this stratum; they controlled access to local bureaucratic jobs as representatives of the State; they were the priests and the leaders of local Church. The bargaining power of lower strata increased as the concentration of lands disappeared and new sources of livelihood were opened up for wider sectors of the population. The *mezzadri* were incorporated fully into the market economy, large landowners became absentees and universal suffrage gave rise to quite dispersed political activity. Many of the services which were delivered by patrons came to be distributed by the State in the form of credits, a national health plan, charitable organizations, assistance for mothers and babies, special allotments during agricultural crises, etc. At the same time unions and political and religious organizations offered now assistance on a limited scale to their members.

Yet the basic clientelistic pattern persisted in a changed organizational form. Here specific forms of brokerage came to replace the traditionally wide embracing and monopolistic mediation of *patroni*. Brokers drawn from different social strata appeared within administration and formal organizations. As Sydel Silverman has pointed out, "the national society is known and participated in not primarily through an upper class landlord, but through the major who is also a peasant, the labor union confined to *mezzadri*, other formal organizations composed of lower class persons, and relatives and friends who live in towns"¹⁴.

In Brazil, during the colonial period and especially after the abolition of slavery in late 19th century, local, restricted patron-client relations were established between *fazendeiros* and rural workers in the sugar cane zones of Bahia and Pernambuco in the Northeast and later on in the coffee growing area of Sao Paulo. Such paternalistic relations were fostered by the relative isolation of the *fazendas*, the weak effective control of the center and the blurred boundaries of influence of contesting landholders; later on, as the region lost its former economic prosperity and value and it became more integrated into the sphere of influence of national forces and the lower strata searched alternative ways to meet their needs, these

¹⁴ Silverman (1965).

relations assumed a more instrumental and coercive character – in the forms of *parceria* and *cambao*. With the adoption of liberal institution during the Old Republic (1889-1930) and the development of parliamentary politics based on a narrow but expanding franchise, political clientelistic network emerged around the so called *coroneis* who bargained with political forces at the regional, State and national capitals the delivery of the votes they controlled locally in exchange for access to office holding and the resources attached to it such as employment opportunities, health or credit facilities or exemptions from regulations. Parallely to the enhanced distributive and regulative activities of the national State, contacts with central politicians and bureaucrats served to gather or maintain a following locally, while the ability to do it was used by patrons to gain a greater access to loci of power and to positions of control over the flow of resources, either for themselves or to place a loyal client in them. Such activities came to be increasingly fostered and played by social actors – whether individuals or collectivities – related to the institutional center of society. Such was the case of the union activists called *pelegos* during the populist corporative period of organization of workers under Vargas (1930-1945), or of the electoral gathering activities of the *cabos eleitorais* during the multiparty parliamentary period that followed until 1964. During these years, people could arrange the delivery of electoral or other forms of support and extract by it the particularistic grant of some favour or help in dealing with administration. The military coup of 1964 attempted initially to remove the clientelistic networks; indeed it conducted to a temporary centralization of similar forms of personalistic intercession, whereby the State organs came to be seen and acted as surrogate patrons. However, in rural areas, lawyers and physicians among others continued to gather followings and prestige by offering services to rural and peripheral-urban poor without significant immediate return, creating ties of indebtedness that could be turned into political support when running for parliamentary positions.

V

The preceding analysis, as well as available broader comparative materials, provide us with several illustrations both of the core-characteristics of patron-client relations, as well as with their variability and it would be worthwhile to start with the analysis of these core-characteristics.

The most important of these core analytical characteristics of patron-client relations are :

- a) Patron-client relations are usually particularistic and diffuse.
- b) The interaction on which these relations are based is characterized by the simultaneous exchange of different types of resources, above all, instrumental, economic, as well as political ones (support, loyalty, votes, protection) on the one hand and promises of solidarity and loyalty on the other.
- c) The exchange of these resources is usually arranged in some sort of

“package-deal” — i. e., each of these resources cannot be exchanged separately, but only in some combination which includes both types.

d) Ideally, there is built in these relations a strong element of unconditionality and of long-range credit and obligations.

