

Compliance and Resistance in Iraq under Saddam Hussein: Evidence from the Files of the Ba‘th Party

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Abstract

What explains patterns of compliance with and resistance to autocratic rule? Using data from documents captured by US forces during the 2003 invasion of Iraq, I identify a series of empirical regularities related to Iraqi citizen behavior under the regime of Saddam Hussein. Iraqi students living in and around Saddam Hussein’s hometown of Tikrit almost universally self-identified as Ba‘thists and enjoyed privileges as a result of close ties to the regime. Sunni students living in areas distant from Tikrit, however, frequently identified as political independents (i.e., non-Ba‘thists) despite regime efforts to inculcate them with party loyalty. Students living in the Shi‘a south were uniformly Ba‘thists, though not as a result of ties to the regime; rather, fear of reprisals for non-compliance with regime expectations made public forms of political defiance infeasible. Southern areas populated by Shi‘a Iraqis were more likely to witness private forms of non-compliance, however, like the circulation of destabilizing rumors and evasion of compulsory military service. Kurdish areas of the Iraqi north maintained an almost continuous state of insurgency since severe forms of collective punishment against Kurdish populations encouraged an “all-in” strategy of resistance.

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1 Introduction

The internal workings of an autocratic regime 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. Because collecting information in a non-democratic setting is so challenging, relatively little scholarship has sought to explain the mechanics of authoritarian 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. And 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* (Nalepa 2010). These factors, among others, have led the existing literature on non-democracies to be sparse and poor (Tullock 1987).

Determining the specificities of everyday political life in one of the 20th century’s most notorious dictatorships — Iraq under Saddam Hussein — is possible as a result of the recent availability of almost ten million internal security force and Ba’th party documents recovered upon the overthrow of the Iraqi regime in 2003. Because of the conditions under which the US invaded Iraq and the insurgency which was to follow, the US government had a powerful incentive to carefully collect and preserve a huge number of these internal government documents. The Hoover Institution acquired the Iraq Memory Foundation collection in 2008. The documents associated with the collection include both print and video materials and provide a rich picture of the everyday practices of Iraq’s highly repressive autocracy.

Using data from various collections within the Iraq Memory Foundation documents, I provide empirical evidence about the types of resistance and compliance that took place in the Iraqi context. I argue that the types of non-compliance observed in autocratic contexts differ across individuals and groups as a function of two primary factors, the political *opportunity structure* available to groups and their members and the prevailing *punishment regime*. Coalitional concerns made sub-populations more or less critical to regime maintenance over time; such concerns impacted the opportunities offered to group members and their leaders. The prevailing punishment regime refers to the conditions under transgressions against the regime are punished, the intensity of the punishment and the extent to which sanctioning tends to be individualized or directed at a collective. Both the prevailing opportunity structure and punishment regime can change as a result of unexpected political shocks, providing opportunities to examine over-time discontinuities in citizen behavior.

This framework is associated with the following empirical regularities. Iraqi students living in and around Saddam Hussein’s hometown of Tikrit almost universally self-identified as Ba’thists and enjoyed privileges as a result of their close ties to the regime. Sunni students living in areas distant from Tikrit, however, frequently identified as political independents (i.e., non-Ba’thists) despite regime efforts to inculcate them with party loyalty. This can be understood as a function of a lower expected benefit for identifying as a Ba’thist (since the regime preferenced individuals with geographically-based tribal ties for opportunities in the military and bureaucracy) and the unwillingness of the regime to punish fellow Sunnis severely, or collectively, for transgressions of this type. Students living in the Shi’a south were uniformly Ba’thists, though not as a result of ties to the regime. Shi’a Iraqis would seek to avoid all public forms of political resistance given the severe uncertainties to life

and livelihood associated with even small acts of non-compliance, particularly following the 1991 Shi'a and Kurdish uprisings and associated crackdown on Shi'a dissent. The use of collective punishment at the level of the extended family, tribe or village encouraged forms of social cohesion that supported the spread of destabilizing political rumors and acts of draft evasion. Kurds living in predominantly Kurdish areas of the Iraqi north had little to gain by joining the Ba'th Party. Severe forms of collective punishment against Kurdish populations encouraged an "all-in" strategy of resistance against the regime that ultimately resulted in the creation of an autonomous Kurdish governance zone within Iraq.

An aggregate analysis can only tell us so much about the incentives and disincentives faced by citizens as they contemplate how to translate grievance into acts of resistance. An important source of information about life in autocratic Iraq and the type of punishment regime to which individuals were subjected comes from the first-hand testimony of Iraqis. Between 2003 and 2008, documentary film makers associated with the Iraq Memory Foundation recorded the experiences of 190 individuals who survived repression of the Ba'th Party as part of an oral history project. These testimonials aired on *al-Iraqiyya* – a Arabic-language satellite and terrestrial public television network in Iraq that serves 85 percent of the country's population.¹ I include the first-hand testimony of individuals interviewed for this project throughout the paper.²

This paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 describes some of the relevant existing theoretical work on autocratic regime type. Section 3 provides background historical information on the development of the Iraqi state and modern authoritarianism in Iraq. Section 4 describes the archival data sources used in the analysis. Section 5 discusses a theoretical framework for thinking about the Iraqi case. Section 6 provides preliminary evidence about patterns of compliance and resistance in Iraq under Saddam Hussein. A final section concludes.

2 Compliance and Resistance under Authoritarianism

Previous work exploring issues of compliance and non-compliance in authoritarian contexts has focused on the conditions under which individuals might participate in rebellion against an oppressive political regime. Roger Petersen (2001) identifies a series of threshold points over which individuals move from low risk forms of opposition activity, like scribbling graffiti or attending a rally, to more direct material or military support for anti-regime militia activities. Similarly, he describes the continuum of activities that might reflect an individual's

¹The testimonials, including material not included in the original television broadcasts, are available for viewing in the Library and Archives of the Hoover Institution.

²On 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 as a result of these abuses (See Dexter Filkins, "Regrets Only?" *New York Times*, October 7 2007). And many of the individuals subject to regime abuses did not survive the experience. 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.

collaboration with the regime. James Scott (1985) points out that rebellions — particularly among rural populations — are rare and everyday forms of resistance among peasants tend to stop short of collective defiance. Ted Gurr’s models of political grievance suggest that when grievances are large and societal groups have elaborate networks with strong, cohesive identities, rebellion is most likely. Petersen (2001) also argues that structure of the community matters for whether or not that community can move from neutrality and low levels of non-compliance to more significant forms of political rebellion.

While the dynamics associated with compliance and resistance to autocratic rule are closely tied to issues of authoritarian legitimacy, regime duration, the existence and success of secessionist movements as well as processes of democratization, recent scholarly work on authoritarianism has been primarily focused 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.³ Barbara Geddes (2003) argues that single party, military and personalist regimes are distinctive institutional types and that the strategic factors guiding politics in each context are different. 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 which reintroduces monarchies as a distinctive regime type (previously excluded from the Geddes analysis) and focuses on a key difference within the set of party autocracies, particularly the distinction between single party regimes and hegemonic party regimes. 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. Geddes describes many of the regimes in the Middle East — like those in Egypt or Syria — as “hybrid” regimes exhibiting multiple institutional forms simultaneously.

The focus on institutional type (i.e., 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. Hannah 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” (1966, 474). For Arendt, the use of terror and ideology are an outgrowth of the regime’s desire to dominate all aspects of citizen life. Although Arendt’s use of the term totalitarian has been criticized by scholars who argue that truly totalizing forms of social control are not possible even in the most repressive regimes (Wedeen 1999, 44), the ambition, or perhaps need, to create totalizing forms of social control would seem to be one dimension on which to distinguish such regimes from other types of autocracy.

The influential work of Juan Linz (2000) focuses on the distinction between totalitarian and authoritarian regimes without regard for the precise institutional form. Linz defines authoritarian political systems as ones with limited forms of political pluralism, without an elaborate guiding ideology and without extensive or intensive political mobilization (Linz 2000, 159). In such a context, a leader or oligarchic group exercises power within relatively predictable limits (Linz 2000, 159). Totalitarianism, on the other hand, is characterized by

³Haber (2006) points out that efforts at categorization tend not to be derived from first principles.

Linz 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” (2000, 67). In Linz’s conceptualization, the role of the party would seem to be the 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” (Linz 2000, 94).⁴

One of the core theoretical debates in the literature on Iraq under Saddam Hussein relates to whether the regime should be categorized as authoritarian or totalitarian. In *Republic of Fear*, Kanan Makiya argues that fear was “not incidental or episodic” but rather constitutive of the regime itself (1998, xi). 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” (2009, 241). For Dawisha, the authoritarianism of Saddam Hussein’s predecessors becomes dwarfed by “Saddam’s procrustean totalitarianism” (2009, 240). Sassoon, on the other hand, does not consider the regime totalitarian (2012, 5) despite the fact that he argues the Ba’th Party was involved with almost all aspects of life, from birth to death (2012, 9). Sassoon points out that “many Iraqis did not accept the Ba’th regime” (2012, 221). 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 (Sassoon 2012, 8 and 211).

Part of the reason for this disconnect in how various scholars describe the regime relates to the differential treatment of citizens and groups of citizens across time and space within the context of a single Iraqi “regime.” For example, tolerance of dissent declined for certain populations over time, sometimes as a result of regional or geopolitical concerns. This variation in treatment across groups within a single country, as well as for particular groups over time, allows is certainly not unique; yet, empirical studies that use “regime” as the unique of analysis may place less emphasis on the issue of variation in governance forms within the borders of a single state. The next section provides a brief introduction recent developments in Iraqi authoritarian governance. I pay particular attention to differential treatment across ethno-religious societal groups.

