

10 Conclusion

al-'abd hurrun ma qunī'a. (The slave is as free as he believes himself to be.)
Arab proverb

Mu kull m'dabl joz. (Not everything that is round is a walnut.)
Iraqi colloquial saying

All states require the consent of the governed to rule and insure public order. Likewise, the state is invariably controlled by elites who seek to use it to enhance their own political and economic power and status. Because the use of force represents an inefficient means of rule, and because elites strive to enhance their power and material interests, all states seek to establish hegemony or engage in what I prefer to call the "hegemonic project."¹

There are several motives for attempting to establish hegemony. First, to elicit consent and ensure more efficient rule, the state seeks to generalize its interests to the populace. If those who control the state can convince large segments of the population that elite and mass interests coincide, then the state's policies will be widely accepted. Second, and closely related, the hegemonic project involves the state's attempt to convince the populace that its definition of political community and the public good constitutes the "natural order of things." This process represents less an effort to instill a "false consciousness" among subaltern groups than an attempt to create parameters that define acceptable political thought. By creating boundaries of thought that specify the "natural" political order while stigmatizing political constructs beyond these boundaries as deviant and opposed to the "will of the people," the state seeks to minimize counterhegemonic thinking, and particularly models of political community that challenge its own.² Third, in constructing its hegemonic project, the state seeks to reduce the costs of social control by maximizing consent based on self-imposed norms of behavior and minimizing the need to use force. If subaltern groups are disinclined to challenge the state, then the state can direct its energies elsewhere.

The hegemonic project's potential for success will depend not only on the messages it disseminates, but also on the extent to which it can materially and psychologically integrate subaltern groups. If the state excludes large

segments of the populace from its hegemonic project, the project will fail. As Gramsci notes, subaltern groups must receive some material benefits to motivate them to embrace the state's hegemonic messages. In societies such as Iraq that have sharply drawn ethnic and regional cleavages (which usually also subsume social class cleavages), not only must the state offer material benefits, but it must culturally valorize groups as well.

Ideology plays a critical role in all hegemonic projects. However, referencing the past—creating “memories of state”—is an integral part of all ideological formulations. This is because all states contend that they represent and uphold the continuity of core myths and traditions of a society or, conversely, that they represent a “new order” that seeks to transcend the past, which is denigrated as contrary to the people's interests. In Iraq, the hegemonic project of the Ba'thist state entailed extensive efforts to restructure understandings of the past. Because of the tremendous political instability that the Iraqi nation-state has experienced since its founding, the Ba'thist state sought to reduce the need for force as a mechanism for eliciting the consent of the populace over which it rules. The Iraqi case suggests that in societies with sharply drawn ethnic and regional cleavages, the hegemonic project will eschew detailed and overt ideological statements in favor of greater reliance on the manipulation of historical memory to achieve its ends. This is especially true in states controlled by an ethnic minority.³

Clearly, when the Ba'th first articulated its would-be hegemonic view of history and culture, its formulations were designed to combat and appropriate oppositional views, particularly those of Iraqi nationalists (comprised primarily of communists, party sympathizers, and the non-Marxist left), and to politically marginalize ethnic groups it considered threatening, especially the majority Shi'i community and the Kurds. However, a frontal assault on the Shi'a and the Kurds would have elicited severe reactions that might have toppled the regime.

In organizing its hegemonic project around the appropriation and restructuring of historical memory—what came to be known as the Project for the Rewriting of History—the Ba'th tried to atomize groups it considered hostile through a divide-and-conquer strategy. During the 1970s, the hegemonic project resonated even with marginalized groups to a limited degree because Ba'thist policies seemed to offer the possibility of political stability and a new national identity. For the left, the Ba'th's anti-imperialist rhetoric, its National Front with the ICP, and the nationalization of the Iraq Petroleum Company created the aura of a regime committed to social justice. However, leftists had to renounce all autonomous political activity and totally subordinate their activity to Ba'thist dictates. If members of non-

elite groups implicitly renounced those aspects of their ethnicity or ideology that the Ba'th found objectionable, such as Marxism or traditional Shi'i religion and culture, and if they approached the state as individuals rather than members of corporate entities, they often received material rewards and enhanced status as well.