e) Closely related to the preceding is the strong element of solidarity that is prevalent in these relations — an element often couched in terms of interpersonal loyalty and attachment between patrons and clients — even if these relations are often very ambivalent. This element of solidarity may be, as in the restricted primary relationship of the classical type of patronage, very strong or, as in many of the more modern political machines, very weak — but to some degree it is to be found in all of them. It is often very strongly related to conceptions of personal identity, above all of personal honour and of obligations and it is also evident in the presumed existence in such relations of some, even if very ambivalent, personal “spiritual” attachment between patron and clients.

f) At the same time relations established between patron and clients are not fully legal or contractual; they are often opposed to the official laws of the country and they are much more based on “informal” — although very strongly binding — understandings.

g) Despite their seeming binding, long-range, almost (in their ideal portrayal) life-long endurance, patron-clients relations are entered in, at least in principle, voluntarily, and can, officially at least, be abandoned voluntarily.

h) These relations are undertaken between individuals or networks of individuals in a vertical fashion (the simplest manifestation of which is a strong dyadic one) rather than between organized corporate groups; and they seem to undermine the horizontal group organization and solidarity of clients or patrons alike — but especially of the clients.

i) Last and not least patron-client relations are based on a very strong element of inequality and of differences in power between patrons and clients. Even at this stage of our discussion it ought to be evident that the most crucial element of this inequality is the monopolization, by the patrons, of certain positions which are of crucial importance for the clients — above all, as we shall see in greater detail later, of the access to the means of production, major markets and centers of the society.

The combination of these characteristics indicates that the exchange that is effected in patron-client relations takes place on several levels; that it does create several paradoxical contradictions which constitute one of the major features of the patron-client nexus — the most important among which are first, a rather peculiar combination of inequality and asymmetry in power with seeming mutual solidarity expressed in terms of personal identity and interpersonal sentiments and obligations; second, a combination of potential coercion and exploitation with voluntary relations and strong mutual obligations; third, a combination of the emphasis on such strong mutual obligations and solidarity between patrons and clients together with the somewhat illegal or semi-legal aspect of these relations.

These characteristics and paradoxical features of patron-client relations can be found in societies at different levels of social differentiation, different technological development, different political regimes and in different types of concrete organization of such relations (i. e., in dyadic relations, in broader networks, as parts of broader bureaucratic organization and the like).

These core-characteristics of the patron-client relations and their crystallization around these contradictions provide the clue to the understanding of the nature of patron-client relations as a specific type of social relations in general and as a macro-societal phenomenon in particular.

First of all they indicate that the crux of patron-client relations is indeed the organization or regulation of exchange or flow of resources between different social actors. But second they indicate that, contrary to what seem to be implied in parts of the literature, patron-clients do not denote a special type of simple, specific, seemingly market-like or power exchange as envisaged by the theories of individualistic exchange best represented in the work of George C. Homans and Peter M. Blau. Rather, as other modes of regulation of flow of resources in society, patron-client relations constitute a special type of combination of such specific exchange with what has been denoted in sociological and anthropological literature as generalized exchange¹⁵.

VI

The clientelistic model of structuring the relations between generalized and specific exchange is predicated on the existence of some tension between potentially broad, sometimes even latent universalistic or semi-universalistic, premises; and the concomitant free flow of resources and relatively broad scope of markets derivable from these premises on the one hand and continuous attempts to limit such free flow on the other.

These latent broad, even semi-universalistic, premises are evident in these societies or sectors thereof in the fact that, in principle, unlike societies in which the hereditary ascriptive model is predominant, the members of various strata may be able to get some direct access to the means of production, the major markets and to the centers of power; that they may organize themselves, for such access, and for assuring their own control of the use of their resources in broader settings, and that concomitantly the centers of these societies may develop some autonomous relations to the broader strata from which the clients and brokers are recruited¹⁶.

¹⁵ These concepts are analysed in detail in Eisenstadt and Roniger (1980). See also Homans (1961), Blau (1964a, 1964b), and Turner (1974), pp. 211-320.

¹⁶ For some examples of the limitation in the scope and convertibility on the free flow of resources in these societies see Aya (1975), Campbell (1968), Sayari (1977). For illustrations of the pressures on patronalistic arrangements derived from the latent premises of these societies see Boissevain (1966b), Tarrow (1969, 1976a). For a general treatment of this subject see Eisenstadt (1978), pp. 273-310, and see also below.

