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War and the shadow state:

the case of Iraq during the war against Iran

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“War is the father of all and king of all” (Kirk, 1954, p. 245) is what Heraclitus claimed and even if it might be quite exaggerating, it is not far from reality. War has always been central in shaping human affairs and it constitutes one of the most ancient forms of politics, since it has been used since time immemorial by human beings trying to impose their will on other neighbouring entities. War has largely contributed towards changing the form, structure and composition of both the entities launching it and those on which it was being imposed, while it was a result of war that modern states have been born and developed.

This essay is going to engage with the extent to which the shadowy aspects of a state –namely the shadow state– are affected by war through the study case of Iraq during the 1980-1988 war against Iran. The answer to this question, I argue, is that the shadow state is significantly affected by war. More specifically, the state is an entity which consists of a territory, a political community (based on a common identity) and an institutional mechanism and, as such, it is affected by war in all these levels; the shadow state is a power projection, decision making and wealth allocating network and not a complete state; all the hierarchically structured networks are affected by war since it tests their limits and abilities to deliver answers to the members of the network and to project power over the members and non-members of the network; finally, being a network, the Iraqi shadow state was affected by the Iran-Iraq war regarding the position of the army in relation to the shadow state apparatus, Saddam’s role in the shadow state’s political and economic inner circles and the composition of the shadow state’s broader social base. Overall, the Iraqi shadow state and Saddam’s position have been significantly strengthened because of the war.

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The state, war, the shadow state and Iraq

Born in pre-modern Europe as a direct outcome of the power projection and violence delivery needs generated by war (Tilly 1985, 1992; Kennedy, 1989; Howard, 1976), the modern state has been established as a human community that successfully monopolises the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory (Weber et al., 1968). Obviously, as this definition correctly indicates, the state consists of a territorial unit, a political community and a hierarchical institutionalised mechanism or in other words the state manifests itself institutionally, while it consists of a physical base and of the very idea of it as a state (Holsti, 1996). Being a violent armed conflict that is carried on between political communities, carried out by organised institutional mechanisms (Bull, 1977) and taking place in a given territory, war affects states to the full extent of their multidimensional nature. As Tripp argues,

“a state at war is being tested as an organisation of power, capable of exercising its power through the use of violence; as an ‘ethical community’ whose members have a sense of their own identity and who actively participate in the violent protection or extension of certain commonly defined interests; as a territorial unit capable both of being maintained in the face of attack and the definition of which has entered into the imagination of its inhabitants in the belief that this territory is worth defending with their lives” (1993, p. 103).

It has been correctly argued that a state may have a shadowy aspect as well. Most states in fact tend to have such an aspect, albeit at different levels. The Turkish deep state comprising of military elements and the Soviet shadow state clustering around the party nomenclature are only two examples. In the case of Iraq, the shadowy aspects were expressed mainly through Saddam, who used to appoint non-Arab Sunnis in many symbolically prominent positions and local organisations, to constantly expand the public sector, and to staff the inner circle with Sunni Arab members of the Ba’ath descending mainly from the North-West of Baghdad, where his tribe was dominant. The ruling elites always perceived the public bureaucracy as a hollow shell under the shadow of which a hierarchically structured distribution-and-reward system (Al-Khalil, 1990) could thrive, while membership in the Ba’ath constituted a major path towards inclusion in the shadow state mechanisms, which can be described as “networks of associates, chains of patrons and clients, circles of exclusion and privilege emanating from the office and person of the President” (Tripp,

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2007, p. 259). These circles were not limited to the socio-political level but extended in the economic system of the country as well. The great importance of the public sector as a key economic actor, as a means of quasi-welfare policy and as the first stage of inclusion to the shadow state made it a part and parcel of the shadow state. Therefore, there was a political and an economic elite, which were bound to Saddam via patrimonial channels and links.

Thus, as the network theories of power indicate (Castells, 2011), the power of the members of the network was projected over the non-members, while the power of people closer to its centre (that being Saddam Husain) was being constantly projected over those away from it. The shadowy networks produced, preserved and used power mostly for their own benefit, projecting it to the whole society. "Answering to needs, promoting claims, mediating for problems and favouring with special treatment some parts of society in exchange for their loyalty" (Tripp, 2007, p. 259), while heavily discriminating against others, were practices widely used and utterly connected to rules and standards according to which, as Castells(2011) claims, networks were functioning and social interaction was being coordinated. But the power projection capabilities of the shadow state meant that the strong man of the network could programme (and re-programme) the network itself according to his wishes, interests and values (Castells, 2011). Thus, seen under that prism, the shadow state shall be perceived as a network of power functioning under the shadow (as its name indicates) of the actual state.

