Beyond the façade : instrumentalisation of the Zambian health sector
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Cover Page

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Introduction

Prologue

As I started working at the Africa Department of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs,[1] Dutch public debate on Africa was dominated by a book written by a colleague Roel van der Veen: W*hat went wrong with Africa*.[2] This book followed *Africa works*, by Chabal & Daloz,[3] as a critical analysis of the problems of Africa, which clashed with politically correct approaches to representing Africa's problems. For me these books made uncomfortable reading, initially because the key messages of these books challenged my youthful idealism. But more importantly, because I realised these books presented cynical and exaggerated views of the complexities of African reality, which did not fully correspond with the Africa I thought I knew from earlier visits and field work in Tanzania, Togo, Ghana, Kenya and Zambia. This spurned me to undertake this research project, the result of which is now before you.

In the introduction to the doctoral dissertation which Van der Veen wrote to complement his book, he paints a picture of a formerly elegant African colonial building, crumbling as a consequence of poor maintenance. What remains is a mere façade, a skeletal remnant of its former glory. The building has since been appropriated for new functions. Rooms are occupied by entire families. Extensions have been added, constructed from crude materials. The veranda is used as a market stall. Trees are growing through the roof. In short, the building is undergoing a process of Africanisation until eventually even the façade will crumble away.[4]

This image may reflect an aspect of African reality, though like all metaphors it has its limitations. No doubt this image will resonate with the impressions held by those who have visited Africa. In fact, in my own travels to Africa in the late-1990s and the beginning of the twentieth century, in places such as Bagamoyo, the former German administrative town in Tanzania or the older, rougher neighbourhoods of Accra I did indeed see the once splendid façades of formerly glorious colonial buildings. These now

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[1] In this dissertation, the first person singular will be used to refer to the author's personal experience. 'We' will be used in a narrative stylistic manner to take the reader along in the narratives and analyses presented here. Occasionally, the first person plural will refer to personal experience of the author together with a research assistant.

[2] Van der Veen, R., *Afrika: Van de koude oorlog naar de 21e eeuw* (Amsterdam, 2002; English version: Van der Veen, R., *What went wrong with Africa* (Amsterdam, 2004)).

[3] Chabal, P. & J.P. Daloz, *Africa works. Disorder as a political instrument* (Oxford, 1999).

[4] Van der Veen, R.J., 'The disintegration of states in Africa: The interaction of politics, economics, culture and social relations, 1957-2003 (PhD thesis, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, 2004).

seemed run-down and on the verge of collapse. When I set off to do field work in Zambia to explore the paradigm of the African façade state, I searched for comparable images. What I saw, however, did not correspond to what I was looking for. Indeed many old façades in Lusaka or on the Copperbelt apparently retained little of the perhaps quaint colonial style that they may have had in bygone decades. Old, ornately carved wooden balconies had been replaced by sturdy concrete once they had worn away. Brick and mortar had been plastered over and painted in the gaudy colours of a Kuwaiti mobile phone company. And finely crafted lanterns had been replaced by bare, glaring fluorescent tubes. Perhaps in earlier years I might have encountered Van der Veen's image, especially in the urban decline of the Copperbelt.[5] Alternatively, in the old colonial towns in the Congolese interior or in shell-struck Mogadishu, I might have seen such a sight. But in Zambian towns in 2006, 2007, and 2008, the colonial structures that had not been replaced by larger and more modern buildings had been given a new lease of life – albeit not always in the style or preference of their former colonial architects.

However let us for the sake of the argument assume that indeed I did encounter such a building. Such a façade would just be part of reality. To reveal more of this reality, however, one must look not only look behind but also beyond the façade. The current use and appearance of the building is meant to satisfy the needs of the current occupants, according to their logic, priorities, resources, and capacities. Not far from the building lie shantytowns, or what in Zambian colloquialism are still called 'high density compounds'.[6] Most houses there will have started as rickety shacks. It was only a matter of time before many of them got concrete floors and walls, corrugated iron or asbestos roofing – maybe even roof tiles. Built by their occupants brick by brick. Beyond the compounds lie markets, bustling centres of activity. Stifling competition minimises profits, but supply and demand grow – albeit slowly. The range of products, local and foreign, is larger than it was. A growing number of services are available, from small loans or the filling out of forms to charging or repairing mobile phones. Further to the centre lie shops and offices. Many enterprises are owned by foreigners or those of foreign extraction. Still, it is a business area, where ordinary people earn a living. Near towering structures, some half-built by politician-businessmen – now out of favour and out of business – lie branches of international banks. There, an emerging middleclass cash their paycheques before taking a minibus home. Just out of the centre there are many more sights to describe, four-star hotels and ministries. Along busy roads, plied by four-by-fours and battered lorries, lie Parliament, State House,[7] embassies, NGOs and consultants' offices, and churches. In all these edifices, modest deeds are done, in pursuit of lofty words.

In short, beyond the façade lie many sights and much that is hidden. At times it is not a pretty picture, especially if one could see it through the eyes of the former colonialists who have long since left, been chased away, or have adjusted to the changing status quo – perhaps reluctantly. But what lies beyond the façade works. It may not be as had been planned or expected, and it is certainly not without contest or friction. Yet, if the con-

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[5] Dealt with in Ferguson, J., *Expectations of modernity: Myths and meanings of urban life on the Zambian copperbelt* (Berkley, 2001).
[6] A euphemism inherited from colonial bureaucratic discourse.
[7] The presidential office and residence.

ditions are right – which they not always have been – human activity multiplies and expands, thus causing more problems to arise and more solutions to be needed.[8]

Van der Veen's metaphor of a worn-down, re-appropriated colonial building can be applied to the post-colonial African state. Seen from this perspective, a Western state model was transplanted to Africa by the forces of colonialism and over decades haphazardly reinforced by development co-operation. New entities were created on artificially drawn borders. These were given the formal trappings of modern statehood, such as constitutions, parliaments, ministries, and courts. These institutions of the state were subsequently and gradually re-appropriated and reshaped to local political practices and logics. The legitimacy and professional competence associated with the ideal of a modern bureaucracy were gradually eroded. After all, to the ruling elite the usefulness of the state is greatest when its institutionalisation is minimal. The fewer checks and balances, the greater the prospect of appropriating the resources that are provided by the state. This process is fuelled by the elite, acting as gatekeepers,[9] monopolising control over external contacts and sources of income, such as royalties from natural resources, tariffs, taxes, and aid. From this perspective the process of Africanisation has left the skeletons of state institutions, mere façades or décor masking underlying realities of informalised and personalised politics.[10]

While this perspective will, to those acquainted with Africa, no doubt sound as familiar as the image of the dilapidated colonial mansion, here too one must look beyond the façade. Let us zoom in on the African state, focus on a specific sector where people act to transform money into services and policies. In the ward of a provincial hospital, some patients lie on mattresses on the ground. Many have delayed their coming, having first tried the services of a witchdoctor or first saved enough money to be able to afford medical care. Other ill people prefer not to come at all, considering hospitals places to die rather than places to get better. In the corridors, family members flock in attendance bringing extra food and caring for the needy. The walls bear posters teaching the ABC of sexual health beside hand-written posters professing the values of public service. Nurses enviously eye the director's new Pajero and complain that their allowances have not yet been paid. Some patients are vexed by the nurses' rudeness and complain that drugs are out of stock. The doctor has not shown up today; maybe she has gone to moonlight at a private clinic or is attending a workshop, earning something extra, as money is never sufficient. From time to time the nurses are mobilised by the union to demand higher salaries and extra allowances from government. Meanwhile the laboratory technician checks blood samples and compiles horrific statistics, relieved that this month he has received the proper reagents. In the evenings, he studies. Perhaps his correspondence course will bring him the qualifications to move on to a better life in South Africa or beyond. In a distant rural health centre one can see a health worker, over-worked, under-funded, and yet still showing up to work, immunising children and supervising deliveries, while a cleaner is screening patients and giving them drugs. The limited resources government provides are inventively stretched as far as possible. Fur-

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[8] The vexingly congested roads and exorbitant 'rentals' (to use a Zambian colloquialism) faced by contemporary urban Zambians are a clear case in point.

[9] Bayart attributes the coining of this phrase to General Obassanjo in the 1970s. See Bayart, J.F., *The state in Africa: The politics of the belly* (London, 1993), 80.

[10] This perspective reflecting Van der Veen's central thesis combines what Chabal & Daloz term the paradigm of the transplanted state, the paradigm of the hybrid state, and their own notion of the informalisation of politics.

ther away, a radio transmits the voice of an opposition candidate. She curses the government for incompetence and corruption and promises better education and affordable health care.

All these individuals have various motives. Their primary motives are the same as anyone's: Ensuring one's survival, one's future, and perhaps that of one's family. They are rooted in society and increasingly part of a global village. Social networks provide them with opportunities but also lay claims. With poverty and unemployment ubiquitous, those with employment are seen as a conduit for money or jobs. Failure to respond to expectation could risk inviting bad rumours, sabotage, or witchcraft. Nevertheless, these people have a job to do. Conditions of service are poor. Salaries do not reflect the cost of living for a family and other dependents, and the materials to carry out one's work are often below standard. At any rate, others working elsewhere earn more. Despite this, do these individuals strive to uphold a certain measure of professionalism? Are they driven by the satisfaction of doing their job? Or is their job merely a source of income? These individuals and their families are actors on the stage set with the décor of government institutions. The script is improvised. Their primary motive is their livelihood. Ask them and they will complain about government, about ridiculous taxes, low wages, and appalling services. They will complain about corruption and selfish politicians. But they will comment on something that is real, as if the state was more than merely a façade.

Problem description

W(h)ither the state?[11]
Academic literature, particularly around the turn of the millennium, has painted a bleak picture of Africa. Books such as *Africa works*[12] and *Criminalisation of the African State*[13] describe weak states succumbing to patronage and corruption.[14] Their authors argue that service delivery in many parts of Africa is slipping, while political elites lack a developmental agenda and prefer to serve patrimonial interests. Conflicts have erupted or are sustained, in some cases leading to collapse of government and state failure. In the Netherlands, public debate and policy on Africa in the early years of the twenty-first century have been influenced by the book, *What went wrong in Africa*.[15] Its author argues that African states are undergoing a debilitating process of Africanisation or traditionalisation, and he does not expect any halting of this trend.

The state of the African state has been problematised by many authors, both those from the continent itself and overseas. By and large they share the conclusion that the contemporary African state fails, to a greater or lesser extent, to deliver development and democracy and to uphold the rule of law – aims and principles which within recent history have developed into major policy objectives with near universal acceptance.[16] The neo-patrimonial paradigm offers a compelling conceptual framework for attempting

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[11] Chabal & Daloz, *Africa works*, 3-16.
[12] Chabal & Daloz, *Africa works.*
[13] Bayart, J.F., S. Ellis & B. Hibou, *Criminalization of the state in Africa* (Oxford, 1999).
[14] Meridith, M., *The state of Africa,* (London, 2005) contributes a popularised, journalistic account of the history of the post-colonial African State.
[15] Van der Veen, R., *What went wrong.*
[16] This is well illustrated by the discourse contained in various international policy statements, such as African Union, *The constitutive act of the African Union* (Addis Abeba, 2000).

to understand the state of the African state. From this perspective, contemporary African states and societies are influenced by two coexisting yet contradictory logics. One is the essentially exotic logic of the rational-legal state that can be said to have been imported into Africa together with the bureaucracies of the colonial era. This logic has since been constantly reinforced by African professionals trained along Western curricula and the forces of development cooperation. Another logic, termed patrimonialism, is seen to stem from primordial or traditional sources. This logic is represented by the 'big man' who 'eats'[17] and who gives to his clientele to sustain his power. It is based upon the personalisation of power and the use of kinship ties and patronage for the redistribution of social and economic resources.[18] As seen from the neo-patrimonial paradigm, the African state is a hybrid state. Formal structures and the rules and laws of the state are twisted to suit the patrimonial interests of the ruling elites. Informal patrimonial practices such as nepotism, clientelism, and rent-seeking hamper state structures from delivering what government policies ostensibly aim to do: Deliver development and democracy and uphold the rule of law.

Donors and the neo-patrimonial state
Problematising the African state implies problematising the endeavour of development cooperation which is dependent on the African state. Multilateral development agencies, such as the various United Nations agencies and the international financial institutions, must work with and through African states, which are among their members. For bilateral agencies, states are their natural partners, as development cooperation is often an extension of diplomatic relations.[19] Foreign aid donors have been actively collaborating with African states for decades, though the manner in which they have done so has shifted considerably.[20]

Initially cooperation focussed on distinct social or economic projects of which the African states may have been the beneficiaries, but that were controlled by the delivering agencies. Throughout the 1980s, however, the state itself became the target of interventions, particularly with the aim of restoring macro-economic stability and states' capacity to service their debts to international lenders. The structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) initiated by the IMF and World Bank aimed to roll back and downsize the state. Into the 1990s, democratic and economic reforms were propagated by both bi- and multilateral development agencies and coupled with aid packages and technical assistance to facilitate these reforms. In most African countries, these reforms have been pushed through only partially. Reforms such as trade liberalisation and fiscal and monetary policy reforms can be argued to have more or less achieved their policy objectives. However, reforms dealing more with the structure and effectiveness of the

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[17] This 'eating' is a common African metaphor for appropriating government resources.

[18] See for example, Médard, J.F., 'The underdeveloped state in tropical Africa: Political clientelism or neopatrimonialism?' In: Clapham, C., ed., *Private patronage and public power* (London, 1982).

[19] However, even the approaches of development cooperation that do not directly deal with the state, such as humanitarian aid or direct poverty alleviation, still depend on state authority to operate. Taxation and the issuing of permits offer states instruments for control and possibilities for generating resources both directly and indirectly.

[20] Many works have been published dealing with the shift in approaches to delivering aid. Examples include Groves, L. & R. Hinton, eds, *Inclusive aid* (London, 2004) and L. Schulpen, ed., *Hulp in ontwikkeling* (Assen, 2001).

public sector, such as civil service reforms, have booked less progress and have stretched over the better part of two decades.[21]

Nicholas Van de Walle attributes what he calls the 'syndrome of partial reform' to the fact that neo-patrimonial elites have instrumentalised the reform process for patrimonial interests.[22] They are locked into a macabre dance with donors in which they occasionally placate donors with reformist gestures to keep aid flowing.[23] Meanwhile, they keep a stranglehold on power by feeding their patronage systems and outman-oeuvring and silencing potential competition.[24] Another reason that donor-driven reform programmes have been only partially successful at best, can be attributed to the design of these reform packages. SAPs have been broadly criticised for being donor-driven, dogmatic, one-size-fits-all blueprint prescriptions for reform, aimed at a narrow policy objective: Shaping up public finances and ending unsustainable debt accumulation.[25]

Indicative of the flaws of reform programmes is the incremental readjustment and redesign of such programmes in response to experienced shortcomings and critiques from many sides. As such, SAPs have towards the end of the twentieth century been replaced by country-specific strategies linked to poverty-reduction strategy papers or national development plans. The discourse accompanying this altered approach is one of government ownership, civil society participation, and donor harmonisation.[26] In large part, this is a change in discourse, which raises the question to what extent this changed discourse is reflected by altered practice. Cynically, one could ask if it is any more than 'old wine in new bottles'.[27] What is perhaps more relevant for this dissertation is that the aid approaches associated with aligning to country-led development strategies and country systems presume political will on the part of recipient government to reduce poverty and strengthen democracy and the rule of law. In fact, such political will is seen as a prerequisite for effective development cooperation.[28] However, if one takes the conclusion to its extreme – that neo-patrimonial African states are not developmental, as argued by Chabal & Daloz and others – it poses a serious contradiction in view of this assumption of political will.

