

CONTENTS

List of Figures and Tables ix

Preface xiii

Acknowledgments xvii

1 Introduction 1

PART I THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL FOUNDATIONS

2 Compliance and Resistance under Autocracy 31

3 State- and Nation-Building in Iraq, 1973–1979 61

4 War Burden and Coalitional Politics, 1980–1991 80

5 Political Implications of Economic Embargo, 1991–2003 112

PART II POLITICAL BEHAVIOR IN IRAQ, 1979–2003

6 Collaboration and Resistance in Iraqi Kurdistan 133

7 Political Orientation and Baʿth Party Participation 163

8 Rumors as Resistance 196

9 Religion, Identity, and Contentious Politics 237

10 Military Service, Militias, and Coup Attempts 266

11 Conclusion 305

Bibliography 331

Index 351

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Citizens of few countries have experienced a recent political history as calamitous as that suffered by Iraqis. In the 1970s, Iraq was a middle-income country with a significant and growing class of educated and cosmopolitan elites. Endowed with both oil and water resources, Iraq was on a path to economic modernization, particularly in the years following the 1973 surge in the price of petroleum. Increasing Iraqi oil rents paralleled the rise of an ambitious, yet ruthless, political leader, and the relative prosperity of the 1970s was disrupted by war and repression. The pain of political oppression was compounded by crippling economic sanctions followed by foreign occupation and the violent unfolding of a sectarian civil war. During this time, Iraq became a destination and breeding ground for Islamic extremists.

The Iraqi state that emerged from this trauma has struggled to reestablish territorial integrity. Its governance structures are fragile and prone to sectarian favoritism. In 2006, then-Senator Joseph Biden suggested that an Iraq of autonomous regions split along ethnic lines might bring an end to the civil war.¹ More than ten years later, US policymakers continue to debate whether a unified Iraq will ever again be governable.² This project explores the conditions that led to the breakdown of the Iraqi state through an examination of Iraqi political life during Saddam Hussein's time in power.

There is little doubt that the recent history of political trauma Iraq has experienced has its roots in the Ba'ath Party's governance. Yet understanding how and why nation-building failed in Iraq has been challenging, at least in part, because of difficulties observing the inner workings of autocratic

1. Joseph Biden and Leslie Gelb, "Unity Through Autonomy in Iraq," *New York Times*, May 1, 2006.

2. Tim Arango, "With Iraq Mired in Turmoil, Some Call for Partitioning the Country," *New York Times*, April 28, 2016.

governance structures. The internal workings of a dictatorship are often described as taking place within a “black box”—while some of the input and output characteristics are known, the inner dynamics of how power coalesces and is maintained remains opaque. And because collecting information in a nondemocratic setting is so challenging, relatively little scholarship has sought to explain the mechanics of autocratic control in the world’s most repressive regimes. It is virtually impossible to study the internal politics of such regimes while the dictator is in power.³ Even after regimes have been overthrown, new holders of political power may have an incentive to hide information about the repressive and control apparatuses due to the political implications of exposing the often widespread nature of societal complicity with the *ancien régime*.⁴ And although the existing literature on non-democracies has grown tremendously in the last twenty years, it tends to be sparse when compared to scholarly work that seeks to explain political life in democracies.

Despite these barriers, determining the specificities of everyday political life in Iraq during the Saddam Hussein era has become possible as a result of the recent availability of millions of documents recovered following two pivotal events—the establishment of Kurdish self-rule in northern Iraq in the wake of the 1991 Uprisings and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein’s Ba‘thist regime in 2003. The first cache of government documents was salvaged following large-scale popular demonstrations that took place following the Iraqi military withdrawal from Kuwait. This collection—known as the Iraqi Secret Police Files—is housed at the University of Colorado Boulder. These files provide detailed information about Ba‘th Party and government operations in northern Iraq leading up to 1991. At the time of my visit to this archive in December 2013 to January 2014, I was the only researcher to have visited the collection.⁵

The second cache of government documents is composed of two collections that were captured during the 2003 US invasion of Iraq. The first collection

3. See Ahram (2016) for more on how the opacity and brutality of the Ba‘thist regime, in particular, negatively impacted the way research was conducted in Iraq before 2003.

4. See Nalepa (2010) for a discussion of this dynamic in Eastern Europe following the fall of Communism.

5. Although the collection had not been utilized by an academic researcher prior to that point, documents from the collection were used by Human Rights Watch to generate an influential report published in 1993 entitled “Genocide in Iraq: The Anfal Campaign Against the Kurds: A Middle East Watch Report.”

consists of the tapes and associated transcripts of conversations between Saddam Hussein and various advisors and underlings. Until recently this collection, which is no longer available to the public, was housed at the Conflict Records Research Center at the National Defense University.⁶ The second collection consists of documents assembled by the Iraq Memory Foundation. The Hoover Institution acquired the Iraq Memory Foundation collection in 2008, and these files became available for scholarly research in 2010.⁷ The documents in this second collection include both print and video materials which provide a rich picture of the everyday practices of Iraq's highly repressive autocracy.⁸

6. First open in 2010, the Conflict Records Research Center (CRRC) at the National Defense University housed both documents and audio files captured in Iraq and Afghanistan as part of the Iraq War (2003–2011) and the War in Afghanistan (2003–2014). The collection contained more than 1,000 individual documents comprising more than 30,000 pages and is described by the CRRC management team in Woods et al. (2011). The center was closed for budget reasons in June 2015. For more on the closing of the CRRC see Michael Gordon, “Archive of Captured Enemy Documents Closes,” *New York Times*, June 21, 2015.

7. The records of the *Hizb al-Baʿth al-ʿArabi al-Ishtiraki* in Iraq, or the Baʿth Party Records (1968–2003) compose an approximately 11 million document collection at Stanford University's Hoover Institution. The collection includes correspondence, reports, membership and personnel files, judicial and investigatory dossiers, and administrative files relating to political conditions in, and governance of, Iraq. Most documents are part of the Baʿth Regional Command Collection (BRCC). While there are files that are drawn from both the earlier and later periods of Baʿthist rule, the collection skews strongly toward the 1990s and early 2000s in terms of the sheer number of documents. There are a number of reasons why this may be the case, including the possible purging of older documents, the tendency for older documents to be lost or not to survive and the increasingly common use of computer technologies which made it easier to produce documents (versus the use of handwriting and typewriters from the earlier periods).

8. Working with the Baʿth Party Records proved to be challenging, in part because of the sheer size of the collection. I began my research on the collection initially by browsing through the documents to get a sense of their internal organization. The collection is formally divided into a series of discrete file groupings including the North Iraq dataset, the Kuwait dataset, the School Registers, the Baʿth Party Boxfiles, and the Membership dataset. The School Registers and the Baʿth Party Boxfiles make up the largest two groupings within the collection. The School Registers are organized by governorate-year. Within each governorate-year file, data are organized by school where each “sheet” within the Registers includes information on dozens of students. The Baʿth Party Boxfiles, while not organized in a straightforward geographic or temporal manner like the Registers, frequently exhibited forms of internal coherence within each electronic boxfile. For example, a boxfile typically included the contents of a binder or folder of materials. The first page of the electronic boxfile often includes a scan of the descriptive label that might appear on the outside of the binder. As a result, I was often able to scan the descriptive binder labels to identify boxfiles on topics of political significance.

