

Sayyid Muhammad Baqir Sadr's Agentive Action in the Structure Originated from Iraq's Ba'th Party

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Abstract

The political-social evolutions in societies have always been under the influence of the relationship between the 'agent' and the 'structure'. If the agent's agendum preserves the status quo, the structure survives and experiences less internal challenges. But if the agent pursues a change in the status quo, the governing structure faces serious crises and internal tensions. In the present study, Ba'th party of Iraq is considered as a 'structure' and the great religious authorities in those days have been displayed as 'agents' in relation to that party. Accordingly, we have tried to investigate the political action of Ayatollah Sayyid Muhammad Baqir Sadr as an agent who pursued a change in the status quo with a (comparative) glimpse at Ayatollah Khoui's approach, who chose to preserve the status quo in Iraq under the ruling of Ba'th Party as his strategy. In this article, we have used an analytical method to analyze the structure of the agency under the authority of Muhammad Baqir Sadr and his relation to the power structure. To do so, we first explore his mentality and his theoretical and jurisprudential foundations regarding the Shiite paradigm in the Occultation Period, and investigate some of the indices of his political thought. Then, to clarify his temporal context

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and background, we will study the effects of those evolutions on his mentality as an agent. Naturally, the success of the Iranian Islamic revolution had a tremendous effect on that agent's thought. Then, we will refer to the traditional structures governing the institution of religious authority in Najaf and its priorities to clarify his differences from other contemporary agents. Among them, we may mention Ayatollah Hakim and Ayatollah Khoui, each of whom had a different model and priority in facing with the official structure of power and Ba'th Party. In the end, we will show that Sadr's desirable model, as an agent, was total confrontation with that structure and moving towards its total abolition, and that he used all the social assets of the religious institution for that purpose. This was while other agents were pursuing interactions with the official structure and preserving Najaf seminary as their priority.

Keywords

Ayatollah Sayyid Muhammad Baqir Sadr, Ba'th Party of Iraq, the Shiite jurisprudence, the religious authority institution, the power institution.

Introduction

Sayyid Muhammad Baqir Sadr, the son of Sayyid Heydar, was born in 1353 AH/1934 in Kazemain in Iraq. His paternal lineage goes back to Sayyid Ismail and Sayyid Sadruddin, and their ancestors were all among well-known Shiite scholars. He was educated by famous educators in Najaf seminary center and was granted the degree of *ijtihād* (Nu'mani, 1996, p. 48). With his special genius, he became a great jurist, a thoughtful philosopher, a strong theologian and a supreme scholar of Islam. In encountering with the components of modernism in the new era, he sought to present a systematic design of Islam to enter the public sphere of the global community. His compositions in the spheres of jurisprudence, principles of jurisprudence, history, Islamic philosophy, Islamic economics, logic and other Islamic sciences suggest his command of Islamic sciences and show his plan for active presence in the Islamic society. Sadr was one of the most prominent religious authorities, theoreticians, philosophers and religious Shiite leaders who, due to his position of religious authority and the political-social conditions of his time – which was coincident with the rule of Ba'ath Party in Iraq – had a special confrontation with political government. The descriptive-analytical investigation of that confrontation as well as its reasons and consequences are to be discussed here. The conditions of the era of his authority – concomitant with the rule of Shiite regime in Iran and despotism and limitless oppressions of Ba'ath Party led by Saddam Hussein in Iraq – placed him in the position of a system-maker, active and establishing authority who theorized with the aim to establish a religious Shiite regime in Iraq. He, unlike his master Ayatollah Khoui, kept on having a revolutionary confrontation with Ba'ath Party and sacrificed his life for that purpose. The institution of religious authority, especially after its evolution in Najaf, has experienced many vicissitudes and has arisen the following question for analysts: “Does the institution of

religious authority have a single model in establishing a relationship with the institution of power or we see a variety of model of confrontation in this regard?" In the present writing, we deal with an explanation of Ayatollah Sadr's model of confrontation with the institution of power to clarify the diversity in confrontation with the institution of power. During the time when Ba'ath Party was present in the arena of power as an institution with a certain manifesto, the institution of the Shiite authority had various actions. As we explained in a previous article,¹ Ayatollah Khoui's action was an approach of political avoidance in the form of the theory of structure-agent. Now in this writing, we will deal with Ayatollah Sadr's action, who had – unlike his master's view – an overthrowing approach to the political structure.