3 Emergence of Iraqi Authoritarianism

A defining characteristic of the Iraqi state is its multi-ethnic, multi-sect population. As a result, a typical starting point for historical studies of the country focus on modern-day Iraq’s geographic position on the historical boundary between the Sunni Ottoman Empire and Shi’a Safavid Empire, as well as contemporary Iraq’s adjacency to the historical homeland of the Kurdish people, an ethno-linguistic group indigenous to southwest Asia. As the Ottoman Empire came to consolidate its political control over the region that would become contemporary Iraq, the area was divided into three *vilayet*, or provinces, centered around

⁴There are a number of other characteristics Linz describes as frequently accompanying totalitarianism but which do not define systems as such. Linz argues that “propaganda, education, training of cadres, intellectual elaboration of the ideology, scholarship inspired by the ideology, rewards for intellectuals identified with the system” (2000, 71) are frequently associated with totalitarianism. He also points out the tendency for totalitarian regimes to be ones where a single leader is the “object of a cult of personality” (Linz 2000, 75). Finally, he argues that although most totalitarian systems have been characterized by massive coercion (Linz 2000, 100), terror is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for defining a regime as totalitarian (Linz 2000, 74).

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. Conversions from Sunni to Shi'a Islam took place almost continuously during the Ottoman period, gaining intensity over time, perhaps as a form of opposition to Ottoman rule.⁵

The history of the modern Iraqi state following the British mandatory period has been well documented in a number of excellent studies (e.g., Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett 1990; Tripp 2000; Marr 2004; Dawisha 2009). The 1958 overthrow of the Iraqi monarchy introduced a period of political instability which ended with the consolidation of political power in the hands of Saddam Hussein who successfully sidelined his fellow Ba'hist, Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr, in 1979. Up until this period, forms of political control in Iraq followed a pattern quite similar to neighboring Arab states. Military overthrow of foreign-backed monarchs established Arab republics which repressed political opponents only to be overthrown themselves by other military or political party factions. The characteristic that seemed to most distinguish Iraq from its Arab neighbors was the persistence of the three-way population split between the Arab Shi'a (the numerical majority), Arab Sunni (relatively wealthy, political power holders) and the Kurds (whose ethnic ties cross borders to neighboring Iran, Turkey and Syria).⁶

Ba'hist ideology, with its emphasis on Arab nationalism, sought to Arabize Kurdish populations of the north while reducing emphasis on the religious distinction between Sunnis and Shi'as. The Iraqi Shi'a population had seen important improvements in economic, social and political status beginning in the 1950s (Dawisha 2009, 141). Despite a narrowing of the gap in status and wealth between Shi'a and Sunni populations, Sunni Iraqis remained more prosperous and better educated than their Shi'a counterparts and the officer corps of the armed forces remained overwhelmingly Sunni (Dawisha 2009, 142). Because of the emphasis on Arab nationalism in this period, the distinction between Kurds and Arabs seemed to be more intractable than the divide between Sunni and Shi'a sectarian groups within the Arab population (Dawisha 2009, 143).

Although Saddam Hussein had been highly influential in Iraqi governance following the 1968 Ba'hist coup, he did not fully consolidate power until 1979 when he took on the title of President and led a bloody purge of political rivals. Government under Saddam Hussein has been described as having three main pillars — the party, the military and the bureaucracy — where the party dominated the other organizations (Sassoon 2012, 7).⁷ The intelligence agencies were an important part of the regime's security apparatus and “recruited relatively large numbers from clans that owed total loyalty to Saddam Hussein” (Sassoon 2012, 11). Sassoon describes the relationship between the party and the security agencies as one of “symbiosis” where thousands of secret documents were copied from the security agencies to the party (2012, 98). The form of governance to emerge relied on co-optation, repression and the cultivation of an elaborate ideological network of influence. Dawisha writes:

⁵These conversions were most common in southern areas of Iraq which would have been influenced by Shi'a pilgrims traveling from the East to the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala.

⁶The vast majority of the Kurdish population in Iraq are Sunni Muslims. In this paper, I use the shorthand designation of Shi'a, Sunni and Kurd to represent the Arab Shi'a, Arab Sunni and Shi'a and Sunni Kurdish populations, respectively.

⁷The military was kept weak deliberately as part of a strategy of “coup proofing” (Sassoon 2012, 7).

“Saddam’s Iraq was the exclusive creation of a man who effectively ruled the country for almost thirty-five years. He constructed and, over time, refined a relentless police state that was defined almost solely by its pervasive and barbaric agencies of coercion. Such coercion was not only physical but intellectual as his institutions of cultural production facilitated an adulatory milieu that was dedicated to no other purpose but the indulgent aggrandizement of the President” (2009, 240).

A first-order question might be “why Iraq?” In other words, why such oppressive governance in Iraq when compared to other Middle Eastern states? Although neighboring states were not particularly free, few developed the apparatus for coercion and the will to repress found in Iraq under Saddam Hussein. While an important and interesting puzzle, it is impossible to do more than speculate about the answer. Psychologists might argue that Iraq’s turn toward brutality was related to the personal history and psyche of Saddam Hussein himself. Others might point to the sectarian split in the country, where a geographically central and politically influential minority — the Sunnis — found that repression was the most effectively strategy for maintaining political power over larger Shi’a and Kurdish populations. Even if we are unable to answer the question of why Iraq emerged as among the most repressive autocratic countries of the 20th century, examining individual and community response to growing autocracy in Iraq provides a window into how forms of resistance and compliance emerge under such regimes. The following section describes the evolution in status of various ethno-religious and geographic societal groups as background for theorizing about differential response across groups.

3.1 Differential Status within the Sunni Community

Although the Ba’thist regime under Saddam Hussein has typically been described as having a Sunni basis, the relative standing of various Sunni tribes and geographic groupings has varied over time. In particular, Ba’thist rule under Saddam Hussein came to increasingly rely on the four major clans — the Bakr, Talfah, al-Majid and Ibrahim — from in and around his hometown of Tikrit (Bengio 2000, 97). Coveted positions were filled by individuals drawn overwhelmingly from loyalists who hailed from the provincial towns in and around Tikrit (Marr 2004, 264). This was particularly so for a position in the Iraqi Republican Guard, as Saddam Hussein felt confident in his ability to rely on relatives for stalwart support. The reliance on Iraqis from Tikrit and neighboring areas represented a decrease in political importance for those from Upper Euphrates towns, like Ana and Ramadi, in Anbar governorate (Sakai 2003, 144).

Tension within the Sunni elite became first apparent just before the First Gulf War. Tribesman in the army and Republican Guard from the Juburi clan plotted a coup in January 1990. In 1993, officers associated with the Ubaid tribe were suspected of coup plotting. The most serious threat to the regime came from members of the Dulaimi tribe, who hailed primarily from western Iraq and, particularly, the province of Anbar. Dulaimi tribesmen — who had been critical in putting down the 1991 Shi’a uprisings following the First Gulf War — revolted against the regime in 1995 after the execution of General Muhammad al-Dulaimi and a number of other Dulaimi officers. Al-Dulaimi was suspected of plotting a

coup against Saddam Hussein. A number of other tribes, including the Jumailat, Anis, Rawis and Kubaysis — were reported to sympathize with the Dulaimi at this time. Press reports from that time suggest that the rebellion was also linked to a shrinking of Saddam Hussein’s power base over time through the purge of various Sunni tribes.⁸ It was reported that as many as 1,000 soldiers and officers from a Republican Guard unit was involved in the uprising.⁹ A battalion led by General Turki al-Dulaimi is reported to have attacked a radio transmitter and helicopter base at Abu Gharayb, on the outskirts of Baghdad.¹⁰ In 1996, officers associated with the al-Duri tribe — also from Anbar province — were accused of attempting a coup.

3.2 Evolving Treatment of Iraqi Shi’a

The first major crackdowns on Shi’a populations in Iraq took place as Saddam Hussein was consolidating political power in the late 1970s. This period was also associated with an increase in Shi’a political identity and activism across the region, most dramatically reflected in the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran. The experiences of individual Iraqis is illustrative here. One informant from Najaf reports that he took part in anti-regime demonstrations that took place in 1977. Along with a large number of other demonstrators, he was arrested, tortured and eventually sentenced to fifteen years in prison.¹¹ In 1978, an informant from Najaf was arrested for insulting then-vice president Saddam Hussein. He was sentenced to three years imprisonment at Abu Gharayb where he was beaten, electrocuted and hung by his feet from the ceiling.¹² In both cases, the individuals who were arrested and tortured acknowledged that they were involved in anti-regime activities.

During the 1980s, the regime cracked down even more sharply on any individual believed to be involved with anti-regime religious groups, particularly those believed to be associated with the Da’wa Party, a Shi’a Islamic political organization. A theology student, who was only fifteen years old at the time, was arrested in 1981 and spent ten years at Abu Ghurayb prison where he saw a former teacher of his subject to torture so severe that it led to the teacher’s death in prison.¹³ One informant from a rural family in the strategically important Shatt al-Arab region near Basra recalls that in 1986 — during the Iran-Iran War — he was convicted of being a member of the Da’wa Party and sentenced to a life term in jail where he was beaten, electrocuted and had his arms dislocated from his body.¹⁴

The 1991 Shi’a uprisings were a turning point in the treatment of Shi’a Iraqis by the regime. Notably, forms of collective punishment increased, particularly strategies of abusing the families of suspected anti-regime activists. The testimony described above provides detailed evidence that government repression was common prior to 1991; after 1991, however, repression targeting the families of suspected political agitators increased, suggesting greater

⁸Ed Blanche, *Iraqi Rebels Claim Sunni Clans Gathering Against Saddam*, Associated Press, June 18 1995

⁹Youssef Ibrahim, *Iraq Reportedly Cracks Down On Clan That Tried a Coup*, New York Times, June 20 1995

¹⁰Blanche, 1995

¹¹Testimony of Hadi Marza Zayir Abu Ghunaym, Recorded January 7 2008

¹²Testimony of Muhammad Turki Khudayr al-Mi’mar, Recorded January 4 2008

¹³Testimony of Na’im Hadi Jafatta Al-Hasouna, Recorded on September 27 2007

¹⁴Testimony of Iyad Jari Tehran, Recorded September 29 2007

use of collective punishment tactics by the government. Disappearances became common and — based on the testimony — individuals who were not involved with the 1991 protests were commonplace victims of state abuse.