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[21] Kiragu, K., 'Improving service delivery through public service reform: Lessons of experience from select Sub-Saharan Africa countries'; paper presented at the Second Meeting of the DAC Network on Good Governance and Capacity Development (Paris, 2002); Van de Walle, N., *African economies and the politics of permanent crisis 1979-1999* (Cambridge, 2001).

[22] Van de Walle, *African*, 60-63.

[23] Kanbur, R., Aid, conditionality and debt in Africa in foreign aid and development: Lessons learnt and directions for the future (London, 2000).

[24] Hibou, B., 'The 'social capital' of the state as an agent of deception'. In: Bayart, J.F., S. Ellis & B. Hibou, eds, *Criminalization of the state in Africa* (Oxford, 1999); Chabal & Daloz, *Africa works*.

[25] See for instance, A. Olukoshi, 'The elusive prince of Denmark: Structural adjustment and the crisis of governance in Africa'. In: Mkandawire T. & C. Soludo, eds, *African voices on structural adjustment* (Dakar, 2003); J. Stiglitz, *Globalization and its discontents* (New York, 2002).

[26] A series of conferences and high-level forums were held in Monterrey (2002), Rome (2003), Paris (2005), and Accra (2008), which progressively codified this new discourse at the international level and translated it into measurable agreements.

[27] Or worse: Seshamani, V., 'The same old wine in the same old bottle? Content, process and donor con-ditionalities of the PRSP'; paper presented during conference on 'Political Dimensions of Poverty Reduction – the Case of Zambia' (Lusaka 2005).

[28] This was, for instance, the case in Dutch development policy in the early 2000s, in which 'a certain measure of good governance' including political will was considered a prerequisite for effective aid delivery. See: Netherlands Minister for Development Cooperation, *Aan elkaar verplicht* ('Mutual Interests, Mutual Responsibilities') (The Hague, 2003), 19.

The inconvenient – for donors – notion that the interests of recipient governments might not align with the professed objectives of poverty reduction and good governance spurred at least sections of some aid agencies to take the political reality[29] into account in the preparations of their development strategies.[30] Initially, many developmental analyses had only touched on the issue of neo-patrimonialism and patrimonial practices incidentally. The focus of these analyses was on positive notions of capacity and accountability, while patronage and corruption were seen as system failures or external-context factors.[31] This could be explained by the fact that a frank assessment of the political context of developing countries is an extremely sensitive issue, and it would be tantamount to accusing partner governments of condoning illicit and illegal behaviour. Also it would be tantamount to admitting the likelihood that aid monies may be diverted by corrupt officials, which could undermine donors' legitimacy among their domestic constituencies. Nevertheless, from about 2004 onwards the notion of neo-patrimonial states figured more and more prominently in various analyses; however, owing to their inconvenient conclusions, for donors and recipients, they rarely entered the public realm but rather continued to be circulated by bureaucrats on a 'for your eyes only' basis.[32]

This dissertation is a response to this increasing problematisation of the African state and donors' increasing concern for governance. It was conceived as part of a research programme aimed at straddling the gap between policy and research in the field of development cooperation focussed on the African state. This study will use the neo-patrimonial paradigm as an entry point for its analysis and will attempt to reconcile this paradigm with an empirical case, that of the Zambian health sector. In doing so, it will at the same time follow donors' shifting approach to engaging with government. How do they (within the confines of the chosen case) react to partial reform and to cases of grand corruption?

Theoretical framework

The next section will present the theoretical framework for this thesis. First this dissertation will be grounded in the tradition of studying and theorising the African state, originating from the nebulous, heterogeneous, multi-disciplinary field of African Stu-

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[29] Which in analyses derived from the field of economics – often via the sub-discipline of New Institutional Economics – is often referred to as the political-economy.

[30] For an overview of the various governance assessments used by various donors, see: www.oecd.org/dac/governance/govassessment (accessed July 2010).

[31] Examples of such analyses and approaches are the World Development Report 2004 of the World Bank, titled 'Making services work for the poor', and a series of analyses performed by the European Centre for Development Policy Management on capacity development.

[32] Examples include Saasa, O.S. & N. Simutanyi, Zambia, *Power and change analysis*, commissioned by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (Lusaka, 2007); Taylor, S. & N. Simutanyi, *Governance and political economy constraints to World Bank CAS priorities in Zambia: A diagnostic*, commissioned by the World Bank (Lusaka, 2007); Thompson *et al., Zambia Country Programme Evaluation*, commissioned by NORAD (Oxford, 2008); Duncan, A., H. Macmillan & N. Simutanyi, *Zambia: Drivers of pro-poor change. An overview*, commissioned by DFID (Oxford, 2003); Booth, D. *et al.*, *Drivers of change and development in Malawi,* commissioned by DFID (London, 2006). It should be noted, however, that the *Drivers of change* analyses get published online. However, the analyses that do get published tend not to name those who are informally influential or complicit in plunder.

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dies.[33] In very broad strokes we will follow the evolving debate on the African state, which has its roots in the Africanist tradition of the colonial era. Subsequently, this section will reflect on the neo-patrimonial paradigm which has gained prominence in the analysis and description of the workings of the African state. The decision to pursue this neo-patrimonial paradigm in our study is, however, based on a resolution not to be drawn into the cynical strain of theorising that exaggerates the patrimonial side of the neo-patrimonial coin and prophesises stagnation and decline. Having introduced the neo-patrimonial paradigm, an attempt will be made to operationalise the paradigm by describing the behaviours that distinguish the neo-patrimonial continuum along the axis from rational-legalism to patrimonialism. This will, however, be done with the understanding that this is a gross simplification of a complex reality.

Finally, a few more steps must be taken in order to complete our conceptual framework and prepare the notion of neo-patrimonialism for an encounter with an empirical research object. The neo-patrimonial paradigm is a macro-level theory, yet it makes assumptions about human behaviour. Moreover, it is people who at a micro-level shape and renegotiate the state through their words and actions. Therefore, to conclude our theoretical framework, we will zoom in on the human factor and use sociological theories to prepare neo-patrimonial theory for empirical analysis, not just in the national political arena but also at the shop-floor level. In doing so, we will also focus on the notions of discourse and practice which form the media through which people shape the state and society. At the same time, these notions of discourse and practice generate the fuzzy data on which our imperfect understanding of the Zambian health sector will be based.

The state in Africa
Research on the state in Africa hails from a tradition that has been developed since the first ethnographers tried to fathom Africa. As the Orientalist in the 'East', the Africanist has tried to unlock the mysteries of the 'dark continent'. Understanding of exotic people and societies aided the forces of imperialism and (neo-)colonialism in their subjugation of the non-Western world.[34] This has been, and too often still is, a tradition of the outsider looking in. Focus and scope are thus by definition limited. Moreover, as the observant outsider possesses a frame of reference influenced by ideology, societal values, and scientific discipline, this Africanist tradition is coloured by shifting shades of perspective.[35] However, starting from ethnography, various disciplines have contributed to the study of African societies and states. This tradition thus offers a toolbox of concepts, perspectives, and paradigms that has undergone constant refinement, replenishment, and adaptation. In this thesis a constant effort will be made to approach the subject with optimal objectivity, repeatedly checking assumptions. However, it would

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[33] For a reflection on the Dutch tradition of Africa Studies, see L. J. de Haan, 'Perspectives on African studies and development in sub-Saharan Africa'. *Africa Spectrum,* 45: 1 (2010), 95-116.

[34] In Saïd, E., *Orientalism* (New York, 1978); Saïd argues how the 'Occident' creates an image of the 'Orient' out of a prejudicial and racist perspective. Bayart similarly approaches the Africanist tradition – from which he hails, but from which he tries to emancipate himself – in Bayart, *African State*, 1.

[35] Over the years, African scholars have been making increasingly significant contributions to this body of literature, both by their critique of Africanist perspectives (see for instance, Mamdani, M., *Citizen and subject: Contemporary Africa and the legacy of late colonialism* (Oxford, 1996)) and by their research and analysis.

be vain not to acknowledge the fact that this thesis is also one of an outsider looking in and thus partly tainted by ideological, paradigmatic, and normative perspectives.

In the Cold War period, Africanist research was heavily influenced by the competition between the ideological perspectives of modernisation and dependency. Modernisation attempted to understand human progress. Dependency theory drew attention to the constraints to progress emanating from external forces and the inequitable power structure of society. These perspectives have over time been confronted with criticism as they reflected only part of reality. Moreover, as with all paradigms, they were often employed too dogmatically. Modernisation often assumes a linearity of processes and a mechanistic character of human interaction. Dependency, on the other hand, assumes devious oppression and subjugation of the weak by outside forces, thus under-appreciating the agency of Africans and their institutions.

Subsequent theorising reflects emancipation from this past. Bayart moved beyond the 'paradigm of the yoke', which has dominated dependency theory, by emphasising African agency and its rationality. He also demonstrated that Africa and its state have their own historicity, in all its dynamism and pluriformity. The state is not static but a product of its own evolution over the *longue durée*.[36] Mamdani, however, warns against the use of the theme of agency as a straightjacket. Stretching African agency too far out from under historical constraints would be tantamount to perversely describing 'modern imperialism … as the outcome of African initiative'.[37]

In *Criminalisation of the State in Africa*, Bayart, together with Ellis and Hibou, shone light on the underbelly of the African state.[38] The book set forth the author's argument that criminality is an integral aspect of African society. It brought to light how contemporary kinship relations give certain groups of Africans a competitive advantage within international crime circuits. The authors also illustrated the instrumentalisation of aid and reform for personal objectives. In short, they focussed on aspects of African reality that most practitioners, policymakers, and politicians have long preferred to ignore. However, there is no use in denying that the hidden and the ugly are an integral part of any reality. Bayart, Ellis & Hibou, however, went further than merely highlighting an aspect of reality: They suggest that Africa is 'returning to Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*'.[39]

With their arguments on the informalisation of politics and instrumentalisation of disorder, Chabal & Daloz, subsequently, have had a profound influence on thinking on and policy towards Africa. In *Africa works,* they convincingly challenge the simplistic assumptions of modernisation and developmentalism that underlie much of the theory and practice of the development industry.[40] They describe how elites use violence and chaos and instrumentalise the state civil society, laws, and religion for their own interests and those of their clientele. As such, they highlight a real and endogenous aspect of African politics that has too often been ignored or, at best, reluctantly taken as an exogenous variable to be accommodated in developmentalist equations. Notwithstand-

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[36] Bayart, *The State,* 2; 270.
[37] Mamdani, *Citizen*,10.
[38] Bayart, Ellis & Hibou, *Criminalization.*
[39] See, for critical reviews Wiseman, J.A., 'Book review: Africa works: The political instrumentalization of disorder, the criminalization of the state in Africa'. In: *The Journal of Modern African Studies,* 37: 3 (1999), 560; Martin, G., 'Book reviews' in *Africa today*, 47: 3/4 (2000), 177-181; Reno, W., 'Book review: Africa works: The political instrumentalization of disorder, the criminalization of the state in Africa'. *Journal of Asian and African Studies,* 38: 1 (2003), 90.
[40] Chabal & Daloz, *Africa.*

ing the merits of their contribution, Chabal & Daloz reduce the complexity of the African reality[41] to a mere analytical abstraction. What they consider the perennial core of contemporary African politics is arguably merely an important aspect of reality. Daloz & Chabal present their book as an innovative break with the 'existing intellectual sloth' of past thinking on Africa and *Africa works* has been received in various policy-making circles as a breakthrough in understanding Africa.[42] Critics in academic circles, however, fail to be convinced of the innovativeness of this approach, placing it squarely in the orthodoxy of the neo-patrimonial paradigm.[43]

An alternative view on the woes of the African state is what Erdmann and Engel describe as the 'radical political economy school',[44] or what Osaghae calls the 'second liberation school'.[45] From this perspective, the neo-patrimonial paradigm is part of the neo-liberal project pushed by the Bretton Woods institutions, used to explain why Western interventions in Africa have not worked. The reasons for the failing or even failure of both democracy and the developmental role of the state are rather sought in external factors than in the assumption that the 'pathologies of the state are originally or even naturally African'.[46] It is argued that the authoritarian and anti-democratic nature of African states is a remnant of their colonial past as a tool of exploitation and oppression,[47] a nature which was subsequently reinforced by Cold War machinations. The scarcity of developmental states[48] in Africa is in part attributed to the onslaught on the state by structural adjustment, combined with a global capitalist system that is essentially skewed to Africa's detriment. What is needed, it is argued, is a second liberation and an appropriation of the state by popular forces rather than an externally oriented elite.[49]

As we shall see later, this dissertation will attempt to contribute to the literature on the African state by making a case study of one specific state, Zambia, and trying to do justice to its own historicity in all its dynamism and pluriformity. However, a conceptual framework is required to guide this endeavour – not to predetermine the narratives and analysis that will be presented in this dissertation, but rather to find a language to describe and attempt to understand the Zambian state in all its complexity. Let us now move to the neo-patrimonial paradigm to explore some of the concepts that will allow us to do so.

The neo-patrimonial paradigm
Patrimonialism is a term that is derived from the works of Max Weber, who laid much of the foundations of modern scientific thinking on the state. The term and its relevance

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[41] And, admittedly, much of the elaborate preceding research and literature on this field.

[42] As evidenced by the manner in which Dutch policy maker Van der Veen picks up this Afro-pessimistic theme in *What went wrong with Africa* and *strong people, weak states: Dutch policy on Sub-Saharan Africa for the long term*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2003.

[43] Refer to the earlier footnote listing critical reviews.

[44] Erdmann, G. & U. Engel, 'Neopatrimonialism revisited – beyond a catch-all concept'. *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Studies*, 45: 1 (2007), 95-119.

[45] Osaghae, E.E., 'The state of Africa's second liberation'. *Interventions* 7: 1 (2005).

[46] *Ibid*.

[47] See, for instance, Mamdani, *Citizen*, 285-287.

[48] Mkandawire argues that these states have indeed historically existed and presently exist on the continent. T. Mkandawire, 'Thinking about developmental states in Africa'. *Cambridge Journal of Economics,* 25 (2001), 289-314.

