

## Book Reviews

Andrea Fischer-Tahir and Sophie Wagenhofer (eds.), **Disciplinary Spaces: Spatial Control, Forced Assimilation and Narratives of Progress since the 19th Century**, Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2017, 300 pp., (ISBN: 978-3-8376-3487-7).

The study of space as a social construct has become a popular subject in recent years, provoking intense theoretical debates among scholars from all disciplines – from geography and anthropology to sociology – and thus confirming the consolidation of what it is usually referred to as the “spatial turn”, that is, a vivid strand of literature that places emphasis on space in order to analyse a great variety of social, economic and political phenomena. Among historians, the emergence of transnational and global history as strong areas, as well as the renewal of interest in the history of empires, borderlands, and the making of the modern “refugee regime” after World War I have contributed to putting “space” and “place” at the heart of historical research as well. Consequently, “(t)erms such as frontiers, borders, boundaries, and place are widely employed to delineate virtually all aspects of culture”,<sup>1</sup> and arguably of social life.

Present surge of studies about the spatial production of issues such as ethnic conflict and border making, to mention a few, must be connected to previous intellectual endeavours made by French scholars such as Henri Lefebvre and Michel Foucault, or the British geographer David Harvey, in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Beginning in the early 2000s, a number of works inspired by Ismail Beşikçi’s early pieces on “internal colonialism” in Turkey explicitly addressed the spatial dimension of the Kurdish issue within the framework of Kurdish studies. As spatial meanings are established by those with the power to make *places* out of *spaces*, the “spatial turn” seemed to be a key entry point to study not only how Kurds became a dispossessed people, but also the ways in which the latter resisted dispossession through a variety of strategies such as remembrance and subversion of the space settings imposed by states.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rieber, A. J. (2014). *The Struggle for the Eurasian Borderlands: From the Rise of Early Modern Empires to the End of the First World War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Öktem, K. (2004). Incorporating the time and space of the ethnic ‘other’: nationalism and space in Southeast Turkey in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. *Nations and Nationalism*. 10 (4). pp. 559-578; Jongerden, J. (2007). *The Settlement Issue and the Kurds: An Analysis of Spatial Policies, Modernity and War*. Leiden: Brill; Gambetti, Z. (2005). The conflictual (trans)formation of the public sphere in urban space: the case of Diyarbakir”, *New Perspectives on Turkey*. 32. pp. 43-71; Gambetti, Z. and Jongerden, J. (2011). The spatial (re)production of the Kurdish issue: multiple and contradicting trajectories-introduction”, *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*. 13 (4). pp. 375-388.



In *Disciplinary Spaces: Spatial Control, Forced Assimilation and Narratives of Progress since the 19th Century*, Andrea Fischer-Tahir and Sophie Wagenhofer have sought to provide a survey of forced displacement and illuminating details about disciplinary techniques implemented by diverse “national builders” in different periods and geographical settings (North and East Africa, West and Central Asia, Australia, the Americas, and Central Europe), and include two specific chapters on the Kurds in Iraq. In so doing, *Disciplinary Spaces* situates the Kurdish experience within wider and entangled dynamics that have shaped the emergence and consolidation of the modern world.

The opening chapter provides a thorough theoretical orientation towards the topic of forced migration, highlighting the terms and concepts. While acknowledging that forced migration and dispossession also occurred within imperial settings, the chapter argues, drawing on James C. Scott’s works, that modern states are obsessed with controlling people’s spatial patterns of behaviour. Because modern states need their societies to be “legible”, they tend to create and enhance disciplinary techniques that promptly guarantee spatial control over the latter, rendering uncertainty and contingency unlikely.

Specifically, the book examines the territories (model villages, collective towns, and reservations) created by states to radically alter the behaviour of people perceived as culturally “other” – due to ethnic, religious, and socio-economic characteristics – and thus ill-suited to fit hegemonic imaginations of “the nation”. In that sense, the volume attempts to simultaneously detect “the wider and *longue-durée* circulation of disciplinary techniques” and consider the “cross-border relations, intraregional and transregional connectivities, and the translocal movement of knowledge, people and goods” (p. 11). Henceforth, contributors are invited to account for the connectedness of the biopolitical forms of control and bureaucratic accommodation invented in the Global North in the 19th century and those implemented in the Global South in the 20th century. As with most edited volumes, however, the chapters differ greatly in terms of theoretical as well as epistemological and empirical input. Notwithstanding the uneven quality and originality of the collected papers, the two chapters on the construction of collective towns by the Baathist regime in Iraqi Kurdistan deserve a special attention for a variety of (good) reasons.