According to one Iraqi from Najaf, he was serving in the military in 1991 and when he returned to his family home he found that his family's property had been seized and his brother arrested (and remained missing) even though his family did not take part in the uprisings.¹⁵ An Iraqi from the town of Rumaythah reports that his 75 year-old father was arrested following the 1991 uprisings and it was not until 2003 that he found his father's remains in a mass grave, identifiable by an ID card, prayer beads, eyeglasses and other personal items.¹⁶ The informant — in his capacity as a school principal — reports that at his school there were around 400 orphans enrolled whose fathers had been executed. One man from Najaf reports his son fled to Saudi Arabia following the 1991 uprisings. The son eventually returned to Iraq and reported for military service at which point he was arrested and executed. When the informant was given his son's corpse, he was barred from holding a funeral for his son.¹⁷ Accused of hiding his son from authorities, the informant was brutally tortured with broken bottles and wooden bars.¹⁸

3.3 The Kurdish Experience

Prior to 1991, the Shi'a were — broadly speaking — subjected to government treatment more oppressive than that received by the Sunni population but less oppressive than that received by the Kurds (Rohde 2010, 35). The horrors inflicted on the Kurdish population of Iraq have been well-documented. Kurds believed to have participated in or provided material support to Kurdish militias, the Peshmerga, were subject to arrest and abuse. Suspected association with Peshmerga forces often led to terms in Abu Ghurayb prison where individuals were subject to physical and psychology torture, sometimes even being forced to donate blood to the Ba'ath Party.¹⁹ It was not unusual for army units to storm villages, arresting large numbers of villagers, including entire families. Battles between Peshmerga forces and the Iraqi army could last for days as military planes and helicopters would bomb homes, killing civilians and rebels alike.²⁰

Among the most notorious of incidents relates to the Anfal campaigns against the Kurdish populations of Iraq during the final years of the Iran-Iraq War. Kurdish informants report fleeing to the mountains during aerial bombings of villages.²¹ Despite the difficult conditions of the mountains where families would have little food to eat and poor shelter, the persecution in Kurdish towns and villages was often worse. Houses were burned, with families and children inside of them.²² The 1988 chemical weapons attack on the Kurdish village of

¹⁵Testimony of Hamed Suhail Najim, Recorded December 12 2008

¹⁶Testimony of Muhammad Abdel Hasan al-Zalimi, Recorded May 6 2008

¹⁷Denying the family of an executed political prisoner the ability to hold a funeral was a common practice in Iraq at this time.

¹⁸Testimony of Ghazi Mazhub Sajit Al-Da'mi, Recorded December 12 2007

¹⁹Testimony of Abdel Baqi Kader Muhammed, Recorded March 13 2008

²⁰Testimony of Abdullah Muhammed Hussein, Recorded March 8 2008

²¹Testimony of Asad Mahmud Ahmed, Recorded March 5 2008; Testimony of Habiba Ahmed Abdallah, Recorded March 13 2008

²²Abdallah, 2008

Halabja stands out as among the most horrifying atrocities committed during the Anfal campaign. One informant — who was just ten years old when the Halabja attack took place — reports that his entire family was killed including his mother, his four brothers, his grandmother as well as the families of his aunt and his uncle. He recalls people vomiting and fainting from the chemical attack.²³ A teacher from Halabja reports that fourteen of his family members were killed in the attack and that he is still haunted by memories of seeing people blinded by the chemical weapons trying to get away, and even mothers leaving their children behind to try to escape the chemical attack.²⁴

The differential treatment of Iraqi citizens across ethno-sectarian lines was a defining feature of Saddam Hussein’s regime. The next section attempts to quantify some measures associated with individual acts of resistance to and compliance with regime expectations of citizen behavior.

4 Archival Data Sources

The documents in the Iraq Memory Foundation collection at the Hoover Institution are the basis for the empirical analysis in this project. A number of discrete document collections make up the archive, including the Ba’th Party Regional Command files, Ba’th Party membership files, Ministry of Information documents, the School Registers collection as well as special collections related to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the Kurdish insurgency in the north. Previous scholarship using Iraq Memory Foundation documents has focused primarily on the Ba’th Party Regional Command files and, to a lesser extent, the North Iraq Data Set.²⁵

This section describes the sources for the evidence used in this paper. A primary source of data comes from the School Registers collection for the academic year 2001-2. Data are aggregated to the district level, where Iraqi districts might be considered similar to counties in the US. In this section, I provide background information on the School Registers collection as well as information regarding how the data in the collection was compiled by party officials. I also use documents from the Ba’th Party Regional Command files, which include information on party membership and governance, to provide additional context.

4.1 The School Registers Collection

The Iraqi regime under Saddam Hussein cared a great deal about youth mobilization in the service of the Ba’th Party. According to Sassoon (2012, 54), the party sought to recruit students at an early age, even when they were in high school. One aspect of this mobilization process involved the collection of an annual inventory of students (*al-jard al-tulāb al-sanawī*), described in the Iraq Memory Foundation documents as the School Registers collection. The

²³Testimony of Daron Nuri Muhammad Hilmi, Recorded on March 5 2008

²⁴Testimony of Bahaa al-Din Nuri Ahmed, Recorded March 3 2008

²⁵In my citation of the documents, I cite the full document number beginning with the boxfile and subsequently the folder and document number. If a date is listed on the document or associated memos, I list that date after the document number. If the date associated with the memorandum is not listed or possible to infer from accompanying documents, no date is listed with the document number.

School Registers collection represents the official Ba'ath party records for each high school student in Iraq.²⁶ Sassoon (2012, 55) writes "one main purpose of the School Register...was the potential recruitment of these students." The desire to mobilize and recruit went hand-in-hand with the need to control and coerce. Schools were an important place of observation for the regime where teachers and students were being constantly monitored (Sassoon 2012, 116). As a result, the School Registers include information about students and their families beyond name and address to also include data on political orientation, family reputation as well as other activities with political significance.

Information about how the School Registers were collected as well as the various uses for the Registers by the regime can be gleaned through a reading of associated memoranda. The Registers were collected for every academic year beginning in the mid-1980s and continuing until the overthrow of the regime. The content of the Registers changed in important ways following the 1991 Shi'a and Kurdish uprisings. While previously information was only collected about the political orientation of the student and the reputation of his family (along with name, address and other basics), the expanded format asked a series of additional questions.

One document details instructions for collection of the student inventory for the 2000-1 academic year. The officer charged with collecting the data was to do his job undercover and to perform his duties secretly. The name of each student and school was to be documented and address confirmed. The information was to be indexed and then signed and stamped by the appropriate administrators.²⁷ Additional, everyday documents describe the process by which the party comrade charged with ensuring that the registers were finished and collected would receive a car and driver (most often a Mitsubishi) to travel to various schools.²⁸ Specific instructions were sent to party branch leaders about how to compile the information in the Registers, for example the need for each school to be put into its own file and to be signed by party officials.²⁹ Party officials required that information be carefully checked every year.³⁰ Meetings were held to assist party cadre in avoiding mistakes made in previous years.³¹ Because information in the Registers reflected the child and family's security status, cooperation across various governmental units including the security services, party and police was required.³²

Party memoranda frequently reflect a need to provide the information provided in the Registers in a timely manner.³³ A most pressing concern was to provide information to the armed forces and military and police academies as they began screening individuals for government service suitability.³⁴ Determining the good standing of young men who might

²⁶This is an annual accounting of the nationwide student population by the party with a focus on boys from ages 12 to 18. The entire School Registers collection consists of 162,628 pages (1,036 volumes) for years 1983-2002.

²⁷See Boxfile Doc Nos. 01-3025-0001-0098, 01-3025-0001-0099 and 01-3025-0001-0100.

²⁸Boxfile Doc No. 01-3025-0001-0104, February 26 2001; Boxfile Doc No. 01-3025-0001-0039, August 10 2001

²⁹Boxfile Doc No. 01-2971-0001-0001

³⁰Boxfile Doc No. 01-2496-0003-0200

³¹Boxfile Doc No. 01-3025-0001-0008, April 13 2002

³²Boxfile Doc No. 01-2496-0003-0037 1996

³³Boxfile Doc No. 01-3025-0001-0091, March 2001

³⁴Boxfile Doc No. 01-3025-0001-0097, January 10 2001

receive training and scholarships from the regime appears to have been a very important matter and great lengths were taken to make sure no one with a questionable background might accidentally be incorporated into the regime's security apparatus.³⁵

Student information in the School Registers took the following form: one row was recorded for each student, including his address and parent names. The name of the school appeared at the top of each sheet of students. The following ten questions composed the basic format for the Registers, as well as room for a narrow comments section:

1. Political orientation
2. Reputation of the student and his family
3. Nationality (i.e., Arab, Kurd, Turkman)
4. His and his family's position on the "Mother of All Battles"
5. His and his family's position in terms of treachery and treason
6. Does he have close ties to someone sentenced for hostility to the party or the revolution
7. Is he or his father among the close friends of the leader (God protect him)
8. Was a close relative (brother or father) martyred in either "Saddam's Qadisiyya" or the "Mother of All Battles"
9. Has he in the past or will he volunteer for Saddam's *fedayeen* and, if so, what is his rotation number
10. Did he participate in the "Day of Pride" national training exercises

Political orientation in this context identified students as either being Ba'athists or as politically independent (*mustaqill*). While the vast majority of students are identified in the Registers as Ba'athists, there do exist students who are identified as independent and the percentage of politically independent students varies over space. Reputation of the student and the family is fairly straightforward and the vast majority of students have a "good" reputation in the School Registers. Nationality (*qaumīya*) does not refer to Iraqi nationality but rather whether the student is an Arab, Kurd or, much less frequently, Turkman or other group member. Sectarian identification in terms of the Sunni-Shi'a designation does not appear at any point in official documentation. For the fourth item, the "Mother of all Battles" refers to the student and his family's position on the First Gulf War. There is very little variation on this measure. The fifth item describing treachery and treason (*ghadr wa khiyāna*) is a reference to participation in the 1991 Shi'a and Kurdish uprisings. Again, there is a little variation on this outcome for the 2001-2 academic year (as most individuals from treasonous backgrounds may have been purged from the school system). The next item refers to individuals with hostility to the Ba'ath Party or the Ba'athist Revolution.