[49] Osaghae, 'The state'.

for the study of the African state has been much criticised and discarded by many analysts,[50] but it has been staunchly defended and refined by Jean François Médard throughout his career[51] and has played a major role in the analyses of Michael Bratton and Nicholas van de Walle.[52] Originally, the term denoted a phase in the unilinear model of the development of the state from the patriarchal household, through patrimonialism (and sultanism) and feudalism, and towards the ideal-typical modern rational-legal state. Gradually, however, it has come to be used as a factor or a logic observable in all real-life political systems, to greater or lesser degree.[53] It is fair to argue that patrimonialism and its constituent practices, such as patronage, cronyism, nepotism, and corruption, are also present in so-called developed societies. However, one could argue that in such settings it is more checked and constrained by the formal and informal institutions that these states have developed over generations than it is in the relatively young states of Africa.[54]

Patrimonialism is characterised by the personalisation of power. Authority is attributed to an officeholder rather than the office he holds. Furthermore, authority is maintained through personal patronage rather than through ideology or law. This leads to confusion between the public and private spheres. Daloz & Chabal (1999) argue that in most African countries the state is not emancipated from society. The logic and practice of the personalisation of power imbues a system with a certain measure of subjectivity, changeability, and unpredictability. This logic thus contradicts the objectivity and predictability characterising the principles of the rule of law and limits the effectiveness of a bureaucracy.[55]

The prefix 'neo' is used by Médard in conjunction with patrimonialism to distinguish between the 'ideal type and a mixed type of patrimonialism'. He refers to a neopatrimonial state as a 'kind of hybrid of patrimonialism and bureaucracy'. This hybrid results from either a 'resurgence of an ancient phenomenon or a simple transition between patrimonialism and modern conceptions of the state'.[56] Erdmann and Engel[57] criticise various authors such as Daloz and Chabal for over-emphasising patrimonialism rather than *neo*-patrimonialism. This denies the importance of the rational-legal aspects of African bureaucracies. Although in practice the distinction between public and private spheres is not always observed, formally the distinction is made. In fact, in public rhetoric, African leaders often emphasise the rule of law and the value of consti-

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[50] This includes even those analysts who point out similar patterns, factors, and aspects of the African state that could be referred to as patrimonialist, such as Bayart, *The State*.

[51] Médard, 'The underdeveloped state', and J.F. Médard, 'Patrimonialism, neopatrimonialism and the study of the postcolonial state in Sub-Saharan Africa'. In: Marcussen, H.S., ed., *Improved natural resource management – the role of formal organisations and informal networks and institutions* (Roskilde 1996), 76-97.

[52] Bratton, M. & N. van de Walle, 'Neopatrimonal regimes and political transitions in Africa.' *World Politics*, 46: 4 (1994), 453-489; and Bratton, M. & N. van de Walle, *Democratic experiments in Africa* (Cambridge, 1997).

[53] Brinkerhoff, D.W. & A.A. Goldsmith, *Clientalism, patrimonialism and democratic governance: An overview and framework for assessment and programming* (Cambridge, 2002), Médard, The underdeveloped state, and Bratton & Van de Walle, 'Neopatrimonal regimes'.

[54] The fact that patrimonial behaviours may be checked and constrained by formal and informal institutions does not prevent such behaviours from being adapted to the institutional setting to allow actors to seize privately profitable opportunities.

[55] Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, *Clientalism.*

[56] Médard, 'Patrimonialism'.

[57] Erdmann & Engel, 'Neopatrimonialism'.

tutionality, as evidenced by, for example, the importance placed on constitutional debates in countries such as Kenya and Zambia. The essence of neo-patrimonialism is thus that it captures the dualistic nature of African states and societies in which two interwoven logics – a patrimonial logic and a rational-legal logic – co-exist, compete, and interact.

Bratton and Van de Walle, in their comparative analysis of the political changes that swept through Africa in the early 1990s, rely on the notion of neo-patrimonialism to characterise specific regimes.[58] The focus in this analysis is the transition of various types of neo-patrimonial regimes towards democratic governance. The difficulty in thinking in terms of transition from certain regime types towards an a-historical idealised end-state of democracy, modernity, and rational-legal bureaucracy is that it presupposes a unilinear process and masks the continuities evidenced in real-life processes of change. Mahmood Mamdani (1995) severely criticised most Africanist research of the African state he encountered for its unilinear evolutionary perspective. Developments in Africa are often discussed in analogy with idealised and romanticised epochs in European history. He condemns most Africanists for implying 'that African reality has meaning only so far as it reflects a particular stage in the development of [European] history'. This practice of attributing universal validity to specific European historical experiences is blatant Eurocentrism.[59] From such a perspective, any deviation from this expected unilinear process is denoted as a pathological dysfunctionality and is rejected as incomplete democracy or state failure.

Most concepts from social science are relative and fluid, even though people tend to use them with a sense of absolutism. In the tradition of modern scientific thought,[60] dichotomies are popular models for representing perceived reality. A dichotomy poses one concept as opposite to another: One universal, one residual.[61] The shortcoming of dichotomies, however, is the implicit assumption of exclusivity. One tends to employ them as *either* one *or* the other, black or white. In human reality things are rarely so absolute. Some scholars such as Mamdani and Olukoshi rightly criticise the rigid use of dichotomisations, arguing that in real-life situations in Africa[62] various categories 'inter-penetrate one another in an organic relationship that is at once complementary and con-tradictory'.[63] Actors, organisations, and practices thus possess many facets and aspects. They can even possess the seemingly contradictory, opposing aspects of a dichotomy. Paradoxically, one can be *both* good *and* bad, happy and sad, modern and traditional. This is the strength of the concept of neo-patrimonialism, as it represents exactly this greyness, this dualism of (African) reality.[64]

On the other hand, as most things are relative, concepts are shaped by their context. Concepts are not only defined by describing what they are but also by what they are not. Dichotomies are useful in that they provide the counterpoint to a concept. This offers contrast and contours to a concept and allows for comparison. It could be argued that patrimonialism merits its applicability as a concept to its being essentially a reflexive

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[58] Bratton & Van de Walle, *Democratic experiments*.

[59] Mamdani, *Citizen*, 12.

[60] Some would add the adjective 'Western', although this label would merit much discussion or dispute.

[61] Mamdani, *Citizen*, 9.

[62] Although one can rightly argue that this applies to human reality everywhere.

[63] Olukoshi, 'The elusive prince', 241.

[64] The argument here reflects the reconceptualisation that Giddens makes of dualisms or oppositions into dualities. In particular, Giddens reconceptualised the dualism of the individual and society into the duality of structure and agency (Giddens, A., *The constitution of society* (Berkley, 1984)).

term or counterpoint itself. Olukoshi argues that neo-patrimonialism[65] is abused to explain why policy objectives (usually those of donors) such as structural adjustment or democratic reforms have not been achieved as planned. Anders places the concept of patrimonialism within a socio-pathological paradigm that risks stereotypically presenting 'African bureaucracies and bureaucrats as pathological deviations from the Weberian ideal-type of Western rational-legal bureaucratic order'. It could be thus argued that patrimonialism is useful insofar as it describes that which does not fit with or detracts from the idealised rational-legal ideal of bureaucracy or the state. Is patrimonialism thus merely 'not rational-legal'? How, within a neo-patrimonial setting, do rational-legal logic and patrimonial logic relate?

Table 1.1 Continuum of administrative systems

Neo-patrimonial	⟷ Rational-legal bureaucratic
Administrators are recruited and promoted as reward for personal connection with personal leaders	Administrators are recruited and promoted in competitive processes that judge their merit and expertise
Administrators can be dismissed for no reason	Administrators can only be dismissed with cause
There is an unspoken hierarchy with an unclear division of labour, little specialisation of output, and uncertain reporting channels	There is an authorised hierarchy with a clear division of labour, specific standards for output, and well-defined reporting channels
Important orders may be given orally	Important orders are put in writing
Administrators supplement their salary with bribes and kickbacks	Administrators are prohibited from supplementing their salary
System is decentralised allowing wide discretion on the job	System is centralised with little room for discretion on the job
Administrators' actions are arbitrary, based on subjective reasoning, and follow ad hoc procedures	Administrators' actions are predictable, based on objective methods, and follow uniform procedures
Rules are applied with partiality, and some citizens get preferential treatment	Rules are applied with neutrality, and all citizens get equal treatment
Verbal agreements are used in government procurement and sales	Binding legal contracts are used in government procurement and sales
Internal controls are lax	Internal controls are strict
Documentation is spotty, with sensitive matters left off the books	Thorough records are maintained and regularly audited
Subjects have little recourse for poor service	Citizens have appeal channels if given poor service

Source: Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith (2002)

Nicholas van de Walle argues that 'the rational-legal order can be thought of a public good on which (neo)patrimonial interests attempt to free-ride'. The formal rules in a neo-patrimonial setting, which are in general observed, create possibilities for personal gain through corruption and rent-seeking. This patrimonial instrumentalisation of rational-legal order has its limits, however, as 'excessive free-riding destroys the public

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[65] Here Erdmann & Engel would accuse him of confusing *neo*-patrimonialism with simple patrimonialism.

good'.[66] This perspective illustrates the inter-linkage between rational-legal logic and patrimonial logic. It presents patrimonial practice within a neo-patrimonial setting as dependent on more or less effective rational-legal systems. This backs up the critique of Erdmann and Engel of authors such as Daloz and Chabal not to 'minimise the legal-rational bureaucratic aspect and push the concept (of neo-patrimonialism) too far towards patrimonialism'. Bureaucracy in neo-patrimonial settings is thus 'more than a rational-legal façade'; it is a formal system that is penetrated by informal personal relations[67] evidenced by patrimonial practice which follows patrimonial logic.

To further operationalise neo-patrimonialism, it might be useful to disaggregate patrimonial and rational-legal aspects of reality. In the table above, Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith focus on various aspects of administrative systems. It is, however, important to note that these represent idealised situations. The difficulty with this idealised representation of neo-patrimonial versus more rational-legal bureaucratic systems is the problematic distinction between the formal and the informal. On the one hand, a bureaucracy might be formally structured along lines reflecting a rational-legal system, but this says nothing about how and whether such formal rules are observed. And as was argued above, the essence of neo-patrimonialism is that informal politics invade formal institutions. In addition, formal rules are used either as tools for particularistic interests or as a refuge for competing clientalistic demands,[68] as formal rules are often applied and enforced in an ad hoc manner. The challenge in analysing neo-patrimonialism is thus to take account of actual practice and behaviour rather than merely formal rules of discourse.

Different authors use the concept of neo-patrimonialism in describing different aspects of the state. Bratton & Van de Walle focus specifically on the political arena when describing processes of democratisation. Other authors discuss patrimonialism within the context of bureaucracy or administration. Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith make a distinction between politics and administration, linking the former to clientalism and explicitly reserving the use of patrimonialism for the context of administration. As counterpoints to clientalism and patrimonialism, they use democratic governance and rational-legal bureaucracy respectively. Erdmann and Engel, on the other hand, conceptualise the notion of clientalism together with patronage as part of neo-patrimonialism. Clientalism refers to a personal relationship between a patron and a client in which individual goods or favours such as jobs, promotions, or possibilities to attend workshops are exchanged for support. The essence of clientalism is, however, the asymmetry of this relationship in terms of power. Clientalism is arguably not delimited to the political arena. Rather, clientalist networks permeate society and thus also enter bureaucracy.

In Erdmann and Engel's theorisation, patronage refers more to the distribution of collective benefits by members of the elite in exchange for collective support. Erdmann and Engel explicitly differentiate between patronage and clientalism on the basis of whether an exchange relationship is collective or individual respectively. However, this distinction is not always made, leading to some confusion in common use. The benefits often associated with patronage include the distribution of goods – public and private – such as free public services, 'no-show' jobs, vehicles, food, and campaign goodies. In contemporary Africa this distributive behaviour can be witnessed in electoral cam-

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[66] Van de Walle, *African Economies,* 128.
[67] Erdmann & Engel, 'Neopatrimonialism'.
[68] *Ibid*.

paigns, either referring to the handing out of food, cash, fertiliser, or clothing or to the targeting of development projects to electorally strategic areas – what Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith refer to as 'pork barrel spending'.[69]

Another issue often associated with patronage is the control of the distribution of positions, as an instrument of power. This behaviour does not reflect the collective/-individual distinction *per se* referred to above. It can refer to the placing of a client in a particular position or to expecting loyalty and clients' services from those placed in return for the placement. Those who are critical, indiscreet, or disloyal risk losing their jobs. This means, in a neo-patrimonial setting, that formal human resources' policy can be instrumentalised for controlling a network of power.

This distributive behaviour of positions echoes the term 'prebendalism', for which Richard Joseph is often referred to. Prebends are benefits that come with a position besides a salary, such as commissions or kickbacks for functions such as awarding procurement contracts or delivering services, or the possibility to benefit from a client network. Joseph describes the use of prebendal offices:

> To obtain and keep clients, one must gain a prebendal office; and to be sure that in the distribution of prebendal offices an individual and his kin have a reasonable chance of procuring one, clients must be gathered together to make their collective claims as well as to prove that the aspirant patron (or potential holder of prebendal office) is a person of consequence whose cooptation would be rewarding to the political entrepreneur.[70]

From this perspective a bureaucracy could be seen as a hierarchical network of prebendal offices, linking patrons or 'big men' to clients outside the system through sub-patrons and middlemen.

'Corruption' is also a term that is closely associated with patrimonialist logic. Transparency International defines corruption as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain, thus reflecting the confusion between the public and private spheres in the (neo-)patrimonial paradigm. This definition thus makes a clear distinction between the public and private. This definition lacks precision in that it does not refer to the formal legality or the informal acceptance of a corrupt practice. Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith, on the other hand, do explicitly state that 'corrupt methods break the law or firmly established custom'.[71] This reflects the highly normative character of corruption as a popular concept. Meanwhile, however, the usage of corruption becomes subjective and reflects the confusion between the formal and the informal. This complexity makes questions about what constitutes corruption especially interesting as questions about social acceptance of what is perceived to be corrupt practice.

Rent-seeking is a term derived from economics to describe a type of behaviour linked to the neo-patrimonial paradigm. It reflects the capture of economic benefits flowing from a sub-optimal market situation caused by government regulations and other institutions. It often implies the creation of monopoly positions, thus blocking competition and creating huge profits for businessmen, who are usually tied up with politics or are prebendal officeholders themselves. Rent-seeking need not be illegal *per se*, as it is usually formal legal frameworks that allow for rent-seeking opportunities. Nevertheless, explicitly illegal and corrupt practices can accompany rent-seeking – for

[69] Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, *Clientalism*, 6.
[70] Joseph, R.A., *Democracy and prebendal politics in Nigeria: The rise and fall of the second republic* (Cambridge, 1987).
[71] Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, *Clientalism*, 16.

instance, in terms of bribing legislators and policy makers to shape these legal frame-works to the businessman's advantage.