Reliance on collections of Iraqi government documents no doubt allows for only a partial, incomplete picture of political life in Iraq under Saddam Hussein. Another important source of information comes from the first-hand testimony of Iraqis. Between 2003 and 2008, documentary filmmakers associated with the Iraq Memory Foundation recorded the experiences of 190 individuals who lived through Baʿthist rule as part of an oral history project. These testimonials aired on *al-ʿIraqiyya*—an Arabic-language satellite and terrestrial public television network in Iraq that serves 85 percent of the country’s population.⁹ I include the first-hand testimony of individuals interviewed for this project at various points in the book.¹⁰

Using data from these three collections, as well as material from a vast secondary source literature on Iraqi politics and history, I have sought answers to a series of foundational questions related to autocratic governance in Iraq. What did the Baʿthist regime actually know about its citizens? Why did it use blunt, seemingly suboptimal, forms of punishment against its population? And what explains variation in the types of compliance and resistance behaviors undertaken by Iraqis during Hussein’s dictatorship?

While some of my findings affirm a conventional narrative about citizen behavior in autocratic Iraq, in other cases the archival evidence demands we update the accepted wisdom about Iraqi political life. I find that, despite pretensions to political hegemony, the Iraqi regime frequently lacked important information about its population, and this problem of intelligence gathering varied in magnitude across ethnic, religious, and communal groups within Iraq. When rebellious behaviors occurred, inadequate information about the specific identity of the perpetrators led the regime to engage in forms of collective punishment that reinforced and cemented identity cleavages

9. The testimonials, including material not included in the original television broadcasts, are available for viewing in the Library and Archives of the Hoover Institution.

10. On the one hand, the individuals selected for participation in the oral history project were chosen because of their experiences with regime repression. Clearly not all Iraqis were subject to the type of abuses described in the footage. On the other hand, Saddam Hussein is believed to have killed as many as one million of his own citizens (see Dexter Filkins, “Regrets Only?,” *New York Times*, October 7, 2007). Countless international human rights reports and journalistic accounts describe the widespread nature of Iraqi human rights abuses under the regime of Saddam Hussein (See “Endless Torment: The 1991 Uprising in Iraq and Its Aftermath,” *Human Rights Watch*, June 1992, and “Iraq’s Brutal Decrees: Amputation, Branding, and the Death Penalty,” *Human Rights Watch*, June 1995, for two examples). I am also not aware of any circumstance under which the testimony of these individuals has been refuted.

precisely among those groups about which the regime was least informed. Ethno-sectarian and communal identities alone, therefore, cannot explain the wide range of behaviors observed on the part of Iraqi citizens.

My argument is state-centric in the sense that it suggests states create the political behaviors that they face as a result of their policies toward their citizenries. While my theoretical focus is squarely upon the actions of the state, the state itself is constrained in a number of ways that limit its ability to pursue its preferred policies and achieve its desired outcomes. Most important, states are constrained by their financial and infrastructural, or bureaucratic, resources as well as by the inability of state political leaders to accurately predict or anticipate the response of international actors to their foreign policy initiatives.

In particular, the Iraqi state under Saddam Hussein faced three key constraints on its power. First, Hussein was unable to render all parts of the country politically “legible” to the central government in Baghdad. What is meant by the term legible? Scott suggests that a central problem of statecraft involves effective “mapping” of a country’s terrain and its people to aid the basic functions of the state, including taxation, conscription, and the prevention of rebellion.¹¹ From a political economy perspective, relatively illegible citizens and regions are those for which monitoring costs are high.¹² This was a problem particularly for Iraqi government efforts to politically penetrate the three most northern provinces in Iraqi Kurdistan. Second, despite a well-educated population and abundant oil reserves, the Iraqi state proved to be highly vulnerable to economic shocks, many of which were induced by foreign policy crises. The devastating human and financial costs associated with the Iran-Iraq War and the catastrophic suffering caused by the international sanctions regime of the 1990s were two key contributors. Third, the Iraqi state under Hussein—not unlike other dictatorships which struggle to accurately assess the incentives and motivations of foreign governments—miscalculated the international response to key foreign policy decisions with important knock-on effects for domestic politics. For example, when Iraq invaded Iran in 1980, Hussein expected a war lasting weeks, not years. These three constraints—which are both structural and contingent in nature—form the political context for Iraqi politics in the late twentieth century.

11. Scott 1998, 2.

12. Attempts to increase legibility are state-driven efforts to reduce the cost of monitoring the population.

The arguments that I put forward relate to the literature on state-building and, ultimately, state breakdown. While most of the literature on state-building has focused on the European experience associated with the development of strong territorial states,¹³ and on the African experience associated with states struggling to project political power across territory,¹⁴ I seek to understand how state power is projected in a context that might be more favorable for state development—the contemporary Middle East. Middle Eastern states—endowed with the financial resources to invest in governance structures and a conflict-prone external environment conducive to nation-building—would seem to present a relatively favorable set of conditions for creating robust states. Yet within the Middle East, there has been considerable variation in the strength of states despite a broad similarity of structural economic and international conditions. My findings suggest that certain parameters—like the difficulties associated with policing a diverse ethno-sectarian population—were built into the creation of the Iraqi state and proved difficult to manage over time. This was particularly the case as the state faced a tightening budget constraint as a result of poor foreign policy decision making. Although the dissolution of the Iraqi state was, indeed still may be, avoidable, the forces working against a unified Iraqi state are strong and self-reinforcing.

The weakness of the Iraqi state has its roots in the construction of political identity and social cleavage structures both during and directly after Hussein's dictatorship. While most scholarly accounts of the determinants of societal cleavage structures have focused on the experience of democratic countries and emerging democracies,¹⁵ my arguments suggest when and why certain identities become salient across communities within an autocratic regime. My findings also challenge a conventional narrative about sectarianism in Iraqi society. The myth of monolithic Sunni, Shi'i, and Kurdish populations in an eternally and hopelessly fractured society belies both the multi-sectarian nature of collaboration with the regime, as well as the tremendous threat posed to regime stability by rivals within Hussein's own Sunni community.¹⁶

13. Tilly 1992.

14. Herbst 2000.

15. E.g., Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Rogowski 1989; Posner 2004.

16. See Kirdar (2009) for more on why it is misleading to characterize the Hussein regime as a Sunni regime. Similarly, Zeidel (2010) argues that it is problematic to think about activities of the regime as being carried out on behalf of the Sunni community. For example, he asks,

And perhaps most pernicious, this conventional narrative has, and likely will continue to have, a harmful influence on the formation of US policy in Iraq.

COMPLIANCE AND RESISTANCE UNDER AUTOCRACY

While the dynamics associated with compliance and resistance to autocratic rule are closely tied to issues of authoritarian legitimacy, regime duration, and the existence and success of secessionist movements, recent scholarly work on authoritarianism has been focused primarily on authoritarian institutional type with little attention paid to the everyday practices of governance. The most influential work in this tradition has focused on generating typologies of authoritarian regimes. Geddes argues that single-party, military, and personalist regimes are distinctive institutional types and that the strategic factors guiding politics in each context are different.¹⁷ One tension in this literature relates to how one should characterize those regimes that combine aspects of party organization, military rule, personalism and, sometimes, even hereditary succession.¹⁸

The focus on institutional type (e.g., military, party, personalist regime, or monarchy) represents a step away from a previous literature on non-democratic rule that offered reflections on how power was projected under autocracy and the lived experience of autocratic rule for citizenries. Arendt's work on the origins and outcomes associated with totalitarianism is seminal; she defines totalitarianism as a "form of government whose essence is terror and whose principle of action is the logicity of ideological thinking."¹⁹ For Arendt, the use of terror and ideology are an outgrowth of a regime's desire to dominate all aspects of citizen life. Although Arendt's use of the term

"would the activities of a handful of officers, all of them Sunnis, to topple a Sunni regime be branded 'Sunni'?" (Zeidel 2010, 160).

17. See Geddes (2003). Hadenius and Teorell (2007) contend that all dictatorships exhibit greater or lesser degrees of personalism, often in combination with more institutionalized governance structures. Magaloni (2008) concurs and develops a schematic that reintroduces monarchies as a distinctive regime type and focuses on a key difference within the set of party autocracies, particularly the distinction between single-party regimes and hegemonic-party regimes.

