The Domination of the Kurds

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Abstract: We do two things in this article: develop a novel conception of domination and show how the Kurdish people are dominated in this novel sense. Conceptions of domination are usually distinguished in terms of paradigm cases and whether they are moralised and/or norm-dependent accounts, or neither. By contrast, we argue there is a way of understanding domination in terms of distinct social kinds. Among kinds of domination, like economic or racial or sexual domination, there must be a specifically political kind of domination. Borrowing from Carl Schmitt's framework of differing degrees of political enmity, we argue political domination is best understood as an existential form of domination whereby one people aim to prevent the independent existence of another people mainly through the uncontrolled power and extreme violence involved in absolute enmity. This conception of existential domination is offered as an example of a non-moralised, norm-independent account of domination. We then argue that the Kurdish people, who are the largest stateless people in the world, suffer existential domination from the absolute enmity expressed towards them by the four nation-states they find themselves dominated within: Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran.

Keywords: Carl Schmitt, colonialism, domination, existential, Kurds

Kinds of Domination

Domination has something to do with uncontrolled, unlimited, impositional, unconstrained, or unrestrained power. It is a phenomenon most often characterised by overwhelming force, an intensity of strength that can express itself both in acts and structural conditions and relationships composed of such acts and the dispositions

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to perform such acts. It thus involves a severe imbalance, asymmetry, or disequilibrium in the distribution of power (McCammon 2018). This much seems shared by the various conceptions of domination available today. Less clear in the literature is what precisely distinguishes one kind of domination from another. There is discussion of paradigm cases that any conception of domination should be able to explain, cases formulated in terms of relationships like that of master to slave, husband to wife, parent to child, the present generation to future generations, employer to employee, empire to colony, and so on. There is less discussion of which kinds of domination these paradigm cases are thought to primarily instantiate. Insofar as domination is conceived as a broadly social phenomenon involving interactions between individual or collective intentional agents, one might wonder into which kinds, types, domains, or categories of social phenomena cases of domination might fit.

For example, on the one hand, each of the paradigm cases mentioned above seem to enjoy, or have until recently enjoyed, some kind of *legal* sanction. So, would it make sense to view paradigm cases of domination as examples of a specifically legal kind of domination? If so, conceptions of domination might need to address the distinctly legal aspect to most cases of domination. Of course, that does not mean all cases of domination could be understood as examples of legal domination. Much domination appears to take place in extra-legal grey zones or in areas of social life that do not have much legal regulation. Indeed, we will see below that political domination understood as existential domination often occurs in legal states of exception where domestic or international law, or both, is suspended or bracketed off. On the other hand, if we are willing to admit that domination can take a distinctly or primarily legal form, then could not each of the paradigm cases slot into distinct social categories as well? In other words, it seems cases of domination can be viewed as examples of certain kinds of domination. A kind of domination would then be the primary feature of a case of domination that distinguishes it from other cases of domination.

Slavery, for example, can be seen as a kind of primarily *economic* domination whereby certain agents own and treat other agents as property. Also, in the history of the United States at least, slavery has an explicitly *racial* component. Obviously, slavery has been

legal for most of its history as well. Could we say then that slavery can be, to differing degrees and in descending order of priority perhaps, an example of economic, legal, and racial domination (Skinner 1998)? And what about the kind of domination that can take place in marriage? Would that, and patriarchy more generally, not count as a primarily *sexual* kind of domination (Allen 1999; Hirschmann 2003; Friedman 2008)? Similarly, the complete dependence of a child on a parent or guardian could be viewed as a primarily *filial* form of domination (Bohman 2011). And when the present generation possesses and wields unrestrained power over future generations, that kind of domination could be understood as being primarily *intergenerational* or, perhaps more urgently for us, *environmental* (Katz 2017). The dominating relationship between an employer and his employees seems again to be primarily economic (Gourevitch 2011; Anderson 2017). Finally, the case of an empire's domination of its colonies could obviously be shown to exemplify in some way each of legal, economic, racial, sexual, filial, intergenerational, and environmental kinds of domination (Kohn and Reddy 2017). However, we could wonder at this point, if we are willing to countenance organising cases of domination into specific kinds, if the examples of colonialism and imperialism might exemplify a primarily or distinctly *political* kind of domination.

What we would like to do in this article is develop a conception of a distinctly political form of domination. We would like to do this because, in our attempt to understand the kind of domination the Kurdish people suffer, we felt we needed to reverse engineer a conception of domination that truly captured their situation.[1] In the process, we started to have the sense that the primarily political form of domination the Kurds suffer is actually a very common way that certain agents dominate other agents, at least historically, and that political domination itself can occasionally serve as the ontological foundation for many of the other kinds of social domination. One problem we encountered in trying to develop this conception of political domination was that the word 'political' seemed too generic to properly capture what we were after. All the paradigm cases, and so all the apparent kinds, of domination seem 'political' in some trivial way, and their rectification seems to require politics – that is, constituted political procedures – in some obvious

and uninformative way. We thus decided to try to develop a theory of political domination that is more sensitive to its singularity and captures what is distinctive about it.

We will call this distinctive aspect of political domination *existential* domination. We argue this existential form of domination is the precise problem the Kurdish people face. Many other peoples historically and in the present face it as well. It is the problem for which the solution will involve the liberation of the Kurds, which is our ultimate goal. As a novel conception of domination, therefore, we hope it will also allow for an eventual novel conception of that liberty, conceived as non-domination, that characterises contemporary republican political theories. Existential liberation, and hence existential liberty, will, we hope, be the solution to the problem of political domination understood as existential domination. In this article, our aim is only to establish existential domination as a distinct kind of domination and show how the Kurds are existentially dominated.

A Non-Moralised, Norm-Independent Account

Before developing this conception of politico-existential domination, we would like to place the view within the fourfold division of the kinds of power involved in domination summarily offered by Christopher McCammon (2018). Distinguishing between moralised and non-moralised, and norm-dependent and norm-independent, kinds of power involved in domination, McCammon presents a neat division of conceptions of domination based on the degree to which they are normatively and morally determined. Moralised theories say that acts of domination are *wrong* or that domination itself is a *bad* state of affairs or that dominators are particularly *vicious* and so on, based on whichever applied or normative ethical view one is employing. The problem of domination, for moralised conceptions, is that it entails an immoral or unethical use of power, most often as a violation of an agent's rights, a problem which could only be solved through some sort of moral rectification (Richardson 2002). For some, domination is a problem precisely because it is immoral or, more commonly, because it is unjust (Forst 2013). A moralised conception of domination requires, therefore, some prior

establishment of certain metaethical and moral views about the nature of moral properties and what makes judgments concerning them true or false. Usually, these views come in the form of either a robust or minimal moral realism – like moral naturalism or moral constructivism, respectively – and either a deontological or consequentialist ethic.

