



# Interrogating the tribal: the aporia of ‘tribalism’ in the sociological study of the Middle East

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## Abstract

In this paper, we intend to deconstruct the term ‘tribalism’ as a colonial category, which figures as a prominent concept in social studies on Kurds as well as the Middle East at large. Blithely used, tribalism has occupied a central place, especially in the existing scholarship on Kurdistan. Some earlier anthropological works have gone so far as to regard tribalism as the ‘DNA’ of Middle Eastern people. Drawing on recent studies on Latin America, Africa and Central Asia, we argue that the use of tribalism as if it is the natural constitution of Kurdish society has caused a significant misrepresentation and oversimplification of socio-political life in Kurdistan as well as the broader Middle East. In a way, the existing body of scholarship on this region has reproduced statist-nationalist discourses at the expense of dominated communities (e.g., Kurds). The historical context of both colonial powers and nation-states ‘combating tribes and tribalism’ coincided with the emergence of the discourse of racial biopolitics. Thus, the use of the term tribalism to define certain nations or ethnic groups should not be viewed as merely an application of socio-anthropological categories. Hence, we argue that the ethical aspects and implications of the use of tribalism by both colonial powers and later by the nation-state to define certain ethnic groups must not be overlooked.

**Keywords:** Kurdistan; tribalism; tribal; nationalism; colonialism; Middle East

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## Introduction

Scholars have defined tribalism in several ways: tribalism has alternately been described as a quasi-biologized principle of social organization (Lentz 1995: 317), political coalitions (Barth 1953), ethnic or kin-based identities (Jabar 2003: 75; Charrad 2011: 49), or localized groups (Tapper 1983: 4). Aside from their generality and lack of a precise definition, these viewpoints do not delve

into the phenomenon at hand, and fail to question the colonial application of the term. Conversely, we argue that without taking a deconstructive approach in examining the historical creation of this notion and illuminating the ways socio-political actors have evoked, performed and negotiated the term, any universally applicable definition of 'tribe' becomes problematic, if not impossible. A cursory examination of existing definitions provides evidence for our claim. For example, Jabar (2003: 76) defines tribes as 'the oldest, most enduring social entity in the Middle East', and yet he claims that 'tribe' is also the most polemical entity, thus neutralizing any meaningful attempt at definition (*ibid.*). Similarly, Asfura-Heim's (2008: 3) working definition of 'tribe' in the context of Iraq exemplifies how he takes the term as self-evident when he describes tribes as rural-urban hybrids held together by kinship ties (real or fictitious), patron-client relationships, and a set of shared customs. Thus, even in mainstream social science, not only is such a description exceedingly opaque but also obtrusive, as it could equally utilize concepts such as clan, ethnicity or bandits (cf. Schermerhorn 1970; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Smith 1991; Hutchinson and Smith 1996; Eriksen 2010 for definitions of ethnicity).<sup>1</sup> The mere declaration of a certain group of people as tribal, usually erases the group's diversity and locates it in a particular place in hegemonic civilizational discourse.

Tribalism occupies a central place in the history of Eurocentric social theory and can be considered as one of the most invoked concepts by social scientists working on Middle Eastern areas such as Kurdistan (Leach 1940, Barth 1953; Tapper 1983; McDowall 1988, 1992; van Bruinessen 1991; Yaphe 2000; van Bruinessen 2002; Kennedy 2015; Ross and Mohammadpur 2016; Tugdar and Al 2018). It is occasionally used to explain the failure of statehood (van Bruinessen 1992; Bozarslan 2006; Tahiri 2007; Stansfield 2010), as the apparatus of state manipulation (Cleveland and Bunton 2012; Mansfield 2013; Stancati 2010; Carroll 2011; Erkmén 2012; Radcliffe and Westwood 1996; Dunkerley 2002; Centeno 2003; Saylor 2014; Salzman 2008; Rowland 2009; Dukhan 2014; Ortega 2009; Carroll 2011), or as impediment to state-building in the contemporary Middle East (Rowland 2009; Dukhan 2014; Ortega 2009; Anca 2012; Jabar 1999; Carroll 2011; King 2013). Along with its centrality in understanding Middle Eastern politics, tribalism is usually assumed to be a personal characteristic that some anthropologists have even called the DNA of Middle Eastern people (Salzman 2008: 1).<sup>2</sup> Others have used phrases like the 'return to tribalism' (Rowland 2009: 28), the 'resilience of tribes' (Dukhan 2014: 1) in Middle Eastern politics, emerging 'modern tribalism' (Ortega 2009: 1), 'neo-tribalism' (Anca 2012: xxii), or 'statist tribes' (Jabar 1999, cited in Kennedy 2015: 11). In some instances, tribalism has been regarded as either a premodern hindrance to the formation of the modern state or as a force filling the vacuum left by it (Carroll 2011: 11). Social scientists have conjured up the concept of 'tribe' as a mere independent variable, a toolkit that substitutes

for an explanation (Hymes 1968). As a result, despite its centrality to existing studies and its universal application, it remains unexplained.

In our study, rather than studying *tribalism* as abstract, we suggest that tribalism is forged, regulated and applied by colonial powers to oversimplify the multi-faceted modality of diverse and heterogeneous socio-political arrangements. The application of such a regulative concept can be understood only through a deconstructive attempt in the study of its conceptual and empirical constituents in relation to Kurdish as well as surrounding cultures. In contrast to mainstream social theory, which tends to ask whether tribalism creates an obstacle or facilitates the nation-state, our aim is to identify the conceptual challenges and empirical deficiencies of this term that reduce a vast variety of social forms of organization to a single entity with recognizable universal characteristics. Drawing on recent studies on Latin America, Africa and Central Asia, we seek to demonstrate the colonial roots of ‘tribalism’, whose use has generated ungrounded theoretical and empirical scholarship in the field of Kurdish studies. Therefore, we endeavour to deal with specific questions as to what lies behind the concept of tribalism and *who* evokes it. What are the reductionist approaches in relevant studies? Within what contexts and for what purposes do such reductionist attempts become evident? The contention here is that the concept of tribalism in social science literature exhibits a lack of necessary self-reflexivity and suffers from conceptual and theoretical shortcomings, especially when equated with ethnicity and nationalism (cf. Manchanda 2018).