In terms of the Shi'a, efforts to restructure understandings of the past were designed to sharply contrast secular and religious outlooks. Shi'is who continued to adhere to their religion and culture were linked to movements and symbols that the Ba'th portrayed as unpatriotic, such as the al-Shu'ubiyun and the al-'Ajam, who were symbolic not just of Persians but outsiders generally. The Ba'th branded the communists, whom they also viewed as threatening, as unpatriotic by associating them with stigmatized minorities, particularly Iraq's Jewish population. They did this by manipulating the historical memory of the Jewish community's activities in Iraq prior to the founding of Israel and by portraying the ICP as dominated by Jews, pro-Zionist and hostile to Pan-Arab unity.

The Ba'th likewise sought to undermine its opponents by appropriating the Mesopotamian symbols used in Iraqi political discourse. Unlike earlier Iraqi Pan-Arabists, Saddam and the Takriti Ba'th actively promoted archaeology and historical studies on ancient Mesopotamia to give Iraqis a sense that they were the most “civilized” Arab people. In treatises that argued that the inhabitants of ancient Mesopotamia were “Semitic,” the Ba'th attempted to appropriate Iraqi nationalism and integrate it into Pan-Arab political discourse.

Through the Qadisiyat Saddam campaign, the state's cultural policies were designed to negate the impact on Iraqi society of Khumayni's ideology of an Islamic republic and to redirect the focus of political discourse onto Saddam Husayn.⁴ Here the Ba'th's hegemonic project was less successful because material rewards became scarcer as the Iran-Iraq War progressed and the party under Saddam's exclusive leadership after 1979 became more overtly sectarian. In the wake of the disastrous Iran-Iraq and Gulf wars and the February–April 1991 Intifada, Ba'thist efforts to manipulate the past fell on less receptive ears. The regime found it increasingly necessary to rely on torture and violence, and human rights abuses proliferated. Because this physical intimidation was associated in large measure with Saddam's two sons, Uday and Qusay, the possibility of these self-designated heirs enjoying widespread support after their father's demise was greatly diminished. The regime found itself relying on an ever-smaller circle of supporters and shorn of any support provided by even a limited impact of its hegemonic project to rewrite the past.⁵

What can we learn about efforts to impose hegemony from the case of Ba'hist Iraq? I would offer six hypotheses. First, assuming a relatively unified political elite, state efforts to impose hegemonic modes of thinking will most likely appear in an overt fashion in societies undergoing rapid social change in which the "taken-for-grantedness" of life is fundamentally challenged. Second, state appropriation of public memory will fall on sympathetic ears not only in societies undergoing rapid change, but also in those that, like Iraq, that conform to the "new states / old societies" configuration. Unless a newly formed nation-state has a substantial historical memory to draw upon, the development of an effective hegemonic project will encounter difficulty.⁶ Third, state efforts to appropriate historical memory must be syncretic. That is, they will be widely accepted only if they build on "organic" processes—those not generated and imposed by the state—already underway. Thus the Ba'hist was successful in its efforts to appropriate popular culture (*al-turath al-sha'bi*) and use it for political ends because of widespread public interest in it prior to the Ba'hist coming to power.

