

Peasants, bandits, and state intervention: The consolidation of authority in the Ottoman Balkans and Southern Italy

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Abstract

This paper explores the role of bandits and state intervention in the Ottoman Balkans and Southern Italy in the 19th century by using archival documents. I argue that the states may react similarly and radically when their authority is challenged in the periphery. The Ottoman Empire and the Kingdom of Italy developed the same forms of state intervention to fight against the bandits, even though these two states had fundamentally different political, cultural, and socio-legal structures. I present three different forms of state intervention: (i) victim-centred state intervention; (ii) security-centred state intervention; and (iii) authority-centred state intervention. These three forms consolidated the state's authority while making the two states both fragile and dependent on other social agencies in the long term. I further claim that consolidation of the state's authority manifests the paradox of state intervention and creates more vulnerabilities in traumatic geographies.

KEYWORDS

Ottoman Empire, peasants, bandits, Kingdom of Italy, state intervention

1 | INTRODUCTION

Peasant society is a sociocultural laboratory in which to explore banditry as a social phenomenon. The social conditions of peasants, inequalities in everyday life, and the unjust power relationships of the agrarian economy and the organization of rural

governance have rendered banditry a formidable practice across many different peasant societies. Banditry has been subjected to both romantic and realist attempts to construe its meaning. Hence, it has been one of the most widely used concepts in the exploration of crime, conflict, state-building processes, violence, and atrocities, particularly in the 19th century, when nationalism, industrial revolution, and a new international order set the agenda of major sociopolitical institutions at the national and international level (Arlacchi, 1983; Beaton, 1980; Cassia, 1993; Curott & Fink, 2012; Esmer, 2014; Hobsbawm, 1959; Schneider & Schneider, 2008). These developments in the 19th century reverberated through the role of bandits, who brought dramatic changes into rural life and challenged state authority at the same time. The rise of nationalism in the 19th century convulsed multi-ethnic countries, as happened in the Ottoman Empire when different ethnic and religious groups began to defy Ottoman rule in earnest. On the other hand, nationalism encouraged more interconnected communities to become unified—sometimes even forcefully—under the rule of a mighty power, as happened in the foundation of the Kingdom of Italy, as a result of initiatives led by the Kingdom of Sardinia, the House of Savoy, and an intellectual group that had gathered around the ideals of Italian patriotism (Clark, 2009; Davis, 1988).

We still know very little about the commonalities and distinctions of bandits within the broad spectrum of state intervention in diverse sociocultural geographies. Illuminating the relationship between state intervention and bandits in these two different regions will help us to understand the characteristic milieus of rural dissent, the reaction of society, and the forms of state intervention. The present paper aims to delve into a number of cases that shook the social and political order of the Ottoman Balkans and Southern Italy in the 1850s and the following two decades. The perplexing and tense sociopolitical panorama after the second half of the 19th century was subject to the deep influence of social and political transformations, in both the Ottoman Balkans and in Southern Italy, as a result of state restoration and the process of state formation, respectively, in these two territories. The notorious prevalence of bandits in the 19th century created both parallel motives and diversifications in the emergence of bandits and the position of state authority to deal with banditry activities, which became a marginalized social problem. The lack of comparative banditry studies exploring the status of banditry and its implications in different societies creates an enigma in the state–community nexus of contentious societies. The principal aim of this paper, therefore, is to provide a comparative account of banditry by presenting different forms

of state intervention, which were aimed at the eradication of bandits, in the Ottoman Empire and the Kingdom of Italy. Our responses to the questions raised in this paper will depict the role of state intervention when the great dissent in the periphery was echoed in the decisions of central governments to suppress the bandits.

The archival materials that I examined in this study were derived from two main repositories. The Ottoman sources were derived from the Prime Minister's Ottoman Archives (*Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi*) in Istanbul, while for the Italian sources I consulted the archives of the Institute for the History of Risorgimento (*L'Istituto per la Storia del Risorgimento Italiano*), based in the Museo Centrale Risorgimento in Rome. The archival documents in this study, presented in footnotes, were mostly dated from the 1850s to the 1870s. I mainly endeavour to clarify the reactions of the two states, which had different political and socio-legal structures, against the bandits. How was this reaction shaped according to the principal concerns and implications of state intervention? Finally, what were the outcomes of these interventions with regard to the various segments of society? The responses to these three questions also raised three main arguments in this research. First, the states, which have different political and socio-legal structures, devise similar responses to the social agencies when state authority perceives a severe risk directed against its existence. Second, I identify three main state intervention models applied by the Ottoman and Italian states to eliminate the bandits: (i) victim-centred state intervention; (ii) security-centred state intervention; and (iii) authority-centred state intervention. All these three interventions fostered the consolidation of the state's authority in the Ottoman Empire and the Kingdom of Italy. Finally, none of these three forms of state intervention targeted the core social concerns of the rural communities to eliminate the source of the great dissent. As a result, this failure to eliminate the source of the problem created *the paradox of state intervention*, which signifies the consolidation of the state's authority while, in the long term, creating more vulnerabilities for the rural communities.

There are five main sections in the remaining part of the paper. The following theoretical section explores state intervention and bandits, as well as the historical context of banditry and statehood in the Ottoman Balkans and Southern Italy respectively. Next, the rural dissent in the Italian and Ottoman cases is considered in line with the global developments of the 19th century. In the following two sections, I examine the Ottoman and Italian archival documents that revolve around three main concepts, namely victims, security, and authority. Finally, in the concluding section, I

draw attention to the role of social injustice and its outcomes. I underscore why it is important to explore the cultural imperatives of comparative research in society and history in future studies.

2 | STATE INTERVENTION AND BANDITS

According to Hobsbawm (1959, 2000 [1969]), a social bandit does not merely symbolize a powerful social character governing the socio-economic life and cultural conflicts within a community. A social bandit is also a local figure who uses his power to bring about “justice” or to retaliate in the name of the powerless. However, the cases that I present below convey the message that the definition of social banditry is highly problematic. The negative and positive connotations of social banditry depend on the historical and local particularities of a social setting and the perceptions of local people about particular individual bandits or groups of bandits. For instance, one of the well-known bandits in Southern Italy was Giuseppe Nicola Summa, who was mostly known as “Ninco Nanco”. He strictly prohibited the members of his bandit group from threatening the poor for purposes of extortion, while regularly demanding ransoms from the nobles of the region (Bianchi, 1903). On the other hand, many bandit groups terrorized the villages and extorted from the poor even though they shared the same social and cultural habitus with their victims. This is the reason why every bandit group is a social formation and has commonalities when the principal issue is misgovernance and injustice in that social context.

Tilly (1985, p. 170) argued that legitimacy is gained through wars in the state-making process, so that banditry and war-making can be located on the same continuum. Tilly (1985) also drew attention to a connection between the credibility of violence and the perpetuators of violence, whether it is applied by a legitimate actor, such as state, or an illegitimate actor. This explains why the Ottoman and Italian states treated some of the peasants in the name of public safety as if they were “criminals” and “barbarians”. The anthropological perspectives, on the other hand, inform us that agrarian resistance is highly related to development in a rural setting, and to the struggle to survive in respect of the land, on which the peasants have set their hopes for the future (Scott, 1985; Smith, 1989).