As an agent in this confrontation, he was seeking to heighten the tensions and maximize the demands, and this finally led to Sadr's martyrdom and his elimination from the political field in Iraq. We must regard this as the product of action of the structure and the agent's measures and relations, who was then the most important factor of the Islamic revolution of Iran and its leadership who was in direct relation with Sadr and his prominent pupils. Sadr's policy in his position as the representative of the revolutionary movement in Najaf seminary, who pursued the project of establishing an Islamic government and armed struggle (jihad) for seizing the power, did not gain much acceptance in Najaf seminary and did not continue after his martyrdom, because he was under pressure from two sides. He had to tolerate the political violence of the government as well as the pressure of the informal seminary structures simultaneously. And this made him alone in the field of struggle and his policy after martyrdom

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did not have opportunity to survive under the governance of Ba'ath Party, and it even led to the severe action of that party against the Shiites.

1. Research background

Many works have been published regarding Ayatollah Sadr's personality and his theoretical achievements and innovations. In a major classification, we may mention two classes of studies centering around Sadr. The first one include those texts that consider his political thought, foundations and approach to issues such as *Wilāyat Fiqīh* (the jurist's authority) and democracy. These include books on Martyr Sayyid Muhammad Baqir Sadr's political theory composed by Taleb Hamdani – published in three languages: English, Arabic and Persian – and the book entitled “The Political Thought of the Fourth Martyr Imam Sayyid Muhammad Baqir Sadr” composed by Muhammad Hussein Jamshidi and published in 1377 SH/ 1998. Such studies are focused merely on his political thought and philosophy and never deal with the research background as well as an analysis on why and how his thought altered. The second class of works conducted in regard with him deals with a historical account of his political life, trying to give a report of events, which are invaluable works in their turn. Here, however, we make use of the theory of structure-agent to explain Sadr's model of confrontation with institution of power, which was – undoubtedly – under the influence of his political thought as an agent. On the one hand, we have considered the traditional structure of seminary wherein he was breathing and living. On the other hand, we have considered the structure governing the whole political society of Iraq and Ba'ath Party as well as the revolutionary conditions in Iran to make the analysis of his political action possible in an integrative form along with a consideration of all subjective and objective factors.

2. The foundations of Sadr's political action

Sadr was seeking to present an organic design of Islam and the Islamic society, attempting to delineate the theoretical foundations of the ideal Islamic society and to organize a plan for moving towards it. The diversity of his compiled works such as *Falsafatunā* (1959), *Iqtisādunā* (1961), *Khilāfat al-Insān wa Shahādat al-Anbiyā* (1979), *Manābi' al-Qudra fil-Dowlat al-Islāmiyya* (1979), *al-Usus al-Mantiqiyya lil-Istiqrā* (1974), *Baḥth Howl al-Wilāya* (1974), *Muḥāḍirāt fil-Tafsīr al-Mowḍū'ī lil-Qurān* (1978), and *Baḥth Howl al-Mahdī* (1977) is evidence for that goal and shows the high personality of that Shiite jurist (Nu'mani, 1996, p. 88).

In his economic works, he was seeking to design an economic model for the Islamic society. In those days, the economic and philosophical leftism – crystalized in communist and pan-Arabic parties – were surrounding the Islamic world. In his book entitled *Iqtisādunā* (“Our Economy”), he explained and criticized the two economic schools based on capitalism and communism, and explained the theory of Islam in opposition to them (Sadr, 1980, p. 3). In the zenith of the influence of communist thoughts in the Islamic lands, he composed his book *Falsafatunā* (“Our Philosophy”), wherein he criticized the foundations of atheism and materialism, explaining the views of Islam on creation, existence, origin, and resurrection.

2-1. Monotheism and ownership

Sadr considered the first step in his theory to be monotheism. Based on the Quran and Islamic thoughts, he maintained that God is the creator and the absolute owner of the universe, and that without considering God, one cannot design a coherent theory in any area, including political and economic ones. And from this perspective, he attacked Marxism and Liberalism that were focused just on human, nature and society, with no God present there (Hakim, 2008, p. 139). He

considered God as the main owner, the creator and the manager of the universe, and the One who sent the prophets to guide the human for building an ideal society. The ownership belongs to One God, who then has entrusted it to the human beings. Through entrusting this ownership, we reach the next phase, which is human's divine vicegerency.

2-2. The theory of human's vicegerency

In Sadr's thought, the human is God's vicegerent on the earth and, according to the Quran's verses, this vicegerent can manipulate that ownership. The term *istikhlāf* (meaning 'vicegerency') refers to the Quranic terminology and is Sadr's central idea is a foundation for Sadr's political-social theory and his descriptions and prescriptions (Hakim, 2011, p. 69). If the political theories of other contemporary jurists are related to traditions, Sadr's theory is concerned with the texts of the Quran. After God specified the human as His vicegerent on the earth, this vicegerency was entrusted to the human as a divine trust, and the human accepted the burden of that trust in the next step (Ma'muri, 2000, p. 56).