Moreover, tribalism as a concept emerged during the colonial encounter and Kurdish and non-Kurdish scholars’ employment of the concept continues to hinder our understanding of the socio-political dynamism of Kurdistan. Rather than essentializing various form of social organization, we explore the stability of the concept of the tribe as it is used, lived and experienced by colonial desire and its subjects. Also, given the fact that Kurdish people constitute a significant portion of the population in Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Syria and Lebanon, at times we refer to Kurdistan and the broader Middle East interchangeably. We, like the Turkish sociologist İsmail Beşikçi, recognize Kurdistan as an international colony that has been colonized by a number of Middle Eastern states (see Beşikçi 1990).<sup>3</sup> Such a contention justifies our paper’s dialectical discussion on Kurdistan and the Middle East at large.

### **The concept of ‘tribe’**

Earlier generations of anthropologists often defined *tribes* as a ‘stage in an evolutionary sequence’ (Godelier 1977: 42), ‘distinguished from *less developed* bands and more advanced chiefdoms’ (Sahlins 1961: 323), and leading finally to state formation. In these models, tribes are depicted as preceding and less

developed forms of socio-political organization relative to the formation of the state. Based on this view, the coexistence of the state and tribes in any given socio-political milieu will constitute an anomaly. In other words, the existence of the modern state anywhere evidences the extinction of tribes. Others have defined *tribes* as individuals sharing ‘*a common territory, a common language, and a common culture*’ (Honigmann 1964: 307), ‘a group of bands occupying contiguous territories’ (Linton 1936: 231; also see Radcliffe-Brown 1913; Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1940; Lewis 1968; Tapper 1983, 2006 for similar definitions). While the first definition categorizes tribes as distinct socio-political units that belonged to pre-state socio-historical contexts, the second situates tribes within a broader evolutionary framework of various forms of the political organization, not by any means distinguishable from ethnic groups or nations (Rappaport, 1968). In both definitions, however, tribes are seen with a degree of primitivity destined for an inevitable demise in the face of social progress.

In Middle Eastern and Central Asian contexts, the terms *tribal* or *tribes* are often used interchangeably with *pastoralist nomads* (Amanolahi 1975; Beck 1986, 1991; Scholz 2002; Tapper 2006; Garthwaite 2009) or with *rural* (Amanolahi 2004; Barfield 2012; Noelle 1997; Oraz 2008; Potts 2014; Sungur 2015), where rural organizational forms are, at times, traced into *urban areas* (Roy 2000; Temirkulov 2004; Maisel 2014). Still, even if the two have universally recognizable characteristics, nomadic and rural are neither identical ways of life nor the same social arrangements. Nevertheless, some studies of the Middle East have lumped the two together without qualm. There are also studies in which tribes are described as either a primordial component or a mode of social organization in the Middle East and Central Asia (Gullette 2010). While presuming the notion ‘tribalism’, Alon (2009) and Rabi (2016), for example, advance the thesis of the interplay between tribes, state-building and nationalism in the Middle East.

Generally, the aforementioned studies, perhaps inadvertently, insinuate the persistence of primitivity, which is manifested in the tribal life of non-Western peoples. This is the case since, if the dominant logic is accepted, either the existence of the state has to be denied, or the persistence of primitivity has to be recognized. Contrasted with the European model (i.e., the universal/evolutionary model), either the Middle East and Central Asia are anomalous to the general rule, or in those parts of the world actual states, the celebrated agents of modernity, do not exist. In other words, either those non-Western societies lack modern states, or they are unable to take the necessary evolutionary leap. In essence, such portrayals manifest a hierarchical understanding of world history in which any nation deemed to exhibit pre-modern characteristics is lagging behind in taking necessary and universal evolutionary steps. Such a hierarchical conception of ‘world history’ is best manifested in Hegel’s

conception of history, in which he divides nations into those with a clear consciousness of history and those that lack it (Guha 2002: 39). Accordingly, he claimed that

Nations whose consciousness is obscure, or the obscure history of such nations, are ... not the object of the philosophical history of the world, whose end is to attain knowledge of the Idea in history – the spirits of those nations which [have] become conscious of their inherent principle, and have become aware of what they are and what their actions signify, are its object. (Guha 2002: 35)

Such Eurocentric assumptions are evident in Oliver Roy's study on New Central Asia (2000), that of Temirkulov on Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and Turkman (2004), Maisel's works on Saudi Arabian tribes (2014), Oraz's research on the former Soviet Republics and Central Asia (2008), Sungur's study of Pashtuns (2015), and Ortega's work on the compatibility of Dubai's history (2009), to name a few. It is not hard to discern that tribalism has figured as the constant component in many socio-political studies of the Middle East and Central Asia.

In comparison with those of the Middle East and Central Asia, scholars of African studies have generally avoided using the term tribe, as they perceive tribalism as a concept to be the product of the colonial period. Over 40 years ago, the African scholar Aidan Southall described the subject as the '*illusion of tribe*' (1970: 28). He complained about the lack of analytical clarity and contended that the boundaries between tribes, bands and chiefdoms are rather ambiguous, if not arbitrary (*ibid.*). Christopher Lowe, a scholar of African studies, went further in challenging the concept's analytical value, arguing that the existence of a tribe not only indicates *primitive savagery* but also veils *modern characteristics* of the contemporary social organization in Africa (1997: 3). Moreover, he warned against substituting a common 'illusion of tribe' for detailed analysis of particular situations (*ibid.*). In other words, the sole description of a 'tribe' is not sufficient.

We ought to explore the reasons behind the evocation of the term tribe by particular actors within a specific ethnographic context. In fact, for many scholars of African studies, the construction of tribalism paved the way for colonial rule in Africa. It seems many of these scholars, in order to be able to explain the impact of colonialism on African cultures, prefer to use 'ethnic group' instead (cf. Vail 1991; Wiley 2013; Miguel 2004; Thiong'o 2009; Willis and Gona 2013). These scholars criticize any attempt to describe African peoples as 'tribal societies.' They argue that the term tribe evidences a gross reductionism. The tribe as a concept is vague, lacks any precise definition and is too narrow to explain the complexity of African, Asian and Latin American societies (Mafeje 1971; Ekeh 1990; Pagila 2006; Wiley 2013). Postcolonial thinkers are keenly interested in the question of knowledge production (Said 1978). Their

works have come to demonstrate the centrality of the Western perception of 'the Orient' in making, defining and representing non-Western peoples and denying the complexity of their diverse socio-political and cultural structures.

