# The intifadah in Shinafiyah

*How a small village in Iraq revolted against Saddam Hussain in 1991*

Research Master Thesis

Amir Taha

4009290

RMA History, Utrecht University

Supervisor : dr. Ugur Ümit Üngör

Second reader: dr. Geraldien von Frijtag

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Abstract

This thesis is a study of the origins, causes, and unfolding of the 1991 uprising from the perspective of the Iraqi village of Shinafiyah between 1979 and 1991. This thesis aims to understand how ordinary people in authoritarian societies, who are violently prohibited from organizing themselves and communicating their dissatisfaction with the regime, can erupt in mass uprisings against that same regime when the opportunity presents itself. The main argument of this thesis is that collectively challenging a repressive state is a high-risk decision that demands complex coordination facilitated by a supportive infrastructure and a deep understanding of one's society and politics, rather than a spontaneous reaction to oppression or an expression of grievances. This study of ordinary Iraqis in Shinafiyah demonstrates that people engaged in regular and small-scale regime contestation by merely living their day-to-day lives. The many interactions that people had with the Iraqi state unintentionally helped build important mobilization structures containing an ideology, a network, and an infrastructure, all of which were vital for the eruption of the uprising in 1991. This thesis demonstrates that the mobilization structures combined with the relative deprivation Iraqis experienced in 1989 facilitated the exploitation of the political opportunity for a revolt in 1991. To better understand the origins of uprisings in authoritarian societies, the study of individualized regime contestation in the daily life of ordinary people and its relation to the unintended formation of mobilization structures is vital.

# Contents

## List of maps, figures and images.

# Preface and acknowledgements

During my teenage years I fervently wanted to know what happened in Iraq in 1991. I had heard there was an uprising against Saddam Hussain and that most Iraqis in the Netherlands were veterans of this uprising. This excited and intrigued me as I started collecting and searching for information on this little-known revolt, but to my own frustrations I was unable to find a satisfying account of these events that went beyond the known generalizations. I was unable to understand why so little information was available on this event, because to me, this event was unique in the history of the Middle East. The 1991 uprising was the very first mass uprising against an Arab dictator which, had it not been for the international support Saddam enjoyed, would have likely overthrown him. What really intrigued me, however, was that this revolt was launched by the same ordinary Iraqi men and women I lived and interacted with growing up in the Netherlands. These were the humble mothers and fathers of my close friends that I got to know very well throughout the years. It made me question and think, maybe revolutions were not about the Lenins, Maos and Khomeinis we often read about, but rather these ordinary men and women. Somewhere in my early twenties I therefore decided that if there is no satisfying account of the 1991 uprising then I should write one myself. While I had many doubts and insecurities about achieving this goal, I can proudly say that this thesis was an important milestone for me in getting closer to this ambition.

Obviously, I would not have been able to arrive at this point in my life without the help of family, friends, classmates, teachers and professors. I am very thankful to Dr. Uğur Ümit Üngör who since my bachelor's at Utrecht offered to gradually advise and guide me in my aims to write an account of the 1991 uprising. He maintained this offer until the very end of my master's. Dr. Ungor's endless effort to support me in my academic pursuits shall never be forgotten. Second, I am very thankful to the various teachers I got to interact with the past two years, like Oscar Gelderblom, Willemijn Ruberg, but also Rachel Gillet and Christian Wicke, who all taught me the finer points of writing and research. Within this line I would especially want to thank Iva Vukušić for her feedback on my text, but more importantly for reminding me that this work is only a Master Thesis and not my *magnum opus*. This was a reminder I often needed to lower the stress during the writing. I also want to thank Anna Gopsill for proofreading the final version of this thesis on

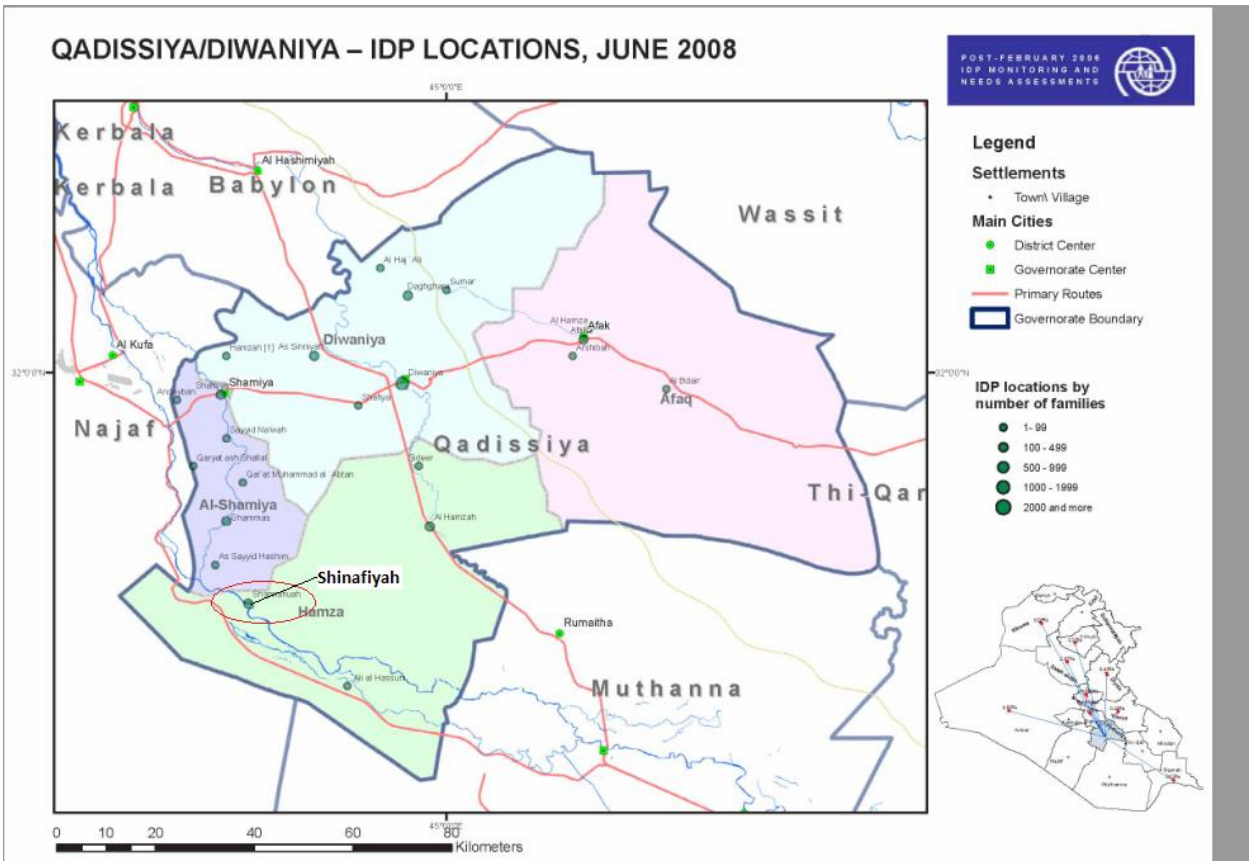
language. Not to forget, I would also like to thank my fellow classmates Lenna Lammertink, Marta Montebovi, Daan Olthoff, Paul van Dijk and Eva Zeilstra who gave me feedback, but also accompanied me daily in the University library. I also want to thank all my friends who consistently showed interest in my research topic and rooted for me from the sidelines, they only know half how much this helped me.

I would also like to personally thank the journalist Kerim Badr, and his effort to provide public attention for my research to the Arab public. His commitment to spread awareness on the 1991 uprising was an important inspiration for me. Most importantly, I would like to thank all the interviewees for their hospitality and patience to recount their experiences. Without their involvement this thesis would have been impossible. Related to this, I want to thank some of the residents of Shinafiyah who diligently helped me collect vital information for this thesis. I am especially thankful for Muhammad Sadiq's endeavours to find the information I wanted from Shinafiyah.

Moreover, I would like to offer a special thanks to my brother and sisters who had to miss and put up with me during my long days of writing but always were able to make me laugh when it was needed. Finally, I would like to show my eternal gratitude to my father and mother who supported me in any way possible in my choice to pursue my degree in history. I don't think I'll ever be able to repay them for their patience and love.


***Map 1. Iraq provinces and principal cities.***[1]

[1] Dina Rizk Khoury, *Iraq in wartime: soldiering, martyrdom and remembrance* (Cambridge 2013) XVI.

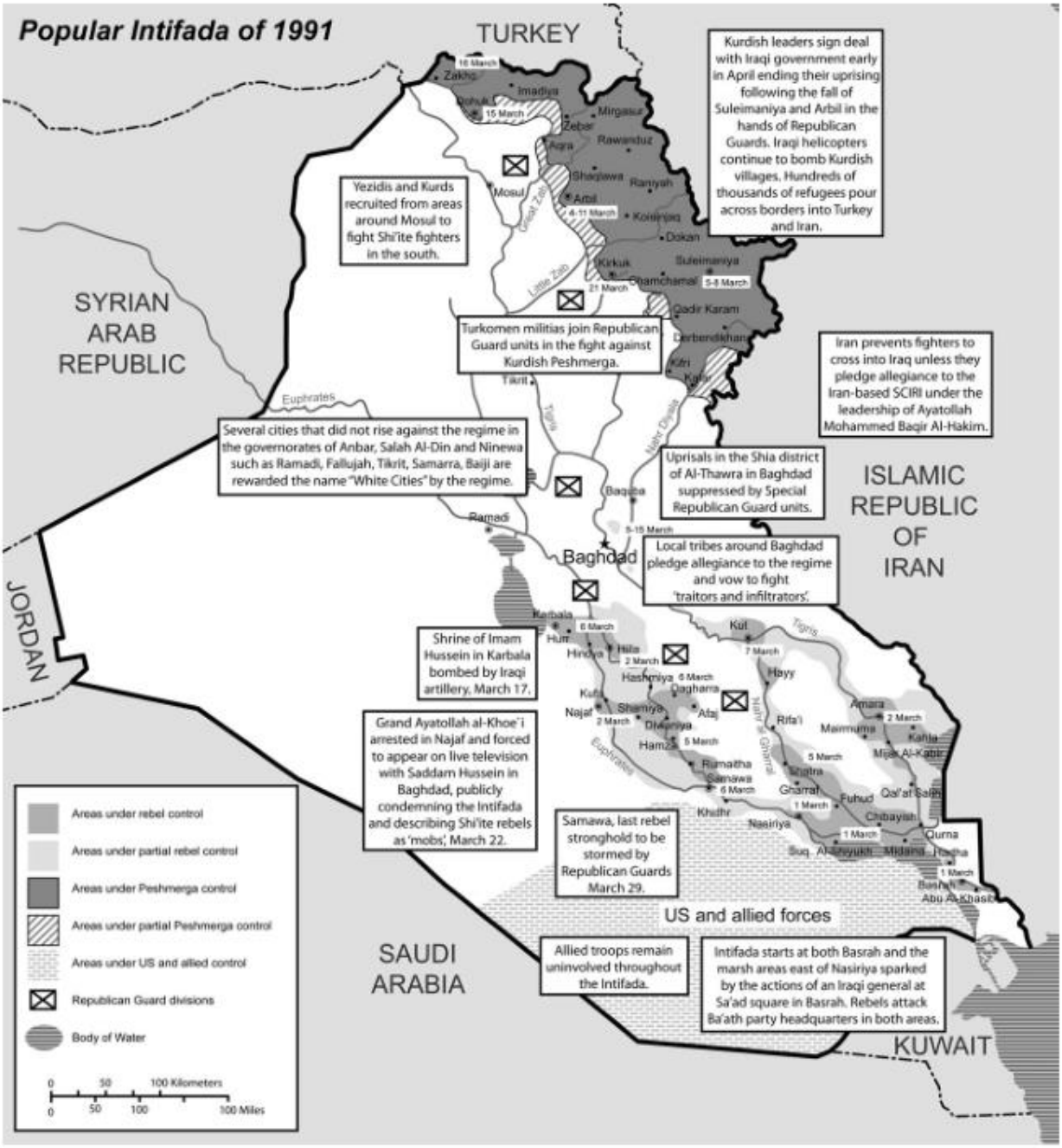



***Map 2. Map of Qadisiya governorate.***[2]

[2] Map created by the International Organization for Migration which can be downloaded here: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/462980DFA27D2CC4C125746E004EACBE-iom_IDP_irq080620.pdf


***Map 3. Shinafiyah.***[3]

[3] Map provided by the *Ibn Sina* high school in Shinafiyah.




***Map 4*. The Intifada in 1991.[4]**

[4] Marashi and Sammy Salama, *Iraq's armed forces: an analytical history* (London, Routledge, 2008) 183.

*Whatever man achieved in ancient Iraq, he did it at the price of a constant struggle against nature and against other men, and this struggle forms the very thread of history in that part of the world.*[5]

[5] Georges Roux, *Ancient Iraq* (New York 1964) 33.

# Introduction

On March 1, 1991, shortly after Operation Desert Storm in January 17, 1991, the people living in Iraq's nine southern provinces and Iraqi Kurdistan 'spontaneously' revolted against the state. Iraqis destroyed buildings, murdered party officials, and a military clash occurred between the loyalist army and the resistors. By April 1, this uprising was suppressed and resulted in a refugee stream of two million and over 100,000 deaths.[6] What was peculiar about this uprising is that none of Iraq's established opposition parties, like the Iraqi Communist Party and the Islamic Dawah Party, had an active role in the uprising, even though they had been struggling against the regime for years. Similar to the 2011 Arab spring, the 1991 uprising (intifadah in Arabic) was therefore a 'spontaneous' and leaderless uprising of the masses without any clear and discernible ideological conviction (e.g. nationalism, Marxism, Islamism, etc.) other than overthrowing the ruling regime of Saddam Hussein.[7] Despite worldwide familiarity with Saddam's repressive regime and human rights abuse, the intifadah still 'took us by surprise', for neither the international community, the Saddam regime itself, nor the established opposition parties anticipated this uprising.[8]

In authoritarian (or totalitarian, as some would argue about Iraq) societies, people are violently prohibited from organising themselves in any way or forming outside the prescribed parameters of the state.[9] Nevertheless, as the 1991 uprising demonstrated, people still managed to stage a revolt despite the prohibition against organising a mass movement. This thesis maintains that collectively challenging a repressive state is a high-risk decision that demands complicated coordination facilitated by a supportive infrastructure and a deep understanding of one's society and politics.[10] The accumulation of the above-mentioned factors that result in the decision to revolt is a combination of

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[6] Eric Goldstein, *Endless torment: The 1991 uprising in Iraq and its aftermath* (New York 1992): Abbas Alnasrawi, 'Economic devastation, Underdevelopment and Outlook', in: Fran Hazelton (ed.) *Iraq since the Gulf war: prospects for democracy* (London 1994) 90.

[7] Eva Bellin, 'Reconsidering the robustness of authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from the Arab Spring', *Comparative Politics* 44 (2012) 2, 127 and Asef Bayat, 'The Arab Spring and its surprises', *Development and Change* 44 (2013) 3, 587-601.

[8] Falah Abdul Jabar, 'Why the uprisings failed', *Middle East Research and Information project 176* (1992) https://www.merip.org/mer/mer176/why-uprisings-failed (accessed March 1, 2018).

[9] Achim Rohde, 'Revisiting the republic of fear: Lessons for research on contemporary Iraq', in: Amatzia Baram, Achim Rohde, Ronen Zeidel, *Iraq Between Occupations* ( New York, 2010) 129-141.

[10] Sydney G. Tarrow , *Power in movement social movements and contentious politics revised and updated third edition* (Cambridge 2011) 119-139.

ongoing political, sociological, and historical mechanisms of life under a repressive dictatorship. Nevertheless, despite the presence of factors that assisted and predicted the eruption of the 1991 uprising, nobody was able to foresee it. Twenty years after the intifadah, the 2011 'Arab Spring' demonstrated that governments, traditional opposition parties, and scholars still seem to be surprised and unable to foresee mass protests erupting in authoritarian societies.[11] This persistent astonishment in the study of uprisings in authoritarian societies is telling about our lack of understanding regarding resistance, struggle and subversion by ordinary citizens in authoritarian societies.[12]

Therefore, the goal of this thesis is to understand how ordinary people in authoritarian societies, who are violently prohibited from organizing themselves and communicating their dissatisfaction with the regime, can erupt in mass uprisings against that same regime when the opportunity presents itself. To achieve this goal, this thesis presents a study on the origins, causes, and unfolding of the 1991 uprising from the perspective of the Iraqi village of Shinafiyah between 1979 and 1991. The study unravels the different political, sociological, and historical mechanisms, processes, and factors that preceded the mass uprising of 1991. However, in studying something as complex as the 1991 uprising, some demarcations and justifications regarding the study of the intifadah in Shinafiyah need to be made based on the current historiography of this uprising.

## Historiography and demarcations

The 1991 uprising was the first mass uprising against an authoritarian dictatorship in the Arab world, but it has gained little to no attention in either the media or in scholarly work, and as a result, many aspects of this uprising remain unknown.[13] The 1991 intifada has been a largely neglected topic within the study of revolts, social movements, and the

[11] Bayat, 'The Arab Spring and its surprises' and Philip N. Howard, et al, 'Opening closed regimes: what was the role of social media during the Arab Spring?' *Working paper Project on information technology & political Islam* (2011).
[12] Gregory Gause, 'Why Middle East Studies Missed the Arab Spring: The Myth of Authoritarian Stability', *Foreign Affairs 90* (2011) 4, 81–90; Laurence Whitehead, 'On the Arab Spring: Democratization and related political seasons' in: Larbi Sadiki (ed.) *Routledge handbook of the Arab spring: rethinking Democratization* (London 2014); 17-27, Bayat, 'The Arab Spring and its surprises', 599; and John Chalcraft, *Popular Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Cambridge 2016) 1-3; Goldstein, *Endless torment*.
[13] Hamid J.A Alkifaey, 'The Arab Spring and Democratization: An Iraqi perspective' in: Larbi Sadriki (ed.) *Routledge handbook of the Arab spring: rethinking democratization* (London 2014) 463-479.

history of Iraq.[14] This uprising is understudied for various reasons. First, scholarship on Iraq mainly has focused on the political elite and government policy, not political activism within Iraqi society itself.[15] Second, Iraq was inaccessible between 1991 and 2003. In addition, given the current instability of Iraq since the 2003 US occupation, Iraqis have had little time to reflect on the recent past and are mainly focused on security and survival. Other than a few reports, memoirs, and articles during the 1990s, interest in the 1991 uprising quickly diminished by the 2000s.[16] However, more scholarly works on the 1991 uprising have emerged since 2010 in the wake of a large amount of Iraqi government material being transferred to the United States.[17]

Historian Dina Rizk Khoury was the first to observe two trends in the historiography of the 1991 uprising. According to Khoury, there are "two radically different framings of the uprising, one highly political and embedded in narratives (…) of Iraqi communal national identities, and the other divorced from the specificity and passions of the political and dressed in the universal language of humanitarianism".[18] The latter framing refers to one of the most central documents pertaining to this uprising: a Human Rights Watch report titled *Endless Torment*, which extensively reports on the events of 1991.[19] The problem, however, with this document is that it is mainly descriptive and focuses only on perpetrators and acts of violence without offering any deeper analysis or historical context. The same applies to polemical narratives by proponents of the

[14] Ariel I. Ahram, 'The Rise and Fall of Iraq in the Social Sciences', *Social Science Quarterly* 97 (2016) 4, 850-861.
[15] Peter Harling, 'Beyond political ruptures: Towards a historiography of social continuity in Iraq' in: Jordi, Tejel, Peter Sluglett, and Riccardo Bocco (eds.) *Writing the Modern History of Iraq: Historiographical and Political Challenges* (London 2012) 61.
[16] Akram Al-Hakim, *Al-Dictatoriah wal Intifadah* (London 1998); Najib Al-Salihi, *Al-Zilzaal*, (London 1998); Ali Fa'iq Al-Sheikh , 'Al-Intifadah al-Iraqiyya fi Dhikraha al-Khamisa' *al-Hayat* (1996); Mohammad Taqi Mudarrisi, *Al -Intifadha al-Sha'abiyah fil Iraq: al-Asbab wal Nata'ij* (Beirut 1991); Andrew and Patrick Cockburn, *Out of the Ashes*, (New York 1999); Goldstein, *Endless torment,* Falah, 'Why the uprisings failed'; Kanan Makiya, *Cruelty and Silence* (New York 1993).
[17] Dina Rizk Khoury ,'The 1991 Intifadah in Three Keys: writing the history of violence' in: Jordi, Tejel, Peter Sluglett, and Riccardo Bocco (eds.) *Writing the Modern History of Iraq: Historiographical and Political Challenges* (London 2012); - *Iraq in wartime: soldiering, martyrdom and remembrance* (Cambridge 2013); - 'Making and unmaking spaces of security: Basra as battlefront, Basra insurgent, 1980-1991' in Nelida Fuccaro (ed.); *Violence and the City in the Modern Middle East* (2016), Fanar, Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic visions of unity* (Oxford 2014); Abbas Khadim, *The Hawza Under Siege: A Study in the Ba 'th Party Archive: IISBU Occasional paper* (Boston 2013); Lisa Blaydes, 'Compliance and resistance in Iraq under Saddam Hussein: Evidence from the files of the Ba 'th Party' in *Annual Meeting of the Association for Analytic Learning on Islam and Muslim Societies* (2013).
[18] Khoury, 'The 1991 Intifadah in Three Keys, 247.
[19] Goldstein, *Endless torment*.

Saddam regime and opposition parties alike. The opposition parties praise the heroism of the insurgents, while proponents of the Saddam Hussein regime denounce the "traitorous, barbarous and un-Iraqi" nature of the 1991 resistors.[20] Likewise, in-depth analysis of the underlying details and factors of the 1991 uprising is absent in the polemical/political narrative.

Another central problem is that both the humanitarian and the polemical narratives were written by actors who did not participate in the uprising themselves. Instead, the writers based their accounts on limited interviews with the elite or on biased state material. Thus far, no written narrative exists 'from below' by those who participated in the 1991 uprising. The main participants of the uprising were of a rural and subaltern background and were not able to record their experiences, nor were they provided with the space to voice their participation during these events.[21] The dominant focus on Iraq's middle class and the political elite at the expense of the lower class is a persistent shortcoming in scholarly works on Iraq.[22]

Nonetheless, some early attempts have been made to provide a historical analysis that goes beyond the existing polarised narratives of the intifadah.[23] For example, political scientist Jabbar Abdul Falah provides an extensive analysis of the causes of the uprising and why it failed, yet his focus remains on what the opposition parties (who were mostly exiled) did or did not do during the uprising. Falah himself also admits that "those who carried the burden of the uprisings, especially in the first days, were ordinary people whose accounts were often neglected".[24]

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[20] See Saddam's speech as quoted in Dina Rizk Khoury ,'The 1991 Intifadah in Three Keys, 252, and official opposition party press releases as quoted in Majid Khadduri and Edmund Ghareeb, *War in the Gulf, 1990-91: the Iraq-Kuwait conflict and its implications* (Oxford 1997) 189-212. In addition, a good example of a polemical account of the uprising is: Ahmad Rasim Nafees, *Al-Shia fil Iraq: Bayn al-Juthoor al-Rasikha wal Waqi'i al- Mutaghayir—Ru'yah Shi'iyah* (*Cairo 2005).*

[21] For wider discussions on the voice of the subaltern in Historiography see : Gyan Prakash, 'Subaltern, studies as postcolonial criticism', *The American Historical Review* 99 (1994) 5; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Rosalind C. Morris (ed), *Can the subaltern speak? Reflections on the history of an idea* (Colombia 2010) and for Iraq in specific see Peter Harling, 'Beyond political ruptures'.

[22] Unique exceptions to this trend are: Falah Abdul Jabbar, 'Iraq's war generation,' in Lawrence G. Potter and Gary G. Sick (eds.) *Iran, Iraq and the legacies of war* (New York 2004); Nicholas Krohley, *The Death of the Mehdi Army: The Rise, Fall, and Revival of Iraq's Most Powerful Militia* (London 2015); Eric Davis, 'History for the Many or History for the Few? The Historiography of the Iraqi Working Class' in: Zachary Lockman, (ed.) *Workers and working classes in the Middle East: Struggles, histories, historiographies*. (New York 1994) 273-303.

[23] Falah, 'Why the uprisings failed', Dina Rizk Khoury ,'The 1991 Intifadah in Three Keys.

[24] Falah, 'why the uprisings failed'.

Currently, Fanar Haddad's *Sectarianism in Iraq* and Dina Rizk Khoury's *Iraq in Wartime* provide the most researched and empirically founded descriptions of the intifadah. Haddad provides a detailed account of the 1991 uprising in his book *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic Visions of Unity*. He conducted an in-depth analysis of state newspapers and exhausted all the available books, biographies, and memoirs available regarding the uprising. He complemented his textual research by doing several interviews with important deserting army officers and tribal chiefs. Haddad's account is mainly a top-down analysis of the uprising, and his aim was primarily to demonstrate how it relates to sectarianism in current-day Iraq – not to provide a historical account of the rebellion.[25] Nonetheless, Haddad does provide some conclusions about the uprising. He asserts that "with no central leadership or coordinating body, events unfolded differently in different towns and often within them. Levels of cohesion, discipline and mobilisation varied between areas and few generalisations can be made regarding the nine governorates south of Baghdad".[26] The uprising can therefore be best understood as "a reaction to years of state oppression and neglect and the disaster of the invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent Gulf War". [27] Haddad however is inconclusive about the main instigators of the uprising, and he states that the instigators can be divided between soldiers, local civilians, and guerrilla fighters from swamps in the *Ahwar* region.[28] In general, the leadership in the different towns was taken by local notables, but the success of the uprising varied in degree depending on each town's history and social composition.[29] Additionally, Haddad claims that the leaders of the intifada "stood little chance of developing cohesive and effective leaderships, even in a localised context".[30] Finally, he states regarding the goals of the rebels that "the rebellions were clearer in what they were against than what they were for".[31]

Dina Rizk Khoury's *Iraq in Wartime* is based on similar sources to Haddad's account, but she supplements her analysis with the Iraqi Baath Party archives, currently located at the Hoover Institute in San Francesco. Khoury agrees with Haddad that

[25] Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq,* 1-6.
[26] Ibid., 65-66.
[27] Ibid., 80-83.
[28] Ibid., 66-69.
[29] Ibid., 70.
[30] Ibid.,70.
[31] Ibid., 80.

because of the different social composition of towns, experiences with the regime and the wars the uprisings "took place simultaneously and independently in many parts of southern Iraq" and therefore also unfolded differently everywhere. [32] However, Khoury differs from Haddad when she asserts that the tribal connections of the returning soldiers played an important role in mobilising them against the state in their home towns. According to Khoury, the mobilisation was based on clan and tribal affiliation and reflected the fact that the Baath Party used to collectively execute and punish people for being a relative of someone who trespassed rules imposed by the Baathist regime.[33] In rural Najaf, for example, "relatives of individuals executed by the regime seem to have played an important role in the organisation of the uprising".[34] While Haddad claims that it is difficult to pinpoint the main instigators of the intifadah – namely, civilians, soldiers, or guerrilla fighters – for Khoury, it is clear that the main instigators were "returning soldiers who were hungry, defeated, bedraggled, and tired of being at war".[35] While Haddad generally defines the leadership of the intifadah as consisting of 'local notables', Khoury more specifically depicts this leadership as a "security officer, a food warehouse employee, a Communist deserter and the hospital director".[36]

According to Khoury, the main cause of the uprising was the suffering that the Iran-Iraq War created in the southern cities. These cities had to endure the brunt of the war due to their proximity to the front and due to the state's excessively repressive counterinsurgency operations in the south legitimatised by the war.[37] For example, Khoury notes that in "the provinces of Basra, Dhi Qar, and Maysan, a direct correlation existed between the loss in life and property incurred in the Iran-Iraq War, political persecutions, and patterns of participation [in the 1991 uprising]".[38] Khoury is hesitant to make any conclusions about the motivations and goals of the rebellion because the participants of the uprising differed in this regard depending on their class, personality, or personal experiences.[39]

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[32] Ibid., 133.
[33] Ibid., 133.
[34] Ibid.,137
[35] Ibid., 139
[36] Ibid., 137
[37] Ibid., 139
[38] Ibid., 140
[39] Ibid., 139

Other than the suffering caused by the wars and the repression by the Baathist regime against the Iraqi people, little information is available regarding the specifics of this repression and its impact on the decision to revolt. It can even be argued that it is tautological to say that the intifadah was the result of the suffering of war and dictatorship and that such a claim provides little to work with on an analytical level. Most of the population decided not to participate in the uprising and were thus bystanders, but many had also been victims of the regime, just like the participants. Therefore, additional factors other than dictatorship and war must have played a role in encouraging certain people to revolt.[40]

While Haddad and Khoury provide good accounts of what happened at different locations during the intifadah, they can only conclude in their final analysis that the intifadah was chaotic and that it escapes generalisation. The uprising unfolded differently in each town and city due to Iraq's inherent historical, social, and geographic diversity and due to the absence of internal communication and coordination between the participants during the intifadah. Much information remains missing. For example, little information exists pertaining to how the local leadership was formed and gained legitimacy among the participants of the uprising. While there is an extensive focus on the destruction of state buildings and the arrest of local party members by the participants, little is provided on how rebel governance contributed to the development of the intifadah. While both Haddad and Khoury note the importance of tribal networks, they give little attention to the networks and camaraderie of the returning soldiers, which bypassed local kinship ties and tribal connections. Moreover, they emphasise the absence of the central Iraqi state in the initial phase of the intifadah but largely ignore the role of decentralised state repression. In general, a specific description of the different skirmishes and battles that erupted between the rebels and the state also is absent. Therefore, a study of the uprising does not lend itself to a macro-analysis because in-depth studies of the uprising in different localities, including their relation to each other during the intifadah, is absent. Therefore, comparison and generalisation about the intifadah are currently impossible.

[40] Khoury, 'The 1991 Intifadah in Three Keys, 266.

In short, given that our current knowledge of the intifadah escapes a macro-analysis and that a bottom-up investigation of the perspective of the participants of the intifadah themselves is missing, this thesis approaches this uprising more accurately through the lens of micro-history. Scholarship pertaining to the intifadah is currently characterised by many fragments that give an impression about the general picture, but any real in-depth study of regions, towns, or cities is still largely missing.[41] Therefore, to get a sharper picture of the uprising as a national event, we must first sketch a picture of this uprising as a regional – that is, city or village – phenomenon. Only after several in-depth studies have been conducted that cover the social, economic, and political history of the different localities that participated in the intifadah can more generalised insights be made regarding the uprising as a national event. Given the time constraints and scope of this paper, a study is provided on the intifadah in one small village: Al-Shinafiyah. Focusing on one village can clarify formerly unknown aspects and features of life under Saddam Hussein, thus potentially providing information on the underlying patterns of the intifadah.

## Research scope

According to Giovani Levi, a micro-history scholar, "the unifying principle of all micro-historical research is the belief that microscopic observation will reveal factors previously unobserved".[42] In a village, there is a high level of face-to-face contact, and everyone is therefore aware, informed, and socially connected to most of their fellow villagers.[43] Second, villages are often located at the periphery of a country and depending on the penetration of a regime, they are often still dominated by the local respected elite rather than the state. This, together with the tight-knit social ties of a village, creates a power

[41] Except for Dina Rizk Khoury, 'Making and unmaking spaces of security: Basra as battlefront, Basra insurgent, 1980-1991' in Nelida Fuccaro (ed.), *Violence and the City in the Modern Middle East* (2016) 127-148.
[42] Giovanni Levi, 'On Microhistory' in: Peter Burke (ed.) *New Perspectives on Historical Writing* (Cambridge 1991) 101.
[43] Roger D. Petersen, *Resistance and rebellion: lessons from eastern Europe* (Cambridge 2001) 16-17 and David T mason, *Caught in the crossfire: Revolutions ,Repression, and the Rational Peasant* (New York 2004) 103-109.

dynamic that is not present in cities.[44] The alternative social context and power dynamics in villages therefore suggest that coercion/co-optation of the population by the state and contestation of the state by village dwellers is a much more complex and heterogeneous process than we originally concluded with regard to state control in Iraq.[45] Studies of villages and villagers in Iraq during the Baathist regime is non-existent.[46] Therefore, studying Shinafiyah can provide insight on the divergent ways the regime dealt with tight-knit villages and how villagers tried to cope with the regime. Moreover, it provides new information on Iraqi village life during the Baathist regime. State repression and resistance in Iraq, as is the case in any authoritarian society as micro-historian William J. Chase demonstrated, was a multifaceted and complex process that entailed actors from different backgrounds – from the most marginalised peasant to the highest Baathists of Baghdad.[47] By relying on micro-history, preliminary steps can be taken to analyse the complexity of state-society relations and to understand how the micro-context interacted with the macro-context. [48]

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[44] Daniel Bates and Amal Rassam, *Peoples and Cultures of the Middle-East* (1983 New Jersey) 142-147, 266.

[45] Currently Joseph Sassoon Aaron Faust's books provide the most extensive and empirically founded discussions on how Saddam Hussein coerced and coopeted his people. While both texts are excellent sources to understand how the regime ruled its people, their analysis suffers an ahistorical perspective and they do not account how different historical developments during Saddam's regime impacted his coercion and co-optation policies. However, these texts do not take the geographic unevenness of the regime's policies into consideration and Iraq's urban-rural divide vis a vis co-optation and repression is not accounted for either. See more : Joseph Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party: Inside an authoritarian regime*, (Cambridge 2011); Aaron M. Faust, *The Ba'thification of Iraq: Saddam Hussein's Totalitarianism* (Texas 2015). See also discussions on the spatial turn in middle-eastern anthropology by Kamran Asdar Ali, 'Reframing the Middle Eastern City: Thoughts on New Research' in: Soraya Altorki (ed.) *A companion to the Anthropology of the Middle-East* (New Jersey 2015) 481-491.

[46] Before the coup of Saddam Hussein, there have been a few studies on Iraqi villages in the south but access for researchers in rural Iraq began to be slowly restricted after the Baath coup of 1968 and near impossible after Saddam took power in 1979. Notable works are : Elizabeth Warnock Fernea, *Guests of the Sheikh,* (New York 1965), Malcolm N. Quint, 'The Idea of Progress in an Iraqi Village', *Middle East Journal* 12 (1958), Wilfred Thesiger, *The Marsh Arabs* ( New York 1964), Shaker Salim, *Marsh Dwellers of the Euphrates Delta* (London 1962).

[47] Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party,* 227-236.
For further discussions on the relation of micro-history and macro state repression see Karl-Dieter Opp, and Wolfgang Roehl, 'Repression, micro mobilization, and political protest', *Social Forces 69* (1990) 2, 521-547; Max Bergholz, *Violence as a generative force: Identity, nationalism, and memory in a Balkan community* (New York 2016) 5-6; William J. Chase , 'Microhistory and Mass repression: politics, personalities, and revenge in the fall of Béla Kun', *The Russian Review* 67 (2008), 3, 454-483.

[48]For more extensive discussions regarding the specificities of the macro-micro link in historical research see : István Szijártó, 'Four Arguments for Microhistory', *Rethinking History 5* (2002) 2, 221; Jill Lepore, 'Historians who love too much: Reflections on microhistory and biography', *The Journal of American History* 88 (2001) 1, 131; Matti Peltonen, 'Clues, margins, and monads: The micro–macro link in historical research', *History and Theory* 40 (2001) 3, 347-351.