The seventh item refers to a student or his father's designation as a close friend of the leader, referred to by Sassoon as a "Friend of the President." This was an official designation

³⁵Boxfile Doc No. 01-3025-0001-0030, March 12 2002

that emerged after the First Gulf War that afforded “Friend of the President” cardholders special privileges. These privileges included additional “points” added to his children’s school applications, the honor of meeting the president once a year, special grants and holiday bonuses, priority over others Iraqis in meeting with government officials and an annual gift of two summer suits and two winter suits, among other things (Sassoon 2012, 209). One main way that someone might receive such an identity card was related to the eighth item on the list of questions — was someone in the immediate family killed in either the “Mother of all Battles” or “Saddam’s Qadisiyya.” “Saddam’s Qadisiyya” was the regime’s name for the Iran-Iraq War, referencing the 636 CE Arab Muslim defeat of the Sassanid Persian army. After the First Gulf War, individuals who died in the Iran-Iraq War or the First Gulf War were posthumously awarded the “Friend of the President” designation (Sassoon 2012, 157). There exists variation in the distribution of war martyrs across Iraq and this variation will be explored in a separate paper. For the purposes of this paper, because of the close link between war deaths and “Friend of the President” designation, I will use war martyrs as a covariate rather than as a dependent variable.

The ninth question relates to whether the student volunteered to participate in “Saddam’s *fedayeen*.” Sassoon (2012, 150) describes this group as a militia established in 1994 after the disappointing performance of local Ba’th Party and army units in the wake of the 1991 uprisings. The group was headed by Uday Hussein, the notorious son of the president, and differed from other state-sponsored militias — like the Jerusalem Army — as its officers were permanent and came from the Republican Guard or Iraqi army (Sassoon 2012, 150).³⁶

The final question that appears in the Registers relates to student participation in “Day of Pride” (*Yaum al-Nakhwa*) national training exercises. Following the 1991 uprisings, Saddam Hussein designated a day dedicated for national military training (Sassoon 2012, 148). Students were expected to participate in these training activities and could suffer consequences if they did not participate. According to one memo from 1998, students seeking acceptance to Iraqi military academies needed to provide a certificate of completion for the national training exercises.³⁷ Indeed, acceptance to these schools could be canceled if they could not prove their participation.³⁸ Participation rates across Iraq were quite high and variation across districts is not examined here.

This paper focuses on two of the above questions, a student’s political orientation and whether or not he or his family was among the “friends” of Saddam Hussein. While many of the other questions have political relevance, for the year which is the focus of my data analysis, academic year 2001-2, there is relatively little variation across Iraqi districts.

³⁶I am currently exploring the issue of when and how recruitment took place for the *fedayeen*. A memo detailing the number of *fedayeen* volunteers by region would suggest that northern and southern parts of Iraq saw the largest number of volunteers while areas of core regime strength would seem to have far fewer volunteers (see Boxfile Doc No. 024-5-2-0121). Although there exists considerable variation across Iraqi districts in terms of the students who volunteered for the *fedayeen* as reported in the School Registers, I will not be reporting results from my analysis in this paper. Preliminarily I can report, however, that the most robust predictor of high levels of *fedayeen* among the Iraqi students in my sample is the distance of the district from Baghdad suggesting something about the recruitment efforts for the organization.

³⁷Boxfile Doc No. 01-2496-0003-0001, 1998

³⁸Boxfile Doc No. 01-2496-0003-0003

4.2 Ba‘th Party Regional Command Files

In addition to information compiled from the School Registers collection, I have also gathered information and contextual insights from documents in the Ba‘th Party Regional Command files. These documents provide important information on the incentives one might have to become a Ba‘th Party member, as well as the potential downsides for doing so. The documents also provide information about the relevance of having a “Friend of the President” designation, particularly for young people seeking opportunities for higher education.

What do we know about the process by which individuals became Ba‘th party members? To be designated a Ba‘thist in terms of one’s political orientation in the School Registers did not — as far as I am aware — require the same process by which individuals entered the hierarchy of party membership. Prospective party members had to fill out extensive questionnaires; indeed, the Iraq Memory Foundation collection is littered with Ba‘th Party membership applications. There existed a strict hierarchy within the Ba‘th Party where individuals could move up the following ranks: sympathizer, supporter, advanced supporter, candidate, active member, division member, section member, branch member and secretary general (Sasson 2012, 46). To become even a sympathizer, one would need to reveal past political affiliations or be hanged; joining another political party after being a Ba‘thist meant a seven-year prison sentence (Sasson 2012, 73).

5 Theoretical Framework

In this section, I discuss the relevant individual and group-level considerations that might influence how Iraqis orient themselves in relation to the party and regime. At each level of analysis, I consider the opportunity structure for sub-group members as well as the prevailing punishment regime. I argue that, taken together, opportunity structure and punishment regime yield predictions about individual and group-level outcomes on a variety of measures of non-compliance.

5.1 Individual-Level Considerations

Assume individuals balance a series of concerns when negotiating their relationship to the Ba‘thist regime. Individuals hope to maximize the benefits they might accrue from association with the regime while considering the likely punishment they would receive for breaking with regime expectations of appropriate behavior. In this setting, one’s personal level of affinity for the regime (or, more likely, grievance against the regime) underlies costs or benefits associated with cooperating with or protesting against the regime.

5.1.1 Opportunity Structure

What benefits might one confer from being a Ba‘thist? Party membership was not mandated by law. According to Sassoon, many Iraqis voluntarily joined the party either because of their commitment to the ideology or for the perquisites (2012, 53). Employees of the state sector — like teachers and petty bureaucrats — were almost universally Ba‘th Party members. From a student’s perspective, to be eligible for a broad range of public educational

opportunities — particularly those supported by Ministry of Defense funding — a Ba‘thist political orientation was critical. Sassoon writes that in the 1970s and early 1980s, the military colleges sometimes accepted applicants who were political independents deemed to be ripe for party indoctrination (2012, 135). By the late 1980s, however, it appears that only committed Ba‘thists were admitted (Sassoon 2012, 135). Candidates for acceptance to such programs had to receive clearance from both the security apparatus and the local party branch, which provided additional details about the applicant and his family (Sassoon 2012, 134).

The Ba‘th Party Regional Command boxfiles include dozens of letters and memoranda related to student applicant status at one of more than a dozen Ministry of Defense funded institutions of higher education. Students could be denied admission for any number of reasons, despite having high-level ties to the Ba‘th Party — failing to submit graduation records on time, scoring low on the psychological portion of the interview or even being unable to pronounce the letter *rā*’ (i.e., having a lisp).³⁹ Being a political independent could also lead a student to be rejected, however, despite the student’s merit as an applicant.⁴⁰ In one memorandum describing the 1993 selection process for Military Medical College students, instructions were given to automatically accept Ba‘thist students who have the “Friends of the President” designation, whose father had such a designation or who were the brothers of war martyrs. Secondary consideration was then given to 271 Ba‘thist students for whom security and party information had been collected and deemed acceptable. The remaining student applicants were thought to have non-encouraging applications and it was instructed that they be rejected.⁴¹

Being a close associates of the regime and party conferred important benefits but complicity was not costless.⁴² Reports from a 1995 file from southern governorates of Basra and Dhi Qar provide some insight into the risks associated with being tied to the party. In one case, a group of “agents” burned down the *mudhif*, or traditional communal house, of a shaykh who was reported to be a supporter of the party and “revolution.” Although checkpoints were set up in the area, the agents escaped.⁴³ In another case, a local shaykh who was a friend of the party had his house attacked; the sons and cousins of the shaykh fired back on the attackers.⁴⁴ Examples of attacks on party facilities were also common in southern areas. One memo documents arrests associated with an anti-regime attack. Agents had planned an attack against a local party headquarters but a guard they had approached about helping them turned them into the police. The agents had a gun, grenade and a semi-automatic weapon.⁴⁵ The guards responsible for raids on insurgents were praised in party memos, sometimes receiving awards or bonuses for their activities. These types of incidents would appear to have been quite common in the south and a number of similar events can

³⁹Boxfile Doc No. 01-3847-0003-0100, 1993

⁴⁰Boxfile Doc No. 01-3847-0003-0100, 1993

⁴¹Boxfile Doc Nos. 01-3847-0003-0101 and 0102

⁴²It was not at all obvious, however, that having a Ba‘thist political orientation as a high school student would incur the same potential risks.

⁴³Boxfile Doc No. 01-3874-0004-0017

⁴⁴Boxfile Doc No. 01-3874-0004-0028

⁴⁵Boxfile Doc No. 01-3237-0000-0061, 1993

be identified in the collection.⁴⁶ One might expect that such pressures would be even more pronounced in Kurdish communities of Iraq.

5.1.2 Punishment Regime

A willingness to break with regime expectations of appropriate behavior would bring different forms of punishment depending on the type of behavior and the individual transgressor. Sharing sectarian identification with the regime leadership provided a form of political “cover” for Sunni Iraqis to engage in non-threatening forms of public non-compliance. For highly oppressed portions of the citizenry, even small acts of public non-compliance could be viewed as a form of resistance and, therefore, were not feasible given the costs associated with such behaviors. According to Sassoon, organized resistance to the regime through participation in Kurdish political parties or the Shi‘a Islamist Da‘wa Party meant that if an individual was caught, “there was no mercy for either them or their extended families” (2012, 221). As a result, societal groups struggling under more oppressive conditions — like the Kurds and after 1991 the Shi‘a — were forced to either avoid all public forms of political resistance or engage in full-scale rebellion, given the perils of the collective punishment norms which predominated.