18. Geddes describes many of the regimes in the Middle East—like those in Egypt or Syria—as "hybrid" regimes exhibiting multiple institutional forms simultaneously.

19. Arendt 1966, 474.

totalitarian has been criticized by scholars who argue that truly totalizing forms of social control are not possible even in the most repressive regimes,²⁰ the ambition to create totalizing forms of social control would seem to be one dimension by which to distinguish such regimes from other types of autocracy.

Linz focuses on the distinction between totalitarian and authoritarian regimes without regard for the precise institutional form. While he defines authoritarian political systems as ones with limited forms of political pluralism, he sees totalitarianism, on the other hand, as having an ideology, a single party, and “concentrated power in an individual and his collaborators or a small group that is not accountable to any large constituency.”²¹

While scholars of dictatorship have recently eschewed discussion of the totalitarian-authoritarian distinction, a core debate in the literature on Iraq under Saddam Hussein relates to whether the regime should be categorized as authoritarian or totalitarian. Complexities associated with understanding the role of repression, fear, and terror in the Iraqi case contribute to differences of interpretation.²² In *Republic of Fear*, Makiya argues that fear was “not incidental or episodic,” but rather constitutive of the regime itself.²³ Dawisha writes that “unlike earlier authoritarian periods in Iraq... Saddam’s Iraq was a country that was held hostage to the will and whim of one omnipresent tyrant.”²⁴ For Dawisha, the authoritarianism of Hussein’s predecessors becomes dwarfed by “Saddam’s procrustean totalitarianism.”²⁵ Sassoon, on the other hand, does not consider the regime totalitarian, despite the Ba‘th Party’s involvement with almost all aspects of life from birth to death.²⁶ Sassoon

20. Wedeen 1999, 44.

21. Linz 2000, 67. In Linz’s conceptualization, the party is a critical component of totalitarianism; he writes that “only when the party organization is superior or equal to the government can we speak of a totalitarian system” (2000, 94). In addition, “propaganda, education, training of cadres, intellectual elaboration of the ideology, scholarship inspired by the ideology, rewards for intellectuals identified with the system” (Linz 2000, 71) are frequently associated with totalitarian rule. Totalitarian regimes also tend to be ones where a single leader is the “object of a cult of personality” (Linz 2000, 75). Although totalitarian systems are often characterized by violent coercion, for Linz (2000, 74) terror is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for defining a regime as totalitarian.

22. See Faust (2015) for more on this debate.

23. Makiya 1998, xi.

24. Dawisha 2009, 241.

25. See *ibid.*, 240. Baram (2014, 5) offers a slightly different perspective, arguing that Hussein aimed for “totalitarian omnipotence,” but failed in this effort.

26. Sassoon 2012, 5–9.

points out that “many Iraqis did not accept the Ba‘th regime.”²⁷ Further, some who did support the regime did so not as a result of duress, but rather out of a desire for power and privilege. For Sassoon, Iraq under Saddam Hussein—while brutal and controlling—should be classified as authoritarian, not totalitarian.²⁸

Part of the reason for this disagreement among various scholars relates to the differential treatment of citizens and groups of citizens across time and geographic region within the context of a single Iraqi “regime.” For example, tolerance of dissent declined for certain populations over time. This variation in treatment across groups within a single country, as well as for particular groups over time, is not unique; yet, empirical studies that use “regime” as the unit of analysis may place less emphasis on the issue of variation in governance forms within the borders of a single state.

These concerns are especially salient for the undifferentiated conceptualization of repression or “punishment” in works of political economy. Punishment, as it typically operates in autocratic regimes, is differentiated across groups and individuals and is also context-specific. This suggests the existence of *individualized autocracy*, or the idea that autocracy, as it is experienced by an individual citizen, is conditional on a variety of factors including the identity of that individual and his or her location within the broader political schema.

IDENTITY IN IRAQI POLITICS

A starting point for most studies of Iraqi politics emphasizes the importance of the country’s multi-ethnic, multi-sectarian population. This is a sensible line of reasoning. Iraq’s geographic position on the historical boundary between the Sunni Ottoman Empire and Shi‘i Safavid Empire, as well as contemporary Iraq’s adjacency to the historical homeland of the Kurdish people—an ethnic and linguistic group indigenous to southwest Asia—would suggest the relevance of ethno-sectarian concerns. Indeed, as the Ottoman Empire came to consolidate its political control over the region that would become contemporary Iraq, the area was divided into three provinces centered

27. *ibid.*, 221.

28. Similarly, Alahmed (2009) criticizes portrayals of the Iraqi government as totalitarian since those depictions attribute undeserved omnipotence to the Ba‘thist regime.

around the area's major population centers—Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra—which came to roughly correspond to the centroids of a Kurdish north, Sunni center, and Shi'a south, respectively.²⁹

Prominent academic accounts focus on how historical antagonisms between the Ottoman Empire and its Persian geopolitical rival generated a legacy of uneven distribution of positions in the military and bureaucracy across ethno-sectarian groups. Disparate access to state employment across groups is an undeniable feature of the postcolonial Iraqi state and a fact that has taken on a decisive role in many scholarly accounts. Wimmer, for example, describes Iraq as an example of an "ethnocracy" where Sunni nationalists ruled over Iraqi Kurds and Iraqi Shi'a, who were largely excluded from bureaucratic and other opportunities.³⁰ Osman argues that "the failure ... to resolve inherent tensions between primordial sectarian identities" has been a defining feature of the modern Iraqi state.³¹

Journalistic accounts of Iraq also describe sectarianism as an enduring, seemingly inescapable feature of the country's identity politics. Similarly, references to ethno-sectarian identities are ubiquitous in Western diplomatic and intelligence reports about internal Iraqi politics. Yet this narrative assumes both too much and too little about the salience of ethno-sectarian identities. Such a narrative suggests that ethnic and sectarian identities have been the defining, overriding identity concern for the majority of Iraqi citizens. And such a narrative says almost nothing about when and how ethno-sectarian schisms emerge as salient when they do.

Increasingly, scholars specializing in Iraqi history have resisted the idea that ethno-sectarian conflict served as the country's primary driver of political tension. Jabar argues against the characterization that Iraq is made up of self-contained ethno-sectarian communities, focusing instead on the tremendous economic, religious, and political heterogeneity within the Sunni, Shi'i, and

29. Conversions from Sunni to Shi'i Islam took place in Iraq throughout Shi'i history but it was not until the late eighteenth century that the proportion of Shi'a grew to a significant portion of the Iraqi population. Many of these conversions were of nomadic tribesmen whom Sunni clerics viewed as "barely Muslims prior to their conversion" (Nakash 1994a, 456). Conversions were thought to take place for a variety of reasons including as a way to evade military conscription or as a form of opposition to Ottoman rule (Nakash 1994a). These conversions were most common in southern areas of Iraq which would have been influenced by Shi'i pilgrims traveling from the East to the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala.

30. Wimmer 2013, 28–29.

31. Osman 2014, 266.

Kurdish populations.³² Davis rejects essentialist claims about Iraq's ethnic diversity, emphasizing how historical narratives about the nation have been constructed by political actors.³³ And Visser warns against trying to “shoe-horn” analysis of Iraqi politics into a sectarian “master narrative,” as such an approach tends to systematically overlook forms of intrasectarian tension which exist at multiple levels for the case.³⁴ Scholars who take such a perspective extend a variety of evidence: relatively high levels of intermarriage across ethno-sectarian groups, promotion and advancement opportunities for Ba‘th Party loyalists regardless of ethno-sectarian identity, and the perpetration of political oppression within, and not only across, ethnic groups and sects.

