The State and Violence in Kurdistan: A Conceptual Framework[1]

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Abstract

This article interrogates the use of state-organised violence against the Kurds by focusing on four major cases of mass violence conducted in the early republican era in the 1920s and 1930s. Through the examination of the key processes and major policies, the study explains state violence as historically and causally related to the logic and imperatives of imposing and maintaining direct rule over the predominantly Kurdish-inhabited territories in post-Ottoman Turkey. To better understand the nature of state violence, I present three mutually reinforcing and interconnected conceptual pathways: integral colonisation, incorporation by nation-destruction and colonial violence. The paper argues that the strategies of state formation and expansion into Kurdistan along with the coercive policies of creating a unitary and homogenous Turkish nation took the form of integral colonisation. This process, while laying the foundations for the politics of incorporation by nation-destruction, co-existed with and informed by the use of colonial violence. Disaggregated into ideological, ethnocidal and genocidal violence, colonial violence is thus referred to as underlying mechanism behind the recurrent use of state violence in Kurdistan.

Keywords: *Colonial violence; Direct rule; Incorporation; Integral colony; Partition; Reordering of the Middle East; State violence*

Abstract in Kurmanji

Dewlet û şidet li Kurdistanê: Çarçoveyeke têgînî

Bi vekolîna çar mînakên sereke yên tundiya girseyî ku di destpêka heyama komarî, yanî deheyên 1920ê û 1930ê de rû daye, ev nivîsar li ser bikaranîna şideta dewletê ya dijî Kurdan radiweste. Di ber nirxandina pêvajoyên esasî û siyasetên bingehîn re, ez şideta dewletê wek diyardeyeke weha rave dikim ku, ji aliyê dîrok û egerên wê ve, têkildara mantiq û pêdiviyên ferzkirin û ragirtina hukmdariya rasterast a dewleta Tirkiya pişt-osmanî ye li ser erdên ku pirî nifûsa wan Kurd in. Ji bo ku çawaniya şideta dewletê bêhtir were fêmkirin, ez sê rêbazên têgînî pêşberî xwendevanan dikim ku girêdayî hev in û hev du jî xurt dikin : mêtingeriya tevahî, daxilkirin bi riya xirakirina neteweyî û şideta mêtinger. Di meqaleyê de, ez piştgiriya vî fikrî didim ku stratejiyên sazkirin û berfirehkirina dewletê ya li Kurdistanê, li gel polîtîkayên zordar ên avakirina neteweyeke tirk a yekpare û mitecanis, bi şikla mêtingeriya tevahî hatin meşandin. Vê pêvajoyê hem bingeha siyasetên daxilkirin bi riya xirakirina neteweyî danî, hem jî tev li bikaranîna

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şideta mêtinger hat xebitandin û vê şidetê bandor jî lê kiriye. Li nav şideta komkujî, nijadkujî û îdeolojîk dabeşbûyî, şideta mêtinger bi vî awayî wek alava binyadî ya bikaranîna mukerrer a şideta dewletê li Kurdistanê tê nîşandan.

Abstract in Sorani

Dewllet û tundutîjî le kurdistan: çwarçêweyekî têgeyiştin

Ebistrakt: be serincdan leser çwar dosîyey gewrey tudutîjî ke leseretay qonaxî komarîda, le deyekanî 1920 û 1930 piyadekiran, em witare le bekarhênanî ew tundutîjîye ke dewllet le dijî kurd rêkîxistuwe. Twêjîneweke le rêgay hellsengandinî prose binerretîyekan û polesîye serekîyekan, ewe rûndekatewe ke tundutîjî dewllet wek mêjû û hokar peyweste be lojîk û binemakanî sepandin û parastinî hukmrranî rastewxo le turkyay post-'usmanîda beser ew herêmey ke zorîney danîştwanî kurdin. Bo baştir têgeyîştin le sruştî tundutîjî dewllet, min sê rêçkey têgeyîştinî yekgir û pêkewe grêdraw amade dekem: kollonîzekirdnî tewawkarî, girtinexo le rêgay wêrankirdnî-netewe we tundutîjî kollonîyallî. Witareke argumêntî ewe dekat ke stratîjî pêkhênanî dewllet û firawankirdnî bo kurdistan hawkat legell siyasetî serkutkerane bo pêkhênanî netewey turkî yekgirtû û çunyek forrmî kollonîyalîzey tewawkarî wergirtuwe. Em proseye, le katêkda berdî binaxey siyasetî girtinexo le rêgay wêrankirdnî-netewe, hawkat bû legell we denasrêtewe be bekarhênanî tundutîjî kollonyallî. Be polênkirdnî bo tundutîjîyekanî aydiyolojî, etnosayd û cînosayd, bemcore tundutîjî kollonyallî amajeye bo bûnî wek mîkanîzmêkî binerretî pişt bekarhênanî dûbarey tundutîjî dewlletî le kurdistan.

Abstract in Zazaki

Dewlete û Kurdîstan de Şîdet: Çarçewayêka Konseptkîye

Na meqale destê dewlete ra gurenayîşê şîdetê ver bi kurdan tehqîq kena û tede giranî dana çar nimûneyanê komşidetî yê bingeyênan yê serranê komar ê verênî yê 1920 û 1930an. Pê analîzkerdişê proses û polîtîkayanê bingeyênan, no cigêrayîş îzah keno ke şîdetê dewlete bi hewayêko tarîxî û sebebkî mantiq û fermanê bandura serê mintiqayan kurdan ê ke rasterast Tirkîyaya badê demê osmanijan de tetbîq û muhafeze bîye, tede girêdaye yo. Seba ke senînîya şîdetê dewlete rindêr fehm bibo, ez hîrê rêçanê xohêzdarkerdoxan û konseptkîyanê têzerefîşteyan pêşkêş kena: kolonîzasyono întegral, bi rayîrê çinkerdişê netewe daxilkerdiş û şîdeto kolonyalîst. No nuşte îdîa keno ke stratejîyê neteweawankerdişî û vilabîyayîşê ver bi Kurdîstanî, tede kî polîtîkayê zoranî yê viraştişê neteweyêka tirka homojen û yewbîyayîye, ê kewtî şekîlê kolonîzasyonê întegralî. Herçiqas ke nê prosesî bingeyê polîtîkayanê bi rayîrê çinkerdişê netewe daxilkerdişî nayî ro, o eynî dem de hetê şîdetê kolonîstî de estbîyêne û ci ra kî xeberdar bîyêne. Şîdeto kolonyalîst ke şidetanê îdeolojîk, etnosîd û jenosîdkîyan rê lete beno, Kurdîstan de sey mekanîzmaya binê gurenayîşê şîdetê dewlet ê timî name beno.

Introduction

> "There is no Kurdish problem where a Turkish bayonet appears" (Vakit 7 May 1925, Turkish newspaper, cited in McDowall 2017, p.200).

The conduct of mass violence, along with the periodic deployment of various emergency regimes, has a long history in the Kurdish region. Indeed, no single Kurdish generation has been spared from state violence in one way or another over the past century or so.[3] Apart from relatively short periods of liberal openings and reforms of some sort, state violence, and non-compliance to it, has shaped, and continues to shape, the lives of substantial segments of Kurdish society.

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[3] While writing this article, the Kurdish society once more is going through one of the most threatening periods of its modern history in the face of multiple military campaigns carried out by the Turkish military and affiliated Jihadist groups. Immediately after the American withdrawal from Syria, on 9 October 2019, Turkey launched its hitherto biggest military assault against the Kurds in Rojava, in north-eastern Syria.

The present study is an attempt to shed some light on this puzzle by setting out a conceptual framework that explains the use of state-organised mass violence in Kurdistan by looking at the intersection of state formation and expansion, direct rule and the politics of nation-building, and various forms of resistance.

While aiming to provide a conceptual framework for understanding the historical and contextual conditions for the roots, recurrence and durability of the state-organised violence, this article builds on multiple theoretical approaches and insights generated by scholars working on violence. Generally, mass violence here is referred to as indicating widespread physical violence against non-combatants, including killings, and other atrocities such as "forced removal or expulsion, enforced hunger or undersupply, forced labour, collective rape, strategic bombing, and excessive imprisonment" (Gerlach 2010, p. 1ff.). As this study focuses on instances of state-organised mass violence, it takes up the insights generated by scholarly work on state criminality which are essential for a proper understanding of the nature of state crimes (Kramer 2016; Green et al 2004; Rothe & Kauzlarich 2016; Anderson 2016). This literature provides an indispensable line of argumentation for addressing state crimes, the criminogenic structures through which such crimes are conducted as well as the question of impunity, responsibility, personal motivation, and structural logic behind state-organised violence. It denotes crimes perpetrated by states, directly and indirectly, as "criminogenic", i.e., crime-producing structures whereby the denial of responsibility or even the commission of crimes is considered as part of the statecraft of the perpetrating state and its officials. As Anderson notes, "in genocidal states deviant behavior is actually normative" which explains how, by perpetrating or condoning "the commission of normally criminal acts" authoritarian states become themselves criminogenic or crime-producing (2016, p. 85).