Sadr's theory known as "Khilāfat al-Insān wa Shahādat al-Anbiyā" (Borji and Nazira, 2012, p. 318) means human's vicegerency and the prophets' supervision or witness. He attempts to reach – based on the Quran's verses – from the human's present situation, the desired situation and the historical background of the universe to a consistent understanding to establish the desired social, economic and political system based on those presuppositions.

2-3. A look at the government

One of the foundations of Sadr's political thought is the type of his view of government and political system. Some authors maintain that Sadr has presented, altogether, three theories about political system.

The first one is the theory of selective government based on council, which was presented about 1378 AH and was similar to the theories of Sheikh Muhammad Javad Mughniya and Muhammad Mahdi Shamsuddin. The second theory is the theory of the general appointive authority of the jurists. But the third theory is the theory of people's government under the supervision of the jurist, which was presented in his *al-Islām Yaqud al-Ḥayāt* one year before his martyrdom, and is an effort for the synthesis of the two previous theories for amalgamating republicanism and Islamism. According to this theory, the general vicegerency is people's right and, to institutionalize this right, the executive and legislative powers are administered by people, and the religious authority takes over – apart from the supervisory function – the duties of guiding and educating people, with a supervisory role in time of establishment of the regime (Modarris al-'Oloum, 2000, pp. 57-59).

For Martyr Sadr, the Islamic state, as an independent institution, has the four following components. *Dār al-Islām* (literally 'the House of Islam') is the territorial domain of Muslims, organized in the present time in the form of nation-states. The Islamic nation is the second component, which includes Muslims following that religion. The third component is political vicegerency, which shows human's vicegerency for God on the earth in the political dimension, according to which humans have the right, on the part of God, to determine their destiny; and this right is in longitudinal relation to God's governance. The fourth component is the Islamic government, which is the executive institution and organizational formation (Jamshidi, 2019, pp. 9-10). Therefore, Martyr Sadr regarded government as a human and genetic affair that is the result of human's divine caliphate and vicegerency for God and human can, based on this principle, take over ruling on the society and their own fate. On the other hand, he turns

towards the important issue of supervision and religious watch over the government (Jamshidi, 2019, pp. 16-17).

2-4. Sadr's political-social action and the structure

Under the general authority of Ayatollah Hakim and in an objection to Ba'ath Party's measures in dislodging the Iranian seminary students, Sadr formulated and read the final text of the declaration. However, in that era, Ba'ath Party would regard just Ayatollah Hakim's house as hostile, assuming other actors' actions under the institution of authority and in relation to Ayatollah Hakim. Thus, we keep on our discussion by investigating Sadr's early takeover of the charge of religious authority and formation of the circle of his pupils; then, we would analyze his mutual action with the Party.

2-4-1. Sadr as an agent

Unlike the common tradition in the seminary schools, Sadr entered the arena of religious authority while his masters – i.e. great Ayatollahs Sayyid Muhammad Rouhani and Khoui – were still alive. Therefore, he came into a conflict with the traditional structure of seminary and Ba'ath Party. Hakim was an authority with various traditional and modern layers. His traditional layers were inherited by Ayatollah Khoui, and his modern heritage, maintaining in the presence of religion in the arena of politics and society as well as jurists' responsibility and nurturing an evolutionary system of Islamic thought and political action, was taken by Sadr. This type of look in seminary school was quite new and was inconsistent with the generality of Najaf school (Wiley, 1992, pp. 222-224).

After the demise of Ayatollah Hakim, Sadr gained an extensive influence in Najaf seminary. Thus, Ba'ath Party did not have much freedom of action in facing him. Sadr believed that all forces of seminary had to follow one person so that Ba'ath Party could not

implement its plans in suppressing the institution of religious authority (Ra'ouf, 2001, p. 109). However, after a while, he concluded that with Ayatollah Khoui's approach, the path of Ayatollah Hakim's authority could not continue. On the other hand, Ba'th Party's pressure continuously increased. Therefore, he entered the arena of religious authority and its personal requisites. In the half 1970s, he published *al-Fatāwī al-Wāḍiḥa*, which served as his practical treatise (or 'catechism'), to formally enter the arena of religious authority (Ibrahim, 2012, p. 511). Afterwards, he stood upright against Ba'th Party.