Postcolonial thinkers direct severe criticism at earlier generations of social theorists. They accuse earlier social scientists of complacency with colonial powers and denying the agency of the indigenous peoples (Werbner 2017: 438). For the founders of postcolonial theory, modern social theory, in its broader sense, was born to serve Western colonialist enterprises. As Julian Go writes: 'Social theory was born in, of and, to some extent, for modern empire' (2017: 2). Institutionalized and nestled in the heart of the metropolises of USA and Europe, social theory went hand in hand with the imperial quest to unleash violence against subjugated nations. 'Scientific' studies and theories served as claims to Western racial superiority and legitimized military or political occupations of lands in the rest of the world (Go 2017: 67). Postcolonial thinkers have also carefully studied the socio-political and psychological impact of colonialism on how the colonized emulate their colonizers and on their internalization of colonial modes of behaviours and thought (Dwivedi and Kich 2013).

Social scientists have also invented a set of concepts and terminology to describe indigenous peoples and imposed arbitrary characterizations on non-Western cultures (Pels 1997: 169). More recent works exhibit a considerable degree of self-reflexivity and critical re-examination of the colonial era's conceptual impositions. In his valuable book, *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*, Talal Asad demonstrates the central role of British colonialism in anthropological thought and practice, which was developed as an academic discipline devoted to explaining non-Europeans to their European audiences (Asad 1973). Similarly, in *Anthropology as a Cultural Critique*, George Marcus and Michael Fischer coined the term 'the crisis of representation', treating the very same issue in a different fashion. They specifically accentuate the uncertainty within the humanities and social sciences and the lack of adequate means to describe 'social realities' (Marcus and Fischer 1986: 7). Their critiques, along with the postmodern rejection of objectivism, labelled science as a form of positivist inductivism that claims access to 'the absolute truth' (Haviland, Prins, McBride and Walrath 2010: 67). Nevertheless, in the scholarship on the Middle East, one aspect of the discourse of tribalism has received little or no attention in its use by both colonial and nation-states to define ethnic discontent. This has been largely overlooked in the field of Kurdish Studies as well. Of course, the use of the term tribalism by the scholars of the field and the states should not be equated. Yet, often the ruling communities' intellectuals have either endorsed the states' policies or have paved the epistemic ground for the state nationalism.

## Tribalism in Kurdish studies

In the past few decades, social scientists have become increasingly critical of their predecessors (Go 2016; Ludden 2002). Added to such self-reflexive approaches is the monumental contribution of the anti-colonial and post-colonial scholarship that has deconstructed the paradigmatic foundations of social sciences (Smith 2012).<sup>4</sup> While there has been considerable progress in Latin American (Fisher 2014), African (Gibson 2011), and North American Resistance studies (Choudry, Majavu and Wood 2013), little has been done in the context of Middle Eastern studies, and Kurdish studies in particular.

The fact that scholars of Kurdish studies have blithely used terms such as ‘tribe’ and ‘tribalism’ shows that they have generally remained heedless of the ideological underpinning of these colonial concepts.<sup>5</sup> In his 1978 work, Hanna Batatu, a prominent historian of Iraq, described the social structure of Southern/Iraqi Kurdistan as follows:

In montane Kurdistan ... the tribal begs or aghas, who were drawn from mounted nomads and lorded over nontribal peasants. The position of all these leading strata rested fundamentally on superior force or military power, birth or kinship, and, from the standpoint of their own rank-and-file tribesmen but not necessarily of client tribes, on immemorial tribal customs. (1978: 10)

A cursory reading of the above quote is enough to realize that what is referred to as a ‘tribe’ cannot be defined. We are told that their existence was neither based on kinship nor clientelism, nor were they lowlanders, nomads or peasants. They were highlander military forces, and their power had not originated from ‘immemorial tribal customs’. Yet, Barth (1953) defines the entirety of Kurdish society in the south as tribal, claiming that the ‘lineage-based tribal system as to be *autonomously Kurdish*’ (ibid. 10). Similarly, viewing Kurds as tribalist is prevalent in most (if not all) of the writings on Kurdistan by Kurdish and non-Kurdish scholars alike (cf. Bedlisi 1988[1367]; Mustafa 1998, 1999; Ghaftan 2006; Gharadagi 2007; Nabaz 2007; Miran 2009; Sanandaji 1972[1361]; Borzoei 1999[1378]; Hirat Sadjadi 2003[1382]; Jalaipour 1990[1369], 1999; Babani 1377[1998]; Yasemi 1994[1363]; Kinnane 1964; Nikitine 1956; Bois 1965; Olson 1989; Chaliand and Pallis 1993). The main body of literature, regardless of the language of its publication, portrays Kurdish society as one that is *remaining* essentially tribal (cf. McDowall 1988: 464; 1992). Wadie Jwaideh, an Iraqi historian known for his work on Kurds, describes Kurdish society as follows:

the autonomous Kurdish political system never developed beyond the tribal stage. Those Kurdish leaders who succeeded in founding such systems followed an Islamic rather than a Kurdish pattern of political organization. As a result, tribal-based institutions, rather than state-based institutions,

have come to be the Kurdish political institutions par excellence.... One of the most striking features of Kurdish tribal life is the peculiar tenacity of Kurdish tribal sentiment. On numerous occasions, it has proved even stronger than religious sentiment. (Jwaideh 1960: 30–3)

Such essentializing views continue to persist with utmost tenacity in the most recent scholarship on Kurds. This is especially the case in works by white scholars on Kurds (King 2013; Mansfield 2014). For instance, Nerina Weiss, in her entry on ‘Social Organization and Family Life’ in *The Kurds: An Encyclopedia of Life, Culture, and Society*, writes: ‘Tribal organization has played and still plays a central role in the consolidation of Iraqi Kurdistan. It was through tribes, and here specially under the leadership of the Barzani tribe, that the Kurdish nationalist struggle against the Iraqi state was mobilized’ (2018: 85).

As stated above, the term tribalism occupies a central place in studies on Kurds and Kurdistan (see Gunes 2016; Jongerden 2016; Entessar 2016; Hassanpour 2015; Aziz 2011; Bengio 2012; Tahiri 2007; Ahmedi 2018). Tribalism has been considered the primary obstacle to Kurdish nationalism and nationhood (Roosevelt 1947). Additionally, existing scholarship views tribalism as a stage in the evolution of Kurdish social life (Yadirgi 2017). Accordingly, modern Kurdish politics are prized based on the degree of their ‘anti-tribal agenda’, showing how scholars have internalized the state discourse. When it comes to statist intellectuals, they even consider Kurdish aspiration for nationhood as a form of tribalism. For instance, in his 2006 work on Kurds, Özcan, a Turkish sociologist, ties the possibility of Kurdish independence in Iraq to the possibility of thriving ‘Kurdish tribalism’ (2006: vi). (This is exactly how the Turkish state has always referred to Kurdish politics in the South.) Özcan thus opines that ‘Whether or not Kurdish tribalism is prospering in the north of Iraq ... continues to remain a highly dubious question’ (ibid.). For Özcan and the like, Kurdish self-assertion per se is tribal.