To begin with, based on a variety of sources from government records, press articles and political parties’ brochures, as well as on the interviews with relocated families, in “From Agrarian Experiments to Population Displacement: Iraqi Kurdistan Collective Towns in the Context of Socialist ‘Villagisation’ in the 1970s” Mélanie Genat does place the Baathist policies in the 1970s in a wider context. Convincingly, the author argues that, at first, the collective towns erected in Iraqi Kurdistan in the mid-1970s sought to secure enough manpower to work in expanding agricultural production. As the March 1970 Iraqi-Kurdish Autonomy Agreement made possible a brief period of development, the Iraqi regime redistributed land to landless farmers, while establishing and expanding cooperatives and state farms. Although these kinds

of development projects were not new in the region, arguably the direct push for their implementation came from the Soviet Union and its Iraqi Communist counterpart. As early as 1970, Law 216 explicitly refers to the practicalities of Soviet support for the construction of new villages inspired by contemporary socialist experiences. Incidentally, Genat reminds us that between 1970 and 1975, the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) became a key player at a national level. Thus, the launch of collective towns was also the result of indigenous recommendations for the improvement of the living conditions of farmers and workers. Furthermore, interviews with Kurdish “new villagers” confirm that, initially, local populations perceived these measures as positive because the long-awaited implementation of the land reform voted in 1958 had only been partially successful, in particular in the Kurdish provinces.

But, as the author demonstrates, the objectives changed as the war between the Kurdish movement and the Baathist regime resumed in 1975. Progressively, the modernisation efforts by the regime in the early 1970s were replaced by security concerns. As a result, the guiding impulse of the new relocation and housing campaigns “was clearly counterinsurgency” (p. 151). In that sense, Genat’s chapter allows us to depart from the orthodox *foucauldian* and linear readings of Baathist policies from 1968 until 2003, in that the emergence of the first collective towns in Iraqi Kurdistan cannot be analysed only in the light of the infamous Anfal campaign of the 1980s in which thousands of Kurds were assassinated and displaced. Although the former were certainly disciplinary spaces in the broad sense, they were a part of a wider political agenda: Kurdish communities, along with other Iraqi populations in other regions, were to be integrated coherently with the national modernisation strategy.

With “Appropriating and Transforming a Space of Violence and Destruction into one of Social Reconstruction: Survivors of the Anfal Campaign (1988) in the Collective Towns of Kurdistan”, Karin Mlodoch brings to the fore two original inputs for the analysis of this massive punitive operation and its aftermath. On the one hand, Mlodoch looks at space from a psychological perspective, relying on concepts of trauma and recovery elaborated in critical psychology. On the other hand, drawing from both direct observation over the last twenty years and an important number of interviews with the victims of al-Anfal, she argues that Anfal survivors who were relocated in collective towns in Germyan region proved their capacity of agency by transforming a space of coercion and dispossession into one of social (including psychological) reconstruction. How is that possible?

Like Mélisenda Genat’s contribution, Mlodoch’s chapter adopts a dynamic and interactionist approach to explain how Anfal survivors – mainly women and children – recovered from their trauma and were able to subvert Baathist policies in detention-like camps. Crucially, she points out that psychological stabilisation and recovery were correlated and intertwined with the economic and social improvement of the Kurdistan region, including the remaining collective towns, witnessed from the late 1990s onwards. As living conditions

improved (in terms of job opportunities, infrastructure investments) Anfal survivors were able to engage in new life perspectives with a double struggle: transforming detention-like camp conditions into “vibrant” medium-size towns and, in parallel, maintaining the memory of Anfal alive, not as it was explained by Kurdish political parties and “official” historians, but as remembered by the victims themselves.

Taken together, both contributions are in constant dialogue with explicit comparisons and references to each other’s chapter. Finally, because they both study collective towns in the same country, albeit in a different time period and responding to different aims, comparisons can readily be made by both knowledgeable and less informed readers.

In short, although the connectedness and comparisons between diverse disciplinary spaces created since the 19<sup>th</sup> century worldwide are not always explicit, this is clearly a thoughtful volume, and one from which students will benefit. It would be of value as a primary or supplementary text, a source of course readings or research resource for students of disciplinary spaces, forced displacement, as well as for those interested in ethnic conflict and related issues.