A norm-dependent view of domination, by contrast, concerns the social expectations, rules, claims to authority or legitimacy, or, more basically, the reasons that are resorted and referred to in cases of domination. Norm-dependency theorists want to claim that domination always occurs through some sort of baseline normativity, some sort of explicit or implicit acceptance of considerations in favour of the domination. For example, this view might claim that the phenomenon of, say, filial forms of domination can be described as the expression of an unlimited power not merely through the brute physical force of a parent over a child, but rather more often through the social norms, expectations, or rules – sometimes codified, sometimes not – that entail that a parent deserves to be obeyed by a child, that a parent has a legitimate claim of authority over a child. As a matter simply of whether a parent does indeed have such a claim and the child is indeed expected to act in accordance with it is, for norm-dependency theories, a wholly descriptive matter that is distinct from whether it is possibly morally permissible.

Norm-dependency, it is thought, need not necessarily be moralised. A case of domination can be attained with it not necessarily being immoral or morally anything at all. It could just be a social phenomenon that does not reach the level of moral relevance. Of course, more often than not, arguing that actual cases of domination are normatively salient is pre-text for deciding whether they are right or wrong, good or bad. On the other hand, just as there could be views of domination that emphasise its norm-dependency without mentioning its moral status, there could be views that emphasise domination's morally problematic nature without reference to whatever normative acceptability it might enjoy. Domination is first and foremost a violation, an extreme wrong done to the dominated. It need not be first mediated through social norms, legitimate or illegitimate, in order to be morally salient. For this view, regardless of how socially expected or accepted it is, domination is always a matter of the violation of an agent's rights or basic (Allen

1999) or best (Kittay 1999) interests. The views of Richardson and Forst mentioned above are not only moralised, but norm-dependent as well. For them, cases of domination involve not just violations of interests, but violations of the normative universe, the 'space of reasons', social agents are thought to operate in such that cases of domination involve forcing them to have duties or obligations that are intrinsically unjustified.

Unlike the other three options, non-moralised, norm-independent views of domination are meant to be concerned mainly neither with rights nor justice nor best interests nor social normativity, though, as far we can tell, those who offer such views – like Philip Pettit, who is a moral realist after all (Jackson and Pettit 1995) – usually end up drifting into holding either or both a moralised and norm-dependent view. A non-moralised, norm-independent view is meant to emphasise, firstly, what is conceptually and empirically unique about the kind of power expressed in a dominating relationship and, secondly, what kind of power is necessary for checking a dominant power. By focusing on the kind of power domination involves, these views pay special attention to the strategic nature of social relations whereby what one agents does is in direct or indirect response to the power wielded and actions performed by another agent. Domination is simply those cases of extreme inequality and asymmetry in the distribution of power found in social relations that allow one agent to control or constrain the actions of another agent with a degree of intensity that leaves that latter agent in a specifically weakened state. As an example of such an approach to domination, Pamela Pansardi offers a non-moralised, norm-independent view that understands cases of domination through the lens of social exchange theory, which regards social relations as exchanges of certain material and non-material goods (Pansardi 2013). The kind of power that such a view offers as capable of checking domination is usually some strengthened collective action like democratic procedures or some other form of legal redress.

Now, we would like to develop a theory of existential domination as an example of a non-moralised, norm-independent account of the power expressed in certain cases of domination. However, our motivation for doing so is based on considerations that are not explicit in other non-moralised, norm-independent accounts. One consideration is that we hold rather precise views in the realm

of metanormative and metaethical reflection. We are convinced anti-realists and, in particular, error theorists about normativity as such, which includes not only a denial of purported general mind-independent, categorical, and objective reasons, but moral reasons in particular (Streumer 2017; Cline 2018). To over-simplify, normative error theory says that, as a semantic or conceptual matter, normativity is irreducible to anything in the world, that to be meaningful normative terms must refer to entities or relations that are literally out of this world, but that since the world is all that there is, normativity is too metaphysically weird to possibly exist. No normative naturalist or non-naturalist view works, thus rendering all normative judgments false or untrue.

Since we hold such a metanormative view, our account of a distinct kind of domination will have to fail to resort to referring to any sort of normativity (moral, social, or otherwise). Such a thoroughgoing naturalism leaves us with only the world to deal with, which includes human society as just another natural phenomenon, and the power that permeates it as the medium for all interactions. While Ian Carter has correctly intimated that those who have thus far offered non-moralised, norm-independent accounts of domination are not committed to 'value-independence', we are claiming our account of domination is indeed committed to value-independence (Carter 2015: 280–281). We are committed to 'the complete detachment of our analysis from all ethical concerns', but that does not mean we are not deeply committed to existential concerns that arise from a desire to overcome the severity and extremity of certain cases of domination (Carter 2015: 280–281). One could strongly desire the liberation of victims of domination without thereby using a normative discourse to convey that desire. The language of power itself is all that is needed. Again, reasons are not reducible to desires and desires are merely natural facts. There are only wills, desires, acts, and the degrees of power or force they express and the conflicts their tensions engender. If something like normative error theory is true, all that there is, is the non-normative desire for liberation from domination anyway. If domination is a matter of uncontrolled power, then an analysis of domination such as ours can concern itself only with the way that power is expressed and not with its supposed normative import.[2]

The second consideration that motivates our desire to offer a non-moralised, norm-independent account of domination is that

emphasising the purported moral or normative significance of domination leaves domination itself, especially political domination, at least a little under-theorised. Much about domination is left as presupposed, including how cases of domination could be distinguished on the basis of certain social categories, when the emphasis is perennially on how wrong, bad, or illegitimate it is thought to be. Of course, this makes sense considering exceedingly few of the victims or witnesses of domination like it very much. The assumption is that moralising or reasoning about domination will then increase the effectiveness and speed of possible solutions to it. Whether that is true is an empirical matter about which we remain deeply sceptical. Our suspicion, based on what moral and social psychology has been telling us recently, is that it will not in the end prove to be very effective (Nyhan and Reifler 2010; Machery 2010; Rini 2017). Either way, we have already bracketed off the possibility of offering a moralised and/or norm-dependent account of domination. What interests us most is discerning what would make a case of domination a distinctly political kind of domination, and by 'political' we are going to have to focus on something more concrete than any moral and/or normative account could offer. The concrete nature of cases of political domination is often what is left under-theorised by other accounts and it is a part of what makes political domination existential.