In addition, a stream in the literature on political identity in Iraq has increasingly focused on the constructed and contingent nature of identity formation. Haddad argues that a variety of factors have created sectarian tension including the influence of external actors and economic competition between sectarian groups.³⁵ Khoury links post-2003 sectarianism in Iraq to forms of physical and bureaucratic violence perpetuated by the Ba‘thist regime.³⁶ For Khoury, regime-perpetrated violence was not sectarian in nature but, instead, driven by security concerns. Helfont concurs, arguing that even if sectarianism was a product of Ba‘thist governance, the regime strove to treat Sunnis and Shi‘a equally.³⁷ Yousif suggests that sectarianism arose in Iraq as a result of an interaction between unfavorable underlying conditions and damaging government policies where economic sanctions elevated the salience of sectarian identities.³⁸

While existing accounts are compelling and empirically informed, there is little consensus regarding the specific mechanisms underlying identity salience or a more generalizable frame for understanding these issues. My argument creates a unified, theoretical framework for thinking about the form and timing of identity salience that might be applied to a variety of cases.

32. Jabar 2003a.

33. Davis 2005, 24.

34. Visser 2012c.

35. Haddad 2011.

36. Khoury 2010.

37. Helfont 2015, 70.

38. Yousif 2010.

ARGUMENT AND EMPIRICAL STRATEGY

The case of Iraq provides unique opportunities for the study of political behavior under autocracy, and for reasons that go beyond the availability of the new Ba'ath Party archival materials. Through an examination of the Iraqi case it is possible to explore the broad scope of repression intensity and government distributive strategies, as well as a wide variety of behaviors undertaken by a diverse citizenry operating in a high-stakes political environment. In Iraq, one's political life came to be synonymous with life itself.

While beliefs, ideological or otherwise, are critical for determining the described outcomes, the empirical focus of this study is on behaviors, those actions that might be observed or leave a bureaucratic record. Part of the reason for this focus is the untenability of accurately measuring beliefs for a period of time that has passed and for which there were no reliable ways to collect information, even if we could go back in time. Another part is equally practical—the data that I use to test the main theories laid out in this book are not attitudinal, but based on the observable, or quasi-observable, actions of individuals as collected or documented by the regime's single party. There is also a tangible quality to behaviors, as behaviors reflect a commitment to action that is not always reflected in attitudes, which can be fast-changing and without clear consequences. While behaviors, too, are highly contextual and made under conditions of extreme political pressure, I believe that they reflect complex political calculations.³⁹

Theoretical Contribution

This project focuses on how state actions explain citizen political behavior. In particular, I seek to endogenize the political beliefs and behaviors of citizens through a focus on the actions of states and their leaders. I argue that the policy choices of the state are constrained in a number of meaningful ways and that these constraints limit the action set available to state leaders, forcing them to deviate from their optimal political strategy. The actions that I am most

39. Kalyvas (2006, 101) argues that it is important not to infer support based on behaviors, a point with which I concur; he argues that inferring preferences from behaviors is difficult for a variety of reasons including the tendency for beliefs to be manipulated and falsified as well as the ever-changing nature of political support. Petersen (2001, 9) also chooses to focus on observable behaviors and not attitudes in his study.

concerned with are related to distributive practices, particularly the intensity and precision of monetary rewards offered to citizens, and practices related to punishment for political transgressions that threaten regime interests.

From the perspective of an autocratic regime, the state's ideal financial resources would be functionally unlimited, allowing for private payouts to regime insiders and public goods for the general population.⁴⁰ In such a setting, citizens would grow to be invested in the state's political leadership where citizen investment in the regime resembles a capital asset—providing more and more rewards to citizens grows public investment in the political status quo. But what happens if the state's financial resources decline? Or even worse, the state begins to demand costly service of the citizenry as a result of a foreign war or other external shock? As investment in the regime declines, or even becomes negative, citizens harmed by the negative shock may engage in anti-regime behaviors that the state seeks to punish. In such a setting, states attempt to sanction political transgressors, but often face an information problem—it is difficult to identify precisely who committed the transgression, yet the behavior demands a punitive response. This situation leads states to use forms of collective punishment, particularly directed against those segments of the population that are less legible to the state.

A primary argument of this book is that the use of collective punishment has important implications for both the beliefs and behaviors of citizens living in autocracies. When citizens are punished collectively (i.e., in a relatively imprecise manner), a number of processes unfurl. First, citizens know that the state's ability to monitor them is weak, and this knowledge allows them to organize in relative safety, encouraging the creation of dense networks with high degrees of social cohesion. Second, when information-poor states punish citizens as a result of their membership in an identity group, this encourages the likelihood of in-group policing within that identity group as the actions of one group member are tied to the outcomes for all members. Finally, when punishment is both severe and collective, individuals increasingly come

40. Recent research on distributive politics in the Middle East has tended to focus more on the distributive consequences of electoral authoritarianism (e.g., Koehler 2008; Lust 2009; Blaydes 2011; Masoud 2014; Corstange 2016); the impact of sectarianism on public goods provision (e.g., Cammet and Issar 2010; Salti and Chaaban 2010; Clark and Salloukh 2013; Cammett 2015); and the distributive policies of oil-exporting states of the Persian Gulf (e.g., Herb 2009; Harris 2013; Harris 2016; Hertog 2016). Less attention has been paid to the distributive economic policies of countries with the most repressive authoritarian regimes.

to believe that they share a “linked fate” with their fellow group members, further enhancing group solidarity and encouraging all-in strategies of political resistance.⁴¹

The level at which these processes take place depends on how punishment is meted out by the state. When the state punishes at the level of the “nation”—impacting a collective with common characteristics like language, customs, and ethnicity—the result is *nationalism*. When punishment takes place at the level of a smaller social group—impacting a collective that falls short of constituting a national group—the result is *communalism*. By communal, I mean related to a group or community including a cultural group, a religious community, or an extended kinship group, regardless of whether the kinship ties are actual or fictive.⁴² What determines the state’s choice to punish at the level of the nation or the subnational group? I argue that there exists variation within countries regarding the legibility of certain populations and this factor determines the precision with which punishment is delivered.

This argument suggests that states create the citizen behaviors that they confront as a result of policy action, but the constraints that states face are real and binding. The first constraint relates to the evenness with which populations within society are legible to the state. A number of factors contribute to the legibility of sub-populations to the bureaucracy; language group and terrain or geographic accessibility are two highly salient factors. When groups speak a different language than the dominant language of the state and its bureaucracy, this increases the monitoring costs for the government. Similarly, when groups are located in or near geographic regions that are relatively inaccessible to the government, this also decreases the

41. Scholars have argued that African Americans, and members of other minority groups, often believe that their individual fates are linked to those of other African Americans, even substituting group utility for individual utility when making political evaluations (Dawson 1994). While research has suggested that the salience of linked fate is contextual (Gay 2004), it is a salient political narrative when considering the attitudes and behaviors of minority groups living under conditions of political repression. Relatedly, Levi and Olson (2000) describe workers associated with organized labor movements as being part of a shared “community of fate” as their interests are bound up with one another.

42. My use of the term communalism differs, then, from those who focus on the principles and practices of communal ownership, often related to the study of communes and other forms of collective ownership. For the purposes of this study, communalism refers to the salience of group identity where such groups might include collectives associated with a variety of characteristics including ideological attachment, religious beliefs, or organizational and tribal identity.

ability of the state to monitor. Schutte (2017) uses a distance-decay model to show that violence becomes more indiscriminate with distance from the state's power center. While physical distance is a powerful proxy for the use of indiscriminate punishment, *cultural distance* hinders a state's ability to monitor to a degree greater than geographic distance alone.⁴³

That said, both of these problems can be overcome with a sufficiently large financial investment in monitoring. In some cases that means developing the bureaucratic capacity to effectively police less legible areas. While geographic factors would seem difficult or even impossible to impact for a state, the experience of Iraq under Saddam Hussein suggests otherwise. Although unable to raze the mountains in the Kurdish regions of the country, the Iraqi state sought to depopulate villages near the northern mountains and went so far as to drain the marshlands in southern Iraq.⁴⁴ These extreme and costly measures were done with the goal of increasing the legibility of the Iraqi citizenry to the state.