The proverbial success of the Iraqi shadow state can be explained by its need-fulfilling capacity, the region's political tradition and the patrimonial relationship developed between Saddam Husain and each one of his protégés separately. He had managed to appear as the only person capable of securing their interests, maintaining a balance among them and at the same time preserving this profitable status quo. Therefore, they would not unite against him for fear of the unexpected future and they would not confront him on their own, as their influence and power could not match his and as no one would (be able to) protect them. Apart from Saddam's personal aptitudes, the shadow state succeeded also because it constructed and maintained networks which could personalise the impersonal mechanisms of a distant state. Personalised power relations are much closer to the Middle Eastern political tradition, as modern states were arbitrarily imposed to the traditional power structures and social relations, thus being unknown and alien to the indigenous populations. The shadowy networks were legitimised by the serv-

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ices offered to the people, as well as by the expectations created amongst them. As Tripp claims, if people believe that the network system is efficient and profitable, they will support it and “in doing so they further strengthen the very principles of efficacy and authority which sustain these networks, and consequently assist in the degradation of the normative framework of the institutions of the state” (1993, p. 95).

These practices resulted in the Iraqi state being de facto deprived of two out of its three dimensions and fully existing only as a territorial unit. It could not properly function as a political community since the discriminative tactics of the shadow state had deconstructed whatever common identity was there, while its public hierarchy existed only in name, since it was deeply penetrated and almost completely dominated by the shadowy networks of privilege. But this does not mean that the shadow state was able to cover the gaps left by the actual state. Even if it was almost completely dominating the public hierarchy, the shadow state could not function as a political community since there was no common identity based on an ideology, belief system or narrative. Therefore, since the term “state” includes all the three above mentioned dimensions (territory, community, mechanism), and since neither the shadow state nor the actual state dominated all three, then neither one, enfeebled as they were, should be viewed as a complete state.

On the contrary, in the late 1970s Iraq consisted of a territorial unit, multiple political communities and a shadowy network of privilege, which was covered by the hollow shell of the official hierarchy. Not abolishing this shell helped the shadow state to have a pool of potential members and to deal only with the clientelistic relationships, leaving the everyday matters to be settled by the weak public hierarchy. Seen under that prism, the term “shadow state” loses its essence: it was not a state, but only a discriminative network of privilege and it was not functioning that much undercover, since the large majority of the population was aware of its existence and role. Those who accepted it (mainly Arab Sunnis and some Arab Shi’ites) lived by its rule, whereas those who did not (mainly Kurds and some Arab Shi’ites) were systematically marginalised (Al-Khalil, 1990). This raises questions on whether this kind of state is rather fierce and not strong. Nonetheless, despite their inapplicability, the terms “shadow state” and “state” will still be used in this essay mainly for reasons of brevity.

The war against Iran and the effects on the Iraqi shadow state

Being a network, the shadow state is affected by all the factors normally affecting a network of power, like a major technological leap, an innovation in the economic or political system, a sudden change in the geopolitical, socio-political or economic balance, a new ideology, a policy or a conflict, especially when this conflict constitutes “the continuation of policy by other means” (Clausewitz, 1984, p. 87). In the Iraqi case, the unforeseen totality and prolongation of the war, the several religious and ethnic distinctions among the Iraqi “nation”, the highly exclusionist way in which politics was carried out, the state’s failure (or non-interest) in claiming its citizens’ primary loyalty and the regime’s ability to withstand the difficulties and gradually to overcome them may indicate the shadow state’s depth, endurance and adaptability in the changing conditions of a war. Just as WWII has modified the socio-economic and political system of the USSR and has strengthened Stalin’s rule, the war against Iran has affected in many ways the Iraqi shadow state apparatus which, being a network of power designed to deal with internal issues (mainly order and security), has been challenged by an external actor and, thus, by external challenges and issues, namely the preservation of the territorial integrity of the country. As a result, the army was repositioned in relation to the shadow state, Saddam’s role in the inner political and economic circles was redefined, and the shadow state’s social base was considerably transformed and restructured.