The three models of state intervention analysed in this study demonstrate that states may engage in a paradoxical situation when state authority follows the trajectory of radicalization without targeting the source of the main social problem. Thus, the

paradox of state intervention occurs when a social problem sustains itself in either the same or a new structure, even if state authority deploys different forms of intervention, and uses both soft and hard power to tackle that social problem. However, different forms of state intervention foster the consolidation of the state's authority while rendering the main source of the social problem either unfixed or transformed into a new guise. The same social problem and its new variants widen the scope of victimization among the powerless, whereas state authority emerges as a recognized force and engages in collaborations with the new social agencies or the variants of former local forces—as long as state authority assures its superiority. Turning to our case, the cases presented in this study show that the Ottoman and Italian state authorities employed different forms of state intervention and used soft power through social protection. Yet the soft power had little influence on the elimination of bandits, as it primarily addressed the suffering of victims after they had been attacked by bandits through the victim-centred state intervention model. Both states also used soft and hard power together in security-centred state intervention. Nevertheless, different from victim-centred state intervention, they achieved the elimination of a number of bandits through the law enforcement agencies. Finally, the elimination of bandits reached its peak with authority-centred state intervention, which not only wiped out a significant number of bandits but also increased the numbers of civilian victims greatly by destroying an entire village that did not accept the state as a superior authority.

Not even the highest numbers of bandit eliminations, however, could guarantee the complete eradication of the source of the social problem. More fundamentally, the vulnerabilities of the peasants persisted with the state intervention. The paradox of state intervention, therefore, explains how the state gains social control in the periphery while, ironically, its authority depends on other social agencies. In fact, this shows us that a recognized authority can hold fragile power at the same time. Furthermore, social injustice in the periphery sustained itself through state incapacity. This was the reason why mafia-type syndicates appeared, given the vacuum of brigandage and banditry in the Italian context, shortly after the completion of the unification process in the 1870s. Similarly, in the Ottoman context, the source of the social problem was fuelled by ethnic and religious conflicts that also resulted in the full independence of a number of nations in the last quarter of the 19th century in the Ottoman Balkans.

The bandits prevailed as social agents who held influential local power and notable authority in the countryside during the long 19th century. The two state

authorities, on both sides of the Adriatic Sea, engaged in reforms to defeat the bandits, who posed a high risk to the subjects of the two states, and to public safety, and who even aimed at delegitimizing the social and political order in these two countries. Yet we need to explore the historical context of banditry and statehood in the Ottoman Empire and Southern Italy before the presentation of archival materials.

3 | REVISITING THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF BANDITRY IN THE OTTOMAN BALKANS AND SOUTHERN ITALY

3.1 | The historical context in the Ottoman Balkans

Şaki—*eşkiya* in the plural—is the key term used by the Ottoman authorities to indicate bandits and brigands. *Şaki* etymologically signifies a desperate or miserable person; however, it gained a more negative connotation since it was mostly used for bandits. In addition to *eşkiya*, klephts demonstrated a traditional banditry character in the rural and mountainous areas of Ottoman Greece. The klephts became a social problem even after Greece gained its full independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1829: “The klephts were mainly fugitives, debtors, outlaws, misfits, adventurers, victims of oppression, men not attached to the land by property or other obligations, who took to the hills and became brigands” (Koliopoulos, 1989, p. 195). Similar to the klephts, hajduks were also used as popular aspirations to point out the bandits in both the Ottoman Empire and the Eastern Europe (Petrović, 2003). These multilayered facets of bandits made them part of a complex and difficult social problem. Nevertheless, what makes banditry a perplexing concept lies in the diverse characters and activities of the bandits, which included positive attributes such as resisting oppressors or fighting for justice. On the other hand, certain bandits also committed heinous crimes and consolidated their authority through ravaging and intimidation. As a result, *eşkiya*, hajduks or klephts were formidable figures in a rural community that was subjected to social injustice, public uncertainty, social isolation, and a vacuum of authority from time to time. Yet it is necessary to revisit the historical roots and social conditions of rural dissent to locate the bandits legitimately in the transforming social and political dynamics of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century.

The socio-economic and political decline after the Russo-Turkish wars of the 18th and 19th centuries made discernible the urgent need for major agrarian reform. Furthermore, each failed reform package prompted a flood of angry responses from the lower social classes in the rural communities. For the Ottomans, the 19th century was

a period of state centralization (Quataert, 2000, p. 54). The gradual but deepening degradation in social life was conflated with the rise of corruption in the many parts of the country, including the Balkans, from the early 19th century onwards (Kasaba, 1988, p. 58). Some of the responses of the troubled people in the rural communities had used violence as a strategic instrument, directed against the Ottoman local elites and rulers, in the 18th century. This resistance had introduced repressive, deterrent, and oppressive methods into the sphere of public life in order to end the social tumult in the rural areas of the Balkans. Those revolts were sometimes perceived by the local rulers as attempts by the Sultan's subjects to resist his "holy" authority (Ursinus, 2005). This formidable social dissent did not terminate in the 19th century. In fact, the situation deteriorated further, as the uprisings gained the support of certain ethnic bandit members to resist the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, the Ottoman official forces hired and used bandits as an irregular militia, known as *bashibozuks* (literally, "crazy-heads"), to repress the dissent in the rural areas (Özcan, 1986, p. 130). Consequently, an important segment among those who were resisting were labelled as looters and bandits, particularly by the appointed local governors when their higher social status was tested against these attempted uprisings.

Through an examination of a number of archival resources related to bandits during the Tanzimat era, I have found that banditry activities increased exponentially while the Tanzimat reforms were striving to keep the Empire united, integrated, and more prosperous. The rise of nationalism was a major risk posed by the differing ethnic bandits against the rule of the Ottoman Empire, so nationalism was a stimulating aspect that brought the fight of the various ethnic groups to the fore. The uprisings by bandits who were part of diverse ethnic groups, such as Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians, Bosnians, Montenegrins, Macedonians, and Albanians, was appreciated from time to time by their own rural communities, with growing support particularly during the second half of the 19th century. However, in addition to these national and religious insurgents, an important part of the rural dissent and the attacks of the bandits was the source of social injustice (Inalcik, 1964). In fact, the drafters of the Tanzimat reforms were aware of the prevalent social injustice. The economy of the state was primarily based on agricultural products and land tenures, so much so that the administrative governance and tax collection were enmeshed in the authority of one man—in other words, the mutesellim. The infamous authority of the mutesellim (*mültezim*) was finally abolished in 1842 due to the Tanzimat reforms; however, his authority was mostly sustained when the rights

of the mutesellim were transferred to the mutasarrif in 1864 (Karpat & Zens, 2003, p. 16).