The decision to express a Ba‘thist political orientation as a student or to join the Ba‘th Party as an adult often engendered forms of extreme psychological discomfort for individuals. While some individuals had personal or familial experience with the effects of regime repression, others felt as though their ethnic group, religious order or tribe had been mistreated in a way that decreased their affinity for the regime. A belief in the “linked fate” of others from the same ethnic or tribal group might lead individuals to oppose the regime in the absence of a negative personal experience.

5.2 Group-Level Considerations

In this section, I argue that an individual’s behaviors and orientation toward the regime were also impacted by considerations related to one’s ethnic or sectarian group membership. In particular, I argue that levels of social cohesion within societal groups are a function of how punishment was meted out by the regime against group members. Social cohesion, in turn, impacted the types of non-compliance observed by individuals within those groups.

5.2.1 Opportunity Structure

Selectorate theory suggests that political leaders must maintain their winning coalition to stay in power and that in autocracies such coalitions tend to be small, allowing leaders to use private goods to pay off their supporters (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003). In section 3, I have argued that in the Iraqi context, the nature of coalitional politics has changed over time. In the 1980s, Shi‘a Iraqis were seen as full partners in governance of the state. Sunnis — hard-pressed to rule Iraq without complicity from at least one of the two major minority groups — pursued policies promoting Arab nationalism. Such policies tended to extend perquisites to Shi‘a Iraqis — who shared Arab identification with Sunni Arabs —

⁴⁶Boxfile Doc Nos. 01-3874-0004-0106 and 01-3874-0004-0171

over Kurdish Iraqis. Shi'a Iraqis had the added value of representing the next rung in a hierarchical ordering of ranked social groups where Kurds were historically at the bottom of the economic hierarchy.

The 1991 uprisings of Shi'a and Kurdish Iraqis represented among the most serious challenges to Saddam Hussein's survival as a political leader. The key military units of the Iraqi regime — overstretched as a result of the Kuwaiti occupation, US invasion and twin uprisings — turned to Sunni tribesmen from outside of the Tikrit heartland to put down the southern rebellion. After 1991, much of the Shi'a community was branded as traitorous. Under the sanctions regime, Sunnis peripheral to Tikrit saw significant declines in quality of life and, despite the instrumental role they had played in putting down the uprisings, did not enjoy the same levels of access, employment and privilege as Sunnis from in and around Tikrit. Since the early days of Saddam Hussein's rule, the regime showed a preference for placing family members and geographically-based tribesmen from Tikrit and its environs in sensitive positions of government, including the military, bureaucracy, intelligence and security services. This preference intensified over time, however, to the detriment of Sunnis from outside of the Tikrit heartland. By 2003, the winning coalition of the regime had narrowed to include tribesmen from central Iraq, some Shi'a tribes and some tribes from the Sunni periphery.

5.2.2 Punishment Regime

One major challenge for Saddam Hussein was identifying the individual or set of individuals deserving of punishment as a result of their transgressions against the regime. A starting point for the analysis in this section assumes differential costs for collecting information about opposition across societal groups. When the cost of information tends to be low, this allows the regime to punish individuals who transgress. As the costs of information gathering increase, this leads to punishment being less targeted and more diffuse. In the extreme, forms of collective punishment that target entire villages or regions might be observed. An implicit assumption of such an approach is that the regime prefers to target its punishment when possible. What types of factors increase or decrease a group's "legibility" from the perspective of the regime?⁴⁷ Shared language is one critical factor. Geographic accessibility would also seem to influence a government's ability to map an area, take a census or engage in other forms of information collection. In some cases, such factors might be overcome with a large investment in bureaucratic expertise; even then, however, costly investment does not translate readily into local knowledge.

The cost to government information collection impacts the forms of social cohesion that emerge across communities. When acts of non-compliance are unobservable by the regime, individuals — knowing this — can organize relatively safely, encouraging the creation of dense networks with higher degrees of social cohesion. At the opposite extreme, when the cost of information collection is very low, this discourages social cohesion since individual citizens recognize that regime penetration of their potential network means that anyone in this network might report their opposition beliefs to the government. For middling levels, the regime might have some idea about who perpetrated the transgression but not enough

⁴⁷See Scott (1998) on the efforts of high modernist states to render society as "legible."

information to identify an individual transgressor. Under such circumstances, trust and social cohesion develop at the group level, most often to include members of a tribe, clan or extended family.

Taken together, variation in informational environment and punishment regime create categories of rule which define both the levels of social cohesion to emerge and the types of non-compliance observed. When a societal group is relatively opaque to the regime, transgressions result in wide-scale collective punishment without regard for the guilt or innocence of neighboring individuals who represent a form of “collateral damage.” Knowing that the cost of information about opposition activity tends to be high, individuals can organize relatively freely, encouraging social cohesiveness. When the regime tries to put down opposition, dense social networks encourage a strategy of “all-in” resistance that can cascade into full-fledged rebellion.⁴⁸ This scenario describes the Kurdish equilibrium.

At the opposite extreme, a high level of regime penetration into a community means that punishment for transgressing regime norms tends to be more individualized. The ease with which information is gathered about opposition to the regime leaves disgruntled individuals with little incentive to hide their beliefs; agents of the regime are likely to ferret out their preferences anyway. Weak social networks also discourage societal groups from reigning in individuals who might transgress. This scenario describes the situation for Iraqi Sunnis. While the Sunni of Iraq surely had less cause for grievance than either the Shi’a or the Kurds, there did exist variation within the Sunni community with regard to this dimension. Disgruntled members of the Sunni community, therefore, are observed engaging in small-scale forms of public dissent despite having closer ties to the regime.

An intermediate case describes the situation most applicable to the Shi’a of Iraq. For the Shi’a, a shared language made their community more legible than the Kurds but still less accessible than the greater Sunni community, given the local knowledge held by the regime. As a result, punishment was meted out on the level of the extended family; security forces may have had some knowledge about the identity of transgressors but less than the full information required to identify individual perpetrators. The result was that forms of social cohesion did emerge, particularly at the tribal level. According to Sassoon, organized resistance to the regime among Shi’a meant that if an individual was caught, “there was no mercy for either them or their extended families” (2012, 221). Social cohesion at the tribal level allowed for forms of in-group policing as well as mobilizational capacity at critical moments of rebellion. In general, however, non-compliance among Shi’a was typically pushed underground. Information was shared within small groups of trusted individuals in a way that encouraged the spread of rumors. Private acts of defiance, like draft dodging, were also common among Iraqi Shi’a.

5.3 Predictions

This framework suggests a series of empirical predictions for various societal groups as well as predictions that relate to the behaviors of individuals within those groups. Sunnis from Tikrit and its environs should expect the largest potential benefits from having a Ba’thist political orientation while simultaneously enjoying the lowest levels of grievance against the

⁴⁸See Petersen (2001) for more on the effects of strong community on rebellious activity.

regime. If Sunnis living in the Tikrit heartland are indeed the group with the greatest opportunity to reap government benefits, we should observe higher levels of “Friend of the President” status for this subgroup. In addition, Sunnis in and around Tikrit should see a low percentage of individuals with a politically independent orientation. Low levels of grievance on the part of this group will discourage rumormongering and draft dodging.

Sunnis living at some distance from Tikrit — particularly in the Upper Euphrates region of Anbar governorate — observed a decrease in the benefits that could expect from the Ba‘thist regime. Simultaneously, they are less likely to suffer punishment for transgressions against the regime as a result of their status as Sunnis and were unlikely to be punished collectively. As such, outlying Sunni populations had less to gain from being Ba‘thists and also less fear of potential punishment for failing to comply with regime expectations.

For Shi‘a, the expected punishment from having an independent political orientation was so high that we expect to observe a type of “pooling” equilibrium for the Shi‘a where everyone signals that they have a Ba‘thist political orientation despite strong anti-regime sentiment among Shi‘a. The use of collective punishment at the level of the extended family, tribe or village encouraged forms of social cohesion that supported the spread of rumors, the act of draft evasion and the possibility for political uprising. Widespread Shi‘a uprisings following the 1991 Gulf War suggest the existence of sufficient social cohesion to allow for collective mobilization. The 1991 Gulf War also provides an opportunity to consider the over time variation in anti-regime sentiment. Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait believing that the United States would not intervene in an inter-Arab conflict. When the Shi‘a bore the brunt of casualties and infrastructure damage associated with the US intervention, increasing Shi‘a grievances led to widespread rebellion and a massive increase in the cost of non-compliance. I consider over-time variation in Shi‘a political orientation in the next section.

Kurdish populations of northern Iraq were subjected to brutal forms of collective punishment which fostered high levels of social cohesion. Kurdish populations took advantage of regime weakness following the 1991 Gulf War to establish an autonomous Kurdish zone in the north. Prior to 1991, most Kurds had little to gain by being Ba‘thists and might have also subjected themselves to within-group sanctioning for collaborating with the regime.

6 Evidence

Thus far, I argued that individual Iraqis were subject to both individual and group-level considerations that impacted their political behavior. Iraqi Sunnis operated in an environment where the cost of collecting information about opposition to the regime was low. Under such circumstances, individuals were willing to engage in small-scale acts of public non-compliance if they felt aggrieved, as was common among Sunnis of the Upper Euphrates. In Shi‘a areas, social cohesion came to develop at the level of the tribe or extended family group where members had an incentive to reign in the activities of other group members to avoid forms of collective punishment. Prior to the 1991 uprisings, the cost of breaking with regime expectations were relatively low; after 1991, however, even small acts of non-compliance could be highly costly acts. As such, non-compliance was pushed underground and more frequently took the form of rumormongering and draft dodging. In Kurdish areas, the opacity of Kurdish society from the perspective of the regime both encouraged the use of

collective punishment and the development of forms of social cohesion that allowed grievance to translate into rebellion.