Existential Domination

What is meant then by *political* domination? While an unlikely character to come up in discussions of domination, we will employ Carl Schmitt's notion of the political. This is because Schmitt is one of the few political theorists to have said something fundamental about the political and because this fundamental aspect of the political is required to explain cases of specifically existential domination. The following is an adaptation and reconstruction of Schmitt's conception of the political. Therefore, the conception of existential domination in what follows is Schmittian without being Schmitt's conception. We doubt, actually, if Schmitt would have liked this conception very much. We are thus, in a sense, using Schmitt against Schmitt.[3] For him, the political is the making of

the friend–enemy distinction. Such a distinction is made by human groups about other human groups. The political is, first of all, friendship or amity within and possible friendship or enmity between human groups. Such enmity does not entail permanent warfare, ceaseless violence, or even indefinite hostility. It only entails the ever-present possibility of such conflict between groups. But this possibility itself is an actual disposition of the groups that structures the relationships between them. It is the source of what is often called 'international order'. But it is also the source, we could say, of any internal political order as well. What enables concrete political order to emerge both within and between groups is the basic fact that groups are always a potential threat to each other's existence and they thus act accordingly. Human groups are existential threats to human groups. Humanity remains fundamentally dangerous, at least at this point in history and as long it retains a vaguely anatomically modern form (Schmitt 1996: 61).

For Schmitt, it is an undeniable anthropological fact that humans constitute themselves into mutually antagonistic groups. When such groupings reach a degree of contrast such that violent conflict between them becomes possible, then the political is instantiated. The political is distinct from other social categories insofar as it is the most intense form any human grouping can take. This intensity is expressed in the nature of the friendship within and enmity between human groups. Not any mere group of humans are friends. Friends are those who one is willing to fight and die for, those whose existence one desires to defend and preserve. Friendship is a necessary condition for the emergence of political order, and thus for the emergence of the political distinctions that make that order possible. A human grouping that is determined by friendship is, for Schmitt, a *people* (Schmitt 1996: 28; 2008: 59). A people are friends who are willing to fight and die for the existence of the entity they become through being friends. A people are constituted by the friendship between its members, with such friendship being the willingness to fight and die for each other and the entity, the human grouping, they compose through such willingness. Friendship, therefore, requires a degree of cooperation and coordination, and thus unity, that produces a sufficiently distinct entity, a people, for which it is desirable to be willing to fight and die to defend and preserve.

By necessity, friends have enemies. Enemies are other groups of friends, those that are friends to themselves, but not to other groups of friends, except in the limited sense of possibly provisionally entering into relations of relative, often mutually advantageous, peace. One could say friendship is possible between groups of friends, but external friendship is never as intense as internal friendship. Sometimes, peace between different groups of friends is not possible. Then we have enmity. Enmity comes in differing degrees of intensity for Schmitt. Least intense is 'conventional enmity', which is best found in the European legal order of the modern period of roughly the sixteenth to the early twentieth centuries, the *Jus Publicum Europaeum.* In this setting, enmity was bracketed off and constrained by the legal recognition that every group of European friends – understood as the fictional, moral, or legal persons known as states – enjoyed a just enemy status in case of war. This meant they were never meant to be morally or criminally culpable for the eventual hostility and violence enmity and hence war requires. Wars are fought and peace treaties are signed without the extremity of humanitarian or moralistic hyperbole exaggerating the conflicts' import. Here enmity is understood essentially as stylised duelling between separate but equal people (Schmitt 2004: 36). In this way, enmity was not allowed to become too extreme or reach the intensity of the kind of enmity that we think is involved in existential domination.[4]

Existential domination emerges in contexts of the most intense forms of enmity, what Schmitt calls 'absolute enmity'. While Schmitt more often preferred to describe the revolutionary rhetoric coming from a figure like Lenin as being permeated with absolute enmity (Schmitt 2004: 35), we would like to broaden out and extend Schmitt's meaning of this notion by claiming it is a kind of enmity where there is no recognition whatsoever of the status of one's enemies as friends to themselves, as being politically or legally real or unique. It is, moreover, an attempt to deny them the possibility of becoming friends in the first place. Existential domination then will be the result of applied or expressed absolute enmity. It is a denial of the humanity of one's enemies, and by humanity we mean what Schmitt meant: the propensity of human groups to exist, to become friends, to distinguish themselves as something truly politically real by being willing to fight and die for

their collective existence (Schmitt 1996: 36; 2004: 67). Existential domination as applied absolute enmity is the intentional discharging of measures meant to prevent an emergent or nascent friendship among a people not yet unified enough to count as a politically real people, that is, an expression of absolute enmity through the use of overwhelming force or uncontrolled power, a treatment of human groups as inhuman or subhuman so that they will be either annihilated or rendered permanently fragmented, forever left unable to unify and so exist as a genuine political entity, as a people. Existential domination is the domination of a potential or nascent people by a people whose aim is to prevent that people from becoming a properly political people, that is, from becoming friends to such a degree that they can become, in contemporary terms, a possible nation-state. What the perpetrators of absolute enmity want most of all is to not have to deal with treating a certain people in a conventional manner, as a separate but equal people who enjoy enough sovereign statehood, or at least constitutional independence, such that they enjoy true political existence. Existential domination is a kind of enmity employed not merely to defeat an enemy and then return back behind one's borders, leaving that enemy mostly standing and roughly self-sufficient, but to obliterate the very possibility of the emergence in the first place of an enemy as a politically distinct people legally required or at least expected to be treated as just another dignified duelling partner.