2-4-2. Establishment of al-Da'wa Party and the agent's volitionism

Najaf as the cradle of religious authority, while not far from political evolutions in Iran and Iraq, has always taken a conservative approach to the issue of tenure and presence in the political arena (Imad, 2013, vol. 2, p. 2137). The political tradition in Najaf was evading and avoiding politics. It also reacted to the theoretical evolutions such as the jurist's authority and its conceptual expansion (Tabatabai, 1990. Vol. 9. P. 584). However, the course of evolutions in 1950s in Iraq and the emergence of Sadr as an agent and formation of structures effective in evolutions caused the Shiite authority to become familiar with the concepts of party and power, entering in party functions, which were unprecedented in the Shiite world. In that stage, which can be called the era of transition in the history of the Shiite jurisprudence, wherein the emergence of Sadr with an Islamist project – for whom he also employed the institution of religious authority – occurred, the political tradition of Najaf was experiencing a new evolution.

In an atmosphere full of willing to leftist struggles, many Islamist juveniles had tendencies towards political action to overturn existing regimes, and the opinions of individuals such as Mowdudi, Abdul-Qadir Owda and Taqiuddin al-Nabhani regarding the necessity of formation of establishing Islamic government and Allah's governance

prepare the theoretical support for Islamic movements (Imad, 2013, vol. 2, p. 2141).

In 1957, the foundations of an Islamist party called *al-Da'wa al-Islāmiyya* was established for saving Islamic nation from backwardness (Imad, 2013, vol. 2, p. 2144), and Sadr was a founding and effective member of that party. Though he was in his youth when the party was founded, he took the burden of the party due to his genius and his presence in Najaf seminary as a famous educator. Appearing as an ideologue from the intellectual and theoretical aspects, he composed various books about Islam and the public sphere to prepare a theoretical support for the party (Imad, 2013, vol. 2, p. 121).

One year after the establishment of the party, the anti-royal coup took place and the wave of communism pervaded in Iraq, and al-Da'wa Party gave priority to cultural confrontation with that trend. In 1963, the coup against Abdul-Karim Qasem made the milieu insecure for the leftists. The era under Abdul-Salam Aref, i.e. the period between 1964 and 1968, was the golden era of Islamist trend in Iraq, which ended with the coup of Ba'this (members of Ba'th Party) in 1968 and the seizure of power by Hassan al-Bakr and Saddam Hussein. Al-Da'wa Party added to their political tendency with the ascension of Ba'this and their confrontation with Islamist trend.

In 1962, Sadr resigned from al-Da'wa Party to dedicate more time to his scientific activities in seminary. He had well understood that the existing conditions of party activities was not sufficient for his project to get to its goal; thus, with that movement, he wanted to make use of capacities of the institution of religious authority for his project. Indeed, he could appear in the guise of a *Marja*¹ to make use of, on the one hand, that institution and its traditional abilities including financial independence, the ability to mobilize people and relation

1. A religious authority whose fatwas must be followed by religiously competent persons

with people, and on the other hand, to prepare immunity for himself considering the pressures of governmental institutions and Ba‘th Party. Sadr took over the responsibility of the institution of authority while, alongside his common scientific activities as a Marja‘, he was also the spiritual father and the director of the party organization. After the increase in pressure on the al-Da‘wa Party and the wave of severe suppression by Ba‘th Party and other pillars of political structure, he issued a fatwa whereby he made illicit any activity in parties, even in al-Da‘wa Party, for the seminary students (Husseini, 2010, p. 124). The goal of this fatwa was reducing the pressures of institutions such as Ba‘th Party and the Revolution Council as well as the pressures from the body of seminary. The general structure and the body of Najaf seminary would confront Sadr’s project, without any sympathy with the government.

2-4-3. Sanction of membership in Ba‘th Party

Sadr’s confrontation with Ba‘th Party as the main base and the intellectual support of the government in Iraq would enter a new phase every day. After the victory of the Islamic revolution of Iran in 1979, the wave of this movement as the victory of an Islamist movement reached Iraq, and naturally, gave more self-esteem and morale to all opposing trends. On the other hand, security institutions became more sensitive to the institution of religious authority and the condition of Najaf. In that time span, Sadr issued a fatwa to declare illicit any cooperation with Ba‘th Party (Abu Zayd Ameli, 2006, vol. 4, p. 65). Due to the nature of Ba‘th Party and the high cost of opposition to Ba‘th regime, Najaf and religious authorities were conservative in expressing their opposition (Nablusi, 2004, p. 69). However, Sadr could issue fatwas against Ba‘th Party seriously and overtly. Besides, he advised those who could not exit Ba‘th Party to make efforts to decompose it from inside (Nu‘mani, 2000, vol. 2, p. 60). In reaction to that fatwa, Saddam proclaimed in

a declaration that the fatwa was enough for issuing a sentence to death for Sadr (Mu'min, 1993, p. 209). Sadr's goal in issuing that fatwa was to neutralize the propagandas of Ba'th Party. He attempted to make use of religious propagations and addressing the traditional community of Iraq to hinder the spread and infiltration of Ba'th Party into the body of Iraqi society. He declared that membership in the Party is a [religiously] illicit action and the knowledge of illicitness of the action is important (Nu'mani, 2000, vol. 2, p. 66).