As we saw above, the concepts of patrimonialism and neo-patrimonialism are con-tentious. As elastic concepts, they may lack the precision some analysts aspire to. At the same time, they contribute to a conceptual framework that gives a place to some of the behaviours that have too often been left out of analyses or narratives set in the context of an African state. The concept neo-patrimonial will be used to refer to a context in which rational-legal logic is strongly influenced or subverted by other competing logics. These 'other' logics may be referred to as patrimonial. The difficulty here is that the rationale of the actors involved is difficult for an outsider to determine. If a clerk conveniently overlooks a procedure, does he do that to help another in view of a favour in return, to serve his political master, or simply to make life easier? Labelling this as patrimonial will thus be imprecise. If such labelling of behaviour is done in this dis-sertation, it will thus be with some reluctance. As an alternative, the notion of instru-mentalisation will often be used. This forgoes implicit labelling of the motives driving an actor's behaviour. At the same time, as the aim of this dissertation is to confront the neo-patrimonial paradigm with an empirical case, it will not be possible to avoid analysing empirical data in the language of neo-patrimonialism.

Having surveyed contending viewpoints for a frame of reference set by the neo-patrimonial paradigm, it would be useful to determine the scope for this research. To what level will the lens of neo-patrimonialism that we have crudely constructed be zoomed? So as to gain understanding, scope must be delimited to allow us to access a certain subject matter. In this thesis we will follow the neo-patrimonial perspective while zooming in on the human factor.

Zooming into the human factor

In the preceding section, we have discussed the neo-patrimonial paradigm at a very broad and general level, as is usual in the literature framing this paradigm. The debate on neo-patrimonialism and the analysis of neo-patrimonialism often take place at a meta- or macro-level and employ a structuralist focus on regimes or the state at large.[72] The risk of such theorisation at the macro-level is that one may end up suggesting stasis and determinism, and neo-patrimonialism may, paradoxically, be conceptually con-strued as a similar 'yoke' to the one Bayart considered dependency theory to be. We thus need to move beyond macro-level discussions and give due attention to the agency of the individuals shaping the reality this research aims to study. Are they caught in the straight-jackets of tradition, convention, and static political and cultural patterns, or is there room to make autonomous decisions that have the potential to change the system?

Gerhard Anders in his analysis of civil servants in Malawi takes a distinctly micro-approach to analysing issues of governance. While he is cognisant of the neo-patri-monial paradigm, he prefers to work up from 'the state's "shop-floor level"' and civil servants' everyday life, rather than deducting from theoretical concepts at meta- or macro-level.[73] As this research will attempt to look 'beyond the façade', it will be necessary to look beyond analysing the state at a macro-level. This dissertation will also

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[72] Erdmann & Engel, 'Neopatrimonialism'; Bratton & Van de Walle, *Democratic experiments*; L. Rakner, *Political and economic liberalisation in Zambia* (Uppsala, 2004); Erdmann, G. & N. Simu-tanyi, *Transition in Zambia: The hybridisation of the third republic* (Lilongwe, 2003).

[73] Anders, G., 'Civil servants in Malawi: Cultural dualism, moonlighting and corruption in the shadow of good governance' (PhD thesis, Erasmus School of Law, 2005), 6.

move to the shop-floor level, but with the intention to make sense of meta- and macro-level concepts such as neo-patrimonialism. The neo-patrimonial paradigm makes assumptions about agents' behaviour and how this may undermine rational-legal order. Thus, in order to critically examine the neo-patrimonial paradigm in practice, it is important to begin with this behaviour; this means zooming into the human factor of the state. It is humans who shape, operate, and even subvert the state in their quest for power, in their pursuit of public goods, and in their need to create a secure livelihood.

Sociological and anthropological theory has been shaped by a debate on structure versus theory, which has shed light on how people relate to institutional power structures such as the state. Is it rules, laws, and culture that determine people's behaviour? Or are people free to ignore or even rewrite the rules in practice with their agency. There is a general consensus that this structure/agency dichotomy is false, as both individuals and institutions matter.[74]

A nearly constant dissatisfaction seems to characterise the interaction between individuals and complex institutional networks such as the state. Citizens are concerned the state does not deliver what they voted or paid for. Politicians may be worried that their manifestoes and policies do not deliver the expected results. Why is it that the sum of people's actions does not equal the sum of their expectations? The sociologist Giddens provides an explanation: Whereas humans are knowledgeable agents, their knowledgeability is bound by unconscious, unacknowledged conditions and unintended consequences.

> The flow of action continually produces consequences which are unintended by actors, and these unintended consequences also may form unacknowledged conditions of action in a feedback fashion. Human history is created by intentional activities, but is not an intended project; it persistently eludes efforts to bring it under conscious direction. However, such attempts are continually made by human beings, who operate under the threat and promise … that they are the only creatures who make their history ….[75]

This conclusion on humans' imprecise contribution to their own history resonates with concerns in neo-patrimonial literature on partial reform and state failure. The outcome of a reform process or a process of state formation can fail to produce the outcome intended, as unknown or unacknowledged factors play a role leading to unintended consequences. One often unacknowledged factor is that various competing interests are at play in shaping such a process. Different actors have different objectives which may not overlap with, or may even compete with, formal objectives. A reform process or the process of state building is thus an arena in which different actors may compete to pursue their interests of accumulating power and assets. From a neo-patrimonial perspective, one could label any interests which compete with formal, rational-legal objectives as patrimonial interests. Alternatively, one draws a distinction between private or public interests. In human reality, however, it is difficult to narrow down agents' objectives to fit under one or the other label. Moreover, interests are difficult to observe as a social scientist. Pronouncements about actors' interests can be made only after an implicit or explicit analytical process, taking into account what can be observed or recorded about agents' behaviour: Practice and discourse.

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[74] Hajer, M. & D. Laws, 'Ordering through discourse'. In: Moran, M. *et al*., eds, *The Oxford Handbook of Public Policy* (Oxford, 2006), 257.

[75] Giddens, A., *The constitution of society* (Berkley, 1984), 27.

In order to understand human behaviour within a seemingly elusive structure such as the state, anthropologists have taken to study practice and discourse.[76] These are factors that mediate between structure and agency and form the cultural processes that give meaning to the state from the perspective of both those within the state, such as officials and health workers, and those outside the state, such as patients and taxpayers.

Routine and repetitive everyday practices are one of the primary ways in which the state is culturally constructed and reproduced.[77] Examples of such practices include registration and application procedures: Filling out forms, stamping, and forwarding. Also included are practices of legislation and parliamentary debate. Of course, such practices are not fixed, as agents may have opportunities to deviate from or improvise on formal procedures. As such, actors can instrumentalise formal rational-legal procedures in order to create opportunities for private benefit. For instance, in a registration procedure, a clerk can frustrate a client by being excessively proceduralistic in the hope of a bribe to speed things up. Equally informal practices may be routinely used instead of formal procedures, while the formal rules may then be used to cover up or legitimise the actor. Whereas it is clear that, as argued before, such a setting can be labelled neo-patrimonial, labelling behaviour patrimonial is more ambiguous. It is credible that in practice bending a few rules need not be patrimonial behaviour, but mere pragmatism. Formal rules can be arcane and mutually contradictory, creating a situation which may be legal but is neither rational nor logical. Moreover, actors may be likely to hide informal practice behind formal practice because rule-breaking, particularly if done for private gain, may be considered illicit. As such, their actual practice lies behind the façade of rational-legal acceptability. Beyond the methodological problems this creates – which will be addressed later – this means that others have to rely on verbal accounts to understand such hidden practice. In short, this means looking at discourse.

Discourse is the written and oral language that people use to represent their socio-cultural and institutional context. This refers to stories, rumours, and speeches related by people, or the documents, plans, and programmes they write to convey their messages. For groups, organisations, and networks of people, discourse creates legibility and contributes to a common understanding of social practice and the socio-political environment. Discursive tools that serve this function include mission statements, myths of creation, graphs, plans, and statistical yearbooks. This functionality creates a demand for discourse to be reflective of reality. Discourse, however, not only represents reality; it is also used as a medium to influence reality. As such, orders, directives, circulars, proposals, advisories, policy statements, and strategic plans aim to shape bureaucratic and other social practice.

At the same time, like practice, though perhaps to an even greater extent, people can manipulate words to represent 'reality' in a way that suits their objectives. People can bluff, flatter, or even lie. This need not be malevolent *per se*. People are cultured to follow norms about what one can or cannot say. At the same time, people tend to pursue their interests and are thus not inclined to incriminate themselves, as well as the fact that they will portray themselves (or a group they belong to) in a better light. Discourse is

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[76] Alternatively, the concept of 'representation' is used to cover discourse. Representation is broader that discourse, as it also encompasses non-written material symbols and attributes which convey a cultural message – such as a president's portrait or a white coat. See Sharma, A. & A. Gupta, 'Rethinking theories of the state in an era of globalization'. In: Sharma, A. & A. Gupta, eds, *Anthropology of the state* (Oxford, 2006).

[77] Giddens, *The Constitution*, 284; Sharma & Gupta, 'Rethinking'; Hajer, 'Practice'.

thus subjective and can be used to hide realities or suggest something is real when it is not.

When applied to the neo-patrimonial paradigm, discourse can thus be seen as an important contributor to the notion of the façade. Lip service can be paid to rational-legal principles and documents, while hidden informal practice gives shape to a whole other reality. Furthermore, while the above suggests that rational-legal discourse is a bad proxy for reality, patrimonial discourse – accusations of corruption and patronage – also cannot be fully trusted to represent reality. As corruption is discursively linked to legitimacy, charges of corruption can be used to attack the state and its representatives,[78] or alternatively rivals or disloyal clients. Patrimonial discourse is thus instrumentalised to negotiate an actor's or a group's relations to the state. These comprise, for instance, power relations as well as duties and entitlements. This argument on instrumentalising patrimonial discourse also has a more general validity: Discourse is used by actors not only to represent the message they want to convey about 'reality', but also to shape reality and renegotiate social, cultural, political, and economic realities – albeit in an imprecise manner.

At a later stage we will discuss what the reflections on discourse and practice above will mean for the methodology of this research. Let us now conclude this theorising on the human factor by zooming out again and reflecting on what this implies for our concept of the state. Focussing on the human factor has shown that the state is 'a multilayered, contradictory, translocal ensemble of institutions, practices and people in a globalised context'.[79] Through their practice and discourse, 'actors contribute to the reproduction of institutionalised practices, which shapes structure' – in this case, the state. However, this process does not involve a closed system but is linked up to far-flung connections.[80] This process is one of struggle, conflict, and compromise in various arenas of negotiation. As such, people write history as an unintended project. This history as Giddens cautions, does not have an evolutionary shape.[81] Ferguson poses that rather than have a linear path, the trajectory of human development with its myriads of paths and branches forms a bush.[82] Progress and regression are both at play. Based on innumerable and context-specific factors, this can either be a withering bush or one growing with vigour. From time to time the structural context undergoes seismic shifts of institutional change. Examples include the creation of a new state following colonial rule, the transition to multi-party politics, or the establishment of a new service delivery agency. These ruptures change the arena in which people negotiate the state. While this is a new reality to which actors have to adapt, it need not, however, fundamentally alter the political and cultural repertoires of discourse and practice which people employ within that arena. Thus, while context changes as history unfolds, history may be seen to repeat itself.

Let us now move to the specific context that is the focus of this dissertation, to see the arguments proposed above reflected in empirical reality. Let us confront theory with an empirical object: The Zambian health sector.

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[78]   Gupta, A., 'Blurred boundaries', In: Sharma & Gupta, *Anthropology.*
[79]   Sharma & Gupta, 'Rethinking', 6.
[80]   Giddens, *The constitution*, 284.
[81]   *Ibid*. 236.
[82]   Ferguson, *Expectations*, 80; 252.

Empirical object of study

Whence and w(h)ither Zambia?
The decision to focus on Zambia was arbitrary in the sense that practical considerations were dominant. As desk officer for Zambia at the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I was in a convenient position for familiarising myself with the political context of the country. Moreover, through my contacts with the Netherlands Embassy in Lusaka, which had years of experience as a donor in various sectors, I had a convenient network and point of access to a sector of the African state. Beyond pragmatics, however, there are various arguments to justify the choice to focus on Zambia as a setting in which to explore the neo-patrimonial paradigm.

By 2005 – at which time the decision was made to focus this dissertation on Zambia – Zambia did not fit the picture drawn by some of the literature framing the neo-patrimonial paradigm of a collapsing African state. Rather, Zambia looked as if it was emerging from the 'permanent economic crisis'[83] which seemed to have characterised the country throughout the 1980s and 1990s (Table 1.2). Following decades in which the country's growth rate fluctuated wildly between negative and positive rates, it appeared that Zambia had found a stable path of growth (which has endured up to the time of writing). In addition, the inflation rate had come down to around ten per cent compared to rates above one hundred per cent in the early 1990s. These results had followed generations of structural adjustment programmes, privatisation of the copper mines, and a process of conditional debt relief which resulted in relief of 92 per cent of Zambia's international debt. Significantly, the mines had been finally privatised at a moment when copper prices were buoyant due to high demand for copper, particularly in emerging economies such as China.

Table 1.2   Historical growth and inflation rates

Year:	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
GDP growth	6.6	-2.9	-1.1	-1.7	1.2	1.7	1.5	9.3	-3.7	-0.6
Inflation	14.0	12.5	19.7	20.0	37.4	54.8	47.0	54.0	128.3	109.6
Year	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
GDP growth	-0.7	2.1	-0.1	-13.3	-2.8	6.9	3.3	-1.9	2.2	3.6
Inflation	97.7	165.7	183.3	54.6	34.9	43.1	24.4	24.5	26.8	26.1
Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
GDP growth	4.9	3.3	5.1	5.4	5.3	6.2	6.2	5.7	6.4	7.6
Inflation	21.4	22.2	21.4	18.0	18.3	9.0	10.7	12.4	13.4	8.5

Source: IMF World Economic Outlook Database

In addition, in the realm of politics Zambia appeared to have been somewhat transformed compared with the authoritarian one-party state of the Kaunda era. Disaffection over bread-and-butter issues at the end of the 1980s had contributed to a popular movement challenging the political status quo. Changes in the geo-political context – the collapse of various authoritarian socialist regimes, tacit support amongst donors for

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83   Van de Walle, *African Economies*.

political change, and the illusion of the Kaunda regime that it could defuse political unrest by being seen to partially accommodate demands – contributed to a chain of events that saw Kaunda lose power in multiparty elections. The electoral victory of the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD), supported by civil society groups and activists, led to an opening up of the political space. Not only were political parties and civil organisations free to be formed but also media outlets critical of government. In fact, a civil society campaign in combination with defections by ruling party politicians and donor concerns thwarted an attempt by Kaunda's successor Chiluba to alter the constitutional framework so as to extend his tenure past ten years. Whereas the 1996 and 2001 elections had been marred by substantive accusations of vote rigging, the 2006 elections were seen more as an accurate reflection of public opinion. Although Mwanawasa and his party, the MMD, won these elections, they were effectively challenged by Michael Sata, who ran a populist campaign based on nationalist-developmental issues resonating strongly with the urban population. After the elections, some of the policies proposed by Sata were adopted by government.[84] This suggests that the multiparty electoral system provided an arena for debate about policies and the articulation of policy alternatives.