The Tanzimat reforms, which began with the Edict of Gülhane in 1839 and continued up to the declaration of the first Ottoman constitution in 1876, fostered hopes of bringing newfangled solutions to bear on the grim social problems and the political hubbub. The reaction of the peasants against the violation of the reform packages resonated through the 1841 Niš uprising (Uzun, 2002) and the Vidin uprising in 1849 (Inalcik, 1964). These two attempts at resistance were the most important symbols of the rural dissent, in which the bandits played an important role in the surge of uprisings and its spread. Yet the Porte had to cope with a more challenging situation when the bandits played an even greater role through the revolts in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the uprisings of the Bulgarian community in the following decades. Additionally, the rural communities also sought, through aggressive and unyielding efforts, to negotiate with those implementing the complex and sometimes contradictory Tanzimat reforms in the periphery (Petrov, 2004). The archival documents cited in the following sections show that differing state interventions resonated in the periphery to different degrees. The three main forms of state intervention—victim-centred, security-centred, and finally authority-centred—endeavoured to overcome the rural dissent while fighting the bandits and consolidating the state's authority.

3.2 | The historical context in Southern Italy

I briganti and *i banditi* are the two terms that were mostly used by the Italian state to refer to the brigands and bandits, respectively. In addition to the common use of brigands and bandits, the Italian archives examined in this study mostly mentioned *I malfattori* (evildoers), *i male intenzionati* (the malicious ones), *i barbari* (the barbarians), or *i malviventi*, which literally signifies those who live in a bad or evil way, while narrating different cases related to the bandits. Unsurprisingly, similar to the Ottoman state discourse, the various words used to imply banditry demonstrate the negative connotations in the vision of the Italian state with regard to bandits and brigands.

Brigandage has a long pedigree in various parts of Southern Italy, from the 15th century onwards (Ciccone, 2011; Santino, 2000). On the other hand, similar to the Ottoman case, the prevalence of bandits in the 19th century was related to the lack of state security, land governance, social injustice, state incapacity, and state

transformation. Yet the rural areas in Southern Italy were structured by idiosyncratic circumstances. In this regard, and unlike the Ottoman Mediterranean and the Balkan region, state centralization was weaker, and there was no effective police force in the rural parts of Southern Italy in the first half of the 19th century (Fiume, 1984, p. 109). Yet, more dramatically, the region deteriorated socio-economically because social injustice and rural dissent were rampant both before and after Italian unification (Gaudioso, 2002; Massari, 1961, p. 93). Unlike the Ottoman Balkans, feudalism flourished as a mode of government in Sicily until the early 19th century. Even though the Bourbon rulers of the Kingdom of Sicily abolished feudalism in 1812, they could not engender significant changes in the degenerating social conditions of the peasants (Mack Smith, 1965, p. 90). The blockage of a new and democratic constitution by Ferdinand IV of Naples and the ongoing social dissent among the rural communities united the nobles and peasants against the rule of the Bourbon Kingdom (Scianò, 2004). The various attempted uprisings led by the peasants of Sicily, starting particularly in the early 19th century, intensified after the 1830s. The death of Ferdinand IV of Naples in 1859 spurred a new social and political phase for the unification of Italy.

The invasion of Sicily by Garibaldi in 1860, with 1,000 ambitious volunteers accompanying him, known as the “Expedition of the Thousand” (Italian, *Spedizione dei Mille*), leveraged public panic, fostered some hopes, and at the same time crystallized the grievous social problems of Sicily among the different sectors of society. Conversely, the new state formation and repressive policies in Southern Italy geared those lingering social problems towards reproducing their new forms within a culturally marginalized and politically fragile conundrum. The Southern Question was part of that conundrum. Indeed, the Southern Question, as a holistic term, was invented and used commonly in the late 19th century to express the historical, economic, and social problems of Southern Italy, while a number of reform packages were dealing with uncertainty and the status quo in the region (Dickie 1999; Moe 2002; Romano 1966; Schneider 1998; Viterbo 1966). The state’s perception in regard to the suppression of brigands criminalized the region through orientalist, populist, and sometimes violent policies. The Italian unification, the *Risorgimento*, was an ambitious statecraft project that mostly realized its ultimate goal—at least on paper—with the unification of Italy in 1861. Yet this glorified historical background to the unification of Italy created the rural poor as “the big losers” (Clark, 2009, p. 98). The weak state institutions, therefore, catalysed brigandage activities and determined their prevention either through the

employment of radical forces to suppress them or the integration of armed men into the social system through the force of elites in the periphery.

The archival documents studied in this paper show that there were numerous repressive and ferocious operations organized by the Kingdom of Italy against those brigands to consolidate the state's authority, restore social order, and guarantee public safety, particularly within the first 5 years of the *Risorgimento*, from 1861 to 1866. However, there were also other forms of state intervention. The Italian state intervention, which is explored in the following sections, informs us that it was concerned with certain sociopolitical issues to differing degrees. Akin to the Ottoman case, these principal issues revolved around the concerns of victims, the guarantee of public security, and the consolidation of the state's authority.

4 | RURAL TROUBLES, MODERNIZATION, AND GLOBAL CHANGES IN THE OTTOMAN AND ITALIAN SOCIAL LANDSCAPE

The tax collector, local governor, and military authorities in the rural towns and villages vied for the monopolization of power that eventually diminished the capacity of the state to consolidate the rule of law and guarantee public safety. A Weberian form of bureaucratic dysfunctionality caused a surge of insecurity in the periphery. The most striking impact of local misrule was evident in the clientelist and patronage-oriented relationships: "Personal cleavages were superimposed upon the organizational ones. Each new appointee at each level of government tried to get his own protégés appointed to critical posts to safeguard his position against future intrigues" (Karamursal, 1940, p. 202; see also Heper, 1980, p. 86). The decisions of local courts and the correspondence between Istanbul and the periphery ensured that the Ottoman central government recognized corruption and the mistreatment of local people as common social problems in both Anatolia and the Balkans (Bogaç, 2003; Haim, 1994; Herzog, 2003). This was the reason why "the imperial orders sent to provincial centres regularly warned judicial and military officials against acts of corruption and oppression, indicating the presence of these practices as continual concerns" (Cosgel, Ergene, Etkes, & Miceli, 2013, p. 362).

The modernization of the Ottoman Empire was aimed at overcoming the grip of the country with regard to socio-economic, military, legal, and bureaucratic matters. The local notables gained important power in the periphery from the 17th century onwards, and officially consolidated their focal role in the socio-economic system in

the 19th century. The local notables and Mahmud II signed the *Sened-i Ittifak* (Deed of Alliance) after a series of negotiations. The aim of this alliance was to regulate the centre-periphery relations, render the polity more effective, and reduce the vulnerabilities of victims in the villages through the guarantee of a certain degree of authority to the local notables (Barkey, 2008, p. 205; Sadat, 1972; Yaycioglu, 2016). However, the Porte weakened the authority of the local rulers in the following decades of the 19th century by centralizing the Ottoman polity and creating new democratic channels in the form of local assemblies, in which the representatives of the diverse communities and the local rulers appointed by the Porte had to work together. On the other hand, the attempts at modernization by the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies were different from those of the Ottoman Empire. Even though the governance of land was the factor that galvanized social dissent in both Sicily and Southern Italy in the first half of the 19th century, the attempted reforms were not oriented from bottom to top, but the reaction to the failed reforms was. One of the most striking examples of a local reaction from the people was evident in a manifesto that was distributed from hand to hand 3 days before the birthday of King Ferdinand I, on January 9, 1848, stating the following:¹

Sicilians! The time of useless supplications is past. Protests, requests and peaceful demonstrations are useless. Ferdinand has scorned them all. Are we, a freeborn people, reduced to shackles and misery, to delay any longer in reconquering our legitimate rights? To arm, sons of Sicily. The force of the people is omnipotent: the unity of the people will bring the fall of the king. The day of 12 January 1848, at dawn, will bring the glorious epoch of universal regeneration.