Equally, for an enhanced understanding of violence, Galtung's conceptualisation of "direct, structural and cultural violence" is still essential (Galtung 1969, p. 170 ff; Galtung 1990). In addition, Spivak's concept of "epistemic violence" is important in that it brings into focus the constitution of "the colonial subject as Other" and "the asymmetrical obliteration of the trace of that Other in its precarious Subjectivity" (Spivak 2010, p. 35). Kalyvas' idea of desegregating violence and linking it to order are also very inspiring for this study as it allows us to focus on the logic and dynamics of violence in relation to the type of order (2006, p. 19 ff; Kaylvas et al 2008 p. 14). The intersectionality of violence and nation-building is central to the approach taken by Bloxham and Gerwarth (2011, p. 2). While linking violence with nation-building, they conceptualise political violence as emanating from the generation of new forms of state power seeking to homogenise societies by resorting to ethnic cleansing and genocide if deemed necessary (Bloxham & Gerwarth 2011, p. 138 ff).

It is this particular type of violence the present study seeks to explain, i.e., violence executed by state authorities as part and parcel of the strategies of nation-building, imperatives of homogenisation, the imposition of direct rule and ethnic domination. This will be referred to as colonial violence, and comprises the *politics of denial, domination and destruction, as well as the targeting of the agency, identity, territorial and communal make-up of Kurdish communities for the purposes of imposing and maintaining direct rule via special regimes and associated policies of assimilation, displacement and social engineering.* These processes and policies, while rendering state violence with an inherently colonial character, I refer to as *incorporation by nation-destruction* which is offered as a key mechanism responsible for the roots and recurrent uses of state violence as well as for providing perpetrators with impunity. Conceptualised as the primary concept, colonial

violence is then referred to as existing along a continuum from ideological, to authoritarian, to ethnocidal and genocidal violence.

As indicated above, this study empirically focuses on four successive cases of mass violence: Koçgiri (1920-1921), the mass violence committed during and after the Sheikh Said-led resistance (1925), Zilan (1930) and Dersim (1937-1938). Koçgiri, Zilan and Dersim are regions in which uprisings and mass violence took place, whereas Sheikh Said is the name of the leader of the insurgency and shall indicate state violence conducted during and in the aftermath of this uprising. The cases are taken as exemplars of the politics of incorporation by communal destruction executed through a combination of ethnocidal and genocidal violence. They occurred at the intersection of state formation, expansion, homogenising and nationalising strategies of nation-building rigorously undertaken by the emergent republican regime in post-Ottoman Turkey. All four cases demonstrate the pattern of repression and resistance, or "dialectics of domination and resistance", involving Kurdish movements and the sovereign powers ruling over Kurdistan (see Vali 2020, v ff.).

The cases involve forms of non-compliance to the politics of denial and domination by demanding the national and/or cultural rights and claiming agency. This is, however, not to suggest that the cases are identical, or represent a kind of duplication or re-enactment of the same over a period of time. For one thing, they are located within different regional and geographical settings (Bozarslan 2008, p. 341 ff; Watts 2000). And for another, the cases are varied in terms of the level of organisation, resistance as well as political and national demands involved. While differing in scope and intensity, in all four cases the ethnic domination is met by the dominated, claiming their agency and desire for forms of self-rule, a core demand which has been, and remains, central to all the Kurdish discontent and uprisings.

Finally, and more importantly for the purposes of this article, all four cases involve state-organised mass violence which was conducted in the early republican era and evolved over two decades. The first two cases are then referred to as ethnocidal (Section III below), and the latter two cases as genocidal violence (Section IV), executed by a combination of negationist, assimilationist and eliminationist strategies targeting the Kurdish communities in their agential capabilities and qualities, as well as their national and territorial integrity. I use the term ethnocidal violence in cases where the emphasis is primarily placed on policies aiming at the destruction of communal agency, identity and culture, whereas genocidal violence refers to "selective extermination".[4] By that, I mean the use of mass violence within a territorially delineated space where violence is conducted in a "group-selective" and "group-destructive" manner but is limited in scope as it focuses on a selected region (cf. Straus 2012. p 554 ff; 2016, p. 19ff.).[5]

Both ethnocidal and genocidal violence used in the cases under review are further characterised by *politicide* and *exemplary repression*. The former refers to targeting rebels or

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[4] Bellamy identifies three basic pathways for the justification of mass atrocities: denial, military necessity and ideology of selective extermination. The latter has provided "a moral framework that underpinned the justificatory arguments employed by some of the leading twentieth-century proponents of genocide" (Bellamy 2012, p. 161). Governed by the "civilising mission" doctrine, the ideology of selected extermination "is based on a consensus within a given political community that certain groups are not entitled to moral and legal protection and may therefore be legitimately subjected to indiscriminate violence" (Bellamy 2012, p. 180).

[5] This understanding is roughly equivalent with Semelin's distinction between 'destroying to subjugate' to 'destroying to eradicate' (Semelin 2012, p. 28). The former refers to annihilating a group partly in order to force the rest of the group into total submission, while the latter involves eliminating the targeted group from a more or less extensive territory controlled or coveted by a state. "These two processes," Semelin maintains, "often overlap in the same historical situation" (ibid.).

potential rebels, that is, "killing where the intended target is the entire leadership and potential leadership class of a more generally victimized and feared group" (Mann 2005, p. 16). Whilst the latter refers to the policy of "putting an entire city to the sword in order to cow other cities into submission" (ibid.).

Contrary to the argument that suggests a mutually exclusive relation between ethnocide and genocide, I endorse the view that considers both as belonging to the category of *"murderous ethnic cleansing"* (cf. Mann 2005. p.17). As such, they are coterminous, as they share essential features that overlap with each other, but are not interchangeable. Similarly, Harff and Gurr define both genocides and politicides as "the promotion and execution of policies by a state or its agents which result in the deaths of a substantial portion of a group" (Harff & Gurr 1988, p. 360). In genocides, they contend, "the victimized groups are defined primarily in terms of their communal characteristics, i.e., ethnicity, religion, or nationality. In politicides the victim groups are defined primarily in terms of their hierarchical position or political opposition to the regime and dominant groups" (ibid.).

As we will see below, the cases presented here, and indeed all cases of Kurdish uprisings, are commonly referred to in Turkish official historiography as "banditry" or "revolts" (*isyans*) etc., not least in order to justify the use of mass violence (see Section II). Working on political violence in Kurdistan, or indeed any aspects of the Kurdish society, one is permanently reminded of what Walter Mignolo describes as one's own positionality in the "geo-politics of knowledge" (2011, p. 17) and "epistemic disobedience" from a decolonial perspective (2009 p. 160). After all, there is a fundamental difference between studying political violence from the perspective of those subjected to it, or those who justify and rationalise its use - be it by referring to the exigencies of the state and nation-building, by assigning the violent actions to the realm of necessity, or by rendering the outcomes of violent policies to the intended consequences. To study the former, i.e. the targeted groups, without stripping them of their agency, and the latter without falling into the affirmative logic through which state-organised violence is justified remains the most challenging task for scholars working on violence.

The cases addressed in this study are taken to represent forms of "non-compliance", or collective resistance to imposed rule by demonstrating the absence of the rulers' legitimacy (cf. Hechter 2013, p. 21). As the study focuses on the early Republican era (1923-1945), the examination will methodologically take the form of historical process tracing, understood as "a key technique for capturing causal mechanism in action", while generating historical-comparative explanations (Bennett et al. 2015, p. 9). Process tracing allows systematic and contextualised comparisons while paying attention to the significance of considering alternative explanations and gathering diverse and relevant evidence (cf. Mahoney et al. 2009, p. 363).

The remainder of this article is structured as follows: the first section presents the concept of integral colony to address background conditions and to identify mechanisms through which the state violence in the 1920s in Turkey was enacted. Section II addresses the relationship between official ideology and violence and the ways in which the Kurds are depicted by the state discourse. Sections III and IV focus on the four cases of mass violence presented above by explaining how, for what purposes, under what conditions, and by means of which policies mass violence was carried out by the Turkish Republic during the 1920s. Finally, I will conclude by summarising the main insights and indicating some research desiderate.

Becoming an Integral Colony

Having outlined the types of violence relevant to this study, this section focuses on the historical and contextual conditions through which this violence was generated. It does so by laying out the concept of integral colony which is understood as the key enabler for the arbitrary exercise of state power and the conduct of mass violence. In order to better understand how this came about, I will first consider the wider context of state formation, state expansion and nation-building as they played out in the post-Ottoman Middle East, and how this affected the status of the Kurds and Kurdistan within the emergent nation-states in general, and within the Turkish republic in particular.

As briefly addressed elsewhere by this author (2018, p. 64ff), World War One (1914-1918) led to a violent process of reconfiguration of the political space in the entire Middle East through a combination of direct and indirect rule by the victorious Western powers in the 1920s. Syria and Iraq received French and British mandatory rule respectively, while in post-Ottoman Turkey a republican regime was promulgated, and in post-Qajar Iran a new dynastic regime was established (Vali 2020).