To stop various dimensions of Ba'th Party, especially its media dimension among the juveniles, Sadr issued two other fatwas against Ba'th Party, which can be considered as complements to his previous fatwas (Askari, 1996, p. 538). In another fatwa, he opposed the anti-Islamic policies of Ba'th Party in forbidding hijab in universities (Heydari, 2003, p. 145). The collection of these fatwas under the conditions of those days in Iraq had no result except a sentence to death.

2-4-4. Sadr and the Iranian revolution

Sayyid Muhammad Baqir Sadr had ties with Islamic revolution of Iran from various angles. There was an intellectual closeness and a convergence in theory and approach between them. Sadr can be considered as one of the theoreticians of Iranian revolution and especially the constitutional law (Martin, 1987, p. 52). He published the lectures entitled *al-Islām yaqūd al-Ḥayāt*¹ for this purpose (Abu Zayd Ameli, 2006, vol. 4, p. 23). One of the treatises of that collection entitled "Lamḥat Fiqhiyya Tamhīdiyya 'an Mashrū' Dastūr al-Jumhūriyya al-Islāmiyya fī Iran"² served as the draft for the constitutional law (Malat, 1998, p. 95). Richard Dekmejian has rightly considered Sadr's thought about the Islamic government as the evolutionary system implemented

1. Islam leads the life.

2. A jurisprudential glimpse at the project of the Constitutional Law of Iran

by Imam Khomeini in practice (Ali Heydar, 1997, p. 204).

Sadr had ties with Iranian revolution in various layers. In theoretical level, he supported the movement with intellectual products, and in another level, he dispatched a group of his pupils – who could not be present in Iraq due to the security pressures – to Iran and wanted them to be at the service of the newly established government. After the victory of the Iranian revolution, the fear of Ba‘this government from its becoming a model increased growingly and the pressures and detentions became more and more. In a letter to Sadr, Ayatollah Khomeini wanted him not to leave Iraq and mentioned his leaving Iraq as a cause for his worry (Imam Khomeini, 1999, vol. 7, p. 422). This is while Martyr Sadr did not have the intention to leave Iraq at all (Hakim, 1993, p. 289). After that letter, Sadr’s level of confrontation with Ba‘th Party went further one step and after a short while, groups of people in the form of nomads, specialists and religious bodies from all over Iraq came to his house to pay homage to him (Mahdi, 1982, p. 20). The relationship of Sadr and the Islamic revolution caused a movement in Iraqi society, and this sympathy caused the formation of structural pressures destroying the institution of religious authority and Sadr himself.

2-4-5. Intifada centered around Sadr

After the coup, the Ba‘thi regime of Iraq encountered various internal crises. Thus, any social movement such as demonstration could be a crisis for the newly established regime of coup. In such a condition, two intifadas – known as intifada of Safar and intifada of Rajab – pervaded the Shiite areas in the south Iraq. In both of them, Sadr played a role and the ruling regime considered this as his unforgivable guilt. Sadr’s action and his abilities in the structure of the religious authority for mobilizing people were naturally potential

sources of threat to Ba'ath Party, and he used that ability to put pressure on Ba'ath Party on two occasions.

A) Safar intifada

After seizing the power, Ba'ath Party attempted to accompany the Shiite religious ceremonies. Gradually, however, it forbade holding mourning ceremonies for Imam Hussein (Ali Ja'fari, 1996, p. 490).

In 1977, the mourners' march from Najaf to Karbala in Arbaeen was declared as a forbidden practice. But the religious bodies paid no attention to that forbiddance and a large population gathered in Najaf. The Islamist parties distributed announcements to encourage people to take part in that ceremony in a concerted action (Mousavi, 1983, p. 66).

Along the route from Najaf to Karbala, there occurred three struggles between the marchers and the security forces, which led to the retreat on the part of Ba'athi forces, but caused some of the mourners to be killed or wounded (Abu Zayd Ameli, 1996, vol. 3, p. 326). When the news reached people, some other groups of people moved from Najaf to Karbala and, in practice, Najaf and Karbala went out of the government's control.

To control the situation, Ba'athi forces resorted to Ayatollah Khoui and Sadr (Hussein, 2010, p. 266). They wanted Sadr to make efforts to subdue the conditions and – in return – they promised not to punish anyone after the event. Sadr asked the population to disperse slowly after doing their Arbaeen pilgrimage, but the government did not keep its promises (Nu'mani, 2000, vol. 2, p. 80) and arrested a large number of the heads of the religious bodies, who then were sentenced to death or long-term imprisonment.