Fourth, historical memory cannot be appropriated and disseminated in a thoroughly authoritarian fashion. If historical memory affords a particular group symbolic participation but offers the members of that group few or no material benefits, such as increased opportunities or political power, then the new configuration of memory will not penetrate very deeply into those segments of society. For Saddam to speak approvingly of pre-Islamic Arab tribal culture, and to claim that he is a descendent of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, valorizes the heritage of both Sunni and Shi'i Arabs. However, the relationship of this valorization to the two communities' access to political power and economic benefits is very different. Sunni Arab Iraqis, particularly those drawn from the rural tribal nexus upon which the Takriti Ba'hist based its power, enjoyed privileged access to the state—including its administrative arm, the cultural bureaucracy, the diplomatic corps, the military, the police, and the security services—by virtue of being a member of this ethnic group. Shi'is, however, enjoyed no such privileged status under the Ba'hist. Although many Shi'is acquired status and power within the state, they always did so as *individuals* rather than as Shi'is, and they were dependent on their Sunni Arab compatriots in order to maintain their positions or be promoted. This often produced disaffection, for example as seen in the attempt by Shi'i security chief Nazim al-Kazzar's to seize power in 1973 because of his resentment of Takritis and the influence of Saddam's family within the state. Ba'hist rule, increasingly based on tribalism and nepotism after 1979, was so blatantly at odds with party ideology that it alienated many party members and ideologically motivated candidates for

membership. Thus the prospects for imposing cultural (and hence political) hegemony became even less feasible during the 1980s, given the Ba'hist's self-inflicted wounds that were caused by the two Gulf wars and increased sectarianism, which circumscribed still further Kurdish, minority, and especially Shi'i access to the state. Such access was critical given the state's overwhelming control of a myriad of political, social, economic, and cultural institutions and hence its role as the distributor of material largesse, political power, and social status. This control is especially true in nonmarket societies such as Iraq, where the state is responsible for distributing material rewards.

The Ba'hist's Project for the Rewriting of History suggests that, in order to be effective, an effort to promote hegemony must not only be organically linked to the experiences, interests, and needs of key constituencies in a body politic, but must also be accompanied by institutional developments that will allow target audiences to achieve practical benefits by adopting a state-sponsored worldview. The material prosperity and relative political stability that Iraqis enjoyed during the 1970s attracted significant support among urban and rural Sunni Arabs and many urban Shi'is despite the regime's authoritarianism and human rights abuses. Although the Ba'hist Party's significant growth and the establishment of a national parliament inspired hope that meaningful political participation might be a future option, such institutional development never materialized, thereby blunting support for the Ba'hist.

Fifth, states divided along ethnic lines will encounter greater difficulty constructing a national historical memory, and hence an effective hegemonic project, than societies that do not suffer from such cleavages, even if the state possesses the necessary material and human resources. The vertical cleavages that characterize ethnically divided societies create boundaries that are often difficult to transcend. Paradoxically, those states most in need of a shared political culture are often the ones that find it most difficult to achieve. Only through the development of transethnic institutions, such as a mass party whose ideology and daily functioning is based on nonsectarian and culturally inclusive criteria, can such cleavages be addressed. Ironically, it was the Iraqi Communist Party, and to a lesser extent the National Democratic Party, that helped create a distinctly Iraqi nationalism that crossed ethnic lines, thereby establishing the counterpoint against which the Ba'hist launched its own Project for the Rewriting of History.⁷

Sixth, the success of a hegemonic project will be directly linked to the strength of counterhegemonic narratives. Despite the decline of Iraqi nationalism after the 1963 Ba'hist coup d'état, its message of cultural inclu-

sion and social justice has continued to resonate with many Iraqis, especially the huge expatriate population of intellectuals and professionals. Many Iraqi nationalist intellectuals did concern themselves with history and historical memory. Before 1963, the archaeologists organized around the journal *Sumer*, and many Iraqi intellectuals, such as poets and short story writers, took Iraqi *national* historical memory seriously. The two main political organizations in the Iraqi nationalist camp, however, did not. The ICP was more concerned with Soviet history and culture, and the NDP with Western European and Russian history and culture, with the result that neither sought to engage Iraq's past, whether ancient Mesopotamia, the pre-Islamic Arab past, or 'Abbasid history, in any systematic way. This neglect of indigenous historical memory played into the hands of the Pan-Arabists, who were more effective in engaging the nation-state's collective desire to overcome decades of social fragmentation and political turmoil. Further, in failing to engage Iraqi historical memory, the Iraqi nationalist political parties ceded much of the intellectual terrain centered on the nation to Pan-Arabists. In other words, Pan-Arabists were able to dominate the discourse of nation more effectively by positioning themselves as the bearer of important national traditions in a way that neither the ICP nor the NDP was capable of doing. This does not mean that Iraqi Pan-Arabists possessed a more realistic sense of political community. Pan-Arabism has never been able to meaningfully address the questions of ethnic and cultural diversity and social inequality that Iraq still suffers from today.