In this section, I use data from the School Registers collection and information drawn from the Ba‘th Party Regional Command files to provide evidence for the differential forms non-compliance observed across autocratic Iraq. I examine cross-sectional variation on five issue areas related to compliance and non-compliance with the autocratic regime of Saddam Hussein. The first two refer to outcomes associated with high school students through information reported in the School Registers: self-identification as having a Ba‘thist vs. independent political orientation and an individual or his father’s designation as a “Friend of the President.” A third outcome of interest relates to the percentage of the population in different Iraqi governorates who have joined the Ba‘th Party as well as the ratio of low-level “supporters” to active members by governorate. A fourth outcome of interest is the number of rumors circulating by region. A final area of investigation involves the number of draft dodgers and military deserters by region.

6.1 Cross-Sectional Variation in Party Status

Figure 1 displays six maps of Iraq. The panel in the upper-left quadrant provides information about the ethnic breakdown of the Iraqi population.⁴⁹ This map suggests that the southern portions of Iraq are predominantly Shi‘a 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 Sunni and Shi‘a Arabs.

The upper-right panel of Figure 1 shows the distribution of final year high school students for the 2001-2 academic year who are identified as having an independent political orientation. Darker areas have higher percentages of political independents; lighter areas have lower percentages of political independents. Relatively uninhabited desert areas and areas under Kurdish autonomous control have no data. The primarily Shi‘a districts of the south have very low percentages of political independents. Tikrit and some of its neighboring districts also observe very low numbers of students with an independent political orientation. Areas of Al-Anbar governorate, including the districts of Al-Qa‘im, Anah, Falluja and Ramadi, saw relatively large numbers of political independents despite being primarily Sunni areas. Mosul and two surrounding districts in the Iraqi north also saw relatively large numbers of political independents.

From an empirical perspective, we can estimate the effect of a series of covariates on the percentage of students from a particular district identify as having an independent political orientation. Table 1 reports the results of four regressions where percent political independents serves as the dependent variable. Model 1 estimates the association with percent Sunni, percent Kurdish, distance of the centroid of the district to the centroid of the Tikrit and the interaction of percent Sunni with distance to Tikrit. Model 2 adds a variable measuring the average level of wealth in the district based on a survey taken just after the 2003 invasion based on the value of items in a household. Model 3 replaces the variable measuring wealth with a measure of population density. Model 4 includes both the wealth index and population

⁴⁹The 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.

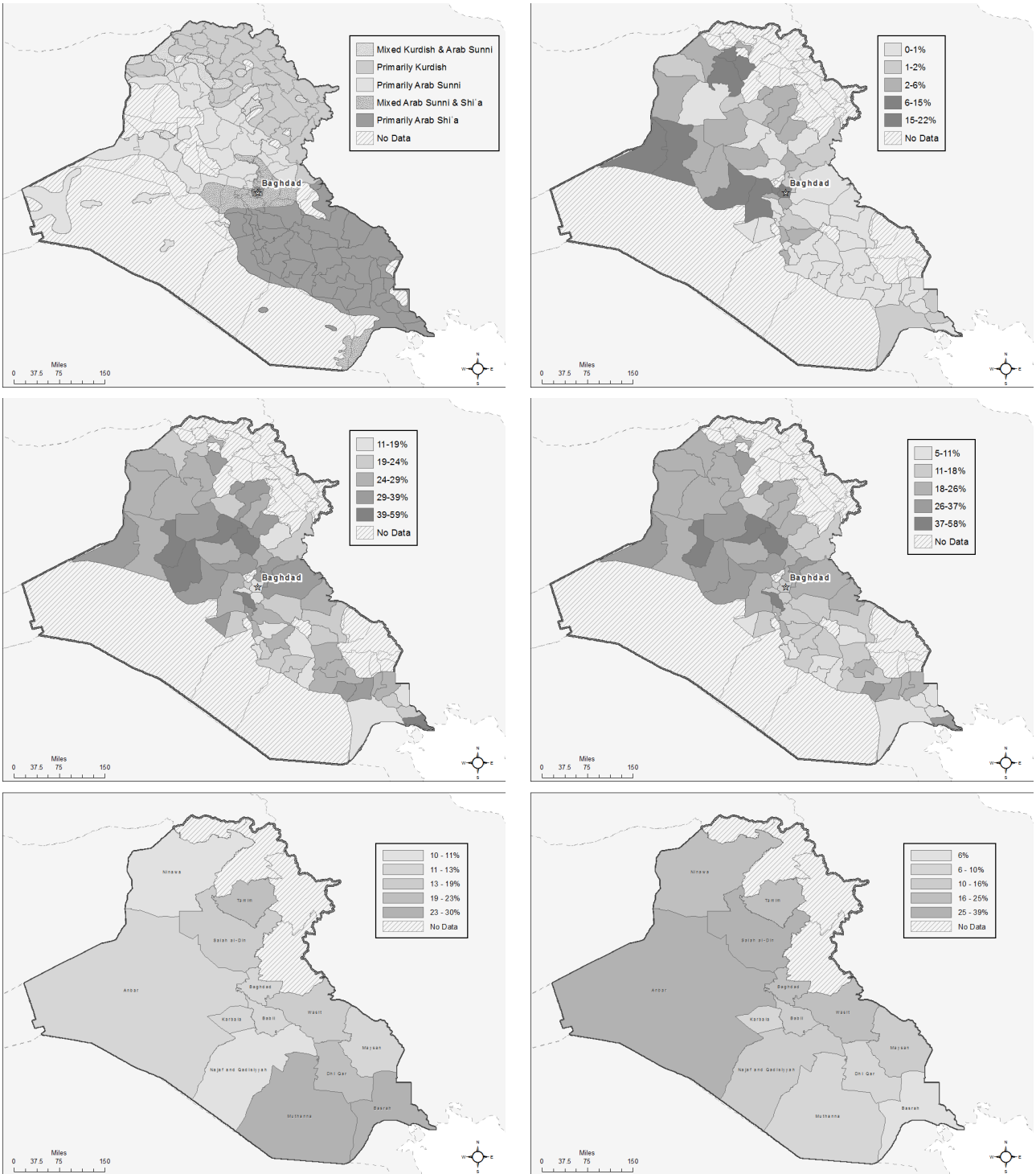


Figure 1: *Distribution of regime ethnicity and party participation, 2001-2. Upper-left, ethnic distribution; upper-right, percent politically independent students; center-left, percent of students with "Friends of Saddam" designation; center-right, percent with "Friends of Saddam" designation after controlling for war casualty in family; lower-left, Ba'th Party membership relative to population; lower-right, active members to supporters.*

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<i>Percent Sunni</i>	-4.92 (3.92)	-5.52 (3.54)	-2.88 (3.72)	-4.00 (3.50)
<i>Percent Kurdish</i>	1.73 (2.42)	2.99 (2.29)	3.34 (2.32)	3.80 (2.25)
<i>Distance to Tikrit</i>	-0.006 (0.006)	-0.004 (0.006)	-0.002 (0.006)	-0.001 (0.005)
<i>% Sunni*Distance to Tikrit</i>	0.066 (0.019)	0.068 (0.018)	0.061 (0.018)	0.065 (0.017)
<i>Wealth Index</i>		1.85 (0.48)		1.52 (0.49)
<i>Population Density</i>			0.003 (0.001)	0.002 (0.001)
<i>Constant</i>	3.34 (2.49)	-10.52 (4.11)	0.92 (2.45)	-9.74 (4.01)
Observations	67	64	67	64
R^2	0.29	0.47	0.39	0.51

Table 1: *Coefficient estimates for dependent variable, percentage of politically independent students, by district for the 2001-2 academic year.*

density measure. Wealth and population density are both positively associated with percent of political independents. What is the impact of ethnic group on the outcome variable? The predicted probability that a Sunni student from Tikrit will be a political independent is 0% [95% CI: 0-4], holding wealth and population density at their means; a Sunni student living 200 miles from Tikrit, however, has a predicted probability of 10% [95% CI: 7-14], again, holding constant wealth and population density. Shi'a districts 200 miles from Tikrit have a 1% [95% CI: 0-4] predicted probability of politically independent students. Kurdish areas 200 miles from Tikrit have a 5% [95%CI: 2-9] predicted probability. The data for the Kurdish areas is limited, however, to those districts over which the Iraqi government still maintained control in 2001-2; many Kurdish areas become autonomous in the years following the 1991 Gulf War.

One of the conjectures common in the qualitative literature is that Sunnis from Tikrit received important benefits and privileges as a result of the regime's dependence on clan and family members to staff key positions in the bureaucracy and security apparatus. To what extent were those benefits enjoyed by the Sunni citizenry more broadly? The center-left panel shows the percentage of Iraqi high school seniors or their fathers who have been designated "Friend of the President." Because a relatively large number of individuals and their families received that designation for having a war martyr in the family, I also map the percent with a "Friend of the President" designation after netting out the percentage of war martyrs for that district. The two maps show a largely similar pattern. Lighter areas represent a smaller percentage with "Friend of the President" designation while darker areas represent a larger percentage with that designation. The center-left panel shows that southern, Shi'a areas of the country see smaller percentages of the population with the "Friend of the President" designation; those percentages become even lower as reflected in the center-right panel (i.e.,

	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
<i>Percent Sunni</i>	23.56 (6.89)	24.50 (6.88)	21.69 (6.92)	21.88 (6.87)
<i>Percent Kurdish</i>	4.58 (4.25)	2.38 (4.45)	3.10 (4.31)	0.97 (4.41)
<i>Distance to Tikrit</i>	0.001 (0.011)	0.004 (0.011)	-0.002 (0.011)	-0.000 (0.010)
<i>% Sunni*Distance to Tikrit</i>	-0.074 (0.034)	-0.071 (0.035)	-0.070 (0.034)	-0.067 (0.034)
<i>Wealth Index</i>		0.57 (0.93)		1.13 (0.95)
<i>Population Density</i>			-0.003 (0.002)	-0.004 (0.002)
<i>Constant</i>	15.61 (4.27)	10.62 (8.00)	17.84 (4.55)	9.27 (7.86)
Observations	67	64	67	64
R^2	0.31	0.35	0.34	0.39

Table 2: *Coefficient estimates for dependent variable, percentage of students whose families enjoy the “Friend of the President” designation, by district for the 2001-2 academic year.*

after taking into account families with war martyrs). The Sunni areas of the country tend to have relatively high percentages of individuals with that designation with Tikrit and its neighboring district appearing at the highest levels.