The other binding constraint faced by states beyond the heterogeneous legibility of its population relates to the limited and variable financial resources that are available for governance. Proponents of rentier state theory have long argued that state-controlled natural resources provide countries with the means to distribute wealth to their populations in exchange for political support.⁴⁵ Yet even countries that are endowed with such a favorable rent stream are subject to internationally driven commodity price fluctuations

43. Fearon (2003) uses the structural distance between languages as a proxy for the cultural distance between groups; Blaydes and Grimmer (2017) determine cultural groups based on shared values (measured using public opinion survey responses) and then estimate the distance between groups. Cultural distance has been shown to be an important predictor of military effectiveness. For example, during the Second Chechen War large numbers of Chechens crossed ranks to work with the Russians. Lyall (2010) finds that Chechen soldiers were more successful at conducting counterinsurgency raids than their Russian counterparts. The implication is that cultural distance—as exhibited between Russian soldiers and Chechen civilians—resulted in less targeted and effective forms of punishment. Within sociology, scholars discuss social distance as multidimensional, with a cultural basis (Karakayali 2009). Bhavnani et al. (2014) define social distance as encompassing a variety of intergroup differences including class, ethnicity, religion, race, and variants associated with normative, cultural, and habitual perceptions of difference. Social distance might also be assessed in an empirical setting. Bakke et al. (2009) employ a social distance perspective, mapping the unobserved dimensions of social distance among survey respondents in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the North Caucasus region of Russia.

44. Prior to their draining, the Iraqi marshlands were the largest in western Asia.

45. See Ross (2012) for a discussion of recent literature on this subject.

and other sources of financial instability. For states that aspire to regional leadership or other foreign policy objectives, shocks to financial resources are potentially even greater should a state become embroiled in a costly war.

The idea that citizen preferences are endogenous to state action is not new and, indeed, recent scholarly work has emphasized the way behaviors respond to government policy. Kalyvas, for example, suggests that while existing accounts of civil conflict tend to focus on preexisting ethnic, sectarian, or nationalist cleavages as the key determinant of conflict outcome, there exist a variety of endogenous, micro-historical mechanisms that influence the behavior of individuals.⁴⁶ Lyall argues that, despite the fact that there is no consistent empirical relationship between state repression and collective mobilization, state repression can reinforce certain forms of group identity.⁴⁷ Lawrence argues that French colonial subjects who were offered the full rights of French citizens were less likely to engage in anti-colonial protest; in other words, movements for political equality that emerged in the French empire were endogenous to the policies of the metropole.⁴⁸

Mylonas considers the determinants and impact of three nation-building policies—accommodation, assimilation, and exclusion—on nationalism, particularly among noncore groups (i.e., those groups that do not share the ethnic, religious, or sectarian identity of the host state).⁴⁹ For Mylonas, noncore groups can be effectively assimilated if this is compatible with the host state's external relations. Like Mylonas I argue that because individual behaviors are influenced by state actions, it is important to develop an account that can explain variation in policies toward various societal groups. Where I diverge from Mylonas is with regard to the locus of activation. While Mylonas argues that state policies are externally activated, I argue that attitudes toward noncore groups may also be activated *internally* as a result of government policies promulgated in the context of various constraints, limitations, and unforeseen (indeed, unforeseeable) external shocks.⁵⁰

46. For example, Kalyvas (2006, 132) argues that the most important factor favoring collaboration with the state is the level of territorial control where territorial control requires a "constant and credible armed presence."

47. Lyall 2006.

48. Lawrence 2013.

49. Mylonas 2012.

50. This is not to say that external factors are not important; I would argue that their relevance needs to be considered in the context of domestic political constraints, however, and

Outcome Variables of Interest

A first task for this project relates to defining the outcome to be explained—the range of observable behaviors undertaken by citizens in relation to the state. Previous scholarship has pointed to the complexities associated with understanding forms of political assent, dissent, and passivity. Levi argues, for example, that “compliance and non-compliance are not the simple dichotomous variables they at first appear to be,” suggesting a range of possible activities that reflect varieties of consent, volunteerism, and resistance.⁵¹ Scott makes the case for the existence of subtle forms of resistance to economic domination that go beyond characterizations of “blind submission and homicidal rage.”⁵² Indeed, Scott points out that rebellions—particularly among rural populations—are rare and that everyday forms of resistance among peasants tend to stop short of collective defiance. In his work on resistance to autocracy in Eastern Europe, Petersen describes the continuum of activities that might reflect an individual’s collaboration with or resistance to the regime.⁵³

What are the concrete behaviors that I seek to explain in this book? First, I attempt to explain variation in pro-regime behaviors or those behaviors that enhance the power or reach of the state. In many autocratic settings, a primary way by which citizens might do this is by supporting or joining the regime party. Whether in single or hegemonic party systems, providing support for the regime party is an important marker of the regime’s political access and control.⁵⁴ I provide detailed information about party identification based on tens of thousands of individual records of Iraqi high school students at four different points in time.⁵⁵ I also provide evidence on the regional distribution of party rank based on the Ba‘th Party’s internal membership records.

concur with Mylonas regarding the importance of endogenizing nationalist sentiment by taking state strategies into account.

51. Levi 1997, 17.

52. Scott 1985, 304.

53. See Petersen 2001. Sassoon (2012) also takes a broad view of resistance in Iraq under Hussein to include: desertion, sheltering deserters or opposition members, absenteeism from work or party activities, fleeing the country, subversive intellectual or artistic work, petition writing, and joke telling.

54. This is even more true because these parties are often devoid of meaningful ideological content.

55. The Ba‘thist regime considered the political loyalty of Iraqi youth an important indicator of consent and control.

Citizens may also seek out or accept honors and distinguished status vis-à-vis the regime. This can take a number of forms and might include special bureaucratic designations, medals, or distinguished service awards. Acceptance of such an award signals a willingness to associate oneself closely with the authoritarian regime. Using lists collated by the Baʿth Party, I am able to identify the tribal affiliation for thousands of Baʿth Party “badge” recipients. Because tribal affiliation provides indication of an individual’s sectarian and regional identity, I am able to make inferences about the distribution of the regime’s core constituencies. I can also identify the geographic distribution of the “friend of the president” bureaucratic status, a designation that provided special privileges to holders.

Another way that citizens can support regime objectives is to inform on fellow citizens or engage in other forms of regime collaboration. While this is often a private act, there are important political implications as widespread collaboration creates a climate of mistrust and fear. Citizens also seek out ways to become part of the inner-circle autocratic apparatus itself. In such cases, individuals may volunteer for regime-sponsored militias. Baʿth Party documents provide information about the many thousands of individuals who volunteered for militias—like the Jerusalem Army—both at the aggregate level, across regions of Iraq, as well as at the individual level for the Iraqi high school student population.

An alternative to active complicity is the possibility for acquiescence or more passive forms of collaboration. Kalyvas surveys existing literature on conflicts between incumbent regimes and opposition groups and finds that only a small percentage of citizens actively support the armed opposition; this leads him to conclude that “most ‘ordinary’ people appear to display a combination of weak preferences and opportunism, both of which are subject to survival considerations.”⁵⁶ Levi raises the possibility that “perhaps what we have come

56. See Kalyvas 2006, 103. Schedler (2013, 42) argues that most authoritarian contexts include the “bad, the good and the guilty—regime supporters, their opponents and the silent masses in between.” Yet such a characterization glosses over the difference between individuals who may appear to be supporters or fence sitters but who are actually quiet resisters. Scott (1985, 315–316) describes how economic and political oppression elicits certain, often quiet, types of political and economic resistance. In particular, Scott (1985) suggests how class rule might be enforced through the passive compliance of a subordinate economic class rather than more straightforward forms of coercion.

to describe as compliance is actually a means of expressing consent.”⁵⁷ In other cases, political elites create institutions that encourage compliance, including “rituals, symbols and propaganda.”⁵⁸ Schedler argues individuals often “adapt to the realities of authoritarian governance by taking part in public rituals and official discourse, by applauding and falling silent at the right moments, by going into inner or outer exile, by ciphering or self-censoring their political disagreements.”⁵⁹ For Scott, compliance can be the result of either resignation or more active forms of support. In either case, class rule is not enforced through sanctions or coercion so much as through passive compliance of society’s economic subordinates.