Existential domination can be expressed through a variety of forms of uncontrolled power also distinguished by degrees of intensity or extremity. The most obviously extreme expression of absolute enmity is genocide, though not all genocides are cases of existential domination.[5] It depends on whether the enmity has the specifically political motivation of preventing a nascent people from becoming politically distinct. A genocide can be driven primarily by something closer to blind racial or religious hatred, for example. Of course, this does not mean genocidal racial or religious domination could not be an aspect of cases of existential domination. What it means is that existential domination is a distinct kind of domination such that it involves domination perpetrated with the primary intention of preventing a people from becoming unified enough to become a distinct political entity, at first from becoming friends but ultimately from becoming a *de facto* and *de jure*

constitutionally independent sovereign nation-state, again to speak in contemporary terms.[6] Genocides that could be viewed as cases of existential domination, to name just a few examples, range from the many genocides of conquered or colonised indigenous peoples by Europeans to the Irish famine to the late Ottoman genocides against Greeks, Armenians, and Assyrians to the variety of Cold War-era genocides such as those in Bangladesh, East Timor, and Guatemala.

Existential domination can occur through other forms of mass political violence as well, ranging from distinct kinds of genocide such as utilitarian genocide, policide, or democide to ethnic cleansing to demographic controls like forced assimilation or displacement to mass disappearance to torture and executions and so on. What matters is the use of political violence for the sake of preventing a people from existing on their own terms, from existing in a politically real and self-determining manner. An obvious condition that sounds like existential domination is the colonial domination we started with, especially considering Margaret Kohn and Kavita Reddy's definition of colonialism as 'a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another' (2017). Colonialism is a form of existential domination to be sure, and thus classifiable as a specifically political form of domination, but we want to emphasise that colonial domination could be viewed as a way that existential domination occurs with existential domination itself being the broader phenomenon. For colonialism to work for the metropole, the dominated people need to remain overwhelmingly controlled to such an extent that political distinction and independence is impossible or improbable for them. It is, therefore, hard to imagine cases of colonialism that do not involve existential domination.

At the same time, existential domination is the broader social kind because it can include colonial domination within it along with the other forms of mass political violence mentioned above. Also, it can include less directly violent forms of domination, like being absorbed into a neighbouring hegemonic sphere of influence for example. After colonialism and geopolitical matters, in descending degrees of intensity, one could see certain legal and economic manipulations as means by which a people are existentially or politically dominated as well. Again, to summarise, what matters most is that the absolute enmity involved in existential domination entails

the denial and prevention of full political peoplehood of a human group not yet fully unified enough to count as friends, to count as an entity willing to determine, defend, and preserve itself in opposition to other equally distinct political entities, which in the modern era necessarily takes the form of a constitutionally independent nation-state.

To conclude this section, it is important to note Schmitt did not shy away from recognising the historical irony that his much-cherished conventional enmity was mostly an epiphenomenon secreted by Europe's discharging of something like absolute enmity on the rest of the world, especially through the near-global imposition of conquest, land-appropriation, and colonial forms of existential domination (Blanco and de Valle 2014; Kalyvas 2018). Indeed, he champions it as the very source of the modern European legal order: 'The colony is the basic spatial fact of hitherto existing European international law' (Schmitt 2011: 114). Outside of Europe, European conventional enmity did not apply. Rather, the rest of the world was deemed a spatial zone of exception where limitless violence and what we are calling existential domination could find unconstrained demonstration. As Andreas Kalyvas writes, 'Schmitt regarded this exception as foundational because it produced a normal, relatively pacified, secure, and stable space against an anomic zone, a lawless colonial space free for appropriation that became the indispensable site of limitless violence and wars of expansion and annihilation' (Kalyvas 2018: 38). Schmitt indirectly admits that European conventional enmity was contrasted against religious and colonial wars where a more absolute enmity could be released: 'Compared to the brutality of religious and factional wars, which by nature are wars of annihilation wherein the enemy is treated as a criminal and a pirate, and compared to colonial wars, which are pursued against "wild" peoples, European "war in form" signified the strongest possible rationalisation and humanisation of war' (Schmitt 2011: 142). To us, that sounds like a description of the absolute enmity being applied through the existential domination of non-European peoples we are claiming is constitutive of a distinctively political kind domination, understood in Schmitt's sense of the political.

On the other hand, Schmitt also wrote somewhat admiringly of peoples suffering existential domination resisting absolute enmity

through what he called 'real enmity', which included a begrudging respect for certain tellurian partisan groups and their leaders like Mao Zedong, Ho Chi Minh, and Fidel Castro (Schmitt 2004: 13). Real enmity is the martial response of a people to their existential domination through the use of the many irregular and asymmetric tactics found in the guerrilla wars of national liberation fought in the mid-twentieth century. As he often does in other contexts, Schmitt uses mythological imagery to describe the attempt to resist existential domination with real enmity. Borrowing a phrase from Bismarck, he describes the initiation of real enmity as a trip down the mythical river of Acheron, the river that leads to Hades, to hell (Schmitt 2004: 28). But we could invert the image and say that being the victim of absolute enmity, of existential domination, is already hell, and that real enmity is an attempt by a dominated people to paddle back up the Acheron and out of hell. The river Acheron is both the path into and out of the hell of existential domination. As we have argued elsewhere (xxxx), the Kurds are an example of a people who have responded to their existential domination with real enmity. Over at least the past half century, the Kurds have exhibited, through a variety of resistance groups, all the features of Schmittian tellurian partisans. Here we would like to establish just how it is that the Kurds, as merely one concrete example, suffer existential domination, to flesh out the conception of existential domination itself.

The Domination of the Kurds

Numbering around 45 million, the Kurds are the largest stateless people in the world.[7] They have been dominated by Turks, Arabs, and Persians for roughly the past few centuries, ranging from colonisation and divide-and-rule tactics utilised by the Ottoman and Safavid Empires to contemporary Turkish and Iranian suppression of Kurdish attempts at even the slightest amount of political self-assertion. Also, until very recently, Western colonial powers and then the Arab Ba'athist parties in Syria and Iraq were equally as excessive in denying Kurds the most basic of a political existence. Kurdistan is presently divided by four nation-states: Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran. The territories occupied by these states correspond to

the four regions of Kurdistan: Bakûr (Northern Kurdistan), Rojava (Western Kurdistan), Başûr (Southern Kurdistan), and Rojhilat (Eastern Kurdistan), respectively. We will go through each of the regions of Kurdistan and discuss some of the many ways Kurds have been and remain existentially dominated, that is, dominated in the political sense of being denied their existence as a really distinct people. The Kurds have been at the receiving end of absolute enmity by the peoples that surround them and so treated as being insufficiently human to count as a distinct political grouping, as friends, worthy of recognition and inclusion in the international order of conventional enmity.[8]

Before the Turkish Republic, one could argue that the Kurds exemplified the paradigm case of the mostly benignly neglected colonised subjects that republican theorists often use in their arguments to differentiate domination from the more liberal, obtuse, and modally narrow notion of interference. While enjoying something like regional autonomy in the mid- to late-Ottoman empire, the Kurds were still a dependent people upon an imperial system of rule that pitted them against each other and used them as pawns in border conflicts with Persian dynasties ranging from the Safavids to the Qajars. Kurds, just as other peoples colonised by the Ottoman empire, were not allowed anything like genuine self-determination or independence. With the emergence of the Turkish Republic in 1923, Kurdish domination ceased being a matter of colonial dependence and became one of direct subjugation.