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Ayşegül Aydın and Cem Emrence, **Zones of Rebellion: Kurdish Insurgents and the Turkish State**, *Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2015, 192 pp., (ISBN: 978-0-801-45354-0).*

This is a sophisticated analysis of insurgent Kurdistan Workers’ Party (*Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê*, PKK) violence in Turkey and the Turkish government’s counterinsurgency response to what is one of the longest-running conflicts in the world. The book’s title, *Zones of Rebellion*, refers to the three separate areas of conflict defined by how strong the PKK insurgency has been there, while also considering the state’s establishment of an area of emergency rule (*Olağanüstü Hâl Bölgesi/OHAL*). “For the insurgents, the OHAL meant two zones: Zone 1 [or the Battle Zone], the insurgency’s stronghold, where the PKK could easily survive and was most effective,” while Zone 2, or the Transition Zone, was “where the PKK faced rivals, a less enthusiastic clientele and considerable state presence” (p. 5). In Zone 3 (which was outside the OHAL region and thus constituted the vast majority of Turkey) “the state was hegemonic” (*ibid.*). Or to put it more concisely, “for each side: a zone under control, a contested zone, and a zone beyond reach” (p. 4).

After a short introduction, the authors divide their study into two parts: The insurgency and counterinsurgency, analysing each as to its organisation, ideology, and strategy. Most impressively and uniquely, the authors at all times refrain from taking sides as to who has been right or wrong, contenting themselves to an easy-to-understand and heuristic scholarly analysis. To create the databases upon which they constructed their work, the authors employed

“a large collection of newspaper articles” from “two newspapers that circulate widely in Turkey, *Milliyet* and *Hürriyet*,” as well as “for shorter periods,” such other Turkish dailies “as *Radikal*, *Cumhuriyet*, *Tercüman*, *Güneş*, and *Türkiye* (p. 138), plus *Aym Tarihi* (a press review published by the Office of the Prime Minister). “This research effort led to [two] unequaled datasets on civil war violence that cover a 24-year period (1984-2008) and all violent events across Turkey... and contain information on roughly 10,000 incidents” (p. 140), one dataset being a compilation of “violent incidents initiated by the rebel group” (p. 141) and the other on the state’s “counterinsurgency operations in the same time frame” (p. 144). In addition, a third dataset details 846 additional incidents of civilian unrest in Kurdish urban centers that occurred from 1989 to 2008 and ranged from passive resistance to active challenges to the state’s security.

The result led to “a powerful narrative and an analytical framework” (p. x) containing a wealth of information and data that will reward both researchers and policy makers interested in this specific struggle as well as insurgencies in general. The authors themselves note that “the book’s major finding... [is that] there has been a strong affinity between zones and the nature of violence in the Turkish civil war.” Based on this they conclude “that the state and the insurgency are resource-dependent organisations and that the distribution of violence closely reflects their ties with [these resources of] territory and people” (p. 135). In what they term “path-dependent origins” (p. 131), the authors further explain that “the rigidity of policies stems from combatants’ earlier choices... are embedded in history and can be revealed by studying key processes over time” (p. 9).

After the state captured him in February 1999, Abdullah Öcalan’s “official stand on the Kurdish issue became one of political compromise, stipulating a solution that would promote a democratized Turkish Republic” (p. 33), a position he has continued to reformulate from prison. “Rebel demands now included a ‘democratic decentralization’ scheme that would foster regional rule by the PKK and its political allies that would be funded by state revenues and institutions” (p. 49). “The Turkish state is no longer regarded as a foreign aggressor that occupied Kurdistan and colonized the Kurds. In this new version of history, the Kurds... are presented as equal partners with the Turks in founding the Republic” (p. 45). Thus, “the minority framework was similarly rejected... The rebels feared that if the Kurds were given minority status, they would be treated as second-class citizens” (pp. 46-47).

In a seeming non-sequitur, however, the authors also write that “demands for regional autonomy were also taken off the table [because]... millions of Kurds lived in the western parts of Turkey... Hence, dividing Turkey would not necessarily address the Kurds’ grievances” (p. 46). The authors interestingly add that the KCK (*Koma Civakên Kurdistan/* Kurdistan Communities Union) created in 2007 “was not a new idea. It in fact embodied the [earlier but subsequently disbanded] ERNK (*Eniya Rizgariya Neteweyî ya Kurdistanê/National Liberation Front of Kurdistan*) with a new mission and involved promoting an

organization within Kurdish society that would be an alternative to state rule” (p. 48).