But at the same time there develops, within these societies, for reasons which we shall analyze in greater detail later on, continuous attempts to circumvent these potentialities; to limit first the free access of broader strata to the broad markets and centers by the monopolization, by the potential patrons and brokers, of the positions which control such access; and second, of the use and conversion of their resources. It is the combination of the potential openness of access to the markets with the continuous, semi-institutionalized attempts to limit such free access that constitutes the crux of the clientelistic model.

Thus the structuring of relations between generalized and specific exchange implied in the clientelistic model is characterized above all by a very special type of the two linkages between the aspects of institutional structure mentioned above as crucial to the structuring of the relations between generalized and specific exchange. The first such linkage is that between the respective standing of the potential patrons and clients in the semi-ascriptive hierarchical sub-communities or sub-sectors of the society on the one hand, and the control of access to the center of centers of the society; to the bases of production; to the major institutional markets; to the setting up of most public goods and to the public distribution of private goods, on the other.

The second such linkage is that between such access to markets and centers and the use and conversion of potentially free resources in these markets.

The most crucial aspect of these two linkages in the clientelistic model is that they are very strong, yet not fully legitimized, and that they are based on the abdication by the clients of their potential autonomous access to some of the major markets, to positions of control over use of resources, or to the center and to the setting-up of public goods and services — except through the mediation of some patron — whether a person or an organization (i.e., party or trade unions) within which the clients do not have autonomous access to the major loci of power.

Such mediation is contingent on the clients' entering into a relation of exchange with the patron — an exchange which contains many aspects of routine exchange of goods or services within the various institutional markets — and which necessarily limits the scope and convertibility of resources freely exchanged within these markets and between them.

VII

Thus it can be seen that the clientelistic model of structuring the relations between generalized and specific exchange can be distinguished from other such models along several dimensions¹⁷.

It differs from those models, like corporate kinship groups or ascriptively based hierarchical ones, in that it is predicated on the existence of central (and not only marginal) markets and of organization of means of production which are not embedded in such ascriptive units or in the relations between them; on a situ-

¹⁷ On such models see in greater detail Eisenstadt and Roniger (1980).

ation in which there exists already a difference between the ownership of resources and control over their use in broader settings; and on the concomitant existence of a certain segregation between the resources exchanged in generalized and in specific exchange.

As against the more “open” universalistic models — whether pluralistic, monolithical or consociational — in which there develops strong tendencies to countervail any attempts to limit the access of different groups to the bases of production and to positions of control of use of resources in centers and markets — it is the very essence of the clientelistic model to establish and maintain such limitations even if they are not derived, as in the kinship of ascriptive — hierarchical models from the basic premises of the society.

The clientelistic model of relations between generalized and specific exchange is closest, as already indicated above, from all the different models, to the corporatist one. Indeed, in many societies in which the corporatist element is very strong there tend also to develop, in close relation to the former, patron-client relations, although not always necessarily vice-versa. The major difference between them is that the purely corporatist model does not necessarily always include so many “package-deals” in the concrete relations between the major (corporate) units and their membership.

VIII

These differences between the clientelistic and the other models are most evident in the types of linkage between inequalities in the major dimensions of institutional life and in the structuring of social hierarchies which it generates and which are markedly different from those that develop either in the “universalistic” or ascriptive-kinship hierarchical societies.

In common with the societies in which the ascriptive hierarchical model is predominant there develops in the patron-clients nexus a very close linkage — yet not always as precisely and normatively defined — between ascriptive hierarchical standing on the one hand and access to power, to public goods and to major institutional markets on the other.

It is the continuous overwhelming de-facto existence of such linkage that makes the inequality inherent in patron-client relations seem to be characterized by a certain totality or continuity which seemingly cannot, within the context of these relations, be easily changed. It is this totality or continuity of such inequality that distinguishes patron-client relationships from the more “chance” inequalities that may develop within the markets and in access to them of both the universalistic and the ascriptive hierarchical societies.