The Republic of Turkey was founded upon an ideology of indivisible Turkish nationalism. It is conveniently summarised in the phrase often chanted at the rallies of its current president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan: 'one nation, one flag, one state' (Schleifer 2013). The Turkish constitution makes it clear that the Republic of Turkey 'affirms the eternal existence of the Turkish nation and motherland and the indivisible unity of the Turkish state' (*Constitution of the Republic of Turkey*). To achieve such an indivisible identification of nation with state, of the Turkish people with the Republic, the Turkish state has, from its beginning, had to engage in an indefinite ethnic-cleansing campaign against those ethnic minorities it trapped within its borders. The Kurds are the largest ethnic minority in Turkey, constituting roughly a fifth of its population. The Turkification process unleashed against the Kurds has been thorough and stark.

Along with denying there is such a thing as a Kurdish question, the Turkish state denied there even were Kurds in Turkey until the early 1990s, labelling Kurds 'mountain Turks'. This view is summarised succinctly in a line from an article in *Son Posta* published in April 1946: 'In Turkey, no Kurdish minority ever existed either nomadic or settled, with national consciousness or without it' (Quoted in McDowall 2004: 397). Stretching back to the late Ottoman period on through to the present, Kurds have been forcibly removed from their territory, Bakûr, and required to integrate into cities and town throughout western Turkey. The prohibition of the use of the Kurdish language, especially in schools, has been a weapon in the Turkish arsenal used in its aim to eliminate the Kurds as an independent people and fully assimilate them into an indivisible Turkishness. This answer to the Kurdish question goes back to the early ideologues of the Turkish state, with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk himself influenced by Namık Kemal and his claim that,

> While we must try to annihilate all languages in our country, except Turkish, shall we give Albanians, Lazes, and Kurds a spiritual weapon by adopting their own characters? … Language . . . may be the firmest barrier – perhaps firmer than religion – against national unity. . . . If we set up regular schools . . . and carry out the programmes which are now not fulfilled, the Laz and Albanian [and Kurdish] languages will be utterly forgotten in twenty years. (Quoted in Arai 1992: 3)

The Turkish obsession with eliminating the Kurdish language also involved changing the Kurdish names of towns and even animals. The coercion of the Kurds by the new Kemalist state did not stop at forced removal from their lands or the attempted elimination of their language and culture. It also involved the suppression of a series of Kurdish revolts in response to Turkey's reneging on promises of relative autonomy under the new regime. Claiming Turks and Kurds shared a pan-Islamic identity that was to be preserved under a retained caliphate, the nascent Turkish state received Kurdish support in confronting the occupying Allied Powers. However, after the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, which recognised Turkey's sovereign rights over its territory, talk of Kurdish self-government was completely dropped and harsh repression of the Kurds commenced. Between the early 1920s and late 1930s a series of Kurdish revolts were crushed – including the Koçgiri

(1921), Beytüşşebap (1923), Sheikh Said (1925), Ararat (1930), and Dersim (1937–1938) Rebellions – leaving well over 100,000 Kurds dead and many more displaced.

With the Eastern Reform Plan of 1925, the southeast of Turkey was placed under indefinite martial law. The Kurdish provinces of Turkey have been in some state of exception or emergency since the Republic's foundation (Mizrakli 2019). Atatürk's drift into veritable absolutism was well underway by the 1930s and any mention of provincial autonomy or minor federalism was forbidden. The Kurds now became what they always were for the new Kemalist regime: a civilisation problem to be solved, a culturally backward mistake to be remedied, an existential threat to be confronted. The Kurds have been a genuine political threat to the Turkish state since its foundation. The existential domination of the Kurds by Turkey stretches right into the present with the intermittent ferocity of its counterinsurgency campaign against the Kurdistan Workers Party and the near-ubiquitous arbitrary removal and imprisonment of elected Kurdish mayors and other political leaders by Erdoğan's AK party. In hindsight, the Kurds appear to be Turkey's primordial and permanent enemy. Indeed, they came to represent a force and a presence that struck the Turkish Republic with deep anxiety and existential terror, what some today describe as constituting Turkey's 'ontological insecurity' (Çapan and Zarakol 2019). It seems to follow that the ontologically insecure would regard the perceived source of their insecurity with absolute enmity and so utilise many of the most violent means of existential domination to thwart their nascent peoplehood.

Moving down to Syria, the Kurds of Rojava have similarly suffered existential domination from the predominantly Arab nationalist Ba'athist regime of the Syrian Arab Republic. While numbering around two million, and thus constituting only about 10 per cent of the Syrian population, the Kurds have been victim to one of the most elaborate Arabisation campaigns in the modern Middle East. The problem of gradual Kurdish self-assertion in Rojava came to represent not only a political, but an economic threat to Syria as Kurdish areas were predominant in grain, cotton, and oil production. The Jazira region was pinpointed in particular as needing to be Arabised. Lieutenant Muhammad Talab Hilal, the former head of internal security for al-Hasaka, a population centre in the Jazira,

conveniently summarised the approach the regime took towards the Kurds from the latter half of the twentieth century, leading up to the Syrian Civil War starting 2011. Hilal claimed,

> the bells of Jazira sound the alarm and call on the Arab conscience to save this region, to purify it of all its scum, the dregs of history until, as befits its geographical situation, it can offer up its revenues and riches, along with those of the other provinces of this Arab territory . . . The Kurdish question, now that the Kurds are organizing themselves, is simply a malignant tumour which has developed and been developed in a part of the body of the Arab nation. The only remedy which we can properly apply thereto is excision. (Quoted in McDowall 2004: 474–475)

Hilal then offered a twelve point plan to excise the Kurdish 'tumour' by disrupting and destroying the coherence of the emerging Kurdish community in Rojava, a list of measures that all go to constitute what we are calling 'existential domination':