Table 2 reports the coefficients associated with four models where the dependent variable analyzed is the percent of a district with the “Friend of the President” designation after subtracting the percent of war martyrs for that area (since having had a brother or father killed in one of the major wars was one route to receiving the designation yet not channel that would reflect special privilege). Like in the previous analysis, I consider the impact of an area’s sectarian identity, its distance from Tikrit, the interaction between Tikrit and percent Sunni as well as covariates for wealth and population density. While the coefficient on the variable measuring wealth is positive in each of the two specifications where it is included, it is not statistically significant in either. Population density appears to be negatively associated with “Friend of the President” designation.

For Sunnis living in Tikrit, the predicted probability for “Friend of the President” designation is 38% [95% CI: 30-48], assuming mean levels of wealth and population density. For Sunnis living 200 miles from Tikrit, the prediction is only 25% [95% CI: 18-32]. For Shi’a areas, the predicted probability is 17% [95%CI: 2-12]. Kurdish districts have a predicted probability of 18% [95% CI: 10-25]. Again, the Kurdish figure only reflects those Kurdish areas that remained governed by Iraq in 2001-2. As expected, Sunni areas in and around Tikrit had very high percentages of individuals with the “Friend of the President” designation, even after controlling for wealth and population density. Sunni areas at some distance for Tikrit were — on average — more than 10 percentage points lower. Shi’a areas saw the lowest percentage of individuals with this designation.

The lower-left map displays Ba‘th Party membership as a percent of the population by governorate. Darker areas represent higher percentage of the population as Ba‘th Party members, regardless of level within the party. Southern areas of Iraq see the highest levels of party membership. The lower-right panel shows the ratio of active members to supporters (the lowest level of party membership). The governorates of Anbar and Salah al-Din, where Tikrit is located, see the largest percentage of active members to supporters. The southern Shi‘a portions of the country see relatively few active members relative to supporters. Again, this suggests that citizens living in Shi‘a areas may have sought to signal that they were loyal to the regime since the punishment for breaking with the government could be severe.

6.2 Over-Time Variation in Party Status

The evidence presented above suggests that the percentage of individuals who identify themselves as having an “independent” political orientation varies across space where Shi‘a students living in the Iraqi south were highly reluctant to admit that they were not Ba‘thists. But how can we understand changing patterns of compliance and resistance in the same area over time? In this section, I consider the impact of the First Gulf War on the relationship between Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi Shi‘a population.

In August 1990, the Iraqi army invaded Kuwait. The most common explanation given for why Saddam Hussein ordered the invasion relates to the severe levels of Iraqi debt accumulated during the course of the Iran-Iraq War. Kuwait had previously refused to forgive billions of dollars of Iraqi debt to Kuwait and had also failed to slow oil production as part of an OPEC bid to drive up oil prices. When Saddam Hussein received mixed signals from US Ambassador April Glaspie about likely US intervention in the event of an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, Saddam Hussein moved forward with the invasion.

The war proved to be particularly costly for citizens of the Shi‘a south. Much of the aerial bombing by coalition forces hit targets in the south, where many of the country’s oil refineries and petrochemical complexes were located. Eventually over 90 percent of power stations in Iraq were destroyed as well as more bridges, roads and railroads (Rouleau 1995). Southern areas were also impacted by the land invasion of coalition troops moving in from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. According to one analyst, the Shi‘a bore the brunt of the war in terms of both casualties and damage to infrastructure (Rodhe 2010, 34).

On February 10 1991 a crowd in the southern city of Diwaniyah — frustrated by the impact of the regime’s foreign policy choices, among other things — killed ten Ba‘th Party officials (Mackey 2002, 286). A few weeks later, a tank driver aimed at and shot a mural of Saddam Hussein in Basra (Mackey 2002, 287). Shortly thereafter, Ba‘th Party headquarters and party officials were attacked and, often, killed by mobs across the Iraqi south. In some cases, lower ranking Ba‘th Party officials joined the uprising rather than be killed by rioters (Rodhe 2010, 63). Eventually, the insurgency spread to all of the major Shi‘a cities of the south. On March 4, the Kurdish Iraqis in the north also rebelled. At its peak, the 1991 uprisings left fourteen of eighteen Iraqi governorates outside of government control.⁵⁰

Once the regime had an opportunity to regroup, a decision was made to focus the efforts of regime loyalists from the “geographic spine” of the Ba‘th Party — the Sunni heartland —

⁵⁰BBC News, “Flashback: The 1991 Iraqi revolt” (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middleeast/2888989.stm>)

on repressing the southern uprising (Mackey 2002, 289). According to Dawisha, “purposeful bombardment was aimed at houses with little regard for its occupants, and people were indiscriminately shot in the streets...within less than three weeks, over 30,000, including women and children, had been killed, and some 70,000 had fled the country, mainly to neighboring Iran” (2009, 226). According to Mackey, “the Shi‘a would fall subject to a level of ruthlessness previously applied only to the Kurds” (2002, 289). Although the Shi‘a revolt failed in its objectives to overthrow the incumbent regime, the Iraqi government never fully regained control over the northern, Kurdish part of the country.

The question of why the revolts failed to unseat Saddam Hussein has been explored by numerous scholars. Mackey argues that one important factor was that some of the important Shi‘a tribes did not participate in the uprising or remained neutral during the rebellion (2002, 296). Dawisha suggests that the tribally-oriented Sunni Iraqis from Anbar and Salah al-Din had too much to lose should the uprising succeed and, as a result, “savagely put an end to the rebellion” (Dawisha 2009, 236). He also points out the importance of the neutrality or even regime support offered by some Shi‘a tribes of the south (Dawisha 2009, 236).

This narrative would suggest that the grievance level of Shi‘as living in southern Iraq saw a sharp increase for reasons unrelated to increases in government repression or crackdown. Rather, the increased grievance of southern Shi‘a was unexpected for Saddam Hussein — he believed that the US and its allies would allow Iraq to occupy Kuwait. As such, he would have had no reason to believe that his decision to invade would spark such massive domestic unrest. In other words, the prevailing account for how events unfolded in the First Gulf War would suggest that Saddam Hussein did not invade Kuwait with the goal of imposing a strict new order on the country’s population.

The Shi‘a of southern Iraq went from being, first, an oppressed minority group where non-compliance was a costly — but not necessarily devastating — act to, next, widespread (but not universal) resistance to, finally, totalitarian conditions where collective punishment became the norm for even relatively small acts of non-compliance with the autocratic regime. One observable implication of this narrative would be that over time levels of public non-compliance should decrease in Shi‘a areas of southern Iraq over time replaced by more private acts of resistance.

This conjecture might be tested using information from the School Registers for dates prior to the 2001-2 academic year. As is clear from the upper-right panel of Figure 1, there are almost no high school students in Shi‘a districts who are identified as independents in terms of their political orientation. Yet if we compare 2001-2 to the 1987-8 academic year, we see a very different picture. Table 3 lists all of the districts from southern Iraq for which there is School Registers data available for the 1987-8 academic year. At that point, relatively large percentages of students in some areas had an independent political orientation. More densely populated urban areas, like Basra City, seemed to have the largest percentages.

7 Alternate Forms of Non-compliance

After the 1991 Gulf War and associated Shi‘a and Kurdish uprisings, it became increasingly clear that identifying as a political independent was no longer a feasible option for most Iraqi Shi‘a. This does not suggest, however, that Shi‘a did not continue to harbor grievance

District	Percent	District	Percent
Basra City	51.0	Kut, Wasit	4.0
Al-Zubair, Basra	30.1	Al-Shatra, Dhi Qar	3.9
Al-Kahla, Maysan	22.0	Ali Al-Gharbi, Maysan	2.1
Nassriya, Dhi Qar	20.5	Karbala	1.5
Najaf	15.7	Al-Midaina, Basra	1.2
Al-Suwaira, Wasit	15.3	Al-Maimouna, Maysan	1.1
Al-Mejar Al-Kabi, Maysan	12.0	Qal'at Saleh, Maysan	1.1
Amara, Maysan	11.2	Al-Na'maniya, Wasit	0.6
Suq Al-Shuyoukh, Dhi Qar	9.6	Al-Hai, Wasit	0.0
Al-Qurna, Basra	5.0	Shatt Al-Arab, Basra	0.0

Table 3: *Percentage of Political Independents for select Shi'a districts of Iraq during the 1987-8 academic year (ordered from high to low).*

against the regime, particularly considering the brutal methods used to put down the uprisings. This section argues that the forms of non-compliance observed following 1991 changed, particularly for Iraqi Shi'a. While large percentages of the Kurdish population were able to govern themselves autonomously in northern Iraq, Shi'a Iraq of the south had fewer options. This section considers two forms of non-compliance, the circulation of potentially destabilizing rumors and the evasion of the draft. Both acts — draft evasion and rumormongering — relied on the existence of certain forms of interpersonal trust and social cohesion. I argued previously that the nature of regime repression against the Shi'a helped to foster both trust and social cohesion at the level of the tribe or clan.