And yet, despite this seeming comprehensiveness, and totality and continuity of this inequality, in fact the concrete linkage between the inequalities in the major dimensions of institutional order that develop in the clientelist model is rather fragile. This fragility is evident in several closely connected aspects. First, unlike in the ascriptive -hierarchical societies such inequalities, and above all the linkages between them, are not, in clientelist societies or sectors thereof, fully prescribed,

legitimized or assured. Indeed, as has been already implied in our preceding discussion, in most of these societies they are set up against some of their basic formal, more open, universalistic “premises”.

Second, and closely related to the former, is the fact that the relative hierarchical standing of different actors — patrons, brokers, and clients — is not always fully prescribed and there may often arise disputes with respect to it¹⁸.

Third, is the fact that the clients are sometimes, potentially or actually, able to accumulate resources in the various markets (especially, but not only, in the political one) which are not commensurate with their relatively low ascriptive standing, and when combined with the latent broader premises of these systems may threaten the patrons’ monopoly of access to the various markets and to the center or centers of the society¹⁹.

IX

It is this central core-characteristic of patron-client relation that persists through the changes in levels of development, as well as in the concrete organization of patron-client relations, in the transition from the “traditional” dyadic to the more modern type of patronalistic relations with networks of brokers or of organizations (like trade unions) acting as patrons.

Throughout all the changes in the concrete organization of the patron-client relation, which are, as we have seen, very closely related to changes in levels of economic development and of political modernization, it is this mode of structuring of the relations between generalized and specific exchange and the concomitant mode of control over the flow of resources, that seems to evince a basic continuity.

How can then this continuity be explained? Obviously it cannot be explained in terms of levels of economic development. They are, however, related to three basic elements of social structure — the internal cohesion of major groups, the major cultural orientations that are prevalent in the society and the structure of the major elites and coalitions which are predominant in them,²⁰ and which tend to persist throughout processes of development and together with changes in the concrete composition of these groups and elites as well as in changes in the concrete contents of such cultural orientations.

X

Most of these societies have been characterized by certain internal characteristics of their major social groups — as well as of their respective centers.

¹⁸ On these aspects of patron-client relations and especially on the fragility of these relationships see among others Blok (1974), Wolf (1969), Friedrich (1970), Hottinger (1966), Pool (1972) and el-Messiri (1977).

¹⁹ On these possibilities of severing the relationships see for instance Blok (1969), Singelmann (1975). The quasi-legal or quasi-ritual fixation of incumbency to roles may provide a beforehand way of avoiding the above referred possibility. See on this Peters (1968) and Ishino (1953).

²⁰ See on this Eisenstadt and Roniger (1980).

The most important of these characteristics, which has been stressed in the literature, has been the internal weakness, as evident above all in relatively low degree of internal solidarity and of symbolic and sometimes also of organizational autonomy, especially of the lower groups of the society²¹.

A closer look at the evidence indicates, however, that such characteristics are shared by other major societal actors — that is by the center or centers, the broader periphery and the major elites. Or, in other words, all these social actors evince, in those societies in which the clientelistic model is predominant, a relative low degree of autonomous access to the major resources which they need to implement their goals, and to the control, in broader settings, of their own resources.

Such relatively low level of autonomy is evident in the centers of the societies in which the clientelistic model is predominant in the fact that, even when the centers were much more compact and able to establish relatively wide administrative frameworks, their relative structural weakness was manifest in their lack of ability to act in an autonomous way, distinct from the mode of use of resources found in the periphery and to penetrate the periphery in an independent way through autonomous channels. Rather, they acted through channels which have been either embedded in the power domains of the periphery; or which have been structured according to principles very similar to those of the periphery. Parallely, in most of these societies, the distinctiveness of the center was not connected with attempts to a structural and ideological transformation of the periphery or with effecting far-reaching changes in the periphery's basic concept of social order. Accordingly there developed in these societies rather weak autonomous linkages between the center and periphery, links which created but few basic structural changes within either sectors or strata of the periphery or within the center itself²².

Parallel manifestations of relatively low levels of broader corporate symbolic or organizational autonomy can be identified in these societies in the different units of the periphery on all ladders of the social hierarchy²³. The major societal units do not usually exhibit a strong collective consciousness and broader self-identity based on symbols of kinship, territoriality, class or strata, or on other principle of social organization which are community, country or sector wide. Similarly, the units of the periphery have but few mechanisms through which they control corporately access to outside resources and loci of decisions which affect them or autonomous control over the conversion of their own resources. Accordingly, the units of periphery in these societies exhibit relatively low capacity to

²¹ This point can be found among others in Banfield (1958), Wolf (1966b), J. Schneider (1971), Johnson (1977) and Lynch (1964).