‘Tribes’ are assumed to be an old traditional and ‘premodern form’ of social organization. In the Kurdish case, we are told that they have persisted and are shaping modern Kurdish politics.<sup>6</sup> As a result, histories of Kurdish people often become synonymous with the history of a tribal leaders, ‘whose position; claims van Bruinessen, a student of Kurdish studies, ‘*determined whether his tribe would oppose, join, or remain neutral toward the national movement*’ (1992: 10, emphasis added). Unlike other orientalists, van Bruinessen – who in 2012 repeated the claim of a Turkish minister that ‘Kurdish was not a language of civilization’ – views ‘Kurdish tribalism’ more as an anomaly, as something that defies the general rule of ‘social evolution and progress.’<sup>7</sup> This is the reason why

The past two decades of great social upheaval have not led to the extinction of tribes.... The apparently pre-modern phenomenon of the tribe has shown remarkable resilience and adaptability, and in several respects tribes

and tribalism are even more pervasive in Kurdish society now than twenty, thirty years ago. (2002: 165)

It is not always an easy task to differentiate scholars' approach to dominated communities from those of the states in the scholarship on the Middle East. For instance, the prominent historian of Iran, Ervand Abrahamian, portrays all non-Persians as the 'tribes [who] consisted of some fifteen major entities known as its – *Qajars, Kurds, Turkmans, Baluchis, Arabs, Qashqa'is, Bakhtiyaris, Lurs, Mamasanis, Boir Ahmadis, Hazaras, Shahsavans, Afshars, Timouris, and Khamsehs...*'. They, however, 'lived in ... communities with their own structures, hierarchies, languages, and dialects, and, often, until the late nineteenth century, self-sufficient economies' (2008: 21, emphasis added). Abrahamian's remarks are but reverberations of the official discourse as the state has declared all non-Persian communities (i.e., Arabas, Baluches, Lores, Kurds and Turks) as tribes since the establishment of *The Office of the Study of Tribes and Nomads* in Iran, in 1912.<sup>8</sup> Hamid Ahmadi, another Persian writer, claims that the Kurdish community, in its entirety, is just a tribe (2008). Hamid Dabashi, a vocal Persian postcolonial author, berates all non-Persian identities as 'manufactured ethnicized [*sic*] identities' (2016: 17), as opposed to the ruling Persian community's identity, *which he takes to be an inert fact of nature*. Under the auspices of the Islamic Republic, the discourse of tribalism, now, is a scholarly subject and major segments of the polity are treated as tribes. Iranian sociologists produce a significant amount of literature on the so-called '*tribal life and affairs*' (see below). There are various academic texts with titles such as *The Essentials of Sociology and Anthropology of Tribes and Nomads* (Tabibi 2016), *The Sociology of Tribes and Nomads of Iran* (Safinezhad 2016), or *Applied Sociology of Tribes* (Mahmoodi Bakhtyari 2003), just to mention a few recent works.

In the discourse of tribalism, regardless of who may perpetuate it, Kurdish identity is posited as inherently pre-modern, and the state is recognized as having a role in modernizing 'tribal entities'. Such a discourse legitimizes the colonial practice of states in labelling ethnic resistance as 'the persistence of pre-modernity'. From this comes the struggle between the state, the representative of secular modernity, and Kurdish identity, the sum total of tribalism and banditry (for more see Soleimani 2017). Inevitably, such an approach results in the acceptance of the official discourse – not uncommon in some of the Iraqi, Iranian and Turkish leftists' reading of history. The majority of dominant communities' intelligentsia have internalized the ethno-nationalist discourse of their 'own' nation states and therefore, they single out dominated communities' nationalism as reactionary and as a threat to the unity of the people.

The argument against the blithe application of ideologically informed categories should not mean that communal relations or kinship systems as social markers are not historically contingent. The attempt here is to question the

supposed ‘universal applicability’ of terms like tribe, tribal and tribalism. These terms, with their current, supposedly self-evident definitions, were coined by the power of colonialism to portray the non-West as a homogeneous multitude as opposed to the West’s unique position in the world. Recent decades have witnessed an important body of critical scholarship that locates the genesis of previous literature within the context of European identity formation (Peterson and Walhof 2002), where the effort to invent the tribal, tribalism, or/even religions with universalistic traits is understood as a manifestation of European self-perception, ‘as a prototype of unity amidst plurality, Europe as a marker for the subject position of universal history’ (Masuzawa 2007: 182).

What Middle Eastern states claimed to be ‘combating tribalism’, has been but attempts to make and remake ‘tribes’. This has especially been the case for those states that have dealt with Kurdish political resistance. In countries like Turkey, Iran and Iraq, the state-declared ‘de-tribalization’ policies that have been nothing other than systemic attempts at demographic change, depopulation and repopulation in Kurdish regions. As shown below, the post-colonial regimes of the Middle East have readily appropriated this discourse and the logic that underpins it, in a way that elevates them in a social evolutionary process, at the cost of relegating their *internal Others* to a backward, ancient, primordial stage.

### **The tribal, Kurdistan, and the perpetuation of internal colonization**

The terms tribe and tribalism have been useful tools for the modern nation-states of Iran, Iraq, Syria<sup>9</sup> and Turkey to define their Others (Deringil 2003a; Makdisi 2002; Soleimani 2016; Üngör 2012; Yeğen 1996). Historically, the states and intelligentsia of the *sovereign communities* have characterized Kurdish opposition movements as manifestations of the tribal and uncivilized tendencies of an unruly people, inherently averse to law and order (cf. Zarinebaf 2012: 93). Yet, these very states have systematically intervened in the making and unmaking of ‘tribes’. They have incited ‘tribal feuds’ and ‘tribal politics’ as a means to divide people and to weaken Kurdish nationalist unity.