In that event, the government concluded that without the presence of Sadr and the organization related to him, no such order was possible (Qabanchi, 1982, p. 89), and that he has the initiatives in his hands

(Mousavi, 1983, p. 81). Therefore, some hours after the subdual of the situation, they arrested Sadr and transferred him to Baghdad.

B) Rajab intifada

The measures taken by Sadr as an agent after the Islamic revolution of Iran escalated the security situation and the pressures from the official structure. These measures included congratulations for the victory of Islamic revolution and correspondences with Imam Khomeini as well as some movements such as public mobilization of the south areas and allegiance to Sadr, all of which served as declaring war against Ba'th Party (Husseini Ha'eri, 1990, p. 121). On the other hand, in another measure taken for supporting Iranian revolution, Sadr wrote a letter to Arab people of Khuzistan and emphasized the unity and avoiding ethnic and Farsi-Arabic or Shiite-Sunite disagreements under the leadership of Imam Khomeini (Abul-Hassan Shirazi and Taremi, 2005, p. 74). This was while Ba'th Party wanted to make use of the ethnic, religious and lingual schisms in south Iran. Sadr, however, wrote a letter to challenge their measures in south Iran. In general, after the victory of Islamic revolution in Iran, there was a field combat between Sadr as an agent and Ba'th Party as the structure. Numerous detentions and efforts for negotiations with him and even attempts to assassinate him showed that the conflicts escalated, which led to his second arrest (Husseini, 1989, p. 316). This arrest was accompanied by announcing emergency in Iraq and a widespread wave of suppression in centers of provinces, which then led to detention and execution of many members of al-Da'wa Party and the religious and cultural activists.

After informing and coordination among some combatant seminary students, marchers moved in Najaf and wanted the fall of Ba'thi government. Soon, these large movements reached Kufa, Karbala, Kazemain, Baghdad, Samawa and other cities of Iraq (Hassan, 1980, p. 60).

In that popular movement known as Rajab intifada, an unknown number of people were killed or wounded (Bernhard, 2016, p. 107).

2-4-6. Armed struggle

Sadr, as an agent thinking in the system of Islamic revolution and walled inside the traditional structure of seminary and the new political structure, acted radically in a time, in a way that we can say the history of the Shiite authority had not seen before. He asserted that considering the nature of that regime, the peaceful methods such as marching and the like were not fruitful, and that the military action and increasing violence are inevitable (Husseini, 2010, p. 210). Once again, in June 1979, Sadr was arrested, but he was soon returned from Baghdad to Najaf due to public reaction. After freedom, while under security watch, he announced the obligation of armed jihad in a voice declaration (Askari, 1996, p. 541).

In this stage, Sadr – under increasing pressure of the ruling structure – changed his action and moved towards further violence (Martin, 1987, p. 63). The Islamist forces considered the increase in violence and taking arms as a form of self-defense (Mo'min, 1993, p. 407). During the period of imprisonment, he would think of assassinating Saddam Hussein in his position as the vice-president. This can be analyzed in the form of his fatwa on armed jihad. In a time, Sadr met the emissary of Adnan Hussein. As a high-rank member of Ba'th Party, he informed Sadr of his intention for staging a coup against Saddam Hussein and overthrowing him. He wanted Sadr to accept and support the new government after the victory of the coup, and Sadr agreed to do so with some provisions (Nu'mani, 1996, pp. 197-199). After Adnan Hussein's coup in Ba'th Party, the special intelligent service of the Party was informed of the plot and Adnan Hussein was executed. After his execution, Sadr lamented the situation, for he believed that Saddam was much dangerous than other members of the Party. The

level of Sadr's confrontation with the regime in the form of armed jihad led to training martyrdom-seeking forces ready for assassinating Saddam Hussein (Heydari, 2003, p. 147).

3. Limitation of the structure in confrontation with Sadr

From 1969 to 1980, Ba'th Party faced various crises. This period must be considered as the stage of establishment of Ba'th Party and, especially, centrality of Saddam Hussein in the Party. The crises in the social structure of Iraq that led to hegemony of Ba'th Party in their context must be considered as factors effective in its action as well. Before dealing with confrontation of Ba'th Party with Sadr, we refer to some structural backgrounds.