The position of the army in relation to the shadow state and Saddam Husain

The urgent need of successfully conducting (mainly) defensive military operations after 1982 led to several modifications in the criteria applied to the appointment of the officers: loyalty to Saddam started to retreat and to give its place to military competence and organisational skills. As a result, many qualified Arab Shi’ites were promoted to important positions in the military hierarchy, thus ending the Arab Sunni domination in the officers’ corps, while constant replacements of the officers in order to avoid the formation of groups able to constitute a threat to the regime gradually faded away. Through these changes, the army command was allowed an unprecedented level of independence: the shadow state massively retreated, thus allowing the officers’ corps to be professionalised and institutionalised, as well as relatively

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Furthermore, the Iraqi army significantly expanded in size and, consequently, its composition was changed. From around 250,000 in 1980, it almost quadrupled during the war, thus increasing its relative importance in Iraqi society as an institution, as a socio-political and economic class and as a social way of self-determination. In parallel, under the pressures exerted by the Iranian counterattacks, the regime “rediscovered” the Arab Shi’ite population of the south. As a result, Arab Shi’ites were included in the army and sent to the front to fight against Iran. Through these palpable changes, the role of the army has been considerably modified: from being a largely Arab Sunni force used as a tool of internal military suppression and from constituting an important pillar of the Iraqi shadow state (Al-Khalil, 1990), it transformed into a much wider and mainly Arab Shi’ite institution which was capable of defeating external enemies and successfully protecting the country.

The major reforms and changes in the army’s structure, composition, size and way of functioning resulted in Saddam Husain’s supremacy being somehow more fragile compared to the Sunni-dominated recent past as he was deprived of a trusted tool of internal suppression. The reforms came as a response to a dilemma posed to Saddam and his regime: losing power or losing Iraq? Nevertheless, since he did not want to lose either, he tried to follow a third way consisting of three policies: firstly, he modified the regime’s discourse concerning the army. Before the war against Iran, the public narrative clustered around the “Iraqi army”, whereas after the outbreak of the war it quickly transformed into Saddam’s army. By personalising the army’s leadership in the eyes of his clients, Saddam Husain tried to create an image of him continuing to be in absolute control of everything. Except from his will to claim the possible success of the army as his own making, he meant for this narrative to function as a safety valve for him and his mechanism. The message sent out addressed to the professional hierarchy and it was short and simple: “do not try to topple me, because I am still the only person on whom the whole structure of the Iraqi multi-aspect state and economy is based”.

Secondly, in order to secure his position and to materialise his preventive (against the prospective successors) policy, Saddam ordered the recreation of the Republican Guard on entirely new foundations, the most important of which was that it was all-volunteer, that it consisted only of Arab Sunnis coming from the President’s tribal background and that it was trained in order to be an elite force. The Guard actually took over the role that the whole army had held during the pre-war

period. By doing so, it became the pillar of the regime and was mainly used for internal political aims, while by being (considered as) faithful beyond any doubt it undertook the task to protect the regime against any anti-governmental activity coming from all the possible internal enemies, including the rest of the army.

Thirdly, he granted to the army a level of independence, but he could not “abandon” it to the (partly Shi’ite) professional military hierarchy. Knowing perfectly well that “to invest an institution with authority and to give it the licence to act upon that authority, is to create a potential base for opposition” (Tripp, 1993, p. 97), Saddam never allowed the army to achieve absolute independence from his shadow state. Instead, he chose to balance its autonomy by appointing his people to several key positions, trusting them that they will prove in the future as loyal as they did in the past. For example, the Minister of Defence, deputy Commander-in-Chief and Commander of the Southern Region (Adnan Khairallah Tulfah), as well as the Head of the Military Bureau of the Baath and Commander of the Northern Region (Ali Hassan al-Majid) were both his first cousins. His trust to them was initially based on their common tribal or family background, as well as on his “divide and rule” way of governance which was based on his personal networks of patron-client relationships mentioned before.