Despite the enormous expenditure of energy and revenues during the 1970s, the state's efforts to establish itself as a hegemonic force in Iraqi society ultimately failed. The 1991 Intifada and the tremendous exodus from the country of the Iraqi middle class (and anyone else who had the financial means to leave) created one of the largest expatriate communities in the world. Similar to prior regimes, the Ba'th Party was unable to establish a political culture shared by large segments of the populace, causing a problem that has led some observers to label Iraq an "artificial state," particularly because of its ethnic divisions.⁸ This study rejects that view, which confuses the state's lack of hegemonic control with the populace's feelings toward Iraq as a nation-state.

First, Iraq's three main ethnic groups have never indicated anything but a desire to remain an integral part of the Iraqi nation-state. During the Intifada, no Shi'i organization called for an independent Shi'i state. This is also true of the Kurds, who have enjoyed autonomy from Baghdad since 1991 and who want federalism, not independence. Second, two of the most bloody and materially devastating wars of the twentieth century failed to destroy

Iraq's cohesion as a nation-state. As I argued earlier, the Iran-Iraq War was won by Iraq's Shi'i-dominated infantry fighting against fellow Shi'is from Iran. Indeed, this was the first war of Shi'a fighting Shi'a.

Because the Ba'th Party failed in its efforts to impose a hegemonic view of culture and history on Iraq, and it became captive of its own historical memory—namely one of cruelty, torture, war, and economic degradation—there was little or no possibility that the current regime would rehabilitate itself after 1991. The Ba'thist regime was able to prolong its hold on power through acquiring additional funds by concluding contracts with foreign oil firms and manipulating the sale of oil under the United Nation's Oil for Food Program, thereby largely circumventing United Nations sanctions. Through a combination of increased brutality, venality, corruption, and nepotism, and the thoroughly disjointed nature of cultural production, the regime after the 1991 Gulf War and Intifada resembled a mob that exploited the state for personal ends more than a government concerned with the public good. This is true not only of Saddam, who became increasingly remote from the people, but even more so of the main political actors standing in the wing: Uday, whose violent outbursts and quixotic behavior verged on the unstable, and Qusay, who was despised for his brutality in suppressing dissent, and especially his so-called "prison cleansing" campaigns. In Gramscian terms, the state denuded itself of the "inner fortresses and earthworks" that it had attempted to provide by its hegemonic project. Force and bribery became its only protection. Politics ultimately comes down to choices. To use Gramscian terms, when a political situation changes from a "war of position" to a "war of maneuver," that is, to a situation when a state is directly challenged, citizens need reasons to choose to defend the state from such challenges. If the populace does not identify its own interests with those of the state, the state will never be able to withstand a serious challenge.

What, then, are the prospects for a more participatory form of politics and cultural pluralism now that Saddam and the Ba'thist regime have been removed from power? The transition to democracy in Iraq will not be easy. The social and political toll of twenty years of war and sanctions cannot be overcome overnight. Many of Iraq's professionals and intellectuals, having established roots abroad, will not return to Iraq, even now that Saddam and the Ba'th have been overthrown.⁹ Many have argued that the Kurds, with no economic base of their own and generous United Nations assistance at the present, did not want to see the Ba'thist regime collapse. The extent to which the Kurds will help the Arab democratic forces now that the Ba'thist order is gone is not entirely clear. Surrounding states, especially Syria,

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and, to a lesser extent, Jordan, do not want an Iraqi regime that encourages political participation and cultural pluralism because it will reflect negatively on their own authoritarian regimes. Their support of the new Iraqi government, especially if it contains a significant Shi'i presence as it must, cannot be counted on. Turkey fears the formation of a break-away Kurdish state in the north of Iraq, and it may intervene in Iraq's domestic politics should such a state appear to be a possibility. Finally, the tensions caused by the retribalization of Iraq will also place a great burden on any democratically minded government. Although the tribal system was moribund by the early 1950s, and the Qasim regime seemingly sealed its fate through reformist laws passed after the 1958 revolution, Saddam's revival of the system during the 1990s, even if based on "invented tradition," created new interests, centers of power, and cleavages between tribal leaders and peasants.