On the other end of the behavioral spectrum are anti-regime and anti-government protest activity as well as other, more private, forms of political resistance. The existence of revolutionary social movements represents the most forceful and politically risky form of citizen non-compliance since collective action of this type deeply threatens either the existence or the territorial integrity of the state itself. In some cases, it might be defined as a civil war or sometimes even as domestic terrorism. For the Iraqi case, I am able to identify numerous memoranda documenting the nature of protest and resistance activities as well as regime documents outlining strategies for handling political transgressions of this type.

Much smaller in scale, but often more impactful, are attempts to seize political power via overthrow of an existing ruler or assassination of that ruler. An attempted or successful coup d’état is often instigated by a small group; as a result, it lacks the scale of an insurgency. Political protest represents a third act of anti-regime activity that can take place either on a large or small scale.⁶⁰ This

57. See Levi 1997, 18. The public transcript gives the impression that subordinate groups endorse their continued subordination within the prevailing power structure, while the private transcript might provide a totally different interpretation of political preferences (Scott 1990, 4–5). In such a setting, conventional behavioral measures may be “nearly indistinguishable from behavior that arises from willing consent” (ibid., 67). More quiet forms of political and economic resistance rely on coordination within the community of subordinate people where even the “social spaces where the hidden transcript grows are themselves an achievement of resistance” (ibid., 118–119).

58. Levi 1988, 52.

59. Schedler 2013, 42.

60. Existing accounts of public protest that focus on the organizational factors associated with protest occurrence tend to emphasize the importance of coordinated action and informational gaps in predicting behaviors. Coordination is critical for overcoming the collective

activity also takes both public and private forms.⁶¹ Using both public reports and internal regime documents, I report on suspected coup attempts, assassinations targeting regime leaders, and political protest in a variety of forms.

Anti-regime political activity that undermines the objectives of an authoritarian leadership in less overt ways includes behaviors like draft dodging, which has the effect of undermining the capability and morale of an authoritarian army.⁶² Using internal security reports, I discuss the geographic distribution of draft dodgers as well as regime efforts to handle that problem. In the strictly controlled information environment of many authoritarian regimes, the circulation of rumors represents another way that regime objectives are subverted. While some of these rumors may have explicitly anti-regime content, the mere circulation of unsanctioned information on almost any topic of social concern breaks the information monopoly dictators seek to maintain. I collect and report on the content of more than 2,000 rumors collected by the Ba'ath Party, the most common locations where rumors circulated, as well as the typical vectors of rumor dispersion.

Approach to Inference

My approach to making inferences relies on two factors—first, the short-term exogeneity in citizen legibility across different regional groups within Iraq and, second, the unanticipated impact of a series of externally driven shocks that forced coalitional realignment for the regime. Neither of these strategies approaches the gold standard for causal identification in the social sciences—the randomized control trial. Within the world of observational data analysis,

action problem for a number of reasons. First, citizens are loathe to be alone in their anti-regime behavior, preferring the protection of crowds. In addition, protest behavior on the part of activists can trigger protest participation of more moderate individuals who differ from extremists in terms of how costly it is for them to falsify their preferences (Kuran 1991). Lohmann (1994) and Kricheli et al. (2011) both consider how incomplete information impacts the possibility for public protest participation.

61. The behaviors that I am highlighting are not an exclusive list; rather they are emblematic of behaviors along a spectrum of possible behaviors. The specific types of behaviors that represent active collaboration, acquiescence, or resistance differ as a function of political and cultural context. Behaviors that are seen as resistance in one regime may be viewed as supportive in another, requiring a context-specific approach to defining the range of relevant behaviors for examination.

62. While it is impossible to discern the political motivations of a single individual evading military service, there is little doubt of the net effect of the act when taken collectively.

true natural experiments are rare, as are instrumental variables that meet the exclusion restriction. As a result, the strategy that I have proposed represents, in every way, a compromise of the ideal inferential setting. That said, given the realities of empirical analysis of observational, archival data, I believe that my approach provides meaningful analytic leverage.

A key dimension of cross-sectional variation explored in this project is geographic, where geography tends to be correlated with ethno-sectarian identity. While some parts of the country tend to be highly diverse with regard to the ethno-sectarian background of the citizenship, there are many areas of Iraq that were dominantly homogenous, allowing me to make some inferences about the behavior of citizens belonging to particular ethno-sectarian groups without much concern for problems of ecological inference. My goal is not to claim that ethno-sectarian groups behave in monolithic ways. Indeed, the evidence that I provide offers details about the within-group variation in political behavior. Rather, I take a regional approach to the study of Iraqi politics. One reason for this is practical; much of the data that I have collected suggest important forms of regional variation in political behaviors. More important, however, is the fact that prominent scholars of Iraqi politics have endorsed such an approach.⁶³

Figure 1.1 provides maps displaying information about the ethnic breakdown of the Iraqi population.⁶⁴ This map suggests that the southern portions of Iraq are predominantly Shi'i, while the northern portions of the country are primarily Kurdish. The central portion of the country is populated by Sunni Arabs, while the area surrounding Baghdad and Baghdad itself is a mix of Shi'i and Sunni Arabs. The key distinction between Kurds and Arabs is linguistic, as Kurds typically speak one of two (some say three) main Kurdish dialects. Religious belief is a second dimension of potential cleavage. The

63. For example, Zeidel (2008, 80) argues that "regional identity" holds particular importance in the western areas of Iraq, including towns like Tikrit, Samarra, Haditha, and Ana, whose townspeople are not drawn from a single dominant tribe. In Tikrit, regional identity is highly salient and a function of the relative weakness of local tribes as well as the geographic isolation of the area (*ibid.*, 80). Visser argues that "in Iraq south of Baghdad, two non-sectarian ideological currents have historically been far more important than the idea of Shiite consolidation in a territorial bloc" (*ibid.*, 29).

64. The map for ethnicity in Iraq in 2003 was produced using a shapefile available on the ESOC website (<https://esoc.princeton.edu/>), which relied on data from the Gulf/2000 Project at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs.