The state and statist intellectuals in Turkey and Iran have systematically equated Kurdishness and any non-dominant ethnic self-assertion with tribalism (cf. Chehabi 2011: 196). The Turkish sociologist İsmail Beşikçi, whose works are deep reflections of his time undertaking military service in the Kurdish region, incorporates various historical, legal, political and cultural examples that are considered evidence of the state’s long-term ideological project of concealing and misrepresenting Kurdish identity. He is the first scholar to regard Kurdistan as an internationally colonized entity and to study the Kurdish situation as a case comparable to or worse than that of other colonized nations. Beşikçi traces the institutional concealment of Kurdish identity

in the first republican constitution as a major evidence of an ‘institutional distortion’ (Beşikçi 1986: 16–18). He states that the Turkish constitution ‘attempts to solve a sociological reality through the use of ideological means. According to the 1924 constitution, anyone who lives in Turkey is ethnically Turkish and *is content to be a Turk*’ (1986: 8). The stipulation, on the one hand, recognizes Turkishness as a form of political performativity or a speech act, and yet denies the existence of non-Turks within Turkey’s territory. The legal declaration of the people’s ethnic background, the Turkish constitution stipulates, has received the nation’s popular approval. Beşikçi regards this misleading stipulation as an ideological statement that obfuscates the social reality of the existence of non-Turkish elements (see Beşikçi 1986, 1990).

In 1925, within months of this constitutional draft, Turkey witnessed the broadest-based Kurdish uprising up to that time, which was crushed by the state’s force. This uprising was followed by the 1925 forced migration plans and attempts to change the region’s demographic makeup in the name of fighting feudalism/tribalism and land redistribution. Under the rubric of the Eastern Reform Project (*Şark Islahat Planı*) and the Establishment of Order (*Takrir-i Sükûn Kanunu*), the Kemalist state tried to remove all the ‘potentially dangerous Kurdish families’ so that they could be replaced by Turkish ones (for more see Bayrak 2009). The Republican claim was that those laws were enacted to abolish tribalism ‘and to make the Republican laws dominant requires radical reforms in the Eastern provinces’ (Minutes of Parliament, quoted in Yeğen 1999: 561). While in the late 1990s the Turkish state was reconstructing and arming ‘tribes’ like Bucak *Aşireti*, which comprised more than 10,000 armed men.

Mesüt Yeğen, another scholar of Kurdish studies, contends that the Turkish state’s exclusionary policies were formulated through the use of terms like ‘tribalism and political reactionism’ as synonymous to Kurdishness. In essence, argues Yeğen, ‘the Turkish State Discourse (TDS)’, in its systematic attempts to erase Kurdishness – through the constant employment of the above referents – inadvertently enunciated Kurdish identity in Turkey (Yeğen 1996, 1999). Beşikçi, on the other hand, argues that the state’s denial of the non-Turks made it necessary for all those who lived in Turkey to acknowledge the ethnic superiority of the Turks. He states that both the 1924 and the 1961 constitutions embodied the legal declaration of Turkish ethnic superiority as it was a ‘[pre] requisite [for] the good fortune of being Turkish’ (Beşikçi 1986: 13). Kurdish identity was outlawed, and the practice of denying Kurdish identity was institutionalized. Beşikçi asserts that every single institution, such as universities, political parties, the judiciary and the press, claimed that ‘everyone in Turkey is a Turk [and did their utmost to put] Kurdish reality on trial’ (ibid.). He adds that anything that could signify the non-singularity of the nation’s culture and ethnicity was outlawed. This is evident in Article 89 of the Turkish Penal Code for political parties. Accordingly, any party would face closure if they hinted at

the diversity of the Turkish polity or questioned its supposed ‘mono-cultural and mono-ethnic character’ (Beşikçi 1986: 13). In this reading, thus, the 1966 Turkish Penal Code eliminated all possibility for the recognition of non-Turkish citizens (*ibid.*). How, then, would Kurdish discontent be addressed? Such a discontent, as Yeğen puts it, would always have to be referred to as ‘tribalism and reactionism’ (Yeğen 1996, 1999).

It is worth remembering that the Ottoman state had radically transformed the so-called ‘tribal structure’ in some of its domains. In many ways, the 1858 land reform by Ottoman grand vezir Midhat Pasha overhauled the socio-political structure of three provinces that constitute modern-day Iraq. Some of his main objectives included sedentism, pacifying ‘tribes’ and the extension of military conscription to the ‘tribal’ areas. His attempts resulted in the reduction of the nomadic population by half by the first decade of the twentieth century (for more see Batatu 1978 and Ceylan 2011). Such attempts to civilize the periphery continued until the birth of the Republic of Turkey. For instance, in 1892, the Ottoman State opened a new school in Istanbul to turn the leading Arab and Kurdish ‘tribal notables’ into ‘loyal Ottoman functionaries by sending them back ‘to their tribes’ to continue the process of civilization and Ottomanization. By teaching them Ottoman Turkish, classical Arabic, French, and Persian as well as Islamic sciences’ (Makdisi 2002: 788). So, the use of tribalism in the Middle East as a mechanism for state control goes back to the Ottoman era. The Ottoman state gradually adopted the policy of making and unmaking tribes right after the destruction of Kurdish principalities in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Midhat Pasha’s above-mentioned land reform gave a new form to ‘tribal reconfiguration’ (Batatu 1978). And yet, after the 1880 Kurdish nationalist uprising, the state started rethinking its previous policies toward tribes by introducing the aforementioned tribal school and Hamidian Cavalries in the 1890s (Soleimani 2016).<sup>10</sup> In addition to militarization, the Ottoman State even used Sufi Orders and religion to civilize the ‘tribes.’ According to Deringil, Istanbul viewed certain sheikhs as bearers of civilization to the tribes.<sup>11</sup> The sheikhs were said to ‘train [the tribesmen] in religious morals and, as much as is at all possible, abate their savagery.’ The leaders of the dervishes were constantly ‘evoking the Caliph’s name and making it clear to the tribes that he was their Master’ (Deringil 2003b: 323). Also, as a frontier region and due to its strategic importance, Kurdistan required a close attention from the Ottoman Empire. The state hoped to integrate Kurds into the Ottoman system by arming the tribes against both ‘untamed Kurds’ and Armenians. It was also perceived as a step towards the assimilation of Muslims. As Sultan Abdülhamit II once said, ‘we need to strengthen the Turkish element in Anatolia and [therefore] give priority to making the Kurds part of us’ (Heper 2007: 47).