Equally in the area of corruption, it seemed that Zambia had embarked on a new trajectory, apparently departing from the logic of impunity for grand corruption characteristic of neo-patrimonial settings. Mwanawasa had apparently been handpicked by Chiluba as his successor in the expectation that Chiluba could continue to wield influence as party president. Mwanawasa responded to public concerns and donor concerns about grand corruption, which had been widespread under Chiluba. In July 2002, Parliament lifted Chiluba's immunity from prosecution and by the end of 2003 a trail began, to indict Chiluba for corruption.

The images framed above suggest several dramatic shifts in how the Zambian state is managed. Indeed, these images are real reflections of the history that Zambia has undergone in the 1990s and early 2000s. This could implicitly suggest that Zambia's path of development increasingly reflected rational-legal order rather than patrimonial logic. That is, however, not a point that this dissertation can argue, as the above merely represents a selective framing of aspects of Zambian history. A closer reading of history rather suggests that, whereas seismic shifts have taken place in Zambia's institutional structure, influencing Zambian actors' political practice and their political discourse, there are enduring patterns of behaviour. In other words, Zambian history reflects both changes as well as continuities. Within a changed institutional structure, actors have adapted existing repertoires of political practice.

In the early 2000s a number of analyses critically reflected on the political and economic reforms of the Chiluba era. Rakner analysed the dual economic and political reforms of that period. This analysis clearly presents Zambia's reform experiences as an empirical example of Van de Walle's syndrome of partial reform. While there was considerable convergence between government policies and donor conditionalities, Rakner concludes that domestic interest groups were marginalised in these reform processes and did not profit from the reforms. Rakner concedes that the foundations for a shift from a state-led to a market-oriented economy were laid in this period. Examples are the implementation of a cash budget, the establishment of the Zambia Revenue Authority, and the abolition of exchange-rate controls. However, while there appeared

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[84] Larmer, M. & A. Fraser, 'Of cabbages and King Cobra: Populist politics and Zambia's 2006 election'. *African Affairs,* 106: 425 (2007), 611-637.

to be a genuine commitment to stabilisation, there was little commitment to structural public service reforms, and the liberalisation of the mines suffered from procrastination.[85] In the political realm, Rakner built on other analyses, which stated that due to enduring patterns of formal institutions and informal practice and their influence on political behaviour, there were significant continuities between Chiluba's tenure and the past.[86] Examples of such continuities are the role of presidentialism in the Zambian context and the pressure to form a maximum coalition to hold onto or to gain power. One effect of these continuities was that the MMD formed a dominant party system with striking similarities to the UNIP one-party system.

These continuities provide arguments for other analysts to stick the neo-patrimonial label on Zambia. One of the first robust 'neo-patrimonial' analyses focussing specifically on Zambia, by Erdmann and Simutanyi, declared Zambia a 'hybrid regime'. They argued the persistence of neo-patrimonial rule was a constraint to the 'permanent institutionalisation and consolidation of democracy', despite the transition Zambia had undergone. They questioned whether Mwanawasa's 'new deal' government would be able to dismantle the predominant pattern of politics with its anti-corruption drive. They argued that this would be inconsistent with the logic of forming a maximum coalition, a logic central to Zambian politics, pointing out that the political elites have been socialised in a neo-patrimonial setting. Going further, Erdmann and Simutanyi even asked whether the prosecution of Chiluba may even have been a tool in a neo-patrimonial power struggle.[87] Politicians implicated in corruption from the Chiluba era, such as Vernon Mwaanga, Katele Kalumba, and Michael Mabenga were retained or rehabilitated by Mwanawasa, suggesting selective application of the law.[88] Another analyst using the neo-patrimonial frame of thought saw Mwanawasa employing patrimonial strategies such as patronage in his attempts to broaden his power base by co-opting opposition politicians into his cabinet and broadening his power base beyond Chiluba's Bemba coalition, which had brought him to power.[89]

At the same time, however, Mwanawasa's government was seen to be dismantling some institutional tools of Chiluba's patronage system, such as the presidential discretionary 'slush' fund and the presidential housing initiative.[90] In addition, some institutions were seen to perform relatively well in a continued neo-patrimonial context. This can be illustrated by the most concrete attempt yet to apply the neo-patrimonial paradigm to a concrete case in Zambia. In an analysis of the Zambian Revenue Authority, Von Soest concurred with the conclusion that neo-patrimonial continuities persist in Zambia. This, he argued, was evidenced by the abuse of state resources, the concentration of political power, and the awarding of political favours. At the same time, he

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[85] Rakner, L., *Political and economic liberalisation in Zambia* (Uppsala, 2004).

[86] For instance, P. Burnell, 'The party system and party politics in Zambia: Continuities past, present and future'. A*frican Affairs,* 100 (2001), 239-263; Van Donge, J.K., 'Zambia: Kaunda and Chiluba; Enduring patterns of political culture'. In: Wiseman, J.A., *Democracy and political change in Sub-Saharan Africa* (London, 1995), 193-219.

[87] Erdmann, G. & N. Simutanyi, Transition in Zambia: The hybridisation of the Third Republic (Lilongwe, 2005).

[88] Mutesa, F., 'The nexus between public resources management reforms and neo-patrimonial politics'. In: Meyns, P. *et al.*, eds, *Conference on political dimensions of poverty reduction – The case of Zambia* (Lusaka, 2005).

[89] Meyns, P., 'The creation of an enabling environment for poverty reduction; can Zambia's political system deliver the doods?' In: Meyns, P. *et al.*, *Conference.*

[90] Mutesa, 'The nexus'

found that the effectiveness of tax collection had increased. This conflicted with Von Soest's initial hypothesis that neo-patrimonial politics would undermine effective tax collection,[91] or the broader notion that neo-patrimonialism necessarily undermines the efficient operation of institutions.

Zambia's recent history thus reflects the contradictions of neo-patrimonialism. In the dynamics reflected above, we can see that rational-legal arrangements were strengthened, and neo-patrimonial arrangements institutionalising patrimonial logic were abolished. At the same time, however, it can be argued that certain patterns of political practice endure, albeit in reshaped institutional structures. However, to add historical depth to this context analysis, let us look further back to the origins of the Zambian state, to see if we can determine the origins of these enduring patterns or continuities.

Before colonial times, Zambia as a political entity did not exist.[92] The territory which is now Zambia has long been populated by a continuum of Bantu peoples, trading and settling across what are now Zambia's frontiers. These peoples, conveniently and imprecisely labelled by colonial ethnographers as 72 tribes, had experienced various degrees of state formation. Some like the Tonga were not organised into hierarchical political institutions above the family level. Others had the political office of clan-chiefs; some like the Bemba had paramount chiefs ruling over numerous clans. In Western Province the Lozi had developed a kingdom, based on aristocracy and a proto-bureaucracy of officials. The Lozi, like other peoples such as the Bemba, held other ethnic groupings in tributary dependency. However, it was only under the authority of a private British company that these peoples were cast together into a larger political unit.

The British South Africa Company administered two territories in what is now Zambia: North-West Rhodesia and North-East Rhodesia. Here the company pursued commercial objectives in areas such as mining and agriculture. In 1911 these were merged, and in 1923 Northern Rhodesia became a British Colony under the Colonial Office when London did not renew the British South Africa Company's charter. To cover the costs of administration and to mobilise labour, the company taxed the native population. Administration was also kept to a minimum by applying a system of indirect rule, which was further institutionalised when the Colonial Office took over authority in the colony.

Under indirect rule, chiefs were appointed to lead native authorities. These were not always those people who were recognised as leaders by their communities; for some groups of people, the institution of chief had not even previously existed. Native authorities were supervised by native commissioners (later district commissioners) who, besides relying on chiefs, made use of African policemen to enforce their orders. Chiefs continued to deal with civil disputes among the population and were seen as inter-locutors between the native commissioners and the population. They also played a role in tax collection. Later their functions expanded to cover government programmes in areas such as public health and agriculture. The historian Chipungu described how chiefs and their assistants contributed to the creation of a *boma*-class, a local bureaucratic elite who had accumulated wealth and status from their positions. Chipungu even described how members of the *boma*-class at times instrumentalised their authorities

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[91] Von Soest, C., *How does neopatrimonialism affect the African state? The case of tax collection in Zambia* (Hamburg, 2006).

[92] For a more systematic and comprehensive overview of Zambian pre-colonial and colonial history, see Roberts, A., *A history of Zambia* (New York, 1976) and L.H. Gann, *A history of Northern Rhodesia: Early days to 1953* (London, 1964).

and access to the Native Treasury to aid this accumulation.[93] This suggests that patterns of instrumentalising bureaucratic processes for private gain also occurred in earlier episodes of state formation in Zambia.

In the period after the Second World War, as the notion of self-determination of peoples began to conflict with colonial realities, a greater investment began to be made in what was called 'native affairs': The socio-economic welfare of the African population. Up to that period, health care and education for the native population had been mostly left to missionary activity. Meanwhile, for the European population, primarily in towns and the Copperbelt, a different grade of public services was being provided by the colonial state. The settler population, moreover, increasingly advocated for self-rule, making them less politically dependent on London. This led to a process of negotiation, leading to the establishment of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. During the period of the Federation, African nationalist politicians became increasingly vocal and successful in articulating a challenge against the legitimacy of both colonial control and minority rule.

As in many parts of Africa, the process towards independence had the historical momentum of an avalanche. While some technocrats planned a gradual process towards majority rule, independence was granted faster that these plans foresaw. Within a very short period the institutional structure of the 'North-Rhodesian State' was carved away from the Federation and launched into independence. In the early years of the Federation, two categories of civil service existed: A European civil service to fill senior grades and an African civil service to fill other grades. Only in the last two years of the Federation, as independence for Northern Rhodesia seemed imminent, were these two integrated. A major challenge was to 'Africanise'[94] the public service by gradually replacing the Europeans, who made up a third of the entire workforce of the Northern Rhodesian public service and nearly all of the senior management. Problematically, however, the education system for Africans was by no means sufficient to supply the number of qualified graduates needed to fill the public service.[95]

At independence, the UNIP government embarked on a path to implement a state-driven, nationalist development agenda, which among other things depended on expanding the provision of education and medical services to the population. As a result, the colonial state as it was inherited was expanded and in part redesigned to respond to this agenda. Between 1964 and 1972 the Zambian public service grew from 72 departments and 14 ministries to 102 departments and 16 ministries. The total personnel meanwhile grew from 22,561 in 1964 to 51,497 nine years later.[96] Various training institutions were established to attempt to fill these numbers, especially in the face of a

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[93] Chipungu, S.N., 'Accumulation from within: The Boma class and the native treasury in colonial Zambia'. In: Chipungu, S.N., ed., *Guardians in their time*: *Experiences of Zambians under colonial rule* (London, 1992).

[94] Note that the use of Africanisation (or more specifically Zambianisation) here flows from contemporary usage in African public administration, which referred to the human resource problem of staffing the post-colonial public service with native Africans rather than expatriates. This differs from the usage by Van der Veen and Chabal & Daloz, which has the explicit connotation of erosion of rational-legal order by patrimonial interests or logic.

[95] In 1959, there were 75,000 Europeans in Northern Rhodesia and 2,310,000 Africans. Out of 14,370 posts in the civil service, Europeans filled 4,375. Africans, however, filled only 54 senior posts. Usborne, M.,'The Africanisation of public services'. *Civilisations,* 11: 1 (1961), 39-51

[96] Lungu, 'Africanization and the merit principle in the Zambian public service'. *Journal of Administration Overseas* (1980), 93-94.

disorderly and abrupt exodus of expatriate staff. However, demand by far outstripped the increase in supply, leading to the conclusion that 'by 1972 the Zambian public service was composed of relatively young, under-educated and inexperienced personnel'.[97]

The redesign of the post-colonial state reached a high point in 1973, when the one-party state was introduced, but in effect was a gradual ongoing process. The implicit aim of the reforms that were implemented during the Kaunda era was to increase political control over the state. This meant that, even though rhetorically the notion of one-party participatory democracy was espoused and programmes of administrative decentralisation were launched, in effect power was centralised in the presidency. In addition, the state and the ruling UNIP party were increasingly fused.[98] This had an impact on the appointment of civil servants. Whereas formerly (but also since the reintroduction of multi-party politics) civil servants could not be politically active, by the late-1960s/early-1970s, civil servants were required to be party members or at the very least loyal to UNIP, especially in middle and senior posts. This particularly applied to the post of Permanent Secretaries, who in the British system, as the most senior civil servant in a ministry, were supposed to be non-partisan and politically neutral, but who had since the early Kaunda years been directly appointed by the president. Such appointments at times involved distinguished technocrats but equally reflected the function of political patronage – of rewarding political supporters.[99] This was much to the chagrin of Valentine Musakanya, the first head of the Civil Service in post-colonial Zambia, who complained about liberation heroes being given positions regardless of their competence and qualification.[100] This led the scholar of public administration, Lungu, to conclude that the relation between Africanisation and the merit principle was often not positive.[101]

Long-time Zambia analyst Szeftel argued that in the Kaunda era the post-colonial state was thus transformed into a one-party patronage state. The centre of this state was formed by the presidency, which closely controlled state resources. Much of these resources were used to expand the state by creating jobs. As such, not only the state bureaucracy grew but also parastatal companies. Distribution of these jobs and other benefits of the state would favour political loyalists, thus institutionalising the slogan, 'it pays to belong to UNIP'. Szeftel argued that access to the state led to possibilities for self-enrichment and redistribution through clients, which in turn contributed to a process of class-formation.[102]

Notably, this institutionalisation of patronage was not equated with corruption or nepotism. Lungu noted that President Kaunda had on various occasions stated that he would not hesitate to use his power to appoint and disappoint to confront corruption, nepotism, and tribalism. Kaunda had repeatedly wielded what was popularly known as 'Kaunda's Axe' to fire – or more commonly, reshuffle – popular officials for violating

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[97] *Ibid.* 93.

[98] Chikulo, B.C., 'The Zambian administrative reforms: An alternative view'. *Public Administration and Development,* 1: 1 (1981), 55-65

[99] *Ibid.*, but also G. Lungu, 'Role ambiguity in African public management: Lessons from Zambian permanent secretaries'. *African Administration*, 51 (1998), 23-37.

[100] Larmer, M., 'Chronicle of a coup foretold: Valentine Musakanya and the 1980 coup attempt in Zambia'. *The Journal of African History,* 51 (2010), 391-409.

[101] Lungu, 'Africanisation', 98.