Nonetheless, a micro-historical approach for studying the intifadah has some pitfalls. For example, the conditions of a small village  one must ask to what extent a village is representative for the intifadah and Iraq on a broader scale. However, although Shinafiyah was a small village, it was not isolated, and many of its inhabitants constantly had to travel to different cities and towns for education as well as to serve at the front during the Iran-Iraq War and the Kuwait War. This movement brought many men from Shinafiyah into contact with different experiences, ideas, and the varied faces of the state. When these men returned to Shinafiyah, they brought back different stories and shared them with family and other habitants of Shinafiyah, thus creating a dynamic link between micro-and macro-history.[49] Additionally, just like any other city and town in Iraq, the state had institutions in Shinafiyah that operated based on local conditions, while also receiving directives from al-Diwaniya (capital of the province) and from Baghdad itself.[50] Iraq was a highly centralised country between 1979 and 1991.[51] Just like the rest of Iraq, Shinafiyah was subjected to raids, arrests, and other forms of repression that the Baathist regime implemented throughout Iraq.[52] Additionally, Shinafiyah had its own Baath Party centre that actively recruited party members and that sent information about the residents of Shinafiyah to the authorities, sometimes even directly to Saddam Hussein himself.[53] While there was room for adaptation to the local circumstances, the framework in which the Baath Party and governmental employees were expected to operate was nationally (and sometimes internationally) maintained and not diverged from. [54]

This thesis specifically focuses on Shinafiyah because of its unique geographic setting, social composition, and experience with the regime as well as because of pragmatic considerations related to financial limitations and time constraints. Shinafiyah is a small village in the province of Qadisiya. The village is located south of Diwaniya, the capital of Qadisiya. The urbanisation and detribalisation of Diwaniya preceded the majority of Iraq's provinces, and the role and power of tribalism in Shinafiyah was therefore not as extensive as in Nasiriya, Amara, and Samawa, where tribes and tribal

[49] Khoury, *Iraq in wartime* 11.
[50]Ibid., 56.
[51] Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th* Party, 227-236.
[52] Faust, *The Ba'thification of Iraq*, 153.
[53] Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party,7.*
[54] Faust, *The Ba'thification of Iraq*, 31-33.

culture played a major role in the local politics.[55] Second, while Shinafiyah was dominated by a public adherence to Islamic morals and by reverence to Islam's most important saints, it lacked any significant clerical representatives – in contrast to the cities and villages surrounding Najaf and Karbala.[56] Thirdly, while many of Shinafiyah's men participated in the Iran-Iraq War, the village was far from the front line of the war and thus only suffered from the war indirectly. This is in contrast to Basra, Nasiriya, and Dhi Qar, which were located on the border of Iran, and Samawa and Basra, on the border of Kuwait. In these cities and towns near the front line, the intifadah was much more closely tied to the wars than it was in Shinafiyah.[57] Finally, due to time and financial constraints, the research for this thesis had to be conducted in the Netherlands. Coincidentally, the Netherlands hosts a significant but small community of exiled men and women from Shinafiyah, some of whom were interviewed for this thesis. Second, I made some short visits to Shinafiyah for ethnographic research preceding the writing of this thesis. This provided me a unique corpus of knowledge and insights and an extensive network within Shinafiyah, which improved the quality of the research.

## Theory and thesis organisation

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to review all the debates and discussion surrounding revolts, but in order to better understand the 1991 uprising, three points need to be discussed: what causes revolts; what defines state-society relations; and why, how, and when people revolt. As part of this theoretical discussion, the sub-questions of this thesis are also presented.

One primary purpose of this thesis is to determine the origins and causes of the intifadah. The difference between origin and cause will be defined first. In this thesis, origin refers to sufficient long-term causes that impact the necessary cause of the 1991 uprising. Sufficient causes, in the specific case of the 1991 uprising, refer to the different cultural, social, economic, and political conditions that fuel but also define a group's resentment of the state. In this regard, certain structural factors inherently position and

[55] Yitzhak Nakash, 'The conversion of Iraq's tribes to Shiism', in: *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 26 (1994) 450 and Wadi al Atiya, *Tareekh al-Diwaniya* Kadima wal Jadeeda ( Najaf 1954).
[56] This fact is verified through interviews and one longtime resident of the city of Diwaniya.
[57] Khoury, *Iraq in wartime* 140.

define a group in an antagonistic position against the state. Likewise, these same sufficient causes shape both the content and the form of the mobilisable networks, infrastructures and symbols that could precede a revolt. Chapters 1 and 2 are primarily devoted to the sufficient causes or the 'origins' of the uprising.

Necessary causes, on the other hand, relate to the immediate events and developments that must occur to spark the long-term structures of sufficient causes into a revolt. How a revolt then unfolds is partly a reflection of the sufficient causes. Chapter 3 therefore addresses the necessary causes of the uprising. While it is difficult to define the precise conditions that are necessary for uprisings, an approximate and plausible attempt is made to affirm the necessary causes of the 1991 uprising in combination with the sufficient causes.[58]

In this thesis, the state is understood to be a "set of ongoing institutions for social control and authoritative decision-making and implementation," whose main interest is expanding its autonomy to control revenues, assemble social and economic relations, and maintain ideological hegemony over the society it wants to rule.[59] In a state's efforts to expand its autonomy over a certain territory, it has to compete with countless distinct social institutions, organisations, and groups, who together constitute 'society'.[60] In this process of expanding its autonomy, a state clashes with a society, which encompasses a group of individuals who pursue their own interests and autonomy either against or within the interests of the state. In this process, some individuals cooperate with the state, while others contest the state to preserve their own interests and autonomy at the expense of the state.[61] To neutralise societal groups that oppose it, the state can provide a political field of permitted contestation, which is defined and enclosed in the state's institutions.

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[58] John Gerring, *Social science methodology: A unified framework* (Cambridge 2011) 327-359.
[59] Merilee S. Grindle, *challenging the state: Crisis and innovation in Latin America and Africa* (Cambridge 1996) 4.
[60] Victor Azarya, 'reordering state-society relations: incorporation and disengagement', in: Donald Rotchchild and Naoimi Chazan (ed.) *The precarious balance: state and society in Africa* (Boulder 1988) 10.
[61] For a discussion on local elites that align themselves with the state and those who contest it see : Ugur Üngör, and Mehmet Polatel, *Confiscation and destruction: the Young Turk seizure of Armenian property* (New York 2011) 1-5; Merilee S Grindle, *Challenging the State: crisis and innovation in Latin America and Africa*, (Cambridge 1996) 3-4; Charles Tilly 'Armed Force, regimes and contention in Europe since 1650' in: Diane E. Davis and Anthony W. Pereira, *Irregular Armed Forces and Their Role in Politics and State Formation* (Cambridge 2001) 69-77; for the specific case of Iraq see Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq* (2007) 76-104.

Democratic states are characterised by a large political field for regime contestation, thus softening the conflict between state and society.[62] In authoritarian states, however, the permitted field of politics is limited, and regime contestation is severely and violently repressed. Authoritarian states rely on coercion and co-optation to neutralise groups that might undermine the state.[63] Groups that contest states can rely on different repertoires that help individuals assert and legitimise their own autonomy against the state in economics, social relations, security, or ideology. [64]

One of the more radical repertoires of state contestation are uprisings, rebellions and revolts. The intifadah carried all three of these labels.[65] This thesis uses a workable definition for studying the intifadah that includes the above-mentioned labels, stating that the 1991 intifadah was a collective mass movement that aimed to directly contest or depose of the symbolic hegemony and structures of the state through violent means.[66] An uprising, however, is only one of the many ways individuals can contest their government. Alternative methods include organised oppositional party politics, clandestine violent operations, media publications, economic boycott, and art.[67] This thesis mainly focuses on regime contestation from the perspective of an uprising, but the relationship between uprisings and other repertoires of state contestation is also investigated.

**Organisation and theoretical background of Chapter 1**

Early scholars of revolts, protests, and other social movements often argued that after a certain threshold of discontent due to social and economic inequality, any provocative event can spark a 'spontaneous' mass uprising.[68] This perspective is however critiqued by

[62] Tilly 'Armed Force, regimes and contention in Europe since 1650', 58-59.
[63] Mason, *Caught in the crossfire,* 10; Christian Davenport, 'State repression and the tyrannical peace', *Journal of Peace Research* 44 (2007) 4, 485-504; Jennifer Earl, 'Political repression: Iron fists, velvet gloves, and diffuse control', *Annual review of sociology* 37 (2011) 261-284; Selin M. Bölme, 'The Roots of Authoritarianism in the Middle East', Jülide Karako (ed.) *Authoritarianism in the Middle East* (London 2015) 7-37.
[64] Mason, *Caught in the crossfire,* 45.
[65]Khoury, Intifadah in Three Keys.
[66] For extensive discussions on what a revolt, rebellion or uprising is see : Roderick Aya, 'Theories of revolution reconsidered', *Theory and Society* 8 (1979) 1,39-99; Mason, *Caught in the crossfire* 12-13; Jeremy Weinstein, *Inside rebellion: the politics of insurgent violence* (Cambridge 2007) 16-17.
[67] Verta Taylor and Nella van dyke, 'tactical repertoires of social movements' in David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule and Hanspeter Kriesi (eds.)*, The Blackwell companion to social movements* (New Jersey 2004) 264.
[68] Mason, *Caught in the crossfire*, 30.

the scholars John D. McCartney and Mayer N. Zald, who argue that grievances and discontent alone do not comprehensively explain the emergence of revolts because discontent is ubiquitous in society but does not always push people to revolt. People's specific grievances – whether economic inequality, social/ethnic discrimination, or physical oppression – are secondary factors in understanding why and how people revolt, and the eruption revolts therefore must be explained by relying on additional factors other than grievances.[69]

Several authors who are adherents of resource mobilisation theory therefore argue that an organised effort of active and strategic mobilisation must galvanise people's discontent into collective action against the state in order for an uprising to occur. The function of this organised effort, which is led by a social entrepreneur, is the strategic accumulation and deployment of human, material, moral, and ideological resources to effectively challenge the state.[70] Such entrepreneurs successfully articulate the discontent of their mobilised networks and convince them to pool their resources to gain access to policy-making institutions.[71] Once some form of organisation is established, the entrepreneurs have to convince people that revolt is the most adequate repertoire for pursuing individuals' stated goals against the state. [72] However, if a revolt is not applicable, other methods can also be relied on to pursue a group's interests, such as petitions, protests, print and press – as well as clandestine attacks targeting institutions and symbols of the state.[73] The main point is that those alternative repertoires can function as building blocks to eventually mobilise an increasing number of individuals for a revolt if necessary, or even a revolution.[74] The different repertoires performed by individuals inside an organisation preceding a potential revolt can assist in expanding the

[69] Mayer N. Zald, 'Resource mobilization and social movements: A partial theory', *American journal of sociology* 82, (1977) 6: 1212-1241.
[70] Bob Edwards and John D. McCarthy, 'Resources and social movement mobilization' in : David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule and Hanspeter Kriesi (eds.) *The Blackwell companion to social movements* (New Jersey 2004) 137.
[71] Marc Edelman, 'Social movements: changing paradigms and forms of politics', *Annual Review of Anthropology* 30 (2001) 1, 289; Anders Themnér, 'A leap of faith: When and how ex-combatants resort to violence' *Security Studies* 22 (2013) 2, 298.
[72] Charles Tilly, *Regime and Repertoires* (Chicago 2006) 30-60.
[73] Hanspeter Kriesi, 'Political context and opportunity' in: David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule and Hanspeter Kriesi*, The Blackwell companion to social movements* (New Jersey 2004) 81-82.
[74] Suzanne Staggenborg , 'Can Feminist Organizations Be Effective?' in: Myra Marx Ferree and Patricia Yancey Martin (eds.) *Feminist Organizations: Harvest of the New Women's Movement* (Philadelphia 1995), 339-342.

organisation's social outreach, material infrastructures and ideological appeal to a larger group of people, who in turn can be activated for a mass revolt.

Therefore, to fully understand the origins and causes of a revolt, it is more fitting to see it as part of a larger movement that relies on a variety of repertoires that steadily and sometimes unintentionally prepare a group to revolt. This thesis therefore hypothesises that the 1991 intifadah was the accumulation of a growing inchoate social movement that encompassed a wide range of repertoires, a unified ideology, and important social and material infrastructures that started to take root when Saddam Hussein took over in 1979.

Sidney Tarrow, a leading scholar of social movements, defines social movements as "collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities in sustained interaction with elites, opponents and authorities".[75] The literature on social movements often refers to social movements as driven by specific professional organisations with an internal command structure, specific and sophisticated ideological programmes (left/right wing, nationalism, Islamism, or identarian), a division of labour, and a long-term plan to achieve policy change.[76] The Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) and the Islamist Dawah Party are examples of such movements in Iraq, which this thesis considers to be traditional social movements.[77] The inchoate social movement of the intifadah, however, lacked an explicit programme, organisation, or sophisticated ideology other than the rejection and desire to end the Baathist regime of Saddam Hussein. Therefore, it is distinct from Iraq's traditional social movements. However, the elementary social movement of the intifadah was able to mobilise more people than any of Iraq's traditional social movements were able to do.

One dominant explanation for why social movements emerge is that they are a reaction to exclusionary politics of the state against a certain group of people and a response to the corresponding limited field of permitted political contestation.[78] When a

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[75] Sidney G Tarrow, *Power in movement: Social movements and contentious politics* (Cambridge 2011) 9.
[76] Hanspeter Kriesi, 'The organizational structure of new social movements in a political context' in Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, Mayer N. Zald *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements* (Cambridge 1996) 152-184.
[77] Traditional because they adhere to dominant definitions of social movements and have a long and established history in Iraq.
[78] Kriesi, 'Political context and opportunity', 78; Tarrow, *Power in movement,* 80-88; Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to revolution* (Michigan 1977) 6.1-6.20

group of individuals has grievances that are not effectively mediated through government institutions, people rely on extra-institutional organisations to self-sufficiently rectify their grievances or to start a social movement to pressure the state to address those grievances. Regarding social movements in authoritarian societies in contrast to in democratic societies, the repression of social movements is the norm rather than the exception.[79]

Chapter 1 therefore explains Iraq's political context between 1979 and 1991 with regard to the state and Iraq's two largest social movements, the ICP and Dawah Party and how both the state and both of these social movements influenced ordinary Iraqis and the incipient social movement of the intifadah. The absence of Iraq's social movements during intifadah demonstrates that ordinary Iraqis were not only excluded from the state but also from the ICP and Dawah Party. This chapter explores to what extent ordinary Iraqis were excluded from both the state's institutions and Iraq's main social movements and the consequences of this double exclusion.

**Organisation and theoretical background to Chapter 2**

Understanding the formation of an incipient social movement is closely tied to understanding that the organisation of social movements in authoritarian states like Iraq is radically different than in Europe's liberal democracies.[80] In a repressed society such as Baathist Iraq, meeting in a group and discussing and organising alternatives to the current order or even having an identifiable group name intended to contest the state is highly risky and, in the case of the Baathist regime, was effectively repressed.[81] Authors like Charles Tilly therefore argue that authoritarian societies are unable to host social movements because repressed conditions do not allow for them.[82] However, social scientist Hank Johnston contests Tilly's point by arguing that "it is incorrect to say that movements do not occur in authoritarian states. Rather, when movements do mobilise, their organisation, trajectories and targets of collective action often are different from

[79] Asef Bayat, 'Islamism and Social Movement Theory' *Third World Quarterly* 26 (September 2005) 6, 903.
[80] Hank Johnston, 'The Game's Afoot: social movements in authoritarian states' In: Donatella D. Porta & Mario Diani (ed), *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements* (Oxford 2015).
[81] Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party* 193-217.
[82] John Markoff, 'Historical analysis and social movements research' in: Donatella D. Porta & Mario Diani (ed), *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements* (2015) 72.

those of movements in democratic contexts."[83] Johnston therefore argues that social movements in authoritarian societies rely on different repertoires.[84] He calls these 'repressed repertoires', which, according to Johnston, function as a middle phase that prepares the ground for a larger public rejection of authority at a later point in time.[85] Nevertheless, Johnston's understanding of repressed repertoires still mainly refers to conscious and ideological repertoires of organisations against the state in a more clandestine fashion. With regard to the situation in Iraq, Johnston's idea of repressed repertoires was actively pursued by Iraq's by both the ICP and the Dawah Party during the 1980s. Nevertheless, these groups (ICP and Dawah) did not participate in the 1991 uprising. Instead, the participants of the intifada were primarily ordinary non-politicised citizens who were never part of study-groups or clubs, who were not able to freely gather in institutions like mosques, and who did not adhere to a specific ideological programme, and therefore, Johnston's concept of repressed repertoires is not fully applicable when studying the rebels of the intifada.[86]

This difference between the members of traditional social movements and undeveloped social movements has a clear class component, and this difference has been addressed by Asef Bayat and James Scott. In *Weapons of the Weak,* Scott explains that "most of the subordinate class have rarely been offered the luxury of open organised political activity. Clandestine revolutionary politics have often remained the domain of the middle class".[87] James Scott, despite writing about peasants, provides his own understanding, of the repressed repertories of subordinate classes: "Here I have in mind the ordinary weapons of relatively powerless groups: foot dragging, dissimulation,

[83] Hank Johnston, 'The Game's Afoot', 619.
[84] Ibid, 619.
[85] Johnston notes three important characteristics of these repressed repertoires: duplicity, creativity, triggering. Duplicity refers to the double-minded quality of public discourse, acts and speech that within them carry implicit critique to the regime. Additionally, this refers to the awareness of citizens in authoritarian society to be aware of the tiny gaps within society where one is free to speak about the regime, often amongst trusted friends and at specific locations. Johnston in this case refers to study groups and clubs but also spaces of religious gatherings like the mosque for example. Creativity refers to the different and often symbolic ways dissenters attempt to mitigate the risks to openly resist order for citizens in authoritarian societies. By demonstrating public symbolic resistance through for example graffiti or merely just being present as a large group in a public space without any clear reason or goal, communicates to the ordinary citizen but as well to the state that there are groups out there working to undermine the order, and that they know how the system works a can exploit it. Finally triggering refers to the staging of transgressive events to provoke open resistance to the state; Ibid., 619-625.
[86] Asef Bayat, *Life as politics: How ordinary people change the Middle East* (Stanford 2013) 14-15.
[87] James Scott, *Weapons of the Weak. Every Day Forms of Peasant Resistance*, (New Haven 1985) 44.

desertion, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage, and so on".[88] Scott explains that the commonality of these repertoires is that they require little to no coordination or planning, avoid direct (or symbolic) confrontation with the authorities, and mainly aims to help the personal (rather than the collective) interests of the individuals in the subordinate classes.[89] Scott further explains that these informal acts of resistance can form a subculture of subversion and passive networks, fostering a social movement "with no formal organisation, no formal leaders, no manifestoes, no dues, no name".[90] In short, repressed repertoires of the weak can formalise ties and demonstrate that even within repressive conditions some form of dissidence can occur without the luxury of time and resources. Scott however, does not suggest how such networks of the subverted class and their repertoires can transform into a mass uprising. Likewise, Asef Bayat argues that practices that grind against the repressive order can transform into passive networks that become activated when there is a common threat.[91]

Chapter 2 provides a study of these 'weapons of the weak' – namely, why and how people relied on them to contest the regime and what kind of latent mobilisation structures (material and discursive) were formed through these alternative repertoires that preceded the intifadah (1979–1991). Therefore, this chapter provides an in-depth study of how people in Shinafiyah indirectly built mobilisation structures that contributed to the 1991 uprising by simply living their life and by pursuing their own interests, which potentially contested those of the regime. Structural factors that assisted in the use of these weapons of the weak in Iraq, and especially in rural Iraq, are also addressed.

**Organisation and the theoretical background of Chapter 3**

After contextualising the origins and characteristics of the inchoate social movement of the intifadah, an understanding of when people revolt still needs to be developed. This is a pertinent question in debates surrounding revolutions, social movements, and rebellions, and many people have attempted to answer it.[92] Merely establishing that

[88] Scott, *weapons of the weak*, xvi.
[89] Ibid,29.
[90] Ibid.,35, 44.
[91] Bayat, *Life as Politics,* 22.
[92] See : Keith Baker Michael, and Dan Edelstein (eds.) *Scripting revolution: a historical approach to the comparative study of revolutions* (Stanford 2015); Jack A Goldstone, 'Toward a fourth generation of revolutionary theory', *Annual Review of Political Science* 4 (2001) 1, 139-187; Jeff Goodwin and James M.

people have grievances and have the ability to create some form of an organisation to galvanise those grievances into revolt is not sufficient for revolt to actually occur; an additional factor must be included to explain *when* people revolt.[93] As a reaction to this problem, the political opportunity thesis (POT) has been proposed. The POT claims that social movements arise as the result of expanding political opportunities.[94] A political opportunity is any historical event or social development that undermines the suppositions of an established political system. Neal Karen has provided several examples of such opportunities, including 'wars, industrialisation, international political realignments, prolonged unemployment, and widespread demographic changes.'[95]

In the case of the intifadah, however, although many political opportunities presented themselves throughout Saddam's reign for people to revolt, it was only the political opportunity of 1991 that was finally exploited by the people for a revolt. Chapter 3 therefore provides a historical account of Shinafiyah from 1979 to 1991 and the events of the intifadah itself to explain how the various experiences, structures, networks, and characteristics of Shinafiyah all were combined in 1991 when a political opportunity presented itself to be effectively seized for revolt.

## Methodology and sources

The amount of written material on this event from the perspective of the participants is limited and insufficient to provide answers to the questions of this thesis. After 2010, new memoirs on the 1991 uprising have started to emerge.[96] There is one written memoir on the intifadah in Shinafiyah by Syed Hussein Husseini Muhsin, who was known to be the leader in Shinafiyah. However, his account of the intifadah is contested by others from Shinafiyah (see Chapter 3).[97] Accounts of the ordinary participants from both Shinafiyah

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Jasper, 'Caught in a winding, snarling vine: The structural bias of political process theory' in: *Sociological forum*, vol. 14 (1999) 1; James Chowning Davies James, *When men revolt and why* (New York 1997).

[93] Goodwin 'Caught in a winding, snarling vine', 1.

[94] Ibid., 37, 30.

[95] Neal Caren, 'Political Process Theory' in : George Ritzer from Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology (2012, June 18), http://nealcaren.web.unc.edu/files/2012/05/Political-Process-Theory-_-BlackwellEncyclopedia-of-Sociology-_-Blackwell-Reference-Online.pdf (accessed 13-04-2017).

[96] Abdul Rida Oudh, *Al Intifadah al Shabaniya fi al Hillah* (Hillah 2012); Jelala Al-Seyed, *ana listu li* (Kuwait 2016).

[97] Syed Muhsin Hussein al-Husseini, *Al-Shinafiyah* (1998) http://sadik70.tripod.com/diwan01/shnafia1.htm accessed (May 5, 2018).

and the rest of Iraq are absent, demonstrating that writing and recounting the 1991 uprising is undertaken only by the privileged few.[98] Nonetheless, the memory of the 1991 uprising is still very much alive in the minds of those who experienced it. This is evident during religious commemorations, in poetry, and even among Iraqis active on YouTube and Facebook.[99] Therefore, given these conditions, it is necessary to rely on oral history sources to answer important questions regarding the 1991 uprising. It must however be noted that the Hoover Institute in San Francisco has over 2.5 million documents containing reports by the Baath Party on its own citizens before and during the 1991 uprising.[100] It cannot be denied that these reports contain immense value in trying to understand this uprising. However, due to time and money constraints, it was not possible to visit this institute to read those reports. This thesis however does rely on that Baath archive – namely, what has already been published in secondary literature.

Oral history on Iraq is in its infancy, and only a few works have been released. Kanan Makiya, who set up the Iraq Memory Foundation shortly after 1991, has conducted over twenty interviews about life under Saddam Hussein, covering both massacres, such as the Anfal Campaign against the Kurds, and the 1991 uprising.[101] In that same line, The American Academic Research Institute in Iraq conducted a similar set of interviews with Iraqi refugees in Jordan under the guise of the Iraqi Oral History Project.[102]

Other notable works on Iraqi oral history include Nadje Sadig Al-Ali's *Iraqi Women: Untold Stories From 1948 to the Present*, which focuses on the lives of a diverse group of middle-class women during Iraq's different regimes since 1920.[103] Another known work is *Iraq's Last Jews* by Tamar Morad and Dennish Shasha, which relies on

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[98] See also Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli, Form and Meaning in Oral History* (New York 1992) on the inherent bias in written sources on historical events.
[99] For example see the large Facebook group '*Munazamath al thoar al Intifadah al Shabaaniya*' at https://www.facebook.com/groups/uprising1991/ (accessed: August 12, 2018); the YouTube '*Al kateb Hameed Shaker*' : https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNXhbl5KdZ3Xbdk5kmXBDDA (accessed: August 12, 2018 ).
[100] Michelle Caswell, 'Thank you very much, now Give them back': cultural property and the right over the Iraqi Baath records' *American Archivist*, 74 (2011 ) 211–40.
[101] The Iraq memory foundation, '*Al tareeg al Shahafee shadat 2005*',http://www.iraqmemory.org/Projects_OralHistory_vedio.asp (accessed: August 12, 2018).
[102] The Academic research Institute in Iraq, 'The Iraq Oral History Project' http://www.taarii.org/projects/iraqi-oral-history-project (accessed: August 12,2018).
[103] Nadje Sadig Al-Ali, *Iraqi women: untold stories from 1948 to the present* ( London 2007).

personal witness accounts of Iraqi Jews.[104] Most innovative is Mark Kuki's *Voices from Iraq: A People's History, 2003-2009,* which contains interviews from a diverse group of people from different classes, religions, and ethnicities in Iraq with the aim of providing a historical account of the US occupation of Iraq.[105] This thesis expands on these excellent oral histories of Iraq by not only focusing on the rebel's 's experiences but also by using the information participants of the intifada provided to document and review unknown facts pertaining to the 1991 intifadah as well as village life under Saddam. This thesis, contrary to many other works on Iraq that rely on interviews, centralises the views and lives of Iraq's subaltern class rather than those of intellectuals, white-collar workers, or the middle and upper classes.[106] Finally, by relying on interviews, this thesis provides new empirical source material for successive researchers of the 1991 intifadah.

Ten people were interviewed for this thesis, seven men and three women, the majority of whom were born during the 1960s and the early 1970s. The interviews were semi-structured and lasted from two to four hours, and up to ten with one person. None of these ten had high-ranking leadership positions during the intifadah, but rather they were mainly ordinary participants. Six of the interviewees were residing in the Netherlands and had been living there since 1992–1995. Three interviewees, who were residing in Iraq, were either interviewed by phone or answered questions in written form. One interviewee, who lived in Canada, was likewise interviewed by phone. In addition, many informal conversations were held with a group of Iraqis that was living in the Netherlands; each of those individuals was from a different town or city, and thus each provided, albeit indirectly, a different piece to the puzzle. The interviews were conducted in Arabic, the native language of the interviewees, allowing them to use the full potential of their language skills to portray their experiences as accurately and vividly as possible. A list of interview questions was prepared consisting of three parts. The first part focused

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[104] Tamar Morad and Dennis Shasha*, Iraq's Last Jews: Stories of Daily Life, Upheaval, and Escape from Modern (*New York 2008).
[105] Mark Kukis, *Voices from Iraq: a people's history, 2003-2009* (New York 2011).
[106] While the importance of oral reports in the research on modern Iraq is slowly gaining traction most recent works on Iraq still rely on interviews with foremostly Iraq's middle-class and elites: : Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party: Inside an authoritarian regime*, (Cambridge 2011); Dina Rizk Khoury ,'The 1991 Intifadah in Three Keys; Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq;*
According to Paul Thompson the famous Oral Historian of the working class, giving the underclass a voice is one of oral history's most important task; Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford 2000) 77–81.

on one's youth, domestic life, school life, and relationship with siblings and parents in Shinafiyah. The second part focused on life during the 1980s, including confrontations and experiences with the Baathist regime and any ties or familiarity with the Dawah Party or the ICP. This part also included an additional list of questions for those who had to serve in the Iraqi Army and experienced either the Iran-Iraq War or the Kuwait war first hand. The final part contained questions aiming to retrace why and how the intifadah happened in Shinafiyah. However, this list of questions was primarily intended to guide to the interview rather than to strictly obtain an answer to every question. At the beginning of every interview, I explicitly stated the goals and aims of the interview and guaranteed participants' anonymity so that they could speak freely. As a result, all names in this thesis are changed to ensure the privacy of the participants. The names that are mentioned in this thesis are either publicly known figures, or I was provided permission to use by those involved. At the request of the participants, names of regime collaborators were also changed to prevent this thesis from having social repercussions for the families of the participants or of the collaborators. All the interviews were audiotaped. Due to time constraints, the interviews were not transcribed, except for direct quotations. Analysis therefore took place by carefully listening to the record and by taking notes. Three interviewees were not audiotaped either due to the preference of the interviewee or due to the specific conditions under which the interview had to be conducted.

In addition, oral history has its own set of problems that must be addressed within the context of this research. Two important problems are addressed: 1) the extent to which accurate retention of a bygone time and events is possible through one's memory and 2) how the inherent subjectivity and bias of interviewees can be mitigated to arrive at an accurate rendition of the 1991 uprising.

According to Valerie Yow, the accurate retention of an event through one's memory is dependent on four factors – whether it 1) was unique for a witness, 2) had consequentiality, 3) was unexpected, and 4) caused emotional preoccupation.[107] The fact that the 1991 uprising was unprecedented not only in Iraq but also in the larger Middle East fulfils the conditions of uniqueness, unexpectedness, and emotional preoccupation

[107] Valerie R. Yow, *Recording Oral History: A practical guide for social scientists* (California 1994) 20 Donald A Ritchie, *Doing Oral History: A practical Guide* (Oxford 2003) 32-35.

for those directly involved.[108] However, the most significant factor pertaining to this group of interviewees, most of whom now reside in the Netherlands, is the fact that the 1991 uprising was the defining reason for why they had to move abroad. As a result of that move, they had lived in a totally different social, cultural, and political context.[109] The rupture of one's life before and after the intifadah is significantly more impactful for those who went abroad than for those who stayed in Iraq. For those that stayed in Iraq after the intifadah, a sense of continuity prevailed. Therefore, the consequentiality of the intifadah for its diaspora participants in combination with the other three factors make it likely that their retention of the events would be much stronger than those who remained in Iraq after the 1991 uprising. This latter fact merits measure of precise details that the exiled interviewees can provide.

The views, perspectives, and memories of the interviewees are nonetheless partly coloured by their own political preferences, self-image, and the social and cultural context that the interviewees experienced after the events. This bias had to be neutralised in order to retrieve the past as accurately as possible.[110] Oral sources are like any other written or unwritten historical source: They contain contextual bias, incompleteness, and errors, and they must be scrutinised for validity and truthfulness by means of internal and external source criticism as prescribed by standard historical practice.[111] In this regard, the advantage of conducting personal interviews is that, contrary to written or pre-recorded sources, interviewing allows the researcher to directly question and scrutinise statements by interviewees to determine their truthfulness.[112] During the interviews

[108] Hamid J.A Alkifaey, 'The Arab Spring and Democratization: An Iraqi perspective' in: Larbi Sadriki (ed.*) Routledge handbook of the Arab spring: rethinking democratization* (London 2014) 463-479.
[109] Geraldine Chatelard, 'Migration from Iraq between the Gulf and the Iraq wars (1990-2003) historical and sociospacial dimensions' *Working Paper 09-68, COMPAS - Centre on Migration, Policy and Society* (Oxford 2009).
[110] Selma Leydesdorff, Nanci Adler, 'The Evidence Value of Personal Testimony' in Nanci Adler, Selma Leydesdorff (eds.) *Tapestry of Memory, Evidence and Testimony in Life Story Narratives* (London 2013) IX-XXIX.
[111] Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli, Form and Meaning in Oral History* (New York 1992) 50; John Tosh, The pursuit of History Aims, methods and new directions in the study of modern history ( London 2002) 84-107; Ronald J Grele. 'Movement without aim: Methodological and theoretical problems in oral history', in: Robert Perks and Alistair Thompson, *The oral history reader* (London 2002) 41.
[112] Grele. 'Movement without aim', in: Robert Perks and Alistair Thompson, *The oral history reader* (London 2002) 41; Katryn Anderson and Dana Jack, 'Learning to Listen; Interview Techniques and Analyses', in: S. Gluck and D. Patai (eds.) *Women's Worlds. The Feminist Practice of Oral History* (New York 1991) 11.

conducted for this thesis, requests for additional information on certain statements were made during short breaks, intermissions, or transitions in the narrative. Reserving such questions for breaks ensured that the interviewees' original answers were not distorted, thus improving the quality of the information and the process of verification.[113] Additionally, contact was maintained after the formal interviews, which allowed the researcher to double check with the interviewees if new contradictory facts emerged during research. Finally, because all the interviewees lived in the same small village and were of the same generation, they share, as Pierre Nora calls it, lieu *de mémoire* (a site of memory), which allows for the verification of information by comparing the different testimonies.[114] All these precautions assist in making the claims of this research as accurate as possible.

[113] See also Valerie J. Janesick, *Oral History for the qualitative researcher : choreographing the story* (London 2010) 41-70 on effective interview techniques; Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, (New York, 2010) 1-18.
[114] Pierre Nora, 'Between memory and history : Les Lieux de memoire', *Representations* 26 (1989) 7-8.

# Chapter 1:

# The politics of Iraq (1979–1990)

To understand how the political institutions and social movements in Iraq pushed Iraqi citizens to find alternative forms of contestation before the 1991 intifadah, it is necessary to first understand Iraq's social, cultural, and political context. Afterwards, it is discussed how Iraq's most important government institutions, such as the Revolutionary Command Council, the Baath Party, and the army, included or excluded Iraqi citizens from these institutions to contest regime policy. Once a clear picture of Iraq's political institutions is sketched, attention is given to the salience of Iraq's two most important social movements: the Iraqi Communist Party and the Islamist Dawah Party. These two social movements are analysed in order to understand the extent to which these social movements gave Iraqi citizens the opportunity to contest the institutions of the state. This chapter thus explains how the different forms of contestation, exclusion, and inclusion influenced a large segment of Iraqis to unify behind alternative forms of contestation. The conclusion briefly connects this macro-context to the situation in Shinafiyah.

## 1.1 An overview of Iraq

Iraq's modern history as a nation-state began in 1920.[115] An Iraqi state was carved out of the former Ottoman-Empire, and it first expanded through state centralisation under the British mandate (1917–1932).[116] The British empire then implemented rigorous taxation systems, built economic and social infrastructures, and expanded state institutions, such as the military and the parliament. The 1920 revolution against the British occupation of Iraq was the second important event that accelerated the formation of an Iraqi nation-

[115] Sami Zubaida, 'The fragments imagine the nation: The case of Iraq', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 34 (2002) 2, 205-215; Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq* (Colorado 2012); Charles Tripp, *À history of Iraq* (Cambridge 2007); Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, *Iraq since 1958: From revolution to dictatorship* (New York 2001).
[116] Zubaida, 'The fragments imagine the nation', 206.

state. The 1920 revolution was the Iraqi people's first unified expression of contestation because it involved the participation of all of Iraq's diverse ethnicities, religious groups, and classes.[117]

The events of 1920 demonstrated the beginning of an enduring struggle between an expanding centralising, repressing, and co-opting state with a highly pluralistic population whose interests did not always align with those of the state.[118] Evidence of this enduring struggle between the state and the population can be seen in the many uprisings against the state that occurred between 1920 and 1991.[119] In the twentieth century, Iraq's most important resource was oil.[120] Postcolonial Iraq (1958), therefore, never lacked the resources to build its state institutions and coercion apparatus.[121] As a result, the state could grow disproportionally powerful without having to rely too much on its own population.[122]

It is beyond the scope of this paper to consider all the different ethnic and religious ethnicities in Iraq. However, a brief discussion on the Iraqi Shia is important because Shinafiyah was a Shia village and because the Shia were the largest group that participated in the intifadah. To fully understand the grievances of the Shia and how the Shia identity could be mobilised for regime contestation, it is important to first understand how the Shia of Iraq were included and excluded by the succeeding regimes of modern Iraq.

### 1.1.2 The Shia of Iraq

Iraq's population from 1980–1991 was between 12 and 16 million. Sixty percent of this population was Arab Shia – that is, Muslims who fell under the Jafari *Madhab*.[123] The

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[117] Eric Davis, *Memories of state: Politics, history, and collective identity in modern Iraq* (California 2005) 53.
[118] Tripp, *À history of Iraq*, 1-4.
[119] 1922 uprisings, 1930s Intifadahs, the protests and Intifadahs of the 1950s-1960s, 1977-1979 Intifadah and the 1991 Intifadah.
[120] Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq,* 12.
[121] Malik Mufti, *Sovereign Creations: Pan-Arabism and Political Order in Syria and Iraq* (New York 1996) 197.
[122] Mufti, *Sovereign creations*, 197.
[123] *Madhab*=school of thought.
The term 'Shia' is an umbrella term for many groups and it is necessary to define what one means when using the word Shia. But in this case and the rest of this thesis the term Shia will refer to the majority of Twelver Shia part of the Jafari school of thought see also: Sayyid Husayn Muhammad Ja'fari, *The origins and early development of Shia Islam* (Oxford 2002); Wilfred Madelung, *The succession to Muhammad: A study of the early Caliphate*. (Cambrdige 1998); Muhammad Al-Tabataba'i, *Shi'ite Islam*( New York

majority of Shia Muslims in Iraq was contrasted by the diverse minority of Muslims who adhered to the other four known Islamic schools of thought, often placed together under the term 'Sunni'.[124] However, it is important to note that Shia Islam's most important institutions, clerics, and historically symbolic sites are in Iraq.[125] The religious institutions of Shia Islam and its related clerics were historically independent from the different empires and regimes that dominated Iraq because these religious institutions of Shia Islam were financially self-sufficient and not in need of state support.[126] The role of Shia institutions in contesting the state was contingent in postcolonial Iraq, but those institutions did play a role during the intifadah.[127]

In the context of Iraq, the Shia are a diverse group of people whose identity is not solely defined by its religious affiliation, and contains peoples with different levels of religiosity, class, occupation, and political convictions. The label 'Shia' has no sociological demarcation on its own as Falah Abdul Jabbar explains.[128] In Iraq at least, one can be identified as Shia based on name, birthplace, accent, and other subtle details, regardless of an explicit expression of one's Shia identity.[129] The state also relied on this information and had techniques to isolate Shia individuals from non-Shia individuals, such as implementing a differentiated policy regarding Shia.[130] Therefore, when speaking about Shia Muslims in the Iraqi context of 1980–1991, it is better to understand them not primarily as a group defined by its specific Islamic doctrine but rather as one defined by a communal identity imposed and demarcated by external actors.[131]

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1975); Moojan Momen, *An introduction to Shi'i Islam: the history and doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism*, (New Haven 1985).