After the collapse of the Empire, to make fragmented Kurdish groups governable, the Republic of Turkey invented a ‘unite and rule’ policy, moulding

armed tribes into smaller and more manageable units (Olson 1996). Under Mustafa Kemal's rule, 'undesirable Kurdish tribes' were either disciplined or depopulated and banished to different regions in Anatolia or forced to cooperate with the state. The term 'Mountain Turk'<sup>12</sup> fully captures the way in which the new nation-state of Turkey portrayed Kurds and denied their identity. This term not only historically denied the very existence of Kurds as one of the old inhabitants of the region, but also criminalized Kurdishness. The state used the term 'tribalism' to carry out policies of erasure and to frame the assertion of Kurdish identity as a symptom of underdevelopment, primitivity and uncivilizedness. While the state could make the overwhelming majority of Kurds forget their mother tongue, it never destroyed the state-sanctioned-'tribalism' or honour killings. The discourse of tribalism enabled the state to explain ethnic differences while criminalizing any reference to the heterogeneity of 'the nation'.

After the First World War, British colonial policies recreated and expanded the desired 'tribal structure' in Iraqi Kurdistan (Maussen, Bader and Moors 2011: 100). In the early 1960s, Abdul Karim Qasim resorted to the revival of 'tribalism' to curtail Kurdish nationalism and therefore employed the familiar tactic of lending support to (then main Kurdish leader) Barzani's rivals among the Kurdish tribes (Rubin 2007). The same policies were to be adopted later by Saddam Hussein. The latter combined those policies with a concurrent plan to destroy and reconstruct Kurdish identity as a manifestation of tribalism. Rather than eradicating 'tribal sheykhs', Saddam manipulated and controlled the sheykhs through Baathification policies in all of Iraq (Baram 1997: 1). He also tribalized his own Ba'ath party, as well as the Iraqi army, and extended a 'tribal sense of loyalty' (imagined or real) to its rule, even referring to the Ba'ath Party as 'the tribe'. By manufacturing some form of traditional kinship ties, Saddam engineered various forms of socio-political rivalries among state-made tribes over land appropriation and other resources to strengthen his power across Iraq (Hassan 2007).

The policy of tribalization not only consolidated Saddam's power in the farthest regions but also facilitated the Ba'ath Party's suffocating political surveillance over the entire country. Furthermore, through re-tribalization policies, the regime institutionalized a sort of 'tribal spirit' for generations to come. It must be noted that the incorporation of tribal structure, kinship ties and local linkages in the political administration began even before Saddam's accession to power. For example, in 1963, President Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr and his groups (General Hardan Abd al-Ghaffar al-Tikriti, General Hammad Shihab, and Saddam Hussein) were all from the same town and broadly related. Even though this term did not necessarily mean blood relations, they called one another 'cousin' (Blaydes 2013). Similarly, Saddam Hussein's bodyguards (known as *al-him*) were from approximately the same tribe and geographical area. In general, the indirect support of both tribal shaykhs and tribal identity

became manifest in Ba'athist media in the final stages of the Iran-Iraq War (1988–90). It was during this period that tribal shaykhs publicly declared their allegiance with Saddam.

Similarly, in Iran, with the rise of the nationalist state, the projection of tribalism onto dominated communities 'gained much currency and was propagated as a justification for dominant ruling ethnic groups in the face of the Other's challenges' (Soleimani 2017: 959). Also, 'the ascription of tribalism has [had] the more practical aim of justifying the extension of state violence' (ibid.). Kaveh Bayat, an Iranian scholar, shows that 'the sedentarization, which was carried out in Luristan, Fars, Azerbaijan, and Khurasan during the years 1933 to 1937, took a very brutal and, in some cases, a genocidal form' (Bayat 2003: 229). Nevertheless, in the post-1979 Revolution era, the Iranian state was actively trying to reintroduce a form of tribalism desired by the state. Using strategies from displacement to offer economic incentives, the state tried to arm certain segments of Kurdish society to combat Kurdish nationalism. Hoping to revitalize a 'tribal structure' in Kurdistan, the Iranian state strove to undo the Shah's land reform. Such a policy would have caused the regimentation of Kurdish society, especially by pitting erstwhile landowners against farmers (and to a certain extent, it did). Hence, the heads of 'tribes' were put in charge of the affairs of villages and were regarded as part of the state's administrative apparatus. In many cases, the state made it impossible for the villagers to stay in their villages: They were told either to bear arms or to leave. The state propagated and promoted 'tribalism'. Even Khomeini stated 'the tribes are the reservoirs of the [Islamic] Revolution.'<sup>13</sup> Simultaneously, the state strove to berate the Kurdish national movement by calling it tribal and a 'threat to the unity of the Islamic *Umma* in Iran' (Saleh 2013: 68).

In Iran, like in the neighbouring countries, the current state has turned the remaking and expanding 'tribalism' into its strategy. At the centre of Pahlavi modernization policy was 'civilizing tribes'. In 1939, in order 'to regulate tribal affairs' the Pahlavi state established the Organization for Tribal Affairs of Iran (*Sazemān-e Omūr-e 'Ashāyer-e Iran*),<sup>14</sup> supposedly to integrate them into a civilized world. Unlike the Pahlavi state, the Islamic state's policy has centred on its reconstruction, which has turned 'tribalism' into a social reality for the Persian academic universe. The state has assigned the Higher Council of Iranian Tribes (*Shuray-e 'Ali 'Ashayer-e Iran*) with the task of administrating, surveilling and recruiting Tribal Border Mobilization Units (*Basije Marzban*).