> (i) displacement of the Kurds from their lands; (ii) denial of education; (iii) return of "wanted" Kurds to Turkey; (iv) denial of employment opportunities; (v) an anti-Kurdish propaganda campaign; (vi) replacement of local Kurdish '*ulama* [religious clerics] with Arab ones; (vii) "divide and rule" policy within the Kurdish community; (viii) Arab settlement of Kurdish areas; (ix) establishment of an Arab *cordon sanitaire* along the border with Turkey; (x) the establishment of collective farms for Arab settlers; (xi) the denial of the right to vote or hold office to anyone lacking Arabic; (xii) denial of Syrian citizenship to non-Arabs wishing to live in the area. (McDowall 2004: 475)

Many aspects of this plan were implemented, including the stripping of citizenship from over 120,000 Kurds. Along with the absolute enmity expressed in Hilal's sentiments, this plan can only be understood as an attempt to dominate a people in the explicit sense of preventing them from existing in a specifically politically real manner in the first place. The Syrian regime regarded the Kurds with the contempt one has for a political enemy that one does not wish to recognise as an independent unit, as a human grouping of friends that are really distinct.

In Başûr, or Iraqi Kurdistan, many of the same Arabising techniques were employed along with the measures of actively erasing any signs of Kurdish existence employed by the Turks. Following

the defeat of the Ottomans at the end of World War I, the British assumed colonial control of Iraq, where they at once encouraged and suppressed Kurdish attempts to achieve some form of autonomy or independence. Under the leadership of the Barzani clan, the Kurds fought a variety of revolts to a draw against a number of military leaders following the downfall of the Hashemite monarchy. With the Ba'athist coup of 1968 and the eventual ascension of Saddam Hussein, Arab–Kurdish relations started down a path that would lead to the most severe expression of absolute enmity, and hence existential domination, found in Kurdish history. The Ba'athists engaged in an Arabisation campaign that fully implemented Hilal's twelve measures and then some. Throughout Saddam's reign, thousands of Kurdish and Yazidi villages were razed to the ground, leaving hundreds of thousands homeless. Many were deported and sent to other parts of Iraq while formerly Kurdish areas were populated with Arabs. Mass dispossession and displacement was only an aspect of the Iraqi Arab existential domination of the Kurds. Amidst the intrigues and complexity of the Iran–Iraq War from 1980 to 1988, which they were hoping to exploit in the aim of obtaining greater autonomy, the Kurds faced what can only be described as a campaign of genocidal annihilation. Taking ethnic cleansing and forced disappearance to a heightened level of severity, Saddam unleashed his cousin, 'Chemical' Ali Hassan al-Majid, upon the Kurds in the aim of exterminating any resistance to the Iraqi regime.

Through eight separate military operations from 1986 to 1989, the Al-Anfal campaign led to the mass murder of over 182,000 Kurds. From ground assaults, aerial bombing campaigns, the total destruction of settlements, mass deportation and disappearance, to the abduction and enslavement of women and girls, firing squads used to kill as many men and boys of fighting age as possible, and indiscriminate chemical warfare, the Kurds were systematically subject to the most violent kind of existential domination for the primary reason of trying to assert their own political existence. The worst of the chemical attacks came on 16 March 1988 in Halabja. Using mustard gas and other nerve agents, Iraqi forces killed over 5,000 and injured over 10,000 Kurds. In the years following the attack, people from area affected showed higher rates of cancer and birth defects. Only with the American overthrow of Saddam's

regime in the early 2000s did the most intense forms of Iraqi Arab existential domination of the Kurds come to an end.

While there were a number of small Kurdish kingdoms in Rojhilat from tenth to the twelfth centuries, a successive line of Persian dynasties up to the present Iranian Islamic Republic have suppressed any attempts at self-rule by the Kurds. Without major events of mass death like the Dersim massacre or the Al-Anfal campaign, the Kurds of Rojhilat have been subject to a persistent effort to prevent their nascent peoplehood through the crushing of recurring revolts for autonomy. Starting as early as the sixteenth century, when they were not outright massacred, rebellious Kurds defeated by Safavid, Afshar, and Qajar kings were often deported and relocated around the Iranian plateau. In the 1530s, King Tahmasp I went on what can only be described as an ethnic cleansing campaign, razing Kurdish villages and towns, and relocating many Kurds to northern and central Iranian areas (McDowall 2004: 29–36). The descendants of those relocated to the northern Khorasan area came to amount some two million Kurds separated from their lands occupied in the west of Iran. By the twentieth century, Rojhilati Kurds continued to revolt against Iranian domination, with such domination now including many of the measures adopted in Turkification and Arabisation processes utilised in neighbouring states. The Pahlavi kings and then the Islamic Republic continued the effective policies of seizing land and executing or deporting leaders of Kurdish revolts. They would also rotate Turkish Azeri groups into Kurdish areas emptied of its Kurds. There was a rare moment of success in the formation of the Mahabad Republic in 1946, but after the Soviet Union removed its support, the Iranian regime crushed the experiment and executed its leader, Qazi Muhammad. Throughout the era leading to the present, following the Islamic revolution of 1979, the Kurds have continued to resist both political and cultural domination. The Islamic regime has been especially severe in its crushing of Kurdish attempts at self-expression, combining Turkish-style measures of denying Kurdish existence with counter-insurgency efforts that include new techniques like mass deforestation, in order to leave guerrillas with nowhere to hide, and the persistent torture and execution of many those who are caught showing even the slightest sign of political resistance. The Kurds of Rojhilat enjoy the least amount of autonomy of all of the dominated Kurdish groups.[9]

Conclusion

We have argued that, if one can conceive of the phenomenon of domination as being organised into distinct social kinds, and if one wished to supply a non-moralised and norm-independent account, one could claim that there is a distinctly political kind of domination that could be viewed, given its existential nature, as perhaps the most basic or primary form of domination. We have used Carl Schmitt's conception of the political and his theory of different degrees of enmity to show that a specifically political form of domination amounts to an attempt to deny a people an ability to exist as a people, as a distinct political entity. What we are calling 'existential domination' is the expression of the absolute enmity that the modern Eurocentric international legal order tried to bracket off, and thus unleash on the rest of the world, in its aim to secure a less moralised and hence less severe kind of conventional enmity that reduced relations between peoples to a much more stylised and constrained manner of confrontation.