[124] The term 'Sunni' is a debatable, this term dulls the different diverse group of Muslims that encompassed these four different schools of thought who both have coexisted and fought against each other in pen and sword, and whose usage of this term as self-identity is difficult to measure. Moreover, it also implies a hard distinction between different groups of Muslims that shares many rituals and traditions. Therefore, for accuracy and for a lack of a better word to classify this group, the word non-Shia Muslim shall be applied, see also : Colin Turner, *Islam: the basics* (New York 2013) 3.

[125] Falah A. Jabbar, *The Shi'ite movement in Iraq* ( London 2003) 152-185.

[126] Jabbar, *The Shi'ite movement in Iraq*, 152-185.

[127] Abbas Khadim, 'The Hawza Under Siege: A Study in the Ba 'th Party Archive', *Institute for Iraqi Studies at Boston University (IISBU) Occasional Paper* 1.

[128] Jabbar, *The Shi'ite movement in Iraq*, 33-34, 63.

[129] Fanar Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic visions of unity* (Oxford 2014) 51-64.

[130] Joseph Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party: Inside an authoritarian regime*, (Cambridge 2011) 283.

[131]Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic visions of unity*, 43-49.

From the creation of the Iraqi state by the British until the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003, Shia were offered limited opportunities for political representation.[132] Moreover, because the state was the country's main employer, state discrimination against Shia narrowed their economic opportunities.[133] This political and economic discrimination occurred because the higher echelons of the state and its coercive institutions were dominated by non-Shia. In fact, the non-Shia domination of state institutions caused a period of discrimination against the Shia. Under the Baath Party regime (1968-2003), this discrimination took violent turns. Shiite religious rituals began to be violently repressed, giving the impression that Shiism as a religious creed was being attacked.[134] Furthermore, Shia discrimination began to take a racialised connotation, with many Shia accused of being Persian and disloyal to Iraq and therefore being deported to Iran (the world's largest Shia country).[135] Finally, the Iraqi south, where most Shia live in comparison to other regions in Iraq, was highly neglected in the state's developmental projects and distribution of wealth.[136] In brief, the state's violent measures against the Shia imposed a constructed Shia identity on a group of people who did not always directly identify as Shia.

It should be clarified, however, that a large segment of the Shia population was effectively co-opted and integrated into the Baathist regime. The Iraqi Shia experienced different forms of discrimination and co-optation, thus provoking different schemes of cooperation or resistance among the Shia according to divisions by class, tribe and occupation.[137] For some Shia, the reason to contest the Baathist regime was based on their discriminatory experiences as Shia (self-identified or imposed) and not based on a religious conviction. This has been insufficiently explored in the literature, but Fanar Haddad explains that "Iraqi Shia activism throughout the twentieth century was usually

[132] Adeed Dawisha, *Iraq a political history: from independence to occupation* (2009 New Jersey) 29-33; Jabbar, *The Shi'ite movement in Iraq* 67.
[133] Joyce N. Wiley, *The Islamic Movement of Iraqi Shi'as,* (Colorado 1992) 85, 104-107; Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq,* 14-17.
[134] Marr, *the modern history of Iraq*, 169-171.
[135] Dina Rizk Khoury, *Iraq in wartime: soldiering, martyrdom and remembrance* (Cambridge 2013) 25 65-70; Wiley , *The Islamic Movement of Iraqi Shi'as,* 49, 59; Jabbar, *The Shi'ite movement in Iraq* 70.
[136] Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq,*14-17.
[137] Jabbar, *The Shi'ite movement in Iraq*, 59-67; Tripp, *A history of Iraq* 234.

animated by a sense of socioeconomic and political disparity and discrimination (real or perceived)".[138]

Shia discrimination in postcolonial Iraq, however, resulted in different political manifestations that contested the Baathist regime. One such manifestation was the emergence of the Islamist Dawah Party, initiated by Shia clerics and laymen. Another political manifestation of the Shia of Iraq the Communist Party was overrepresented by Iraqis of Shia background and that its main social base was the urban Shia proletariat.[139] Therefore, Shia communal discrimination also partly impacted non-religiously inspired social movements like the Communist Party.

The intifadah, however, whose main participants were Shia, was not part of any political party and did not have any specific Shia agenda in mind, other than opposition to the Baathist regime.[140] A consequence of the state lumping a diverse group of individuals as Shia and repressing them was to provoke the assertion of an explicit Shia identity, which did have religious connotations, especially as a form of contestation.[141] Because the Shia is a group that carries a large cultural repertoire based on Islamic religion, the distinction between communal aspirations and religious activism can become ambiguous.[142] For example, one widely distributed slogan throughout southern Iraq was "Maku wali ila Ali wa nahnu nareed qaid Jafari" (There is no governor but Ali, and we want a Jafari ruler), 'Ali' here refers to Ali ibn Abu Talib, the first holy Imam that the Shia revered, and 'Jafari ruler' refers to the desire to have a Shia ruler over Iraq.[143] Nevertheless, it is not clear whether this slogan implies the desire for an Islamic theocracy or simply to have a Shia individual in power – or whether this is merely the assertion of a Shia identity as a reaction to years of discrimination. Therefore, communal discrimination against Iraqi Shia is a relevant factor for understanding not only the causes

[138] Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq,* 14.
[139] Laith Kubba, 'Iraqi Shi'I politics" in Lawrence G. Potter and Gary G. Sick (eds.) *Iran, Iraq and the legacies of war* (New York 2004) 140; Nicholas Krohley, *The Death of the Mehdi Army: The Rise, Fall, and Revival of Iraq's Most Powerful Militia* (London 2015) 27; Jabbar, *The Shi'ite movement in Iraq* (London 2003) 75 and Marr, *the modern history of Iraq*, (Colorado 2012) 127.
[140] Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq,* 80.
[141] Ibid., 9; See Ugur Ümit Üngör, *The making of modern Turkey: nation and state in Eastern Anatolia, 1913-1950* (Oxford 2012) for a parallel case on how the Turkish state constructed the a Kurdish identity through similar patterns.
[142] Ibid., 80-84.
[143] Ibid., 82.

of the intifadah but also the form of contestation by Shia in Iraq before and during the intifadah.

## 1.2 The History of Shinafiyah and Iraq between 1979 and 1991

Shinafiyah is a village founded around the year 1800 in Ottoman Iraq. It started as a settlement of a large group of families migrating from the holy city of Najaf, which had been hit with the plague in 1772.[144] This migration was also likely part of the *Mujtahid's* (high Shia cleric's) intention to promote Shiism among the newly settled tribes in the south as a bulwark against a growing anti-Shia military threat from the Arabian peninsula.[145] The foundational myth of the village is that when this large group of families was still roaming around the Euphrates, they stumbled upon a shepherd named Shinafi and his family, who were from the Al-Zayadi clan. The large group of migrating families decided to settle with this shepherd and named the new settlement Shinafiyah in honour of Shinafi.[146]

Shortly after, the newly arrived families started engaging in farming and profited from the fertile land of the riverbeds of the Euphrates. In the early nineteenth century these farmlands must have been held in communal ownership by the different families and tribes of Shinafiyah. However, as a result of Ottoman tribal policies in Iraq and the implementation of the land code of 1869, land ownership came into the hands of several individual tribal chiefs who were consolidating their tribal leadership positions in Shinafiyah.[147] One such leading tribal chief was Sayed Hussain al-Mugotar.[148] By 1958, according to Hanna Batatu, the al-Mugotar were one of the principle landed families of Iraq, owning over 117 km$^2$ of land surrounding Shinafiyah. The descendants of al-Mugotar, such as Syed Muhsin al-Husseini al Mugotar, together with two additional *Sadah* (plural of Syed) were part of the five-headed leadership council during the 1991 uprising in Shinafiyah, which is clear evidence of the family's enduring social power.[149]

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[144] Charles Issawi, *The Fertile Crescent, 1800-1914: A Documentary Economic History* (Oxford 1988) 99.
[145] Yitzhak Nakash, *The Shi's of Iraq* (New Jersey 1994) 25-48.
[146]Syed Muhsin Hussein al-Husseini, *Al-Shinafiyah* (1998) http://sadik70.tripod.com/diwan01/shnafia1.htm accessed (May 5,, 2018).
[147] Nakash, *the Shi's of Iraq*, 33.
[148] al-Husseini, *Al-Shinafiyah* (1998).
[149] Ibid.

It is important to note that the al-Mugotar tribe was also accompanied by an intellectual segment consisting of clerics, poets, and Quranic teachers, who, according the historical account of Syed Muhsin, existed largely out of the Al-Nassar clan from the Sheybani tribe.[150] Two of Shinafiyah's intifadah council were coincidently well-respected teachers, one of whom was Jafar al-Sheybani, a descendant of the Al-Nassar clan.

**Image 1: Syed Muhsin al-Husseini al Mugotar (picture taken ca. 1992 1993).151**

During the nineteenth century, Iraq's rural economy was diversified, and it started to become connected with the emerging global capitalist economy. As trade flourished, a dock was built where locally produced grain, rice, and dates were sold and exported to Basra, Najaf, Karbala, and even Baghdad. Surrounding this dock, inns, mosques, and a market emerged to facilitate the trading infrastructures.

[150] Al-Hussein, *Al Shinafiyah*.
[151] Photo provided by interviewee.

The mid-Euphrates remained a grain producing powerhouse well into the twentieth century.[152] This increased surplus and allowed some people to engage in new occupations, such as handicrafts and the service industry. By 1900, Shinafiyah had a population of 3,500. This number doubled in 1965, and by 1990 Shinafiyah housed 22,000 people. [153]

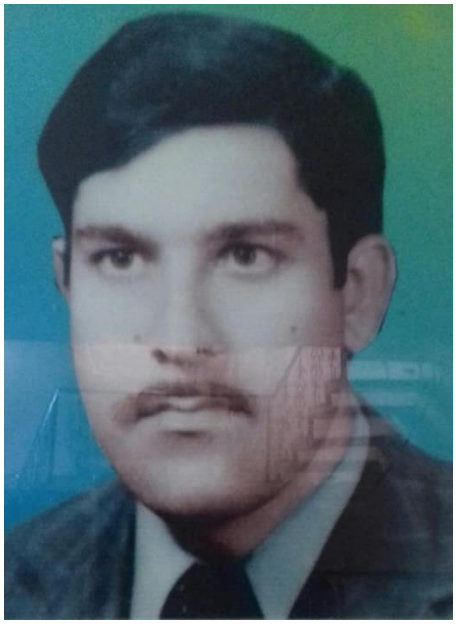

***Image 2 Jafar Al-Sheybani (picture taken ca. 1980s).[154]***

The most prominent inhabitants were those who owned land in the surrounding rural areas of Shinafiyah. This land was worked on either the family's own tribesmen or by peasants of different tribes from Shinafiyah.[155] In the nineteenth century, these same families were on the side of the Ottomans and fought the British during World War I.[156] Shinafiyah's largest landowners of the al-Mugotar tribe also had strong ties to the monarchy until 1958.[157] The rest of Shinafiyah's population were merchants, craftsman, or peasants.

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[152] Thair Karim, 'Tribes and nationalism : tribal political culture and behavior in Iraq , 1914-20' in: Falah Abd al-Jabbār, Hocham Dawod, *Tribes and power Nationalism and ethnicity in the Middle East,* 287.
[153] Word book inc, *The 1992 World Book year book : the annual supplement to the World Book encyclopedia* (1992 Ohio) 488; Thair Karim, *Tribes and nationalism* , 299.
[154] Photo provided by interviewee and permission for using it for this thesis was provided by Jafar Al-Sheybani's son.
[155] Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes & The Revolutionary Movement In Iraq* (1982 New Jersey) 71,75,83.
[156] Rutledge, Ian, *Enemy on the Euphrates: The Battle for Iraq, 1914 – 1921* (London 2015) 35.
[157] Nakash, *the Shi's of Iraq*, 92.

Despite the secularisation policies of the Baath that had been in place since 1968, Shinafiyah remained a traditional, religious town where tribal values still had a significant impact on relationships. During the 1960s–1980s, while restrictions pertaining to the wearing of the veil for women were slowly being loosened, in Shinafiyah it remained the norm for all women to be veiled.[158] Additionally, the commemoration of Shia saints – ceremonies in which people mourn, cook, and distribute food – continued to take place annually in Shinafiyah despite state efforts to repress such rituals.[159]

Geographically speaking, Shinafiyah is divided into two parts by the Euphrates River. On one side is the *Sobh al-Sarray* ('riverbed of the army division'), and on the other side is the *Sobh al Gasef* ('riverbed of the askew land'). The rulers of Iraq since the Ottomans invested mostly in *Sobh al-Sarray*. A small Ottoman military base was built in *Sobh al-Sarray* most likely at the end of the nineteenth century.[160] The police station, town hall, schools, and important infrastructural developments, like paved roads, were built only in *Sobh al-Sarray* by the British and the succeeding Iraqi regimes. Many of the wealthier inhabitants of Shinafiyah lived in *Sobh al-Sarray* and were employed in the different institutions present in Shinafiyah.[161]

*Sobh al Gasef*, on the other hand, was neglected and lacked many basic services and infrastructural developments. Moreover, due to the lack of any governmental institutions and associated professionals and due to the poverty of the residents of *Sobh al Gasef*, immense power accumulated in the hands of a few powerful families who owned the land surrounding the area. An interviewee from *Sobh al Gasef* explained 'The difference to both sides is big, the cultures are different and even the signs of oppression are different'.[162]

After the British left in 1932 and due to secular education and the modernising projects of the successive regimes, a new class took root in Shinafiyah – namely *al tabaqa al muthaqafa*: 'the cultivated class'.[163] This class was mainly represented by teachers.

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[158] Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq,* 106; Juman Kubba, *Meeting the New Iraq: A Memoir of Homecoming and Hope* (N. Carolina 2013) 42; Interview with A.J.H., Netherlands, April 13, 2018.
[159] Interview with A.J.H.
[160] Interview with A.N.T, Netherlands, April 15, 2018.
[161] Interview with M.S.H., Netherlands, April 1,2018.
[162] Interview M.S.H., Netherlands, April 1,2018.
[163] Mustafa Jabar al-Waeli, *Madrasat ibn sina al ibitadiye: darase tarigiya,* , unpublished thesis Qadisiya university (2017 Diwaniya).

Both landed families and the *tabaqa al thaqafiya* composed the leadership council during the 1991 uprising, showing how respected and valued the 'cultivated class' was by people in Shinafiyah.[164] Shinafiyah obtained its first Baathist party centre in 1973 under the leadership of Ghaleb Mahaneh, who was in power until 1977. After that, Sadiq Radawi took over until 1979. From 1979 until 1989, Shinafiyah was ruled by Taleb Razi, who was then succeeded by Khadim Manhel until 2001.[165] These men and their loyal Baathist followers dominated the local police station, secret service, school, and town hall. If anyone challenged that dominance, those had strong enough ties to the local institutions to get those challengers arrested or sent away. The arrival of the Baath Party distorted and fractured the different relations among the habitants of Shinafiyah and created an unprecedented and unfamiliar power dynamic. To better understand the repressive nature of the Baath Party in Shinafiyah, it is important to show how powerful Saddam Hussein and the Baath Party had become.

### 1.2.2 The reign of Saddam (1979–1991)

Saddam Hussein assumed the presidency of Iraq in 1979. Since the Baath Party coup in 1968, Saddam as a party secretary accumulated strong coercive powers by developing the extensive *Amn al-'am* (general security). The *Amn al-'am* monitored not only dissent within the Baath Party (Iraq's leading and most powerful party since 1968) but also potential threats to the Baathist regime by other political factions, minorities, or religious groups.[166] Additionally, Saddam was also in charge of *Jihaz al-Mukhabarat al Iraqiya* (the Iraqi intelligence service (IIS)) from 1968. Through the IIS Saddam was able to monitor other Baath Party members as well as the activities of non-Baathists in different towns and cities by means of the Baath Party centres across Iraq.[167] Together, all these security organisations were infamously known by Iraqis as the *Mukhabarat.*[168] From 1968–1979, Saddam was able to purge and outflank all his competition within and outside of the party as he accumulated enough power to assume the presidency at the cost of Iraq's

[164] Muhsin al-Syed Hussein al-Husseini, *Al-Shinafiyah* (1998).
[165] Based on written correspondence between the author and a longtime resident of Shinafiyah who chronicled these events.
[166] Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party,* 95-96, 283.
[167] Ibid., 96.
[168] Interview with A.N.T, Netherlands, April 15, 2018.; Interview with H.H. Netherlands, March 13, 2018.

president Hassan al-Bakr (1968–1979).[169] Once Saddam took power in 1979, he appointed himself chairman of Iraq's highest decision apparatus: the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC).[170]

During the 1980s, the members of the RCC varied in number between seven and eighteen, but the other members had little ability to contest the chairman.[171] The RCC therefore stopped functioning as an autonomous decision-making organisation after 1979. The three most important institutions in Baathist Iraq before 1979 were the Baath Party, the state's bureaucracy, and the military. However, all three pillars lost their autonomy to Saddam's true power base: his family and clan members from Tikrit who were loyal only to him.[172] President Saddam's own family had the most important and powerful positions in the security apparatus and infiltrated the bureaucracy, the Baath Party, and the military, thus hollowing these institutions from the inside out.[173] Adeed Dawisha explains that all institutions and every security apparatus had "the primary purpose (…)to facilitate the President's absolute political control and psychological hold over peoples' lives".[174] Even Baathist ideology, the ideas of which transcend Saddam, functioned as a repressive discourse to maintain 'political and psychological control' over Iraq and to test people's loyalty to his rule.[175]

Saddam's coup provoked mixed reactions in Shinafiyah. One interviewee from Shinafiyah who had served seven years in the army (1983–1990) explained that the ascendency of Saddam for 'simple' Iraqis like him was initially perceived with indifference: "We were simple people living on our good nature, we did not inform ourselves about politics or the parties, and who came and went, we were simple people we only wanted to live".[176] Another interviewee who was 14 years old when Saddam took power said the following:

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[169] Mufti, *Sovereign Creations,* 215.
[170] Helen Chapin Metz (ed.) *Iraq a country study* (Washington 1988) 179.
[171] Marr, *the modern history of Iraq*, 150.
[172] Tikrit Saddam Hussein's home town.
[173] Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party,* 11; Amatzia Baram, 'Saddam's Power Structure: the Tikritis Before, During and After the War' in: *The Adelphi Papers* 34 (2003) 354, 96.
[174] Dawisha, *Iraq a political history,* 29-33, Jabbar, *The Shi'ite movement in Iraq*, 216.
[175] Aaron M. Faust, *The Ba'thification of Iraq: Saddam Hussein's Totalitarianism* (Texas 2015) 35-47.
[176] Interview M.S.H., Netherlands, April 1, 2018.

> I used to love Saddam Hussein (…) we did not understand politics, but we understood his deeds, we used to see Saddam dig the ground with farmers, help construction workers in making cement, speak and concern himself with a poor person, build houses for women, we could say he was seen the carrier of Iraq's blessings.[177]

However, one Shinafiyah paramedic who was 17 years old in 1979 had the following opinion:

> Contrary to other people even when Saddam was a vice-deputy [1968-1979] I did not like him. Even back then you could hear him talk with arrogance and constantly wanting people to praise him.[178]

However, in the early 1980s many more Iraqis began to reconsider their initial welcoming of Saddam.

Even though Saddam was able to accumulate immense coercive force to repress and co-opt the population, many promises the Baathist regime had made to its people remained unfulfilled. Agricultural development remained low and industrialisation lacked support (expect the arms development programme), causing a sectorial and social imbalance between different regions in Iraq.[179] One interviewee's biggest complaint regarding the Baathist regime was the superficiality of social and economic services for the poor:

> All of it was lacking, despite what he [Saddam] did, there was allot lack, underground construction was none, location from location there are lots of differences [in development]'. Saddam provides hospitals, schools and even free lunch at school and [Saddam] places it in the spotlights and in the media and uses it as a form of power over you, he [Saddam] profits not you.[180]

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[177] Phone interview M.A.S., Canada, April 4, 2018.
[178] Interview with A.N.T, Netherlands, April 15, 2018.
[179] Achim Rohde, *State-Society Relations in Ba'thist Iraq: Facing Dictatorship* (London 2010) 23-31.
[180] Interview with M.S.H., Netherlands, April 1,2018.
With underground construction he refers to subterranean sewage and electricity systems but also house foundations.

Initially in 1979, Saddam failed to gain legitimacy among his own people, non-Iraqi Arabs, and other Baath Party members who did not accept his leadership over the party. Moreover, Saddam's brutality and ideological bias against the Shi'a and the Kurds quickly estranged a large portion of the population. Saddam was afraid that the marginalised Kurds and Shia would feel empowered by a revolutionary Iran (1979), so the regime intensified its repression of the Kurds and Shia.[181] Saddam also had to compete with the Syrian wing of the Baath Party under Hafez al Assad; therefore, Saddam also had questionable legitimacy in the eyes of the Baath Party. The proximity of Syria to Palestine allowed Assad to present himself as the liberator of Palestine and the vanguard of pan-Arab aspirations. This was a role Saddam longed for himself, but due to Iraq's distance from Palestine and its international isolation, this was difficult to achieve.[182] Thus Saddam lacked legitimacy inside his own party, among Iraqis, and among Arabs at large in economic, social, and political fields. As a result, Saddam's policies and behaviour beginning in 1979 are best interpreted as a way to gain legitimacy inside and outside of Iraq.

Iraq invaded Iran in September 1980, causing tremendous suffering and the death of 1 million Iraqi and Iranian victims – not to mention the mass slaughter of the Kurds that took place in the context of this war.[183] A whole generation lost its best years serving on the front line, thus wasting Iraq's human potential.[184] Both Haddad and Khoury argue that the suffering and impact of the Iran-Iraq War were important reasons for the Iraqi people to revolt against the state during the 1991 intifadah.[185] Additionally, the war amplified Iraq's economic and social problems, plunging the country into an even deeper crisis, especially when the war ended in 1988.[186] In September 1980, however, Saddam

[181] Rohde, *State-Society Relations in Ba'thist Iraq,* 31-49.
[182] Jerrold M Post and Amatzia Baram, *Saddam is Iraq: Iraq is Saddam* (Alabama 2002) 10.
[183] Dina Rizk Khoury, *Iraq in wartime: soldiering, martyrdom and remembrance* (Cambridge 2013) 33,41.
[184]Falah A. Jabbar, "Iraq's war generation,' in Lawrence G. Potter and Gary G. Sick, eds., Iran, Iraq and the legacies of war (New York 2004) 126-128.
[185] Fanar Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic visions of unity* (Oxford 2014) 82 and Khoury, *Iraq in wartime* 133-145.
[186] Falah A. Jabbar, 'Why the uprisings failed', *Middle East Research and Information project 176* (1992) https://www.merip.org/mer/mer176/why-uprisings-failed (accessed March 1, 2018).

wanted to quell and distract the people from the country's domestic problems through a war and to gain legitimacy as a leader.[187]

The war therefore functioned as a way for Saddam to gain acceptance inside and outside of Iraq as the necessary leader (*Qaid al Zaruri*) that would defend Iraq and the Arab nation from a 'Persian Zionist' aggression.[188] On a micro-level, his attempts to further foster legitimacy among the Iraqi people were accompanied by personal presidential visits to people's homes, or as Dina Rizk Khoury called these deeds 'perpetuating ties'.[189] Saddam also made regular visits to the front and joined the soldiers for lunch or to give a speech.[190] Saddam also attempted to tighten his ties to the population by personally visiting towns and villages distributing goods and solving conflicts.[191] As a result of this policy, Saddam made a visit to Shinafiyah in April 1982. He tightened his personal ties to two influential tribal chiefs (whose names are kept anonymous in this thesis), who lived on the outskirts of Shinafiyah and owned a lot of land:

> I remember a time when he [Saddam] came to Shinafiyah (…) Two tribal chiefs [Y] and [X] had a conflict. Saddam came to them and he solved the conflict. The conflict was about land. He [Saddam] gave both chiefs weapons and money. Many people went to see him (…) I did not go and did not care.[192]

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[187] For a more extensive summary of the debate on Saddam's motives to invade Iran see Eric Davis, 'State-Building in Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War and the Gulf Crisis', in: *The Internationalization of Communal Strife* ( London 2014).
[188] The Arab Socialist Party of Iraq, *The central report of the ninth regional congress, June 1982* (1983) 11.
[189] Examples of Saddam visiting people's homes are abundant:
'Saddam yezur beyut shabiya', https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJSmP2zj900 (accessed: August 12, 2018); 'Saddam Hussein yezur beyut mowatiniya vi alahyah al shabiya', https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OFmCJ1iDgeg (accessed: August 12, 2018); 'Al raees Saddam Hussein yezur bayt iraqi adi jidan', https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i5Zc7Kl-XUw (accessed: August 12, 2018).
[190] 'Saddam HUssein am 1982 fee jabhat al qital vlm yeruz lil awal mara aljzh al awal' https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kkCewk21Po8 (accessed: August 12, 2018).
[191] Faust, *The Ba'thification of Iraq,* 73-75; Joseph Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party* (Cambridge 2011) 206-216.
[192] Interview with A.N.T, Netherlands, April 15, 2018.

For the Iraqi state, rewarding and incentivising the population was just as much a form of control as violent coercion. Saddam's personal visit to Shinafiyah clearly demonstrates that even a smaller village like Shinafiyah was considered an important target for regime legitimacy and control.

Second, in the name of the war effort, Saddam was able to get rid of 'internal enemies' who questioned Saddam's authority. Saddam excessively suppressed Shia Dawah party activism and executed its most prominent leader, ayatollah Muhammad Baqr al-Sadr.[193] Shia not directly involved in Dawah party politics were also subjected to torture, imprisonment, and executions. The number of deaths related to suppressing this Dawah activism is estimated to be 30,000 by 1986, or possibly more.[194] Furthermore, Saddam conducted mass deportations of Shia and Kurds to Iran and confiscated their property. The number of deportees was a staggering 200,000 between 1980 and 1988.[195] Saddam also used the context of war to ruthlessly conduct ethnic cleansing against the Kurds during the Anfal campaigns.[196] The large group of Iraqi men that was sent to the front was replaced by a large labour force of Egyptians and Palestinians, providing ample opportunity for Saddam to export his legitimacy abroad and demonstrate his commitment to pan-Arabism and the struggle of the Palestinian people.[197]

The war itself began when Iraq's third army corps invaded the Arabic speaking region of Khuzestan in Iran.[198] Iraq was able to maintain the position until 1982, when Iran pushed the Iraqi Army out of its territory. Iran then refused a ceasefire agreement, and Iraq was pushed into a defensive position. From 1982–1985, it was a war of attrition fought in trenches and dominated by a persistent stalemate. In 1986, Iran successfully took over the Fao Peninsula, and it took two years for Iraq to expel the Iranians from Fao.[199] Moreover, the war not only took place at the front: Both sides started shooting

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[193] Patrick Cockburn, *Muqtada: Muqtada al-Sadr, the Shia revival, and the struggle for Iraq* (London 2008) 54-56.
[194] Wiley, *The Islamic Movement of Iraqi Shi'as,* 49, 59; Jabbar, *The Shi'ite movement in Iraq* ( London 2003) 63.
[195] Jabbar, *The Shi'ite movement in Iraq* (London 2003) 70; Abdullah Thabit, *Dictatorship, imperialism and chaos: Iraq since 1989*, 33.
[196] Human Rights Watch, *Iraq's Crime of Genocide: The Anfal Campaign Against the Kurds* (New Haven 1995).
[197] Dina Rizk Khoury, *Iraq in wartime: soldiering, martyrdom and remembrance* (Cambridge 2013) 34.
[198] Pierre Razoux and Nicholas Elliot (tr.), *The Iran-Iraq War* (London 2015) 33.
[199] Marashi and Sammy Salama, *Iraq's armed forces: an analytical history* (London, Routledge, 2008) 69-71.

rockets at the other's cities and facilities, causing civilian suffering. Eventually over 1.7 million Iraqi men were in the military from 1980 to 1988, the majority of them conscripts.[200]

After the end of the Iran-Iraq War in February 1988, Iraq suffered from a tremendous economic crisis, post-war havoc, and a demoralised population.[201] Thereafter, Iraq had to deal with the demobilisation of an army of about 1 million soldiers, who were becoming restless and wanted jobs, homes, and other post-war relief. In the meantime, Kuwait was without permission of the Iraqi government exploiting the Iraqi Ramallah oil fields. Saddam Hussein, at the time the incumbent president of Iraq, argued that Kuwait was behaving unjustly, especially because Iraq had fought against Iran to protect small vulnerable countries such as Kuwait.[202] As a consequence of these tensions, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait on August 1, 1990. This provoked an international military intervention led by the Americans to evict the Iraqis from Kuwait in February 1991. The demoralised Iraqi Army stood no chance against the large, well-funded, and technologically advanced military operation by the world's strongest powers.

As a pre-emptive strategy, Saddam pulled his Republican Guard (his elite personal military wing) out of Kuwait but left the bulk of his army to endure systematic bombing by the United States Air Force.[203] Shortly after the American operation started on January 17 1991, many Iraqi soldiers stationed in Kuwait mutinied.[204] The intifadah started when a large number of these lower ranking soldiers fled back to Iraq between February 28 and March 2 and started to attack Baath Party officials, take over government buildings, and demolish public portraits of Saddam.[205] This started in Basra and spread to the rest of the southern provinces, and eventually to northern Kurdistan as well.[206] The uprising lasted between 10 and 30 days, depending on the town or region. In Shinafiyah, it started on March 5 and lasted until around March 20. Baghdad, the country's capital, nevertheless

[200] Khoury, *Iraq in wartime,* 34.
[201] Falah Abd al-Jabar, 'Why the uprisings failed'.
[202] Majid Khadduri and Edmund Ghareeb, *War in the Gulf, 1990-91: the Iraq-Kuwait conflict and its implications* (Oxford 1997) 95-117.
[203] Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq,* 67.
[204] Falah A. Jabbar , 'Why the uprisings failed', *Middle East Research and Information project 176* (1992) https://www.merip.org/mer/mer176/why-uprisings-failed (accessed March 1, 2018).
[205] Kanan Makiya, *Cruelty and silence: war, tyranny, uprising, and the Arab World* (New York 1994) 59-60.
[206] Al-Jabar, 'Why the uprisings failed'.

remained stable throughout the intifadah. Once Saddam had negotiated a treaty with the United States by March 6, the Iraqi state turned its attention to the rebels and started violently and gradually repressing the rebellion until the regime regained control by April 1. The violent repression by the state caused many of those who had participated in the rebellion and innocent bystanders of this uprising to die or to leave Iraq with their families. Over one million people had to find safety outside of Iraq because of what happened in March 1991.[207]

## 1.3 Contestation through Iraq's political institutions

While Iraq's most important institutes: the RCC, the Baath Party, state bureaucracy, and the army, lost their autonomy because of Saddam's overwhelming personal power, it remains important to discuss the extent to which contestation still was allowed within and through these institutions and what kind of bearing this had on ordinary Iraqis.[208]

### 1.3.1 Revolutionary Command Council

The RCC was originally established in 1968 when the Baath Party conducted its coup against Abdel Salem Aref.[209] It remained Iraq's "supreme government body (…) it was both the highest executive and legislative body in the country until 2003".[210] In 1979 Saddam made himself the Chief Executive of the RCC and the "the president, who serves as the commander and chief of the armed forces and as the head of both the government and the state".[211] The number of members of the RCC between 1979 and 1991 varied between 8 and 17.[212] Members were admitted to the RCC only if they were also members of the Baath Party and therefore ideologically committed to Baathist principles.[213] After 1979, commitment to such principles included total loyalty to Saddam Hussein.[214] The

[207] Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett. *Iraq since 1958: From revolution to dictatorship* (New York 2001) 289.
[208] Iraq under Saddam also had a national assembly but due to its highly insignificant impact it is considered beyond the scope of this thesis see Faust, *The Ba'thification of Iraq,* 73-75.
[209] Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett. *Iraq since 1958: From revolution to dictatorship* (New York 2001) 114.
[210] Edmund A. Ghareeb, *Historical dictionary of* Iraq (Oxford 2004) 194.
[211] Helen Chapin Metz (ed.), *Iraq a country study* ( Washington 1988) 178.
[212] Ghareeb, *Historical dictionary of* Iraq, 386-387.
[213] Mufti, *Sovereign Creations,* 198.
[214] Faust, *The Ba'thification of Iraq,* 40-50.

function of members admitted to the RCC was to discuss and consult with the president about policy and important political decisions.[215]

While it cannot be denied that Saddam had absolute control over the RCC, the RCC members still had some room for debate and contestation.[216] Nonetheless, this room for debate must be understood in light of a few facts. First, the agenda prepared for RCC meetings was prepared by Saddam Hussein himself. This means that discussions always took place within the framework and limits that Saddam had pre-emptively formulated for the meeting.[217] Second, the RCC was mostly only convened at the insistence of the president, members only gathered when it was in the interest of the Saddam Hussein. Finally, there were some red lines that could never be crossed – that is, suggesting that Saddam should step down for strategic reasons or considering rapprochement with Israel. But within these prescribed frameworks there was room for debate and even voting rounds regarding certain policies.[218]

While it is beyond the scope of this paper to analyse the transcripts of RCC meetings, some remarks can be provided. It was permitted for someone to voice his opinion about an issue, but members in the RCC tended to remind the president of one of his previous opinions and to affirm that they had a similar view. On other occasions, they added in details or discussed insignificant and secondary facts about the main topic of discussion. Policy decisions by Saddam presented in the meeting were therefore not seriously addressed.[219] In short, even though debate did take place in the RCC, the debate did not take the form of contestation in the sense that it affected policy.

To emphasise the limited role of the RCC meetings, Amatzia Baram showed that before the meetings of the RCC, another preparatory meeting took place between Saddam's close confidants, like Izzat al Duri and Taha Ramadan.[220] In this preparatory meeting, the agenda for the RCC meeting and any new policy to be implemented was decided beforehand. This undermined the institutional power of the RCC. In conclusion,

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[215] Chapin Metz (ed.) *Iraq a country study* (Washington 1988) 179.
[216] Kevin M. Woods, *The Saddam Tapes: The Inner Workings of a Tyrant's Regime*, 1978–2001 (Cambridge 2011) 326-327.
[217] Kevin M. Woods, David D. Palkki and Mark E. Stout, *The Saddam Tapes*, 449.
[218] Woods, *Saddam tapes*, 327.
[219] Kevin M. Woods, The Saddam Tapes: The Inner Workings of a Tyrant's Regime, 1978–2001 ( Cambridge 2011 ) 326-327.
[220] Amatzia Baram, 'The Ruling Political Elite in Ba'thi Iraq, 1968-1986: The Changing Features of a Collective Profile' in: *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 21 (1989) 457.

within the RCC itself, it was essentially impossible to contest policy. Therefore, it is reasonable to postulate that for the average Iraqi, the RCC functioned as an exclusionary institution and that it was nearly impossible to contest or to participate in policy-making.

### 1.3.2 The Baath Party

In 1968, the Iraqi Baath Party took power through a bloodless coup. The Baath Party is a pan-Arab political party and was originally founded by two Syrians named Michel Aflaq and Salahaddin Bittar in 1942. The Baath Party was founded on the principles of unity, freedom, and socialism and was meant to inspire all Arabic speaking nations to unite and defeat exploitation by Western imperialism and Zionism.[221] The Baath Party initially had four branches located in Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon.[222] Before 1968, the Baath Party in Iraq was one of the many political parties vying for membership among Iraq's growing middle class. [223] Eventually the party became Iraq's most powerful organisation under the leadership of Saddam Hussein.[224] By 1979, all the members of the RCC were Baathist, and the Baathist regional command (RC), the highest body of party, was merged with the RCC, making the Baath the party the ruling party.[225]

However, in the context of Iraq the Baath Party was not merely a political party that only dominated the field of governance. Instead, it encompassed all aspects of Iraqi life. Joseph Sassoon explains that "from the cradle to the grave it is hard to find any aspect of state or society in which the party did not yield some influence".[226] The party established its presence in schools, the army, labour and professional unions, cultural organisations, sports, and any other aspect of civil society.[227] Additionally, the Baath Party also made membership a precondition for building a career in education, the bureaucracy, or the army. For occupations that were considered less important and less dependent on the state, such as a carpenter, the pressure to join the Baath Party was relaxed.[228]

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[221] John F. Devlin, 'The Baath Party: Rise and Metamorphosis', *The American Historical Review* 96 (1991) 5, 1399.
[222] Devlin, 'The Baath Party', 1399-1405.
[223]Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, (Colorado 2012) 76-78.
[224] Faust, *The Ba'thification of Iraq,* 24-26.
[225] Baram, 'The Ruling Political Elite in Ba'thi Iraq, 1968-1986', 452.
[226] Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party,* 9.
[227] Faust, *The Ba'thification of Iraq,* 117-147.
[228] Interview with A.J.H., Netherlands, April 13, 2018.

