



**FRIEDRICH-SCHILLER-  
UNIVERSITÄT  
JENA**



**Call for Papers**

**Workshop**

**“International Patron-Client Relations in Secessionist Conflicts:  
Empirical Insights and Conceptual Innovations”**

**1-4 October 2020**

**Friedrich Schiller University Jena, Germany - Dornburg Castles (World Cultural Heritage)**

**Organized by:**

Prof. Dr. Rafael Biermann (Friedrich Schiller University Jena)

**In cooperation with:**

Prof. Dr. Eiki Berg (University of Tartu)

Prof. Dr. Stefan Wolff (University of Birmingham)

Secessionist conflicts possess, by definition, an international dimension. Usually, a plethora of states, intergovernmental organizations, and non-state actors considerably affect the outbreak, course, and outcome of a conflict. Some of those actors are called “patrons”.

The terms “patron” and “patronage” are frequently used in the literature. However, closer scrutiny reveals a lack of conceptual clarity and terminological vagueness. Terms and concepts are diffuse, overlapping, ill-defined, and poorly operationalised. Research on patronage is incoherent, fractioned, and it lacks a clear demarcation from other concepts. To begin with, we recommend using the term *patron-client relations*: two types of actors – patrons and clients – with distinct profiles interact in a dynamic, more or less reciprocal relationship of varying asymmetry. Often, such relations are enmeshed in complex networks of multiple patron-client relations.

Our primary goal is to conceptualize patron-client relations in secessionist conflicts by arriving at core definitions, exploring key properties, and assessing their impact on conflict. We see five crucial dimensions:

- Identification of patrons and clients in a conflict (*agency*): patrons are mostly assumed to be states supporting secessionists. However, similar roles might also be assumed by IGOs or NGOs, such as diasporas or human rights groups; and patrons might also

support central governments. Conversely, clients are rarely just puppets, but agents with distinct preferences and varying degrees of autonomy. Identifying patrons and clients presupposes definitional clarity.

- The balance of dependence, autonomy, and control (or power) between patrons and clients: this varies among dyads and over time (*symmetry*).
- The motives why patrons support clients despite the drain of resources this implies and the motives why clients seek the support of patrons despite the autonomy loss this entails (*motives*).
- The types, degrees, and duration of tangible and intangible resources patrons and clients exchange: this varies strongly over time and across cases (*resource exchange*).
- The effect patron-client relations have on the course and the outcome of secessionist conflicts (*impact*): scholars widely assume that such support can tip the balance in favour of secessionists while a lack thereof dooms a secessionist bid to failure. They also assume that such relations influence the conflict calculus of the conflict parties. However, they hardly ever consider different degrees of support over time and across cases, support for central governments, and (methodological) challenges of measuring the effectiveness of support.

The workshop brings together senior and junior researchers who already have sophisticated knowledge of secessionist conflicts. The goal is a collective conceptual reflection based on robust empirical data. Ahead of the workshop, the organizers will provide a background paper on how patron-client relations are conceptualized in IR, political science, and adjacent disciplines, detailing areas of agreement and disagreement and identifying blind spots within and across disciplines. The workshop itself will combine presentation and brainstorming sessions. In presentation sessions, individual papers, which are distributed in advance (paper archive), will be presented and discussed. In brainstorming sessions, we will have an initial input based on the organizers' background paper, followed by plenary and small group discussions moderated by senior researchers and based on cross-case comparison. The goal is to refine the initial concept inductively.

Most papers are expected to deal with one single case, i.e., a secessionist conflict. Due to the limited systematic research so far, each paper is **expected** to identify the full range of state and non-state patrons and clients relevant in the case (agency). Later it might focus on some of them. In addition, each paper should focus on at least two of the other dimensions presented above. A few papers might also be comparative, conceptual, or methodological in nature. Conceptual papers transferring insights from non-IR disciplines (such as comparative politics or anthropology) on patron-client relations to our topic are very much welcome. We especially encourage researchers to apply who have already done substantial empirical work on individual cases.

Regarding our selection criteria, we aim at variance: discussing a variety of secessionist conflicts (not more than one paper per conflict), regions (not only the post-Soviet space and the Balkans), kinds of patrons and clients (patrons of the central government, non-state actors) and degrees of support and instruments. We are interested in historical as well as contemporary cases, in cases of diffuse patron-client relations as well as non-cases.

The workshop aims at a publication of a special issue in a peer-reviewed journal or an edited volume in our book series “[Innovation in Conflict Research](#)”.

All interested researchers are invited to send their applications to [ir.powi@uni-jena.de](mailto:ir.powi@uni-jena.de), consisting of an abstract of 600 to 800 words, a letter of motivation, and a short CV. **The application deadline is 5 June 2020.** Notifications about decisions will be circulated by the end of June. Accepted participants will have to submit their **full papers by 11 September 2020.**

We have applied for funding of the workshop by the German Foundation for Peace Research (Deutsche Stiftung Friedensforschung). All basic expenses, including travel, accommodation, transfers, and meals, will then be covered.

Given the uncertainties of the current pandemic, the fall-back date for the workshop is the second half of February 2021.

Please find all further information here: [www.ir.uni-jena.de/secession+workshop+2020](http://www.ir.uni-jena.de/secession+workshop+2020).

If you have further questions, please contact us at [ir.powi@uni-jena.de](mailto:ir.powi@uni-jena.de).