7.1 Circulation of Destabilizing Rumors

One way that people might engage in more subtle forms of non-compliance would be through the spreading of rumors (*isha'āt*). Ba'ath Party officials were concerned with the destabilizing effects of rumormongering as rumors could harm the objectives of the regime. What do we know about the content of rumors circulating in autocratic Iraq? Memoranda from the Ba'ath Party Regional Command files provide information about the types of rumors of concern to the regime. For example, a security file focusing on Spring 1993 contains a number of examples related to internal security. A rumor circulating in the Kurdish community in March of 1993 suggested that state authorities were deporting Kurds.⁵¹ It was also rumored that on April 28 1993 a military parade held in Baghdad on the occasion of the birthday of Saddam Hussein would be bombed by a joint American-Israeli air strike.⁵² A rumor was circulating that the Minister of Interior was going to be fired.⁵³ The same memorandum reports that prisoners had escaped from Abu Ghurayb prison.⁵⁴ Rumors also circulated

⁵¹Boxfile Doc No. 005-3-3-0027, March 26 1993

⁵²Boxfile Doc No. 005-3-3-0039, April 22 1993

⁵³Boxfile Doc No. 005-3-3-0069

⁵⁴Ibid.

about assassination attempts against the sons of the president, Uday and Qusay Hussein, and coup attempts.⁵⁵

Another set of rumors also circulating that spring related to the agricultural sector. One rumor suggested that Saddam Hussein would nationalize farmlands and place agricultural lands under the control of his son, Uday.⁵⁶ It was also rumored that the president's family had manufactured a tomato shortage in order to drive up the price of tomatoes they were selling.⁵⁷

The majority of rumors reported at this time were in some way related to Shi'a Iraqis or to predominantly Shi'a areas. In the Najaf area, it was rumored that three thousand Iranians would be entering Baghdad and that Iraqi government security forces would be harassing all bearded men, as a result.⁵⁸ The same document also suggests that there would be an uprising in the days to follow which the state will attempt to crush and that clashes would take place between security forces and bearded men.⁵⁹ The following Thursday was reported to be a date for resistance against the government in all cities and Karbala and Najaf would be surrounded by security in a bid to catch draft dodgers and deserters.⁶⁰ In the same month, it was rumored that the Minister of Interior had been shot in the predominantly Shi'a "Saddam" (now Sadr) neighborhood of Baghdad by a fellow security service officer and that the Saudi media had reported on this incident.⁶¹ The government was also reported to be deporting residents of the "Saddam" neighborhood.⁶²

One document — dated August 2 1990 — lays out the number of rumors by region as of the day Iraq invaded Kuwait in the First Gulf War.⁶³ South refers to the most southern region of the country, including the governorate of Basra. The information presented in Table 4 suggests that Baghdad and governorates of the south saw larger numbers of rumors than central or northern parts of Iraq.

7.2 Draft Evasion

A major problem for the Iraqi regime related to the relatively large numbers of young men who either deserted from the army or engaged in forms of draft evasion.⁶⁴ According to Sassoon, most deserters and draft dodgers in the early 1980s were Kurds who could find refuge in mountain areas controlled by Kurdish guerillas (2012, 152). By the late 1980s, it would appear that the problem of desertions was common in the south as well. According to a report focusing just on deserters from the governorates of Babil, Karbala, Najaf, Qadissiyya

⁵⁵Boxfile Doc No. 005-3-3-0564, February 9 1993

⁵⁶Boxfile Doc No. 005-3-3-0141, April 16 1993

⁵⁷Boxfile Doc No. 005-3-3-0147, April 10 1993

⁵⁸Boxfile Doc No. 005-3-3-0001, April 24 1993. Around the same time, it was rumored that young Iraqi men would be compelled to shave their beards because the son of the president, Uday, had shaved his facial hair, Boxfile Doc No. 005-3-3-0051, April 22 1993.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Boxfile Doc No. 005-3-3-0032, April 24 1993

⁶²Boxfile Doc No. 005-3-3-0081, April 19 1993

⁶³Boxfile Doc No. 024-5-2-0115, August 2 1990

⁶⁴These individuals are described in the memos as *mutakhallifin*, literally the stragglers, and refers to those who failed to report for their required military service.

	Party Branches	Rumors	Rumors/Million
North	6	15	2.2
South	5	54	10.4
<i>Furāt</i>	5	7	1.5
Baghdad	6	130	21.3
Central	3	3	0.9
Military	11	7	—
Iraqi Expatriates	—	4	—

Table 4: *The number of party branches, number of rumors and rumors per million people by region, as of August 2 1990.*

and Muthanna, there were 15,482 deserters from that area for the period April-August 1987 alone.⁶⁵

The First Gulf War and associated domestic uprisings intensified the problem of desertions (Sassoon 2012, 152). In 1994 — after offering a short window for clemency if they rejoined their assigned units — the Ba‘th Party began to offer financial inducements for anyone who provided information about the whereabouts of a deserter (Sassoon 2012, 153). Beginning in June 1994, Saddam Hussein ordered that deserters would be punished with ear amputations. This practice did not end until March 1996.⁶⁶ Doctors were arrested and, in some cases, even executed for refusing to carry out ear cutting and amputations for other crimes — like thievery.⁶⁷

Table 5 provides information about the number of deserters and draft dodgers who were captured, the number who surrendered and the number of raids to find such individuals.⁶⁸ I have added to those columns additional columns for the total number of deserters and draft dodgers caught, the percent captured (as opposed to who surrendered) as well as the total per million people in the region. The areas with the largest number of per capita draft dodgers would appear to be in the south followed by Baghdad. The number of raids to find such individuals was also the largest in southern areas. The percentage of deserters captured (as opposed to those who surrendered) was very high in the *Furat* region and in central Iraq.

Table 6 provides information about the number of deserters caught from a 1995 report.⁶⁹ Again the areas with the largest number of deserters are the Saddam neighborhood of Baghdad (a large Shi‘a slum) and the southern governorates of Basra and Dhi Qar. The number of deserters from Sunni areas like Salah al-Din and Anbar is small. Table 5 also provides information about the degree to which local authorities complied with the demand to amputate the ear of deserters. There exists considerable variation on this measure. Notably, northern areas saw the largest percentage of ears amputated as a percentage of draft dodgers and deserters.

⁶⁵Boxfile Doc Nos. 01-2135-0004-0032 and 01-2135-0004-0033

⁶⁶Associated Press, “Saddam Orders End To Ear Amputations For Deserters,” March 17 1996

⁶⁷“Iraq’s Brutal Decrees Amputation: Branding and the Death Penalty,” *Human Rights Watch* (June 1995)

⁶⁸Boxfile Doc No. 024-5-2-0166

⁶⁹Boxfile Doc Nos. 01-3874-0004-0502 through 01-3874-0004-0529, January 9 1995

	Captured	Surrendered	Total Caught	% Captured	Total/Million	Raids
North	140	430	570	25	85	403
South	189	1,406	1,595	12	307	1,212
<i>Furāt</i>	618	814	1,432	76	177	151
Baghdad	95	1,680	1,775	5	291	604
Central	399	141	540	74	164	269

Table 5: *The number of draft dodgers and deserters captured; the number who turned themselves in to authorities; percent captured; total and total per million people and the number of raids in each area to find draft dodgers and deserters.*

In what sense might draft desertion be considered a “private” rather than public act? While the identity of the deserter is known with certainty, there continues to exist some ambiguity about the political orientation of the individual — the relevant “private” dimension. Because individuals avoid the draft for a variety of reasons, most importantly fear of injury or death during the course of military service, evasion of military service is not a clear marker of political opposition. Draft evasion was an act often only possible with the existence of close tribal cohesion where extended family networks might provide financial support for the draft dodger while in hiding.

8 Conclusions

This paper provides a framework for understanding the variation in forms of non-compliance undertaken by individuals living in autocratic settings. The evidence provided draws from a set of unusually rich archival collections — the Ba‘th Party Regional Command files and the School Registers of the Ba‘th Party. Individuals living in Iraq under Saddam Hussein sought to balance a series of concerns — both at the individual and community level — when negotiating their relationship to the Ba‘thist regime. From an empirical perspective, I describe cross-sectional variation in Iraq on a number of indicators. Students living in predominantly Sunni areas peripheral to the Tikriti heartland were less likely to publicly identify as Ba‘thists than their counterparts living in the Shi‘a south. Southern areas populated by Shi‘a Iraqs were more likely, however, to witness private forms of non-compliance, like the circulation of destabilizing rumors or draft avoidance. Collective punishment against Kurdish populations encouraged the growth of dense social networks that sustained an insurgency that ultimately led to the creation of an autonomous Kurdish north.

	Draft Dodgers & Deserters	Ears Amputated	Percent Amputated
Baghdad – Karan – Khalid	484	38	8
Baghdad – Karan – Hamza	1,015	35	3
Baghdad – Karan – Abu Ja‘far	527	26	5
Baghdad – Rusafa – Saddam	2,336	172	7
Baghdad – Rusafa – Sa‘d	476	58	12
Baghdad – Rusafa – Rashid	833	86	10
Baghdad – Rusafa – Adhamiya	837	39	5
Diyala – Diyala	280	16	6
Salah al-Din & Anbar – Salah al-Din	110	12	11
Salah al-Din & Anbar – Al-Mu‘tasim	63	7	11
Salah al-Din & Anbar – Anbar	68	11	16
Salah al-Din & Anbar – Gazira	12	3	25
Basra & Dhi Qar – Basra	1,899	312	16
Basra & Dhi Qar – Dhi Qar	1,651	72	4
Maysan & Wasit – Miysan	533	20	4
Maysan & Wasit – Wasit	412	3	1
Babil, Karbala & Najaf – Babil	420	68	16
Babil, Karbala & Najaf – Karbala	583	12	2
Babil, Karbala & Najaf – Najaf	351	11	3
Qadisiyya & Al-Muthanna – Qadisiyya	391	5	1
Qadisiyya & Al-Muthanna – Al-Muthanna	183	5	3
Ninawa, Mosul, Duhuk & Irbil – Ninawa	87	48	55
Ninawa, Mosul, Duhuk & Irbil – Mosul	58	27	47
Ninawa, Mosul, Duhuk & Irbil – Duhuk			
Ninawa, Mosul, Duhuk & Irbil – Irbil			
Al-Ta‘mim & Sulaymaniya – Al-Ta‘mim	252	25	10
Al-Ta‘mim & Sulaymaniya – Sulaymaniya			

Table 6: *The number of draft dodgers and deserters arrested by area and the number of these individuals who had an ear cut off from a report dated January 1995.*

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