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The linguistic difference that stood between Arabs and Kurds proved to be very difficult for the Baʿthist regime to overcome. The regime attempted a variety of measures to bureaucratically control northern Iraq. And while sometimes successful, the difficulty in determining the identity of anti-regime activists, and those who abetted them, plagued the regime.[67] Sunni Arabs, on the other hand, shared the religious and linguistic characteristics of the regime's core, thus making that community legible to the Baʿth Party. The ease with which information could be gathered about opposition to the regime among Arab Sunnis left disgruntled individuals with less incentive to hide their beliefs. And while the Sunnis of Iraq typically were less aggrieved than either the Shiʿa or the Kurds, there did exist variation within the Sunni community on this dimension. For the Shiʿa, however, a shared language made their community more legible than the Kurds, but still less accessible than the Sunni, given the regime's own origins within the Sunni community. Barriers to legibility were intensified within insular, Shiʿi religious communities.

The challenges physical geography posed for state penetration of society mapped onto the Iraqi population in a similar fashion; Kurdish areas of the Iraqi north tended to be mountainous and difficult to penetrate and, similarly, the wetlands of southeastern Iraq also proved to be a safe haven for anti-regime activists, including Shiʿi Daʿwa Party members and draft evaders.

A central shortcoming of my analysis is that even as I analyze variation in the salience of group identity, the project begins with ethnic groups.[68] In

67. Cultivating and maintaining local informants from within groups that are culturally distant would seem to be part of an effective strategy for increasing the legibility of hard-to-read segments of society. This strategy has been widely used by autocrats in a variety of contexts, including multi-ethnic societies like the USSR. In Iraq, the regime engaged in surveillance of the population both through its own agents as well as through the use of informants (Faust 2015, 155). Yet informants are unable to completely replace the infrastructural capacity of the state. For example, given the clandestine nature of much of the political activity in northern Iraq, the regime would have been required to have informants within relatively small units of Kurdish militants or be able to observe civilian support for Kurdish fighters that often took place under cover of darkness. An escalation of policing capacity, on the other hand, allows for forms of monitoring that are more effective against organizational compartmentalization, a common feature of militant groups. See della Porta (2013) on the issue of how clandestine groups are often both fragmented and hierarchical in their organization, which may help to avoid penetration by the state or to increase the difficulty of recruiting informants.

68. Fearon (2006) defines an ethnic group as socially relevant when people notice and condition their everyday behaviors on ethnic distinctions; ethnicity becomes politicized when political coalitions are organized based on ethnicity.

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particular, I posit the existence of groups and then analyze the conditions under which group identity becomes salient. Like other scholars who study the salience of ethnic identification, I struggle to explain why certain ascriptive identities would be viewed as a dimension of difference to begin with.[69] The challenge of analyzing "ethnicity without groups"[70] is a real one that exists beyond my scope.

My characterization of the relative legibility of the three ethno-sectarian groups is time-invariant in the short-term, but surmountable with a long-term investment in state-building. Indeed, the positive economic conditions enjoyed by Iraq during the mid- to late 1970s proved to be favorable for handling such concerns. In the 1970s, Iraq was a rapidly modernizing state, flush with foreign currency reserves as a result of rising oil prices. The Iraqi state spent freely in a bid to extend its reach through the building of roads and schools and new job creation in the public sector. While the political elite was dominated by the regional and tribal kinsmen of Hussein, the benefits associated with the economic boom were felt by large swaths of the Iraqi population.

But the economic expansion of the 1970s was interrupted by a costly war in the 1980s, followed by more than a decade of debilitating economic sanctions. Rapidly declining economic conditions had important political implications. And while there is little doubt that Baʿthist-initiated foreign policy actions were undertaken with domestic political considerations in mind, evidence from a variety of sources suggests that the regime leadership often anticipated vastly different reactions by foreign powers than those actually observed. In fact, the Iraqi leadership was poorly positioned to predict many of the domestically relevant externalities associated with these foreign policy choices. In some cases, Hussein may have been insulated from high-quality estimates of success as a result of incompetent or sycophantic advisors. In other cases, he and his advisors may have misread signals from international actors or failed to make accurate predictions about how international actors would respond to his actions.

For example, Hussein invaded Iran in 1980, just months after the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran. Although there had been long-simmering grievances between the two countries, Hussein believed that the Iranians were

69. E.g., Marx 1998.
70. Brubaker 2004.

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weak, geopolitically isolated, and likely to capitulate quickly. Rather than lasting for six weeks—as had been anticipated by the Iraqi side—the war lasted for eight years. Chapter 4 discusses both Iraqi regime expectations going into the conflict as well as the uneven distribution of human casualties on the Iraqi side. I argue that the political implications of war costs undermined investment in the regime among Iraqi Shiʿa who disproportionately bore the burden of war.