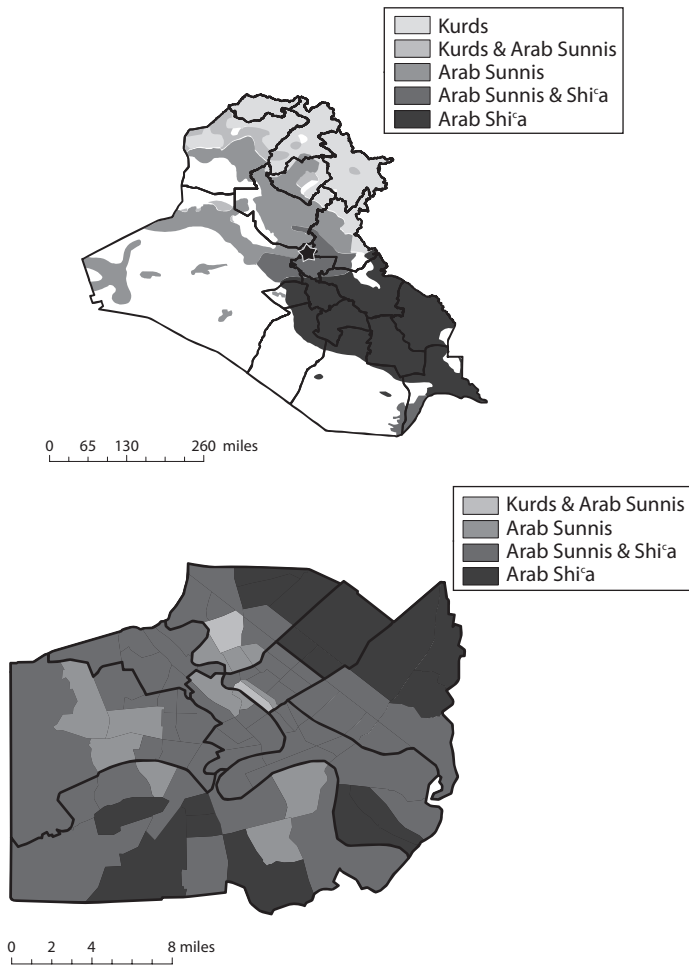


Figure 1.1. Ethno-religious population distribution across Iraq (top) and Baghdad (bottom).

majority of Iraqi Kurds are Sunni.⁶⁵ As a result, Kurds and Sunni Arabs have a shared religious framework that distinguishes those groups from Shi'i Arabs, who have historically been the plurality of Iraqi citizens. Sunni Arabs, then, might be viewed as the ethno-sectarian “pivot” group⁶⁶ as well as the group inhabiting the geographic center of the country.

65. While numerically small, the Fayly Kurds—Kurdish Shi'a—have been historically important in commerce.

66. Posner 2005.

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 Shi'a or the Kurds, there did exist variation within the Sunni community on this dimension. For the Shi'a, 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, Shi'i 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 Shi'i Da'wa 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.

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 Ba‘thist-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.

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 Shi‘a 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 Shi‘i 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 Shi‘i 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.

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 Ba'athist 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.

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 Ba‘th 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 Ba‘th 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 Ba‘thist 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.

INDEX

- 1991 Uprising, 2, 25–26, 38, 56–59, 81,
87–93, 98–99, 109–110, 121, 126,
157–158, 165, 168–169, 171, 174–175,
178, 195, 212, 225, 249–250, 256, 259,
264, 272, 278, 280–281, 294, 297, 304
- 1999 Uprising, 259–263
- Anbar, 58, 88, 95, 97–98, 113, 119,
123–125, 130, 165–166, 179–180,
184–185, 211, 253–255, 273, 280–282,
294, 297, 299, 310, 317–318
- Anfal Campaign, 31–32, 81, 148–157,
161–162, 165, 177
- Assassinations attempts, 19–20, 133, 207,
210–211, 217, 219–220, 223–224, 227,
229, 236–237, 260, 262, 265, 294–295,
298–302, 313, 320
- Babil, 89, 95, 97–98, 123, 185, 254, 277–279
- Baghdad, 21–22, 68, 95, 97–98, 123–124,
151, 156, 179–180, 184–185, 189, 194,
189, 201, 207, 212–215, 219–222, 224,
226, 228, 231–232, 236, 245, 248,
252–255, 258–263, 274, 276, 279–280,
282, 285, 289, 294, 297–298
- Barzani, Masud, 147, 154–155, 157,
224, 279
- Barzani, Mustafa, 137, 139–140, 142, 145
- Basra, 80, 87, 89–91, 95, 97–100, 115,
123–124, 156, 165, 170, 177, 182,
184–185, 211, 217, 222–224, 226, 228,
253–254, 261, 266, 276–277, 279–281,
287
- Ba'ath Party, 1, 17–18, 27, 42, 50, 58–59, 61,
64, 67–68, 71–73, 75–78, 87–89, 91, 93,
99, 103, 105–108, 117, 124, 133,
138–147, 150–151, 157–159, 162,
164–186, 190–195, 201, 206–207,
211–212, 214, 219, 222–226, 228, 230,
233–234, 238–239, 241–244, 246–248,
250–254, 257–260, 263, 266–272, 275,
278, 281, 283–285, 291–294, 298,
300–301, 303, 308–310, 312, 314–315,
319, 322
- Beliefs, 12–13, 32, 36–37, 39, 45, 308–309
- Casualties, 25–26, 55, 59, 80–81, 93–100,
104, 108–109, 147, 165, 173, 174–175,
177, 186–188, 190, 259, 261, 272,
291–292, 312, 322
- Chemical Ali: *See* al-Majid, Ali Hasan
- Clerics, 48, 57, 83, 225–229, 236–265, 311,
318, 320–321
- Collective Punishment, 4, 13–14, 32, 37–38,
45–47, 52, 56–59, 81, 90–92, 108,
134–135, 148, 152, 154, 158, 161–162,
237, 261, 275, 277, 302, 308, 312–313,
323–327
- Communalism, 14, 32, 48, 58, 211–212,
237, 311
- Communist Party, 74, 76–77, 105, 107–108,
137, 155, 163, 167, 241, 292
- Coup attempts, 19–20, 58–59, 113, 129,
220, 223, 266–268, 280, 293–304,
310, 321
- Cultural Distance, 15, 23, 51, 306

352 • INDEX

- Da'wa Party, 74–75, 105, 107–108, 170, 211, 241–246, 248, 250, 264, 294, 302, 320
- Desertion: *See* Military
- Dhi Qar, 89, 95, 97–99, 123, 182, 185, 209, 221–223, 225, 228, 254, 258, 266, 279–280
- “Distinguished” Families, 93, 96–100
- Distribution Regimes, 13, 32, 39–44, 53–54
- Diyala, 95, 97–98, 119, 123, 184–185, 254–255
- Draft, 20, 23, 39, 57, 268, 274–280
- Duhok, 89, 123, 145–146, 150–151, 279
- al-Duri, Izzat Ibrahim, 170, 247
- Economic shocks, 5, 13, 24–26, 44, 63, 66, 86, 102, 109, 111, 113–115, 126, 163, 210, 306
- Embargo, 25–26, 58–59, 112–130, 178, 186, 210, 256, 265, 268, 283–284, 293–294, 296, 303, 310, 312, 319
- Erbil, 89, 95, 97–98, 123, 150–151, 159, 221, 223, 254, 279
- Euphrates Region, 91, 93, 95, 97–99, 151, 184–185, 189, 212–215, 236, 251, 254, 263, 277, 282
- Faith Campaign, 238, 251
- Fedayeen (*Fida'iyyu*) Saddam, 174–175, 232, 263, 280, 282–283, 287–290, 300
- “Friends of the President,” 173, 174–176, 186–192, 195, 234, 289–291
- Gulf War, 25, 56, 86–87, 93, 98–100, 109, 111, 113–115, 129, 161, 170, 174–175, 178, 190, 201, 216–218, 272–273, 278, 282
- Halabja, 32, 153–155
- Hawza, 239–241, 244, 247–249, 251, 257, 320
- Hussein, Saddam, 25, 31, 38–39, 42, 54, 56, 61, 63, 67–68, 79–80, 82–84, 86–88, 91–93, 100, 102–104, 106, 108, 111, 118–121, 125–130, 133, 143–145, 158, 164, 168–171, 194, 205, 210, 216–221, 223–225, 227, 230–234, 236, 238, 243–244, 246–249, 255–256, 258–260, 266, 270, 273, 276–277, 280–281, 284–285, 294–301, 303, 308–309
- Incentives, 35–37, 39
- Individualized autocracy, 9
- Infrastructure, 61, 64–65, 87, 114–115, 129, 321–322
- Iran, 80–85, 87, 96, 99, 105, 111, 136, 141–142, 145, 147, 150, 152–153, 161, 181, 208, 220–221, 226, 239–240, 242–244, 248, 250, 266, 274, 276, 292–293, 296, 306, 309, 318–320
- Iran–Iraq War, 5, 24–26, 31–32, 55–56, 59, 80–86, 93–107, 109, 111, 114, 134, 143–145, 148–149, 156, 162, 165, 168, 174–175, 177, 190, 196, 246–249, 270–271, 275–278, 292–293, 296, 303, 306, 309, 311
- Jerusalem Army, 18, 234, 284–287
- Karbala, 74, 89–91, 95, 97–98, 123–124, 170, 185, 189, 220–221, 225, 239, 244, 249, 253–254, 277–279, 311, 320
- Khomeini, 84–85
- al-Khu'i, Abu al-Qasim, 247–249, 255, 320
- Kirkuk: *See* Ta'mim
- Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), 68, 72–73, 96, 137, 139–141, 144–145, 155, 161, 223, 309
- Kurds, 9, 68–69, 71–72, 81–82, 94–96, 105, 133–162, 165, 189–191, 220, 276, 289–290, 309, 311–312
- Kuwait 86–87, 205, 208–209, 211, 216–218, 220–221, 266, 271–272, 282, 296
- Legibility (of citizenry and groups), 5, 13–15, 23–24, 42, 49–51, 54, 57, 122, 134,