²² On the distinction between strong and weak centers see Eisenstadt (1971a, 1971b esp. chapter 8; 1973b). Further elaboration can be found in idem (1978), esp. chapters IV and V. The description of the structural weak character of those centers was a recurrent theme in the literature on clientelism. See Eisenstadt and Roniger (1980) and Tarrow (1976a, 1976b), Silverman (1965), Landé (1973) and Scott (1972).

²³ See for instance Landé (1973), Boissevain (1966b), Gilmore (1976), and Meertens (1975).

influence the center with respect to the principles of policy-making and allocation of resources, or with respect to the construction of the center's own symbols.

On the local level, most of these units — especially the villages, homesteads and in the (especially more modern) urban settings, the neighbourhoods or vocational or occupational groups — evince a very low level of community cohesion and solidarity, or of solidary corporate organization²⁴. Closely related to these characteristics has been the structure of kinship prevalent in these societies on all — but probably especially on the lower (or at least more fully documented) “local” echelons of the social hierarchy among the peasants. The most important of these characteristics have been the relative weakness of corporate kinship units in general, and of unilineal kinship groups in particular, a rather strong tendency to bilateral kinship with a strong emphasis on matrilineal descent; a relatively high predilection to narrow and unstable, cross-cutting kinship networks and alliances, with a marked tendency to lack, beyond some of the minimal demarcation of exogamous units, clear boundaries of the kinship unit or network²⁵.

XI

These societies were also characterized by the persistence within them of certain symbolic or cultural orientations while changing their concrete contents — especially in the direction from religious to secular emphases and contents.

The most important of such orientations have been first, a combination of certain conceptions of tension between a “higher” transcendental order and the mundane order, especially in the “religious” sphere-proper — together with the absence or weakness of the necessity to overcome these tensions through some “this-worldly” activity (political, economic or “scientific”) oriented to the shaping of the social and political order or its transformation; or, in other words, there tends to develop in these societies a strong emphasis on other-worldly orientations.

Second, there was a strong emphasis on the givenness of the cultural and social order; a weak perception of active autonomous participation of any of the social groups to the shaping of the contours of these orders. The major groups and elites of these societies rarely conceived themselves in these societies as actively responsible for the shaping of those contours.

Third, this was closely related to a relatively low level of commitment to a broader social or cultural order, a perception of this order mostly as something to be mastered or adapted to but not as commanding a high level of commitment on behalf of those who participate in it, or who are encompassed by it.

Fourth, and closely related to the former, was also the relatively weak emphasis on the autonomous access of the major groups or strata to the major attributes of these orders or of salvation. Such access was usually seen as being mediated by

²⁴ See for instance Powell (1970), Aya (1975), Waterbury (1970), Tarrow (1967). In Sicily and other regions, the enormous overlapping and intermingling of occupational roles and identities can hamper the formation of broad categorical commitments; for Sicily see J. Schneider (1969) and Blok (1974). See also above note No. 19.

²⁵ On bilateral kinship and the structure of kinship in the ‘clientelistic’ societies, and on the structuring of social hierarchies there see Eisenstadt and Roniger (1980).

various actors — mostly ascriptive groups or ritual experts who represented the “given” order — and a concomitant stress on mediating symbols and supernatural powers.

Closely related to the preceeding characteristics has been also a certain structure of the major elites and coalitions that tended to develop, and persist, in these societies, — beyond the impact of processes of development and concomitant organization changes.

Thus first of all, there tended to develop here relatively few fully autonomous, political, functional (professional) cultural elites. Most such elites tended to be, symbolically at least, very strongly embedded in broader ascriptive groups, with but little — even when already very specialized (as in the case of professors or administrative echelons in the more modern societies) — autonomous self-definition and orientation. They were usually very strongly related to the articulation of the solidarity of the major ascriptive groups.