Tilly (1973) rightly demonstrated that modernization does not directly produce conflict. However, the wider implications and the governance of modernization characterize the ups and downs of this process. From this standpoint, the fundamental issues at the core of the social dissent in both Southern Italy and the Ottoman Balkans were embedded within social injustice, exploitation, and local misrule, which marginalized the desperate rural communities afflicted by the great socio-economic changes of the 19th century. Northern Italy and the Piedmont region, under the rule of the Kingdom of Sardinia, had the most modernized structure in the diverse political geography of the Italian peninsula in the 19th century. The commercialized middle and

¹ Cited by Tilly (1973, p. 425). For the original source, see Candeloro (1966, p. 122).

aristocratic classes in Piedmont stimulated the unification of Italy through state-seeking nationalism, against the state-led nationalism of the South by the Bourbon loyalists (Tarrow, 1977; Ziblat, 2006, p. 78).

The great changes in the global economic arena and their impact on the local economies created a reaction among the peasants. The Ottoman Empire's centralization philosophy in this period was aimed at responding to the concerns of peasants through increasing the capacity of central authority in the periphery, in order to deter the deteriorating administration and the social pressure of local elites over the dissident peasant community. As happened in other regions, the area of cultivated land and agricultural production was increasing in correlation with the rise in consumer demand.

The global developments in rural economy and the implications of modern agricultural cultivation also caused a surge in consumption and production in the 19th century. However, the increase in agricultural production did not eliminate rural dissent. The economic degeneration was conflated with political dissent when the ethnic and religious concerns of the Balkan communities lessened the attachment of the people to Ottomanism and Ottoman rule. Eventually, this will for dismemberment spurred their quest to establish an independent political entity. Transportation gained strategic importance due to its accumulative force over economic capital in the 19th century. Compared to Western Europe, rural Anatolia in the Ottoman Empire lacked a well-developed railway system. Even though the Balkans was smaller than Anatolia in terms of geographical size, the difference in track mileage between Anatolia and the Balkans was not very great. However, the capital to construct these railway lines depended on a supply of finance from European financiers, which eventually increased the economic dependence of the Ottoman Empire on the European powers (Quataert, 2000, pp. 118–120). The ability of the Ottoman state to tax its subjects was germane to understanding the attempted revolts that occurred in both Anatolia and the Balkans (Aytekin, 2013). For example, the application of the equality principle enforced by the Ottoman Empire's secular law system to the collection of taxes in order to consolidate social justice frustrated the privileged Muslim notables in the 1834 peasants' revolt in Palestine (Beinin, 2001, p. 33). However, the violent tax revolts in the 19th century were limited in Anatolia and the Middle East when compared to the Balkans. In the 19th century, the social class organization of the peasantry in the Balkans created greater dissent in Istanbul than other revolts that occurred in North Africa, the Middle East, and Anatolia. During the tax revolts, the fertile agricultural environment and yet

the scarcity of territory became enmeshed, by the leading ideologues of the national uprisings, with the instigation of nationalistic sentiment.

The invasion of Sicily by various kingdoms from the 13th century onwards alienated peasants and their concerns were not taken seriously either by the invaders or the local notables, who enriched themselves by exploiting the peasant labour force. In the early 19th century, the deteriorating social conditions of the peasants compelled the abolition of feudalism through laws implemented in 1812 and 1816; however, these regulations did not bring about a major progression in the everyday life of peasants (Jamieson, 1999, p. 12). The lands distributed as part of these new legal changes were distant from the towns and not as fertile as those in the central and northern parts of Italy (Hilowitz, 1976, p. 14). The commercialization of agriculture, a more powerful middle class, and a well-connected transportation system in Northern Italy put the peasants in a better position when compared to the South. Therefore, in addition to the environmental and geographical conditions, the gap between the different social classes in Southern Italy was based on the governance of lands, prevalent social injustice among the peasants, and the eminent role of local notables in the control of capital. In 1863, shortly after the unification of Italy, there was no great change in the social conditions of peasants. General Alfonso La Marmora explicated the relationship between the different social classes in Southern Italy, stating that "... If ignorance and ferocity are the characteristics of the inferior class, egoism and intrusion into the dominating positions are the so-called features of *gabellotti*" (Serra, 2009, p. 36). The new Italian state and its officials recognized these degenerating social conditions while portraying those who were revolting through the lens of cultural relativism, and labelling dissidents as criminals and emotional reactionaries (Whelehan, 2014). The victory of the ruling classes in the suppression of the peasant revolts in Southern Italy also influenced Italy's poor economic performance (Sereni, 1971). As a result, the *Risorgimento* "remained essentially an element between the Savoy monarchy and the urban high class, whereas large segments of the peasant population were, at best sceptical about or even fiercely against, the process of unification" (Guiso & Pinotti, 2013, p. 309).

In addition to the local dynamics, agricultural production was also under the influence of great global changes. The expansion of staple agriculture after the American Civil War changed the economic history of the United States, and its impact across the world in the late 19th century was deliberate. The spatial distribution of

prices paved the way for the expansion of Western cultivation and influenced local wheat prices (Harley, 1978). The development of an international economic system influenced the agricultural economy through the regulation of wheat production in Britain and the USA. This influence was the start of a series of events that triggered more global reactions in rural areas. The cheaper grain brought about lower rents throughout Europe and increased real wages in Britain, whereas it diminished other places because of different trade policies as well as political and agricultural divisions among European countries (O'Rourke, 1997; Winders, 2009). Yet the main characteristic in the outcome of cheap American grain was the destabilization of the European agricultural economy and the impoverishment of rural communities, which resonated dreadfully in the Mediterranean rural landscape. This sinister impact had a negative effect on the production of fruits in the region (Morilla Critz, Olmstead, & Rhode, 1999).

The economic transformation in the 19th century combined with the technological developments and canalized the leading forces to implement capitalist policies fiercely. This formidable combination constituted the pillars of the liberal and industrial economic agenda of the imperialist powers: “The long history of ‘capital-intensive’, epoch-making innovations—above all, the early modern shipbuilding–cartographic revolution, the nineteenth century steam engine and the internal combustion engine of the twentieth century—has indeed been marked by the geographically specific concentration of capital in particular places, above all in the heartlands of the Dutch, British and American hegemonic regimes” (Moore, 2010, p. 393). Transportation in the 19th century was developed by means of steam locomotives in addition to the construction of railways. All these changes connected different economic geographies and eventually caused a surge in the expansion of the capitalist system. The integration of the Southern Italian peasantry into the rapid changes in the global agricultural economy was dominated by the political aspirations of the new regime in Northern Italy, hence undermining the peasant reaction against the unification of Italy. Unlike the North, in Southern Italy the local notables stimulated the increase in agricultural production by exploiting peasants, and reaped the benefits of this integration by taking the governance of lands under their control. In doing so, the new regime established its implicit dictatorship over Southern Italy by leaving the explicit hegemony in these areas to the local notables (Brögger, 1968).