3-1. The ideology crisis of Ba'th Party

In an era when Sadr was in interaction with political structure as an actor in the status of religious authority, Ba'th Party was in undesirable conditions from the intellectual and ideological perspectives. Some analysts have referred to that situation as the intellectual and doctrinal bankruptcy of Ba'th Party (Ali Ja'fari, 1996, p. 464). From the perspective of theoretical support, Ba'th Party was in relation with the Pan-Arab movement called "Madd al-Qowmi al-'Arabi"; and the head of the Pan-Arab movement was Jamal Abdul-Nasir. The movement of Arab ethnicity with its strong leftist taints, considering the widespread attraction of leftist trend, could fascinate the Arab world (Dowri, 2008, p. 24). However, these ideals and the mottoes such as freedom, independence, Arabic ethnicity, anti-colonialism, democracy and annihilation of Israel lost their strength soon, and the wave of this political disappointment resulted from the decline in the status of Arabic ethnicity put Ba'th Party in Iraq under severe pressure as well.

3-2. Ba'th Party: a Sunnite party

Ba'th Party was dependent on secular literature, especially the leftist one with veins of Pan-Arabism. That thought negated any religious identity and, while rejecting all sub-cultures, considered accepting Ba'th Party as an independent identity. This was while under the rule of Ba'th Party, that party turned into a Sunnite party, meaning that all pillars of the party was in the hands of a Sunnite clan and they did bloody liquidations to form a Sunnite party with family tendencies (al-Alavi, 1989, pp. 205-227). Although this process was slow, after a while all secular and non-Sunnite leftist trends were omitted from power. This increased the crisis of participation and distance from other secular and religious trends to the extent that for the continuation of that situation, increase in violence and political suppression was inevitable. According to reports, more than one-fifth of the active forces in the country were under interrogation, pressure, discrimination and other types of violence in the time of Ba'th ruling (Khalili, 1989, pp. 37-39).

Ba'th Party took many measures during Sadr's tenure and his presence in the position of religious authority. Those measures can be enumerated as follows:

A) Numerous arrests

During the time of combat with Ba'th Party, Sadr was arrested on three occasions. The first was on August 16, 1972. In that period, Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr was the president of Iraq and there was inappropriate conditions between the regime and seminary.

In that period, with the direct order from Hassan al-Bakr, the oil of Iraq became national (Slughlet, 2003, pp. 141-200), and after that, many pressures were exerted by the government on the religious authority of Najaf to celebrate those measures through letters and declarations.

On December 12, 1971, Ba'th Party declared through an order to

more than one thousand of Iranian families in Iraq to leave the country in six days (Karbaschi, 1992, vol. 1, p. 494). Expulsion of Iranians from Iraq was known as the “project of interpretation”.

In these special conditions, wherein Ba‘th Party was willing to control its political opponents through various means, the leaders and members of al-Da‘wa Party were assaulted and the security institutions became suspicious about the ties between Sadr and al-Da‘wa Party, arresting him on various excuses. However, with the pressure from seminary and public mobilization, they were forced to free him and set him under house arrest (Abbasi, 1988, vol. 2, pp. 45-47).

B) Physical elimination and assassination

One of the methods used by Ba‘th Party in elimination of its political opponents, rivals and influential individuals was murdering them secretly in their houses, offices and public places. Through this method, the ruling system would not undertake the responsibility directly for their murder. During the time of house arrest, there were reports of measures taken to assassinate Sadr through uncommon methods (Nu‘mani, 1996, p. 231; Abu Zayd Amelli, 1996, vol. 4, p. 191; Nu‘mani, 2000, vol. 2, p. 108).

C) House arrest and negotiations

Sadr’s house arrest was done in an about ten-month period, which is of importance for studying his political action, goals, strategies and priorities. In that period, important events occurred which, on the one hand, influenced the structure and, on the other hand, led the agent into a certain direction. Therefore, to employ the method of structure-agent, studying and analysis of the events of the period of house arrest are important. In that period, Ba‘th Party entered negotiations with Sadr through some mediators and also directly. Besides, Ba‘th Party was experiencing violent evolutions, which made it more radical.

During ten months of house arrest, he closed the way to any reconciliation with the government and Ba'ath Party, stressing on the increase in tensions. He wanted to enliven the Islamist movement in facing with Ba'athi government by sacrificing himself. The events of previous years including intifada and the consistent activities of al-Da'wa Party presented to Sadr a reading of the Iraqi society and its conditions that many called it error in analysis (Anonymous, 1981, vol. 2, p. 106). Some others introduced the violence of Ba'ath Party, the type of its action and the level of suppression as an unpredictable factor.

In that era, Sadr focused his political action on not reconciling with Ba'ath Party and increasing the level of confrontation (Bernhard, 2016, p. 107). To win the support of the Sunnite society of Iraq, Ba'ath Party attempted to introduce Sadr and his associates' movement as a Shiite one. Thus, Sadr attempted to fill the religious gap by issuing three declarations during his house arrest, aiming at mobilizing the Sunnite and Shiite society against Ba'ath Party by using uniting words. Though published after his martyrdom, those three declarations showed how he would think during his house arrest and what his priorities were. Besides, Sadr considered introducing some individuals as jihadi leaders and his deputies in a lecture in Imam Ali's shrine during his house arrest (Nu'mani, 2000, vol. 2, p. 109) so that he could keep on that movement.