In each of these states the Kurds "became a status-less minority, not because they constituted a numeric minority in their own territories where they had an overwhelming majority, but because they were deprived of equal rights with the dominant Persian, Turkish and Arab communities" (Bozarslan 2018, p. 12-13). The result has been "a regime of inter-state domination" informed by "an inter-state security regime which defined the region-wide Kurdistan as a zone of permanent regime of exception" (ibid.).

The break-up of the Ottoman Empire resulted in, among other things, the "partition of Ottoman Kurdistan" (McDowall 2017, p.115). This process was then officially completed by the Treaty of Lausanne (1923) between Turkey and the victorious powers of the First World War, and the ensuing international border agreements. The first border treaty was signed between Turkey and the mandatory State of Syria and France in May 1926, followed by border agreements between Turkey and the Mandatory state of Iraq and Great Britain in June 1926, and between Turkey and Iran in January 1932. The agreements not only involved redrawing state boundaries, but also security-related arrangements targeting the Kurds as potential destructors of the emerging post-war *status quo* (Bezwan 2008b, p. 270, Bezwan 2018, p.63-64).

For the purposes of this paper, however, the most crucial and durable outcome of the complex processes of imperial/colonial reordering and territorial engineering of the Middle East was the fact that the states whose ruling elites were antagonistic towards the Kurdish national aspirations and rights, became legally entitled to rule over Kurdish communities. Once endowed with sovereignty over the respective part of Kurdistan, they became engaged in the rigorous imposition of direct rule over the Kurdish-inhabited territories during the course of the 1920s. The most crucial turning point in this process was the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne of 24 July 1923, in which Turkish sovereignty over substantial portions of Kurdistan in present-day Turkey was recognised.

Put differently, the processes of redrawing the territorial borders, of state formation and expansion into 'peripheral' regions in the Middle East became materialised as forced incorporation of the Kurdish territories into the newly established states in the 1920s, often

by use of mass violence.[6] This inaugurated what Christopher Houston has succinctly called as "an anti-history of a non-people" (2009, p. 19). The peculiarity of the Kurdish case lies in the fact that Kurdish communities emerged out of the process of turning the political geography of the post-Ottoman Middle East into "nation-states" as a *non-nationality with non-status*.[7] This provided the background for integral colonisation through policies and practices which targeted the communal rights and existence of the Kurdish population.

Integral Colonisation and Mass Violence

If there were still some positive approaches towards the Kurds during the crucial period from the dissolution of the Ottoman empire (1918) to the proclamation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 (cf. Olson 1991, p.21ff.), with the signing of the treaty of Lausanne things changed dramatically. One of the last public statements on the Kurdish situation with reference to "some kind of autonomy" (*bir tür muhtarlık*) was made by Atatürk on 16-17 January 1923, whereas the constitution adopted by the Grand National Assembly in April 1924 did not allow for any autonomy of any sort (Olson 1991, p. 26ff).

With the benefit of hindsight, one can conclude that pursuant to the balance of power and the level of power consolidation, a shift from what can best be called "benevolent colonialism" to "integral colonialism" took place, both of which can be found in an official document: *Draft law for a proposed autonomy of Kurdistan as debated in the Grand National Assembly on 10 February 1922*.[8]

What makes this document, which offers "an autonomous administration for the Kurdish nation in harmony with their national customs", so striking is twofold: first, the drafters rightly recognised the Kurds as a nation with its own identity and territory so that there is no misrecognition, no denial, no dismissal of the Kurd as "Mountain-Turks", as was the case during the course of the 1920s. Secondly, for the purposes of this paper more importantly, the proposed "government of Kurdistan" in this document is cast in clear colonial terms, with the Kurds given a dominated status within an officially recognised tutelage system of governance. Put differently, it is about a form of colonial rule that was pretty much in accord with the *Zeitgeist* of the 1920s where colonialism took the form of indirect rule, as was the case with the instruction of mandatory regimes throughout the Middle East and elsewhere. The mandatory regimes were famously stipulated by Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations of 1920, with "the ideological foundations of the mandates demanded that colonial rule combine with paternalistic structures of liberal rule" (Provence 2017, p. 270; see also Anghie 2004, p. 121).

It goes without saying that this "benevolent colonialism", that is, a regime of a Governor-General appointed by the Turkish Grand National Assembly overseeing "the government of Kurdistan" with Turkish as the only official language (document cited in Olson & Rumbold

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[6] In the introductory chapter to the edited volume "Right-Sizing the State: The Politics of Moving Borders", Brendan O'Leary defines "right-sizing" the state as referring "to the preferences of political agents at the centre of existing regimes to have what they regard as appropriate external and internal territorial borders" (2004, p. 2).

[7] With the idea of non-recognised colony, I draw on İsmail Beşikçi who has famously noted that the Kurds have far less than "the status of a colony" and that Kurdistan is not "even a colony" (*Kürdistan sömürge bile değil*). This laconic and thought-provoking statement was meant to bring into focus the peculiarities of the Kurdish situation. He himself has analysed the Kurdish predicament by developing the concept of "interstate colony" (*Devletlerarası Sömürge*) (Beşikçi 1986, p.10 ff).

[8] This document was first brought to light by historian Robert Olson entitled *Draft law for a proposed autonomy of Kurdistan as debated in the Grand National Assembly* on 10 February 1922, F.O. 371/7781 Eastern (Turkey) E3553/96/65, no. 308). Telegram from Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquess Curzon of Kedleston commented and cited in Olson & Rumbold 1989, p. 55 ff.)

1989, p. 55 ff; see also Olson 1991, p. 24 ff.) was accompanied by the attempts to contain and fatally undermine a genuine constitution and development of a Kurdish movement (see the *Koçgiri* case below). However, as indicated above, parallel to the consolidation of the Kemalist regime in post-Ottoman Turkey, all promises of recognition even *by submission under a tutelage regime* were incrementally abandoned in favour of strategies of denial, domination and destruction, which targeted the political agency as well as the national and cultural makeup of the Kurdish community. For example, in a conversation in November 1926 with the then British colonial high Commissioner in Iraq, Sir Henry Dobbs, Mustafa Kemal (later Atatürk) was quoted as saying that *"'self-determination' rights and minority rights could be talked about, but such rights were necessarily the rights of nations"* adding: *"The Kurds are still a tribe in commerbunds [kuşaklar boyu]; they will remain unable to administer [yönetme] themselves"* (cited in Olson 1991, p.26. footnote 10).[9]

The colonial logic of this statement needs no further explication: the aim to withhold from the people the right to administer themselves by using violence and take it as absence of their capacity to govern themselves.[10] In governmental terms, however, this meant moving away from the proposed regime of Governor-General with Kurdistan having an officially recognised status, or autonomy of any sort, to the establishment of exceptional and exceptionally coercive emergency regimes, among others, the regime of "Inspectorates-General" *(Umûmî Müfettişlikler)*,[11] which became the primary form of governance and mode of direct rule in Kurdistan from 1927 to 1952 (see Section II.3).

I explore this process by presenting a new concept, the concept of integral colonisation and colony. By that, I mean a specific type of domination by which the territories and communities that have been subject to the incorporation into the dominant society are construed as integral to the state and thus indivisible from its territorial and national integrity, without being recognised as communities in their own right or accorded to any public status. As such, an integral colony is a non-entity, devoid of any status or recognition, as it is quite literally interned into the body politic of the sovereign power and denied a socio-political existence of its own. It is important, however, to emphasise that the concept of integral colony is not understood as static or a one-size-fits-all concept, but as a conceptual variable[12] that looks at the different levels of coloniality, as well as at the methods and structures of domination, their ideological justification, along with variant policies and strategies that inform colonial politics. It takes into account both processes of change and continuity from a historical perspective by explaining how policies and practices targeting the Kurdish communities have been shaped, reshaped, sometimes reduced, at times normalised, and repeatedly resumed and reinforced.

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[9] This conservation is referred to by the British ambassador in Ankara Sir George Clerk in his telegraph of November 1926 to the British Foreign Office (commented and cited in Olson 1991, p.26. footnote 10.).

[10] The colonial logic that flows out of this assessment is running like a leitmotif throughout the history of colonial thinking which comes down to the point that tribes or colonised peoples cannot represent themselves.

[11] On 1 January 1928, the First Inspectorate General (*Birinci Umumi Müfettişlik*) was established, comprising the provinces of Bitlis, Diyarbakır, Van, Hakkari, Mus, Mardin, Urfa and Siirt, with Mahmut Tali Öngören as its first Inspector-General. The Second Inspectorates-General was established on February 19, 1934, covering the provinces of Kırklareli, Edirne, Tekirdağ and Çanakkale and Edirne as headquarters. On August 25, 1935, the Third Inspectorate-General was installed covering the provinces of Ağrı, Kars, Artvin, Rize, Trabzon, Gümüşhane, Erzincan, with Erzurum as headquarters. The Fourth Inspectorate-General was set up on June 6, 1936 that included Tunceli, Elazığ and Bingöl provinces with Elazığ as its centre.

[12]On conceptual variables see Nettl's article (1968). He offers to conceptualise state as conceptual variables for the sake of identifying "more or less stateness" in order to better examine consequences of different levels of stateness (cf. 1968, p. 591 ff.)