In short, the officers’ corps has been institutionalised, professionalised and allowed to be relatively independent, while the army increased in size and incorporated many Shi’ites. As a result, its role changed and could no more be used for internal purposes. This led Saddam to imposing a more distant surveillance on it through his most trusted protégés, to upgrading the Republican Guard (so that it could be used in a counterbalancing way) and to changing the image of the army. The characteristics and the gradual transformation that the army underwent during the war against Iran may indicate some more general trends: even the most autocratic regimes may depend on factors and institutions outside their control. Even if this may not totally serve the regime’s own interests when politics goes on as usual, it is vital when politics is disrupted by the emergence of an external threat. At that point, the over-concentration of power (which is a central characteristic of autocracy) might prove destructive since it usually leads to relatively low levels of efficiency. With the exceptions¹ of Hitler’s Germany and (most probably²) pre-

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1 Stalin’s USSR is not mentioned among the exceptions because its purged military hierarchy was radically transformed after the German offensive on the basis of skill and capabilities, while it was allowed relatively large levels of autonomy during the WWII operations

2 Even though the Turkish army is among the largest worldwide and it is considered to be well trained and efficient it has actually not participated in large scale operations against serious enemies since WWI. The invasion in Cyprus was carried out against largely uncoordinated and not very well trained Greek and Cypriot units, while the Kurds constitute a partly military and partly civilian guerrilla force.

2000s Turkey, the armies usually are militarily least efficient when autocratic regimes are in power and the reason for this must be sought to the clientelistic practices used by the regime in order not to lose control over the military hierarchy, as well as to the highly political way in which the army is being used by the regime. In other words, efficiency (again with exceptions) usually cannot be combined with autocracy, since the latter favours political obedience instead of skill. This obviously does not suggest that non-autocratic regimes are necessarily more efficient than the autocratic ones. It only suggests that efficiency is more likely to arise under a non-autocratic regime, since it is usually those states that favour competence and skill.

Saddam Husain and the shadow state's inner political and economic circles

As mentioned above, the shadow state structure included a political and an economic elite bound personally to Saddam Husain through patrimonial networks. Despite his dominating position in these circles, the multidimensional danger faced by Iraq, his personal responsibility for the outbreak of the war, the negatively cumulative effects of the war in Iraqi society and economy along with the Iranian declaration of ending the war only if he gave up the presidency had severely endangered Saddam's position among the political and economic elites. As a result of that, and since the army was no longer as useful as it was before the war, he sought a strategy towards securing his place and power and he came up with that of personalisation, which was already used in the case of the army.

In the political realm, the personalisation of Saddam's power took the form of compressing the decision making process into him only. At the 1982 Congress "he succeeded in establishing that thenceforward 'on every matter, big or small, [he would be] cited as the authority'" (Chubin & Tripp, 1988, p. 90). The more insecure he was feeling, the more he tried to enforce his line of thinking and to assert his authority (Bengio, 1985). Furthermore, he intensified the practice of appointing his relatives and tribesmen in all key positions of the shadow state, while the fact that he was simultaneously chairman of the RCC, president of the country, chairman of the council of Ministers, chief of the armed forces, chairman of the Committee on Agreements, secretary of the Iraqi Regional Command of the Ba'ath Party and chairman of the Supreme Planning Council among many others (Al-Khalil, 1990) signalled an unprecedented concentration of power in one per-

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son. This trend is depicted by his efforts to import to the “public” discourse many autocratic norms and images: he used to describe himself as an “imperative leader”, the “people’s champion” and the “leader of the nation” among others, while he was extensively referring to the ancient empires and monarchs of Mesopotamia, like Hammurabi and Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.

These policies constituted a message addressed to the political elite, which was not less threatening than the one addressed to the professional army hierarchy: “I am the only and absolute source of power and without me you are doomed”. Seeking to add a preventive note to this message and to further warn the shadow state that not following the “strategic line” emanating by him would have negative and unpredicted consequences (Bengio, 1985), he significantly intensified the use of violence (Woods et al., 2006). In 1982, he had the Minister of Health (Riyadh Ibrahim) savagely executed, just because he embraced Iran’s suggestion that Saddam should withdraw from the Presidency in order for peace to be achieved. In parallel, he launched a purge of the top Ba’athist leadership, the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) and the government. The role of those who remained in the decision making process was limited to giving advice. After listening to all of his legal experts, his ministers, the members of the RCC and the six newly appointed special advisers to the Presidency, “he would then make his decision on the basis of this counsel and of what he considered to be correct” (Tripp, 1993, p. 112).