It was not a coincidence, therefore, that the local reaction against exploitation and social injustice promulgated violence and brigandage activities. Dal Lago (2005) has developed an important framework by comparing social and rural dissent in South America with Southern Italy in the 19th century, arguing that, even though a certain number of differences existed between these two geographies, the role of local elites and the exploitative labour system in both places deepened social degeneration. The socio-economic decline of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century and its struggle to relieve the rural population, interfaced with pressures posed by the global changes in the control of agricultural production. The tensions, particularly in the Ottoman Balkans, between the Christian and Muslim peasants and the notable classes crystallized disputes over land within the context of local dissent (Yaycioglu, 2016, p. 30). Even though the struggles of the Ottoman Empire to draft social reforms were more aspiring and deliberate than those of the Northern Italian politicians, the rise of nationalism brought new difficulties to the other side of the Adriatic Sea, while Italian unification aimed at undermining the reaction of local people in the southern part of the country. The state interventions in the Ottoman and Italian social landscapes remained under the influence of regional and global changes in one way or another. The state power was under pressure to regain political and social control over its territories. However, this struggle of both states created different state intervention models, and none of these interventions either tackled the source of dissent or relieved the traumatic conditions of the peasants completely.

5 | THE OTTOMAN STATE INTERVENTION: VICTIMS, SECURITY, AND AUTHORITY

This section is based on archival documents that demonstrate how the Ottoman state responded through victim-centred, security-centred, and authority-centred state intervention. Victim-centred state intervention was at issue when people were injured or fatally victimized in the prevention of banditry. The case of Hüseyin reveals the generous Ottoman policies to provide state support for the victims. Hüseyin was a zabtiye, working in the police force in Mitrovica, located in the northern part of Kosovo. After his assassination by bandits, a letter issued on March 12, 1859 put Hüseyin's family on a salary immediately and ordered the arrest of the offenders.² Hurşid, who

² BOA. A.MKT.MVL. 105-78, 7 Sha'aban 1275—March 12, 1859.

was also a zaptiye, lost his life while chasing the bandits of Montenegro and Austria. A salary was immediately assigned to his family by the Ottoman government.³ A similar decision was made for the family of Ibrahim, who lost his life in a similar manner to Hurşid.⁴ The common point of all these documents is that the deaths of law enforcement officers are narrated elaborately, and they demonstrate empathy with the relatives of the victims.

Assigning a salary was not the only practice of victim-centred state intervention. Decisions about compensation depended on the evaluation of each case separately. The case of Agrafa, noted below, demonstrates how the incidents were assessed on a case-by-case basis, according to the outcome in each case. Agrafa, a mountainous region in central Greece, hosted notorious bandit groups. The bandits were at an advantageous in these remote areas, which provided considerable scope for shelter and hiding places. Furthermore, the bandits in these highly inaccessible areas managed to defeat various Ottoman army forces, as happened in 1867, when a junior officer in the armed forces and five soldiers lost their lives while fighting bandits. The Porte decided to give some money to the sons of the soldiers, but a regular salary was not assigned.⁵ Unlike the Agrafa incident, a year later, the Porte put the family of Yahya Ağa on a salary after he lost his life while chasing bandits. Yahya Ağa was a high-ranked army officer, in the Tabur Ağası (battalion network).⁶ If we take into account that the Empire was running a budget deficit, particularly after the second half of the 19th century, the cost of fighting the bandits and compensating the families of victims aggravated the already fragile financial situation.

The peasants in Nikšić, located in central Montenegro, became victims of the bandits twice. First, their houses were burnt down. Second, in Geçkal, a new group of bandits seized stocks of foodstuffs and grain that had been sent to the peasants by Ottoman officials from Trebinje, located in the southern part of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 41 miles away from Nikšić.⁷ While the bandits' attacks leveraged panic in the region, the Ottoman social system sought alternative methods to help victims in

³ BOA. A.MKT.MVL. 117-24, 6 Muharrem 1277—July 25, 1860.

⁴ BOA. A.MKT.NZD. 183-65, 22 Sha'aban 1272—April 28, 1856.

⁵ BOA. IDH. 562/39130, 26 Z.Hicce 1283—May 1, 1867.

⁶ BOA. IDH. 579/40345, 24 R.Evvel 1285—July 15, 1868.

⁷ BOA. A.MKT.UM. 461/99, 5 Ramadan 1277—March 17, 1861.

the periphery when they were victimized. In a very similar case, when the peasants in the village of Azdovik, in Herzegovina, were afflicted by bandit attacks, numerous donations were implemented by the central Ottoman government to ameliorate the deteriorating social situation in the village.⁸ When, in 1860, bandits burnt down 17 houses and a tower in Trebinje, the Porte allocated a budget to reconstruct those 17 houses and the tower.⁹ Yet again, the Porte sent food subsistence and other logistical goods to the peasants of Nova Varoš in eastern Serbia and Višegrad in eastern Bosnia-Herzegovina when they were attacked by bandits.¹⁰

In 1859, the Ottoman Empire published a decree to ameliorate deprivation in the villages that was suffered as a result of raids by bandits during the internal social upheavals. The decree offered significant benefits to the victimized peasants by abolishing tax payments for 8 years and returning the already collected taxes that had been charged mistakenly. To this end, the central government in Istanbul ordered the dispatch of *defters* (tax registers) to obtain the names of taxpayers and reschedule the tax collection.¹¹ These forms of compensation, supported by the state, also encouraged certain individuals from the reaya to prepare a petition and ask for the help of the Porte. Peasants rearing sheep and goats had to pay an additional tax annually, which was called *ondalık*. Halid, one of these peasants from Salonika who was obliged to pay the *ondalık*, was economically victimized by bandits. However, he did not hesitate to ask the Porte to compensate him for his loss.¹²

The two documents¹³ of the Şuray-ı Devlet (the Council of State) that are discussed below are significant materials conveying the message that the Ottoman Empire pardoned the tax obligations of communities in Bosnia when the residents of these communities were victimized in attacks by bandits. The documents were signed by the members of the Council of State, who were Mehmet Sahib, Mustafa Nazmi, and Ibrahim Edib, and sent to the local communities in Travnik, which is in present-day central Bosnia. The community of Belive was devastatingly ill-treated as bandits raided the houses of residents and seized their cattle. The tax on approximately 10,000

⁸ BOA. A.MKT.UM. 484/36, 6 Muharrem 1278—July 14, 1861.

⁹ BOA. A.MKT.MVL. 119-73, 18 Safer 1277—September 5, 1860.

¹⁰ BOA. I.MMS. 25/1080, 18 Ramadan 1292—October 18, 1875.

¹¹ BOA. A.MKT.MVL. 110-41, 29 Sefer 1276—September 27, 1859.

¹² BOA. A.MKT.NZD. 200-47, 16 R.Ahir 1273—December 14, 1856.