Non-Baathists with higher positions in the army, bureaucracy, or education were rare, and non-Baathists who did attain such positions remained under scrutiny throughout their career, increasing their risk for demotion or sometimes even imprisonment. As the interviews conducted for this thesis indicated, there was tremendous pressure on the population to join the Baath Party; even the choice to be 'non-political' was considered a dissenting position and could result in imprisonment, torture, or execution.[229] Every workplace in every sector in Iraq had at least one high-ranking Baathist member (*Udu Amil rank* and higher) who ensured the employees acted in obedience to the goals and aims of the Baath Party.[230] Sensitive posts in the security apparatus and the government were reserved for loyal Baath Party members.[231]

The Baath Party penetrated the whole of Iraqi society. In the 1980s, the Baath Party consisted of 1.6 million members out of a population of 16 million.[232] The majority of the Baath Party however were the lowest ranks – namely, a *Moayed* (supporter) (ca. 900,000) or a *Nasir* (partisan) (ca. 500,000) – and their impact within the party was limited and loyalty questionable because it was almost obligatory for Iraqis to become a member in order to pursue an education or a state career.[233] To maintain clarity in this thesis, when one person is referred to as a Baathist, it means that this individual was not only a higher ranked member of the party (above *Nasir*) but also was pro-regime and convinced of the rightness of Baathist principles. The interviewees themselves also maintained this distinction between someone who was merely a member of the party out of necessity and someone who voluntarily was a convinced Baathist. Those latter individuals were referred to as *Hizbi*/*Hizibiyun* (from the Arabic word *Hizb,* which translates to 'party').[234]

Members of the Baath Party were forced to participate in meetings, courses, and lectures meant to mould Iraqis into perfect Baathist citizens. These meetings and conferences were often led by a higher-level Baath Party member at a school, workplace, or neighbourhood. While there must have been ideologically committed party members,

[229] Faust, *The Ba'thification of Iraq*, 118-120.
[230] Ibid., 98-108.
[231] Ibid., 98-108.
[232] Ibid., 84.
[233] Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party*,46.
[234] Interview with M.S.H., Netherlands, April 1,2018.

climbing the party ladder would improve one's career options and provide a set of privileges and political power.[235] The Baath Party also imposed an extensive cultural programme through film, poetry, newspapers, scholarships, and local cultural events that emphasised the Baath Party principles and the importance of Saddam Hussein's leadership for attaining those principles.[236]


***Figure 1. Party Membership Hierarchy.[237]***

The party and its loyal members consisted of a set of social and political actors who ought to have been feared. The party had strong ties with the security apparatus, the regime's most important instrument of power.[238] An important function of the Baath Party therefore was to be the eyes and ears of the regime. The Baath Party provided incentives for members to spy and report on their fellow citizens inside and outside of Iraq.[239] The

[235] Ibid., 207-217.
[236] Ibid., 63.
[237] Ibid., 46.
[238] Ibrahim Al-Marashi, 'Saddam's Security Apparatus During the Invasion of Kuwait and the Kuwaiti Resistance' *Journal of Intelligence History*, *3* (2003) 2, 61-86.
[239] Faust, *The Ba'thification of Iraq,* 38.

Baath regime employed informants in "mosques, markets, town squares, and other public spaces" but also among family, friends, the workplace, and schools – people everywhere were ready to provide information to the state about their compatriots' loyalty and disloyalty.[240]

People who demonstrated or who were suspected to be against the ideological and political aims of the Baathist regime were subjected to extensive techniques of repression and terror. A transgressive act in the eyes of the regime could be committed in "deed, word or thought".[241] For example, merely swearing at the regime could have fatal repercussions and was taken very seriously by Iraq's Baath Party and security apparatus.[242] When a citizen was not convinced (or bought off) to obey the regime, the full spectrum of the coercion apparatus could be utilised to make someone conform.[243] These techniques included execution, murder, imprisonment, destruction of homes, deportation, and withholding of economic or social services.[244] Additionally, sexual violence was also used as an instrument of punishment.[245]

Many innocent people were subjected to repressive practices because of the lack of checks and balances of coercion and punishment under Saddam Hussein's Iraq.[246] Personal vendettas and material incentives for reporting on one's neighbours, family, or colleagues resulted in many incidents of innocent people being punished. Punishment also functioned to instil fear in the citizens and to emphasise that obeying the directives of the Baath was an absolute command. Public executions in town squares or reports concerning them in the media were therefore not unusual.[247] The randomness of punishment, the constant repression, and the stories of torture created a sense of insecurity, which was an important instrument of control for the Baath to demobilise people from contesting the state.[248]

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[240] Ibid., 155.
[241] Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party,*194.
[242] Ibid., 198.
[243] Faust, *The Ba'thification of Iraq,* 153.
[244] Faust, *The Ba'thification of Iraq*, 153.
[245] Suha Omar, 'Women: Honour, Shame and Dictatorship' in Fran Hazelton (ed.) *Iraq since the Gulf War: Prospects for democracy* (London 1994) 60-71.
[246] Faust, *The Ba'thification of Iraq*, 153- 156
[247] Ibid., 153- 156.
[248] Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party,* 196.

However, the lower one looked in the Baath Party hierarchy, the less tight and insightful the ears and eyes of the regime were, and the larger the field of contestation. Despite the immense power the Baath Party wielded, it was especially at the lower levels of the party in the daily social and work lives, that contestation of the Baath Party took place. People would avoid going to the prescribed Baathist meetings at the party centre or come in late. At the workplace, people would self-sabotage their work, take extra vacation days, or call in sick. Additionally, because fixed Baathist ideology and related discourse was widely disseminated among the population, this ideology was used to critique the regime or pursue personal interests while hiding behind sanctioned ideological phrases and idioms (see Chapter 2).[249] Therefore, because the Baath Party was omnipresent in society it was also automatically the largest space for contesting the regime.

### 1.3.3 The war and the army

In Rodaan al Galidi's novel, *De Dorstige Rivier* ('thirsty river') about the life and history of an Iraqi family in a remote village like Shinafiyah, one of the younger family members asks his grandmother shortly before the 2003 US occupation what her age is, and she responded with "I am eight wars old" for she could remember her age better through the the many wars that occurred in Iraq rather than counting the years of her life.[250] While debates over whether Iraq was an authoritarian, totalitarian, or patrimonial society are ongoing, few authors accurately describe Iraq as a country in a constant state of war.[251] During the Saddam regime, other than the year 1989, Iraq was constantly at war. This defined and moulded Iraq as a state, a society, and a culture more than the specifics and characteristics of those who governed Iraq between 1979 and 2003.[252] For the ordinary Iraqi, life was not defined by politics or the Baathist regime but by the war front, conscription, returning caskets, desertion, death, destruction, and the loss of loved

[249] Faust, *The Ba'thification of Iraq,* 61-62.
[250]Rodaan al Ghalidi, *De Dorstige rivier* (Amsterdam 2008) 278.
[251] Achim Rohde, 'Revisiting the republic of fear: Lessons for research on contemporary Iraq', in: Amatzia Baram , Achim Rohde, Ronen Zeidel, *Iraq Between Occupations* ( New York, 2010) 129-141; Dina Rizk Khoury's , *Iraq in wartime: soldiering, martyrdom and remembrance* (Cambridge 2013) is the only one who addressed Iraq as a war society.
[252] Isam Al-Khafaji, 'War as a Vehicle for the Rise and Demise of a State-controlled Society: The Case of Ba'thist Iraq', *Research Center for International Political Economy and Foreign Policy Analysis* (1995).

ones.[253] One interviewee from Shinafiyah who served in the army from 1987 until 1991, accurately described it: "Even if one loves the party, even if one loves Saddam, war is death".[254]

The war impacted Iraqi society in the most unexpected ways. People strove for higher education or to extend their time in school only to be exempted from conscription. People became artists, poets, engineers, or doctors only to obtain a more comfortable post at the front.[255] A new economic class also emerged and accumulated a large amount of wealth because the state had to retrench its social services to pay for the war.[256] Even when the war in Iran was over and in the years before the invasion of Kuwait, life was still defined by reporting to the local army base for additional training or work within the army. [257] War was such a dominant aspect of Iraqi life that it was a topic you were not even allowed to discuss or question, a prohibition reflecting the imposed normalisation of war.[258]

Because the front and the army were not only a space of concern for the state but also a space of regime contestation for generals and soldiers, it was heavily monitored.[259] Threats from popular or successful generals who wanted to commit a military coup were always possible, and Saddam made sure to use the front to eliminate threats within the army.[260] For soldiers, desertion was equated with political dissension from the Baath, and a high amount of resources were allocated to combat this pervasive problem. The deserting soldiers saw desertion as a method to express their rejection of the regime. A whole infrastructure of accommodating deserting soldiers emerged, whereby non-combatants assisted deserting soldiers, thus widening the complicity of desertion and contestation.[261]

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[253] Khoury, *Iraq in wartime,* 6-7.
[254] Interview with A.J.H., Netherlands, April 13, 2018.
[255] Khoury, *Iraq in wartime,* 76, 88.
[256] Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 206.
[257] Phone interview with M.A.S., Canada, April 4, 2018. and Interview with M.S.H., Netherlands, April 1, 2018.
[258] Interview with A.J.H., Netherlands, April 13, 2018.
[259] Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party,* 143-145.
[260] Al-Jabar , 'Why the uprisings failed', (1992).
[261] Falah A. Jabbar, 'Iraq's war generation' in: Lawrence G. Potter and Gary G. Sick (eds), *Iran, Iraq and the legacies of war* (New York 2004) 126-128; Khoury, *Iraq in wartime,* 73.

The front concerned the regime because of the tension between the expectation of loyalty towards the regime from the soldiers and the fact that the Baath Party needed the soldiers for the war effort whether they were loyal to the regime or not. All the soldiers at the front were armed and could revolt at any moment against the state or, even worse, defect to Iran *en masse* if they wanted to.[262] The Baath Party therefore felt forced to show restraint during war operations so as not to dissatisfy the soldiers too much. An interviewee from Shinafiyah, who served in the army from 1986 until 1990, also explained that the heat of battle temporarily overrode the power and control the regime had over the soldiers:

> A general during an attack, is a very sympathetic man and he begs and pleaded with his soldiers, why? Because he is afraid to die, he will kiss the hand of a soldier, if there is no attack he will act as if he is the king.[263]

In short, war was repressive for Iraqis but also an opportunity wherein the regime could be contested by generals and ordinary soldiers alike.[264]

The RCC, the Baath Party, and the army were all three important centres of power for the Iraqi state, defined and monitored by the interests and aspirations of Saddam Hussein's inner circle. The higher one rose in these institutions, the higher he risked being accused of dissension and the smaller the space became to operate against the interests of the regime. Therefore, even among the elite of Iraq, little contestation took place. Most Iraqis were excluded from contesting the regime at such a high level. Therefore, the average Iraqi citizen who wanted to contest the demands of the regime within his or her own personal environment often had to do so at the bottom of the state bureaucracy, army, or the party. The risk of dissent was significantly lower, and the space to operate was larger. It is important to note that within this form of low-level contestation by ordinary Iraqis', those Iraqis never directly- targeted or fully and actively rejected the

[262] Alex Campbell, 'Where Do All the Soldiers Go?', in: *Irregular Armed Forces and their Role in Politics and State Formation* (Cambridge 2003).
[263] Interview with H.H., Netherlands, March 13, 2018..
[264] Alex Campbell, 'Where Do All the Soldiers Go?' in: *Irregular Armed Forces and their Role in Politics and State Formation* (Cambridge 2003).

institutions. However, Iraq's Communist Party and the Dawah Party attempted to build a social movement to directly target and reject Iraq's centres of power.

## 1.4 Political opposition in Iraq (1979–1990)

As Charles Tripp explained, power provokes resistance.[265] The Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) and the Dawah Party were the face of Iraqi resistance in the 1980s. Both movements directly targeted the state's institutions, and both became militant as a reaction to the state's increasing exclusionary politics. This section focuses on the origins of the ICP and the Dawah Party and how they challenged the state and impacted ordinary Iraqis.

### 1.4.1 The Iraqi Communist Party

The ICP is Iraq's oldest political party.[266] After the success of the Russian Revolution in 1917, many communist writings and pamphlets were translated into Arabic and were widely discussed in Iraqi salons, living rooms, and universities. Communism had a large appeal among Iraq's growing urban middle class, who neither felt at home in traditional modes of knowledge nor were part of the landed elite aligned with the British monarchy.[267] This middle class was able to form alliances with an emerging urban proletariat by 1958.[268] The mass appeal of the Communist Party in the cities of Baghdad and Basra gave it important political weight in the political history of Iraq. For example, when Abdul Karim Qassim overthrew the monarchy, he relied on the support of the Communist Party. Likewise, when Qassim was deposed in 1963 by another general, Abdel Salem Aref, many communists were vengefully slaughtered.[269]

When the Baath Party eventually took over, they tried to co-opt the Communist Party to support their government. This was the Baath Party's way to deal with the large appeal of Communism among Iraqis and to prevent the ICP from using their appeal against the Baath state. Moreover, Baathist Iraq wanted to use the Communist Party to

[265] Charles Tripp, *The Power and the people: Paths of resistance in the Middle East* (Cambridge 2013) 11.
[266] Hamad, Wadood. 'Who Speaks for the Iraqi People?', *Logos* 2 (2003) 51.
[267] Tareq Ismael, *The Rise and Fall of the Iraqi Communist Party* (Cambridge 2008) 17-21.
[268] Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes & The Revolutionary Movement In Iraq* (1982 New Jersey) 379-382.
[269] Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 116-117.

foster better ties with the Soviet Union for financial reasons.[270] Therefore from 1973 to 1977, the ICP ruled together with the Baath Party. When the Baath Party felt strong enough in 1978 and did not need to rely as much on the Soviet Union, the Communist Party was purged within the confines of the government, and their activities were strictly monitored and repressed. As a reaction to this repression, the Communist Party adopted the goal of ending the Baath dictatorship by militarily fighting against it.[271]

During the 1980s, the Communist Party opted for armed struggle in alliance with the Kurdish insurgency against Saddam, and in the south they relied mainly on propaganda through pamphlets, newspapers, and secret reading groups.[272] By the 1980s, however, many of the ICP's leaders were exiled to Syria, Lebanon, and the Soviet bloc.[273] The most important development regarding the Communist Party since 1973 was that they lost their ties with the urban proletariat in Baghdad, Basra, and the rest of southern Iraq. According to Hanna Batatu, the link between the proletariat and the ICP was caused by "The deep wound inflicted on the communist cadre in 1963, its 1973–1978 course of compromise with the Baathist regime, and the exile in 1979 of no fewer than three thousand of its hardened members".[274] Expect for in Iraqi Kurdistan, the social base of the ICP remained a highly monitored segment of the urban middle class, who nevertheless wrote articles, read illegal books, and held secret discussions about the regime.[275] Therefore, the ICP was

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[270] Abdullah Thabit, *Dictatorship, imperialism and chaos: Iraq since 1989*, (London 2006) 28-31 .
[271] Ismael, *The Rise and Fall of the Iraqi Communist Party*, 186.
[272] Ibid., 184.
[273] Ibid., 186.
[274] Hanna Batatu, 'Iraq's Underground Shi'i Movements' in *Middle East Journal* 12 (1981) 102.
[275] International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam Pieter Bogaers, File number 204 H.R,') International Institute of Social History, Pieter Bogaers Archief (henceforth PBA), file number 190 M.S June 1989., Amsterdam ; PBA, file number 359 W.K. August 1996; PBA, file number 390 M.S. August 1994; PBA, file number 467 K.S. January 1991; PBA, file number 204 H.R. April 1994;
The Bogaers archive is a large collection of personal legal dossiers donated by Pieter Bogaers, a lawyer who has defended asylum seekers from 1975 to 2015. Of his 1000 files, 135 of them are of Iraqi asylum seekers, 60 of whom are of middle-class residents of Bagdad. Each of these files contain a wealth of information, including an intake interview the moment they arrived in the Netherlands, in which the person explained their background and reason for leaving Iraq. Each file also contains a report of a second interview by Bogaers himself, written as an extensive life story that includes the client's childhood, family relations, school life, persecution, etc. This life story was intended to defend the client in court and justify his request for asylum in the Netherlands. Most files contain documents from Iraq to verify the claims made in the interview report of by Bogaers. The level of detail in these life stories is absolutely astounding. Each life story begins with an explanation of the family environment of the client, including an extensive account of the social, political and cultural background of the parents, siblings and extended family. Each life story also contains the complete trajectory of the client's school and work life, but also what kind of worker or student this person was, what kind of activities the client indulged in his leisure

heavily repressed and lost their ties to the people. Their role in the intifadah of 1991 was marginal to none. An interviewee said about Iraqi communists in the 1980s, "they were an old sickness, you saw them around, but they had no real presence".[276]

However, the impact of the Communist Party was not inconsequential to non-partisan Iraq. One female interviewee stated, "But of course, I disagree with Communism and maybe I would also disagree with the ideas of *Hizb al-Dawah*. But they had a spirit of opposition and that is what I liked".[277] The majority of the interviewees felt sympathy for the Communist Party – but for its oppositional stance against Saddam Hussein rather than their ideological convictions. This thesis argues that the Communist Party was perceived to be an opposition party rather than a communist one, characterised by a more inclusive oppositional ideology that transcended political differences. The aim to depose Saddam therefore overruled ideological aims in the eyes of ordinary Iraqis. This opened the field for a more inclusive oppositional ideology to take root in Iraq, which unified a larger group of people who might have had different ideals and convictions or no specific political conviction at all nor were members of any political party. The fact that many in Shinafiyah did not share any communist convictions but had sympathies with them and their struggle against Saddam is evidence of an emerging ideology, whose only core component was resisting the Baath regime.[278]

### 1.4.2 The Dawah Party

*Hizb al-Dawah* or the Dawah Party, was a political Iraqi Islamist party founded in the 1950s as an educational and cultural movement initiated by Iraq's religious clerics from Najaf and Karbala.[279] The aim of this movement was to provide intellectual and (mainly) written responses regarding the increasing appeal of Communism among Iraqi citizens and regarding the secularisation of state, society, and culture.[280] Political questions were

time, and finally, an important part of these life stories are the client's relations to the Baath party and the Iraqi state. This often covers the client's political convictions and principles.

[276] Interview with A.N.T, Netherlands, April 15, 2018.

[277] Interview with Z.A.M., Netherlands, April 10, 2018.

[278] Interview with A.J.H., Netherlands, April 13, 2018.

[279] Wiley, *The Islamic Movement of Iraqi Shi'as*, 73.
Najaf and Karbala are cities known for their religious seminaries and pilgrimage sites.

[280] Jabbar, *The Shi'ite movement in Iraq*, 75-77.

asked, and the Islamic legitimacy of newly implemented laws by the secular state was questioned in light of Islamic teaching (e.g. nationalisation of land property).[281]
This party had a high appeal among religious, highly educated middle-class lay men and women. This new urban group often was confronted with new norms, ideas, and situations that modernity imposed on Iraq but that were not adequately addressed from the perspective of Islamic values and norms. The publications and ideas of Dawah provided answers to the challenges of modern life. In the 1950s and early 1960s the political climate of Iraq was still relatively relaxed, and the cultural and educational activities of the Dawah Party, such as publishing books, articles, and newspapers and giving public lectures were not yet repressed. [282]

After the Baath coup in 1968, three developments transformed the Dawah Party into a revolutionary militant organisation. First, the Baath Party rigorously repressed Islamic activism the moment it gained power – arresting, torturing, and executing thousands of clerics, Dawah activists, or any individual expressing piety. Furthermore, religious commemorations closely associated with the history of Karbala and Najaf and of the Shia Muslims, such as *Ashura* and *Arbaeen*, were highly monitored and increasingly constrained. Three public protests against these measures in 1977, 1979, and 1980 were bloodily crushed, climaxing with the execution of the important Dawah leader Ayatollah Muhammad Baqr al-Sadr in 1981, the first ayatollah to ever be executed by a state.[283] This violence radicalised and brutalised the Dawah Party as they began to conduct military operations against Saddam Hussein's government after 1981.[284]

The second important development was economic. More religious, educated layman started to flood the labour market, but due to state emphasis on Baathist conviction or loyalty to Saddam over competence and expertise, many of these laymen ended up unemployed or doing jobs they were overqualified for.[285] This created resentment towards Baathist ideology and towards the regime itself, which was pushing many of these educated men and women into the folds of Dawah. Finally, the third

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[281] Wiley, *The Islamic Movement of Iraqi Shi'as*, 31-32.
[282] Ibid., 85-92.
[283] Jabbar, *The Shi'ite movement in Iraq* ( London 2003) 201-215; for the complete biography of Muhammad Baqr al Sadr see also: Chibli Mallat,. *The Renewal of Islamic Law: Muhammad Baqer as-Sadr, Najaf and the Shi'i International* ( Cambridge 2004).
[284] Wiley, *The Islamic Movement of Iraqi Shi'as*, 46-66.
[285] Ibid., 85, 104-107.

development, the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979, empowered and gave confidence to Dawah to actively start challenging the Baathist regime because the victory of their Islamic ideology seemed near.[286]

The Dawah Party conducted assassinations, sabotage attempts, bomb attacks, sometimes even targeting Saddam Hussein himself during the 1980s. The regime made membership of Dawah punishable by death in 1981.[287] This was followed by a ruthless eight-year anti-Dawah campaign so extensive that a person could be arrested for merely being slightly pious in outlook or dress. According to Joyce Wiley, 30,000 people died in this anti-Dawah campaign.[288]

However, the revolutionary operations of the Dawah Party took place in a clandestine and atomised fashion.[289] Because the regime excessively monitored Dawah, they were forced to be clandestine in their operations. However, because of the forced secrecy of their operations, Dawah also failed to connect with ordinary Iraqis, thus preventing it from ever becoming a mass movement.[290] Dawah activism therefore remained the occupation of a small minority of middle-class activists dwelling in secrecy even to the ordinary Iraqis who sympathised with them. [291] All interviewees stated that they had suspicions of people who might be in the Dawah Party in Shinafiyah, but those people were never open about their membership nor spoke about party activities even to the most staunch sympathiser.[292] One interviewee of lower-income also simply stated, "I did not had the time nor the money to afford party activism in my life", which reinforces the suggestion that the Dawah Party was mainly a middle-class movement.[293]

The Dawah Party, however, was not fully disconnected from the masses. Iraqis learnt different ways to contest or to hide from the regime by observing the Dawah Party. The activities of the Dawah Party provided vital information to ordinary Iraqis – that the government was afraid of Dawah and everything Dawah-related. Scholar Sydney Tarrow explains the relation between organised groups like Dawah and non-organised ordinary

[286] Marr, *the modern history of Iraq*, 171-173.
[287] Thabit, *Dictatorship, imperialism and chaos,*29.
[288] Wiley, *The Islamic Movement of Iraqi Shi'as*, 45-66.
[289] Jabbar, *The Shi'ite movement in Iraq*, 233-234.
[290] Wiley, *The Islamic movement, 89-92.*
[291] Tripp, *A history of Iraq*, 238.
[292] Interview with A.N.T, Netherlands, April 15, 2018.; Phone interview with M.A.S., Canada, April 4, 2018.; Interview with A.J.H., Netherlands, April 13, 2018.
[293] Interview with A.N.T.

people: “Social movements [like Dawah] are repositories of knowledge of particular routines (…) which helps them to overcome the deficits in resources and communication (…)among disorganised people” and “early risers can expose opponents’ points of weakness that may not be evident until they have been challenged”.[294]

For example, Dawah activists were known for wearing beards, praying in public, and expressing other forms of piety. Ordinary Iraqis therefore understood that expressing piety or performing religious rituals was disliked by the regime, so they too began to express piety to contest the regime.[295] Eventually, the intifadah itself also reflected much of the pious symbolism originating from the Dawah Party. One interviewee from the town of Hamza remembers that on the day of the intifadah, he heard people in the street shouting “Sadr lives, Sadr lives” referring to Dawah’s murdered symbolic leader Muhammad Baqr al-Sadr.[296]

The Dawah Party had a marginal role as a social movement during the intifadah, mainly because of the regime’s effective repression as well as because of the failure of the Dawah Party to build strong ties with the Iraqi masses, especially the working class, in the preceding years.[297] While almost all the interviewees vehemently rejected any involvement with the Dawah Party during the intifadah, they remained sympathetic to the Dawah Party as an opposition party. This indicates an ambiguous and contradictory relationship between the Dawah Party and the participants of the intifadah. Like the ICP, the Dawah Party was seen by ordinary Iraqis as one actor within a larger opposition movement against the regime, rather than as a party with a specific ideology.

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[294] Sydney G Tarrow , *Power in movement social movements and contentious politics revised and updated third edition* (Cambridge 2011) 29, 167.
[295] Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party*, 259-267.
A similar phenomenon was also seen in Egypt during the 1990s, where people who expressed piety were regularly arrested, especially wearing a beard was a form of Islamist dissent.
Mohammed M. Hafez and Quintan Wiktorowicz ‘Violence as contention in the Egyptian Islamist movement’, in: Quintan Wiktorowicz, (ed.) *Islamic activism: A social movement theory approach*. (Bloomington 2004) 78.
[296] This was what an witness to the Intifadah in Hamza told me during a phone conversation, March 2018.
[297] Jabbar, ‘Why the uprisings failed’.

## 1.5 Conclusion

Ordinary Iraqis were severely prevented from directly contesting the higher echelons of power symbolised by the RCC, the party, and the army in Iraq. The higher one went in the hierarchy of the state, the smaller were the opportunities for contestation and the more repressive became the consequences of contestation. The RCC, the top of the Baath and the army, therefore did not function as an institution meant for contestation, but as an institution of exclusive power, unchallenged from within and without. The exclusion of the majority of Iraqis from the state's institutions had two consequences. The first was the emergence of militant social movements like Dawah and the ICP that directly targeted the institutions of exclusion in Iraq. This resulted in the effective and brutal repression by the government of both the Communist Party and the Dawah Party throughout in the 1980s. The other consequence however was that Iraqi citizens refocused their regime contestation lower in the hierarchy of power and where the eyes and ears of the regime were less insightful. Indeed, people could still contest the regime but now only within their own personal environment through micro-transgressions, at school, at one's job, or even within one's own house.

The extensive repression of social movements and their secretive nature also stopped being a relevant vehicle of contestation for ordinary Iraqis, forcing them to rely on themselves in contesting the regime. Instead, the social merit of these social movements was that they made clear to Iraqis what the regime liked and disliked and what kind of repertoires were effective against it. This was beneficial information for regime contestation or at the very least for informing ordinary Iraqis what not to do to prevent the regime from harassing you.

The second merit of the repressed social movements of Iraq is that they helped create an inclusive anti-regime ideology that would unite and define the intifadah in 1991 and assist in the mass contestation of the regime by ordinary Iraqis. Due to the severe repression of any ideological current in Iraq, both the ICP and the Dawah Party started to be seen by ordinary Iraqis as mainly opposition parties in the broadest sense possible, rather than specific Communist or Islamist parties. Simply stated, in the fierce fight against the Baathist government, one's personal ideological convictions played no relevant role in this struggle. Therefore, the Dawah Party, the ICP, and ordinary Iraqis

who contested the regime became part of an emerging anti-regime ideology whose only goal was the overthrow of the Baath regime. It was this same anti-regime ideology that also united and defined the masses during the intifadah. Moreover, this anti-regime ideology contextualised the acts of contestation of ordinary Iraqis in their day-to-day lives.

People in Shinafiyah were aware of these developments. Both the Communist Party and the Dawah Party gained sympathy in Shinafiyah for their oppositional stance to the regime, rather than for their ideological convictions. For Shinafiyah, being anti-regime, rather than an adherent of Islamism or Marxism, was the main indicator that allowed ordinary Iraqis to support these movements and to personally contest the regime. In this regard, it still needs to be explained how exactly contestation in one's daily life and the emergence of a more inclusive opposition ideology assisted in the eruption of the intifadah in 1991.

# Chapter 2:

# The sociology of Shinafiyah

The first chapter demonstrates that due to the severe repression of the Saddam regime, any alternative political party or movement was banned. Therefore, all those involved in contesting the regime were reduced to the label of 'opposition' in the widest sense possible. This made contestation on an ideological basis obsolete and irrelevant, thus creating a more inclusive framework under which contestation of the regime could take place, even for non-politicised, ordinary Iraqis.

During the Saddam regime, contestation in Iraq was limited to individualised small acts of non-compliance and resistance in spaces in which the regime had less power and influence. These small acts of contestation happened on mass rather than on a collective basis in Iraq. This chapter investigates whether 12 years of individualised contestation assisted in the creation of vital mobilisation structures for the intifadah in Shinafiyah. First, it needs to be established whether the intifadah was an organised revolt that reflected specific mobilisation structures or whether it was a spontaneous ad hoc reaction to repression. Second, this chapter analyses the social and political conditions under which small forms of individual contestation can occur in Shinafiyah. Finally, it explores what forms of contestation took place, how the different forms of contestation related to each other, and how they helped create the mobilisation structures for the intifadah.

## 2.1 Spontaneous uprisings

Khoury and Haddad argue that the intifadah was mainly a spontaneous and unexpected reaction to discontent caused by an eight-year war and severe repression committed by the Baathist regime.[298] This understanding of the intifadah resonated among the interviewees as well. One interviewee, who was eighteen during the intifadah, explained that people revolted because "every day you saw dead people, Saddam pulled us into an

[298] Fanar Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic visions of unity* (Oxford 2014) 83-84; Dina Rizk Khoury, *Iraq in wartime: soldiering, martyrdom and remembrance* (Cambridge 2013) 137.

eight-year-long war and we experienced only difficult times, people's hearts were about to explode".[299] Several authors therefore understand the intifadah as a primordial expression of frustration and not as an organised effort against the regime.[300] Furthermore, understanding the intifadah as a 'spontaneous' revolt was also the dominant narratological interpretation during annual commemorations of the 1991 uprising.[301] In short, the intifadah is considered spontaneous for two reasons: it was unexpected, and it was disorganised.

It needs to be stated that this thesis does not deny that suffering and the war played a role in the mobilising participants for the intifadah. However, as a result of the existing historiography and my interviews, this thesis maintains that the factor of suffering alone does not explain why and when the intifadah took place. The year 1989 is demonstrative of this point. In that year, suffering in Iraq reached its height, and the regime relaxed its repressive measures, thus providing a political opportunity to mobilise for an uprising. Nevertheless, the year 1989 was a relatively peaceful year, despite the large amount of suffering, repression, resentment, and relative freedom to politically organise opposition.[302] Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to provide an extensive study on why the intifadah did not happen in 1989, the year clearly demonstrates that the intifadah was not only a reaction to suffering and war. Nonetheless, it is correct that the years of suffering under Saddam were definitely an important factor for the intifadah. However, based on the example of 1989, the extent to which the intifadah should mainly be called a spontaneous reaction to this suffering still needs to be examined.

The word 'spontaneity' in the context of an uprising largely refers to the unexpectedness of the uprising. Indeed, Asef Bayat explains that "every revolution is a surprise, no matter how convinced the protagonists or observers may be of their coming".[303] One famous instance of the unpredictability of revolts is President Carter calling Iran an 'island of stability' exactly one year before the Islamic Revolution took

[299] Interview with A.J.H., Netherlands, April 13, 2018.
[300] Jabar A. Falah, Why the uprisings failed', *Middle East Research and Information project 176* (1992) https://www.merip.org/mer/mer176/why-uprisings-failed (accessed March 1, 2018).
; Majid Khadduri and Edmund Ghareeb, *War in the Gulf, 1990-91: the Iraq-Kuwait conflict and its implications* (Oxford 1997) 189-212.
[301] *Intifadah Sha'abaniya commemoration* in Utrecht, April 2018.
[302] Tripp, *A History of Iraq* (Cambridge 2007) 239; Marr, T*he Modern History of Iraq*, 195-205.
[303] Asef Bayat, 'The Arab Spring and its surprises', *Development and Change 44* (2013) 3, 587.

place in 1979. This is similar to the Arab Spring, which occurred in 2010 across the Middle-East and North Africa and which was often labelled as a spontaneous and leaderless uprising from the peripheries.[304] Another way to understand spontaneity, however, is by referring to the unpreparedness and short-term improvisation of the revolutionaries as the uprising unfolds, reflecting chaos, disorganisation, and fragmentation.[305] The interpretation of the intifadah as unprepared and chaotic is a persistent interpretation in writings and commentaries.[306]

Nevertheless, despite this interpretation of the intifadah being chaotic, the general patterns of the intifadah were similar and consistent across Iraq. In most towns, the intifadah began with returning soldiers who were joined by citizens, thus increasing the protesting masses as they marched to the city hall, "party headquarters; secret police building; the prison; and the city garrison".[307] Afterwards, the people burned the government archives filled with monitored information on the local population, collected all the weapons stored in government buildings, and distributed them among themselves. In some instances, acts of revenge against informants or Baath Party members were instigated in some towns and villages, whereas the Baathists who had already fled were left alone.[308] In the south, there was also a consistent use of Shia symbolism and slogans. For example, holding pictures of famous Shia clerics in public was a phenomenon seen all over southern Iraq. [309] While it remains unclear exactly how the intifadah unfolded in each town and city, it was highly organised in Shinafiyah.

Participants quickly appointed a leadership council and decided to make the *Husseniya* (an Islamic centre distinct from the mosque) in *Sobh al-Sarray* its headquarters. Tasks were divided based on expertise, and a food distribution programme was even set up.[310] So, while the intifadah indeed lacked collective leadership and was

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[304] Edward W. Said, Moustafa Bayoumi (ed.) and Andrew Rubin (ed) , *The Edward Said Reader* (New York 2000) 194.
[305] David A. Snow and Dana M. Moss, 'Protest on the fly: Toward a theory of spontaneity in the dynamics of protest and social movements', *American Sociological Review* 79 (2014) 6, 1123-1124.
[306]Jabbar, 'Why the uprisings failed'. it was argued for example the Intifadah was chaotic and disorganized because Saddam effectively depoliticized the army's leadership leaving most of the soldiers, who joined and instigated the Intifadah, fundamentally unable and uninformed on how to organize a revolt.
[307] Falah A. Jabbar, *The Shi'ite movement in Iraq* (London 2003) 269-270.
[308] Jabbar, *The Shi'ite movement in Iraq*, 269-270.
[309] Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic visions of unity*, 81.
[310] Interview with A.A.H. Netherlands, April 7, 2018.

rather fragmented, there was organisation on a town-to-town basis and an indication that some form of preparation did take place. Labelling the intifadah as spontaneous therefore needs to be qualified.

The organisation and coordination of the intifadah within towns like Shinafiyah, as described above, required an extensive amount of information. Rebels had to know whom they could trust and whom they could not, and they needed to know who had enough legitimacy within the locality to take a leadership role. Extensive knowledge was necessary to divide up the tasks according to the extant human resources as well as which symbols and goals should be articulated to maintain unity, for example.[311] This is a vast and tangible amount of information that could not have been processed and deployed during the short timespan over which the intifadah erupted. This thesis therefore argues that the intifadah in Shinafiyah reflected the knowledge people had accumulated that unintentionally created mobilisation structures for the intifadah while contesting the Saddam regime for over a decade, rather than a spontaneous reaction to suffering.[312]

Interactions with the regime and personal cultural history impacted and unintentionally prepared the people for the eventual mobilisation and organisation for the intifadah. Ordinary Iraqis learnt many techniques through which they could contest the regime, and they gained further information on effective contestation when opposing the regime. These techniques of contestation were famously labelled by Charles Tilly as 'repertoires'.[313] However, given the authoritarian political and socioeconomic situation of Iraq, the people had to rely on 'repressed repertoires' that avoided the direct attention of authorities and on 'weapons of the weak' that demanded few economic and human resources.[314] Nonetheless, these repressed weapons of the weak were strong enough to impact state policy, communicate an anti-regime stance, and facilitate infrastructures and information that could assist collective mobilisation in the long term.

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[311] Sydney G. Tarrow , *Power in movement: social movements and contentious politics revised and updated third edition* (Cambridge 2011) 119-139.
[312] Tarrow, *Power in Movement,* 55.
[313] David T. Mason, *Caught in the crossfire: Revolutions, Repression, and the Rational Peasant* (New York 2004) 45.
[314] Hank Johnston, 'The Game's Afoot social movements in Authoritarian states', in: Donatella D. Porta & Mario Diani (ed), *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements* (Oxford 2015) 619; James Scott, *Weapons of the Weak. Every Day Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven 1985).