We then argued that a clarifying contemporary example of existential domination is the treatment of the Kurdish people over the past few centuries. Ranging from genocide to ethnic cleansing to forced displacement to mass disappearance to torture and execution to less violent means like the banning of the Kurdish language, there has been no technique of existential domination that has not been used against the Kurds. And they have all been employed for the sake of preventing the Kurds from existing in a politically real way, as a truly distinct people. The desire to exist in a politically real sense on the part of the Kurds has been enough for Western colonial powers, Turks, Arabs, and Persians to unleash absolute enmity against them and so dominate them with the explicit goal of preventing their emergence as an independent people in need of conventional recognition. We feel this notion of existential domination could also be used to describe the treatment of other peoples, historically and in the present, including perhaps the Palestinians, Rohingya, and Uyghurs today. To end, we also now find ourselves in a better position to motivate and develop a novel republican theory of liberty as non-domination that would hopefully serve as the solution to the problem of existential domination, for the Kurds in particular, and for other dominated peoples as well. Existential

liberation will be that form of non-domination that allows a people to truly and independently exist.

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Notes

1. One may wonder, 'why the Kurds? Why address them in particular?' We focus on the Kurds, firstly, because we think they represent a paradigm case of what we call existential domination, and so serve as a clear example of the conception of domination we are trying to develop. Secondly, we focus on the Kurds because one of us is Kurdish, and thus our son is half-Kurdish, so the issue of determining the precise nature of the domination Kurds suffer seems especially relevant for us. We hope our son will one day be able to visit an independent Kurdistan. This is, in a sense, a brute and determining desire for us. In order for it to be fulfilled, the Kurds need greater conceptual clarity concerning how exactly they are dominated so they can then get to work liberating themselves. We hope the view developed herein helps with that. But this does not mean it only applies to the Kurds. It can be applied, so we claim, to many other groups in the world today who suffer a similar kind of domination. It seems to us political liberation movements the world over might benefit from greater conceptual clarity concerning from what more precisely they are seeking liberation. It might be hard to think of something more important than that for dominated peoples. We hope that these thoughts do not make our approach look question-begging, or at least not excessively so.
2. One may not be entirely convinced by this combination of Pasnardi's non-moralised, norm-independent account with normative error theory. In particular, while they may grant us the non-moralised part of the view, they could worry that we have not yet clearly shown how it is truly norm-independent. A word about norms, then. The normative error theorist does not deny people believe and speak as if

norms really did provide reasons for action or belief. After all, they say all such judgments are false, and in order to be false they must first exist *qua* judgments. They also admit that people believing and speaking in normative terms might affect their behaviour in some way, not because norms are causally efficacious (that they are not goes to show why they do not exist), but because beliefs and utterances might be. The important point here is that norms themselves do not do anything or play any causal role in reality. This is because, again, norms do not exist. That is, there are no norms because there are no reasons if reasons are, by a certain semantic or conceptual necessity (as they are for normative error theorists), considerations in favour of believing or doing something that pertains to us regardless of what we want. What we are saying then is that, as an ontological matter, there is only what we want. We are saying there are only desires and desires do not entail reasons and hence do not entail norms. Desires are neither the grounds for nor productive of reasons nor what reasons can be reduced to. So, desires produce no obligations because nothing does because obligations are conceptually required to be irreducibly normative and there is nothing irreducibly normative because there is nothing either reducibly or irreducibly normative insofar as normativity means the objective applicability and prescriptive force of a consideration regardless of what anyone wants and there is nothing at all like that in the world. All there is, is power and the desire for it and the desire to check it. Beliefs and utterances with normative content are false because they refer to nothing even if such normative beliefs and utterances are nothing but non-normative social facts *qua* non-normative beliefs or utterances. Our view is norm-independent, therefore, because reality is.

To flesh this out a little, if a child believes they have an obligation to obey their parents, the mere fact of that does not generate any actual norm-dependence in this case of domination. What explains why this child is dominated is not that they believe they are obliged to obey, but that its parents wield uncontrolled power over them. That *that* power dynamic gets consciously or discursively cashed-out in terms of the norm-dependency of obligations is simply a falsification of the reality, not a social fact that explains the case. This is again because there are no norms that are social facts, or any facts whatsoever, because there are no norms, which is again why the account we offer is indeed norm-independent. At least, this is what we suspect the normative error-theoretic response to this issue would be, and to which we find ourselves mostly sympathetic.

And any use of political concepts in this paper like 'sovereignty', 'independence', and 'self-determination' are not examples of normative or quasi-normative concepts, as Hilary Putnam might have said of a concept such as 'cruelty'. 'Sovereignty' has something to do with ultimate and final decision-making power. It is not like the concepts of 'authority' or 'legitimacy', which have something to say about obligations and obedience. 'Sovereignty' is purely descriptive in its own terms. Likewise, 'independence' just designates the negative state of not being dependent, not depending on the dominating will of another, which is again a merely descriptive matter. 'Self-determination' is the positive side of this same phenomenon. It is the power to enjoy one's independence, the ability to assert one's capacity to be. And so on. None of these concepts are themselves normative no matter how some may errantly give them that reading, nor do they generate obligations for anyone, again because in fact nothing does.

3. We could also add here that we are not indifferent to the highly specific contexts in which Schmitt himself wrote and how Schmitt's conception of the political changed somewhat over his long life, especially in response to critics like Leo Strauss. We realise that the conceptual analysis we are attempting here is playing a little fast-and-loose with the historical development of Schmitt's own views

insofar as our conceptual analysis is moving synchronically through a diachronic axis of different texts. We can apologise for that and claim that since we are neither trying to write an intellectual history of Schmitt's thought nor provide detailed textual exegesis of Schmitt's works, we may be forgiven for simply using Schmitt's conceptual framework for our own purposes, that is, to develop a novel theory of political domination that helps us understand the historical and present condition of the Kurdish people. After all, Schmitt himself might have appreciated this since he claims all political concepts have only a polemical meaning anyway (Schmitt 1996: 30). Also, this is precisely why we are claiming to be reading Schmitt against himself since he admittedly had only fleeting interest in those upon whom absolute enmity, and hence existential domination, was unleashed. In a sense, we can claim to be looking at political domination from the perspective of one of its victims, in this case the Kurdish people, which is not something Schmitt was especially interested in. We are using Schmitt's framework to see what his notion of absolute enmity actually means for a particularly dominated and yet still emerging people, namely the Kurds.