¹³ BOA. İ.SD. 39/2049, 8 C.Ahir 1295—June 9, 1878.

kilograms of grain and the cash payment of tax, which was equal to 877 qurush and 22 para,¹⁴ were all pardoned. What is more, the peasants of Bubek and Kabul from the town of Novi Pazar became refugees in Serbia due to attacks by bandits. The letters also confirmed the exemption of tax from these people as well as the *mültezims* who collected the tax from the peasants on behalf of the Porte.

Victim-centred state intervention was not the only method applied by the Ottoman Empire. Banditry also posed a significant threat to public safety, so security-centred measures were employed by the Porte from time to time. The security-centred form of state intervention was more prevalent when there was a local reaction against Ottoman authority. The next case,¹⁵ which I will present below, shows that the Ottoman Empire applied both instruments of social justice and repressive methods at the same time to suppress the bandits. The people of Karşu Peyve in Bosnia, who were residents of around ten different villages, resisted the Ottoman Empire because of tax concerns. On the other hand, attacks by bandits created agitation in these villages. The vulnerable peasants asked for help from the central government of the Ottoman Empire to fight the bandits. In return, they declared that they would accept the superior authority of the Porte and its local governance, and that they would abandon their attempted uprisings against Ottoman authority. The central government sent armies into this region, suppressed the bandits and guaranteed the safety of the villages. Ten leaders of the community were invited to the Porte. Upon their arrival, the leaders of the community received presents. These gifts even included seeds to produce grain. Accordingly, the governor of Bosnia was also informed by the central government in Istanbul regarding these developments.

The two forms of state intervention mentioned above—victim-centred and security-centred—offer important hints with regard to understanding the reaction of state and society in difficult times. However, the last form of state intervention, authority-centred state intervention, is both radical in its use of force and less flexible in its orientation towards entailing a progressive society and a negotiable governing model. The primary reason for this distinction lies in the perception of state authority, which identifies certain bandits as an existential threat directed against the social and political order. This drastic perception about the bandits also stimulated the Ottoman

¹⁴ 40 para was equal to 1 qurush.

¹⁵ BOA. IDH. 576/40143, 19 Safer 1285—June 11, 1868.

state to implement radical policies that were both destructive and ultimate. The two examples briefly presented in the next paragraphs, the Cretan revolt in 1866 and the April Uprising in 1875, demonstrate the radical vision of authority-centred state intervention.

Political dissent in Crete became much more intense with Greek independence in 1829. The religious support for a revolt against Ottoman rule not only increased the motivation of the bandits, but also created new conflicts between the religious authorities and the governing cadre of the state. One of the most prominent examples of this conflict occurred in the Sanjak of Chania, which was the most important region in the Vilayet of Crete. The island had already become notorious for Ottoman governance, given its attempted uprisings from the early 1820s onwards. Since that time, the resistance had been repressed with bloody Ottoman attacks. The revolt in Crete erupted and gained an international character when around 300 armed insurgents and 600 civilians tragically lost their lives in the surrounded Arkadi Monastery in 1866, after the intervention of Ottoman forces (Senisik, 2011, p. 76). The monastery crumbled when barrels of gunpowder in the church were set on fire. The spread of news about this atrocity across Europe, in various journals, magazines and newspapers, helped to delegitimize Ottoman rule on the island (Stillman, 1874, p. 87). Authority-centred state intervention was determined to succeed at the expense of tragic outcomes, as happened in the case of Arkadi Monastery. Hence, the Ottoman victory in the region also signified the erosion of zones of resistance and the restoration of state authority.

The April Uprising in 1875 dramatically weakened Ottoman state power in the Balkans. The well-planned preparations for an uprising among the Bulgarians intensified in the autumn of 1875, when the fragilities of Ottoman authority crystallized during the Bosnian Uprising (1831–1832) and the Herzegovina Uprising (1852–1862). Todor Kableshkov, who was a young and ambitious nationalist, educated at Istanbul's Lycée Impérial Ottoman de Galata-Sérai, led the attempted uprising with his band in April 1876 (Perry, 1993, pp. 31 and 245). Even though the number of victims remained a disputable issue among the conflicting factions, the Ottoman casualties were severe in the first half of the uprising, which began in the final days of April 1876. In a couple of days, the conflict expanded virally into central Bulgaria. The response of the Porte, the authority of which had already been defied formidably in Bosnia and Herzegovina, against the Bulgarian insurgents and bandit groups was relentless. The Porte's reaction was not regulated very well, as had happened in many previous suppressions. What is

more, the attacks by the insurgent groups on bridges, roads, telegraph lines, and government buildings¹⁶ radicalized the Porte into taking punitive measures. The Ottoman Empire had already become convinced that it should respond harshly to the rebels when the news about the victimization of Muslims and civilians reached the Porte. The uprising was controlled with bloody attacks by irregular soldiers, *bashibozuks*, particularly in Batak and neighbouring villages, which were severely afflicted by the bloodshed and terror of the *bashibozuks*. Thousands of people lost their lives tragically in the *bashibozuk* assaults. However, the malgovernance of the Porte became more palpable internationally when the *bashibozuk* violence drew furious attention abroad, because of the widespread atrocities in the region. What is more, the journalists and diplomats who visited the locations of the uprisings narrated and reported the violence eloquently. The foreign media, particularly *The Times* and the *London Daily News*, conveyed those bloodstained events on their pages (Reid, 2000, p. 453). Thus, authority-centred state intervention is distinguished from victim-centred and security-centred state intervention because of its radical nature and the persistent revolt of the communities against the ruling regime. Therefore, both the revolts within the communities and the radical interventions of the state led to traumatic and iconic events.

6 | THE ITALIAN STATE INTERVENTION: VICTIMS, SECURITY, AND AUTHORITY

This section examines the three forms of Italian state intervention. Victims, both from the civilian population and state officials, received different types of state support. The policies to guarantee public safety were also part of the agenda of the Italian state, which implemented harsh legal measures and social control through a security-centred state intervention. Finally, the Kingdom of Italy, as a newly established state, embraced radical suppression policies when it perceived that its ultimate authority was under threat. Thus, the Italian state organized a number of attacks against the rebel towns and zones of resistance that did not recognize state authority. The attacks of the Kingdom of Italy demonstrate that authority-centred state intervention was both traumatic and iconic in the state-building process. In the following paragraphs, I will analyse how state intervention revolved around the differing priorities of the authority of the state.

¹⁶ Doc. 451, Report by Mr. Baring on the Bulgarian Insurrection of 1876, pp. 333.

Yet, similar to the Ottoman case, these priorities concentrated on the three main targets: (i) victims; (ii) security; and (iii) authority. All these three state interventions determined the course of the state reaction while responding to the dreadful challenges posed to the state.

The claims of Luigi de Benedictis offer important indications with which to conceive the state's perception with regard to brigandage. This perception among Italian officialdom influenced the state reaction against brigandage and banditry. When we look at the claims raised by Benedictis in 1862, the impact of cultural relativism is evident. Furthermore, there was an alarming psychosocial perception about the rise of brigandage activities that would categorize the newly established regime in the class of uncivilized nations.