Integral colony is then referred to as entailing (i) ethnic domination, (ii) the politics of impunity, (iii) the politics of non-recognition, (iv) a political economy based on *de-development,[13] building state coercive capacity* and *elite co-optation.* While generating the systematic use of political violence, these features are referred to as foundational to the nation-states ruling over Kurdistan and as mechanisms that produce mass violence. Differences are then understood as ones of degree and not of kind.

The features indicated here shall be briefly explicated and related to each other. The first concept, *ethnic domination*, refers to the regimes of *control and coercion* mostly provided by the periodic deployment of martial law, state of emergencies and/or military rules and war-making. While in itself exceptional, the government of the integral colony is in many respects the very embodiment of "the colonial exception" (Chatterjee 2017, p. 90).[14] As such, it should either be calm and obeyable or must be silenced and governed by exceptional regimes of various forms. An integral colony cannot be governed other than by variant regimes of control and coercion as indicated by the "Inspectorates-General" (*Umûmî Müfettişlikler*) along with many other emergency regimes (see below). Given the frequency, recurrence, and durability of emergency regimes and use of violence in dealing with the question of Kurdistan, the political and administrative regimes of the states in question, as I have argued elsewhere, take the form of a dual state, that is, a "normative state" approach towards the dominant ethnicity and "prerogative state" approach against the Kurds and non-core minorities at large. Whilst the former is not entirely dismissive of the principles of democratic governance, the latter operates as an apparatus of domination that denies equal rights, recognition and protection by targeting the agency, identity, territorial and communal make-up of Kurdish society through deployment of special regimes and associated policies of assimilation, displacement and social and demographic engineering (Bezwan 2008b).[15]

This provides the institutional and ideological basis for the conduct of violence and the politics of impunity. By *politics of impunity*, I mean the lack of remedial justice mechanisms for addressing and redressing the injustices committed by the state and its officials. As such, impunity is part and parcel of state crimes at large, that is, a type of "criminality organized by the state [which] consists of acts defined by law as criminal and committed by state officials in the pursuit of their job as representatives of the state" (cited in Kramer 2016, p. 233; see also Green et al 2004, p. 2). State crime involves "an act or omission of an action by actors within the state that results in violations of domestic and international law, human rights, or

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[13] The concept of "de-development" was first coined by Sara Roy in an article on The Gaza Strip "defined as a process which undermines or weakens the ability of an economy to grow and expand by preventing it from accessing and utilizing critical inputs needed to promote internal growth beyond a specific structural level" (Roy 1987, p. 56). For the relevance of the concept of de-development in relation to the Kurdish regions see Yadırgi (2017, p. 58 ff), and to Iranian Kurdistan see Mohammadpour and Soleimani (2020, p. 4 ff).

[14] Chatterjee uses the term "imperial prerogative" to indicate colonial exception: "The imperial prerogative", he suggests, "is the power to declare the colonial exception" (Chatterjee 2017, p. 89). As underlined by Chatterjee's the government of a colony essentially consists of two kind of pedagogies, namely "a pedagogy of violence and a pedagogy of culture", so that "[T]colony must either be disciplined by force or educated ['civilized'] by culture" (Chatterjee 2017, p. 90).

[15] The concept of the dual state, conceptualised as the "Normative State" (*Normenstaat*) and "the Prerogative State" (*Maßnahmenstaat*), was first coined by Ernest Fraenkel. The former refers to the arbitrary and unbounded use of state powers and acts as "the jurisdiction over jurisdiction" (2017, p. 57), whereas the latter accounts for self-imposed restraints or some sort of government by law, especially in matters deemed lying outside the domain of the political or mainly related to the well-functioning of the economy (p. 71 ff.). By addressing this problem, Fraenkel's empirical focus was on Nazi Germany. But since the first publication of his book entitled The Dual State in 1941, many scholars, including the author of this paper, have referred to, expanded on, and modified it for the purposes of comparative analysis of authoritarian regimes with deceptively devised dual structures and hybrid features (Fraenkel 2017 (19941), p. 4ff.)

systematic or institutionalised harm of its or another state's population, done in the name of the state regardless of whether there is or is not self-motivation or interests at play" (Rothe & Kauzlarich 2016, p. 102).

As Das and Poole strikingly put it, drawing on Agamben, "law produces certain bodies as 'killable' because they are positioned by the law itself as prior to the institution of law" (2004, p.12). Impunity, then, is the mechanism that puts life in question by producing a category of eliminable lives, while refusing any remedial justice. As will be discussed below, an early example of how such impunity was explicitly legislated for was law No. 1850 - also known as a law on crimes committed in the zone of rebellion (cf McDowall 2017, p. 206) - which was passed in 1931 in response to a Kurdish insurgency, the *Ağrıdağı isyanı* (Mount Ararat resistance). Revealingly enough, this law has never been abolished and has been invoked as late as in the recent case of armed clashes between Turkish security forces and allegedly PKK-affiliated groups following the collapse of peace talks in the summer of 2015. As indicated by a UN-Report, some 2,000 people were killed during security operations from July 2015 to December 2016 in the Kurdistan region and over 355,000 were displaced (cf. UN-Report 2017. p. 5). During this period, the domestic protection of human rights in South-East Turkey, the UN-report maintains, "has effectively been non-functioning since at least July 2015" (UN-Report 2017, p. 3).[16]

The politics of *non-recognition* points to the denial of national and cultural rights, and refusal of their non-violent accommodation. Contrary to the official account that presents assimilation as a benevolent act, providing a kind of 'equal opportunity' for the inclusion into Turkishness, assimilation indeed contains an eliminatory dimension as it targets *a territorially concentrated population with explicit national aspirations, agential claims and qualities as well as a history of struggle for self-rule.* Given that, to paraphrase an idea formulated by Wolfe, assimilation can be a more effective form of elimination than conventional forms of killing (cf. Wolfe 2006, p. 402).

Predicated on geo-ethnically oriented territorial politics, the political economy of integral colonialism, except for moments of welfare state approaches during periods of reform, is essentially grounded in three dominant strategies. First, it is mainly concerned with building state coercive capacity.[17] Second, it involves the politics of de-development, designed for resource extraction and exploitation, combined with low levels of investment in social and economic infrastructure and human development, which has created abysmal disparities, inequalities and injustices in the use and allocation of vitally important resources and infrastructures in Kurdish regions, a policy which is particularly relevant, but not limited, to the Kurdish region. Finally, third, it entails co-optation, i.e., "the capacity to tie strategically relevant actors (or a group of actors) to the regime elite", which involves both formal institutions and informal ties mostly based on clientelism and patronage (Gerschewski 2013, p. 22 ff).

In the Kurdish case, co-optation mostly occurs through informal relations based on clientelism and patronage as opposed to democratic participation and just allocation of resources for much-needed public investments in social and economic infrastructure and reasonable development. Elite co-optation is thus intended to serve regime stability and deepen the proverbial intra-Kurdish division provided by the integral colonialist policies

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[16] See the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in February 2017.
[17] In recent literature, the concept of state capacity is taken to mean "extractive, coercive, and administrative capacity" (White 2018, p,130), which is built on the works of Skocpol (see also Skocpol 1985, p. 16) and Mann (2008, p. 355; see also 2012b, p.13).

presented above. As argued by Cunningham, states target internally divided movements by employing both a "divide and conquer" and "divide and concede" strategy, using concessions as strategic bargaining tools without settling the underlying dispute (2011, p. 295 ff.).

It goes beyond the scope of this article to analyse in any detail the relevance of the concept of integral colony for Kurdish regions across four states. Yet, framed as a dynamic and relational concept, the notion of integral colony may offer a better understanding of the common Kurdish predicament as an essentially integral colony, without failing to notice their asymmetrical level of development and different trajectories. For example, given the presence of the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG), Kurdistan/Iraq, one would reasonably assume that it would not fit into the category of integral colony. And yet, as the concerted political and military actions of Iran, Iraq and Turkey concerning the independence referendum in 2018 have clearly demonstrated, the KRG remains within the matrix of an integral colony. Both Kurdistan in Iran[18] and Kurdistan in Turkey are essentially governed as integral colonies, whereas Kurdistan n Syria lies somewhere in-between: between acquiring a status of its own and an eminent danger of being integrally recolonised, as indicated by the efforts of the Assad regime to recapture the control of the Kurdish region and the ongoing Turkish invasion and military campaigns.

Understood as a dynamic and relational socio-political concept, the concept of integral colony can cast light on many of the political, ideological, and status-related peculiarities and conundrums surrounding the question of Kurdistan, without neglecting the differences in the level of coloniality, and the ways in which the features presented above come together to inform the overall politics of each of the sovereign powers towards the Kurds. As such, the concept of integral colonialism may better explain why exceptional regimes have become, and remain, essential to the exercise of sovereign power in Kurdistan, and why they have been invoked at every critical juncture for long periods of time from the 1920s onwards up until today. *Second,* it helps make sense of the apparently inclusive and civic, yet deeply racialised and pronouncedly ethno-integralist ideological discourses of the states involved. *Third,* it offers an explanation as to why the Kurdish national communities across four 'host states' are depicted as an integral part of "the territorial and national integrity" of the states in question, while simultaneously portrayed as an existential threat *par excellence* to the very integrity they are supposed to be part of. *Fourth,* it allows us to identify the structural and ideological obstacles behind the notorious rejection of peaceful and negotiated forms of accommodation throughout the history of the four states.