In this context, the forces of globalization have exerted a salutary effect on political change in Iraq. A global culture of democracy and the rejection of state-sponsored human rights abuses, as seen in the greater integration of communications networks and the development of international legal institutions and precedents, makes it more difficult for states like Iraq, which depend heavily on the world market for their economic success, to avoid adhering to international political norms. The Iraqi democratic opposition's discussion and practice of democracy abroad after the Gulf War and Intifada of 1991 developed important skills, including the ability to negotiate and compromise, a new political vocabulary of participation and cultural pluralism, and new levels of trust and tolerance. These skills will serve the opposition well as it tries to establish a democratic system and promote the development of civil society.

What are the implications for state theory of Ba'athist efforts to establish a hegemonic view of politics through manipulating Iraqis' sense of the past? Much has been made of the notion of the "rentier state" as the foundation of power for political elites in oil-producing states such as Iraq through the creation of their relative autonomy from the populace at large.¹⁰ Without a doubt, the tremendous increase in oil revenues was critical to the Ba'athist state's development of a massive cultural production infrastructure. Conversely, as indicated in chapter 9, once these revenues declined, the state's cultural production shrunk by more than 50 percent. Despite being almost an archetypical rentier state during the 1970s, the Ba'athist state lost its power and influence during the 1980s and 1990s, finally collapsing in 2003. It would seem that only when efforts are made to translate the wealth available to the rentier state into the development of a shared political culture

and effective political institutions does this concept do anything more than provide a temporally bounded description of state power. In limiting their theorizing to the structural components of the "rentier state," the proponents of this theory have failed to theorize the components of agency whereby access to externally derived rents is translated into effective and lasting political power. Under what conditions do elites who control rentier states succeed in reproducing themselves over time, and under what conditions do they fail to do so? This study of the initial success and ultimate failure of the Ba'ath Party's hegemonic project in Iraq represents an attempt to answer this question.

It can be hypothesized from the Iraqi case (and the neighboring Iranian case as well) that the mechanisms for extracting rents from the international economy, which purportedly increased state autonomy and power through a decreased economic dependence on domestic society, can actually produce a concomitant political cultural distancing of political elites from that society, which undermines their power and control. When the Takriti Ba'ath felt challenged by opposition groups during the 1970s, state-sponsored cultural production focused on marginalizing that opposition. Populism, folklore, al-Bakr's paternal rule, and photographs depicting Saddam's humble origins, which made him one of the people (*ibn al-balad*), highlighted this effort to sustain strong ties to the populace. During the 1980s and 1990s, the state, dominated by Saddam and the "family party" (*hizb al-usra*), lost touch with political and social reality. The regime was seriously threatened by Iran's invasion of southern Iraq in 1986, and was almost overthrown in March 1991.¹¹

Recent studies have challenged the agentic assumptions of many structural theories. These studies' argument that agency cannot necessarily be deduced from structural determinants is a powerful one.¹² They assert instead that the study of choice and decision making at the microanalytic level is necessary before any meaningful statements about political behavior can be made. Although differing ontologically and epistemologically, both the rational choice and neo-Marxist paradigms argue that choice is central to any political equation.¹³ Only by making choices (or failing to do so, which is, in effect, a form of choice) do citizens either support or challenge the state. Neither the Iraqi nor the Egyptian army—both having retained a powerful memory of the humiliation each suffered at British hands in 1941 and 1942, respectively, and chagrined by their poor performance in the 1948 Palestine campaign because of defective equipment and poor training—defended their respective monarchies when the Free Officer movements in each country moved to overthrow them in 1952 and 1958. Likewise, the