There was also a growing resentment against the new rule in Sicily. The forces resisting the Kingdom of Italy did not remain silent. A manifesto was declared in Palermo on October 29, 1862 to mobilize people against the new authority on the island. The emotional discourse of the manifesto was both dramatic and straightforward. One of its first paragraphs was devoted to the social and cultural dichotomy between the North and South by means of the following statements: "In Turin, they sing, laugh, dance, feast; in the provinces of Southern Italy, there is crying out, shooting, suffering because of the devastations of troops and brigands."¹⁷ Moreover, the letter continued by expressing the great concern regarding the new city council's priorities, which made the council busy with sending presents to Maria Pia of Savoy when she got married to Luís I of Portugal: "... And these people know very well that the municipal council of Palermo, which does not pay the debts of the Commune, is able to find money to prepare and send gifts to the royal princesses to imitate the Pope who sent his wedding gift to the daughter of Vittorio Emanuele II when she married the King of Portugal."¹⁸

The public legitimacy of the Kingdom of Italy was also premised on its ability to provide social assistance for vulnerable groups, including both the civilian population and state forces, who were injured, killed, or economically ruined while fighting bandits and brigands. The nine different decisions explain how the state strove to recover these vulnerabilities through embracing a victim-centred state intervention. For example, at its meeting held on January 24, 1864, the commission for the repression

¹⁷ M.C.R. 668, 34(11), no. 61264, *Al Popolo*. Il Comitato. Palermo, October 2, 1862.

¹⁸ Ibid., paragraph 5.

of brigandage granted premiums and subsidies:¹⁹ these grants denoted the financial support of the Kingdom of Italy towards defeating brigandage activities with ease, through giving money to those people who cooperated with the state in this process or who were victimized because of their cooperation.

After 3 years of these decisions by the committee, there was still an intensive distribution of funding among those civilians who were either the victims of brigandage or who had received awards and prizes because of their collaboration with the authority of the state. For instance, one of the decisions made in Basilicata declared the award of “425 lira and its division into three pieces to be given to *Vitiello Gerardo, Cesare Giovanni, Muro Lucano* for presenting the brigand *Vitiello Francescantonio* to the justice”.²⁰ This state support was also used effectively to support soldiers. Thousands of soldiers received medals because of their roles in the suppression of brigands. Cesari (1922, p. 167) reported that four gold medals, 2,375 silver medals, and 5,012 Medals of Honour had been distributed. The number of cases of distribution of money prizes in different places and at different times, particularly during the long 1860s, show that victim-centred state intervention was one of the main methods adopted while fighting the brigands. However, it was not the only one. The following paragraphs point out that security-centred and authority-centred state interventions widened the scope of state authority, paved the way for state violence, and limited the fundamental rights of dissident communities.

The state reaction against the brigands and bandits was predicated on the possibility of their success as the sole ruling authority, which would delegitimize the power of the newly established state after the fall of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Accordingly, the sometimes reactionary attitudes of the citizens and bandits towards the state forces fostered the degree of the harsh decisions taken by state authority to rule the region as an independent and omnipotent agency. The verdict delineated below is a crucial example demonstrating how the intervention of the state was aimed at the extension of its authority over the entire community in Siracusa in Sicily, through

¹⁹ M.C.R. 543, 4(6). *Provincia di Basilicata, commissione per la repressione del brigantaggio e per la distribuzione del fondo raccolto con la soscrizione nazionale*. Il Presidente Cav. Pasquale Ciccotti, il segretario G.M. Rossi, il prefetto Veglio. Potenza, February 10, 1864.

²⁰ M.C.R. 543, 7(8). *Provincia di Basilicata, commissione provinciale per la repressione del brigantaggio e per la distribuzione del fondo raccolto dalla soscrizione nazionale*. Potenza, December 13, 1866.

raising concerns related to public safety and the legitimacy of state authority:

Some unsavoury people were committing themselves to engaging in certain acts, which cannot be found in a civilized country. Stones were thrown at the Band of the National Guard while they were playing in the marina on Sunday. Some people stopped in the Theatre for a political demonstration on Monday, the following week. These are not only the responsibilities of the insensitive people who committed these acts, but also the citizens who tolerated such acts and eventually fostered the concealment of the Authority.

The honour of the City concerns all of you.

Any person who, in any way, attempts to change the public order either through acts, or words, will be arrested or taken to the disposal of the Military Tribunal in Catania or Messina. Those who know the perpetrators, but do not collaborate with the Authority will also be denounced in the municipal and military authority according to its illegal outcome.

Denouncing the disturbers is a requirement of Patriotism whereas hiding them is pusillanimity and it is eventually equivalent to complicity.²¹

The concerns about public safety increased other measures within the context of security-centred state intervention. Unsurprisingly, within a week of the incident in Siracusa, Filippo Brignone, the highest authority responsible for the mobilization of troops in Sicily, claimed that “the military represents the government so everyone must be respectful towards the military as if it were the government”. In the following statements in the same document, he underlines that every harsh measure needs to be taken to defeat the brigands, and he insists on the treatment of every resident as a brigand if that person bears arms.²²

In line with the assertions raised by Brignone, the mayors played a crucial role in the suppression of the brigands through collaboration with the military authorities. Emilio Pallavicini’s letter to the mayors of the provinces of Terra di Lavoro, Aquila, Molise, Benevento, Salerno, Avellino, and Basilicata is discernible proof of this collaboration. More importantly, his letter ordered crucial duties for the municipalities in the interests of public safety by reporting the locations of bandits and brigands, through forcing the relatives of the bandits to collaborate with the law enforcement

²¹ M.C.R. 668, 34(7), Comando Generale della Sotto Divisione Militare Territoriale di Siracusa. Siracusa, September 5, 1862.

²² M.C.R 668, 34(6), Comando Generale per le truppe mobilitizzate in Sicilia. *Il Giornale Officiale di Sicilia*. F. Brignone. Palermo, September 12, 1862.

agencies, and even considering assigning a salary or giving money prizes upon receiving their confessions regarding the bandits' hideouts.²³

One of the remarkable concerns with regard to public safety was the complete elimination of arms, excluding those in the possession of the state forces. Hence Eberhardt, the colonel who was responsible for the repression of brigands, claimed that the disarmament of the civilians in Agrigento (located in southern Sicily) was an obligation for public safety. The security-centred state intervention used, *prima facie*, the 'public safety' concern to legitimize its intervention. However, the harsh reaction of the state even against civilians shows that the state had a different agenda beyond the public safety concern.²⁴

In addition to the victim-centred and security-centred state interventions, the Kingdom of Italy also applied the authority-centred state intervention, which was radical in its reaction, similar to the case of the Ottoman Empire. The massacre at Pondelandolfo represents one of the most prominent examples of state crime, when authority-centred state intervention was imposed both zealously and brutally.