People's own cultural history also assisted in creating mobilising structures for the intifadah.[315] In the case of Shinafiyah, the people already had a point of reference regarding how to conduct an intifadah and how to contest a regime before Saddam even took power. For example, the very first uprising in the Middle East that was labelled an intifadah took place in 1952 in Iraq, and many followed.[316] Moreover, religious wisdom, collective rituals, and other aspects of life also impacted people's understanding of how, when, and why people should contest a regime. The story of the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, for example, was central to people's understanding of injustice and rebellion.[317] The participants of the intifadah therefore could fall back on essential mobilisation structures that had been gradually cultivated in the preceding 12 years.

Although the uprising was not spontaneous, neither was it strictly organised as a social movement. The structures of organisation and preparation were clearly observable and must have been formed in the preceding 12 years. The rest of this chapter elucidates the origins of the organisational structures of the intifadah. First, a brief discussion of social power dynamics under Saddam is provided to clarify how contestation could take place on an individual basis and in one's daily life.

## 2.2 Power dynamics in Baathist Iraq

Social power dynamics in Iraq were defined by the tensions that emerged in the late urbanisation process, fostering a new class of urban elites who competed with Iraq's traditional and tribal elite of the rural regions.[318] After the Baath coup of 1968 and the 1970s oil boom, Iraq's urban middle class grew immensely and reached the height of its wealth because of the state's educational programmes and the jobs that were provided inside state's vast bureaucracy.[319] The Baath Party, which had close ties to the security

[315] Roger D. Petersen, *Resistance and rebellion : lessons from eastern Europe* (Cambridge 2001) 39.
[316] Karol Sorby, 'THE 1952 UPRISING IN IRAQ AND REGENT'S ROLE IN ITS CRUSHING (Iraq from al-watba to al-intifāda: 1949-1952)', *Asian and African Studies* 12 (2003) 2, 166-193.
[317] Edward W Said, 'The clash of ignorance' *The Nation* 22 (2001); Graham Huggan, 'Perspectives on postcolonial Europe', *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 44 (2008) 3, 242; John McLeod, *Beginning postcolonialism*. (Manchester 2000) 19-24; Jasmin Zine, 'Muslim women and the politics of representation', *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 19 (2002) 4 , 3-5 ; Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper, 'Caught in a winding, snarling vine: The structural bias of political process theory' in: *Sociological forum*, vol. 14 (1999) 1; Jabbar, *The Shi'ite movement in Iraq* , 186-198.
[318] Laurie King-Irani,'Iraq: A look back', *Orbis* 51 (2007) 1, 93-99.
[319] Adeed Dawisha, *Iraq a political history: from independence to occupation* (2009 New Jersey) 286; Jabbar, *The Shi'ite movement in Iraq*, 57-58.

apparatus, supported these emerging urbanites in transforming their social capital into state-backed political power and the urban middle class used that power against other forms of power still rooted in Iraqi society.[320]

By the 1970s, the Iraqi state had grown disproportionally large and powerful at the expense of the Iraqi population. The expanding Baath state did not have to follow the dominant social, economic, and cultural constraints of society to exercise its power.[321] Tying one's self to the Baath state was therefore an easy way for the urban middle class to gain power in society, especially because their social capital came from occupational competency and not charisma, tribal prestige or land ownership, which had been important sources of power for Iraq's old elite.[322] Individuals who were tied to the Baath state through the party individually reflected the state in the sense that they were imparted a capacity to liberate themselves from the older impositions of values, hierarchies, and exclusive networks of the power of Iraq's old society.[323] By offering power to an originally marginalised group, the Baathist state could therefore co-opt a large segment of the Iraqi population and neutralise the chasm between the disproportionately powerful state and its population – although not resolving it fully.[324]

The darker side of the emancipatory potential of the Baathist state is that its associated emancipated individuals had access to the state's coercion apparatus and could use it to oppress other citizens. Without any clear checks or balances, Baath Party members easily repressed, and sometimes violently eliminated, people who adhered to or embodied local contending social hierarchies and value systems.[325] An interviewee who was a Shinafi manual labourer and a soldier explained the power Baath Party membership entailed as follows:

> If the Baathist wanted something, it would instantly happen (…) the Baath Party is more powerful than the security organisations themselves (…) you could easily insult someone from the security

[320] Khoury, *Iraq in wartime,*21 ; Jabbar, *The Shi'ite movement in Iraq*, 58.
[321] Gareth Stansfield, *Iraq : People, History, Politics* (Cambridge 2016) 82-83.
[322] Dawisha, *Iraq a political history,*286; Jabbar, *The Shi'ite movement in Iraq* ( London 2003) 171.
[323] Faust, *The Ba'thification of Iraq* 51-57 220-222.
[324] Stansfield, *Iraq: People, History, Politics, 73.*
[325] Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party* 38-39; Faust, *The Ba'thification of Iraq,* 156.

> service, but you can never curse at a party member, that is the difference [in power].[326]

This process of 'emancipatory' Baathism among the middle class caused collusions and tensions with older systems of power and values. Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett explained that in post-revolutionary Iraq (1958), the persistence of *Gemeinschaft* during an enforced transition to a *Gesellschaft* had a significant and violent impact on how power dynamics played out in Iraq.[327] In a *Gemeinschaft,* power is defined by one's tribal lineage, moral charisma, personal ties with the local community, and land ownership. *Gesellschaft*, on the other hand, is associated with an urban setting. In the city, power is more closely related to one's economic and professional contribution to society, irrespective of one's social background, morality, or land property. Additionally, social ties in large cities began to be more defined by class and political affinity and not by community, family, or religion.[328] The urban middle class was also secular in outlook, in contrast to rural Iraq and other elites.[329] As *Gesellschaft* was imposed on a persistent *Gemeinschaft*, collisions and tensions were bound to happen.

Initially, the prevalence of state-backed Baathism in the 1970s was an urban phenomenon, but it began to slowly spread to rural Iraq, creating new unfamiliar antagonisms. Power based on one's tribe or ties to the local community in rural Iraq was easily challenged when institutes like the townhall, the police station, and primary and secondary schools appeared. These new institutions provided jobs, incomes, and power independent from one's ties to the local community, land, or tribal lineage.[330] Most important in the context of this thesis, the penetration of the Baath Party in rural Iraq provided immense power to local Baath Party members.[331] The Baath Party in rural Iraq was therefore especially attractive for individuals who were originally marginalised,

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[326] Interview with H.H., Netherlands, March 13, 2018.
[327] Marion Farouk-Sluglett, and Peter Sluglett, 'The historiography of modern Iraq', *The American Historical Review 96* (1991) 5, 1412.
[328]Ferdinand Tönnies, *Community and Civil Society : A Translation of Ferdinand* translated by Jose Harris (Cambrdige 2001) 28-42, 52,66, 142.
[329]Ali. A Alawi, *The Occupation of Iraq: Winning the War, Losing the Peace*, (New Haven 2005) 127.
[330] Yitzhak Nakash , 'The conversion of Iraq's tribes to Shiism', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 26 (1994) 52,111-112,126.
[331] Faust, *The Ba'thification of Iraq,* 98-108.

smaller tribes or clans.[332] Party rank in Shinafiyah displaced traditional forms of social capital based on piety, hospitality, family ties, and land ownership.

It is a mistake, however, to interpret the political process in Iraq only as an antagonism between traditional rural bases of power and modern urbanised forms of power. For example, the state and the party also fostered close ties with the different tribes in rural Iraq, demonstrating that there were non-urbanised tribes whose power emanated the state.[333] Simultaneously, there were also rural middle-class and non-Baathist and Baathist professionals from prestigious tribes who synthesised both urban and rural forms of legitimacy and power. For example, in Shinafiyah, Jafar al-Sheybani (1948–1991) was known for his cultural sophistication and his professionalism as a teacher. Nevertheless, his anti-regime stance was known, and he had a leadership role during the intifadah in Shinafiyah. Simultaneously, al-Sheybani had extensive ties with the local community and was a member of one of Shinafiyah's oldest families.[334]

Overall, community-based power as the historically dominant form of power in villages like Shinafiyah had to contend with new forms of social and political capital, which was embodied by Iraq's Baath Party members and supported by the state's coercion apparatus.[335] The rest of this chapter elaborates on how, and to what extent, this process of state expansion and Baathism exactly impacted Shinafiyah and created different opportunities to contest the regime and how the state caused resentment in Shinafiyah against the regime.

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[332] Said K. Aburish, *Saddam Hussein: the politics of revenge* (London 2000) 8-36; Juman Kubba, *The First Evidence: A Memoir of Life in Iraq Under Saddam Hussein* (London 2003) 9-10; Interview with A.J.H., Netherlands, April 13, 2018.; Roger D. Petersen , *Resistance and rebellion : lessons from eastern Europe* (Cambridge 2001) 35.

[333] Jerrold M Post and Amatzia Baram, *Saddam is Iraq: Iraq is Saddam* (Collingdale 2002) 25.

[334] Teacher Jafar, as the interviewees recalled him, was also mentioned in memoires of Syed Muhsin Syed Muhsin Hussein al-Husseini, *Al-Shinafiyah* (1998) http://sadik70.tripod.com/diwan01/shnafia1.htm accessed (May 5, 2018).

[335] Marion Farouk-Sluglett, 'The historiography of modern Iraq', 1408-1421. Regarding the importance of family and regional ties in modern Iraq. It does not mean that family and regional ties or background stopped functioning as an instrument of power. For example: It is widely known that being originally proximate to Saddam's home-town, tribe or ethnic-religious community could easily overrule institutional limitations or party rank. This was a tension that that plagued Baathist Iraq that never was truly resolved during its reign. Nonetheless tribe and region now had to contend with urbanized forms of social capital. See also Amatzia Baram, 'Saddam's Power Structure: the Tikritis Before, During and After the War', *The Adelphi Papers* 34 (2003) 354.

## 2.3 Power to contest the regime in Shinafiyah

Contesting the Saddam regime was a very risky act because it was highly monitored and punished. Notwithstanding, in Shinafiyah some conditions lowered the risk of contestation and incentivised people to pursue their own interests at the expense of the regime. In Shinafiyah, therefore, more contestation of the regime was possible for the following reasons: hegemonic contraction, strong local social ties, incentivised reputation rewards, and embedded community knowledge regarding who was an ally or an enemy.

### 2.3.1 Hegemonic contraction

The Baathist regime, according to most authors, was totalitarian. This is because it aimed to hegemonise Iraqi society, economy, and culture in every way possible.[336] However, in the peripheries of Iraq (like Shinafiyah), the regime experienced moments of hegemonic contraction, which prevented it from achieving its totalitarian aims. All states have a limited number of resources for implementing coercion and co-optation against its populace; therefore, states must prioritise high-risk areas over low-risk areas.[337] According to that logic, the capital city of Baghdad, due to its large concentration of people, sensitive government institutions, and residency of the president was prioritised over low-risk areas in the peripheries, such as Shinafiyah.

Therefore, in the periphery, the regime was obliged to rely on local consent and only sparingly intervened through either co-optation or repression to reaffirm its hegemonic dominance.[338] As a result, local representatives of the state – namely, high Baath Party members – could not always rely on the coercion of the state if their authority was undermined. Local representatives of the regime therefore had to contend and cooperate with the hegemony of Shinafiyah's own elites, networks, and dominant cultural values.[339] Inhabitants of Shinafiyah were conscious of the regime's hegemonic

[336] Makiya, *Republic of Fear*; Faust, *The Ba'thification of Iraq;*, Jabbar, *The Shi'ite movement in Iraq*; Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*; Stansfield, *Iraq : People, History, Politics*.
[337] Ariel Ahram, *Proxy warriors: the rise and fall of state-sponsored militias* (Stanford 2011) 2; Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (New York 1966) 279.
[338]Merilee S Grindle, *Challenging the State: crisis and innovation in Latin America and Africa*, (Cambridge 1996) 15.
[339] John Chalcraft, *Popular Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Cambrdige 2016) 33-38; Lisa Blaydes, 'Compliance and resistance in Iraq under Saddam Hussein: Evidence from the files of the Ba'th Party', AALIMS Comparative Politics Workshop (2013).

contraction. People understood that the regime ought to be feared but that it was relatively weaker in an isolated place like Shinafiyah. This gave the people of Shinafiyah some signals that critiquing the regime or confronting Baath Party members was slightly less risky than if they lived in important and central urban area. One soldier, who was 21 years old during the intifadah, commented on how people were able to get away with complaining about the regime in Shinafiyah: "Shinafiyah is far away from the governate capital, far away from the country's capital, its isolated (…) so yes this opens up some space to speak one's mind".[340]

However, despite the realisation that the regime was weaker in Shinafiyah, people knew that if the regime really wanted to, they could take anyone away at any moment.[341] Nobody ever knew when the regime would strike, which caused people to live in a perpetual state of fear. This fear inhibited them from opposing the regime or from organising themselves.[342] One interviewee from Shinafiyah, who was 29 during the intifadah, said, "Everyone in Iraq expected to be taken away at any moment, whether you did anything or not".[343] One women from Shinafiyah reminiscing about the 1980s spoke about a well-known high-ranking Baathist in Shinafiyah: "when I only saw his motorcycle parked somewhere, fear overwhelmed me".[344]

The space provided by hegemonic contraction in Shinafiyah should therefore not be overestimated, and arrests, executions, threats, assassinations, and military siege remained common practice throughout the 1980s in Shinafiyah. This created enough fear in people to still be alert regarding their conduct towards the regime (see Chapter 3). Nonetheless, despite the dominance of fear, there was an underlying awareness that some form of contestation without getting punished could be exercised because of the regime's hegemonic contraction.

[340] Interview with A.J.H., Netherlands, April 13, 2018.
[341] Khoury, *Iraq in wartime*. 151.
[342] Makiya, *Republic of Fear*, 129.
[343] Interview with A.N.T, Netherlands, April 15, 2018.
[344] Phone Interview with B.U.S. Iraq, April 19, 2018.

### 2.3.2 The power of the local elite

Shinafiyah was a community defined by close kinship ties, face-to-face contact, respect for tribal values, religious morality, economic prestige, and economic reciprocity.[345] Within this value system, local elites and notables who engaged in nurturing and perpetrating the different ties of the Shinafiyah community enjoyed legitimacy among some segments in Shinafiyah that the Baath state could not always overrule. For example, the local elite aided in mediating conflicts and provided both economic and social assistance to the outliers of the community.[346] One interviewee, for example, born in the early 1960s to a poor family within his clan, was economically sustained by his extended family who had a thriving thread business. This phenomenon of elites assisting the marginalised was, according to him, widespread in Shinafiyah.[347]

Moreover, local Baathists were as much tied to Shinafiyah through family, marriage, or friendship as non-Baathists.[348] The local elite therefore had significant influence on the local Baathists as a result of those ties. For a Baathist, offending the local notables could isolate him and his family from the community, which could in turn affect the quality of his or her life in Shinafiyah.[349] In the long term, isolation would decrease the local Baathist his or her power and influence in the community because influence in Shinafiyah was largely defined by one's ties to it.[350] Therefore, it was important for high-ranking Baathists from Shinafiyah to stay on the good side of the local notables, their associated friends, and family members.

Local notables (i.e. heads of large families), at least in Shinafiyah, sometimes had more power and influence than the local Baathists who could not always rely on assistance from the state to impose their Baathist will because of the state's hegemonic contraction. The different ties the people of Shinafiyah had with each other and the power of the local

[345]Roger D. Petersen characterizes a community in the following way 'If "community" can be reduced to one measurable aspect, it would be a high level of face-to-face contact, (…) and stability of social relations between members'; Ibid., 16- 21.
[346] Interview with A.A.H., Netherlands, April 7, 2018.
[347] Interview with A.N.T, Netherlands, April 15, 2019.
[348] Interview with A.A.H.
[349] Kipling D. Williams, 'Ostracism: The kiss of social death', *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 1 (2007)1,236-238.
[350] Tönnies, *Community and Civil Society*, Ferdinand Tönnies, 28-42; Interview with A.J.H., Netherlands, April 13, 2018.

elites prevented the local regime collaborators from gaining total control of Shinafiyah. This opened space for disobedience and contestation.[351] The following anecdote demonstrates this mechanism more clearly.

One interviewee told the story of how he was walking outside at night, somewhere around 11 pm, and two people from the *Amn* (security service) stopped him and started hitting him, asking what he was doing there at that time. The interviewee told me that he was just going to visit one of his peers, but he told the *Amn* that he just came back from visiting an important Syed of a big family, to whom he was also related. The two men then stopped hitting the interviewee and quickly walked away. The next day, this interviewee went to see the important Syed to tell him what happened, but to his surprise he found the two men who had beaten him the day before apologising and begging the Syed for forgiveness for having harassed his family member.[352]

This is only one example of many, but it indicates that local notables with strong ties to the community provided some relief and protection against the regime. The Shinafis were conscious of the fact that their social ties to the local elite could be a bulwark against the repression of the regime. This realisation was purposefully exploited in order to contest the regime:

> The Baath Party always pressured me to come to the party centre, but I always told them no. I could do this because my brother was a security officer and my father was a friend to Abu S [Important local Baath Party member] this deflected them off from me.[353]

However, distinct from the power of the local elites that guarded Shinafiyah from the full onslaught of the Baathists, the local Baathists themselves also aimed to have a positive reputation among the non-elites of Shinafiyah. This prompted some Baathists to support the people of Shinafiyah against the regime to improve their reputation in Shinafiyah. This indirectly assisted the conditions for regime contestation in Shinafiyah as well.

[351] Petersen, *Resistance and rebellion*, 16.
[352] Interview with A.J.H., Netherlands, April 13, 2018.
[353] Interview with H.H., Netherlands, March 13, 2018.

### 2.3.3 Reputation and information

A community is fundamentally defined by a high rate of face-to-face interaction; everyone can be rapidly identified and credited or discredited according to their reputation.[354] The reasons for crediting or discrediting someone are culturally and historically contingent. The more favourable reputation one has in a community, the more respected and influential this person is. In this regard, individuals in Shinafiyah either felt the need to improve their reputation or to avoid having a negative reputation. This impacted the behaviour of both regime collaborators and ordinary inhabitants of Shinafiyah. An exploration of the role of reputation awards in Shinafiyah reveals how some individuals were able and willing to contest the regime and why some regime collaborators had to refrain from coercing the people excessively.

Obtaining a good reputation within a community is culturally contingent. Based on my interviews, I was able to conceptualise an ideal characteristic that people considered worthy of a good reputation in Shinafiyah. First, a good man is pious, hospitable, good mannered, truthful, and he respects the status ascribed to men of religion and to tribal notables. He maintains family ties and is loyal to Shinafiyah.[355] Additionally, the term *Ahal al-Wiliyah* ('family of the district') was often used to describe a trustworthy inhabitant of Shinafiyah – someone who placed the interests and reputation of Shinafiyah above all else. The term *Ibn-Ashira* ('son of a tribe') was used to refer to a person who was raised with tribal manners, which prohibit both the powerful and the weak from cursing, from commandeering, and from behaving in other uncouth ways, even during a hostile situation.[356] One soldier from Shinafiyah who considered himself an *Ibn-Ashira* explained:

> The army shows you the ugliness of Saddam Hussein, why? There is this guy who is a *Serseri* [immoral person], depraved, heedless but only because he has a star and carries the name general can start commandeering you, and you yourself are a *Ibn-Ashira,* son of good

[354] Petersen, *Resistance and rebellion*, 20.
[355] See also Malcolm n. Quint, 'The Idea of Progress in an Iraqi Village', *Middle East Journal* 12 ( 1958) for a similar example in the village of Umn al-Nahr.
[356] Phone interview with M.A.S., Canada, April 4, 2018.

> people, and this guy starts commanding you to do what he wants, that is oppression.[357]

The interviewee indicated that in the army he had to listen to someone who did not adhere to tribal forms of politeness and respect, and the interviewee considered this part of the oppression.

Many who were unable to gain a positive reputation in Shinafiyah through the above-mentioned values saw the Baath Party as a means to improve their reputation outside of the known avenues defined by the dominant values of Shinafiyah.[358] However, this reputation-building strategy backfired because diverging from Shinafiyah's dominant values resulted in sanctions against an individual's reputation. Interviewees explained that the Baathists were considered disloyal to family and tribe, criminals, irreligious infidels (the secularism of Baathism was known), and they were not considered *Ahal Wilaya* because they placed regime interests over the interests of Shinafiyah.[359] Therefore, joining the Baath Party and seeking a positive reputation outside of the established community values would lower one's reputation in the eyes of the community.

An interviewee whose father owned a small farm in the outskirts of Shinafiyah, explained that voluntarily joining and supporting the party had social repercussions, even if you joined but did not believe in Baathism:

> The Party early on was known for what it was and therefore already hated. The party was hated by everyone because it was known to be a criminal group, let alone all the executions and arrests they did (…) you see, joining the party whether you are really a criminal or not, will automatically cause people to hate you, people won't trust you anymore (…) the social climate will directly label a voluntarily party member as hated. [360]

[357] Interview with H.H., Netherlands, March 13, 2018.
[358] Interview with A.J.H., Netherlands, April 13, 2018.
[359] I base this statement on how my ten interviewees characterized Baathists in their discourse.
[360] Interview with A.J.H., Netherlands, April 13, 2018.

The interviewee explained that even a sympathetic Baathist under certain conditions could and would betray other individuals of Shinafiyah at any time if the circumstances would change. [361]

The Baath Party members from Shinafiyah who chose to be publicly Baathist and to collaborate with the regime were also conscious of how important reputation was in a small village like Shinafiyah. As a result, some regime collaborators were vulnerable to reputation rewards and punishments and acted accordingly. This reality prompted the Baath Party members to sometimes support the interests of Shinafiyah against the interests of the regime in Baghdad. This placed some restraints on the machine of repression in Shinafiyah and widened the possibilities for regime contestation.

For example, a Baathist that wanted to maintain a good reputation among the community would purposely look the other way when a neighbour did something that was perceived as anti-regime. Some Baathists could, for example, doctor an individual's files so that punishable information on that individual was removed. Sometimes Baathists would simply propose to solve the problem locally.[362] This cooperative attitude towards the village dwellers however was only implemented if non-Shinafi Baathists were not involved or present. If outside representatives of the state were present, the Shinafi Baathists felt obliged to choose the side of the regime against the interests of Shinafiyah. This mechanism is exemplified through an interviewee's experiences with a sympathetic Shinafi Baathist who helped him when he was deserting the army:

> This *Hizbi* [convinced Baathist] was known in the community and was from the community and a friend to the community. Therefore, this person [The Baathist in question] cannot pressure you too much because then must deal with your brothers, father, uncles and the rest of your family at the same time if he [this Baathist] does not do what the government wants, they are going to take him away instead. So, for example if he gets a message from the higher ups to go and arrest a certain person, he arranges through the community [network] that you are quickly informed that the regime will come

[361] Interview with A.J.H., Netherlands, April 13, 2018.
[362] Interview with M.S.H., Netherlands, April 1,2018; Phone interview with M.A.S., Canada, April 4, 2018.

> to your house to take you, so that you can escape. This way, he [the Baathist] avoids being reprimanded by the government and at the same time still maintain his name among the community, he helps you and you help him this way. (…) There are many like him in our kind of places.[363]

If the Baathist was from Shinafiyah and his Baathism was explicit, he tended to be cooperative with locals and let them get away with regime contestation, thus increasing his reputation in the eyes of the Shinafis. However, if state representatives from outside of Shinafiyah were present he would support regime repression because conformism to the regime had priority over striving for a positive reputation in Shinafiyah, which then became too risky. Nonetheless, some Baathists had no interest in maintaining a good name among the community and would even report their own cousins or brothers to the regime. However, because Shinafiyah was close-knit, those who would report their family or friends were well known, and Shinafis were able to effectively avoid them.[364] The case, however, was different with regime supporters who were not explicitly Baathist in the public sphere.

Because reputation was bound to one's performance in the public sphere, reputation only impacted regime collaborators who were explicitly and publicly known to be Baathist. The same interviewee who spoke about the friendly Baathist who helped him desert explained that the real danger did not come from these public Baathists. According to this interviewee, public Baathists were either known friends or if not, he said that "we can just avoid them as and save ourselves the trouble".[365] The real danger came from the secret regime collaborators who did not show any connection to the regime or an explicit support for Baathism in the public sphere but who wrote reports on their family members and neighbours in the private sphere. By keeping their role as collaborators outside of the public sphere, they bypassed the local mechanisms of reputation rewards and therefore limited the space that Baathists friendly to Shinafiya could provide for people to contest the regime.

[363] Interview with M.S.H., Netherlands, April 1,2018.
[364] Interview with A.J.H., Netherlands, April 13, 2018.
[365] Interview with M.S.H., Netherlands, April 1, 2018.

The interviews indicated that people were aware of the nuances between the different types of regime collaborators and therefore were able to act accordingly when they saw opportunities to contest the regime. This covert (and overt) system of information and power was a matrix that governed state-society relations across Iraq. As Stathis Kalyvas has argued, "information is as hard to come by as it is essential" for manoeuvring one's self around the security apparatus of regimes.[366] In the context of a rural village, it is easier to detect regime informants because of the smaller scale and the regular face-to-face contact between people. Therefore, in Shinafiyah, the people were highly aware of the reputation and background of different families and the extent to which they were collaborating or opposing the regime.[367] This was community-embedded knowledge that one could only have accumulated by being a long-time resident in Shinafiyah and by having maintained one's ties with the community. Second, because the village was so small, such information spread rapidly until it became common knowledge whom to trust and whom not to trust. One woman stated the following:

> Among us women, we warned each other about who and whom we should watch out when we talk. It was not always in the open who helped the Baathist regime, some of them were paid to provide information about others to the Baath Party. You were able to recognise them in the amount of freedom they take to talk about politics or the latest news, topics we normally avoided out of fear.[368]

This was vital information if one wanted to successfully contest the regime and to be able to identify allies and who might offer support if there were opportunities for larger-scale regime contestation. Finally, one last point that impacted contestation needs to be discussed – namely, how the subtleties of gender influenced one's ability to contest the regime.

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[366] Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The logic of violence in civil war* (Cambridge 2006) 176.
[367] According to Roger D. Petersen "community histories produce knowledge of who can be trusted, who can be persuaded (and what the best means of persuasion might be), and who must be isolated (or liquidated); Petersen, *Resistance and rebellion*, 18.
[368] Interview with Z.A.M., Netherlands, April 10, 2018.

### 2.3.4 Gender dynamics

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to fully explore the relationship between gender and contestation in Iraq, but the difference between men and women in Iraq during Saddam's reign impacted and defined contestation quite significantly. Thus far, though, it has rarely been studied.[369] Men were idealised as heroic soldiers defending women and children during the reign of Saddam until the intifadah. Civilian men who failed to adhere to this militarised ideal of masculinity were suspect and were more likely to be subjected to the full arsenal of state coercion and punishment. Deserters, teachers, artists, doctors, architects, and anyone else who affirmed his masculinity in ways other than fighting in the war undermined the state's expectations regarding manhood.[370] The above described gender dynamics regarding men in Iraq however already receives significant attention in this thesis because most of the interviewees were men.

Therefore, this section focuses on the gender dynamics that existed between women and the regime. While the gender dynamics within Iraqi society itself also impacted women's abilities for contestation, it is beyond the scope the paper to fully address those; however, Chapter 3 partly addresses women's abilities to engage in contestation from the perspective of gender dynamics within Iraqi society itself.

Because women were not expected to serve at the front, different expectations and forms of contestations mattered in the lives of Iraqi women during the 1980s.[371] Women in Iraq were pressured by the regime to fulfil both the role of a producer in the labour market to support the war effort and the role of a reproducer in the private domestic realm to bolster Iraq's population growth and to create more soldiers.[372] I was unable to gain

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[369] Works on gender in Iraq have thus far mainly focused on the fluctuating quality of life for women because of war, dictatorship, state feminism or patriarchy notable works are and how the Baathist regime used to coopt women's liberation/subjection into its ideology through it public and legal rhetoric: Achim Rohde, *State-Society Relations in Ba'thist Iraq: Facing Dictatorship* (London 2010) 75-119; Noga Efrat, 'Productive or reproductive? The roles of Iraqi Women during the Iraq-Iran War', *Middle Eastern Studies 35* (1999) 2; Nadje Sadig Al-Ali, *Iraqi women: untold stories from 1948 to the present* (London 2007); Suha Omar, 'Women: Honour, Shame and Dictatorship' in: Fran Hazelton (ed.) *Iraq since the Gulf War: Prospects for democracy* (London 1994) 60-71; Qais N. Al-Nouri, 'Iraqi rural women's participation in Domestic Decision-Making', *Journal of Comparative Family studies* 24 (1993) 1, 81-97; Ismael, Jacqueline S., and Shereen T. Ismael, 'Gender and state in Iraq', Suad Joseph (ed.) *Gender and citizenship in the Middle East* (2000) 185-211.

[370] Jennifer Frances Chandler, *No Man's Land: Representations of Masculinities in Iran-Iraq War Fiction,* (Dissertation University of Manchester 2013) 59-64.

[371] Nadje Al-Ali, 'Reconstructing Gender: Iraqi women between dictatorship, war, sanctions and occupation', *Third World Quarterly* 26 (2005) 4-5, 745.

[372] Efrat, 'Productive or reproductive', 30-38.

contact with women who had a job in Shinafiyah during the 1980s, so this thesis is unable to provide an analysis of the relationship between the role of productive women and regime contestation. This thesis can however comment on the expectations of the regime for women to be reproducers and how that expectation affected the homebound women of Shinafiyah. The regime's expectation for women to stay in the private realm for reproduction automatically resulted in women being perceived as harmless by the regime. They were seen as fulfilling their reproductive role, for example, of housewife, mother, and dutiful daughter. Women were therefore, at least within the confines of their home, not directly targeted by the regime.

For example, one male interviewee who deserted the army in 1988 and hid in his own house told how a local Baathist who was accompanied by several outsider Baathists came to his house. The local Baathist prevented the outsiders from collectively entering the house and raiding it by explaining to the outsider Baathists that this was a house owned by a known family and that it was "mainly filled with women". The outsider Baathists then agreed to not raid the house and allowed the local Baathist to ask the women from behind the door whether they had seen anything lately.[373] This indicates that to a certain extent disturbing woman in their roles in the domestic realm was something the regime avoided and considered to be dishonourable.[374]

However, women in the public sphere were monitored by the regime because of their potential subversion of the regime's expectations by refusing to fulfil their reproductive roles. One female interviewee explained this difference between private and public expectations:

> I could not go [outside] where I wanted to go of course. I was afraid (…) but this also prevented me from being personally confronted by the Baath Party or the regime. I felt safe with my family.[375]

[373] Interview with M.S.H., Netherlands, April 1, 2018.
[374] Nadje Al-Ali, 'Iraqi women and gender relations: redefining difference', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 35 (2008) 3, 405-418 and Suha Omar, 'Women: Honour, Shame and Dictatorship' in: Fran Hazelton (ed.) *Iraq since the Gulf War: Prospects for democracy* (London 1994) 60-71.
[375] Interview with Z.A.M., Netherlands, April 10, 2018.

That women mainly stayed home did not mean that they did not suffer the full vengeance of the regime but rather that they suffered from the regime the context of their domestic life. For example, one woman speaking about her family situation at home said the following:

> In the war many of our older male members were lost to the war. The war really ruined our family. (…) My mother however could only cry and do a supplication to God against Saddam, cursing him (…) by the age of 12 I was already extensively exposed to the political situation in Iraq. This made me conscious that we were in a war, that we were living in a dictatorship. [376]

When this interviewee was asked what she did when she had a complaint against the regime, she said, 'I told God'. [377]

Another female interviewee provided another story in which one classmate refused to wear the obligatory uniform to school. Moreover, she purposefully wore the black *abaya*, which is a garb that covers the whole body and is mainly an expression of religiousness – a very risky act under a regime that severely repressed public piety.[378] This classmate went even further: She explicitly preached the importance of religion, life, death, and the hereafter. The interviewee explained that everyone avoided interacting with her out of a fear of being punished. The interviewee explained that this classmate was only able to openly contest the regime's restrictions on religion because she came out of a family of only daughters and a very old father. From the perspective of the regime, harassing or punishing her family would possibly limit this daughter's ability to marry and reproduce children who could serve the Iraqi state. However, this religious girl at school was consistently harassed and marginalised by the female teachers (who were high Baathists). Within the context of school, regime loyalists did persecute her because of her defiance of the regime but not to the extent that it would undermine her ability to get married and have children.[379]

[376] Interview with Z.A.M., Netherlands, April 10, 2018.
[377] Interview with Z.A.M.
[378] Faust, *The Ba'athification of Iraq*, 36.
[379] Interview with A.A.S., Netherlands, April 17, 2018.

In short, being a woman in a village like Shinafiyah under Baathist Iraq provided some shelter from direct regime repression. Nonetheless, women suffered indirectly due to the deaths of their male family members, their limited mobility, and the psychological and emotional consequences of fear. However, because the regime had an interest in benefitting from women's reproductive potential, they were spared from being excessively punished and monitored. This allowed women the space to articulate the inarticulable because of the regime's interest in maintaining the nation's reproductive capabilities. Indirectly this only amplified anti-regime sentiment in Shinafiyah

Due to Shinafiyah's geographic location, social ties, the significance of reputation, the wide distribution of communal information, and gender nuances, people had ample opportunities to contest the regime. However, such opportunities need to be balanced against the constant state of fear, the unexpectedness and ruthlessness of the regime, and the ubiquity of informers and collaborators. Nonetheless, the contestation structures of Shinafiyah were important building blocks for creating networks and infrastructures that were mobilisable for larger operations of contestation, such as the intifadah. Furthermore, these conditions allowed for specific forms of contestation that could significantly impact state policy and communicate an anti-regime stance to potential allies.

## 2.4 Weapons of the Iraqi weak

Like many village communities in the Middle East after World War II, Shinafiyah had to contend with a centralised government that penetrated and impacted local socio-political hierarchies and caused resentment.[380] As stated above, an important characteristic of a community is extensive face-to-face contact. Additional characteristics of a particularly strong community are 'a common set of beliefs' and most importantly 'norms of reciprocity' that encourage returning favours and assisting each another.[381] The Baathist regime disrupted Shinafiyah's shared beliefs, social ties, and its norm of reciprocity through in three ways: religion, the war, and the Baath Party's structure and ideology. These three focal points also provoked simultaneous forms of contestation. The

[380] Daniel Bates and Amal Rassam, *Peoples and Cultures of the Middle-East* (1983 New Jersey) 270-274.
[381] Petersen, *Resistance and rebellion,* 16,21.

contestation people engaged in, in relation to these focal points had three consequences: the emergence of a latent infrastructure of contestation for collective action, the public communication of one's anti-regime stance, and policy change.

### 2.4.1 Religion, beliefs, and anti-Baathism

Shared religious beliefs and Islamic morality defined the cohesiveness and shared identity of Shinafiyah. All interviewees emphasised the ever-present collective memory of the martyrdom of Hussein ibn Ali ibn Abu Talib (670 AD) during their time in Shinafiyah. Imam Hussain, as the Shia call him, was a revered Islamic saint who is remembered to have opposed the corrupt Caliph Yazid ibn Muawiya and was murdered for it. This event is annually mourned during *Muharam* (Islamic New Year) by Shia Muslims for a period of 40 days. The rituals and narratives surrounding the mourning of Imam Hussain consolidated a shared identity and affirmed a solidarity among the villagers that transcended class divisions.[382] While it is difficult to retrace the religiosity and the number of practising Muslims in Shinafiyah, religious Islamic norms dominated the public sphere in Shinafiyah. People understood that they were expected to not transgress Islamic boundaries in public. For example, drinking alcohol in public was forbidden, and men and women dressed modestly and did not publicly interact.[383]

The Baath Party however considered religion a dangerous counter-narrative that could undermine the monopoly of the Baath on the Iraqi nation.[384] The Baath actively repressed religion in the public sphere during the 1980s. When the interviewees were questioned about why they resented the party, they stressed how the party tried to repress widely shared religious convictions and passions in Shinafiyah.[385] One woman however explained that over the years, the events surrounding *Muharram* were increasingly repressed. People were forced to read the tragedy of Imam Hussain in private, and the forms of *Muharram* mourning allowed in public were superficial because they did not

[382] See: Jabbar, *The Shi'ite movement in Iraq* , 186-198, for an extensive discussion how the mourning of Imam Hussain created solidarity and a shared identity in Iraqi villages.
[383] Interview with H.H., Netherlands, March 13, 2018.
[384] Faust, *The Ba'thification of Iraq,* 129.
[385]As recent archival research proved, the repression of popular religious rites and commemorations was deliberate Baath policy during the 1980s. The regime also flooded publicly allowed commemorations with informants and security personnel to ad hoc repress moments when religious passion crossed unacceptable lines see : Ibid., 139.

contain substantive discussions of religion or the meaning of Hussein's martyrdom.[386] When an interviewee was asked why he disliked the Baathist regime, he said that "reading about Imam Hussain became forbidden, learning about Imam Hussain was important. Imam Hussain was our symbol. It is because of Imam Hussain we fight against oppression".[387]

This resentment against the Baath that arose out of Shinafiyah's religious passions had little to do with a person's own religiosity. The resentment of the Baath's anti-Islamic policy was also held by non-practising Muslims. For example, one former soldier stated the following:

> The party expects you to conduct war against religion and Imam Hussain, this is something people [in Shinafiyah] do not agree with, no matter what you tell them, and I am referring to both the practising and non-practising Muslim.[388]

A non-practising Shinafi, who was eighteen during the intifadah, stated the following:

> Look I was not bad, I did nothing *haram* (religiously forbidden) like drinking, stealing or gambling, and I did not always pray and fast (…) but I always considered Imam Hussain important and helped with cooking duty during *Muharam*.[389]

However, resentment against the Baathists was not only a reaction against their anti-religious policies. Instead, there was already a distrust regarding the regime and its secular policies before it started excessively repressing religion after 1979:

> You see, at a very young age, when we were obliged to pay contribution to the party at school, my friend's father who was a learnt man told us: "Yes, just pay them but they (the Baath Party)

[386] Interview with A.A.S., Netherlands, April 17, 2018.
[387] Interview with A.N.T., Netherlands, April 15, 2018.
[388] Interview with A.J.H., Netherlands, April 13, 2018.
[389] Interview with A.A.H., Netherlands, April 7, 2018.