army chose not to defend 'Abd al-Karim Qasim in 1963 or to come to the aid of the Shah of Iran in the face of massive street demonstrations in 1978. In each instance, the military's choice not to act was a critical factor in the collapse of the state. By detailing state efforts to impose hegemonic modes of thought and the responses of subaltern groups to these efforts, the concept of hegemony can help us better understand choices, and the structural nexus within which these choices are made. Hence the concept of hegemony offers the possibility of bridging the methodological divide between structure and agency, thereby integrating theoretical approaches derived from both political culture and political economy. Because hegemony has many affinities with legitimacy, a concept that is at the core of much political science research not just on Western democracies but on the Arab and non-Western world as well, what is the advantage of constructing the analysis of state-sponsored efforts to appropriate historical memory around hegemony rather than legitimacy?¹⁴

Legitimacy, understood in Weber's formulation as support for rational-legal authority, suggests a democratic polity with a developed civil society. Only in a political setting where citizens enjoy organizational rights (political parties, professional groups, civic associations) and institutional rights (laws, individual rights, constraints on executive authority) can the governed freely decide whether or not to attribute legitimacy to those who control the state. In the context of the modern nation-state, legitimacy actually denotes legitimate authority and the citizen's freedom to decide whether to bestow legitimacy on a particular form of political authority. Although the concept of legitimacy suggests different analytic levels, especially between the political leadership that controls the state and seeks to make its authority legitimate, on the one hand, and the citizenry, which must decide whether to bestow legitimacy on a particular form of authority, on the other, the concept of hegemony is broader because it is applicable to both authoritarian and democratic societies. The concept of hegemony likewise offers a more dynamic notion of political process than the concept of legitimacy.

Unlike the Weberian notion of legitimacy, hegemony, at least in its Gramscian construction, implies a dialectical approach to political process, because hegemony always entails counterhegemony.¹⁵ Because hegemony, unlike legitimacy, assumes that elites or ruling classes will invariably seek to skew the distribution of political and economic resources in their favor, subaltern groups will oppose such policies, as reflected in the development of counterhegemonic worldviews. The concept of legitimacy in its modern formulation, that is, defined in relation to rational-legal authority, seems

more applicable to democratic political systems, in which citizens enjoy a greater ability to make choices.¹⁶

During the 1980s, however, the Ba'ath Party's influence was increasingly subordinated to the "family party," and it quickly became apparent that the Iraqi parliament would not be delegated any meaningful legislative power. The Iran-Iraq War, coupled with intensified corruption and nepotism within the regime, increasingly circumscribed opportunities for upward mobility and undermined the material gains of the 1970s. As Gramsci argues, hegemony never resides solely in the cultural realm. Unless the hegemonic ideology proposed by the state is accompanied by material benefits for the targeted social strata, efforts to inculcate the populace with the notion that its interests are synonymous with those of the ruling elite will fall on deaf ears. By restricting state-sponsored memory to the cult of personality surrounding Saddam, and by narrowing political and especially economic opportunities to a relatively small elite, the regime moved away from the populism of the 1970s and constrained rather than expanded the institutional development that was necessary to promote acceptance of its own worldview. When the Iran-Iraq War ended and the state was unable to fulfill its promises of a return to the prosperity of the status quo ante, serious discontent quickly surfaced, providing one of the stimuli for invading Kuwait.

Because war making proved to be so counterproductive for the Ba'ath Party, the question arises whether initiating wars was a function of Saddam's aggressive personality or a deeper structural characteristic of sectarian states. I have argued that there was a direct relationship between the Ba'athist state's efforts to promote a hegemonic worldview and its efforts to institutionalize sectarianism in the Iraqi political system. Likewise, I would argue that sectarian states maintain aggressive tendencies because they are inherently unstable. In Iraq, the Ba'athist state's aggressive and violent character was fostered not only by sectarianism, but by reliance on tribalism as well.