Regarding the economic aspects, the personalisation of Saddam Husain’s power took the form of strengthening the economic ties between the shadow state and the economy and, thus, slightly extending and significantly deepening his economic control over his clients. His statements that “‘an active and prosperous private sector’ should be created as a supplement and encouragement to the state sector... [and] that ‘all officials have to pay as much attention to economic affairs as to political ideology’” (Chubin & Tripp, 1988, p. 113) depict the very proximity of the shadow state and the economy, as well as the importance that the latter held in Saddam’s effort to secure his position. It is clear that the privatisation process was not to be (and eventually was not) carried out “democratically”. The people who have benefited from it the most were either those already connected with Saddam Husain through the shadowy patron-client channels, or those who have chosen to do so at that specific moment. Thus, Saddam managed to strengthen his position among his already declared clients and to extend it to other people as well, many of whom belonged to the Shi’ite upper class. In that way they were “neutralised” and drawn closer to the regime.

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In short, Saddam's new strategy resulted in a smaller decision making elite and in a slightly extended and considerably deepened economic one. As a result, Saddam was far more secure: he limited the decision making process only to himself, he depended on no one that he did not control, he managed to bind more people to him and, consequently, he made them believe that both Iraq and (mainly) their privileges and interests were to be secured only by him. If he went down, he would take them with him. Nevertheless, this could possibly act like a two-sided knife: having narrowed down and personalised so much the decision making process, Saddam could blame no one if something went wrong, whereas he produced a system which was relatively cumbersome and, thus, prone to be characterised by low levels of adaptability to any new conditions, to commit mistakes and to make wrong decisions. The changes in the political and economic circles of Saddam's regime indicate some general trends: in order for a regime to survive, it has to keep the right people satisfied, dependent on it, or under control. The satisfaction of the existing socio-political and economic elites or the creation of new ones is causally connected to a regime's longevity. The French monarchy was supported by the land-based aristocracy and the clergy and its fall could be linked to the rise of a new middle class (bourgeoisie consisting of bankers, merchants, intellectuals, wage-earners, proprietors of small businesses etc.) which, having a sense of injustice and meeting obstacles in making its economic power felt directly in the political sphere, allied itself to the working class and the poorer strata of the French society and demanded its own share of power (Brinton, 1965). Therefore, keeping the right parts of the population content is usually a sine qua non for the preservation of a regime, which was proved by the non-success of the 1848 revolution in France, when the bourgeoisie supported the monarchy.

The composition of the shadow state's broad base and Saddam Husain's role in it

The exclusion of the Kurdish and Shi'ite "plebeians" from the Iraqi economic and political system and the hollowness of the impersonalised power institutions of the Iraqi state meant that Iraq lacked a reference point around which the whole population could rally and to which people could refer. Nevertheless, the Napoleonic experience proves that fighting a prolonged total war requires the population supporting the war effort en masse (Tilly 1985, 1992; Kennedy, 1989). But since the unifying narrative of the nation, as presented in

many French and (mainly) German philosophers' romantic nationalist thought (Greenfeld, 1992), could not be easily applied in the case of Iraq's discriminative political culture and diversified population, Saddam needed another reference point in order to organise the population on a large scale, as he surprisingly managed to do.

He chose to "permit no separation between himself and the national community" (Chubin & Tripp, 1988, p. 96), "to define the collective identity of Iraq and attach it indissolubly to [him]" (Chubin & Tripp, 1988, p.87) in two ways: firstly, by extensively referring to a common Iraqi identity always under his enlightened leadership. But since a common identity might endanger his "divide and rule" way of exerting power, he did not put any particular emphasis on this. Nevertheless, as a result of the war and the effort against a common enemy a kind of common identity was finally born and developed on a rudimentary level, but it suffered a multilevel and intensive suppression after the end of the war, when Saddam needed it no more. In any case, since this refers only indirectly to the shadow state, it is not going to be analysed furthermore here. Secondly, he tried to incorporate more groups of people to the shadow state structure and, thus, to render them dependent on him so that they could not turn against him without turning against their interests. The effort to make people support the war en masse was utterly interlinked with the broadening of the shadow state's social base, either by incorporating parts of the hitherto excluded Shi'ite population in it, or by intimidating or casting aside those who would not be incorporated.

The element that mainly helped Saddam in his effort was the fact that, although the Shi'ites shared common religion, dogma, beliefs and rituals, they generally were not a unified community (Kubba, 2004). The large majority of the rural Shi'ite population's political alignment was

"only nominally Shi'i: their political identities and loyalties were circumscribed and delineated by kinship relations and by the mutual obligations of tribal custom. Contact with the government was limited or mediated through tribal leaders, and it seems highly improbable that they saw themselves primarily as either Iraqi or Shi'a – rather as members of a particular tribal lineage" (Chubin & Tripp, 1988, p. 99).