With prescience, the authors maintain that both parties to the conflict are frozen into given tactics and unable to transit from violence to civic politics. This rigidity prevents successful negotiations and battlefield victories from being developed into political solutions. “The state’s political choices precluded any long-lasting solution. Since the state had already committed itself to special interests such as tribal allies, village guards, and religious orders, it failed to integrate the region and win the hearts and minds of the people... The end result was a military victory with no political agenda to back it up” (p. 9). The violent end of the Turkish-PKK peace process in July 2015 – negotiations that both sides supposedly had been struggling to commence for more than a decade and were being pursued in earnest since 2013 – illustrates the validity of the authors’ contentions on this point. Thus their discussion of arrests and civilian casualties in the southeastern Anatolian city of Cizre in 1992 (p. 121), read eerily similar to current reports coming out of the same location in September 2015.

In addition to their three databases of more than 10,000 incidents, the authors have amassed a large and rich documentation of both Turkish- and English-language sources, which deal not only with the PKK insurgency in Turkey, but also draw comparisons with internal struggles of the Communist Party in the Philippines, the Aceh (GAM) in Indonesia, and the Shining Path in Peru, as well as such state outgrowths as the AUC in Colombia, and the ISI in Pakistan, among numerous others not usually mentioned in a study of the PKK insurgency. Somewhat controversially, given the PKK struggle’s relatively geographical isolation, the two authors repeatedly use the term “Turkish civil war” (p. 3, etc.). However, as the authors themselves note, “the state continued its traditional policy of observing a clear distinction between the “bandits” in the OHAL region and millions of Kurds in large cities. This approach saved the state from having to engage with an ethnic question and kept intercommunal relations relatively peaceful” (p. 125). In other words, the PKK insurgency did not reach the level of being a civil war, at least up to now!

This rich, but rather short study also contains a useful list of abbreviations and chronology, as well as an appendix that explains the procedures followed to create the databases upon which more than 10,000 incidents, notes, and the index are based. There is no explicit bibliography, but a detailed one is implied in the notes. Although at times repetitious, Aydın and Emrence have produced an original and important contribution that is highly recommended reading for both scholars and policy makers.

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Evgenia I. Vasil'eva, **Yugo-Vostochniy Kurdistan v XVI-XIX vv. Istochnik po Istorii Kurdsikh Emiratov Ardelan i Baban.** [South-Eastern Kurdistan in the XVI-XIX<sup>th</sup> cc. A Source for the Study of Kurdish Emirates of Ardalān and Bābān], *St Petersburg: Nestor-Istoria, 2016. 176 pp., (ISBN 978-5-4469-0775-5).*

Evgenia Il'ichna Vasil'eva (b. 1935) is one of the last and most prominent representatives of the St. Petersburg school of Kurdology, whose primary research focus since its foundation in the nineteenth century has been the study of Kurdish ethnography, linguistics, literature, and history. For decades, Vasil'eva worked at the world's first structurally independent department of Kurdology – the so-called *Kurdish Cabinet* of the Leningrad Division of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Soviet Academy of Sciences (now St. Petersburg Institute of Oriental Manuscripts). She has dedicated her career to identifying, studying, and translating Persian historical chronicles of Kurdish authors kept in libraries and manuscript collections in and outside of Russia. Over the course of half a century of work and research, she has published extensively; yet, her most important contributions to the field have undoubtedly been the annotated translations of a number of historical chronicles by Kurdish authors such as Khusraw ibn Muḥammad Bānī Ardalān, Māh Sharaf Khānum Kurdistānī, Mīrzā 'Alī Akbar Kurdistānī, and Sharaf Khān Bidlīsī.