- 151–152, 154–155, 237–240, 248–249,
252, 258, 264, 277, 294, 297, 305–306,
313, 323–324, 327–328
- Mahdi Army, 237, 319
- al-Majid, Ali Hasan, 152–153, 156, 205,
229, 247
- Marja' /Maraji'*: *See* Clerics
- Marshes 15, 23, 121–122, 258, 277–278
- Martyrs (war): *See* Casualties
- Maysan, 89–95, 97–98, 185, 209, 221–222,
225, 254, 258, 279
- Medals: *See* 'Rewards'
- Missing in Action, 80, 93–96
- Military, Iraqi: and 1991 Uprising, 87, 92;
and desertion, 94, 101, 105, 117–118,
121, 145, 159, 181, 207, 209, 220–221,
228, 232, 259, 274–280, 292, 303, 311;
and mobilization, 207–208, 219, 236,
270–271, 273; and morale, 101, 104–107
- Militias: *See*: Fedayeen Saddam, Jerusalem
Army, Popular Army, Mahdi Army
- Monitoring costs, 5, 14–15, 31–32, 45–47,
53, 58, 121, 163, 239–240, 306, 324–325
- Mosques, 144, 243–244, 250, 252, 257–259,
261, 263, 318–319
- Mosul, 149, 151, 158, 177, 179, 253–254,
273, 279–280, 294, 322
- "Mother of All Battles": *See* Gulf War
- Muthanna, 95, 97–98, 123–124, 185, 222,
254, 277, 279
- Najaf, 74, 95, 97–98, 123, 170, 185, 189,
220–221, 225, 230, 239, 241, 243–244,
249–250, 253–255, 259, 261–263,
277–279, 311, 320
- Nasiriyya, 170, 224–225, 277, 320
- Nationalism, 14, 16, 32, 48, 58–59, 68–73,
78, 81–83, 85–86, 105–106, 109,
134–137, 141–142, 148, 154–155, 158,
160–162, 309–310, 313–314, 316–317,
319
- Ninawa, 95, 97–98, 151, 185, 254, 279
- Oil: and dependence 114; and development,
1, 24, 62–66, 69, 73, 78, 140, 305; and
nationalization, 55, 59, 62–63, 140; and
rewards 55, 141; and smuggling, 115,
126–127
- Oil-for-Food Program, 26, 59, 120,
123–124, 127–128, 178
- "Pages of Treachery and Betrayal": *See* 1991
Uprising
- Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), 96,
139, 144–145, 155, 161, 223, 309
- Peshmerga, 59, 139, 147–150, 152–153, 309
- Popular Army, 158, 270
- Prisoners of War, 80, 86, 93–96
- Punishment Regimes, 13, 32, 35–39,
44–54
- Qadisiyya, 95, 97–99, 123, 185, 211, 254,
277–279, 281
- Rations, 116–118, 121, 125, 130, 141, 210,
214, 234, 275, 277, 285, 302
- Republican Guard, 42, 90–91, 224, 270, 272,
280, 282–283, 295–297
- Rewards, 35–37, 39–44, 59, 120, 164–165,
180–182, 192–195, 230, 233–234, 246,
275, 284–285, 312
- Rumors, 20, 57, 159–160, 196–236, 250,
282, 284–285, 298–302, 311
- Saddam City, 179, 189, 214, 220–222, 226,
228, 230, 245, 250, 253, 258–263,
279–280, 311
- Saddam's Fedayeen: *See* Fedayeen Saddam
- Saddam's "Qadisiyya": *See* Iran–Iraq War
- al-Sadr, Baqir, 83, 243–245, 255–256
- al-Sadr, Muqtada, 237–238, 260, 319–320
- al-Sadr, Sadiq, 225, 227–229, 237–238, 240,
251, 255–265, 319
- Sadr City: *See* Saddam City
- Sadrists, 237, 256–265, 319–320

354 • INDEX

- Salah al-Din, 95, 97–99, 123–124, 159,
165–166, 184–185, 254, 279–280, 294
- Sanctions: *See* Embargo
- Sectarianism 1, 6, 9–11, 61–63, 70–71, 82,
108–109, 118, 250, 313–321
- Shi'a 9–10, 70–71, 74, 81–83, 85–89,
91–92, 94–95, 105, 111, 164–166, 168,
178, 180, 184, 186–187, 189, 197–198,
207, 209, 211–212, 215–216, 236–240,
242–244, 246, 256–257, 280, 288,
311–312, 317–321
- Social cohesion, 13, 36, 39, 46–47, 50–52,
57, 81, 134–135, 161, 275, 281, 294, 322
- State-building, 6, 24, 32, 62–69, 81, 109,
144, 162, 305–306, 308–309, 316,
321–323
- Students, 64–66, 73, 76–77, 99–100, 103,
121, 143, 147–148, 159, 165–166, 168,
170–180, 208, 234, 239–240, 243, 245,
247–249, 251–252, 262, 264, 282,
287–293, 319
- Sulaymaniyya, 89, 123, 138, 150–151, 156,
158–159, 177, 216, 221
- Sunnis, 9–10, 82, 113, 124–126, 129,
164–165, 168–169, 178, 180, 184,
186–191, 194–195, 212, 236, 242, 257,
268–270, 272–273, 280–281, 286–289,
293–294, 296–297, 303–304, 310–312,
314, 317–318
- Surveillance, 4, 23, 31, 45, 77, 134, 153, 171,
201, 239, 246–247, 250, 252, 257–258,
261–263, 268, 271, 303
- Talabani, Jalal 139, 145, 154–155
- Ta'mim, 89, 93, 95, 97–98, 140–142, 151,
159–160, 185, 254, 279
- Tikrit, 42, 56–58, 67, 70, 125–126, 129,
164–166, 168–170, 177–178, 180,
186–189, 194–195, 239, 269–271, 273,
286–288, 293–294, 296, 304, 310, 318
- Totalitarianism, 7–8, 180, 196, 307
- Tribe, 18, 66, 78, 82, 89, 106, 121–122,
125–126, 128, 136–137, 141, 145,
149–150, 157, 159, 160, 167–168, 176,
192–194, 259, 263, 266, 269, 271, 274,
278, 281, 283, 286–287, 291–299, 302,
308, 311–312, 314, 320–321
- United States, 88, 125–126, 158, 178, 207,
209, 211, 215–219, 222–226, 230–235,
237, 258, 272, 284–286, 298, 300, 316,
319; and 2003 invasion of Iraq, 123, 160,
216, 237–238, 305, 310, 314, 317–320,
322
- Wasit, 89, 95, 97–98, 105, 123, 185,
253–255, 279, 281