Taken together, while rooted in *ethnic domination*, *non-recognition, impunity,* and a political economy based on *de-development*, *building state coercive capacity* and *elite co-optation*, integral colony provides institutional and ideological foundations for the conduct of state-organised violence against the Kurdish communities. Working from this frame of reference, this study will explain state violence as historically and causally related to the forced incorporation of Kurdistan by policies targeting the very stuff of which the historical, cultural, linguistic properties of the Kurdish community are assumed to consist of, as well as the socio-economic, demographic and political foundations on which the existence of the Kurds as a territorially concentrated national community is believed to be founded. The official ideology of the state

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[18] For Iranian Kurdistan see Vali (2020); Mohammadpour and Soleimani (2020). The latter authors define the Kurdish situation in Iran as an "internally colonised community by the sovereign Perso-Shi'a state" (2020. p. 1-13).

plays an important role in that. In what follows, I will consider this issue by focusing on the ways in which the Kurds have commonly been depicted by Turkish state discourse. The main features of this, however, can be found in the official discourses of the other 'host' states as well.

Ideology and Violence

Although the link between ideology and violence is open to different interpretations, there is a widely shared understanding on the justificatory function of ideology (cf. Maynard 2014, p. 822 ff.). Ideologies, it is argued, delimit legitimate in-groups and illegitimate out-groups (cf. Straus 2011, p.549). It is further argued that, although ideology in itself does not provide a sufficient explanation of atrocities, it supplies the perpetrators of violence with motivation, legitimation and rationalisation by labelling victims as dangerous threats or guilty criminals, while euphemistically reframing killing as "self-defence" or "serving the revolution" (cf. Maynard 2014, p. 825-829). It is quite safe to say that there is no single case in the history of political violence and mass killings where the use of violence was not preceded and /or accompanied by attempts at dehumanising and demonising the groups that were targeted.

For lack of a better term, I use "ideological violence" to indicate the whole range of discursive practices that are systematically deployed to hurt and harm members of an outgroup, and the cultural values that the individuals and communities view as constitutive of their identity. As such, it involves the intentional infliction of social harm to the out-group.[19] The term ideological violence is useful in so far as it directs our attention to the workings of ideologies and thus to the ways in which they are related to the use of mass violence.

As for the Kurdish context, ideological violence is taken to mean a wide range of discursive practices aimed at distorting, misrepresenting, dehumanising, and devaluing the communal existence, identity and rights of the Kurds. As such, it can be seen as composed of three main elements: narratives of *tribalism-banditry-backwardness*, *civilising mission,* and *toponymical engineering.* The accounts of tribalism-banditry-backwardness are leitmotifs which run through the whole edifice of the official state ideology around the Kurdish identity. The terms "backward", "bandit", "tribal" are employed with the aim of "the removal of the Kurdishness of the Kurdish question" (Yeğen 1999, p. 563). The state discourse does not misrepresent the Kurdish identity, rather, it enunciates it "in terms of reactionary politics, tribal resistance or regional backwardness, but never as an ethno-political question" (Yeğen 1996, p. 216 ff.). While lacking an analytical value, the concept of tribalism is "rooted in attempts to present colonial domination as a rational agent while ascribing irrationality to resisting forces" with a tendency towards delegitimising claims to equal treatment, rights and nationhood (Mohammadpour and Soleimani 2019, p. 17).

By building on narratives of tribalism-banditry-backwardness, the second salient aspect of ideological/epistemic violence can be described as a mission to 'civilise' the Kurds. In the early republican context, this colonial idea was framed as "the Kemalist civilising mission [which] involved the creation of a homogenous Turkish nation that urgently needed to rid itself of its 'Orientalness'" (Zeydanlıoğlu 2008, p. 5 ff.). This was invoked by the Kemalist

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[19] "The consequences of out-group devaluation" Verdeja points out, "can take many forms, ranging from the limitation of citizenship rights to systematic harassment, incarceration, or even expulsion. In its most extreme form, and with sufficient commitment and resources from the state, it can result in massacres, and ultimately in genocide. The stronger the devaluation, the more probable it becomes that members of the in-group will see violence as a legitimate response" (Verdeja 2012a, p. 315).

centre to construe the non-Turkish population of the eastern provinces "as primitive and inferior, fit for colonial rule by a Turkish master nation which operated in the name of progress and rationality" (Üngör 2008, p. 32).

The third element informing ideological violence can be described as a politics of "toponymical engineering" (Öktem 2008, p. 3.) which was achieved through the introduction of a policy by the Kemalist government which led to the Turkification of the names of thousands of villages and landforms (Kezer 2015, p. 144). This "renaming of place names" Öktem argues, "coincided with larger attempts at demographic engineering through ethnic cleansing and forced migration" (2008, p.5), and has been described as "reconquering Turkey through toponymic erasure" (Kezer 2015, p. 116). The toponymic erasure constitutes a common and recurrent feature of state expansion, whether within or outside territorial borders,[20] and is aimed at removing what would possibly bear testimony to the existence of targeted groups and their uprooting also in geographical terms.

The ideational features and institutional practices presented above are taken to constitute "ideological violence" grounded in the antithetical othering of an out-group and the justification of measures intended to target that group. In its relation to violence, the official state doctrine produces two major *intended consequences*: systemic production of *misrecognition* - defined as "a form of institutionalized subordination, and thus a serious violation of justice" which results in "status injury" (Fraser 2000 p. 114 ff; 2013, p. 177) - and *social harm* at both the individual and communal level (for a discussion on social harm see Pemberton 2015, 22-34 ff.).

One important function of the state discourse on the Kurds has been to negate the Kurdish communal existence in its national and territorial dimensions by simultaneously enacting policies that precisely aim to suppress that which has been fiercely denied. This marks the points at which state ideological discourse turns into ideological violence insofar as it lowers the threshold and/or prepares the ground for the use of violence in more tangible, direct and destructive ways. The workings of ideology presented above will become clearer when considering the cases of state-organised mass violence.

The Use of Ethnocidal Violence

This section addresses two cases of mass violence as instances of ethnocidal violence, namely *Koçgiri*, the first Kurdish uprising before the inception of the Turkish republic in 1923, and the 1925 Sheikh Said rebellion, the first uprising following the establishment of the republican regime. In both cases, the quest for self-rule was met with mass violence, which targeted the leadership as well as the communal existence of Kurdish society.

The case of Koçgiri (1920-1921)

If we locate the major cases of state-organised mass violence targeting the Kurds at the intersection of regime formation, nation-building, and the institution of direct rule over the Kurdish-populated areas, the case of *Koçgiri*, an essentially Alevi Kurdish uprising in the *Koçgiri* region, constitutes a major event involving the politics of incorporation by communal destruction.

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[20] On motives and meaning of Turkification of geographical names in the context of partition of Cyprus island in 1974 (see Navaro 2012, p. 6).

The *Koçgiri* resistance provides a paradigmatic example of non-compliance to the imposed rule by the emerging Kemalist movement in the process of the dissolution of the Ottoman state, and a genuine expression of self-determination. Motivated by the quest for self-government and international agreements such as Treaty of Sevres (10 August 1920), in which an autonomous Kurdistan was stipulated, the uprising was launched in the wider Dersim (present day Tunceli) region in November 1920. As observed by Olson & Rumbold., by July and August 1920, the Kurds were attacking Turkish ammunition shipments, police stations, and military convoys (cf. Olson et al. 1989 p. 40 ff). On 15 November 1920, a five-point declaration was sent to the Kemalist government in Ankara, which included two principle demands: to stop the practices of forced incorporation and to recognise Kurdish demands for self-rule (Olson et al. 1989, p. 43).[21] Whilst the government responded by claiming that it was in agreement with these demands, this was little more than an "effort to buy time", as it simultaneously sent further troops to Sivas (ibid.). Finally, following an armed confrontation in December 1920, when a director of a local post office was assassinated, clashes between the Kemalists and the Kurds began in February 1921, which led to the declaration of martial law in the region on 11 March 1921.