A second, critical strategic error relates to the Iraqi regime's decision to invade Kuwait in August 1990. Some accounts have suggested that Hussein believed the United States would not intervene in inter-Arab disputes based on his July 25th meeting with then-US Ambassador April Glaspie, just eight days before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.[71] Although accounts of that particular meeting vary, the result was that Hussein "seriously miscalculated Arab and Western opposition to Iraq's annexation of Kuwait."[72] The 1990–1991 Gulf War between Iraq and the United States (with its coalition partners) was a military conflict that Iraqi leaders did not anticipate would take place but, nonetheless, had far-reaching consequences for domestic Iraqi coalitional concerns. Most important, in March and April 1991, an anti-regime insurgency erupted in Shiʿi and Kurdish regions of Iraq that left fourteen of eighteen Iraqi governorates outside of government control at its peak. These protests led Iraq's three northern governorates to political autonomy and to a markedly different relationship between the regime and Shiʿi populations of the country after 1991.

Finally, the United Nations Security Council sanctions imposed upon Iraq beginning in 1990 and continuing until 2003 were among the most stringent financial and trade restrictions ever inflicted on a developing country. The economic contraction associated with sanctions impacted all Iraqis, creating tension at many levels of society. Public sector employees saw huge income losses, increasing political dissension for Iraq's large class of party and civil servants. And as state sector expenditures fell, Hussein and his immediate family increasingly monopolized income-generating economic opportunities, like smuggling. The net result was a decline in the financial benefits to all

71. The historical record on this issue is not entirely clear, in part because of the difficulty associated with knowing Hussein's beliefs and expectations during the meeting. See Stephen Walt, "WikiLeaks, April Glaspie and Saddam Hussein," *Foreign Policy*, January 9, 2011 for more on this issue.

72. Davis 2005, 227.

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Iraqis, including Sunni Iraqis who were not part of Hussein's inner circle. In chapter 5, I argue that the sanctions regime drove a political wedge within the Sunni community with important implications. Hussein had not anticipated such a vociferous, negative response to his invasion of Kuwait and had no prior belief that sanctions of such magnitude would be imposed. Decisions about the sanctions were made by international actors, only indirectly influenced by Iraqi diplomacy.[73]

PLAN FOR THE BOOK

Part I of the book describes my theoretical framework and provides an empirically focused discussion of Iraq's recent history. Chapter 2 details the theoretical arguments of the project and enumerates a series of empirical implications of the theory. Chapter 3 describes the nature of political life in Iraq before the start of the Iran-Iraq War. Understanding how the Baʿthist regime fared during times of economic plenty provides a basis for evaluating an implicit counterfactual in this book—that were it not for the massive financial shocks associated with the Iran-Iraq War and 1986 crude oil price collapse, Iraq might have remained an "ordinary developing country" rather than a "republic of fear."[74]

Chapter 4 establishes a key empirical point using new data; I demonstrate that ethno-sectarian communities within Iraq paid a differential cost associated with the Iran-Iraq and Gulf Wars and that this differential war burden created the conditions for the 1991 Uprisings. While scholars have sought to estimate aggregate death tolls using census and other data, previous scholarship has failed to empirically demonstrate the within-Iraq variation with regard to war casualties. Chapter 5 discusses the political impact of the international sanctions regime instituted after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Data from a variety of sources suggest differential costs borne within Iraq's Sunni community, with implications for the vulnerability of the regime from "insider" threats.

Part II of the book examines the political behaviors that are the core focus of this volume. Chapter 6 provides details about the behaviors of

73. For example, during the 1990s, there existed a great deal of uncertainty about when the sanctions would end or eventually be eased with the Oil-for-Food provisions.

74. Makiya 1998, vii.

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Iraqis in the three northern governorates of Iraq leading up to the creation of an autonomous political zone in Iraqi Kurdistan in 1991. Chapter 7 discusses a wide range of behaviors related to participation in the Baʿth Party, including the political orientation of Iraqi students, the distribution of party members across party ranks, and the regional distribution of the "friend of the president" bureaucratic status and other party honorifics. Chapter 8 shifts to an examination of the "hidden" political transcript through analysis of rumors circulating in Iraq covering a variety of subjects. Chapter 9 describes the rise of religious communalism and also details how the Baʿth Party sought to monitor and control the country's clerical establishment. Chapter 10 explores the relationship between the state and the military through an examination of three subjects, (i) evasion of compulsory military service, (ii) volunteerism for state and party militias, and (iii) coup attempts, the majority of which were initiated by members of the Iraqi military.

And, finally, chapter 11 recapitulates the main arguments of the project, discusses how my conclusions relate to existing scholarly work on Baʿthist Iraq, and describes the process of sectarian identity formation in Iraq after 2003. I also explore the theoretical and empirical generalizability of my arguments and findings.

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