Such lack of symbolic autonomy was, of course, characteristic above all with respect to the activities of such elites in the “mundane” spheres. With respect to purely religious activities, some of these elites, especially the cultural ones, did of course evince some more autonomous orientations and activities.

It was such relatively embedded elites that contributed the basic coalitions in these societies. They were on the one hand the carriers of the basic cultural orientations evolved there, while on the other hand, it was they who maintained the basic patterns of control over the flow of resources.

These patterns of control are very closely related to the most crucial aspects of the exchange that takes place between patrons and clients, implicit in its core characteristics, and briefly alluded to above — namely that it takes place concomitantly on two distinctive yet interconnected levels.

One such level of exchange is related to the exchange of different concrete services, goods, or resources. Here there may indeed develop, as a result of changing positions of the different actors (i.e., patrons or clients) in the respective markets of specific exchange great variability and changes in the concrete terms of such exchange.

But in all such relations between patrons and clients there exists another level of exchange connected to some crucial aspects of generalized exchange. On this level the client “buys” as it were, protection against the exigencies of the markets or of nature, of the arbitrariness or weakness of the center or against the demands of other strong groups or people. The price he pays for it is not just any specific service but the acceptance of the patron’s control of his (the client’s) access to markets and to public goods, as well as of his ability to convert fully some of his resources. But this limitation — as against the one that can be found in societies in which the hierarchical-ascriptive model is prevalent — is not derivable from the full institutional premises of the society and its acceptance is potentially precarious.

It is also because of these features that the patrons are indeed willing to accept, in principle at least, some of the limitations that patronage may entail, even if, of course, they always attempt to get for themselves the best possible terms.

XII

The preceding analysis provides some – even if preliminary – answers to the problems we have posed at the beginning of our paper, about the nature of cultural and structural continuities that may persist throughout processes of modernization, structural differentiation and development.

Our analysis has shown first that one central aspect of at least some of such institutional continuities converge around the modes of control over the flow of resources – above all the ways of structuring the relations between generalized and specific exchange.

Second this analysis has shown that these modes of control are carried by specific types of elites and of their coalitions.

Third the structure of such elites and the modes of control exercised by them are closely connected to the persistence of certain type of cultural orientations which are carried by them.

One of the most central findings of recent research on modernization has been that the characteristics of such elites and coalitions persist even when the concrete and even the class composition of such elites and coalitions change and the same is true of the more analytical aspects – as against their concrete contents – at least of some of the cultural orientations²⁶.

Thus it is the continuous feedback between cultural orientations, structure of elites and coalitions and modes of control exercised by them over the flow of resources that constitutes a crucial element of continuity – across processes of technological and structural development as well as of political modernization.

The identification of these patterns and mechanisms of continuity – across different historical periods and patterns of development constitutes, it seems to us, an important stage in the solution of the riddle set out at the beginning of this paper – a riddle of crucial importance for sociological analysis. This identification is very much in line with a central distinction in sociological analysis – namely the distinction between on the one hand social division of labor as manifest above all in levels of technology and structural differentiation, and on the other the construction of solidarity and meaning – all of which constitute crucial components of any social order. This distinction has been implicit in the works of the Founding Fathers of Sociology and in a sense it constitutes the crux of the classical sociological Problemstellung²⁷.

The founding fathers have not however systematically explicated the institutional mechanisms through which these different components of the social order are connected and in the first “classical” studies of modernization this distinction was to some degree dimmed.

But the newer developments in this area in general, and the study of patron-clients relations in particular have revived this distinction. Moreover they have enabled to identify the institutional mechanisms – namely the patterns of control

²⁶ See on this in general Eisenstadt (1973a, 1974).

²⁷ See Eisenstadt (1981).

exercised by coalitions of elites — through which these different components of the social order are interlinked. They have also shown that these patterns of control have a certain dynamic of their own, which differs from that of the organization of social division of labor.

But this very identification of these different dynamics and of the mechanisms through which they are interlinked raises new problems. The first such problem is how such feedback mechanisms between structure of elites, cultural orientations and modes of control have been initially established — for instance in the formative periods of the Great Civilizations. Second is how such continuous feedback is assured and whether it can, at some stages, be broken — by processes of development. These problems, arising out of our preceding analysis, constitute one of the major challenges for future sociological analysis.

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