According to a report dated May 31, 1921, which was conducted by the Sivas governor Tepeyran "132 villages were burned and devastated, hundreds of people killed, their goods and livestock plundered, and that many villagers, frightened by the repression, took refuge in the mountains, where they died of starvation and misery. Tepeyran harshly criticised the killing of numerous people, including innocents" (Massicard 2009, online edition).[22]

Reliable estimates on the total number of Kurdish civilians murdered by the military campaigns are lacking. Nevertheless, we can glean some reliable information from a parliamentary commission of inquiry (*Koçgiri Tahkikat Heyeti*) that was setup to investigate the atrocities, mainly at the demand of the Kurdish members of the General Assembly. The commission drew up a report on the situation, which is still prevented from public access, in which the dimensions of mass killing are explained in plain terms. According to the commission's report, 1703 Kurdish households and 107 villages were completely destroyed by the military and paramilitary forces involved in the campaign. More than 1000 combatants were killed during the clashes and many women were raped. Soldiers were officially instructed to take possession of the whole properties, from livelihood to livestock to the valuables of the Kurds living in the region of insurgency (cf. Kizildag-Soileau 2018, p. 228 -232)

The report also made the recommendation that two key executors of the mass violence, *Nurettin Paşa,* the army commander responsible, along with the commander of the paramilitary forces *Topal Osman*, be brought to justice because of the atrocities they committed. This did not happen, not least because Mustafa Kemal himself took them under his protection, promoting Nurettin Paşa to the Supreme Military Council and later to the position of member

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[21] "I) The Ankara government should state whether or not it accepted officially the promise of Kurdish autonomy as agreed by the Sultan's government in Istanbul. 2) The Ankara government should inform the leaders of the Dersim who wrote the declaration of their attitude towards the administration of an autonomous Kurdistan. 3) All of the Kurdish prisoners in jail at Elaziz, Malatya, Sivas and Erzincan should be freed. 4) Turkish officials must be withdrawn from all areas with a Kurdish majority. 5) The Turkish military forces sent to the Koçgiri region should be withdrawn
 (cited in Olson et al. 1989, p. 43).
[22] www.sciencespo.fr/mass-violence-war-massacre-resistance/en/document/repression-koa-giri-rebellion-1920-1921.html accessed on 25, August 2019.

of parliament (1923), and installing Topal Osman as the first aide-de-camp (bodyguard) of the president (cf. Kizildag-Soileau2018).

The Koçgiri case constitutes the first major instance of mass violence under the emerging Kemalist rule before the inception of the republican regime in 1923. What makes this case striking is the coloniality of violence at the intersection of an emerging regime, and its attempts to expand state sovereignty into the Kurdish region by the use of mass violence. Amid promises of the recognition of cultural and political rights, Kurdish aspirations for self-government were met with violence by the Kemalist regime. This marked the onset of what in this study is referred to as the politics of *incorporation by nation-destruction*. Revealingly, this politics did not end with the termination of the uprising, as one would have expected. Rather, this pattern of violence, namely the dismantling of the leadership in combination with the use of exemplary repression, was significantly amplified both in scope and intensity when the first major instance of Kurdish resistance to the Kemalist republican regime occurred just two years after the inception of the Turkish republic in 1923.

The 1925 Sheikh Said Rebellion

As indicated above, after Turkish sovereignty over substantial portions of the Kurdish inhabited territories was secured by the treaty of Lausanne (1923), a politics of domination and denial ensued. There was, as observed by historian Olson, "no mention of Kurdistan and Kurds in the treaty of Lausanne" (Olson 1991, p. 30 ff.). Once endowed with sovereignty, the Kemalist regime rigorously began to impose direct rule over Kurdistan in the 1920s. During this period, the *politics of incorporation by nation-destruction* became the prevalent mode of managing the conflict and an essential part of Turkish nation-building.

This state of affairs provoked a broad-based resistance initiated by an alliance of Kurdish intellectuals, officers, civil servants, and clergy under the leadership of Sheikh Said (Üngör 2008, p. 29). On 4 March 1925, the government enacted an extraordinary law, the Law on the Maintenance of Order (*Takrir-i Sükûn Kanunu*) which went far beyond counterinsurgency measures. It conferred on the government "virtually absolute powers for the next two years, powers which were renewed until they were no longer necessary and were finally allowed to expire on 4 March 1929" (Ahmad 2003, p. 58). The government banned activities of any organisation, and any publications deemed to cause disturbance to law and order (Zürcher 2017, p. 172). The emergency regime initiated a period of violence targeting both the Kurdish insurgency, and Turkish opposition. Indeed, opposition across the entire political spectrum was effectively silenced with the closure of leftist, liberal, and conservative parties and the prohibition of any dissenting newspapers and periodicals (Üngör 2011 p. 21).

The outbreak of the rebellion entailed an element of calculated provocation by the Ankara government, probably with the intention to precipitate the rebellion at a premature stage. On 8 February 1925, a clash took place in Piran in the province of Diyarbekir when Turkish gendarmes attempted to arrest a group of outlaws who had sought the Sheikh's protection. Considering this an insult against his dignity and authority, the Sheikh refused to hand them over. At the gendarmes' insistence, a fight ensued whereby two soldiers were wounded, and one was killed. This peculiar event marked the start of the rebellion (McDowall 2017, p. 194 ff, Ozsoy 2013, p. 197 ff.). In response, Ankara mobilised some 50,000 soldiers and spent nearly a third of its annual budget while negotiating "with the French authorities to gain use of the southern railways, in order to suppress the revolt" (Bozarslan 2008, p. 339 ff).

After an initial success in taking control of some areas, including some important cities, the rebellion was crushed in April 1925 followed by the arrest of Sheikh Said and the leading figures of the movement. On June 29, he and forty-six of his leading cadres were sentenced to death and were hanged the next day (Olson 1978 et al p. 205). The dead bodies of Sheikh Said and his associates were then unceremoniously thrown in a ditch which was then filled with concrete and dirt (Ozsoy 2013, p. 192). In order to prevent his grave becoming a shrine, or a locus of memory and identification, its exact location was never disclosed and remains a mystery to this day.

The death penalties were ruled by the so-called "Independence Tribunal", which was specifically designed for the Kurdish region – the Law on the Maintenance of Order established two tribunals, one for Kurdistan, called "East Independence Tribunal", the other for the rest of the country (McDowall 2017, p. 192). These tribunals were endowed with full powers of life and death, replaced the military courts, and carried out the martial-law decrees (cf. Olson et al. 1978, p. 203).

As observed by Elizabeth Kolsky in the case of British India, colonial rule tends to develop an "unequal system of law" that combines lawfulness with lawlessness with the aim of providing the colonial masters with impunity (2010, p. 30; also p. 231.). Indeed, once stripped of its normative contents and disconnected from the justice, the law may well become an instrument of coercion and terror. This is what exactly happened with the Law on the Maintenance of Order and 'the East Independence Tribunal'.

During the insurgency an almost "genocidal state of mind" took shape in Ankara (McDowall 2017, p.200). As McDowall notes, the revolt "marked the beginning of 'implacable Kemalism' [whereby] systematic deportation and razing of villages, brutality and killing of innocents, martial law or special regimes in Kurdistan became the commonplace experience of Kurds whenever they defied the state" (McDowall 2017, p.198). Yet, as with every major historical event involving mass atrocities and state crimes in Turkey, there are either no documents available or the existing ones are only selectively accessible to the researchers, if not forbidden altogether. Given the fact that even the information on the exact location of the Sheikh's grave has been withheld to today – despite the continuous efforts by his family members and the wider Kurdish constituencies, it is only logical that the data on the atrocities committed are missing or lacking. However, according to the Kurdish sources compiled by McDowall, "in the winter of 1926-27, 200 villages with a population of 13,000 were razed, while in the whole period 1925-28 almost 10,000 dwellings were razed, over 15,000 people massacred, and more than half a million deported of whom some 200,000 were estimated to have perished" (2017, p 200). According to another Kurdish account, altogether 206 villages had been destroyed, 8758 houses burnt, and 15,200 people killed (see Ungör 2012, p. 129).

Following the destruction of the resistance movement, on 8 September 1925, Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) authorised the creation of the Reform Council for the East (*Şark Islahat Encümanı)* to devise policies to deal with, once and for all, any potential separatist threat (Üngör 2008, p.

29; Yadirgi 2019, p. 143). The final report approved by parliament on September 24, 1925, "was nothing short of a radical expansion of existing Young Turk fantasies and methods of social engineering", with one of the leading members of the council, Cemil Uybadın, explicitly defining the approach adopted as a "colonial administrative method" (cf. Üngör 2008, p. 30).[23]

Indeed, the types of policies recommended in this and similar reports can best be termed as a "Turkish colonial archive" involving security, displacement and reform technologies of rule (on the notion of colonial archive see Stoler 2017, p.52 ff). Once established, "the knowledge accumulated in the colonial archive could and indeed was activated in different geographical areas closer to 'home'" (Bloxham & Gerwarth. 2011, p. 19).

On the whole, with their logic of reform, security and emergency, the Law on the Maintenance of Order along with the East Independence Tribunal and the Eastern Reform Plan set forth the parameters in terms of which the successive Turkish governments have shaped their policies and practices vis a-vis Kurdish movements and Kurdish society. It has thus provided the governments with what can best be called as a *paradigm of colonial exception* that has been invoked at every critical juncture up until today. Relatedly, it inaugurated a period of political warfare in dealing with the Kurdish issue, a process that is still ongoing. As stated by Dierk Walter in the context of European colonial politics, political warfare was justified by the colonial powers under the guise of counterinsurgency and was "designed to facilitate a military solution to a political problem - namely the imposition of foreign rule" (2017, p. 108). All that meant a more aggressive and coercive phase of incorporation of the Kurdish regions into the Turkish "national body".