The book under review, as Vasil'eva points out herself (p. 5), is a continuation of her previous work (1991) in the study of the history and historiography of southeastern Kurdistan. Furthermore, the chronicle at the core of this book is an addition to the list of her other translations, some of which, to varying degrees, have also been utilised here. In addition to the previously unstudied *Siyar al-Akrād*<sup>3</sup> of 'Abdalqādir Bābānī, Vasil'eva makes extensive use of another chronicle by an Ardalānī author – *Ḥadiqah-yi Naṣiriyyah* of Mīrzā 'Alī Akbar Kurdistānī. According to Vasil'eva, it was the publication of these two works in Iran, in 1988 and 2003 respectively, as well as the translation of her earlier work into Kurdish, which inspired her to go back to the study of southeastern Kurdistan and the history of the emirates of Ardalān and Bābān (p. 5). The book, essentially an attempt to synthesise the information in the two chronicles into one historical source, consists of three chapters and an appendix. The latter, in turn, takes up half of the book and is an annotated translation of *Siyar al-Akrād*.

In the first part, Vasil'eva discusses 'Abdalqādir Bābānī's background. The second part focuses on the author's motives for the composition of *Siyar al-Akrād* as well as the sources he used. Here, Vasil'eva discusses the time of the composition and the manuscript itself, convincingly demonstrating that it was composed between 1868 and 1870. The last part is primarily concerned with

<sup>3</sup> Despite a brief mention by Abdollah Mardukh (1998: 43-46), the book under review is the first comprehensive study of the work.

the socio-political structures and organization of the two emirates. It discusses the questions of tribalism and tribal solidarity, the ruling families of the emirates and their internal and external feuds, especially in the last period of their sovereignty and statehood. Given that 'Bābānī personally witnessed the emirates' disintegration, this part is particularly rich in detail and is in some ways a 'requiem' for the time when the Ardalān and Bābān dynasties ruled over their respective domains. Vasil'eva also touches upon the similarities and differences between 'Abdalqādir Bābānī and Sharaf Khān Bidlīsī's lives, their historiographical works, and political objectives. Finally, drawing upon the numerous chronicles she has studied, she discusses such notions as '*Kurdistan vs Kurdistans*' and '*unity despite separation*' (pp. 70-77). Vasil'eva argues that the 'nationalistic' outlook of Bābānī is much stronger than that of any other Kurdish chronicler, bar Bidlīsī. The latter, in fact, never referred to the land inhabited by Kurds in the plural. Indeed, the first Kurdish author to have done so appears to be Bābānī himself while Mīrzā 'Alī Akbar Kurdistānī, in his *Hadīqah-yi Naṣiriyyah*, composed twenty years later (1890-92), also makes extensive use of the toponym in its plural form (p.71). This 'innovation', according to Vasil'eva, emerged in the aftermath of the demise of the Kurdish emirates (Ḥakkārī, Sūrān, Bābān, Ardalān, Bahdīnān) as they were gradually absorbed into the centralizing state structures of their imperial neighbours by the second half of the nineteenth century. It reflected not only the increasing awareness of political and social separation but also the Bābānī's determination to signify the similarities between the emirates that had ceased to exist. Earlier on, as the frontier between the Ottomans and Iran remained blurred, the silhouette of Kurdistan grew clearer; yet, at the later period, as the frontier began to acquire clearer contours so did the borders of the regions of the wider Kurdistan (p. 77).

The appendix includes the annotated translation of selected passages from *Siyar al-Akrād*. Vasil'eva points out that some of the events and personalities described in the chronicle are anachronistic or outright mythical. Yet, she makes an honest effort to fact-check wherever possible by comparing the information in the *Siyar al-Akrād* against a range of other sources. The history of Bānī Ardalān, as narrated by 'Abdalqādir Bābānī, is a prime example of disagreement between *Siyar al-Akrād* and other sources (p. 49). As for the house of Bābān, Vasil'eva provides a table, based on information from a book by C.J. Rich and *Siyar al-Akrād*, which compares and analyses the Bābān rulers' years and chronology of reign. Interestingly, there appears to be an almost complete mismatch between these two sources, very often the dates and periods given in the two sources are almost a century apart (p. 57). Additionally, although the history of Ardalān and Bābān families and emirates receive the greatest attention, Bābānī's chronicle also provides information on a range of other subjects. For example, he talks about the region of Awrāmān and its population (pp. 104-110), and the Mukrī Kurdistan and the Bilbās tribe (pp. 164-165). Furthermore, he provides information on the family of Kurdish rulers of



Ravāndūz and the campaign of Muḥammad-bīk Mīr-i Ravāndūz against the Dāsni tribe of ‘the mountainous region of Zangāriyyah’. It is reported that, following the defeat of the Dāsni, Muḥammad-bīk captured their leaders, ‘Alī-bīk and Badr-bīk, along with ten thousand men and women. With the prisoners, he returned to Ravāndūz where he called upon the Dāsni leaders to give up their Yazidi faith and accept Islam. ‘Alī-bīk refused, to which Muḥammad-bīk responded by ordering his face to be ‘hacked into pieces with a dagger’. Upon witnessing this, Badr-bīk and the rest of the captives, with the exception of one hundred people, accepted Islam (p. 167).