The villagers and brigands resisted and captured a group of soldiers when they arrived in Casalduni to seek fugitives: 41 of the soldiers were then killed, on August 11, 1861 (Di Fiore, 2014, pp. 338–339). The retaliation against the killings paved the way for a radical state reaction, which was neither proportional nor prudent. Pondelandolfo and Casalduni, which were 4 miles away from each other, were sacked by the Piedmontese military forces on August 14, 1861. The development of the massacre demonstrates that the aim of the military force went further than taking control in the city: "Leave not a stick standing in Pondelandolfo and Casalduni" was the ruling code of the massacre when General Enrico Cialdini ordered Colonel Geatano Negri to suppress these two unsubdued towns (De Matteo, 2000, p. 210). Carlo Margolfo, from the Italian Royal Army, narrated the carnage eloquently, conveying how a set of planned and yet violent attacks convulsed the region dramatically:

²³ M.C.R. 543, 8(8), no. 143 circolare. *Comando Generale delle truppe per la repressione del brigantaggio nelle provincie di Terra di Lavoro, Aquilia, Molise, Benevento, Salerno, Avelino e Basilicata*. Emilio Pallavicini. Salerno, July 29, 1869.

²⁴ M.C.R. 668, 34(10), no. 61263. *Comando Generale delle Truppe Mobilizzate nelle Provincia di Grigenti*. Il Colonnello Eberhardt, Grigenti, October 1, 1862.

We entered the town and immediately began shooting the priests and any men we came across. Then, the soldiers started sacking, and finally we set fire to the town ... What a terrible scene it was, and the heat was so great that you could not stand it there. And what a noise those poor devils made whose fate it was to die roasted under the ruins of the houses. But while the fire raged we had everything we wanted—chickens, bread, wine, capons. We were short of nothing. (Duggan, 2008, p. 223)

After the troops turned to Benevento, Colonel Gaetano Negri prepared a report and sent it to the provincial governor on the following day, stating: “At dawn yesterday justice was done to Pontelandolfo and Casalduni. They are still burning” (Duggan, 2008, p. 224). Even though the exact number of deaths remains uncertain, hundreds of people died on the night of the massacre, 3,000 people lost their homes, and many escaped. Also, 573 people were put on trial and punished with either life imprisonment or hard labour (Duggan, 2008, p. 224). The Italian authorities eradicated the bandits at the expense of civilian victims. Indeed, their attempt contained parallel motives when compared with the Ottoman authorities, as was presented above with regard to the April Uprising and Arkadi monastery incidents.

7 | CONCLUSIONS

The suppression of bandits also instigated the reaction of the local community. This dilemma created its own sociocultural paradoxes, which lured the local agencies and state authorities into vying for power. Crime, violence, and social exploitation were the constant variables that became embedded in the everyday lives of rural communities during the process of state restoration and the state foundation process in the Ottoman and Southern Italian social spectra. The perplexing relationship between the peasants and the bandits did not just criminalize the rural communities. More vehemently, and in both cases, the same relationship prompted radical state suppression when the central and highest state authority perceived the reaction in the periphery as a perilous risk directed against its own authority. It is clear in hindsight that there are diverse reasons for the upsurge of bandits in the Ottoman Balkans and the Italian peninsula during the 19th century. Yet the common reasons, which rendered banditry epidemic, were predicated on the dynamics of social injustice in rural governance.

The victim-centred state intervention prioritized state support and event-based social protection for the victims. The salaries assigned to the victims and their relatives, and the economic, logistical, and infrastructural support for the communities, were

symbols of state power, which were also intended to increase trust in the state's authority and institutions. However, victim-centred state intervention offered mostly temporary solutions. Neither the Ottoman Empire nor the Kingdom of Italy drafted the necessary agrarian reforms to change the dynamics of socio-economic life fundamentally and to make social justice the ruling principle. Indeed, the rural dissent and banditry resonated as the outcomes of social injustice and state misrule. Unlike victim-centred state intervention, security-centred state intervention prioritized public safety and employed the law enforcement agencies to guarantee public safety. The Ottoman and Italian state authorities conceived many of the attempts at resistance as the product of banditry and brigandage within the context of security-centred state intervention. This perception also fostered the criminalization of the dissident communities in the zones where the uprisings were taking place. In fact, an important part, if not all, of these uprisings were primarily related to the great social dissent and the withering hopes of the peasants with regard to agrarian reform and social progress. Finally, authority-centred state intervention was the most radical form among the various intervention models, because of the conviction that the social and political order of the state was under ultimate threat, and that the same threat needed to be obviated *prima facie*. More importantly, the ultimate threat against state authority was used to legitimize the destruction of the zones of resistance, and even led to massacres to suppress the uprisings or to execute revenge in the cases presented above. The Ottoman Empire and the Kingdom of Italy employed authority-centred state intervention when both states perceived that there was no more effective way to subdue the resisting communities. This determination also created radical changes in the demographic, social, and cultural structure of the zones of resistance through the massacres, in the Italian case, at Bronte, Pontelandolfo, and Casalduni, and, in the Ottoman case, with regard to the April Uprising and Arkadi Monastery (see Table 1).

<INSERT TABLE 1 NEAR HERE>

The victim-centred, security-centred and authority-centred forms of state intervention could not eradicate the source of the social problem, which was not primarily addressed by these intervention models. Nevertheless, the three forms of Ottoman and Italian state intervention consolidated the central state authority in the periphery, but also made the state's authority more fragile and dependent on the local

forces, rather than on the principles of social justice and the rule of law. The paradox of state intervention, thus, prevailed in the Ottoman and Italian cases because the state interventions provided a temporary relief in the short term, while leading to longer and more formidable periods of contention in both the periphery and the centre. A comparison of the Ottoman and Italian cases shows that the actors of peasant society were not passive figures of the periphery. In fact, their reactionary stance was a remarkable indication when they were subject to injustice to such an extent that the rural communities determined the course of state policies and the degree of state intervention. This is another reason why the characterization of bandits with strong narratives and attempts to resist finds its central place in folklore, poems, and ballads. Indeed, the bandits cannot be reduced merely to the outcome of political and social dissent in contentious societies. The collective memory of peasants who disseminate the stories of bandits through ballads, stories, and poems points to the direction of future research in this field. In addition to the importance of cultural materials, comparative research also needs to take the cross-sectional archival materials into account to explore the embedded injustice in the everyday lives of rural society, and the form of state intervention, which has determining implications and outcomes for both the structure of the state and of society. In this context, delving into the factual and yet tragic cases in the court documents and military and state archival sources might open new gates to an exploration of the complex social and cultural dynamics of vulnerable rural communities in different periods of history.

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TABLE 1 The forms of state intervention in the Ottoman Empire and the Kingdom of Italy

	Victim-centred state intervention	Security-centred state intervention	Authority-centred state intervention
	Local people	State officials	
The Ottoman state			
intervention	✓	✓	✓
The Italian state			
intervention	✓	✓	✓
Principal concerns	Event-based social welfare system and social protection	Public safety in the name of state legitimacy	Ultimate submissiveness to the political and social order of state authority
Implications	Economic, logistic, and infrastructural support for the victims	Law enforcement (police and military force) and legal measures	Radical change in the zones of resistance
Outcomes	Recognition of and collaboration with the state power as the ruling authority and the increase of trust among local people and state officials towards the state institutions	Criminalization of the zones of resistance and clashes, ranging from small-scale to large-scale, between the conflicting factions	Traumatic and iconic state interventions resulting in the erosion of zones of resistance