Put differently, while laying down the ideological and institutional framework for the conduct of mass violence, the Law with its accompanying measures set in motion a period of political warfare, an increase in colonial policing, and a rigorous imposition of a *one-party state* with Mustafa Kemal as eternal leader. The combined effects of these events manifested themselves in the relentless imposition of direct rule in Kurdistan - now more explicitly framed and accompanied by the politics of incorporation by nation-destruction. It is to this politics and its devastating outcomes that I turn in the next section.

The Use of Genocidal Violence

In recent decades, there has been an increased emphasis on the politics of nation-building and its relations with political violence including genocidal violence (cf. Biberman & Castellano 2018. p. 107 ff, Verdeja 2012b, p. 83 ff.). Drawing on scholarly insights, I use genocidal violence to indicate the selective, partial, or wholesale extermination of a group.[24] As will be

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[23] This confidential report alongside with many others were compiled and commented by Mehmet Bayrak in a series of publications which are of crucial importance for understanding the nature of Turkish politics towards the Kurds (for a summary see Yadirgi 2019, p.143).

[24] This distinction between partial and total genocide, while indicated in the UN-Genocide convention, was first introduced by Robert Melson. Referring to "the intentional destruction, in whole or in part, of a national, ethnical, racial or religious group", as provided by Article 1 of the UN-genocide convention of 1948. Robert Melson suggests that the distinction rests both on the physical and cultural dimensions of group destruction. "If *total genocide* implies (a) the extermination of a group, or (b) the mass murder of larger faction of its member together with the destruction of its cultural and social identity, then *partial genocide* is less drastic. It stops short of intending the total extermination of the members of groups, and, though it may affect the identity of a group in some dimensions, it does not attempt to destroy completely its cultural and social identity in all of its aspects" (Melson 1992, p. 29). „Partial genocide" Melson concludes, "means to use mass murder in order to coerce and to alter the identity and the politics of group, not to destroy it" (Melson 1996, p. 28). In the same vein, Melson refers to atrocities in Iraqi Kurdistan and Bosnian as cases of partial genocide (cf. 1996, p. 166 ff.).

argued below, in the Kurdish context, genocidal violence is enacted as a cumulative process which arises from the logic, contingencies and exigencies of regime formation and consolidation on the one hand, and the imposition of direct rule on the Kurdish regions on the other.

One crucial development in this process was the establishment of the regime of the Inspectorates-General (*Umumî Müfettişlikler*, 1927-1952). These inspectorates were established as "regional governorships whose authority prevailed over all civilian, military, and judicial institutions under their domain" (Çağaptay, 2006, p. 47). The official justification for the establishment of these regimes "was to divide the country into large regions" in order to "optimize the country's administration by decreasing the numbers of provinces" (ibid.). Approved by parliament in June 1927, the First Inspectorate-General (*Birinci Umumi Müfettişlik*) was then put into praxis in the Kurdish region in January 1928. The Inspectorates-General can be seen as a paradigmatic example of regimes of coercion and control (see Bozarslan 2008, p. 242; Kocak 2003; Bezwan 2008b, p. 276 ff; Üngör 2012, p. 134 ff.). For more than three decades, the Inspectorates-General would become the primary structure of dominance over Kurdistan, providing the institutional form through which the politics of incorporation *by communal-destruction* would be executed.

One important feature of these truly colonial techniques of rule has been an ethnically classified racialised territorial politics. Put differently, these inspectorates were only established in regions without Turkish majorities, that is, in territories that were either predominantly inhabited by the Kurds or having substantial portions of non-Turkish and/or non-Muslim minorities.[25] Unsurprisingly, many of the inspectors-general along with the inner circle of the Kemalist regime had their background in the CUP (Committee for Union and Progress), with some of them having served as members of the "Special Organisation" *(Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa)*, the primary executor of the Armenian genocide. With this ruling elite now firmly at the helm of state power without any significant internal or external constraints, the use of political violence became more and more genocidal.

The case of Zilan

The ever-increasing policies and practices of denial, domination and destruction once more led to further resistance in 1930 called *Ağrıdağı isyanı* (Mount Ararat resistance). Again, on the pretext of crushing the insurgency, the Turkish military conducted an extensive military campaign on the Zilan Plain in August 1930 (McDowall 2017, p. 204 ff.). As a result, tens of thousands of civilians were killed, the region was almost completely destroyed and depopulated with any resettlement banned until the 1980s (Ulugana 2010, p 80 ff). According to the semi-official media outlet Cumhuriyet, 15,000 "bandits", mostly civilians were eliminated (cf. Ulugana 2010, p. 142ff.).

One year after the atrocities, on 20 July 1931, a law (No. 1850) was enacted by the Kemalist government expressly legislating impunity, thus exempting the perpetrators of mass killing from any investigation (McDowall 2017, p. 206). Accordingly, any acts that were committed during the response to the insurgency between 20 June 1930 and 1 December 1930 were

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[25] For example, the 1934 pogrom in Thrace targeting the Jewish community was executed under this regime with Ibrahim Tali Öngören as the inspector-general, assuming powers "including supreme command of the police, military forces and gendarmerie" (Bayraktar 2006, p. 101; Kezer 2015, p. 114).

simply not classed as crimes (cf. McDowall 2017, p. 206; Bulut 2015, p. 106). As indicated above, this law has never been abolished.

The infamous statement made on 18 September 1930 by the then Minister of Justice, Mahmut Esad Bozkurt, is as much revealing as it was symptomatic of the official understanding of the politics of ethnic dominance, denial and destruction at work during that time: *"It is my opinion, my belief that this country in its inner self is Turkish. Whoever is not authentically Turkish has only one single right in the land of Turks and that is to be a servant, a slave"* (cited in Ergil 2013).

The mass violence in Zilan, and the way it was executed, foreshadowed a significant change in the cumulative use of violence, extending its scope beyond the destruction of leaders and exemplary repression. It marked a shift from ethnocidal violence to genocidal violence as it involved the "selective extermination" of the population of a whole area.

One critical juncture in this genocidal process was the *Law on Deportation/Settlement* of 1934, which allowed for the mass deportation of entire categories of peoples, with the Kurds as the main target (cf. Bezwan 2008b, Üngör 2008). The deportations and resettlements were implemented according to racial criteria as expressly set forth in Article 7 of this law which states: "'those immigrants who belong to the Turkish race' might settle wherever they wished, whereas 'immigrants who do not belong to the Turkish race had to settle as instructed by the government" (quoted in Jongerden 2007, p. 175 ff; Çağaptay 2006, p. 72). The 1934 Settlement Act was not only an instrument to quell insurrection in the Kurdistan region, but "part of a larger, positive objective of creating a homeland of the Turks" (Jongerden 2007, p. 174).

This deportation and depopulation of large areas by using ethnic classification and a racially hierarchised yardstick, the Law on Settlement indeed presents a paradigmatic example of a "right-peopling" by deportation and demographic engineering (cf. O'Leary 2004, p. 29-34 ff). By targeting non-Turkish communities, it further reinforced the unequivocally racist territorial politics of the "Inspectorates-General" regime. Not surprisingly, this law came into being at a time when the consolidation of the Kemalist regime was at its zenith. The Republican People's Party, historian Zürcher observes, "had established a power monopoly and, at the party congress of 1931, Turkey's political system was officially declared to be that of a one-party state" (2017, p. 177). Indeed, as scholar of nationalism Hans Kohn notes, the entire power of the state was vested in the President Mustafa Kemal alone (Kohn 1933, p. 143.). Such were the circumstances when the Dersim region was targeted.

Dersim

If the mass killing in the Koçgiri region was located at the onset of the emerging Kemalist regime, the targeting of Dersim coincided with a time when regime consolidation was at its zenith. The concentration of power in the hands of a ruling elite, in the form of a one-party state without any effective counter forces was compounded by an increasingly expedient international environment due to the rise of fascist movements and regimes across Europe and elsewhere. This provided the rulers with an extremely propitious internal and external environment which was used to intensify state expansion and nation-building, if necessary, by communal destruction.

The process of targeting Dersim - a mountainous region, which had, according to official estimates in the 1930s, a total population of nearly 80,000 (cf. Kieser, 2012 online Dersim

Massacre, 2011) - lasted several years, and went through many stages with ever increasing levels of violence. By 1935, a "reform plan" entitled *Dersim Islahatı* was adopted, predicated on a combination of military intervention and social engineering (cf. Türkyılmaz 2016, p. 164 ff.). On December 25, 1935, Parliament approved the Law for the Creation of Tunceli (Law 2884), a sweeping "package of reforms that placed Dersim under a newly created Fourth Inspectorate headed by a governor-general with absolute administrative and legal authority" (Watts 2000, p. 15).

Whilst Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) declared in parliament in November 1936 that Dersim was Turkey's most important internal problem, a number of statements made by other senior figures in the Kemalist regime made clear how they viewed, and intended to deal with, this problem. For example, according to the then Turkish General Staff Marshall Fevzi Çakmak "Dersim could not be won over by compassion but had to be treated as a *Dahili Koloni* [Internal Colony]" (Türkyılmaz 2016, p.170), and perhaps more explicitly Minister of the Interior Şükrü Kaya described the region as a 'disease' which required 'radical treatment' (cf. Levene 2013, p. 17). Revealingly, the military campaigns in Dersim were preceded by "the construction of roads and bridges, and of police posts and government mansions in every large village" (Bruinessen 1994, p. 13). These infrastructural measures were accompanied by "a more systematic program of Turkification that would better incorporate Dersim's inhabitants into the fabric of the new nation and reduce the cultural power of the local leadership" (Watts 2000, p. 16). The Secret Decision of the Council of Ministers on the Punitive Expedition to Dersim of 4 May 1937 even spoke of "a final solution to the perpetual rebellions in Dersim" (van Bruinessen 1994, p.8).