Vasil’eva argues that no other Kurdish chronicle, except perhaps Bidlīsī’s *Sharafnāma*, depicts historical events and personalities with such vividness and psychological insightfulness (p.58). She finds a lot in common between Bidlīsī and Bābānī arguing that just as Bidlīsī’s famous history of the Kurdish dynasties was composed to promote Kurdish unity, Bābānī’s *Siyar al-Akrād*’s main purpose was to demonstrate that despite political divisions within Kurdistan its population lived within a largely undifferentiated socio-economic structure (p. 79). A special place within Bābānī’s chronicle is allotted to the Kurdish tribes as an institution. For him, the ideology of tribal solidarity assumes the pan-Kurdic scale (p. 72-73). The Kurdish ethnic space along the Ottoman-Iranian frontier presents a sort of mosaic of tribal polycentric statehood, which for centuries broke up the agreements and treaties on border delineation signed between the two states.

The question of ‘Kurdish unity’ is something Vasil’eva has repeatedly addressed in her works. Here too, she discusses both internal and external hindering the Kurdish polities’ resistance against the encroachment of the two imperial powers. Nonetheless, not only does she fail to provide a comprehensive assessment of the regional and geopolitical developments, but also, her work appears to mythologize the Kurds often to the detriment of analytical objectivity. It is only to be expected of a chronicler, whose family for generations had personal affiliations with both Ardalān and Bābān courts, to portray the ties between the two emirates as characterized by friendly relations and solidarity, especially in the aftermath of their dismemberment. Vasil’eva, at times, seems to take Bābānī’s words at face value, failing to approach claims of solidarity and friendship between the emirates critically thus providing an overly glorious impression of the Kurdish past. Thus, although the work does add detail to the narrative history of the emirates, substantiating Vasil’eva’s earlier propositions and conclusions, it is too limited in scope to be considered a monograph in its own right. At the same time, the chronicle and its translation, annotations and analysis still constitute an important contribution to our knowledge of the history of the Kurds and the wider region. Finally, as the example of Vasil’eva alone demonstrates, it is hard to overstate the importance of acquiring working knowledge of Russian for anyone intending to conduct rigorous research in any subfield of Kurdish studies.

## References

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**Karin Mlodoch, *The Limits of Trauma Discourse: Women Anfal Survivors in Kurdistan-Iraq*, Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2014, 541 pp., (ISBN: 978-3-87997-719-2).**

Building upon her twenty years of involvement in the region, in *The Limits of Trauma Discourse: Women Anfal Survivors in Kurdistan-Iraq*, Karin Mlodoch provides a detailed historical account of the so-called Anfal campaign, mainly through the narrations of the Anfal women, the survivors of this extreme violence. Al-Anfal campaign is the name of an extensive military operation against the Kurdish people living in Northern Iraq in 1988 that led to the death, disappearing, displacement, and village destructions in the thousands. Dedicated to conveying women's "own subjective perspective on their Anfal experience" (p. 19), Mlodoch aims to demonstrate the long-term effect of this violence on women's lives by listening to their own narratives. Frequently defined as "victims" and by the loss of their relatives in the existing literature, Anfal women are stripped off their agency; yet Mlodoch introduces a counter gender-based analysis that pays attention to their subjective experiences of loss and ongoing violence, along with their responses to these traumatic events in line with the continuous transformation of their lives. In doing so, the author does not limit her analysis to individual experiences; instead, she demonstrates the ways in which political, social, and economic factors, as well as traditional patriarchal structures, have influenced how women remember and cope with this event. Thus, the book goes beyond the documentation of violence and trauma by providing the reader with an account of how Anfal women have collectively mobilized their resources towards building their own lives under the circumstances of ongoing violence in the region.