> are *Kuffar* (infidels), don't become a Baathist, that is haram" since that day I took that that message to heart.[390]

Resentment against the Baath was also often formulated in religious terms. The Baath were not only an unjust regime but also an irreligious and therefore immoral regime. The repression of religious beliefs in Shinafiyah also provoked religion-based contestation. One of the interviewees, who was 22 during the intifadah, recalled how willing he was to take risks in this regard:

> I used to get some cake and tea, sit in front of my home, turn on an audio recording of Imam Hussain's martyrdom as loud as possible, on purpose while I knew that security people were around.[391]

Contesting the regime with religion also took on more nuanced expressions. For example, two interviewees explained that while their fathers both prayed and fasted, they never advised them to perform religious obligations. It was considered too risky to promote religion among one's children. This demonstrates that publicly promoting religion was considered purposeful regime contestation. This confirms how interviewees often spoke about known anti-regime figures in Shinafiyah. The interviewees often tied the anti-regime stance of these known dissidents to their religiosity. The son of a famous rebellious figure in Shinafiyah explained how his father fought the regime by publicly promoting religious practice:

> For example, when I was walking with my father, I would see him approach a youngster or anyone for that matter, that he knows isn't fasting and tells him and in a very well-mannered way approaches him and tells him "It looks as if you are not fasting? Are you alright? There seem to be no light in your face today?" so my father tried in these kinds of ways, by imploring people to pray and fast, people come to him for advice regarding religious issues, during such

[390] Interview with A.N.T., Netherlands, April 15, 2018.
[391] Interview with H.H., Netherlands, March 13, 2018.

> situations he manifested his opposition to regime, but not out in the open of course, only among individuals that can be trusted.[392]

Another interviewee told a peculiar story regarding religious contestation:

> I used to have a friend who used to be part of the Baathist political education committee in the army. One day he randomly gave me book on 'how to pray' I told him this will get us executed. He told me I should not worry just spread them around.[393]

These religiously conscious individuals, as my interviewees explained, were extremely respected in the community and had a positive reputation in Shinafiyah, thus amplifying the role of religion in defying the regime.[394] As the son of that same famous anti-regime figure stated, "Religion became opposition and opposition became religion".[395]
Practising religion in the private sphere was just as important as practising religion in the public sphere for individuals who wanted to engage in regime contestation. By practising and maintaining religion outside of the eyes of the regime, people remained sensitive and mobilisable to incursions that were made against local beliefs. Because Shinafiyah's shared beliefs were perpetuated in private they could be easily transformed into collective regime contestation in public. One incident that indicates the power of Shinafiyah's commitment to their religious beliefs was when a bar that sold alcohol (an Islamic taboo) was opened in 1980.

In line with Saddam's secular politics, the opening of liquor establishments was imposed all over Iraq, including in Shinafiyah.[396] The Shinafiyah bar was managed by outsiders. According to my interviewees, nobody from Shinafiyah dared to be seen at that

[392] Phone interview with S.J., Iraq, April 19, 2018.
[393] Interview with A.N.T, Netherlands, April 15, 2018.
[394] Interview with A.A.H. Netherlands, April 7, 2018. and Phone interview with S.J. , Iraq, April 19, 2018.
[395] Phone interview S.J.
[396] Mona K. Oshana, *Look Beyond the Fire: Daily Struggles Under Saddam's Regime* (Oklahoma 2007) 77; Faust, *The Ba'thification of Iraq,* 139.

bar. While drinking in Shinafiyah did happen, public drinking was unacceptable. Shinafiyah's drinkers only drank at home where nobody could see them. Therefore, the opening of a bar in Shinafiyah provoked outrage. Two interviewees explained to me that after extensive complaints and hostility over the presence of the bar, it was quickly closed in 1983 and never opened again. When asked how this was possible, one interviewee stated the following: "Simple, we are a religious and rural society how can we accept a bar in our town".[397] Thus, Shinafiyah's persistent religious beliefs in the face of Baathism was a significant force the regime could not easily overcome. People understood this and used it against the regime. If religious beliefs were challenged too much, it could provoke collective mobilisation, as was the case with the closing of Shinafiyah's bar.

In short, the people of Shinafiyah partly resented the regime because it undermined their shared beliefs and convictions of Shia Islam. People expressed this resentment by purposefully promoting religion in the public sphere and by maintaining religious convictions in the private sphere. Both the practice of religion in public and private perpetrated and consolidated a stronger communal belief system and network that was inherently anti-regime. The performance of religiously inspired contestation assisted in communicating the larger presence of anti-regime convictions in Shinafiyah. If the people of Shinafiyah were pressured too much with regard to their religious convictions, the network and infrastructures that were held together through those religious convictions could be easily mobilised for collective action.

### 2.4.2 War and contestation

The community of Shinafiyah was defined by its shared beliefs, social ties and norms, and reciprocity. The impact of the Iran-Iraq War on these three dimensions created both resentment and opportunities for contesting the regime.[398] The Iran-Iraq War wrecked Shinafiyah's social ties. The many men that had to leave Shinafiyah for war had to leave behind a network of parents, children, spouses, and intermediate family who relied on

[397] Interview with A.N.T, Netherlands, April 15, 2018.

[398]The Iran-Iraq war had a manifold of consequences for the people of Iraq, death, rape, oppression, poverty, trauma was inflicted on everyone in one way or another. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore the multifaceted impact war, had on Iraq for its long-term consequences are still to be accounted for. See also: Nige Ashton and Bryan Gibson (ed.) *The Iran-Iraq War: New international perspectives* ( 2014 London); Khoury, *Iraq in wartime.*

them for their sustenance. The young men were also important intermediary figures who cemented and consolidated family and social ties through marriage, friendship, and social service. [399] The loss or the absence of the men was directly felt by everyone in Shinafiyah, as explained by an interviewee who was twelve years old when the Iran-Iraq War began:

> I remember the beginning of the war, it started with a call to those of legible for conscription, I was still young but my brothers and alike reported themselves at the army and not long after that then the martyrs started pouring in, and you know its Shinafiyah so we all know their names, we are a small village'.[400]

As one woman vehemently said, "Saddam was a criminal he did not do anything for us, all he gave us was poverty and a war that took all the youths [young men] away".[401] This sense of social wreckage was very sharply expressed by a paramedic from Shinafiyah, who was asked about his war experience when he served from 1984 until 1989:

> Can you imagine staying with your family and then having to go back to the army, it is as if you go to death not to the army. And this is me who had it relatively good in the war, imagine the person who had to serve at the front. The war is a disaster even in the best situation.[402]

Moreover, even those who refused to go to the army and who stayed in Shinafiyah or deserted still disturbed the social stability of Shinafiyah, as one soldier who served between 1986 and 1989 explained:

> First, you joined the army to save yourself from execution, if they catch you while deserting, they execute you anyways, you joined to

[399] The central role of soldiers in Iraqi society in general has been addressed elsewhere see : Ibrahim Al-Marashi and Sammy Salama, *Iraq's armed forces: an analytical history* (London, Routledge, 2008) 210, 218.
[400] Phone interview with S.J., Iraq, April 19, 2018.
[401] Interview with Z.A.M., Netherlands, April 10, 2018.
[402] Interview with A.N.T, Netherlands, April 15, 2018.

> save your own family, out of respect for your parents. What I mean with respect for your parents is that if you decide to desert you most likely will hide at your parents' house and that will only burden and endanger them [from the regime] (…) your mother will be in a constant state of fear because the party can knock the door at any moment (…) and then when they catch you it will be a disaster they will take everyone, yes even your mother and sisters, and this has also really happened by the way [to other families].[403]

For both the soldiers and those who remained in Shinafiyah, the massive and immeasurable social dislocation caused by the war also caused resentment against the government. All interviewees named the war as an important point of resentment that played a role in their decision to participate in the intifadah. One interviewee, who served seven years in the army, was very articulate in his resentment regarding the war obligations the regime imposed on him:

> It was a dictatorship (…) there was no talk about shortening your military duty or even slightly requesting a small break, no you were expected to serve until we [the regime] tell you bye bye, nothing uglier than this, no law would allow this. You request of me to serve you for three years and let me instead serve eight? On what basis? Like give me an opportunity to go work, to get married, build a life for myself, to live and think like a human being. If you [the regime] take away the peak of my youth and life and waste it on the army, do you honestly imagine that I would excuse and approve the regime? And even then, it was not like you [the regime] approached me with decency and manners that would convince me it is worth fighting for the regime (…) you[the regime] imposed this war on me and not the other way around so when the war was over and you [the regime] proclaimed victory, well I did not see anything of this

[403] Interview with A.J.H., Netherlands, April 13, 2018.

> victory (…) after it all was over and people wanted to get on with their life, what did you [Saddam] do send us into another war![404]

The resentment against the war was partly expressed by deserting from the army. Motivations for deserting might be heterogeneous, but both the regime and the deserters perceived it as dissension against regime policy.[405] Shinafiyah was known to be a hotbed of deserters, and families used their connections to try and hide their deserting son, husband, or cousin from the eyes of the regime. One woman from Shinafiyah explained how hiding a deserter was a tense and complex operation that involved the whole family:

> My brother used to dessert and hide in our house from the army. That was very scary. Especially since, like I said before, my neighbour [whom they suspected to be an informant] used to always visit us and raised the tension in our house. And she knew, she knew he [my brother] was hiding here, because we behaved fearful. And she noticed why a certain door was always closed. However, she did not report us.[406]

On a regular basis, Shinafiyah had to endure raids from the regime looking for deserters. This persecution of deserters reached a highpoint when Shinafiyah was besieged in 1987, and a battle took place between the army and a group of deserters (Chapter 3). Therefore, desertion was considered a serious form of contestation. But it was also a form of contestation for groups of people that did not have the time and money to express their opposition to the regime through other means. The same embittered war veteran from above explained this:

> My desertion was my only way to tell the regime that I oppose them. By deserting I told them "That's it, I can't bear you all no more" the best way to express this message, for me is through deserting, why else would I desert? Clearly, I do not approve of this situation, for if

[404] Interview with M.S.H., Netherlands, April 1, 2018.
[405] Khoury, *Iraq in wartime,* 73.
[406] Interview with A.A.S., Netherlands, April 17, 2018.

> I approved of the situation I would have stayed in the army. But the question remains if I stayed, until how long am I supposed to stay? (…) So, I thought fine, if the [conscription] law only serves you [the regime], then I'll make my own laws and serve myself and leave.[407]

These deserters had a powerful impact on regime policy and were able to change policy to their own advantage. After exerting many resources in finding deserters, the regime felt compelled to revise desertion laws and to issue decrees that pardoned deserters. It is significant to note that the regime invested more in persecuting and punishing deserters than in fighting political opponents organised in social movements like the ICP or Dawah Party.[408] It is therefore also no coincidence that the intifadah was instigated by a mass mutiny, which reflected the Iraqis' most powerful technique of contestation – namely, desertion.[409]

It must also be emphasised that the war experience also nurtured a feeling of emancipation among soldiers and gave a glimpse of freedom from the Baathist regime that could only be experienced in the heat of battle. One-foot soldier explained this feeling:

> At the front there is no party, at the front nobody cares about the party, for the party knows if during the heat of battle he comes asking you to come to a party meeting, you can just shoot the bastard and tell him to get lost (…) you see as long as a fight is going on, the soldier decides what happens and not the party, the bullet talks and not the party.[410]

For those who grew up and have only lived in a totalitarian society, the front might have been the only space that allowed people to imagine a world beyond Baathist repression. Even though soldiers were an important segment of the intifadah, previous research has not addressed how this emancipatory experience at the front assisted and motivated

[407] Interview with M.S.H., Netherlands, April 1,2018.
[408] Khoury, *Iraq in wartime*, 73.
[409] Eric Goldstein, *Endless torment: The 1991 uprising in Iraq and its aftermath* (New York 1992).
[410] Interview with H.H., Netherlands, March 13, 2018.

many to seek a different life by participating in the intifadah.[411] This emancipatory war experience must have assisted regime contestation in the long term and created solidarity among the many war veterans until the intifadah.

In brief, the war created resentment in Shinafiyah because it disrupted the social cohesion of the village. The known unpopularity of the war in Shinafiya also explains why Shinafiyah became a hotbed of deserting and absenteeism from the army and only increased the antagonism against the regime. Simultaneously, an informal network and infrastructure to host all these deserters in Shinafiyah emerged that brought those with anti-regime sentiment closer to each other. The emancipatory experience of many soldiers returning to Shinafiyah must have breathed new life into Shinafiyah. It must have encouraged them to think about a world beyond a constant state of fear, thus amplifying and spreading a growing anti-regime sentiment.

### 2.4.3 Contesting the Baath Party

The Iraqi Baath Party wanted to transform all Iraqis into ideologically dedicated Baathists through a totalitarian strategy that encompassed all fields of social, cultural, economic, and political life.[412] In order to achieve this, the Iraqi Baath Party placed an immense priority on recruiting new members.[413] This task had to be conducted by higher party members (*Udhu Amil* rank and higher) who interacted daily with Iraqi citizens at all levels of society.[414] The fact that higher Baath Party members could kill or imprison anyone who stood in their way created immense pressure and fear in potential recruits. This forced the people of Shinafiya, especially those who had no intrinsic interest to join the party, to cope with the Baath Party's persistent and threatening recruiting fervour. This coping evoked a number of contesting strategies and techniques used to disobey the expectations of the Baath Party.

For example, the Baath Party in Shinafiyah demanded that people participate in party events, meetings, courses, and conferences. This meant that the people of

[411] See for a similar discussion: the emancipatory effect of military service on African American soldiers in the American army during world war two : Christopher S Parker, *Fighting for democracy: Black veterans and the struggle against white supremacy in the postwar South* (New Jersey 2009) 201.
[412] Faust, *The Ba'thification of Iraq,* 6-10.
[413]Ibid., 119.
[414] Dina Rizk Khoury, *Iraq in wartime,* 72.

Shinafiyah had to regularly report and demonstrate their loyalty to the party even if they had no interest in doing so. One war veteran explained how empty these party duties were:

> I was forced to join the party, I had no personal interest in the party nor did I know anything, I did not even understood the different ranks within the party, and during all that time I haven't learnt anything at all (…) so during a meeting they start explaining you the aims and the goals of the party, I did not really pay attention to these things, I did not had any real role in the party anyways (…) you know things like socialism, Arabism and unity and that we are a peaceful nation, and this is your leader, the great comrade Saddam (…) the moment the meeting ends I forget everything they told me.[415]

Despite the lacklustre success in transforming people into convinced Baathists, the regime mainly wanted to monitor and control the people through the party recruitment schemes and activities rather than to transform them into convinced Baathists.[416] Monitoring and controlling movement meant that the state had an interest in always being able to locate citizens to effectively punish them if they worked against state interests.[417] People were expected to always report to their party representative in their own district or workplace so that the regime always knew that the people they were monitoring were present at the location where the regime expected them to be present.[418] This is also why moving one's residence to a different city or village in Iraq required permission from the regime and was rarely granted.[419] Several interviewees explained to me that they went against the party by staying constantly on the move and never remaining in one location. One college student, who went to school in Baghdad, always told his superiors in Baghdad that he reported himself at the party centre in Shinafiyah

[415] Interview with M.S.H., Netherlands, April 1,2018.
[416] Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party,* 201-206.
[417] James C. Scott, *Seeing like a state: how certain schemes to improve the Human condition Have Failed* (New Haven 1998) 1-8.
[418] Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party,* 38.
[419] Interview with A.N.T, Netherlands, April 15, 2018.; International Institute of Social History, Pieter Bogaers Archief, file number 745 R.K. April 2001, Amsterdam.
discusses an extensive case of an Iraqi who had to overcome many hurdles to move from one city in the south of Iraq to Bagdad during the first half of the 1980s.

but always told his superior in Shinafiyah that he reported himself at the party centre at his dormitory in Baghdad. In so doing, he avoided going to meetings most of the time.[420] Another Shinafi explained that he exploited the fact that he had an address where he did not live:

> My original address was in Najaf where my father lived, but I lived in Shinafiyah with my mother and siblings, so if anything would happen the regime would go and try to track me in Najaf (…) I knew I was monitored by them because of the constant reprimands I got from the party (…) I exploited [the different address registration] to my own advantage, I had to, if the regime wanted it they could scratch my whole family from the surface.[421]

Nevertheless, while avoiding the party organisation was possible, nobody could escape the party's constant presence in the workplace, culture, media, and its demands to even use a specific jargon. The Baath Party also functioned through a fixed ideological discourse that people were expected to use, and any deviation from this discourse was strictly monitored.[422] Within the discursive dominance of the Baath Party, people contested the regime by using the discourse to their advantage.[423] Using the regime's contrived ideological jargon against itself was to confuse and contest at the same time. One anecdote was told by a Shinafi who was on security duty at the party centre when the local high Baath representative suddenly decided to go home. This was something this Shinafi found unacceptable and decided to critique him for it in the following way: "You are a traitor to the revolutionary aims of Baath Party." After a few exchanges, a verbal fight broke out, and this Shinafi started saying the following things to his senior:

> You are originally Persian, since the age of Khosrow your ancestors were planted as spies in Iraq, and since that day you resent Iraq, why? Because Iraqis broke the land of Persia and destroyed your

[420] Interview with A.N.T.
[421] Interview with M.S.H., Netherlands, April 1, 2018.
[422] Faust, *The Ba'thification of Iraq,* 31-33.
[423] See Lisa Wedeen, *ambiguities of dominance: Politics, Rhetoric, and symbols In contemporary Syria* (Chicago 1999) 1-24, for a similar case in Baathist Syria.

> empire, that is why since that day you tried to destroy Iraq from the inside, and your presence inside the Baath Party is not to serve the Baath Party but with the intention to destroy Iraq because of your Persian origin.[424]

When this interviewee was asked why he used these words to attack the senior Baath Party member, he explained, "Of course I don't believe the things I am saying, but they do this all the time [The Baathists] so I decided to accuse them for being Persians and alike".[425] To be clear, explicitly critiquing one's superior through discourse was a risky act of contestation that one only utilised under specific conditions that allowed it. In the given example, the fact that both actors were from Shinafiyah and that this confrontation took place in Shinafiyah was an important determinant to the success of contesting the regime through discourse (see previous section).

While it is difficult to measure the direct impact of contesting the regime through movement and discourse, the prevalence of these techniques of contestation indicates an awareness of the ideological hollowness of the Baath Party in Shinafiyah. This awareness of the ideological vacuity of the party only emphasised the lack of legitimacy of the party in Shinafiyah through, for example, publicly neglecting the party and demonstrating its ideological emptiness. Contesting the Baath Party through both discourse and movement communicated to others that the party was ideologically hollow and illegitimate. Alexei Yurchak, who analysed a similar phenomenon in Soviet Russia, argued that the contestation of the system through the mastery and exploitation of ideologically imposed language and rules created "unintended relations" of like-minded people.[426] It is reasonable to argue that the exploitation of the Baath ideology in Shinafiyah created unintended networks of individuals who were aware of the emptiness of the Baath Party. Demonstrating the emptiness of the Baath Party in the long term only strengthened the network of the anti-regime movement in Shinafiyah.

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[424] Phone interview with M.A.S., Canada, April 4, 2018.
[425] Phone interview with M.A.S. and see Ofra Bengio, *Saddam's word: political discourse in Iraq* (Oxford 2002) 98-106 on the prevalence of the 'Persian Other' in Baathist discourse in Iraq.
[426] Alexei Yurchack, *Everything was forever until it was no more: the last Soviet generation* (New Jersey 2013) 77-126.

In brief, the people of Shinafiyah resented the regime because it undermined their shared beliefs, social ties, and norms of reciprocity. This resentment provoked contestation, which simultaneously communicated to others that there was a larger number of people who resented the regime. Second, these acts of contestation assisted in the emergence of a latent underground infrastructure that connected a larger group of people together who were contesting the regime. Finally, these small acts of contestation occasionally influenced state policy to the advantage of the regime contesters.

## 2.5 Conclusion

This chapter starts with the discussion of the spontaneity of the intifadah. It argues that despite the unexpected and chaotic nature of the intifadah, the specific organised patterns of the intifadah still need to be accounted for. I propose that the intifadah was preceded by mobilisation structures that had formed through 12 years of interaction with the Baathist regime. Therefore, the intifadah was not only a simple 'reaction' to years of suffering but also a product of the networks, infrastructures, and accumulated information obtained through twelve years of regime contestation.

In those twelve years, the regime enforced its oppression and co-optation on Shinafiyah, creating massive suffering. Notwithstanding the structural conditions defined by hegemonic contraction, local elites, reputation rewards, local communication structures, and gender dynamics, several opportunities for regime contestation emerged in Shinafiyah. For example, deserting, practising religion, or simply neglecting party duty helped the emergence of infrastructures and social links, which that in turn pulled in a larger group in the act of regime contestation and to create vital mobilisation structures. Second, these acts of contestation communicated anti-regime sentiments among a wide segment of the population of Shinafiyah and asserted the lack of legitimacy of the Baath Party in Shinafiyah.

The next step is to understand how these mobilisation structures helped mobilise the people of Shinafiyah on the eve of the intifadah and how these same mobilising structures were apparent during the uprising.

# Chapter 3:

# The history of the intifadah

The intifadah was executed differently throughout Iraq because of the country's diverse social composition, experiences with the regime, and political convictions.[427] In addition, the spatial dispersion not only affected the way in which different rebel groups dealt with regime collaborators during the revolt, how heavily the regime cracked down on the rebellion, and the success of rebel governance during the intifadah. This chapter takes a preliminary step to understand why and how the intifadah erupted differently throughout Iraq, by comprehensively illuminating how the intifadah took place in Shinafiyah. Therefore, this chapter provides a historical narrative on the origins, causes, and end of the intifadah in Shinafiyah. In addition, this chapter sheds light on an alternative understanding on the causes of the intifadah by specifically focusing on the crucial year of 1989.

## 3.1 Planting the seeds of fear in Shinafiyah (1979–1982)

By 1980, all of the Shinafiyah villagers had their first experience with the nature of the regime, and some experiences were more violent than others. Shinafiyah was a tight-knit society, and any individual regime incursion was directly felt and affected even the villagers who were not directly involved with the incursion. For example, while political activists were individually persecuted and punished in Iraq, nonpoliticised citizens of Iraq were forced to familiarise themselves with the power of the regime through increased restrictions, threats, and public demonstrations of capital punishments.

For many of the generation who grew up under the Saddam regime, especially the portion that was active mostly during the intifadah (those born in the late 1960s), they learnt to fear the regime during their first year of middle school. Anyone who entered middle school in Shinafiyah after 1979 was presented with a Baath Party membership form that each was expected to sign. However, there was a special condition to this form

[427] Khoury, *Iraq in wartime: soldiering, martyrdom and remembrance* (Cambridge 2013) 133.

namely: "When you signed this form, you signed against your own execution."[428] When persons did not sign this form, they implied that they and their families were members of another party—which, under Iraqi law, was punishable with the death penalty.[429] An interviewee who entered middle school in 1980 vividly remembers the fear it provoked:

> It was a very fearful situation. Imagine that if you did not sign it, you were essentially rejecting the party, which meant so much more than merely getting expelled from school. It placed you in a direct conflict with the regime and opened the door to many problems.[430]

Nonetheless, in the first three years after Saddam took power, the situation in Shinafiyah was relatively stable. However, the feeling of being watched and monitored prevailed in Shinafiyah:

> Nothing major happened in Shinafiyah the first few years, but I just felt watched. I started seeing security personnel everywhere, and the mosques began to be watched. The climate in Shinafiyah was changing.[431]

Another interviewee vehemently explained that oppression in Iraq was not only about direct physical harm but also about the psychological pressure one experiences from the excessive monitoring, and that was just as much a part of the regime as the physical violence it exercised on its people:

> Don't expect to directly see injustice with your own eyes and still not know what is going on. Every person, even the one person who the regime did not have an eye on, when asked about his or her experiences with the regime, will tell you the same as I tell you(...) People just feel it [the oppression](...) It was in less than a year after

[428] Interview with A.J.H., Netherlands, April 13, 2018.
[429] Abdullah Thabit, *Dictatorship, imperialism and chaos: Iraq since 1989* (London 2006) 29.
[430] Interview with A.J.H., Netherlands, April 13, 2018.
[431] Interview with A.N.T, Netherlands, April 15, 2018.

> Khomeini appeared in Iran that Saddam attacked Iran, and this is the biggest evidence that [Saddam] is aggressive, dictatorial, criminal. From that moment, the situation became clear [that you live in an unjust dictatorship], but people [Saddam apologists] are not convinced; they only accept concrete proof [i.e., physical and visible violent oppression].

Shinafiyah was especially susceptible to regime monitoring and coercion because of its dominant beliefs, traditions, and convictions that preceded the Saddam regime. The regime excessively monitored and threatened the people of Shinafiyah about their views in three specific events: the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the execution of Muhammad Baqr al-Sadr, and the start of the Iran-Iraq War. The regime expected that people would support Iraq against Iran and that both of revered ayatollahs had been criminalised in the eyes of the people; any divergence from these expectations of the regime was severely punished.[432] These expectations directly and unintentionally placed Shinafiyah in a conflicting situation with the regime. In Shinafiyah, people adored not only Islamic morality but also clerics who perfectly embodied Islamic standards. Some Interviewees from Shinafiyah explained that while they were not so religious, they always had respect and sympathy for clerics like Khomeini or Muhammad Baqr al-Sadr. When the Islamic Revolution occurred in Iran, people were elated in Shinafiyah—not because of disdain for Iraq but because of their respect for Islam and its clerics:

> I remember my street in Shinafiyah. Everyone was very happy, and through the radio we heard about Khomeini. Back then, there were no TVs or satellite networks, so we relied on radio. The majority of the people welcomed this [the Iranian Revolution]. When people see a Syed [Khomeini] who has a turban and studied in Najaf and then comes and rules a country, this is something very special. You have to understand we are talking about an Islamic tendency and, in specific, a Shia tendency [during the Islamic Revolution], and people already leaned on that in Shinafiyah.[433]

[432] Achim Rohde, *State-Society Relations in Ba'thist Iraq: Facing Dictatorship* (London 2010) 31-49.
[433] Interview with A.J.H., Netherlands, April 13, 2018.

However, having such sympathies for the two clerics and the Islamic Revolution was quickly seen as a political stance that questioned Saddam's legitimacy.[434] As tensions escalated between Iran and Iraq, listening to Iranian radio had to happen in secret. The regime monitored people's loyalty to Iraq.[435] As a counter to people's elated reaction to the Islamic Revolution, the government began to publicly blacken the revolution and discredit Khomeini in the media and during local party meetings.[436] In April 1980, the regime executed Muhammad Baqr al-Sadr, who had supported the Islamic Revolution.[437] This was a clear message that everyone who had sympathies with the Islamic Revolution or al-Sadr would face the same fate. The execution of al-Sadr had struck fear in the heart of Shinafiyah. A Shinafi who was 18 years old in 1980 explained that during high school, he had been obliged to sit in a Baath Party meeting dedicated to the execution of al-Sadr in Shinafiyah:

> We were forced to participate at a meeting at school. A speech was held by, may God curse him, a Baathist; his name was Tarek. He was also the head secretary of the school, but he was a Baathist, and he received a decree to inform everyone that Muhammad Baqr al-Sadr had been executed. However, we did not know whether [Sadr] had really been executed or whether this was just a ploy from the government or whether they just wanted to measure people's support for the regime's actions. Anyway, Tarek started announcing to us that the execution of Muhammad Baqr al-Sadr had taken place. We then started making sounds of disapproval: "How could this have happened and why? This is so sad." Tarek quickly reacted to such comments by saying, "Anyone who talks like that is a criminal and a traitor." The people were very hurt by this comment, but nobody could say anything—the fear was really intense. The

[434] Rohde, *State-Society Relations in Ba'thist Iraq, 31-49*.
[435] Aaron M. Faust, *The Ba'thification of Iraq: Saddam Hussein's Totalitarianism* (Texas 2015) 31-56.
[436] Interview with H.H., Netherlands, March 13, 2018.; Dina Rizk Khoury, *Iraq in wartime: soldiering, martyrdom and remembrance* (Cambridge 2013) 60.
[437] Liam Anderson and Gareth Stansfield, *The future of Iraq: dictatorship, democracy, or division?* (New York 2005) 124-127.

> Baath Party had everything under control—Saddam, his gang, and the security service. (…) I will never forget that meeting. [438]

Finally, the Iran-Iraq War disoriented, discomforted, and put fear in the people of Shinafiyah. No one understood why this war had to happen or why it must be supported.[439] One woman vividly remembered the beginning of the war: "The stability disappeared. People thought it was a crisis. The economy was going down, and people even started buying food and preparing; they were not sure what was going to happen."[440]

Because the Iraqi Army relied heavily on conscripts, the regime strained and forced people to enlist in the army against their will; this only increased the fear and stress in Shinafiyah. One interviewee remembered those fearful times: "Some people had connections within the regime; other people just stayed silent and hoped for a blessing [so that they did not have to go to the front]."[441] Some people in Shinafiyah felt besieged, especially by the prospect of having to go to war. One interviewee said, "We wanted to talk about this war, but nobody would want to listen; it was as if I was only talking to myself."[442]

Within the first three years of Saddam's reign, the enthusiasm, sympathies, and personal beliefs of the Shinafiyah people were severely suffocated, and gradually a feeling of psychological alienation from Iraq's government took root among a segment in Shinafiyah. According to a war veteran from Shinafiyah, "Life was a prison."[443] However this was only the beginning, for the regime would soon start physically harassing the people of Shinafiyah.

### 3.1.2 A reign of terror (1982–1986)

> "For Saddam the decree of execution is like drinking a glass of water."[444]

[438] Interview with A.N.T, Netherlands, April 15, 2018.
[439] Interview with A.J.H., Netherlands, April 13, 2018.
[440] Interview with A.A.S., Netherlands, April 17, 2018.
[441] Interview with A.N.T.
[442] Ibid.
[443] Interview with H.H., Netherlands, March 13, 2018.
[444] Interview with H.H.

In 1982, the regime went through an internal political crisis, and the brunt of the Iran-Iraq War started to affect the quality of life in Iraq. To mediate this double crisis, the regime tightened its grip on society and violently radicalised its coercion and doing both directly affected the people of Shinafiyah. In the first two years of the war, Saddam Hussein isolated most of the civilians from the hardship of war through a successful "guns and butter" policy.[445] However, by 1982, Iraq's initial military success was reversed by Iranian offensives, and Iraq's losses were only increasing. Iraq's living standard was slowly decreasing, preventing the regime from isolating civilians from the war situation.[446] In 1982, attempts were made by military officers and other high-level Baathists to push Saddam aside and offer a peace treaty to Iran, resulting in a political crisis for the Saddam regime. This treaty, however, was rejected by Iran. After this failed coup, Saddam decided to crack down on all of his opponents within the government and outside of it and to tighten his grip on the Iraqi people. This meant not only the execution of several officers but also a bloody crackdown on the Kurdish parties, the Dawah Party (and their sympathisers), and the communists.[447] This crackdown on all of the Baath regime's opponents was also felt in Shinafiyah. The dreadful atmosphere experienced since 1979 finally escalated to extensive arrests and house raids at the end of 1982:

> Many incidents happened during that time (…)especially in 1982. A major sweep of arrests took place all over Iraq. People with sympathies with the Hakeem family [known clerical family], or those suspected to be in the Dawah Party, or those suspected to be a supporter of Iran—they all disappeared in the prisons. This also happened in Shinafiyah, especially to the people in the cultivated class, such as the teachers and students; many of those disappeared.

[445] Murray Williamson and Kevin M. Woods, *The Iran-Iraq War: A Military and Strategic History* (Cambridge 2014) 189.
[446] Cherine Shams al Dine, 'Qadisiyat Saddam : the gamble that did not pay of' in: Jordi, Tejel, Peter Sluglett, and Riccardo Bocco (eds.) *Writing the Modern History of Iraq: Historiographical and Political Challenges* ( Singapore 2012) 271-286.
[447] Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, (Colorado 2012) 195-205; Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq* (Cambridge 2007) 227-232; Khoury, *Iraq in wartime,* (Cambridge 2013) 110-111.

> A good friend of mine was taken as well in that year, and I really believed they would take me away as well.[448]

One woman talked about her brother who had made a joke about the government and was taken away during that time.[449] Another Shinafi remembered many of his neighbours' and even his cousin's being taken away and added that "many people of many different backgrounds were taken away."[450] However, for the majority of ordinary Iraqis, the iron fist of the regime was felt in the measures taken to conscript more men into the army. By 1983, the state had intensified its pressure on Iraqi men for conscription duty. Between 1980 and 1983, the soldiers at the front increased from 242,000 to 475,000. [451] By 1987, the number of soldiers at the front was a staggering 850,000 men.[452] In addition, the regime, to maintain its war effort, used extreme fear tactics on its soldiers to ensure their loyalty during the war effort and to prevent them from deserting or doing anything else that could have damaged the war effort. A Shinafi whose conscription duty began in 1983 described his experience of these fear tactics and the pressure to conscript:

> Record this: In the first three months of basic training at the military training centre of Najaf, they called upon us and told us to go outside of the centre. "Where are we going?" we asked. They said, "Your presence is expected at the shooting field." *Shooting field* was the word they used—that was all. We had no idea why we had to go there; did we have to go there to shoot to train? Why? They [the commander] replied, "That is none of your business now; just come, stay silent, and sit down, and then we will tell you what will happen." They absolutely refused to tell us beforehand why we had to go to the shooting field (…) So we went to the field, and I saw exactly thirteen wooden poles. Then a car arrived, and high members of the Baath Party stepped out and started talking and shouting, "Oh, you traitors; O, you criminals!" and thirteen people

[448] Interview with A.N.T, Netherlands, April 15, 2018.
[449] Interview with A.A.S., Netherlands, April 17, 2018.
[450] Interview with A.J.H., Netherlands, April 13, 2018.
[451] Ibrahim Al-Marashi and Sammy Salama, *Iraq's armed forces: an analytical history*, (London 2008) 139.141.
[452]Al-Marashi, *Iraq's Armed Forces*, 143.

> were tied to the poles and instantly executed, right in front of our own eyes! The reason why these people were executed, they told us, was "neglecting their military duty." At least, that is what they told us (…) I mean why did they not just force those thirteen to go and fight instead; that would kill them either way (…) The point of this show was to make us afraid and not desert the army ourselves.[453]

However, the regime wanted to send a message of fear—not only to those who were conscripted but also to civilians who might be considering dissent against the regime.[454] Public executions were performed in Shinafiyah to instil fear into the people of Shinafiyah and to deter them from doing anything that the government disapproved of. One Shinafi remembered a known public execution in Shinafiyah, which most likely occurred around the year 1985:

> I witnessed executions, also in Shinafiyah. I saw where they brought people to Shinafiyah just to be executed, and when I went to the army, they executed people in front of my eyes as well, but they brought three people supposedly from the Dawah Party to Shinafiyah and executed them.[455]

One other Shinafi who had been present at this same execution elaborated on it as well; however, according to him, it was between the four and six people rather than three, but they were

> all strapped on a pole, and people [from Shinafiyah] were forced to come and watch. We were unable to tell who it was that was being executed (…) Those who did the execution were unrecognisable as well. There was a doctor present to check whether those who had been shot were dead. Additional shots were fired at those who did

[453] Interview with M.S.H., Netherlands, April 1,2018.
[454] Faust, *The Ba'athification of Iraq*, 154.
[455] Interview with H.H., Netherlands, March 13, 2018.

> not directly die. Surrounding people were clapping and shouting slogans.[456]

Such executions demonstrated that Saddam Hussain wanted to have control both at the home front and the warfront.