The Iraqi case demonstrates the difficulty of theorizing "stateness" in the abstract. It provides strong support for developing theories of the modern state from detailed case studies that later may be compared within and across regions. One particularly salient question is how to measure the strength of an individual state. If, in the Iraqi case, we are to conclude that the Ba'athist state was strong, then the prospects for the development of civil society are limited. If, as I maintain, the state ultimately lacked ideological direction and came to rest on a narrow social base, then this indicates that its hold on power was always more tenuous than recognized.

In the final analysis, Iraq did not possess a strong state under the Ba'ath. It

undermined its future prospects by allowing little meaningful political institutionalization and the dissipation of whatever political capital the Ba'athist regime had accumulated during the 1970s. To counter those who point to the widespread security and military apparatus the regime developed under the "republic of fear," I would ask whether a gang holding hostages whom it terrorizes is exhibiting strength or power in any meaningful sense for any duration of time. Increasingly the Iraqi state came to be seen by both Iraqis and Westerners as "rule by the mob," invoking the notion of a criminal or rogue state.¹⁷ Once this occurred, the days of the "family party" were clearly numbered.

Hopefully, this study demonstrates the fallacy that states can impose a hegemonic view of politics on a society through financial co-optation and physical intimidation. Hegemony can only be successful if it finds its origins in society, not in the state apparatus.¹⁸ Although the Ba'athist state did build upon cultural sentiments already extant in Iraqi society when it came to power, its attempt to appropriate these sentiments in an authoritarian fashion ultimately served to undermine that process. The state came to believe that it was the fount of history and culture rather than deriving its cues from the populace. The ultimate rejection of the Ba'athist Project for the Rewriting of History stands in marked contrast to the reaction to similar cultural policies followed by the Qasim regime, policies that were pursued in a much more culturally authentic manner and attracted significant intellectual and popular support. All regimes must convince their citizens that they rule in their interests, and hence that the citizenry should identify its interests with those of the state. What the Iraqi case underlines is that democratic rule is not just an ethical imperative, but it is ultimately the best way for the ruler and the ruled to achieve a shared sense of political community. However, forces that support democracy and culturally inclusive policies, especially important in ethnically diverse societies, need to heed another lesson of the Ba'athist experience. Democratic forces that fail to engage the past in newly developed states, such as the Iraqist nationalists failed to do in Iraq, risk alienating themselves from the populace. Unfortunately, one of the most difficult tasks for future Iraqi governments will be to face a complex public memory and answer the question of how the terror and cruelty of the Ba'ath was able to dominate Iraqi society for so long.

In summary, I have argued that a conceptual framework that allows the study of the interrelationship between historical memory, collective identity, and political community introduces an emphasis on contingency and change that is often missing from the models that have heretofore been used to conceptualize Iraqi politics and society. A focus on memory avoids

the essentialist tendencies and static quality of the "ethnic model," and the model that characterizes Iraq as a "republic of fear." By drawing our attention to intellectual production, it reinserts the saliency of ideas into political analysis. By stressing the dialectic of memory and countermemory, it forces any model that utilizes the concept to focus on the constant process of the renegotiation of repression and the resistance by subaltern groups to the state. The concept of historical memory also calls attention to the concept of agency and the microanalytic level of politics by focusing on individual behavior, namely, the process by which intellectuals engage in cultural production and ordinary citizens go about creating their understandings of the past in the face of the intrusiveness of the state. An approach that incorporates historical memory offers an antidote to the poverty of agency that plagues much structural analysis, especially reductionist Marxist models that continue to insist upon the links between political consciousness and "objective conditions." Historical memory also offers a means to refine the concept of hegemony, understood not as the top-down imposition of "false consciousness," but rather as a domain of struggle that can open numerous analytic vistas on political processes. Understood politically, the concept of historical memory can yield great insights into nation-states undergoing rapid change. It can be especially useful in understanding societies that are politically fragmented along ethnic or social class lines, in which the use of an explicit ideology may only threaten to exacerbate those cleavages. Yet any model that uses historical memory needs to be conscious of its own uses of history. Unless situated within a systematic approach that draws upon political economy and political culture, the analytic potential of historical memory to help us better understand political change will not be realized.