In her book, Mlodoch sets the Al-Anfal campaign as the beginning point for analysis, then proceeds to examine the major developments that have happened since then, namely the Gulf War in 1991, the Iraq War in 2003 that led to the fall of the Baath regime, and the post-2003 process that brought relative security and stability to the Kurdistan Region. The book is mainly divided into three time-periods throughout its seventeen chapters. Firstly, Mlodoch focuses on the lives of Anfal women beginning from the Anfal

campaign until the Gulf War in 1991; this section examines their experiences of living under the control of the Baath regime--the perpetrators of genocide--as they suffer the impact of this extreme violence. Secondly, Mlodoch examines the time period between the Gulf War and the establishment of the provisional autonomy of the Kurdistan Region until the fall of the Saddam regime in 2003. While analysing the survivors' narratives, she highlights the changing context in which security and autonomy was assured to a certain extent with the enactment of a no-fly zone. However, strict traditional patriarchal values, economic hardships, and ongoing threats to security continue to regulate women's lives, as she demonstrates. And lastly, Mlodoch focuses on the post-2003 period that has been marked by rapid economic improvement and the restoring of the sense of security in Iraqi Kurdistan, which has caused a sense of relief and hope for Anfal women in their quest to find information about their missing relatives and to achieve justice. However, the delay in the transitional justice process by the Iraqi central government and the neglect of the Kurdistan Regional Government towards Anfal women leads to frustration and disappointment among these women. Still, they manage to build their own lives by raising their kids, who then provide them with social and economic security. For each of these time-periods, Mlodoch presents a complex account of the social, political, and economic dynamics of the time, accompanied by the personal narratives of Anfal women that show the ways in which they tackle with these changing structures and circumstances. Considering the fact that Mlodoch's main argument emphasises the dialectical relationship between survivors' narratives and the changing social, economic and political structures, the structure of the book enables her to prove her argument by analyzing the changing circumstances of each and every period and the ways in which Anfal women experience, narrate and tackle with these transformations.

In terms of its conceptual framework, the book applies to three areas--namely, trauma, memory, and reconciliation. Mlodoch situates her research within the existing literature by addressing the lack of psychological perspective in the current discussions specifically around Anfal and generally around political reconciliation. Simultaneously, she challenges the clinical psychological research methods that focus on collecting quantitative data of the symptoms while analyzing trauma. Instead, Mlodoch approaches trauma as a "politically and socially contextualized and gendered" (p. 29) concept, and underlines the "interwoven character of women's individual and collective memories" (p. 29) by highlighting the effects of changing social, political and economic contexts on women's narrations. Consistent with her conceptual framework, Mlodoch's methodology is very much shaped by the contribution of her subjects. Throughout the book, the narratives of Anfal women are immensely detailed, including gaps, silences, and emotions, which are also integrated into the analysis. The processes in which the narratives evolve and transform are privileged over single moments. In line with her dedication to not to erase women's subjective agencies, Mlodoch successfully challenges the sidelining of

women survivors' experiences by squeezing them into categories of "waiting" and "frozen in the past" (p. 18). She contributes to the literature not solely through "adding" women's narratives into the history, but also by demonstrating the ways in which the changing social, political, and economic conditions since 1988 are gendered (Scott, 1986). While doing that, she presents an extensive description of traditional patriarchal rules and expectations (that are changing in line with the social, political, and economic transformation) and demonstrates how these expectations shape women's lives in the aftermath of the Anfal campaign. By following these women's lives over time, Mlodoch is able to demonstrate the shift in their lives and in the social structures to which they belong. Her analysis demonstrates that as the second-generation survivors grow and take responsibility of the household, the collective solidarity networks that Anfal women have created right after the tragedy start to dissolve. The women-only collective solidarity networks give way to traditional understanding of family. In regard to the methodology, the only point that remains to be elaborated is the researcher's positionality as an "external listener" (p. 240) who works as a humanitarian aid worker and as a member of an NGO while conducting her research. Even though Mlodoch gives the reader detailed information about her access to the field, her position towards her subjects is not incorporated into her later analysis of Anfal women's narrations. Considering the extended literature on the fast-growing number of NGOs in Iraqi Kurdistan right after the abolishment of Baath regime (Mojab & Gorman, 2007), and the feminist criticisms against this process for reproducing a top-down approach (Al-Ali & Pratt, 2009), her analysis in the second half of the book (specifically the post-2003 period) requires a reflection on her position.

Overall, I believe Mlodoch's book will be of particular interest not only to psychologists, but also to historians, sociologists, anthropologists, and scholars of gender studies who are interested in the discussions of trauma, memory and political reconciliation and more generally the social, political and economic transformation of the region.

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