For many men, life and basic military service at the front was an important part of their experience with the regime. For many men of Shinafiyah, life at the front was what confirmed the tyranny and inequality of life in Iraq. One Shinafi recounted his experience of abuse at the front by the regime:

> I learnt the lesson of oppression during the war. You were unable to talk, and any word to the commander was forbidden. You had to affirm any command as if you were a slave. The generals had good rooms and free service, and you had to do everything they asked of you. That was oppression; that was slavery, not duty.[457]

Sometimes, the burden of war and dictatorship was lessened when a soldier had a sympathetic general to lead them, but because Saddam was fearful of his generals' gaining popularity among the soldiers and then committing a coup or instigating a revolt, the regime took measures to prevent this from happening:

> If they noticed he [the general] was being good with the soldiers and helping them out, they would put pressure on him and eventually get him transferred somewhere else, or they just started bullying the soldiers he befriended.[458]

The apathy towards the Iran-Iraq War, in combination with the fear tactics the regime used to push people to conscript and the cruelty experienced on the war front, made

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[456] Interview with A.J.H., Netherlands, April 13, 2018.
[457] Interview with A.N.T, Netherlands, April 15, 2018.
[458] Interview with M.S.H., Netherlands, April 1,2018.
The Baath policy prevented the emergence of cordial ties between generals and soldiers to assure that a general would not mobilize his men for a coup. The party therefore regularly transferred generals to different divisions throughout the Iran-Iraq war see also : Joseph Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party: Inside an authoritarian regime*, (Cambridge 2011) 142.

deserting prevalent all over Iraq, including Shinafiyah.[459] Shinafiyah became a hotbed of deserters and was a persistent thorn in the eyes of the authorities. [460]

1982 was a tipping point that radicalised not only the regime in its fearmongering but also its extensive coercion through executions and imprisonment. For the majority of Shinafiyah, this mainly meant being pressured more extensively to conscript into the army and having to witness the brutality of the regime more directly, through public executions and abuse, during military duty. This terror of the regime and the hardships of war made some segments of Shinafiyah restless and vengeful. Many soldiers started to desert and collect themselves in Shinafiyah. Eventually the large amount of resentment in Shinafiyah, in combination with an increased presence of deserters and other anti-regime elements, provoked a direct armed confrontation with the regime from 1987 to 1988.

### 3.1.3 The Barrier of Fear is broken (1987–1988)

1987 and 1988 were significant years for Iraq because the regime experienced another crisis and again radicalised its violent methods against Iraqis. However, this time the Iraqis fought back. After a long stalemate of four years, Iraq lost the Fao Peninsula to Iran, and Iraq's offensive at Mehran failed as well. This caused the Saddam regime to lapse into a new legitimacy crisis. Saddam was forced to give his military commanders more independence from Baghdad to reverse the military losses of Iraq. Saddam, by bestowing more power on the generals, made himself vulnerable to a military coup. This led to Saddam's becoming anxious about his position, so he radicalised his regime in 1987 and 1988. The regime responded to its temporary relaxing of its grip on the army by increasing its grip on Iraqi civilians' lives. Any form of suspected dissidence was ruthlessly eliminated in Iraq.[461] During 1987, in the northern area of the country, the genocidal Anfal campaign against the Kurds commenced, and in the south, the Iraqi marshes in the Ahwar region were violently cleansed.[462] It seems challenging to measure the increased trend in resistance to the regime that occurred during 1987, but the regime's legitimacy crisis was

[459] Khoury, wartime in Iraq, 76.
[460] Syed Muhsin Hussein al-Husseini, *Al-Shinafiyah* (1998) http://sadik70.tripod.com/diwan01/shnafia1.htm accessed (May 5, 2018).
[461] Marr, The Modern History of Iraq, 194-200; Marashi, Iraq's Armed forces, 161-171.
[462] Khoury, *Iraq in wartime,* 114; Tripp, *A history of Iraq*, 234-236.

experienced as a political opportunity by the anti-regime groups. In 1987, desertion from the army reached a peak, and the Islamist insurgency amped up its efforts against the regime.[463]

This political opportunity to attack the regime, which was in a crisis, was present in Shinafiyah. More anti-regime acts started to occur by the end of 1986, but the most significant one was Khadim Salim's assassination attempt on the governor of Qadisiya Governorate in Diwaniya on April 7, 1987. Khadim, a youngster most likely between 18 and 20 years old, decided to take measures into his own hands and attempted to assassinate the senior Mukhabarat officers Muslim Jibouri and Muhsin Doaze, as well as the military intelligence officer Abu Farqad. The governor's office at Diwaniya hosted a ceremony for the celebration of the birthday of the Baath Party on this day. Khadim threw three grenades at the governor's office, and the governor, the local police director, and three bodyguards were wounded. Khadim was caught and, shortly thereafter, executed.[464] Khadim became a hero in Shinafiyah. Jafar al-Sheybani, one of Shinafiyah's late prominent leaders, was heard saying the following in 1987: "Khadim is a martyr, for while we were all sitting here, he decided to fight the regime head on. We should be embarrassed about ourselves."[465]

The regime quickly retaliated. Within a week, Shinafiyah was occupied by the Baath Party, the Mukhabarat, and the army. Almost every house was searched. The regime took everyone remotely associated with Khadim to the infamous Abu Graib camp for imprisonment. According to one witness to the government's arrests, "They arrested everyone who once had a picture taken with Khadim".[466] The regime believed there was a larger network in Shinafiyah that had planned the attack on the governor.[467] More important, Khadim's attack was the *casus belli* for the regime to root out all forms of anti-regime elements in Shinafiyah, and the regime decided to deal with the large number of deserters hiding in Shinafiyah once and for all.[468]

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[463] Khoury, *Iraq in wartime*, 75 ; Joyce N. Wiley , *The Islamic Movement of Iraqi Shi'as,* ( Colorado 1992) 63.
[464] Al-Husseini, *Al-Shinafiyah*.
[465] Phone interview with S.J. , Iraq, April 19, 2018.
[466] Interview with A.A.H. Netherlands, April 7, 2018.
[467] Al-Husseini, *Al-Shinafiyah*.
[468] Interview with A.N.T, Netherlands, April 15, 2018.

In the summer of 1987, Shinafiyah was subjected to the full vengeance of the regime, because it had been decided to crush all of the deserters sheltered by Shinafiyah. One unexpected morning, Shinafiyah woke to a parade of three mechanised army divisions, which were supported by three helicopters and auxiliary support from the Mukhabarat and the Jaysh al-Shaabi (the party's militia, literal translation: People's Army). Under the leadership of the officer Firaun Abdel Hussain, the army marched to the outskirts of Shinafiyah to hunt down the hiding deserters, who were gathered at an area named after the Sagr tribe. These armed deserters were getting ready for what Shinafis today call the "Battle of Al-Sagr". The deserters had been informed that a military operation was being planned against them, so they started to fortify their positions. The battle took place from around seven o'clock in the morning to around six o'clock at night. The armed deserters managed to fend off the army for some time, even shooting down two helicopters and killing eleven soldiers, but eventually the army overwhelmed the deserters and their supporters. Most of the local supporters who sheltered and fed the deserters lived in Shinafiyah proper. Those who were suspected to have supported the deserters were executed or imprisoned. Local historians are still counting the numbers of lost casualties that occurred on the side of the deserters during this incident.[469]

Khadim's attack and the Battle of al-Sagr were the two foremost conflicts and confrontations of the many that occurred with the regime in Shinafiyah during 1987 and 1988. The regime's counterinsurgency operations were quite costly for the families of Shinafiyah. The people of Shinafiyah were subjected to government raids, and many of their family members, neighbours, or friends were either imprisoned or executed. It confirmed, for many in Shinafiyah, what they had always suspected of the regime—that the government would serve only itself and not the people of Iraq.

The occurrence of the intifadah in myriad villages, towns, and cities was closely tied to individual and collective local experiences with the regime. The direct confrontations of 1987–1988 in Shinafiyah partly explains why the intifadah of Shinafiyah was inevitable. However, by 1988, the regime rallied, and the short window of resistance quickly closed. By the time the war ended, people could feel only a sense of relief. People

[469] Most of the information on this incident was written down in the memoires of Syed Muhsin see : al-Husseini, *Al-Shinafiyah* (1998).

hoped then that the war was over, that the regime would relax its straining measures, and that people could start living their lives. The regime, however, quickly deprived the people of these expectations.

## 3.2 Relative deprivation and the origins of the intifadah (1989-1990)

Haddad and Khoury argued that the intifadah was a reaction to years of suffering due to war and repressive dictatorship. Though not fully rejecting this explanation, this thesis specifies that the causality of the intifadah lay not only in the mismanagement of a severe demobilisation crisis but also in the relative deprivation that Iraqis experienced in 1989 and 1990. Though it should not be denied that the war, the imprisonments, the executions, and the totalitarian-state apparatus inspired enough resentment to fuel a revolt, the initial reaction that Iraqis had at the end of the Iran-Iraq War (August 8, 1988) was welcoming and positive and not resentful and revolutionary.[470] A Shinafi who was stationed in Amara around that time said the following:

> On August 8, 1988, the end of the war was announced. We had cannons, and we started shooting with the cannons out of happiness. But where do you think the cannons fire dropped? —on our own heads, of course. We did not care; we were so happy, and everyone was shooting around with cannons and guns—with whatever they could find (…) Shortly after that, we heard the decree that shooting firearms in the air was forbidden. People began to die from happiness.[471]

Second, the regime relaxed its monitoring and repression and allowed some space for critique and protest, but this political opportunity was not exploited by the people to revolt. [472] The same Shinafi who was stationed in Amara at the end of the war also said the following about 1989:

[470] Thabit, *Dictatorship, imperialism and chaos,*48.
[471] Interview with H.H., Netherlands, March 13, 2018.
[472] Thabit, *Dictatorship, imperialism and chaos*.

> We began to talk more about the government. There was less fear, and of course we remained careful with what we said and how, but we talked more than we did before (…) The government gave space; it wouldn't punish you for everything anymore. It began to listen, and you could talk or curse at the government a little bit. You would not be fully persecuted anymore(…) You see, the government saw that everyone was tired of the war and that people were experiencing hysteria because everyone had lost loved ones in the war. People hoped that Saddam would relax his grip on the government, that the people had more of a say in the government, and that we no longer would have a military-based government. These kinds of things. [473]

Therefore, the initial lack of an intifadah in 1989—and 1990, for that matter—indicates that the suffering and resentment endured in the first 10 years of the Saddam regime were secondary factors that lead to the emergence of the intifadah. Instead, alternate causes of the intifadah should be sought that go beyond only the suffering and the war between 1979 and 1988.

An important cause of the intifadah lay in the fact that Iraq had over 1 million armed men who the regime was unable to reintegrate into society after the Iran-Iraq War was over.[474] These men had to be provided jobs, public acknowledgement for their service, retraining, plots of land, and most important a relief from military duty.[475] The problem, however, was that Iraq was experiencing an economic crisis in 1989–1990 because of the debt it had accrued in financing the war; thus, it could not afford to demobilise its soldiers. This left many soldiers unemployed, isolated, and restless.[476]

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[473] Interview with H.H., Netherlands, March 13, 2018.
[474] Jabar A. Falah, Why the uprisings failed', *Middle East Research and Information project 176* (1992) https://www.merip.org/mer/mer176/why-uprisings-failed (accessed March 1, 2018).
[475] For an extensive discussion on demobilization crisis see also: Alex Campbell, 'Where Do All the Soldiers Go?' in: *Irregular Armed Forces and their Role in Politics and State Formation* (Cambridge 2003).
[476] Abdullah Thabit about 1989-1991 writes 'In the two years after the Iran war, Iraq witnessed the prospect of hundreds of thousands of soldiers roaming the streets with nothing to show for their sacrifices except unemployment and a return to the prewar status quo' in Thabit, *Dictatorship, imperialism and chaos,* 54.

However, the regime neutralised the demobilisation crisis by letting the soldiers circulate between the different military training camps and army bases, and the regime eventually distracted them with the occupation of Kuwait on August 2, 1990. However, it was exactly these two unnecessary years of continued military duty, without a real war going on, that made the soldiers feel desperate, oppressed, and suffocated, more so than the preceding years.[477] A better life under Saddam became unimaginable by 1990. One war veteran said the following about 1989 and 1990:

> The person who had to wear the military uniform—let's say, for example, someone who served for over nine years or six or four—this individual would end up wearing his military uniform forever. I wore it for four years. Whether you left or stayed, you remained a soldier, so you could never really leave your uniform as long as Saddam ruled. War would never end, and I was not able to imagine a life other than that one [circulating in military duty](...) Everyone felt imprisoned during the time of Saddam; you honestly could not go anywhere else. If you managed to stop being a soldier and get a job, you would be confined to the Baath Party [which ran and monitored workplaces]. Wherever you went, they would confine you. Placing yourself outside of the confines of the regime was impossible.[478]

People expected that normalcy would return after the war, and when it did not, soldiers and others felt more resentful, especially during 1989 and 1990. A peaceful and prosperous Iraq, without military duty or anything related to war, occupied the minds of Iraqis at the end of 1988. Iraqis believed that the Iran-Iraq War was over and that the regime no longer had to monitor and repress its people to supposedly maintain unity and support for the war effort. One interviewee, when reflecting about the hopes he had after the end of the Iran-Iraq War, said the following:

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[477] Falah A. Jabbar, "Iraq's war generation,' in Lawrence G. Potter and Gary G. Sick, eds., Iran, Iraq and the legacies of war (New York 2004) 121-141.
[478] Interview with H.H., Netherlands, March 13, 2018. interview.

> There was hope that after you fulfilled your military obligations, for like four or six years, that you would be demobilised and that then you could go back to your simple life and to your family. Maybe you could get married or a job; maybe you could open up a store or buy a car. You hoped for these kind of things (…) that is, if they demobilise you and there was no intifadah, no regime, or any danger to your life.[479]

Iraqis tolerated the regime and endured suffering during the Iran-Iraq War because they expected to be compensated with a better quality of life and a less repressive government policy once it was over. However, not much later in 1989, the regime returned to pressuring people to report for military duty, and it eventually invaded Kuwait in August 1990, mobilising 300,000 Iraqis for that operation.[480] People's post-war expectations were neglected and left largely unaddressed.

The theory that people revolt when they feel deprived dates to the time of Alexis de Tocqueville, and that maintained salience far into the 20th century.[481] However, this assumption has been questioned because it lacks empirical robustness for its claims.[482] For example, Iraqis were deprived for over 10 years under Saddam but did not revolt. Scholars Ted Gurr and James C. Davies have, therefore, argued that people do not revolt against objective deprivation but relative deprivation. When people are assured that they have the right to a better living standard and are promised to be relieved from their deprivation at a certain time under certain conditions but are not, then there is a high chance that people will revolt, depending on the intensity of this discrepancy. Therefore, people revolt against oppression relative to the extent of the realistic prospects of ending the oppression, but these prospects are instead left unfulfilled.[483] The relative deprivation framework of social movements has been criticised for not clarifying the specific

[479] Interview with A.J.H., Netherlands, April 13, 2018. interview.
[480] Thabit, *Dictatorship, imperialism and chaos,* 63.
[481] Edward Muller N and Mitchell A. Seligson 'Inequality and insurgency', *American political science Review* 81 (1987) 2, 425-451 ;Alexis de Tocqueville, John C. Spencer (trans.) Democracy in America (1840 New York) 286.
[482] David T. Mason, *Caught in the crossfire: Revolutions, Repression, and the Rational Peasant* (New York 2004) 31.
[483] Ted Gurr, *Why men rebel* (New Jersey 1970); James C. Davies, *When Men Revolt and Why: A Reader in Political Violence and Revolution* (New York 1971).

threshold of relative deprivation that push people into revolt.[484] However, in the case of the intifadah, given the circumstances of 1989 and 1990 and the interviewees' reflections on these years, the relative deprivation framework provides a plausible explanation for understanding one of the root causes of the intifadah.

Iraqis were promised a life of stability, prosperity, and freedom, under the condition that there was no longer a war. In this thesis, it is argued that though the condition of a peace treaty was fulfilled in 1988, the expectations to be relieved of deprivation remained incomplete, leading to a new form of resentment taking root against the regime. The preceding resentment (1979–1988) that people had for the regime provoked mostly individual, small-scale regime contestations, the goal of which was to avoid negative sanctions by the regime against one's self, rather than overthrow the regime (see Chapter 2). The important point in the years preceding 1989 was that Iraqis imagined that a better life under the same regime still seemed possible once the war would be over. However, during 1989–1990, there was a realisation that life under Saddam would not improve. This formed a new type of resentment and was an important shift in people's perceptions of how to cope with the regime. If there was no prospect of achieving a better life under the Saddam regime, overthrowing it seemed to be the only viable option.

### 3.2.1 Perceiving political opportunities in Desert Storm

The invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990, and Operation Desert Storm on January 17, 1991, were important causes of the intifadah, for both the frustration they festered, and the political opportunity provided by them. Initially, the occupation of Kuwait was a relatively easy task and did not entail much fighting on the side of the Iraqis. The Kuwaitis were abandoned by their leaders, and no effective, organised effort took place to resist the Iraqi Army. A mass plunder occurred in Kuwait, and Kuwaitis were subjected to the same repressive techniques that Iraqis were already used to under Saddam. Until the coalition intervened in January 17, 1991, the occupation of Kuwait did not noticeably influence daily life in Iraq.[485] After Kuwait was invaded, the life of the average Iraqi was still

[484] David T. Mason, *Caught in the crossfire,* 35.
[485] Joseph Sassoon and Alissa Walter 'The Iraqi Occupation of Kuwait: New Historical Perspectives' *The Middle East Journal* 71 (2017) 1, 607-628.

characterised mainly by military training, the circulation of soldiers among the military bases throughout the country (with sporadic deployment in Kuwait), and the persistence of the economic crisis.[486] However, the situation worsened when Operation Desert Storm, led by the United States, started to oust Saddam from Kuwait on January 17, 1991. The coalition launched an extensive aerial operation to systematically push the Iraqi Army out of Kuwait and concurrently destroyed Iraq's infrastructure. On February 22, Saddam decided to abandon his foot soldiers: He let them endure the US bombings on their own while he pulled back Iraq's elite republican guard to Basra. Until Operation Desert Storm ended on February 28, Iraqi soldiers were either surrendering themselves to the Americans or deserting in masses back to Iraq. Some soldiers had already left the front with Kuwait by the end of January, and this was the case for many soldiers in Shinafiyah.[487] After March 28, a final wave of deserting soldiers started revolting in the Basra governorate, instigating the beginning of the intifadah.

The visible absence of the regime during the soldiers' journeys back home clearly communicated to the deserters that the regime was at its weakest point and would not retaliate if struck. In this thesis, it is argued that the soldiers' journeys back home made them aware of the political opportunity for revolt. Though there was an objective political opportunity to revolt, it first had to be subjectively recognised before it could be exploited for contestation.[488] If Iraqi soldiers had been unable to perceive the absence of the Iraqi state in different regions of the country, they would not have realised their political opportunity for an uprising—especially because the media did not accurately inform civilians of the Iraqi government's weak state after and during Operation Desert Storm.[489]

All of the interviewed men, who were 18 or older in 1991, were stationed either at the border of Kuwait or in Kuwait. However, all of them understood when Operation Desert Storm began that it was time to go home and that fighting against the coalition was futile. The soldiers got their hands on falsified permission letters for furlough through the

[486] Phone interview with M.A.S., Canada, April 4, 2018.
[487] For a complete and extensive account of both the occupation of Kuwait and Operation Desert storm see Kevin M. Woods, *The mother of All battles : Saddam Hussein's Strategic plan for the Persian Gulf War* (Annapolis 2008).
[488] See also: Hanspeter Kriesi,. 'Political context and opportunity' in: David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule and Hanspeter Kriesi, *The Blackwell companion to social movements* (New Jersey 2004) 39, on the discussion that political opportunities have to be subjectively recognized before they can be exploited for revolt.
[489] Khoury, *Iraq in Wartime, 129-133.*

illegal deserting infrastructure that had developed during the Iran-Iraq War (see Chapter 2). By February, the interviewees were spending time in Shinafiyah and waiting to see how the war would unfold. Because the United States was extensively bombing Iraqi roads, bridges, and communication lines, the journey back home was risky and long. However, because the regime and the party were occupied with the war against the United States, the absence of the regime was clearly visible.[490] Therefore, many soldiers did not have to fear being caught deserting. One returning soldier to Shinafiyah vividly remembered this episode, and his comments clearly portray the atmosphere inside of Iraq during the war against the United States in 1991:

> They dropped me at Um Qasr [port city in southern Iraq, at the border with Kuwait]. Then the war happened. I stayed there for 10 days(...) Kazem, my head officer, was from Tikrit. I told him I wanted to go home. I had bought myself a fake furlough permit for 10 dinars, and he stamped it. Kazem told me, "You can leave in the morning, but you must return by late afternoon." I agreed, but I did not intend to return. While I was talking to him [Kazem], I asked him his opinion on the war and whether Iraq would retreat. He told me, "No, Iraq will never give up and never retreat." Two days later [during the journey back], when the Iraqi Army was retreating, I coincidentally saw him [the officer]. He went back on his opinion: "Well, I only said those things because we might get executed if we were heard saying something else." Anyhow, there was no transport to Diwaniya because everything had been bombed, so I had to walk all the way to Nasiriya first. During my trip, a bridge was bombed right in front of my eyes while a car was still on it. I also saw a man carrying a large bag filled with clothes. How strange mankind is: While we were thinking of not dying, this person was thinking about clothes. I then arrived in Amara, and from Amara, I went to Diwaniya. There was a checkpoint of the regime, but the guard knew it [the regime] was all nonsense now, and just let us pass. Obviously, he was also afraid of us [since the regime was at its weakest

[490] Fanar Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic visions of unity* (Oxford 2014) 65-86;

> then](...) I then arrived in Hamza in the morning (...) I wanted to go to Shinafiyah. I went to the taxi garage and then a bomb was dropped. The whole earth shook, and people started to run. Then I went to Shinafiyah; I waited there for a month until the intifadah started.[491]

The awareness of the absence of the regime in Iraq was an important message the soldiers brought back to their hometowns, stirring the locals with the idea of revolt. One interviewee claimed that he had heard the word *intifadah* circulate in Shinafiyah several days before the uprising started in Basra.[492] The political opportunity for an uprising that the soldiers perceived during their journeys had been germinating in Shinafiyah.

However, one other aspect of this period preceding the intifadah has not been addressed thoroughly in the literature—namely, the emotional pain the US bombings inflicted on the people of Iraq.493 In this thesis, it is suggested that these bombings were an important aspect of the intifadah story.

***Image 3 The reconstructed Bridge of Shinafiyah, post 2003.[494]***

[491] Interview with A.N.T, Netherlands, April 15, 2018. interview.
[492] Interview with M.S.H., Netherlands, April 1,2018.
[493] I was only able to find one author, when writing about the Intifadah in Hillah explicitly stating that next two years or regime repression, the people of Hillah being a resistant people that American bombings in Hillah were a reason why people rebelled in hillah see also : Abdul Rida Oudh, *Al Intifadah al Shabaniya fi al Hillah* ( Hillah 2012) 30.
[494] Provided by an interviewee.

The US bombing of Shinafiyah's only bridge that connected Sobh al-Sarray and Sobh al-Gasef, which occurred sometime between February 1 and February 10, is still remembered as a painful tragedy closely related to the intifadah.[495] This event is easily recalled because it killed an entire family in Shinafiyah. One woman stated, "I still remember when Bush bombed Shinafiyah. It was really scary—the house was shaking."[496] Another Shinafi said the following:

> The Americans bombed the bridge; it was officially a war. I still remember it. It was at night, and they shot rockets on the bridge. One rocket, however, did not hit the bridge but people. One known man, his mother, and his siblings all died because of the bombings. I think in total this bombing made over ten martyrs. The next day, everyone went to the area and had to help getting the victims out of the rubble. I remember it all.[497]

It is beyond the scope of the research to measure the precise effect these bombings had on the decision to revolt in Shinafiyah, but without a doubt, the attack must have only added to the frustrations that people already had for the regime.

After February 10, the people of Shinafiyah stayed put until news started pouring in that soldiers had started to rebel in Basra. Combined with the perceived political opportunity that the soldiers had brought home to Shinafiyah, the news of a rebellion in Basra on February 28 was a clear sign that it was time to revolt.

### 3.2.2 The eve of the intifadah

According to the memoirs of Syed Hussain Muhsin, one of the exiled leaders of the intifadah, the uprising began on March 5, 1991. The start of the intifadah in Shinafiyah slightly diverges from the general estimate on the start of the intifadah in Basra, which is

[495] Interview with A.N.T; Interview with Z.A.M., Netherlands, April 10, 2018.; Interview with A.J.H., Netherlands, April 13, 2018.
[496] Interview with Z.A.M.
[497] Interview with A.J.H., Netherlands, April 13, 2018.

estimated to have been between February 28 and March 2.[498] In Basra, the intifadah was a more direct and ad hoc reaction to the military developments occurring at the front in Kuwait. However, the Shinafiyah intifadah was a decision made after news on the Basra intifadah was confirmed. The decision to conduct the intifadah in Shinafiyah must have been made sometime between March 1 and 5. In Shinafiyah, on March 5, the town hall, party centre, police station, and all of the other government buildings were occupied by the local rebels. There is a consensus that Syed Muhsin was the leader of the Shinafiyah intifadah, but there are differing accounts about who organised the intifadah in the days preceding the uprising. All of the interpretations must be placed next to each other first to arrive at a plausible account of the days shortly preceding the intifadah.

According to Syed Muhsin, after news spread of the Basra intifadah, he was approached by the mayor of Shinafiyah, the head of security, and the head of the Shinafiyah branch of the party. These major representatives of the regime told Syed Muhsin that they had heard of an intifadah in the south and that they were worried about the stability of Shinafiyah. They told Syed Muhsin that they were prepared to cooperate on all points if Syed Muhsin could guarantee the safety and stability of Shinafiyah. Syed Mushin explained to them that he could not control what the people would do. The representatives told him that they were prepared to grant him access to the town hall, party centre, and security facilities. However, Syed Muhsin understood that the regime had essentially surrendered itself in Shinafiyah and that the time was ripe was for an uprising. Shortly after this realisation, Syed Muhsin held a meeting within his clan and from there planned to take over Shinafiyah and join the intifadah.[499]

However, according to a civilian who witnessed several meetings preceding March 5, not only was it Syed Muhsin's family who came together and discussed the question of the intifadah, but also a mix of many local notables and lesser known people and related family members initiated the meetings that preceded the intifadah. According to this witness, the debates during these meetings were quite heated because there was no initial agreement on how to execute the intifadah in Shinafiyah. Many younger participants of the intifadah proposed to take revenge on the regime collaborators by imprisoning or

[498] Syed Muhsin Hussein al-Husseini, *Al-Shinafiyah* (1998) http://sadik70.tripod.com/diwan01/shnafia1.htm (accessed May 5, 2018).
[499] Al-Husseini, *Al-Shinafiyah* (1998).

executing them, especially now that they could gain access to the reports stored at the party centre. These were the 'hotheads' as the witness called them.[500] The older and more influential notables from the larger families of Shinafiyah were against this idea. The older generation argued that if people started killing all of the Baathists, their doing so would cause resentment among the tightly knit families of Shinafiyah and provoke never-ending family feuds. (the regime collaborators were equally members of the Shinafiyah community and well embedded in its social and kinship ties). Eventually, a compromise was agreed upon, where all of the higher Baathists and known regime collaborators were informed that if they did not leave Shinafiyah, they would be punished. Others sympathetic to the regime were advised to remain in their homes and to not interfere. The witness said the following about this compromise:

> If this decision had not been made back then, we might have had to deal with many family-related murders in Shinafiyah a long time after the Baath Party members would have disappeared [in 2003]. Shinafiyah is now peaceful because of that decision they made back in 1991.[501]

Like many of the local Baathists had sometimes saved the lives of disobedient Shinafis during the 1980s by keeping the regime at bay, the elders of the intifadah saved the loyalist Baathists from the anti-regime rebels. Shinafiyah's social ties, norms of reciprocity, and shared identity overruled the political divisions and spared the lives of many who had collaborated with the regime.

According to another witness, who was a soldier and one of the 'hotheads' described above, it was the returning soldiers who initiated the meetings preceding the intifadah, not the notables. This witness said:

> We, the youngsters, decided to take over Shinafiyah, but instead of just doing this on our own, we wanted to involve the older people in this so that it would be more official and so that the regime would

[500] Interview with A.A.H. Netherlands, April 7, 2018.
[501] Interview with A.A.H.

> come not only after us in case something happened. And we wanted to involve the older people to prevent the regime from blaming us if the uprising failed(…) So some people brought in Syed Muhsin and let him be the leader of the intifadah.[502]

It is likely that the notables agreed to join the younger soldiers in return for letting the Baathists escape rather than punishing them to save the social cohesiveness of Shinafiyah. However, it is clear that the initiative to launch an intifadah in Shinafiyah was not so clear-cut as Syed Mushin described it and involved several competing groups, all of whom had different visions on what to do in the event of the intifadah. These meetings were clearly a reflection of the underlying tensions that existed between the different generations and classes that experienced the regime in divergent ways. In addition, it was a clear manifestation that power as defined by tribal lineage, land ownership, and family size mattered in Shinafiyah. Without some representatives of Shinafiyah's tribal elite, the soldiers feared that the intifadah in Shinafiyah would be illegitimate. On March 5, however, everyone showed unity when they decided to take over Shinafiyah.

## 3.3 The intifadah in Shinafiyah

For those who were not directly involved in the early planning of the intifadah, the events of March 5 were unexpected, and for the first days, there was chaos and mainly ad hoc reactions; no real identifiable organisation was visible yet. One participant said, "I was just sitting around in my house when I heard many noises from outside. I jumped up and took a look and saw a large group of people marching towards the town hall. I just joined them."[503] Another witness who elaborated more on his decision to join in on March 5 said the following:

> One day, I was sitting with my father at the shop, and I then saw people move. The whole village was moving, and people were shouting and encouraging each other. Since I was young, and I saw all this movement, I started running with them(…) In an instant, we

[502] Interview with H.H., Netherlands, March 13, 2018.
[503] Interview with A.N.T, Netherlands, April 15, 2018.

> became a large mass, and everyone then stormed the party centre. The party members in it had already fled, but I think one person was wounded during the storming. Anyhow, they took the party centre and the police station. Shinafiyah was small, so it all happened quite fast.[504]

Another witness added that when the party centre was stormed, people burned the reports on themselves kept by the party.[505] In addition, the people learnt of the many informants that lived among themselves. (However, I was unable to find incidents of revenge against these informants.) One rebel commenting on this situation said:

> In Shinafiyah, we had a certain culture(...) We did not hurt them [the informants], and those same people are still present [in Shinafiyah] and they have they need a home, a car, a family nobody is touching them, why? We had mercy, we had goodness in us, and we had respect . . . but many people started to loot and vandalise because they had been deprived and oppressed. They started entering hospitals and schools and taking devices and everything [public buildings] they saw that they considered representative of the regime. This was their way of revenge; they were not stealing for the sake of stealing(...) We considered all of it the property of Saddam, so it was fair game.[506]

However, not long after the initial chaotic two days that, some form of order was imposed, and the looting and vandalising dwindled. The fatwa of grand ayatollah Syed Khui, which was released on March 5, against stealing and vandalising encouraged the local leadership in Shinafiyah to effectively intervene the next few days.[507] One interviewee recounted the following story:

[504] Interview with A.J.H., Netherlands, April 13, 2018.
[505] Interview with A.A.H. Netherlands, April 7, 2018.
[506] Interview with M.S.H., Netherlands, April 1,2018.
[507] Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq*, 72.

> I saw a man holding a carpet on the street. I helped him because I thought it was his; it turned out he had stolen it, most likely from either the city hall or the police station. Later, I reported the man to the council that was set up by then, and he then returned it.[508]

A short discussion about Shinafiyah's local intifadah organisation is necessary to understand its local effectiveness in imposing order.

### 3.3.1 Organisation of the intifadah

Through the information provided by the interviewees, two perspectives on the qualifications of the leadership and the effectiveness of its organisation can be distilled. One perspective is Shinafiyah-centric, and it relates mostly to the effectiveness of the local rebel governance; the other perspective is intifadah-centric, and it relates to the effort to overthrow the Baathist regime. This section evaluates the extent to which the organisation was successful in leading the intifadah and governing Shinafiyah. First, its main tasks are discussed, and then the performance of its leadership within the context of the intifadah is analysed.

By March 7, an intifadah organisation had been set up, and its headquarters was the Husseniya in Sobh al-Sarray in general it took upon itself four tasks: security, communication, providing basic services and ideological guidance. The local organisation took on the tasks of establishing security against counterrevolutionary forces (inside and outside of Shinafiyah) and acted against vengeful violence not related to politics, looters, and vandalisers. Checkpoints were established on the borders of Shinafiyah and were guarded day and night. Capable men were given patrolling duty based on a strict schedule. The more experienced fighters, commanders, and 'willing martyrs' were expected to team up and join the fight against the Baathists in neighbouring towns and cities.[509]

The second task of the organisation was to set up a new communication network. Because the coalition had bombed Iraq's telecommunication infrastructure and its roads, the revolutionaries had to construct their own communication network. The goals of this network were to collect information on the latest developments of the intifadah, to

[508] Interview with A.N.T, Netherlands, April 15, 2018.
[509] Al-Husseini, *Al-Shinafiyah* (1998)

facilitate cooperation with neighbouring towns and cities in the fight against the Baathist regime, and to pool valuable resources like food, water, and weapons. Thus, a few people were appointed to travel throughout Iraq to collect information and bring it back to Shinafiyah so that the leadership could discuss the next steps to be taken.[510]

Third, the organisation had to distribute not only the limited supplies of food and water but also medicine and basic services. Because the intifadah lasted only a few weeks, most authors on the intifadah have neglected the fact that the rebels had to govern their localities as well. In the case of Shinafiyah, food and water programmes were established to regulate the limited access to these goods.[511] Those who worked in healthcare were expected to resume their jobs as doctors, nurses, and pharmacists.[512] However, because Iraq was already in a dire condition and the organisation of the intifadah had a limited capacity, the goods and services provided by the local organisation was experienced as insufficient by some. One interviewee remembered the following:

> Some women who did not know any better started to blame the lack of gas, food, and electricity on the participants of the intifadah (…) but the cause of these problems was Saddam. They were not Baathists, but maybe they were pro-Saddam or just scared.[513]

Another interviewee vividly remembered that with time, more were starting to criticise the intifadah and its leaders for insufficient services.[514] Nonetheless, attempts were made to provide some form of public service and governance.

It was in this field that women could particularly contribute to the intifadah. In Shinafiyah, women helped the patrolling men by preparing them food. Some women worked as nurses. However, women were prohibited from publicly participating in the intifadah, at least in Shinafiyah. One woman recounted the following:

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[510] Interview with A.N.T, Netherlands, April 15, 2018; Syed Muhsin Hussein al-Husseini, *Al-Shinafiyah* (1998).

[511] Interview with A.J.H., Netherlands, April 13, 2018.
[512] Interview with A.N.T, Netherlands, April 15, 2018.
[513] Interview with Z.A.M., Netherlands, April 10, 2018.
[514] Interview with M.S.H., Netherlands, April 1, 2018.

> I would have loved to help if somebody had requested something for me to do, like write something—anything, really. There is always something you could do to help. With preparation, food, cleaning. But they told us that if you wanted to help, help in your own house.[515]

However, this same woman explained that she had spent her time during the intifadah at her parents' house so that her own house "could be used by the fighters as a resting place because my house was close to the posts they were stationed at. That was my sacrifice".[516] Within the restrictions of Shinafiyah, women tried to participate via the domestic realm, and for some this meant giving up the whole domestic realm (a house) for the public cause.

The organisation of the intifadah provided symbolic and ideological guidance. Lectures and speeches were held regularly during the intifadah by the intellectuals of the leadership. Retracing the contents of these speeches was not possible, but according to witnesses, these speeches focused on the illegitimacy of the Baath Party, the righteousness of revolt, and the promotion of correct, ethical Islamic behaviour.[517] However, the idea of walking around with photos of famous Shia clerics seemed to have come forth from the people themselves and was not an idea the leaders had proposed. The widely used slogan "Maku wali ila Ali wa nahnu nareed qaid Jafari" (There is no governor but Ali, and we want a Jafari ruler) was also heard in Shinafiyah, but it remains unclear where this slogan originated and how it spread to Shinafiyah.[518] Women played an important role here as well; through ululation and poetry, they encouraged the men in their fight against the regime. One man remembered this quite clearly:

> The role of women in the intifadah was very honourable, at least for the women of our village. I remember when I went to fight the

[515] Interview with Z.A.M.
[516] Interview with Z.A.M.; see also for a similar description of resistance in villagers from the perspective of women in the story of Ghada a Palestinian women from the village of Artas during the first Palestinian Intifadah Celia Rothenberg 'Ghada: Village rebel or Political protestor' in: Edmund Burke, Nejde Yaghoubian and David Yaghoubian (eds.) *Struggle and survival in the modern middle-east : second edition* ( London 2005) 327.
[517] Phone interview with M.A.S., Canada, April 4, 2018.
[518] Fanar Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic visions of unity* (Oxford 2014) 82.