[102] Szeftel, M., '"Eat with us": Managing corruption and patronage under Zambia's three republics, 1964-99'. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies,* 18: 2 (2000).

public service ethics.[103] Publicly and discursively, patrimonial practices were morally denounced. Public service ethics (albeit adjusted to require partisan political loyalty to UNIP) were professed in public. At the same time, the readjustment of the state to allow for political patronage was justified by the ideological need to control the state and its resources to deliver on the humanist vision. From a neo-patrimonial perspective, this practical distinction between institutionalised patronage and patrimonial practices is remarkable, as a tendency exists among neo-patrimonial theorists to lump together issues such as patronage, nepotism, and presidentialism. The Zambian state had apparently been shaped in a process combining both rational-legal and patrimonial logic, not least the desire to create a presidential patronage system by fusing the state and the party. At the same time, patrimonial practices by clients instrumentalising the state for personal gain were contested by their patron.

The above presents an image of the Zambian state as a product of its own unique historical experience. Northern Rhodesia was not a transplanted Western state but rather the institutional legacy of commercial and colonial interests. This in turn was renegotiated by a settler population without much attention to the interests of the native population. When this institutional heirloom was subsequently handed to a new political elite, it was thoroughly appropriated. It shows how the Zambian State is a *sui generis*, shaped in a process of contradicting logics of rational-legalism and patrimonialism. Throughout its history, elements of the state were renegotiated in an altered political and institutional arena: First the company, then the colony, then the Federation, then the first, second, and third Republic, and then the post-Chiluba era. These renegotiations and the process of reaffirming the state in daily practice was in part driven by patrimonial logic and self-interest on the part of the agents involved. At the same time, this process did shape both formal and informal rules and agreements, which are themselves up for subsequent renegotiation. Thus it becomes understandable that we can indeed see an evolution of the Zambian state – emphatically not in a unilinear or normative way – with evolving institutions, but along this path we can see recurring patterns of behaviour, including patterns associated with patrimonialism.

The health sector

As seen above, the state is a complex entity. The border between the state and society is blurred and subject to contestation by actors who interact with the state. Moreover, the state spans various professional domains from defence and justice to education and agriculture. To make the abstract and at times elusive character of the state more concrete, it is helpful to focus on a specific part of the state. For this research project a decision was made to narrow down on the health sector. Again, this decision was partially arbitrary, though justifiable. As my point of entry to the field and to data was the Netherlands Embassy in Lusaka. It made sense to focus on a sector in which the Netherlands was involved. Of these sectors, the health sector was the one that had the longest coherent history of Dutch involvement. Moreover, this sector reflected those changes that development policy and practice had undergone in nearly two decades.

In Zambia, as in many countries, the health sector is a domain in which the state is heavily involved. This role of the state in the provision of health care is not self-evident from an economic theoretical perspective but very much the result of the process of

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[103] Lungu, 'Africanisation', 98-99.

state formation since the colonial era.[104] This role of the state in the health sector was reinforced and renegotiated by post-independence politics and international factors: The prominence of health in international development policy. From an economic theoretical perspective, health – particularly curative care – is not purely a public good. People with enough resources prove themselves willing to pay for health care, as they directly enjoy the benefits of these services. Also, it is feasible to exclude people from benefiting from accessing a hospital or clinic; and when one person visits a doctor and receives a treatment of drugs, this rivals opportunities for someone else to do so. This explains why private hospitals and clinics can exist and be profitable. In the area of public health and disease prevention, the rationale for the state to be involved is stronger. These are more fully public goods, as it is not possible to exclude people from benefiting from, for example, a programme to eradicate sleeping sickness. And benefiting from such a programme does not rival your neighbour's ability to do so.

Despite the fact that health care is not a pure public good, there are various considerations for the involvement of the state in playing a role in providing health care. From a moral perspective, it is considered objectionable that people, and especially children, could die of diseases that could easily and inexpensively be prevented. From a socio-economic perspective, the burden of disease impacts on productivity and consumption. Healthy people can do more work, and caring for the ill lays a claim on time and financial resources that could be spent otherwise. As such, health is linked with poverty. A heavy disease burden and lack of access to treatment aggravates poverty, while the poor are especially vulnerable to certain diseases. The above provides a strong justification for the international aid community's involvement in supporting the state to provide access to health care over the past decades, particularly as access to health has been declared a human right.[105]

Notwithstanding moral and political justifications for the state's role in the provision of health care, this is also a result of the historical process by which the state was formed in Zambia. Colonial authorities – first the British South Africa Company, and later the colonial service – had three primary objectives for colonial health policy: First, to keep the European population healthy; second, to keep the African labour force in good condition; and third, to prevent the spread of epidemic diseases.[106] The first medical services provided by the 'state' in what is now Zambia were the doctors and nurses employed by the company to ensure the health of company staff. These health workers were stationed at several administrative stations in the territories. Besides treating company staff, these doctors were free to practise privately among European settlers.[107] Due to the moral considerations of making health care available to a population suffering from disease, health care was an essential part of the *mission civilatrice*. This motivated missionaries to establish medical missions in what was to become Zambia, from the late nineteenth century onwards. Besides the moral considerations, the provision of medical care also had a functional role in supporting the objective of proselytising the native population. The perceived superiority of 'Western' medicine

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[104] As well as institutional and historical experiences in other parts of the world.

[105] World Bank, *World development report 1993: Investing in health* (Washington, 1993).

[106] Doyle, cited by Kalumba, 'The practice', 64; see also Lewis, M.J. & R.M. MacLeod, *Disease, medicine, and empire: Perspectives on Western medicine and the experience of European expansion* (London, 1988).

[107] Kalumba, 'The practice', 66.

vis-à-vis traditional medicine was, as such, a symbol of imperial power.[108] Another provider of medical services were the copper mines, which needed to keep their labour forces productive.

While initially the health care provided to indigenous Zambians was left mainly to missionary activity and the mines, gradually colonial authorities began playing a role in this realm. After Northern Rhodesia became a colony, the colonial authorities developed a Colonial Medical Service with a department initially located in Livingstone. This led to the formation of a fledgling bureaucracy as well as the development of health infrastructure, which was further expanded during the period of the Federation. A notable characteristic of this infrastructure, however, was that it inequitably served the settler population and urban areas to the neglect of the indigenous population in rural areas. This, however, was the health sector that Kaunda's UNIP government inherited at independence and rapidly expanded to serve its formal and informal objectives.[109]

Most of the academic literature on the Zambian health sector is understandably medical-technical in nature. This concerns itself with specific diseases and their effects on population groups or the effects of specific treatments. Social sciences can contribute by focusing on the behaviour of the target group of health policies, such as establishing why the population do or do not access health care.[110] One area of special attention is the AIDS pandemic, its context and consequences, and strategies to fight the pandemic. The first cases of AIDS were recorded in Zambia in 1984[111] and the disease quickly spread. By 1990 some 12.7 per cent of the population of reproductive age was estimated to be HIV-positive, and by 1995 this had grown to an estimated 15 per cent. In later years, this rate receded to 13.5 per cent.[112] Due to the pandemic, debilitating, and deadly nature of the disease, particularly in the years before anti-retroviral treatments became available, the socio-economic consequences were enormous. Not only did AIDS lead to an extra burden on health facilities and people caring for AIDS patients, but professionals such as nurses, doctors, and teachers fell victim to the disease, leading to losses in capacity.[113] For ordinary Zambians, of course, the consequences of the AIDS pandemic were horrific. This is illustrated by the average life expectancy, which dropped from 46 in 1990 to 40 by 2000, only to recover to 48 in 2009.[114] In many families an entire generation died, leaving children in the care of other relatives such as grandparents who had limited assets and resources to adequately care for and school

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[108] Johnson, R., 'Colonial mission and imperial tropical medicine: Livingstone College, London, 1893–1914'. *Social History of Medicine*, 23: 3 (2010), 549-566.

[109] For an overview of the growth of the health sector and the workforce in the health sector from late colonial times to recently, see Annex V.

[110] Hjortsberg, C., 'Why do the sick not utilise health care? The case of Zambia'. *Health economics* 12: 1. 2003: 755-70; J. Stekelenburg *et al.*, 'Health care seeking behaviour and utilisation of traditional healers in Kalabo, Zambia'. *Health Policy*, 71: 1 (2005), 67-81.

[111] WHO, 'Summary country profile for HIV/AIDS treatment scale-up' (Lusaka, 2005) http://www.who.int/hiv/HIVCP_ZMB.pdf (accessed on 4 August 2011).

[112] WHO data on http://apps.who.int/ghodata/ (accessed 3 August 2011).

[113] Grassly, N. *et al.*, 'The economic impact of HIV/AIDS on the education sector in Zambia'. *AIDS,* 17: 7 (2003): 1039-1044; A. Buvé *et al.*, 'Mortality among female nurses in the face of the AIDS epidemic: A pilot study in Zambia'. *AIDS* 8: 3 (1994), 396.

[114] WHO data on http://apps.who.int/ghodata/(accessed 3 August 2011). For some health indicators, refer to Annex V.

these children.[115] The social consequences of AIDS at the height of the pandemic in the mid-1990s were reinforced by the poor economic circumstances resulting from decades of economic crisis linked to a collapse of the mining industry and the privatisations resulting from structural adjustment. For the international community, the AIDS crisis was cause for an emergency response. By the beginning of the current century, a number of global and national vertical programmes were launched to tackle the disease either through or in parallel with Zambian AIDS initiatives and the health system.

While ample scientific research has been undertaken in Zambia into diseases, treatments, and their social linkages, less attention has been given to the political and public administration aspects of the health sector. One notable exception is a study done by Kalumba in the late 1980s into historical experiences with health reforms since colonial times, which will be dealt with in depth in Chapter 5 of this dissertation. As we will see later, this study and notably its author contributed to a process of health reform. As we will also see in more detail, this reform process generated considerable attention from international development agencies – in part because it reflected the neo-liberal paradigm of new public management, which dealt with the question of which domain the state has a role in and which functions can be left to the market. Moreover, this body of thinking considered the introduction of market mechanics into state provision of services. The health sector proved to be an appropriate object for this paradigm, in part due to the fact that health care is not a purely private good, as discussed above.[116] Moreover, during the post-colonial development of the health sector, it was notably tertiary curative care that had received attention and resources at the expense of preventative and primary health care in rural areas. The health reforms were intended to address this and focus more on preventative and primary care, which have more public-good characteristics.

The interest of the international development community resulted in the Zambian health sector becoming one of the test laboratories for what was to become a new paradigm in aid management: The sector-wide approach. This implied that donors would harmonise their support and align it to the systems of the recipient sectoral ministry, rather than running individual, isolated projects under the direct financial management of a donor-controlled, project-management unit. The innovation that made this possible was the district basket, a fund to which different donors contributed un-earmarked funds. These funds would then be allocated to district health offices to cover not only activity and investment budgets but also recurrent costs. For academics, these developments proved to be a relevant research object. One notable publication was very much inspired by the novelty of both the health reforms and the sector-wide approach.[117] A newer study, however, focussed very much on the limitations in practice of the sector-wide approach in the Zambian health sector. In particular, it concluded that the expected reduction in transaction costs, which was an argument to justify this approach in the first place, did not materialise, especially within the Ministry of Health.[118]

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[115] For more on this, see the forthcoming PhD dissertation by Daniel Reijer on children growing up with older and elderly guardians in skipped-generation households in rural Zambia, University of Amsterdam. (Final title unavailable as yet).

[116] This paradigm is well reflected in World Bank, *WDR 1993*.

[117] Lake, S. & C. Musumali, 'Zambia: The role of aid management in sustaining visionary reform'. *Health Policy and Planning*, 14: 3 (1999), 254-263.

[118] Chansa, C. *et al.*, 'Exploring SWAp's contribution to the efficient allocation and use of resources in the health sector in Zambia'. *Health Policy and Planning*, 23: 4 (2008), 244-251.

The health reform process sparked scientific attention, not least from health economists and health anthropologists.[119] A particular feature of these reforms that generated interest and critique was the issue of health-care financing. The reforms comprised an overhaul of the allocation of funds within the sector by directly allocating funds to districts. In addition, users would have to contribute to the costs of their health care, and user fees were charged at all levels where care was provided. Blas and Limbambala, however, demonstrated that these reforms, in the first two years of implementation, had a dramatic impact on patients' attendance – which dropped considerably – at hospitals and clinics. However, the reforms did lead to a shift in services from hospitals to clinics.[120] The impact of user fees on patients was also the focus of a qualitative study by Van der Geest *et al*. This study demonstrated that some patients resented having to pay fees while the 'quality of care', which was understood to comprise availability of drugs, did not improve. They echoed the conclusions of an earlier study[121] advocating for a more humane user fees' policy. While not disputing the concept of introducing cost-sharing as such, they did advocate for better exemption policies for those unable to pay, as well as requesting payment for tangible services rather than for registration.[122] This impression was confirmed by Lake *et al.,* who in an exceptional contribution to the body of literature on the Zambian health sector and the health reform process concluded that while exemption policies were well developed to exclude children from paying user fees, schemes for excluding the poorest were not well developed. At the same time, Lake *et al*. concluded that the geographical distribution of resources in the health sector from hospitals to districts and clinics had improved.

The remarkable element of the study of Lake *et al*. was the detailed and contextualised character of the study. Unlike other studies, this research gave attention to the different personalities who as ministers made their mark on the health reform process. Other studies focussed on the human aspects of the health sector, notably in the face of the so-called human resource crisis: The shortage of qualified health workers, compounded by the out-migration of doctors, nurses, and other professionals. Two studies deserve mention here, one focussed on the motivation of nurses[123] and the other carried out in the context of the research project, of which this dissertation is a result, focussed on motivation of health workers more in general.[124] Studies employing the neo-patri-

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[119] Lake, S. *et al.*, *Analyzing the process of health financing reform in South Africa and Zambia: Zambia Country Report* (Bethesda, 2000); Blas, E. & M.E. Limbambala, 'User payment, decentralisation and health service utilization in Zambia'. *Health Policy and Planning,* 16: 2 (2001): 19-28; Van der Geest, S. *et al.*, 'User fees and drugs: What did the health reforms in Zambia achieve?' *Health Policy and Planning*, 15: 1 (2000): 59-65; Bossert, T.J. & J.C. Beauvais, 'Decentralization of health systems in Ghana, Zambia, Uganda and the Philippines: A comparative analysis of decision space'. *Health Policy and Planning*, 17: 1 (2002), 14-31.

[120] Blas, E. & M.E. Limbambala, 'User payment, decentralisation and health service utilization in Zambia'. *Health Policy and Planning*, 16: 2 (2001), 19-28; see also for similar conclusions, although pointing to a slightly more positive conclusion, Bossert, T.J. & J.C. Beauvais, 'Decentralization of health systems in Ghana, Zambia, Uganda and the Philippines: A comparative analysis of decision space'. *Health Policy and Planning*, 17: 1 (2002), 14-31.

[121] Booth, D. *et al.*, *Coping with cost recovery* (Stockholm, 1995).

[122] Van der Geest, S. *et al.*, 'User fees'.

[123] Toyoshi-Hamada, N., 'Zambian public sector nurses' incentives and motivation in the context of migration: How to retain Zambian nurses?' (unpublished PhD thesis, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, 2007).