4. Here one could ask whether it is a people or a state that has the prerogative to decide upon the conventional enemy status of another group. For Schmitt, in the modern period of the *Jus Publicum Europaeum,* running from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries, a state simply is the concrete unity of a people insofar as it has constituted itself thusly and been recognised as such, so that there is no real distinction between a people and a state in this sense when it decides upon the conventional enmity of another people or state (Schmitt 2008: 59).
5. To avoid any confusion about the meaning of the word 'existential', we do not mean by 'existential' only the attempted genocidal annihilation, the attempted entire wiping-out of existence, of a nascent people by another people, but rather any of the attempts, and thus any of the means, by which a people are prevented from enjoying full political peoplehood, which in the modern period means the prevention of their forming a state. One way, the most intense or extreme way, a people can be prevented from obtaining full peoplehood in the form of achieving statehood is by attempting to genocide them. But there is an entire spectrum of other, less annihilationist, ways peoples aim to prevent the full political peoplehood of other peoples. By understanding political domination as existential domination, we mean by 'existential' then the political existence of a people *qua* a people, not the mere 'bare life' of the individuals who make up such a potential people.
6. An important issue to consider here is whether we are proposing to individuate all kinds of domination according to 'primary intention' or just politico-existential domination. We think it would depend on how the concept of 'intention' is disambiguated. On the one hand, if by 'intention' what is meant is that a conscious, teleological plan to dominate must direct an act of domination in order for it to count as an act of domination of a particular kind, then that seems too strong and subject to counterexamples. After all, there is the oft-cited example of John Stuart Mill instantiating sexual domination by marrying Harriet Taylor Mill when his conscious plan was to do precisely the opposite. Also, a fair share of cases of domination seem to coast on the momentum of a certain social configuration of asymmetrical power without much conscious reflection by the present actors involved. The actions that make up the pattern of a structure of domination need not all be the expression of a conscious aim to exercise uncontrolled power in a certain way even if many, if not most, do. That is, it is not necessary that kinds of domination be always individuated by the conscious, purposive intentionality of dominating actors even if such intentionality is rather predominant in most cases of domination.

   Now, on the other hand, if by 'intention' what is meant is something like Franz Brentano's phenomenological intentionality, then that might work as a way of

delineating the manner of individuating kinds of domination. Intentionality here means merely aboutness or content, what is represented or intended, whether it be conscious or unconscious. This does not require teleological, purposive consciousness. Mill's non-purposive sexual domination of Harriet Taylor Mill by marrying her – because marriage at the time could only be an instance of sexual domination insofar it was a means for men to use uncontrolled, unlimited, impositional, unconstrained, or unrestrained power over women – was intentional in the sense of being the content or object of the act of marriage he was involved in, and so an instantiation of sexual domination, without that being Mill's conscious plan or purpose in marrying her. So, we would be willing to say that kinds of domination are individuated by intentions if by intentions we mean the specific social content and thus structural properties of an act of domination whether or not that act is an expression of a conscious, teleological mental state. However, with respect to politico-existential domination, we are focused here on the likely majority of individuating cases of this kind of domination as being the expression of the conscious aim of a people to prevent the full political existence of another people. Yet, what ultimately individuates political domination, we could say, are not necessarily these conscious intention themselves, but rather that all acts of politico-existential domination are *about* the prevention of the full political peoplehood of a nascent people.

7. This number is not uncontroversial. Since the Kurds are stateless, and so we do not have a precise count of the number of Kurds in the world, there are some discrepancies in the population numbers offered. For example, according to the 2015 *World Factbook,* there are between thirty and forty million Kurds worldwide, while, according to the 2017 estimate of the *Kurdish Institute of Paris,* there are between thirty-seven and forty-six million Kurds. Following general demographic trends, we suspect the latter estimate to be the more accurate one. We would not be surprised to learn the number was even higher now.
8. To clarify: we would not say the ways the Kurds have been and are dominated in each of the four regions of Kurdistan amount to four separate kinds of domination instead of four examples or expressions or aspects of one phenomenon we are calling 'the domination of the Kurds'. In each region of Kurdistan, the Kurds are existentially dominated because they suffer differing degrees of absolute enmity. It is the absolute enmity unleashed against the Kurds insofar as they aim to have a political existence that makes their domination one unified event or reality and not four distinct or disparate ones. On the other hand, of course, we would admit that these differing degrees of absolute enmity are important differences. And the fact that these differing degrees took place in different geographic and historical contexts is also important for understanding their significance. But our main point is that all the degrees of absolute enmity that constitute the spectrum of what we are calling the politico-existential domination of the Kurds can be viewed as expressions of one phenomenon and not multiple phenomena separated by geography or time. There are only differences of degree among the instances of the domination of the Kurds, not real differences of kind.

   An another aspect of the domination of the Kurds that gives it more unity as a distinct political reality is that it is often summarised under the label of the 'Kurdish Question'. The 'Kurdish Question' is the question concerning the political status of the Kurds. Most broadly, the question is something like, 'what is to be done with the Kurds?' Or, more actively, 'what are the Kurds to do?' More specifically, the Kurdish Question asks, 'are the Kurds aiming for political self-determination and independence, and if so, how?' It is this more specifically existential aspect of the Kurdish Question that emerges in response to the domination of the Kurds that concerns us most here and which evinces its unity as a topic. See Gunes and Zeydanlioğu 2014, and Stansfield and Shareef 2017.

9. One could claim this summary of the treatment of the Kurds could be viewed as not so much evidence for an as-yet-undertheorised novel form of domination, but as merely the expression of the social-Darwinist tendencies of Turkish, Arab, and Persian nationalisms. We do not deny that the Turkish, Arab, and Persian treatment of the Kurds is indeed often consciously or discursively driven by something like a social-Darwinist nationalism, as we just saw evidence for. Our point is to emphasise the conceptual distinction between, say, this confessed nationalism and the existential import of its concrete expression. Issues of nationhood are secondary to the primary one of the intention to prevent a people to exist in a politically real way by another people. We are claiming that is the more basic and concrete phenomenon, which may take on a nationalist flavour for sure, as it certainly did throughout recent Kurdish history, but it is not the nationalism itself that amounts to existential domination but the intention to prevent a people from existing in a politically real way that goes to constitute this domination that does. Our suspicion is that the social-Darwinist nationalisms of Turks, Arabs, and Persians are more the post-hoc rationalisations of their politico-existential domination of Kurds than anything else.

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