

Local Self-Governance and Weak Statehood: Theoretical and Empirical Insights from an Interdisciplinary Perspective

Veranstalter DGS-Forschungsgruppe "Lokale Selbstregelungen im Kontext schwacher Staatlichkeit in Antike und Moderne"

Veranstaltungsort Würzburg

Termin 05.07.2021 - 07.07.2021 ganztags

International Conference in Würzburg on July 5-7, 2021

The nucleus of statehood is situated at the local level: in the village, the neighborhood, the city district. This is where a community, beyond the level of the family, first develops collective rules that are intended to ensure its continued existence. But this is usually not the only level of governance at play. Above it, there are supralocal formations of power, varying in scope from regional networks to empires, which supplement the local orders or compete with them. Wherever supralocal statehood exists in the mode of weak permeation, local forms of self-governance are especially heterogeneous and prominent. How do they work in this context?

The approach of the DFG Research Unit 2757 LoSAM is to deepen our understanding of different forms and impacts of local self-governance across time and space, from Antiquity to the Global South of the present (see Pfeilschifter et al. 2020). We are examining the relations to different levels of state governance as well as to other local groups as they develop over time; the scope and spatial contingency of forms of self-governance; its legitimization and interdependency with the organization and collective identity of the groups which carry them out. In addition, we turn our attention to the significance of self-governance for the configuration of weak statehood.

In pursuing our research, we have followed both an interdisciplinary (see Lauth et

al. 2019) as well as a comparative approach by looking at different cases. Bringing together scholars from various disciplines (e.g. History, Archaeology, Theology, Social Anthropology, Political Science, Sociology, Human Geography, Sinology, Economics) helps us to embed our case studies in a broader theoretical and methodological framework. The exchange of different viewpoints and extensive discussions will further our agenda to combine and implement different subject-specific approaches as well as theories of neo-institutionalism and to sharpen the analysis of various forms of governance.

Further information and references (PDF)