[124] Boone, P., 'In search of geener pastures; motivatie en braindrain van gezondheidswerkers in Zambia', (unpublished MA thesis, University of Groningen, 2009).

monial paradigm to look at the Zambian health sector and political-economic analyses looking at issues such as corruption and nepotism were, however, remarkably lacking from the public realm at the time of research. In addition, such studies beyond Zambia are also rare. In the 2004 World Development Report, ample attention was paid to patronage and clientalism in service provision. In the section on the health sector in this report, however, no explicit mention is made of patronage or clientalism as such. Attention is paid to bureaucratic failure to provide health services to the poor. This is attributed to technical, economic, and socio-cultural obstacles. One of these obstacles is the capture of public financing for health care by richer groups ('elite capture'). The section is, however, ambiguous as to whether this refers to inequity in service provision (possibly connected with patronage) or rather diversion of resources for patronage or direct personal gain. This report is also more conceptual than empirical. For Uganda the World Bank did contract a politico-economic analysis of the health sector, but this was never publicly released. The literature study carried out for this research came across two notable incidental studies looking at patrimonial practices in the health sector. However, these were not labelled as such, as they were written before the neo-patrimonial paradigm reached conceptual maturity. These include a study on corruption in the distribution of medicines in Cameroon, which pointed towards Daloz and Chabal's notion of instrumentalisation of disorder even before the phrase was coined. This study talked about the efficiency of inefficiency, arguing that few drugs distributed by the government agency involved reached the intended beneficiaries. At the same time, through informal practices, they were redistributed or commercialised, meaning that many these drugs were used at the end of the day.[125] The other is a study of social relations and practices in a district health service in Nepal,[126] which will be referred to in Chapter 2. In short, the dearth of empirical studies following the neo-patrimonial paradigm into the health sector, particularly in Zambia, provides a justification for the dissertation before you.

Methodology

Having described the theoretical debate to which this dissertation aims to contribute and having broadly sketched the empirical terrain with which this research will confront the neo-patrimonial paradigm, let us now examine the methodology that will facilitate this confrontation. This dissertation is grounded in the social sciences; it will thus have to contend with the complexities, contradictions, fluidities, and falsehoods characteristic of human behaviour and discourse. This means, as was asserted by Chabal and Daloz, 'that for the social sciences to seek to ape the method used in the physical sciences is illusory'.[127] This thesis will therefore not attempt to confront hypotheses with quantitative 'hard data' to meet the test of predictability. Rather it will strive to eclectically collect

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[125] Van der Geest, S., 'The efficiency of inefficiency: Medicine distribution in South Cameroon'. *Social Science & Medicine*, 26 (1982), 2145-2153.

[126] Aitken, J.M., 'Voices from the inside: Managing district health services in Nepal'. *International Journal of Health, Planning and Management*, 9 (1994), 309-340.

[127] Chabal, P. & J.P. Daloz, *Culture troubles. Politics and the interpretation of meaning* (London, 2006), 176. While this work promotes a cultural approach to integrate theory and methodology specifically for the field of comparative political science, many of the premises promoted in this book can be deemed to be suitable for confronting the theory of neo-patrimonialism with the political reality of the Zambian health sector as we intend in this dissertation.

available qualitative data in order to meet the test of plausibility by means of inductive reasoning.[128]

The rejection of a quantitative methodology for this research is not a brazen matter of preference or principle. Of course, there are studies that manage to obtain insight into peoples' perspectives and understandings on the basis of questionnaires, which can lead to correlations proven to a certain measure of probability. However, such methods would not be suitable for the subject matter under study in this dissertation. To apply a quantitative methodology, a narrow research question would need to be formulated, based on a reductionist approach of simplifying complex reality to a few measurable factors; at the same time, other variables would need to be kept or assumed to be constant – *ceteris paribus*. However, in human reality, caught up in the vagaries of history, *ceteris* are rarely *paribus*. Therefore, it was necessary to choose a broad methodological approach in order to do justice to the complexity of human agency within a dynamic socio-political context.[129]

In the process of conducting this research, a conscious effort was thus made not to narrow down the scope of study prematurely. Rather, a broader incremental explorative approach was chosen to gradually zoom in on those areas relevant to the human face of neo-patrimonialism. The aim was not to implement a pre-designed research proposal but to embark on a learning process to build my own understanding as a student of African political bureaucracy. I thus departed from a study of the literature debating the nature of the African state. Subsequently, as justified above, I took a pragmatic decision to focus my attention on a single case-study of Zambia. Then I endeavoured to obtain a broad understanding of the context of the terrain by examining documents and literature in order to make sense of the actors and their behaviour within a real-life African state bureaucracy. In the process of familiarising myself with Zambia, the Zambian state, and development initiatives in Zambia, I took a decision to further focus on the Zambian health sector, while retaining an awareness of the broader political context. It was only following two initial field visits in July 2006 and June 2007 that a decision was arrived at to follow a two-pronged methodological approach, based on anthropological and historical methods respectively: The first to analyse the human factor in the health sector and the second to put people in a broader, political-historical context.[130]

A further rationale for applying a loose and eclectic qualitative approach follows from the political sensitivity of the subject-matter involved. The conceptual framework at the basis of this study deals with issues, such as patronage and corruption, that are illicit or even illegal. How then can one measure such phenomena or collect data on this? This dilemma is directly connected to the tension between discourse and practice we dealt with earlier. Many of the oral and written data sources available about the health sector strongly reflect discourse reflective of the rational-legal side of the neo-patrimonial coin, which can be at odds with actors' actual behaviour. The data from sources central to sociological and historical methodologies may be sanitised to ignore the personal specifics of patrimonial practice. At best the symptoms of such practice are

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[128] *Ibid*.

[129] This decision was in great part inspired by the paradigm of systems thinking as a holistic approach to better understand the complexity of organisational and institutional systems in the process of development. See Morgan, P., *The idea and practice of systems thinking and their relevance for capacity development* (Maastricht, 2005).

[130] In fact, a final narrowing down and structuring of the scope of study was not arrived at until the final processes of writing and editing.

addressed in generalised aggregated terms. If interviewed, people may not be willing to speak frankly but instead opt to reflect 'political correctness'. Consequently, in order to look beyond the rational-legal façade of bureaucracy, it proved necessary to look beyond the official discourse of policy documents and formal interviews and take into account unconventional data sources such as informal interviews, rumours,[131] and journalistic accounts.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, at the same time oral and written sources that reflect the other side of the neo-patrimonial coin, such as rumours and allegations, can also be imprecise or even false. When one encounters discourse indicating patrimonial behaviour, this again need not be an accurate reflection of reality. Accusations of patronage and corruption may be tools of political manipulation, as such discourse may serve to discredit and de-legitimise political opponents. Equally, such discourse may provide an external explanation to disguise one's own failings. In other words, depending solely on data gathered from discursive sources could risk not being able to see reality beyond the rational-legal façade. Paradoxically, relying on discursive sources may also run the risk of being blinded by cynical political machinations exaggerating the patrimonial side of the neo-patrimonial coin.

The limitations of discursive sources may suggest that in order to get a sense of reality, one should focus rather on observed behaviour. In other words, one should look at everyday practice rather than discourse.[132] Participant observation is a key methodology in ethnographic, anthropological research. As it was the intention of this research to take an open, explorative approach to data collection, I attempted to create opportunities for participant observation.[133] However, as the research progressed and the collected data were assessed and analysed, the contribution of these observations to the theme of this research appeared to be limited. This is due to an intrinsic limitation of participant observation: The practices central to our study of neo-patrimonialism are not readily observed. Acts of corruption or patronage are formally illegal;[134] practitioners of such acts will in most cases thus make an effort to conceal such acts, particularly from external researchers. Moreover, part of this thesis focuses on historical-political and policy processes, and by their very nature these cannot be observed in retrospect. Therefore, despite the limitations of spoken and written language, this dissertation will to a large extent have to base itself on discursive sources as 'proxy indicators' of reality.

We can thus conclude that, by default and due to the choice of topic, there is no other option but to use imperfect data sources to further our understanding of the political economy of the Zambian health bureaucracy. By necessity, this research has had to adopt a second-best approach to study what would otherwise be left out of the frame of reference. This approach to collecting data is open and empathic, attempting to see the

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[131] The rumours aired on the metaphorical 'Radio trottoir' play an important role in Zambia and elsewhere in Africa. This can be explained by oral traditions and the lack of reliable sources of information. Such rumours shine a light on perceived reality behind the façade of sanitised official discourse. See S. Ellis, 'Tuning in to pavement radio'. *African Affairs*, 88 (1989), 352.

[132] Focussing on everyday practice is seen as key to getting an anthropological understanding of the state. See for instance, Sharma & Gupta, 'Rethinking'.

[133] This was in part inspired by the following prompt: 'Good ethnography is dependent on standard techniques only to a limited degree, but it requires a sensibility to culture, an appreciation of the value of observation and intuitive empathy. These elements are sometimes referred to as the "anthropological eye"'. Van Donge, J.K., 'Ethnography and participant observation'. In: Desai, V. & R. Potter, eds, *Doing development research* (London, 2006).

[134] Even if they might be tacitly seen as legitimate in some social contexts.

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object of study – in this case, part of the Zambian state, the health sector – through the eyes, words, and concepts of the agents who create social reality through their practices and representations. The fieldwork underpinning this dissertation was not structured in such a way that it followed a predetermined set-up. Rather, on the basis of early exploration, plans were gradually made more concrete in reaction to opportunities for digging further and learning more. Frequently, barriers were encountered that could be overcome, circumnavigated, or even led to a change of path. As such, this approach could be characterised as opportunistic.

However, following Chabal & Daloz, this need not mean that such a venture is unscientific. The scientific essence of this research is applied mainly through the inductive process of ordering and analysing the data – in other words, the process of reasoning, writing, and concluding. Whereas the process of data collection has been an open, empathic process, in presenting and analysing the data it is essential not to take things at face value. Rather, to make sense of reality, I as an aspiring academic had to judge the data. By immersing myself in the context of the object of study, I aimed to develop a sense of perspective which would allow me to weigh arguments. The claims of respondents or authors required testing (or triangulating against) counter-arguments. Finally, an important element in this process is to attempt to deconstruct and reconstruct the motives a respondent or author has to make a certain statement, motives which are often grounded in a process of self-legitimisation.

Having dwelt at length on the rationale behind the methodological approach used (in order to legitimise this approach), let us now move to the more practical side of explaining how I went about collecting this data.

Collecting data
As principal researcher I spent a total of 25 weeks in Zambia collecting data.[135] This was divided over four periods: July 2006 (3 weeks), June 2007 (4 weeks), April 2008 (4 weeks), and September to December 2008 (15 weeks). As justified above, this succession of visits was part of an explorative process that began with a rather broad scope and gradually narrowed down. In the course of conceiving this research project, I had the opportunity to interact with staff at the Netherlands Embassy in Lusaka as a result of my position as desk officer for Zambia at the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the process, I discovered that the health reforms that unfolded throughout the 1990s would provide an interesting setting for research on neo-patrimonialism. In part, this was sparked by the description of the health sector as a patronage system by the embassy's health advisor.

My first field visit in July 2006 therefore had the aim to explore the health reforms. But also, as the Netherlands Embassy provided my point of entry into the health sector, the history of Dutch development support to the health sector provided a secondary point of attention. During this first visit, I interviewed several academics to explore the Zambian academic perspectives on the notion of neo-patrimonialism and also to identify possible partners for collaboration. In addition, I interviewed several health sector officials in Lusaka. However, in order to get a sense for the local realities and context of the health sector, short visits were made to three provincial towns: Solwezi, Mongu, and Livingstone. These visits exposed me to the views and perspectives of the various cadres of health workers on their careers and familiarised me with the professional

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[135] Besides this, time was spent in Zambia on my day-job as an official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

cadres and structures of the health sector. A second area of data collection consisted of collecting policy documents, primarily through the archives of the Netherlands Embassy. This would shine light on the changing donor involvement in the health sector, as well as policy ambitions and policy discourse.

Just before this visit, I discovered another avenue for collecting data on the Zambian health sector and its political context. In the archives of the AllAfrica.com website, newspaper articles were available for the two major Zambian newspapers for the period 1997 to date.[136] Using various search functions, this allowed me to get a broad overview of the health reforms, general developments in the health sector, and key political figures. This provided a large body of material, but also left glaring gaps, not least since the period of the early 1990s was not covered, and other periods may not have been covered consistently.

My second research visit to Zambia took place in June 2007. Again a major focus of attention was to interview health sector officials in Lusaka about the health reform process. A further aim was to get a sense of how this policy process fit into the political context gleaned from the media analysis referred to above. Two key informant interviews were particularly instructive for this aim, notably with a civil servant and a politician directly involved with the design and implementation of the health reform process. Another element of this research mission was a visit to two districts in the Western Province of Zambia to interview a broad variety of people, ranging from a guard to nurses and doctors, working in various health facilities from rural clinics and hospitals to district and provincial health offices. This further sharpened my insight into the organisational structure of the health sector. These interviews also provided insight into the temporal and spatial career paths taken by health workers and the organisational and social challenges they faced along the way.

Following these first two research visits to Zambia, I decided to further pursue two distinct primary strands of investigation. The first would focus on the historical political context of the health reforms. Building on the media articles referred to above, this would mean further archival work to obtain a more complete impression of the time-frame from 1991 to 2008. This would be complemented by further archival sources, such as policy documents and reports and evaluations as well as key informant interviews. The second strand of research would take more of an anthropological, actor-oriented approach. This would thus depart from the context and perspective of health workers on the shop-floor of the health sector. By means of semi-structured, in-depth interviews with a broad range of health workers, it was hoped to obtain a perspective on health workers' careers and social and work contexts as an avenue to glean data on patrimonial practices in everyday life. These interviews would be complemented by informal interviews, attempts at participant observation, and contextual insights from the first stand of investigation mentioned above. Moreover, interviews with actors on the shop-floor level also gave an extra perspective on the health reforms and the personalities and processes guiding the sector. For each strand of research, I would employ a research assistant to complement my own data collection. Following several unsuccessful attempts to identify a Dutch master's student through my academic network, Paulien Boone, a student of international relations, was recruited to conduct the actor-oriented research. The fieldwork conducted for this research at the same time

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[136] Unfortunately, around that time *The Post* stopped submitting its articles to AllAfrica.com, in favour of its own website which underwent various changes with corresponding teething problems. This hindered systematic searching for articles in later years.

provided material to be used for her own masters' thesis on the human resources' crisis in the health sector. To remedy gaps in her skill-set, additional methodological training was sought through Wageningen University.