The Organization has been publishing the *Quarterly of Tribes: The Reservoirs of the Revolution* journal (*Faṣlnāmah-i 'Ashāyerī-e Zakhāyer-e Enghelāb*) since its creation in 1981. The latest issue of the journal<sup>15</sup> appeared in 2017. It goes without saying that the name of the journal is taken from Ayatollah Khomeini's famous statement about tribes: *tribes are the Reservoirs of the Revolution*. In the hope of what is said to be a more 'affective policy to regulate the tribes in Iran',

the Organization hosts various conferences on a regular basis.<sup>16</sup> In addition to the Iranian academics' 'scholarly works' on tribes, sociology courses under the title of 'Sociology of Tribes and Nomads' (*Jāme'ah-shenāsī-e Īlāt o 'Ashāyer*) are offered at sociology departments. Furthermore, the Iranian Sociological Association has established a formal academic branch called 'Rural and Tribal Sociology', which purportedly addresses tribal issues in Iran.<sup>17</sup> In the past few recent years, the University of Shoshtar has begun to publish the journal of Tribes and Nomads' Quarterly (*Faṣḥnāmah-i Īlāt o 'Ashāyer*).<sup>18</sup>

### **Towards the demystification of the tribal**

Emerging and expanding since the 1960s, postcolonial social theory informed by post-colonialism has represented a trend in social sciences that challenges righteous claims to objectivity. Correspondingly, the lack of a precise term to replace 'tribal' and 'tribalism' should not justify the persistent use of imprecise, repressive and essentializing colonial categories. Rather than serving as the construction of another 'truth', in the words of Roland Barthes, criticism can be a 'homage' to the 'construction of the intelligibility of our own time' (quoted in Brown 2005: 2). Universalizing concepts and notions are essentially predicated on the marginalization and the erasure of heterogeneities outside of the West (Clastres 2007: 12). Studying communities should not serve the discourses of established powers or take them at face value. Rather, such studies ought to enable the understanding of the effects of discourses of power in the construction or persistence of discursive categories. This is the case, since '... discourse may serve to construct categories such as "race," "nation," "ethnicity" and "citizen," may perpetuate such categories, and may even dismantle or destroy them' (Blackledge 2005: 4). Self-reflexivity in social sciences aims at revealing silenced language(s) and reductionist aspects of discourse to bring to light the impact of power in knowledge production and the ways in which dominant groups present and frame an event. It is to deconstruct the discriminatory nature of those processes in which an event is reconstructed and socio-political realities are glossed over in accordance with the needs and desires of power. If one's analyses reproduce what has already been produced by the dominant discourse that has shaped and continues to shape the language of many disciplines, the study of that discourse will not achieve much. Contrary to the famous statement by Karl Marx, the interpretation or description of the world does not leave it intact but changes it.<sup>19</sup>

When civilizing discourse is the rubric of removing the Other, as it has been the case in relationships between colonizers and the colonized in general, and in Kurdish-State conflicts, the discourse of power aims at both legitimization and concealment. It conceals because its declared goals are false. The aim is to either assimilate or to destroy elements that are deemed an obstacle

to hegemonic power. However, such a brutal mission needs an appropriate framing that obviously legitimizes its action and finds enough support to carry on the mission. Thus, demonizing the Other has the dual function of concurrently concealing the Other's reality and legitimizing the dominant power's brutality. When this power defines an entity or grants an identity, the definition does not represent the reality of the dominated entity, but distorts it. The dominated group is presented, changed and shaped in such a way that their humanity is thrown into question. Is this not what Said described as the Orientalists' mission: the legitimizing vigour behind colonialism? Defining the demonized Other contains all the beliefs and assumptions that are ideologically essential to describe the Other's presence as unwanted and to challenge their legitimacy. The fundamental concern of a given political discourse is not providing a report of the world the way it is; rather, it introduces a desired world.

The rise of the nation-state coincided with the rise of both colonialism and racial theories. In essence, the nation-state has been explained in evolutionary or teleological terms (cf. Hegel 1975). Therefore, its hostility to other forms of socio-political arrangement has not been sufficiently criticized. Both colonialism in its earlier stage and the nation-state have been perceived to represent 'the universal' and to embody the triumph of reason. Hence, 'tribalism', as one of the categories that 'manifested in the premodern era', has rarely been challenged. Colonial empires and nation-states have been able to define their challengers as unitary entities, be they 'terrorist' or 'tribalist'. Related scholarship has generally and uncritically applied this definition by the state as given. Therefore, just like the recent treatment of methodological nationalism,<sup>20</sup> a more reflexive approach towards the relationships between various units of socio-cultural arrangements and the nation-state is needed.<sup>21</sup> If our understanding of society as 'national societies' has had certain theoretical consequences, so will our thinking of what is natural about state formation and resultant obedience to the state. Such a social Darwinist reading has not only affected our conception of progress but also influenced social science to interpret history in a more teleological sense. As Daniel Chernilo states, 'The unification of nation and state changes not only the face of modernity but also that of the disciplines devoted to the study of modern social life' (2007: 12). The problem with this way of theorizing the nation-state and modernity is that its practices in eliminating any other form of social arrangement – with which it might not be harmonious – are deemed principally legitimate. Hence, such a perception is essentially emic and justifies the nation-state's practice in removing whatever might be viewed as non-modern. The modern conception of the 'tribes and tribalism' is statist, as much as it is colonialist. A critical reading of the notion of tribalism is justified to cast light on the colonial effect on the respective scholarship and knowledge production.

## Concluding remarks

This paper attempted to elucidate a number of issues with respect to the conceptual ambiguity and empirical inadequacy of the term tribalism in the existing scholarship on the Middle East in general and on Kurdistan in particular. As demonstrated, the prevalent use of the tribalism concept has contributed to the oversimplification of a highly complex web of socio-political relations in a polity like that of Kurdistan. The term tribalism has not only proven to be insufficient to explain those complexities but is also far from capturing an emic picture of the social life from the standpoint of Kurdish subjects. The application of the term has been highly ideological and often deployed as an assimilatory means. The making and unmaking of 'the tribal' in Kurdish history has also served the genocidal intent of the state. The best example of this is the violence unleashed against Armenians in the Eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>22</sup>

This paper was also an effort to take a novel look at tribalism in the Kurdish context as the universalized product of colonial desire and the modern nation-state. The current study neither takes the term tribe as self-evident or universal nor as the *prima causa* for the failure of Kurdish nationalism. Influenced by Eurocentric scholarship, most students of Kurdish studies have treated the words tribal and tribalism as inert facts of nature. Rather than critiquing those terms as ideological and reductionistic, they have, inadvertently, considered them a cognitive malfunction of Kurdish mindset. The discourse of tribalism is rooted in attempts to present colonial domination as a rational agent while ascribing irrationality to resisting forces. Nationalist states, too, have adopted the same discourse to subjugate dominated communities through the use of brute force. States have used tribalism to describe Kurdish resistance as a manifestation of pre-modernity in order to place statist modernity outside the discourse of power. Hence, any portrayal of the state-Kurdish conflict, as combating tribes, falls prey to the state's description of the event as a clash between rationality and irrationality and ultimately between morality and immorality.