The mass killing proceeded in two main stages. The first military campaign (*Tunceli Harekatı*) officially began on 21 March and ended 22 September 1937, whereas the second (described by the regime as a "disciplinary campaign" or *tedip harekâtı*) lasted from the 1st of June until the end of August 1938. During the first campaign in spring 1937, the violence mainly targeted armed groups, whereas with the campaign of summer 1938 massive violence was employed against the whole population (Kieser, 2012 online Dersim Massacre, 1937-1938; 2011). This represented "something new to the 1930s: the desire and the (perceived) ability to eradicate local power structures from the ground up" (Watts 2000, p. 25). Strikingly, the most lethal violence was executed in the absence of any significant insurgency – notably after Seyid Riza, the leader of the insurgency, along with his son and five other leaders, were hanged on 18 November 1937 (cf. Aslan 2018, p. 108).

There is still an ongoing debate about the total number of people that were exterminated and deported, as the relevant official documents remain largely inaccessible. According to official sources 5,000 to 8,000 people were killed, whereas critical sources indicate that almost up to 30,000 people were massacred (cf. Boyraz and Turam 2016, p. 411; Aslan & Osztovics 2018, p. 29 ff.). Citing military sources, Watts indicates that in the space of just 17 days during the second campaign, "Turkish armed forces had removed 7,954 people 'dead or alive' (*ölü veya diri*) from the affected regions", adding that "more than 3,500 people were forced into internal exile in other parts of the country [with] the remaining population ... left under the supervision of "nine new barracks, eight new military posts, five administrative office buildings, and 92 official houses"" (Watts 2000, p. 27).

Scholars have provided a number of different explanations for the mass violence in Dersim. Besikçi was the first who qualified the mass killing in Dersim as genocide which was motivated by the imposition of a colonialist regime upon the Dersim region as a part of a wider carve-up, and colonisation of Kurdistan (Beşikçi 1990, p. 67 ff.). Van Bruinessen in turn has described the Dersim campaign as "a deliberate intent to destroy rebels and potential rebels, and this was part of a general policy directed toward the Kurds as such. But this policy is more appropriately termed ethnocide, the destruction of Kurdish ethnic identity" (Bruinnessen 1994, p. 8).

Watts views the Dersim massacre as a "particular response to a new phase of intense Turkish "statification" that began in the early 1930s with an internally expansionary state seeking more "integrated domination"' (Watts 2000, p. 8). For Yüksel, it "highlights the ability of institutional and geographical setting to shape repertoires of state coercion. When a particular form of state ideology interacts with a particular form of institutional and geographical setting, the consequences can be inconceivably devastating" (2008, p.37).

Genocide scholar Levene has characterised the genocidal assault on Dersim as the final action in a particular anti-Kurdish sequence (2013, p.2), arguing that it represents a "colonial-style military massacre" with campaigns that made "no discrimination at all between combatants and non-combatants" (Levene 2013, p.14). As with many cases of genocide, the aim was not necessarily to kill "until every last one of them was dead but certainly until their ability to be viable as an ongoing and independent community had been extinguished" (Levene 2013, p.14). Compared to the Armenian genocide in 1915, "the genocide perpetrated against the Turkish Kurds of the Dersim area in 1936 was essentially partial and local" (Levene 2005, p. 203). The point, he maintains, is not to promote a hierarchy of suffering but simply to remind that genocides are not all the same in scope or scale (ibid.).

Dersim was perceived as the ultimate test for finalising the state formation and expansion by creating a homogeneous, unitary and ethno-integralist Turkish nation. It was depicted as the last portion of an 'unruly' and 'uncivilised' land to be conquered and ruled over at any price, ultimately through the use of genocidal violence. With this genocide, Kurdistan was finally conquered. The politics of incorporation by nation-destruction, which have been identified as a key mechanism of the state-organised violence, seemed to have achieved its goals. Kurdistan was, as it were, condemned to be ruled as an integral colony.

Conclusions and Discussion

This study has set out to develop a conceptual framework for identifying the origins, driving forces, and mechanisms of violence in Kurdistan by relating state violence to the partition of the predominantly Kurdish inhabited territories in the 1920s, their forced incorporation under the sovereignty of newly founded states, and the nature of direct rule established in Kurdistan, while locating both violence and direct rule in the broad context of the Turkish politics of state expansion and nation-building. Where the imperatives of creating a homogeneous nation-state and the political opportunity structures at the domestic and international levels coincided, the use of violence took the most vicious form. The more expedient the internal and external circumstances for crushing the uprisings were, the more rigorous the policies and the more destructive the outcomes.

To more precisely capture the objectives of, and variations in, the use of state violence, I have then desegregated the colonial violence into ideological, ethnocidal, and genocidal violence, arguing that these forms of state organised violence correspond to public policies of negation, assimilation, and elimination that have to varying degrees been targeting the Kurds throughout their modern history. This framework has proved to be instructive in identifying the objectives of violence and its variations over time in connection with special regimes of domination and wider state policies targeting the Kurdish society.

One key insight of this study is that neither the origins and nature nor the causes, recurrence and durability of state-organised violence can properly be understood without understanding the coloniality of order and violence in relation to the Kurds and Kurdistan. To further elaborate on this point, I then argued that the Turkish state expansion and nation-building was enforced through the *colonial incorporation* of Kurdistan into the Turkish body politic, turning Kurdish areas into an *integral colony* to be governed, if deemed necessary, by the use of state-organised violence alongside periodic deployment of variant regimes of control and coercion with impunity for serious human rights violations and atrocities.

I have outlined the concepts of *integral colony,* defined its key characteristics and indicated its heuristic value for the study of state violence, ideology, order, politics and conflict in relation to the Kurds. As a dynamic and relational frame of reference, the concepts of integral colony and colonisation I have referred to above entail the politics of *ethnic domination*, *non-recognition*, *impunity,* and a political economy based on *de-development*, *building state coercive capacity* and *elite co-optation*.

Certainly, we need more comprehensive and comparative studies in order to reach a deeper understanding of the cases of genocidal violence against the Kurdish communities. To this end, it is essential to study the peculiarities of the cases of interest, their contextual and structural conditions, the pattern of relations between perpetrators and victims, the role of ideologies, the spatio-temporal dynamics of genocidal processes as well as differences in the execution and outcomes of each instance of genocide (cf. Levene 2005, p. 67; Verdeja 2012a, p. 314; Straus 2012, p. 551 ff.; Harff and Gurr 1988, p. 360 ff.).

While relating the emergence, recurrence and durability of violence to the colonialist nature of sovereign power in Kurdistan, further research is needed to highlight the role of elite co-optation, internal division, geographical setting as well as the type and level of organization on the part of the Kurds. Based on the insights drawn from the present analysis, the following points deserves a particular emphasis: First, the instances of genocidal violence in Kurdistan provide strong evidence that no boundary can be drawn between ethnocidal and genocidal violence and that the shift from the destruction of ethnic identity to *selective extermination* easily occurs provided that internal and external circumstances are favourable.[26] As Bellamy notes, "[g]enocide and mass atrocities persist partly because perpetrators continue to believe that they can justify such killings to themselves and get away with the violation of shared norms by offering justifications that help to secure sufficient legitimacy" (Bellamy 2012, p. 180). Second, the Kurdish case highlights the importance of an approach that focuses on spatial and temporal dynamics and thereby understands genocide as the outcome of a dynamic

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[26] Space constraints do not allow to consider the instances of genocidal campaigns in Kurdistan, but suffice it to say that the pattern of selective extermination is evident in all cases of genocidal campaigns in Kurdistan, from Zilan to Dersim to Anfal (Hardi 2011; Ihsan 2017, p. 122 ff.) to Halabja (Ihsan 2017, p. 126 ff.) to Shingal as the most recent case of genocide committed against the Ezidi-Kurdish community in 2014.

process of decision-making and as a "complex systems-based phenomenon that unfolds slowly" and does "not follow one particular developmental path" (Rosenberg et al. 2016, p. 6). Finally, the concept of "genocide by attrition" seems to be particularly relevant to the Kurdish situation, as it indicates "the slow and complex process of annihilation that reflects the unfolding phenomenon of mass murder of a targeted group, rather than the immediate unleashing of violence and death" (ibid.). One implication of this analysis is that the scourge of genocidal violence remains critically relevant to Kurdish society.

In view of the tragic history presented in this study, and the current Turkish military campaigns at home and abroad, it is clear that what is needed is a negotiated and internationally supported resolution that would help overcome this century-old politics of non-recognition, forced assimilation, and selective extermination by anchoring the cultural and political rights of the Kurdish population, and by addressing their aspiration for democratic self-government within a democratic and pluralistic framework.

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