My third research visit to Zambia, in April 2008, aimed to prepare the ground for the research assistants I meant to employ, besides continuing to collect data through interviews (including two former ministers of health) and foraging for documents. One aim was to identify a suitable location for the research assistant who would undertake the actor-oriented research. One area of consideration was Western Province. This was an area the Netherlands had focussed on in its development programme throughout the 1980s and 1990s. This had been the location of the Primary Health Care project and a region where scores of Dutch doctors had been deployed. The decision, however, fell on another part of Zambia, Luapula, in part owing to pragmatic considerations, in part owing to considerations linked to the area's relevance for this thesis. The pragmatic considerations were linked to the time limitations during the remainder of my fieldwork. I had undertaken to visit Luapula Province as this was one of President Chiluba's political-support bases. It was also where Katele Kalumba, former minister of health and an architect of the health reforms, had his constituency. Doing fieldwork in this area could thus inform the narrative I intended to write about the political context of the health reforms. As I could not at the same time travel to both Luapula and the Western Province of Zambia, the choice was made to use my trip to Luapula for both fieldwork and preparing my research assistant's deployment. During my visit to Luapula, I also took the opportunity to experiment with participant observation by attending a performance assessment visit. In the end, this visit provided the opportunity for recruiting Carrington Siatontola, a recent graduate of the Department of History at the University of Zambia, to collect newspaper articles on the health sector for the media analysis.

The bulk of my fieldwork was conducted in the period between September and December 2008. During this period I supervised my research assistants. Carrington was provided a digital camera and access to the National Archives, where he collected nearly 1000 photos of newspaper articles published over the period 1990-2001 in the *Times of Zambia*, *The Post,* and to a lesser extent the *Zambia Daily Mail* on the health sector and the key politicians involved in the health sector. The first several days we worked together allowing me to carry out quality checks. We started with the year 1990, which was of less direct relevance for the narrative of the health reforms. Thus, allowing for learning mistakes and allowing for adjustments to the approach, we did not risk creating significant lacunae. At the same time, this offered the opportunity to browse through the papers of the period just before and during the transition from UNIP to MMD, and this gave me a more textured insight into this very relevant part of Zambian political history. Towards the end of the period covered by Carrington, there was an overlap between his pictures and the articles captured online by myself. This gave a further opportunity to roughly check for completeness.

During this period, Paulien ventured to Luapula after conducting introductory interviews and studying policy documents to gain a sense of the policy context. In the provincial capital Mansa, she was lodged at the nursing school, giving her the opportunity to interact with aspiring health workers. Following several days in which she and I together interviewed numerous health workers (23), she proceeded to interview health workers independently. For this she used an interview schedule. Health workers were selected randomly and opportunistically. However, deliberate effort was made to get a broad selection of cadres at a broad selection of health centres and hospital departments

both in the provincial town and rural parts of the district. In total she interviewed 73 health workers at a general hospital and various urban and rural health centres. To complement the selection of interviews up-country, Paulien used her last week in Lusaka to interview health workers, particularly doctors at the University Teaching Hospital (UTH). This would serve to balance a generally up-country perspective in her data with the perspective of the doctors who managed to get positions in the city. Paulien also took notes of relevant informal conversations with students and other young health workers whose confidence she had gained. Notes were also taken on events she observed or participated in such as a graduation ceremony, a performance assessment mission, and a workshop for health centres. Finally, she set up two focus group discussions with female and male health workers, which we facilitated together. The questions posed to the participants related to career perspectives and work relations. However, owing to the interaction between participants, this led to animated discussions in which issues of patronage and corruption filtered through.

As Paulien was interviewing health workers in Luapula and Carrington was collecting data in the archives, I continued carrying out in-depth interviews and foraging for relevant documentation. This included conducting various interviews in Ndola to complement the impressions and data gathered elsewhere. Meanwhile, I alternated the supervision of both research assistants while carrying out an initial analysis of the data each collected.

Access, limitations and bias
My entry point through the Netherlands Embassy provided a convenient way to gain formal access to the health sector. The IS Academy research programme[137] and Dutch involvement in the sector provided legitimisation for the embassy to provide assistance in requesting the permanent secretary for permission for myself and Paulien to carry out the research. This was swiftly granted. Also, access to the embassy archives was unrestricted. To further facilitate access, my 'tribal network' proved very convenient. A network of Dutch medical professionals still existed who either had worked or continued to work in the Zambian health sector. Their contacts and insights and experiences either proved a valuable source of data in itself or brought me closer to useful data.

At the same time, these entry points had drawbacks. One such bias is the Dutch bias my research may suffer from. While the archives of the Netherlands Embassy held documents reflecting the positions of other donors and stakeholders, Dutch views and positions are likely to have been dominant. Most of my informants on the donor side were also Dutch. This may have led to this dissertation overemphasising the Dutch role in the narratives presented on the health reforms. This Dutch perspective may also have reinforced my own cultural bias as a researcher and analyst. To stereotype the Dutch, post-Calvinist outlook, one could say it normatively values rational-legal order. At the same time, it has difficulty in normatively accepting a large gap between discourse and practice. Dutch culture tends to value 'doing what you say'.[138] If it is not feasible to adhere to formal rules as reflected in discourse, as they may be contradictory or ineffective, the tendency is to pragmatically change the formal rules to reflect practice.

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[137] A research collaboration between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and various academic research departments.

[138] Refer to the Dutch populist politician Pim Fortuyn's characteristic one-liner: *"Ik doe wat ik zeg en ik zeg wat ik doe"* ("I do what I say and I say what I do").

Alternatively, formal discourse may be adjusted to reflect practice.[139] This can explain the sense of unease that the Dutch may have with the neo-patrimonial paradigm, in which the greyness and contradictions between rational-legal and patrimonial and between discourse and practice are inherent.[140] In this dissertation, I tried to be self-reflective and aware of this Dutch bias in order to look beyond it.

Another limitation of this research and my own role as a researcher concerns my affiliation to a development agency. For one this may impact on my having a developmental bias towards unilinear progress, planned, externally induced change, and other simplistic paradigms that may be espoused by development agencies.[141] This again can only be mitigated by self-reflection and awareness on my part. My affiliation to a donor agency, however, also has an impact on how I, and by extension my research assistant Paulien, were perceived by respondents. This may have led to people being inclined to give politically correct representations of reality. Such perceptions thus countered the advantages this affiliation may have provided me in gaining access. At times, I tried to counteract this by presenting myself as an independent researcher rather than a donor, which resulted in me opportunistically shifting two mutually conflicting identities to suit the context.[142]

The greatest limitation in the field work relates to the political sensitivity of my research topic, which has already been touched upon earlier. This had implications for how I framed my research when I presented it to respondents or those that would provide access. As mentioning neo-patrimonialism, patronage, or corruption would be likely to elicit bureaucrats' openness and facilitation, I highlighted rather the issues of health reforms and human resource management as my areas of interest. In my introduction before interviews, I stressed confidentiality and anonymity, which I have consistently followed in my dissertation. The only respondents named are those who held political office and could be considered directly responsible for the political outcomes of their actions. Through open questions relating to human resource management, I would see if respondents of their own accord would touch on issues relating to patrimonialism, while using indirect and probing questions to further tease out such issues.

While formal access was relatively easy, real access to the reality behind the façade was more problematic. In arranging interviews, I encountered evasive behaviour, particularly from senior officials closer to the centre. One senior official repeatedly did not show up for agreed meetings, with his secretary being the gatekeeper denying access. Another senior official, cooperative at first, gradually denied further cooperation. As I continued probing and prodding for issues of interest, he expressed his concern that my research methodology and objectives were unclear. He ordered his colleagues not to go beyond explaining the civil service guidelines in their responses to me. Yet another senior official flatly refused to be interviewed when I met him as

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[139] Resulting in the Dutch rational-legal phenomenon of *gedoogen*, which characterises Dutch soft-drugs' policy and, until recently, prostitution policy. While formally illegal, it is pragmatically (though not necessarily socially) accepted and de-criminalised.

[140] Note: This may be a simplistic stereotype not based on deeper sociological research. It is also an idealised cultural representation. This does not discount a myriad contradictions and hypocrisies that exist in Dutch society.

[141] Perhaps this may even have an equally significant impact on how my peers perceive me and my work.

[142] This juggling of identities also resulted in an ambiguous physical appearance during my fieldwork: While dressed in a suit to show bureaucratic respect, I sported a moustache and goatee to look less diplomatic and perhaps more senior.

agreed, having sent him a list of questions. As is common when exploring the neo-patrimonial paradigm in practice, it was difficult to attach meaning to such behaviour, let alone apply a label of patrimonialism or rational-legalism. On the one hand, it is fully consistent with rational-legal bureaucratic behaviour to hide behind official secrets.[143] At the same time, this lack of transparency and openness raised my suspicions that these prospective respondents were intent on hiding aspects of reality that could more easily be labelled as patrimonial practice.

Others, however, did appear eager to talk and even reflect on the problems they perceived in the health sector. Some respondents needed to feel at ease by telling their story before coming with more sensitive reflections on others or on the system as they saw it. With others, the interesting accounts came during a return visit or informally over a beer. Generally, however, these were not the actors closest to the current centre of power within the sector. Rather, interesting accounts came from people at or past the end of their career, or people within the periphery of the sector who knew their career in the health sector would not advance much beyond their present station. Of course, as discussed above, such accounts require careful consideration and cannot just be taken simply at face value. Moreover, in the course of data collection and analysis, it appeared that more openness and more information could be gathered about past scandals and situations than about the more sensitive present.

As discussed above, the hurdles and limitations encountered in the course of this field work justified the eclectic approach used. At the same time, it is important to be fully aware of the limitations this places on the validity of the analysis in this dissertation. The data and analysis are fragmentary and incomplete; some data and conclusions drawn may thus even be speculative. This is, however, inherent to the object of research in relation to the political sensitivities that are at play within a bureaucratic context, neo-patrimonial or otherwise. It is therefore important to remain aware of what this dissertation has intended. The aim has been to attempt to understand a system, including the darker, hidden realities and the personalities that have shaped it and make it work. Empathically, the aim has not been to judge, accuse, or incriminate individuals or groups of people. The test of probability aimed for in this research should therefore not to be confused with the far more stringent test of guilt-beyond-reasonable-doubt used by courts of law.

Reading guide

Having come to the end of Chapter 1, the introductory part of this dissertation, it is time to recapitulate the research objective and present the structure for the remainder of this dissertation. In doing so, the research questions guiding this research will be put to the fore for each part and chapter of this dissertation. As described above, the aim of this research will be to confront the neo-patrimonial paradigm with the empirical case of the Zambian health sector. To do so, this dissertation has been divided into two parts: The Human Factor and The Health Sector.

The Human Factor will explore the life-world of health workers. In the four chapters in this part we will see whether it is possible to distinguish patrimonial logic or behaviour in the accounts health workers present about their working lives. To do so, an attempt will be made to deconstruct what drives them in their career: Are they driven by

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[143] Weber, M., 'Bureaucracy'. In: Sharma & Gupta, eds, *Anthropology.*

'pre-industrial' cultural values rather than the official goals of the health sector to deliver health care to the population? Chapter 2 will present a single case study of a specific health worker with the aim of familiarising the reader with the issues confronting health workers at work. In this chapter we will take a first look at how the public-private conflict of the neo-patrimonial can manifest itself on the shop-floor level of the state.

In Chapter 3 we will set off to explore the path taken by health workers to obtain a position in the health sector. This exploration will be based on health workers' accounts of their working lives. The first question addressed is what has motivated people to become health workers: A Weberian vocation or the pursuit of a secure livelihood? Next we will see what makes someone successful in joining the health sector: Is it a matter of personal connections or merit? Finally, the chapter will explore the tension between health workers' interests and the interest of the health system: How neutral and impersonal are decisions to post someone in a remote location or to discipline errant health workers?

Chapter 4 explores the possibilities for professional advancement open to health workers: Are health workers promoted on the basis of merit or patronage? In exploring this question, we will again explore the tension between private interests in self-advancement and the official objectives of the health sector. Finally, having explored whether professional qualifications matter in the process of obtaining positions of power, the chapter will ask whether vertical linkages of affection and identity are indeed more important than horizontal linkages based on professional distinctions.

In Chapter 5 we will explore health workers' socio-economic situation. We will see if health workers are indeed struggling financially, as many claim they are. Do health workers limit their livelihood strategies to the official remuneration offered by their position or do they work 'beyond the payslip'? Finally, we will then examine how this quest to make ends meet may impact on the system that employs them. Do the social and economic pressures facing health workers explain patrimonial behaviours?

The second part of this dissertation, The Health Sector, will present a narrative of the Zambian health reform process from 1991 to 2008. This part of the research, which will shift focus from the human factor on the shop-floor of the health sector to the human factor in national political and policy arenas, will take a different approach from the preceding chapters. Rather than thematically organising issues per chapter, the five chapters are chronologically structured. Several research questions thus have a bearing on the second part of this dissertation in its entirety. These chapters will explore whether Zambia's experience with health reforms reflect van de Walle's 'syndrome of partial reform'? Furthermore, I will analyse in which way these reforms and other aspects of the health sector have been instrumentalised by key actors in the sector. Was such instrumentalisation purely for private gain or did it serve a political rationale? Finally, throughout these chapters the question will be explored of how the collective interests of health workers shaped the process of health reforms as well as the structure of power and allocation of resources in the sector.

Chapter 6 will explore where the ideas behind the health reforms originated. Like subsequent chapters, it will ask whether this was a Zambian process or donor-driven? In Chapter 7 we will explore the first steps in implementing the health reforms. Here we will explore how the initial ideas of health reforms were adjusted in the course of implementation. In order to do justice to the human factor in this process and to reflect

on the public–private confusion of neo-patrimonialism, this chapter and subsequent ones will explore which political actors played a role in shaping the reforms.

In Chapter 8 we will explore how, paradoxically, the health reforms reached their zenith while at the same time the instrumentalisation of the process was most pronounced. We will also see how the idea of creating a Central Board of Health surfaced, although it was not part of the original concept of the reforms. The chapter also again focuses on the role played by donors. What motivated them to shift their modalities from project support to a sector-wide approach in response to the health reform?

Chapter 9 deals with an episode in which the health reforms stagnate. We will explore both the discursive rationale for this stagnation as well as the underlying interests at play. This episode is, moreover, marked by controversy over a corruption scandal. How did donors react to evidence of corruption and plunder? Moreover, we will see how in a period in which the government's legitimacy was publicly challenged, donors managed to sign a document that would seal a new phase in cooperation in the health sector.

The final chapter on the health sector examines how the health sector fared after Zambia had again changed its political leadership. Did the Mwanawasa era provide a 'New Deal' for the health sector? Did this lead to a change in political and administrative culture affecting the health sector? In this episode, key elements of the reform process were reversed. We will thus examine the discursive rationale for this reversal, in addition to analysing how considerations of power may have motivated these decisions.

This dissertation will be concluded with a reflection on the tentative answers that the research questions above have generated. Here we will try to conclude concerning the extent to which it has been possible to label health workers' ambitions and behaviour as patrimonial. Moreover, we will take stock of the health reform process and discuss what conclusions we can draw from this process to enhance our understanding of the Zambian state, the health sector, and donors' policies to influence such realities.