Our aim here was to show how both colonial and nation-state *definitions* serve to delegitimize the demands and rights of certain communities to self-determination and turn them into stateless beings 'jettisoned from the juridical mode of belonging' (Butler and Spivak 2007). We strove to tackle the troubling and overlooked question of the justification for accepting colonial and nation-state categorization of their Others uncritically, when such categories tend to be morally charged. The historical context of 'fighting tribalism' in various contexts coincided with racial biopolitics and with the emergence of Nazism and fascism. The emphasis here is not solely on the nature of this categorization, which is more than merely socio-political, but also it has ethical and biopolitical aspects. The politics of population was embedded in both colonial and nation-state discourses. There are myriad examples of the use of tribalism

around the world for genocidal purposes but here, the following example by Iranian scholar Homa Katouzian should suffice:

By the late 1920s barely any trace remained of nomadic rebellion and brigandry.... It was precisely after such pacification that extreme force was used to break up the tribes and ‘settle’ them in strange environments; a process, which often led to large-scale deaths. Those in charge of such operations looked upon the nomads almost in the same way as many American whites viewed the Native Americans in the nineteenth century. Sultan ‘Ali Sultani ... said, in a long speech [in the parliament] after the Shah’s abdication: The ... nomads ... not only has their property been looted, but group after group of these tribes have been executed without trial. ... The way they settled the tribes was the way of execution and annihilation, not education and reform. (Katouzian 2003: 28)

Under the guise of modernization and reforms, the discourse of tribalism was used to legitimize hegemony and obscure dominated communities’ legitimate demands and rights. The demands of dominated communities were dismissed as empty nostalgia for the old order and as the persistence of modalities of pre-modernity. It is striking to see how significantly militarism, as a paramount example of the docile body and a symbol of modernity, has occupied the minds of statesmen, especially in the Iranian and Turkish contexts. Major General Derakhshani, who was commissioned to undertake the ‘destruction of the *Poshtkuh/Lursetan* tribes’, claims that the army’s mission was to make the people in that region ‘like the rest of Iranians [i.e., to assimilate them] and to do the military service’ (Derakhshani 1994: 7). Kashani-Sabet, a scholar of Iran, describes the oppressive nature of this project in Iran, stating that ‘the question was no longer “who is Iranian?” but rather “who is modern Iranian?”’ (2002: 170), which was defined by the State, its military, and pro-state intellectuals.

(Date accepted: February 2019)

## Notes

1. Smith (2008: 6) defines an ethnic community as ‘a named human population with myths of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more elements of common culture, a link with a homeland and a sense of solidarity among at least some of its members’ – essentially how contemporary researchers define ‘tribes’.

2. The title of Salzman’s paper contains the word DNA.

3. It should be noted that for the first time in his 1965 *Kurdistan and the Kurds*, the Kurdish political leader Abdul Rahman

Ghassemloo used the term colonialized in reference to Kurdistan.

4. Combined with those efforts there have been various initiatives, ranging from political activism (Chabot and Vinthagen 2007; Alfred and Corentassel 2005) to intellectual revisions (Jefferess 2008), all of which might be characterized as Resistance studies.

5. For example, despite his frequent use of the term tribe and tribal, van Bruinessen (1991, 1992, 2002) never attempts to define it.

6. See Carroll (2011) for her study of the role of pre-Islamic tribal laws and their

supposed 'persistence' in post-World War I Iraq.

7. In 2009 van Bruinessen was quick to repeat the statements made by Turkish minister Bulent Arinç, see for instance: <http://www.ensonhaber.com/kurt-dili-medeniyet-dili-degildir-2012-04-28.html> (last accessed on: 6 December 2018); <https://www.haberler.com/hollandali-kurdolog-bruinessen-kurt-dili-medeniyet-3575410-haber/>; <https://www.timeturk.com/tr/2012/04/28/akademisyenler-kurt-kulturunu-konusuyor.html>; <https://www.haberler.com/akademi-bulusmasi-programi-nin-kapanis-oturumu-3585811-haber/>

8. For more see <http://ashayer.ir/index.aspx?fkeyid=&siteid=1&pageid=135> (last accessed on: 6 December 2018).

9. Following the Syrian (civil) war since 2011, Syrian Kurds have found an opportunity to experiment building a democratic society inspired by Ocalan's idea of Democratic Confederationalism. Many scholars have understood such an experiment as a radical break in Kurdish contemporary uprising (for a recent discussion on the experience of Syrian Kurds, see Küçük & Özselçuk 2002; Cemgil 2007).

10. Soleimani (2010: 171) characterizes this change in Ottoman state policy as a clear manifestation of what Foucault called the change of the state from governing territory to governing population.

11. In addition to Selim Deringle and Usama Makdisi, there are also monographs devoted to the issue of tribal school; for instance, see Akpınar (2001) and Klein (1968).

12. In 1924, the Turkish state banned the use of Kurdish language and propagated this derogatory notion of 'Mountain Turks'

in reference to the Kurds in order to deny the existence of the Kurds.

13. *Ashayer Zakhayer Enghlaband*.

14. For more information about its structure and mission see its official website: <http://ashayer.ir/index.aspx?fkeyid=&siteid=1&pageid=135>.

15. <https://khabarfarsi.com/u/27993080>.

16. <https://www.civilica.com/Papers-NCO/TI01=%D9%87%D9%85%D8%A7%DB%8C%D8%B4-%D9%85%D9%84%DB%8C-%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%87%DB%8C-%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%87%D8%B9%D8%B4%D8%A7%DB%8C%D8%B1-%D8%A7%DB%8C%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86.html>

17. <http://www.isa.org.ir/399-گزارش-نشست-ها-روستایی-و-عشایر-2640-گزارش-نشست-گروه-جامعه‌شناسی-روستایی-و-عشایر-2640-بررسی-تاثیر-اجرای-قانون-هدفمند-کردن-یارانه-ها-بر-معیشت-جامعه‌روستایی>

18. <http://jtn.iau-shoushtar.ac.ir/>

19. Karl Marx states that 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it' (*Theses on Feuerbach*, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/theses/theses.htm> [last accessed on: 18 April 2018]).

20. Methodological nationalism is a notion that presumes the nation-state and its encompassing social processes as the sole unit of analysis.

21. For more on the relation between methodological nationalism and the nation-state see Wagner (1994: 30–1).

22. See an insightful speech on this regard by Hamid Bozarslan, <https://commons.clarku.edu/videoarchive/264/> (last accessed on: 28 August 2018).

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