> regime in Kufa. As I was leaving Shinafiyah, they [the women] used to celebrate our deeds by saying encouraging things and ululating that their role was honourable.[519]

Most interviewees agreed that the leadership, despite its shortcomings, successfully kept Shinafiyah safe and stable and that a semblance of governance was maintained, thereby limiting the amount of bloodshed in the village. Evidence of the success of Shinafiyah's rebel governance was that many men from other towns and cities in the mid-Euphrates Region sent their women and children to Shinafiyah for safety, because Shinafiyah had a 'safe reputation' during the intifadah".[520]

To implement these four tasks, five leaders were appointed who operated from the Husseiniya in Sobh al-Sarray. The five leaders reflected Shinafiyah's century-old composition of its elites—namely, property-owning families whose lineage went back to the prophet and an intellectual class that originally consisted of clerics and poets.[521] In 1991, during the intifadah, the leadership of the intifadah consisted of five people. Three of the leaders were Sadah (plural of Syed) from large property-owning families. The other two leaders were charismatic, well-respected teachers and intellectuals. These five held meetings in a small room at the back of the Husseiniya, behind closed doors. The intricacies of these meetings were difficult to retrace. Though all interviewees agreed that the leadership remained united throughout the intifadah, some tensions were present within the leadership.

One woman whose brother-in-law was in the leadership council and represented the intellectual class stated the following:

> One part of the leadership was known to be rich and to have mainly a tribal perspective on everything. These members were not the cultivated ones; they had been never been arrested, but they had a reputation and money. The other part of the leadership consisted of cultivated people; these were politically involved and had much

[519] Interview with H.H., Netherlands, March 13, 2018.
[520] Interview with A.A.H. Netherlands, April 7, 2018.
[521] Syed Muhsin Hussein al-Husseini, *Al-Shinafiyah* (1998) http://sadik70.tripod.com/diwan01/shnafia1.htm accessed (May 5, 2018).

> experience with the government. The leadership, in essence, comprised total opposites(...) Eventually, they [the cultivated people] were persecuted by the government after the intifadah.[522]

In the previous chapter, I explained that in Iraq, many of its internal tensions during the Baath era could be explained by an enduring Gemeinschaft idea of power in relation to an emerging Gesellschaft form of power. This collision persisted within the leadership of the intifadah in Shinafiyah: The reputable tribal heads in the leadership could not always see eye to eye with the government-educated school teachers. Nonetheless, one civilian interviewee who was close family of one of the leaders said, "The differences among the leaders was a matter of personal vision and did not hinder the decision-making and the implementation of the organisation of the intifadah".[523]

One participant in the intifadah, a deserting soldier, disagreed. According to him, the unbalanced composition of the leadership and the dominance of tribal culture hindered the success of the intifadah. This interviewee explained that

> The soldier was inherently organised. He knew his role, he had specific orders that he knew how to follow, and he knew from whom he was supposed to take orders. The soldiers could organise themselves. The civilian, who never was in the army, approached the situation tribally and would say things like "I cannot do this or that because that is rude or disrespectful to Syed A, to Syed B, or to this or that person." That was why the civilian was embarrassed and shy to do anything at all.[524]

The civilians did not want to cross the boundaries and hierarchies embedded in Shinafiyah's social ties, beliefs, and values. Civilians therefore remained relatively demobilised, according to this interviewee. The only ones who were truly effectively mobilised were the ex-soldiers who knew how to work within an organisation and to fulfil their orders. However, because the leadership of the intifadah in Shinafiyah did not

[522] Interview with Z.A.M., Netherlands, April 10, 2018.
[523] Phone interview with S.J. , Iraq, April 19, 2018.
[524] Interview with A.A.H. Netherlands, April 7, 2018.

contain any military leaders, it lacked the necessary expertise and knowledge to effectively mobilise and utilise ex-combatants. Thus, the mobilisation of ex-combatants in Shinafiyah merited the intifadah to a certain extent but was simultaneously hindered because of a lack of military representation in the leadership. While many generals decided not to participate in the intifada, it is also true that the commanders and generals present and available in Shinafiyah did not enjoy the legitimacy that large family heads or teachers had to take a leadership position.[525] In addition, the ex-combatants who were Shinafis were not in the position to go against the leadership, because doing so would only isolate them, so they to oblige to serve under a leadership without military expertise.

The leadership—when evaluated in the context of the goals and aims of the intifadah (namely, to overthrow the Baathist regime)—lacked the ability to effectively organise people for that goal. Shinafiyah's social ties, beliefs, and norms worked to the advantage of pursuing the interests of Shinafiyah but hindered the people and the leadership of Shinafiyah from effectively pursuing interests that transcended those of Shinafiyah. However, from the perspective of local rebel governance, the organisation of the intifadah successfully provided safety and a continuation of normalcy; therefore, it was successful in a community-centric context. Nonetheless, it can be argued that the success of the local self-rule was an important blow to regime as well. Successful local governances proved to the people that they could rule themselves if conditions required doing so, without necessarily needing an all-powerful regime to take care of them. This concept of self-rule indirectly questioned the regime's right to have so much power and control of its own people. Therefore, for its participants, being able to effectively rule themselves was an important achievement, despite not having effectively mobilised to fully pursue the aims of the intifadah. However, the regime did not wait long before striking back.

### 3.3.2 The final struggle

Before the regime revitalised itself and started to clamp down on the rebels, a wave of happiness overran Shinafiyah. The people were optimistic that they would overthrow Saddam Hussein and take measures into their own hands. One woman remembered that

[525] Interview with A.N.T, Netherlands, April 15, 2018. ( Male, 1962)

"we were happy. We really believed we would get rid of Saddam. It [the intifadah] was a dream of 15 days. Shia took their rights, and the prisoners would be freed."[526] This euphoria was shortly lived, for the regime started to slowly retake Iraq from the rebels on March 6, after the Safwan treaty with the Americans. [527] From this moment on, it was time to defend the accomplishments of the intifadah.

On March 7, the following information arrived: The regime was trying to retake Najaf through Kufa (170 km from Shinafiyah), and there was a request for assistance from Shinafiyah. About 280 fighters from Shinafiyah were easily mobilised because of the religious connotations of the city of Kufa.[528] (Kufa is where Ali ibn Abu Talib is buried; he is one of Shia Islam's most important saints, and his grave is considered a very important pilgrimage site). For the people of Shinafiyah, going to Kufa was not only a fight against the regime but also a holy mission to defend Imam Ali.[529] The perceived offences against Shinafiyah's religious beliefs and convictions remained an important instigator for collective action in Shinafiyah.

It is unclear when and how the group of Shinafiyah's fighters left to Kufa, but most likely they did so between March 8 and March 9, 1991. On their way towards Kufa, the Shinafis met up with the fighters coming from the neighbouring village of Rumaytha, amounting a total force of 600 fighters. In Kufa, the confrontation with the regime was coordinated with other present forces there. A battle ensued against the regime between March 10 and March 11, and the rebel fighters managed to hold off the regime for two days. The details of the battle of Kufa are beyond the scope of this research, and information on this forgotten battle is scarce; however, according to Syed Muhsin, five people from Shinafiyah died (including Syed Muhsin's son) and many more were wounded. They did succeed in taking two prisoners back to Shinafiyah. By March 13, the regime had crushed the resistance of Kufa and had started to attack Najaf.[530] The massive destruction of Najaf and the massacre of thousands of its people by the regime have been

[526] Interview with Z.A.M., Netherlands, April 10, 2018.
[527] Fanar Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic visions of unity* (Oxford 2014) 78.
[528] Syed Muhsin Hussein al-Husseini, *Al-Shinafiyah* (1998).
http://sadik70.tripod.com/diwan01/shnafia1.htm accessed (May 5, 2018).
[529] Interview with H.H., Netherlands, March 13, 2018. and Interview with M.S.H., Netherlands, April 1,2018.
[530] Eric Goldstein, *Endless torment: The 1991 uprising in Iraq and its aftermath* (New York 1992).

widely documented elsewhere.[531] What happened to Najaf foreshadowed the events awaiting Shinafiyah.

By March 12, the fighters of Shinafiyah had returned, and they understood that it was only a matter of time until the army would come to Shinafiyah. On their way back from Kufa, the fighters engaged in several fights with the regime in neighbouring towns, such as al-Shamiya. However, the battle of Kufa was a turning point: "After the battle of Kufa, we lost hope; the only thing left to do was defend Shinafiyah and nothing else. The only thing people thought about was defending one's hometown".[532] Attempts to infiltrate Shinafiyah had already been undertaken in the past few days. A peculiar story was told and confirmed by several interviewees, and it was about two unfamiliar turbaned clerics who made an unexpected visit to Shinafiyah during one of the days. These two clerics claimed to represent the grand ayatollah Syed al-Khoi from Najaf, and they requested the names of the fighters so that they could be compensated with a salary for their services. According to the interviewees, the two clerics noted over 250 names and then left, never to be seen again. It is believed that this same list was used by the regime to punish the participants of the intifadah in Shinafiyah.[533] However, it was not possible to verify this assumption.

Around March 17 and March 18, the army encircled Shinafiyah. The army camped at the same tribal sheikh that had hosted Saddam Hussein in 1982 (see Chapter 1). It was an entire army division that surrounded Shinafiyah, and it was replete with tanks and helicopters. The army soon began to bombard Shinafiyah with rockets, and these initial attacks were intended as a warning for the people of Shinafiyah to surrender their town but resulted in several deaths.

This initial bombing quickly prompted the elders and the 'hotheads' of Shinafiyah to come together again and make a decision about the new situation. The younger participants of the intifadah wanted to fight the army: "I am not exaggerating whatsoever—I definitely wanted to fight the army back then. I had the weapons, the patience, and the will to do so".[534] However, the elders implored the fighters to not confront the army:

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[531] Goldstein, *Endless torment: The 1991 uprising in Iraq and its aftermath*.
[532] Interview with H.H., Netherlands, March 13, 2018.
[533] Interview with A.N.T, Netherlands, April 15, 2018; Interview with A.A.H. Netherlands, April 7, 2018.
[534] Interview with M.S.H., Netherlands, April 1,2018.

> The elders of Shinafiyah did not want us to fight. They told us that if we fought, the whole village would be destroyed because it was a small village. The elders claimed that the army would turn Shinafiyah into flour with its tanks and airplanes, would totally ground it, and would kill the women and the children, so we were advised to leave Shinafiyah.[535]

While many intifadah participants wanted to fight, they accepted the arguments of their elders and decided to leave. Meanwhile, an older representative went to face the army and explained to it that the people of Shinafiyah wanted to surrender the town and that they did not have any participants of the intifadah in Shinafiyah. The army accepted the surrender and entered the town.

The army had lists that contained suspected participants and their families and started to "purify" Shinafiyah of anti-regime elements. Many of Shinafiyah's higher members in the Baath Party, who had originally been saved by the rebels, returned with the army and assisted them by identifying suspects or by giving away names. Many who remained indoors during the intifadah started helping the army as well. It was to one's advantage to cooperate with the army. When the army took over Shinafiyah, the people were expected to leave their homes and stand on the street while the army searched the houses. The younger men were expected to lie on the streets until the army was finished. According to an interviewee, 65 people were taken away, and many of them were innocent bystanders who did not have a direct role in sacking Shinafiyah.[536] Clearly, the army did not believe the elder's claim that the participants of the intifadah had already left Shinafiyah.

To this day, many people do not know what happened to those taken away after the army crushed the intifadah. The mass graves of Shinafiyah found after 2003 convey the amount of bloodshed that this village had to endure in 1991.[537] For the women and men who

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[535] Interview with H.H., Netherlands, March 13, 2018.
[536] Interview with A.J.H., Netherlands, April 13, 2018.

[537]Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty, 'Iraq Report: May 23, 2003', https://www.rferl.org/a/1343123.html accessed (August 15, 2018).

escaped, they had to embark on a long journey towards the borders of Saudi Arabia to start a life elsewhere. One of these women said, "I could have stayed, but I was done with Saddam; my leaving Shinafiyah was my act of opposition."[538]

## 3.4 Conclusion

The trajectory and organisation of the intifadah in Shinafiyah was defined by Shinafiyah's tight-knit social ties, shared identity, and social hierarchies, all of which affected Shinafiyah's experiences with the regime before the intifadah. Because of Shinafiyah's reverence to Islam, its clerics, and Shia symbolism, it directly fell on the spectrum of dissent in the eyes of the regime the moment Saddam took power in 1979. Shinafiyah's shared beliefs—not an animosity against the Iraqi government—made it not only sympathetic to the ayatollahs Khomeini and al-Sadr and the Islamic Revolution but also antipathic to the Iran-Iraq War. This made Shinafiyah a systematic target for the regime's coercion apparatus. The coercion of the government only radicalised with the years and eventually escalated in an all-out war in 1987. These specific experiences with the regime confirmed people's suspicion of the state's disdain for the people of Shinafiyah and effectively alienated them from the regime. These intense flashes of antagonism between Shinafiyah and the Iraqi government were defining for the initial and widespread enthusiasm for the intifadah four years later.

However, after the Iran-Iraq War ended, people were happier and more relieved than angry or revolutionary. Preceding the end of the war, people expected that the excessive measures the regime took against its people were only related to the war effort. Now that the war was over, there was an expectation that the deprivation of the past years would be lifted and that a return to a more prosperous normalcy could occur. However, these expectations were left unfulfilled because of an economic crisis, the continuation of military duty, and the invasion of Kuwait. People, therefore, experienced relative deprivation, and their doing so created a new form of resentment, in which the people could no longer imagine a normal life under Saddam. Overthrowing Saddam seemed to be the only viable option for regaining a normal life. This was an important shift in

[538] Interview with Z.A.M., Netherlands, April 10, 2018.

people's perception of their resentment for the regime and was, as this thesis argues, the first real step towards the intifadah.

Nonetheless, the decision on how to launch the intifadah was controversial and was split between a community-centric perspective and a political perspective. The community-centric approach was favoured by Shinafiyah's notables, and it was aimed at maintaining the social ties that defined Shinafiyah, even if doing so meant allowing leniency towards regime collaborators. The political approach, favoured by Shinafiyah's younger members (whose interactions with the Baath Party in the past were harsher than those of the elders), was less remorseful towards the regime collaborators during the intifadah and suggested that they be eliminated. However, as both the younger participants and the Baathists learnt, going against the social hierarchies and shared beliefs of Shinafiyah would only delegitimise and marginalise a person's self in the eyes of the community. Therefore, the political perspective had to compromise with the community-centric perspective so that the instigators of the intifadah could enjoy legitimacy in Shinafiyah. Thus, Shinafiyah's Baathists were saved from the revenge of the rebels. In addition, this explains why the intifadah organisation in Shinafiyah could successfully maintain stability within Shinafiyah but was less effective in organising themselves within the larger political struggle against the regime. Last, when the army came to Shinafiyah to crush the intifadah, it decided to save the community of Shinafiyah rather than fight the regime and provoke the destruction of Shinafiyah. The rebels were requested to leave Shinafiyah, and the army did not destroy Shinafiyah.

# Conclusion

The main objective of this thesis was to provide insight into how ordinary people in dictatorial societies who are effectively prohibited from organising themselves and communicating their dissatisfaction with the regimes can mobilise in mass uprisings against the state when the opportunity presents itself. This goal was pursued via a detailed study of the origin and causes of the 1991 uprising in Shinafiyah, and the study examined the years 1979–1991. This thesis aimed to contribute to both the historiography of Iraq under Saddam Hussein's rule and the debates regarding the social movements in authoritarian societies. This conclusion briefly discusses the main points of this thesis before providing concluding remarks.

In Chapter 1, I concluded that in the Saddam regime, Iraq's most important political institutions—the RCC, the Baath Party, and the army—mostly functioned as institutions of exclusion rather than as sources political contestation. For ordinary citizens, it was nearly impossible to publicly contest these institutions and to use those institutions to contest regime policy in behalf of the citizens. The severe repression and neglect that the people experienced because of the exclusionary policies of these institutions created many grievances regarding the regime and had two important consequences. First, many Iraqis understood that it was best not to directly challenge the regime's highest institutions but to contest the regime at a lower point in the hierarchy, where the eyes and ears of the regime were less attentive. Second, the ICP and the Dawah Party—Iraq's foremost social movements—*did* openly and directly contest the Baath institutions, because of those institutions' exclusive policy against the non-Baathist middle classes. Through assassinations, bombings, and sabotage operations, they aimed to undo Baathist institutions altogether. However, because these two parties remained the recluse of the middle class, operated only in secret, and were harshly repressed by the state, they failed to establish a connection with the masses and thus experienced social isolation. Because of the severe repression being perpetrated by the Saddam regime, any alternative movement involved in contesting the regime was reduced to the label of 'opposition' in the widest sense possible. This allowed the emergence of a more inclusive framework of resistance; whose core component was to oppose the Baathist regime. This was the same underlying conviction of the intifadah, as Haddad explained: In essence,

the participants knew more about what they were against (the Baath Party) rather than about what they were for.[539]

However, Haddad did not explain the origins or the significance of the emergence of an ideology whose only component was being against the Saddam Hussein Baathist regime. This thesis showed that this stance was a product of the severe repression of Iraq's social movements to the extent that intricate ideologies like Islamism and Communism became insignificant and impractical, at least in the eyes of most of the ordinary Iraqis. When the people were contesting an almost all-powerful regime, the only thing that mattered was being against the regime. For the people of Shinafiyah, both the Dawah Party and the ICP were lumped into the broad definition of 'opposition.

Because of the above described development in the 1980s, a new framework emerged, one in which everyone—irrespective of his or her ideology, membership in a social movement, class, or religious and ethnic backgrounds—could join the fight against the government. This allowed many ordinary Iraqis to become politically involved in individualised ways, leading to much broader sections of society becoming involved in opposing the regime. For the ordinary Iraqis, by virtue of this framework, they now could not only contest the regime without being hindered by political convictions and organisational commitments but also avoid the social isolation that the Dawah Party and the ICP were experiencing. These small acts of opposing the regime (whether intended or not) in combination with the emergence of an inclusive anti-regime ideology allowed the building of alliances and mobilisation structures that would eventually contest the regime in a collective fashion during the intifadah.

Chapter 2 showed the sociology of Shinafiyah and how hegemonic contraction, social ties, reputation awards, the spread of information, and gender dynamics opened domains of resistance in Shinafiyah. In addition, Chapter 2 showed that the Baathist regime's penetration into Shinafiyah created resentment because the regime attacked Shinafiyah's shared (religious) beliefs, social ties, and norms of reciprocity. However, the population of Shinafiyah—by relying on public and private expressions of religion, by defying the demands of the party, and by deserting the army—caused important mobilisation structures to emerge. The different repertoires used by the people of

[539] Haddad

Shinafiyah achieved namely three important goals: communicating and indirectly assisting the spread of anti-regime sentiments, changing state policy to the advantage of Shinafiyah's contesters, and establishing facilitative infrastructures, networks, and local conduits of information to ultimately resist the regime. The shared resentment, in combination with the repertoires people used to contest the regime that assisted the creation of mobilisation structures and with the accumulated information on trustworthy allies and enemies, explains the effective mass mobilisation of the people of Shinafiyah that occurred on the day of the intifadah. This latter argument contrasts with what most authors on the intifadah have argued—namely, that the uprising was a spontaneous reaction to suffering.

In addition, Chapter 2 showed that Baath Party members were just as embedded in Shinafiyah's community as non-Baathists. Therefore, Baathists not only were vulnerable to having a good reputation in Shinafiyah but also did not want to offend the local notables of Shinafiyah. Many Baathists wanted to avoid being estranged from Shinafiyah and knew that gaining the animosity of the Shinafis could personally affect their families' positions within the community. For the Baath Party members, the importance of reputation incentivised them to keep the regime at bay and to place the interests of Shinafiyah above those of the regime. This mechanism, however, was undermined when an outside representative of the state was present. When an outsider was present, the local Baathists chose the side of the regime over the interests of Shinafiyah. Therefore, for the Baathists, it was in their interest to keep the regime at bay so that they would not be obliged to conduct unpopular coercive measures at the cost of their reputations in Shinafiyah. This situation showed that depending on the local conditions, coexistence with the Baathist regime was possible if local interests could contend and overrule the regime's interests. Therefore, contestation and cooperation in Iraq were not only a matter of politics but also a question of community and reputation.

In Chapter 3, I described how early on (1979) Shinafiyah unintentionally fell on the spectrum of dissent because of its local beliefs and convictions (especially because of its reverence for clerics), and afterward it was systematically targeted for monitoring, coercion, and threats by the regime. Between 1979 and 1983, a suffocating atmosphere dominated Shinafiyah because of the increased monitoring measures that the regime was using in Shinafiyah. The fearful climate stifled and shamed the people of Shinafiyah for

their sympathies for Khomeini, Sadr, and the Islamic Revolution. Their apathy for the war was considered treacherous. After 1982, the regime radicalised itself, and a major sweep of arrests and executions of political enemies took place in Shinafiyah. More important, between 1983 and 1986, the violent pressure to enlist in the army and the war itself caused most of the suffering and resentment for the soldiers and their families. Thus, by 1986 the regime's abuse of Shinafis was not only felt but also directly experienced. By 1987, because of a crisis, the government radicalised itself once again, and an all-out war escalated in Shinafiyah between the deserting soldiers and the army. This was an important experience because it confirmed to the people of Shinafiyah that the regime did not have their best interests in mind but was only pursuing its own interests.

However, once the war was over, people expected a return to normalcy, but the regime failed to fulfil these expectations and kept people deprived and oppressed via war- and soldier-related duties. This oppression inspired a shift in people's perception of the regime: Before 1989, it still seemed possible that a better life could be achieved under the regime once the war was over; however, after 1989 the deprivation of the people of Iraq continued, and a normal life under Saddam began to seem impossible. There were no signs that life under the regime would change for the better. Overthrowing Saddam seemed to be the only realistic option to live a normal life in Iraq. In this thesis, I have argued that the Shinafis' realisation that a normal life under Saddam was no longer possible was an important necessary condition that inspired the intifadah.

The eventual uprising in Shinafiyah reflected the persistence to respect the social ties and values of the community to keep Shinafiyah stable and safe. This community-centric perspective, however, clashed with the more political perspective, which argued that the Baathist Party and its representatives should be fought no matter where the Baathists were, even if they were part of the community. The political perspective was supported by the younger soldiers who had more direct and harsher experiences with the regime. However, the political perspective quickly lost to the community-centric perspective—not only because it quickly lost legitimacy after being unsupported by the local notables but also because it damaged Shinafiyah's social ties. Thus, it was agreed that bloodshed against Baathists within Shinafiyah was prohibited and that the Baathists would be allowed to escape. It could be argued that the energies of the younger, more

politically inclined soldiers were channelled to fight the regime outside of Shinafiyah—that is, the battle of Kufa.

Because the community-centric perspective prevailed in Shinafiyah, its rebel governance was quite successful in maintaining a semblance of normalcy in Shinafiyah during the intifadah. Shinafiyah, therefore, seemed an exception to Haddad's claim that the intifadah failed to produce effective leadership on a local level. The success of self-rule was a blow to the regime as well, for it demonstrated that the people of Shinafiyah did not need a large, powerful state to control every aspect of their lives or to implement important duties of governance—such as providing safety, administration, and distribution of basic services. Nonetheless, because Shinafiyah's leadership reflected mainly the values, beliefs, and social hierarchies of Shinafiyah, the organisation was less effective in prioritising the goals of the intifadah, which were mainly focused on overthrowing the Baathist regime through military means. Eventually, when the Iraqi Army encircled Shinafiyah to crush the intifadah, the community of Shinafiyah decided not to fight the regime but to surrender, to ultimately prevent the army from destroying Shinafiyah. Though the number of executions and arrests the army made in Shinafiyah have yet to be counted, Shinafiyah as a community remained intact.

I conclude that the origins of the intifadah in Shinafiyah can be traced back to two factors: First, Shinafiyah was an early target of the regime's systematic repression because of its dominant beliefs, which led Shinafiyah to fomenting much resentment against the Baath Party because Shinafiya was an early target for the Baath regime its repression it highly experienced in effectively contesting and coping with the regime. The fact that Shinafiyah was an early target for the regime meant that it had to endure each radicalisation wave of the coercion apparatus, for a period of over 12 years. The cumulative resentment of such a period and the endless loss of family members and friends—as well as the countless incidents and confrontations with the regime—cemented the antagonism between Shinafiyah and the Baathist regime far before the end of the Iran-Iraq War. I argue that this rather long period of oppression, which was based on an excessive reaction from the regime to an unintended position of dissent vis a vis the regime, was an important sufficient cause of the uprising. From an early period, Shinafis began to find ways, techniques, and methods to pursue their own interests at the cost of the aims of the regime. Shinafis learnt to rely on their own community to build

infrastructures and networks and to obtain vital information that could be used to effectively fend off the regime and to pursue their lives as best as they could. This process was amplified by the fact that Shinafiyah was a tight-knit community that was familiar with centuries of cooperating among themselves for economic and social survival.

The second important factor that originated the intifadah in Shinafiyah related to the structural conditions that enabled the widespread performance of regime contestation in Shinafiyah. The fact that the regime experienced a hegemonic contraction gave the people of Shinafiyah additional space to effectively contest the regime. This empowered the local Shinafiyah elite against the local Baath Party members, so that some segments of Shinafis could easily find shelter against the regime under the wing of the local elites. This effect was amplified by the reality that the Baathists in Shinafiyah wanted to have a good reputation among the community and that they worked to keep the regime at bay.

The networks, infrastructures, and extensive corpus of information on enemies and friends that came forth out of the two above mentioned factors effectively functioned as an inchoate social movement, the priority of which was to maintain Shinafiyah's autonomy and interest against outside actors, such as the state. This incipient social movement could host a variety of people from different classes with different political convictions, backgrounds, and occupations if the interest of Shinafiyah was prioritised. The fact that this social movement only extended to the borders of Shinafiyah had partly to do with the fact that the Baath Party had banned and effectively eliminated Iraq's national social movements: Dawah and the ICP. This forced a large number of Iraqis to contest the regime within only their own local communities.

If we postulate that Shinafiyah hosted an inceptive social movement whose core aim was to maintain the autonomy and interest of Shinafiyah, it still needs to be explained what kind of role the anti-regime ideology of the 1980s and the intifadah played in this movement. This elementary social movement was subtle and not established intentionally; it was a side effect of many years of regime contestation. Anti-Baathist regime contestation propelled the creation of the vital networks and infrastructures of this movement, but in this process, it pulled in friendly Baathists, neutral notables and elites, and uninvolved families and friends. To oppose the regime and not get caught, the regime contesters needed those types of people. However, the interest of the people who were pulled into these acts of opposition was to maintain the autonomy and interests of

the Shinafiyah community—not to pursue an ideological conviction of anti-Baathism. This created internal tension between the group who was vehemently anti-Baathist and the group who merely wanted to prioritise the autonomy and interests of Shinafiyah regardless of personal political convictions.

Nonetheless, the presence of this movement and the fact that Shinafiyah was an early responder to the regime's oppressive system were not the necessary causes that transformed these two elements into collective action during the 1991 intifadah. The foremost inspiration of the intifadah was the moment when the people of Iraq and, in particular, those in Shinafiyah understood that a better life could not be achieved in the Baathist regime. Before 1989, resisting the regime was pursued with the understanding that the situation of repression was a temporary consequence of the war situation. Possibly, the connection between the repression as distinct from the war effort itself was still not made. After 1988, however, it became clear that the regime's repression would continue, along with poverty, the demobilisation crisis, and the accumulated resentment, and a mental shift occurred, one in which overthrowing the regime was perceived as the only form of contestation that would address people's grievances. Given the relative deprivation after 1988, the intifada was only a matter of time. The chief point is that were it not for the combination of deep-seated resentment, the inchoate social movement, and the conviction that overthrowing the regime was the only viable option remaining, the political opportunity to revolt in 1991 would have not been seized.

By defining the intifadah in Shinafiyah from the perspective of an incipient social movement for the autonomy and interests of Shinafiyah, we can better understand how the intifadah unfolded in Shinafiyah. Though the social movement of Shinafiyah housed vehement anti-Baathists, they could not impose their anti-Baathist convictions onto this social movement. They were unable to do so because it would inflict damage on Shinafiyah's social ties, go against the local norms of behaviour, and bypass the social weight of Shinafiyah's notables, who even the Baathists could not overrule during their height of power in the early 1980s. If the young soldiers had persisted in their anti-Baathism, they would have only isolated themselves in Shinafiyah. This explains why Shinafiyah's rebel governance, which was aimed mostly at maintaining the safety and stability of Shinafiyah, was so successful. In my research on Shinafiyah, I did not come across any violent incidents between groups of Shinafis. However, because the rebel

governance lasted only for 15 days, we cannot know how long this governance could have maintained the peace. Eventually, when the army encircled Shinafiyah, maintaining the survival of Shinafiyah and its community motivated the people to surrender the town to the army. For the interests of Shinafiyah and possibly for Shinafiyah's social movement, the more politicised participants of the intifadah were requested to leave to save Shinafiyah as a community.

This examination of the intifadah in Shinafiyah has provided implications for our understanding of the intifadah at large and, in general, uprisings in authoritarian societies. In regard to the intifadah in Iraq, this study on Shinafiyah has demonstrated that the intifadah was not a spontaneous, out-of-context uprising and that the villages played a vital role in the uprising. Years of resisting the regime played a crucial role in creating the networks, attitudes, and infrastructures that prepared the people for the intifadah. The success of creating these structures and implementing them during the intifadah depended much on the social relations of one's locale. Because social ties tend to be stronger in small villages, the success of the intifadah was higher there as well. Placing villages under the rebel governance was easier and would lead to less violence than doing so in large cities, such as Basra, Diwaniya, Karbala, and Najaf. This would suggest that the villages provided many human resources that supported the intifadah in the larger cities. In the case of Shinafiyah, this meant teaming up with the neighbouring village of Rumaytha to support the struggle in Kufa.

Simultaneously, if the rebel governance in villages implied that violence against local regime supporters would be withheld, this meant that Baathists were free to go and assist the regime in the larger cities. This mechanism demonstrated that the role of villages was significant for the unfolding of the intifadah in the larger cities. While we have some idea of how the village rebels assisted the intifadah in the cities, we know little about how Baathist villagers assisted the regime in the larger cities. This topic should be investigated in future research.

The intifadah in Shinafiyah demonstrated that the persistent dynamic between Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft in Iraq significantly influenced how the intifadah unfolded. Gemeinschaft emphasised reputation, tribal values, and moral charisma in leadership, rather than the goal-oriented expertise that defined leadership in a Gesellschaft. The leadership of the intifadah fell into the lap of those who had legitimacy

because of their morality, reputation, wealth, or family name. Therefore, the leadership of the intifadah was dominated by morally upright teachers, clerics, and well-respected heads of large families. These groups of people, who might enjoy the legitimacy of the people, still lacked the expertise of the military elite to effectively organise and fight the regime. One reason for the military elite's absence in the leadership of the intifadah was that many did not take a proactive role in the intifadah; another reason is that the military elite did not enjoy the legitimacy and trust that the people held for the clerics, teachers, and heads of large families. Nonetheless, in the case of villages like Shinafiyah, this latter group played an important mediating role in restraining internal violence, especially because this group enjoyed the legitimacy of a wider group of people. However, if the dynamics between Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft influenced the dynamics of the intifadah on the side of the rebels, a particular question must be asked: How did this dynamic affect the efforts of the regime to repress the intifadah?

Third, the active participants of the intifadah were between 18 and 25 years old and came to age during the height of the Baathist oppression and warmongering and, therefore, clashed with their elders, and this tension demonstrates that the intifadah was underlined by a generational conflict within society. As this study has shown, there was a mismatch between the elders of Shinafiyah and the younger generation in regard to the urgency in eliminating the Baathists. This mismatch had to do with two aspects: First, the younger people tended to be more extreme in their worldview. Second, the generation that participated in the intifadah had to endure the main burden of the Baathist Party's nationwide policies. This young generation was the fuel for Saddam's ambitions. However, this was the same generation of people that were excluded from expressing their dissatisfaction with the Baath Party through Iraq's social movements—the ICP and Dawah—which used to be dominated by the generation born in the 1940s and 1950s. Thus, some of the motivation underlying the intifadah can attributed, in part, to Iraq's lost generation, who neither could see eye to eye with its elders nor could find a connection with their older peers of the ICP and Dawah. The uprising was a rebellion not only against the Baath Party but also against the preceding generations, who the younger generation felt had abandoned them when they were the most vulnerable. Placing the intifadah within the context of a generational conflict can shed light on the tensions and

contradictions that inspired the intifadah and could be a valuable angle to further explore and analyse the 1991 uprising.

The current literature on repertories, social movements, and contestation in authoritarian societies does not provide a satisfying answer on how people who are essentially forbidden to organise themselves can erupt in a coordinated mass uprising when the opportunity presents itself. This thesis has demonstrated that individual regime contestation by ordinary underclass Iraqis in their day-to-day interactions with the regime can unintentionally build a surreptitious organisation merely by pursuing that what is in their own interest and autonomy. This process lacked any intentionally extensive ideological intricacies, planning, hierarchies, leadership, and official organisations, but it managed to mobilise more people than all of Iraq's social organisations. In the 1991 uprising, though it failed to overthrow the Baath Party, it did force the regime to exert a large amount of resources to crush this uprising. In addition, its effect was much more significant on the shrinking and destruction of Baath institutions than were the efforts of the Dawah and the ICP combined, after 1991.[540] This study on "ordinary" regime resistance by ordinary citizens against authoritarian societies would benefit from future comparative studies that aim to research similar groups who are excluded from the state's institutions and the traditional social movements but persist in regime resistance and succeed eventually in collectively challenging their regimes.

In the case of Iraq, this study on Shinafiyah was only a preliminary step to illuminating some of the many unknown aspects of the intifadah of 1991. This examination of the intifadah in Shinafiyah has demonstrated that for future research on this topic, an empirical review of the different provinces, cities, towns, and villages of Iraq is necessary. Many aspects of the intifadah in Shinafiyah were understood only after an extensive review of the available information on Shinafiyah as a village and a community itself. These kind of "area" studies are still seriously lacking within the research field of Iraq. More extensive ethnographic and historical research (i.e., through the Baath Party archive) is needed, especially for the sake of gaining insight into the specific relations that local elites had with their younger constituencies, the community-embedded Baathists,

[540] Nicholas Krohley, *The Death of the Mehdi Army: The Rise, Fall, and Revival of Iraq's Most Powerful Militia* (London 2015).

and the conditions of regime resistance on a wider scale. Last, to obtain a multifaceted perspective, more research needs to be done on both nonparticipating bystanders, regime collaborators, and perpetrators.

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## Glossary

**Abaya** Black cloak that Muslim women use to cover themselves up.

**Ahwar** Iraqi region whose landscape is mainly exists out of marshes

**Amn** General term for Iraq's security/intelligence organization

**Arbaeen** A religious commemoration that takes forty days place after the mourning of the martyrdom of the holy saint Hussein ibn Ali ibn Abu Talib (680 a.d)

**Ashura** The tenth day in the Islamic new year. On this date Shia Muslims collectively mourn over the martyrdom of Imam Hussain. This occurs annually.

**Ayatollah** Literaly means sign of God but mainly refers to Shia Islamic Clerics who have achieved a high level of learning.

**Haram** Religiously forbidden in Islam

**Hizb** Political party.

**Husseiniya** An Islamic centre distinct from the mosque mainly intended for the commemoration of the births and martyrdoms of holy Islamic saints.

**Imam** In the context of Twelver Shiism an Imam as a by God appointed leader for the Islamic community. There are in total twelve Imams according to Shia Muslims, all of them descendants from the Prophet Muhammad.

**intifadah** Arabic term for a leaderless mass uprising.

**Jaysh al Shaabi** Literally translates to the People's army but in the case of Iraq it was Baath Party's paramilitary wing.

**Kafir/Kuffar** Infidel

**Karbala** A holy city and pilgrimage site because it has the grave tomb of Hussain ibn Ali ibn Abu Talib

**Madhab** Islamic school of thought

**Muharram** The first lunar month of the Islamic new year. For Shia this is a month of mourning for the martyrdom of Hussain ibn Ali Ibn Abu Talib.

**Mujtahid** A high-level cleric who people follow for their daily guidance in Islamic practice.

**Mukhabarat** A collective term that refers to all the intelligence services of the Iraqi state including its informants.

**Najaf** A holy city close to the grave tomb of Ali ibn Abu Talib, the first Shia Imam.

**Syed/ Sadah** An individual who descends from the family of the Prophet Muhammad.