On the other hand, most of the urban Shi'ites have had their identity changed due to the different economic, social, ideological and educational structures of their new environment. As a result, their sectarian identity retreated and they started defining themselves in terms of their relations with their –usually Shi'ite– employers. Therefore, through these relations, dominated by the patrimonial and clientelistic way in which most of the private and public companies functioned (and maybe still do) in

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Iraq, the Shi'ites have started getting incorporated in the shadow's state social base. Hence, what Saddam Husain needed to do was only to foster the intensification of the already existing trends in order to prevent the Shi'ites from developing a common political identity.

At the same time, in order to prevent the emergence of a strong Shi'ite political leadership which could possibly unite the Shi'ites against him and awaken their "drowsy" common identity, Saddam needed to control or cast aside all the people and institutions capable of doing so. Therefore, he had Muhammad Baqr al-Sadr executed, Ayatollah Kho'i put under virtual house arrest and the Al-Da'wa movement forbidden. Furthermore, thousands of Shi'ites of even the most insignificant connection with Iran were expelled, while he aimed at and succeeded in imposing significant government control over all Shi'i revenues. This final move drove all Shi'i officials and ulamas into practically being dependent on the central government and, thus, to Saddam Husain himself.

In short, either through intimidation or through exerting influence the shadow state managed to incorporate many Shi'ites, to control some of those it could not incorporate, to cast aside many who would not be controlled or incorporated and to push the rest of them (being few and poorly organised) to the margins of Iraqi politics. The broadening of the shadow state's social base rendered the fighting of the war significantly more feasible since it managed to gather the Shi'ites (too) around it and they were not left exposed to the Iranian influence, which, given their large presence in the army, would have proven fatal. One could argue that in a way the Iraqi people indeed supported en masse the war effort against Iran by being part of Saddam's complex networks of privilege. The fragile common Iraqi identity created as a result of the war could not outlive the unifying effect of these networks and the greatest proof of that lies to the fact that up to now the sectarian identities and the shadowy networks of exclusion not only survive but dominate Iraqi society. The efforts of Saddam Husain just described show that even the most autocratic regimes in control of new or existing elites depend on parts of the societies over which they rule, in the sense that they need to be legitimised among them. But legitimisation does not come only through democratic processes which is partly the case in the West. Instead, it is achieved through need-fulfilling and service-offering capabilities as well. Putting it in a simplistic way, deep down in their essence both democratic polities and autocratic regimes have similar goals, namely the legitimisation of their rule among people.

Conclusion

The numerous changes and multilevel adjustments that occurred in the Iraqi shadow state during the war may constitute an indicator for the significant influence that war exerts on the networks of power, whatever their nature is. Clearly consisting of mechanisms constructed on the basis of hierarchical relations and having been developed as an answer to internal needs, the shadowy networks of a state are severely affected by an external threat, such as war. In the case of Iraq, the eight-year long war had a severe impact on the shadow state's basic pillar (i.e. the army), on its social basis and on its political and economic inner circles.

Even though it may seem cynical (given the enormous human toll of the war), it appears that Saddam and the shadow state (but not necessarily Iraq itself) have largely benefited from this war. The influence of Saddam Husain and the shadow state in the Iraqi society, economy and politics increased, while the army was transformed in terms of its efficiency and organisation, without nevertheless turning against Saddam, even though it could no longer be used for internal purposes. Instead, having lost one of his regime's pillars, he was forced to discover other ways of preserving and strengthening his rule and, as a result, at the end of the war, Saddam Husain's supremacy was unquestionable, even though the country has suffered badly. The shadow state has actually been transformed into a huge mechanism the importance of which for the smooth functioning of the country was salient. Its capability of successfully projecting its power, delivering answers and covering needs during an eight-year war against a country twice the size of Iraq and thrice its population have largely legitimised these networks among the Arab Iraqis.

The deep penetration of the shadow state in the Iraqi society is corroborated by the fact that now, several years after the USA invasion, the overthrow of Saddam's regime, the de-Ba'athification and the introduction of (nominally) democratic institutions, Iraq's socio-political and economic system still tends to act through shadowy networks, clientelistic channels, patrimonial power patterns and exclusive circles (Sawaan, 2012; Ottaway & Kaysi, 2012). Therefore, even if war might not be "the father of all and king of all" (Kirk, 1954, p. 245), it seems to be really important, at least in the case of Saddam Husain's shadow state.

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