3-3. The widespread dominion of the structure

Gradually, Saddam Hussein seized the whole Ba'ath Party, and Hassan al-Bakr had a ceremonial role in many of executive, legislative, structural and security spheres. He violently declared that he would not allow the repetition of Iranian experience of revolution in Iraq (Anonymous, 1996, vol. 2, p. 643). Saddam's strategy in attempting not to repeat Iranian experience can be considered as a sign of increase in level of confrontation and winning the companionship of some of the

non-Shiite sections of the Iraqi society for increasing the political violence.

Another evolution that contributed to making the structure more radical was deposition of Hassan al-Bakr by Saddam Hussein in July 16, 1979, i.e. one month and three days after Sadr's house arrest. Hassan al-Bakr appeared in Iraq's TV and presented his resignation to pave the way for Saddam. Some days after al-Bakr's resignation, Saddam deposed 22 persons among the high-rank personnel of Ba'th Party and, then, executed them (Mo'min, 1993, p. 234). Three months after these measures, on July 17, 1997, Saddam entered Najaf unexpectedly and gave a lecture in al-Thowra district (Kazem, 1984, pp. 26-27).

3-4. Negotiation and mediators

Continuation of Sadr's house arrest was no longer tolerable for Ba'th Party and the government. His presence would enliven the hope in the Shiite Islamists opposing the government. Thus, the Party attempted to send mediators such as Sheikh 'Isa al-Khaqani and Ali al-Badr from Lebanon and negotiate with Sadr to change the situation (Nu'mani, 1996, pp. 290, 319). However, those two mediators could not weaken Sadr's resolution for facing the regime.

In February 1979, a special viceroy from Iraqi president entered Najaf to negotiate with Sayyid. He explicitly suggested conditions such as withdrawing the fatwa on illegitimacy of membership in Ba'th Party, not supporting Iranian revolution, and denouncing al-Da'wa Party for ending the existing condition, much attempting for alluring Sadr (Ra'ouf, 2001, p. 201; Askari, 1996, p. 547). He also declared if they reach no minimal agreement, the answer of Ba'th Party and the government will be his execution. Sadr rejected all conditions and provision suggested by Saddam's viceroy, declaring his readiness for being executed. The house arrest continued for one month after negotiations until the tacit conditions for arresting and executing Sadr were

prepared with the assassination attempted on Tariq Aziz in Mostansariah University (Milat, 1988, p. 728).

Conclusion

For analysis of Sadr as an agent in confronting with Ba'th Party, we must consider his thinking system and his performance as well as the type of his confrontation with Ba'th Party as the political structure established in Iraq. In the position of an Islamic theoretician in the spheres of economy, culture and history, he attempted to mobilize the facilities of the religious authority; and in the context of the seminary and society, he tried to pursue a struggle with Ba'th Party, aiming at establishing an Islamic regime. However, when he found out that the current authorities were not ready to cooperate with him, he himself entered the sphere of religious authority and attempted to make use of the facilities and capacities of that institution – such as the system of representation or the chain of pupils in various regions – for achieving his political goal. Besides, he prepared sufficient literature and theoretical support for his movement and its related system. Naturally, such an ideal, in the special historical era in Iraq, could incite the anger of the power structure against such a powerful agent.

Sadr must be introduced as a revolutionary jurist with a subversive approach to Ba'thi regime. Similarly, he opened the way for armed struggle with the government and even, in a time, he stepped towards assassinating Saddam Hussein, which led to his house arrest under severe conditions. Considering the political structure of Iraq, the measures taken by Ba'th Party and the conditions after Iranian revolution as well as the existence of continuous relations between Sadr and revolutionists, the conditions were worsened for Sadr's political action. The revolution of Iran can be considered as the main factor for radicalization of the structure and – naturally – weakening the latitude of this active agent. During the time of Ba'th's

governance, Sadr quickly placed the train of confrontation on the railroad of increasing the tension and maximizing demands. With his fatwa on illegitimacy of membership in Ba‘th Party and with his direct relation to university elites all over Iraq, he sounded the alarm for the Party and the security forces. After the Iranian revolution, fear of repetition of the experience in a country like Iraq with a Shiite majority and a Sunnite structure came to the regional and global forces. His political action and the type of his confrontation with Ba‘th Party caused the Party to enter into the phase of removing the tensions. However, after Saddam’s seizure of power in the Party and the country, the conditions were prepared for increasing the pressure. He was not ready to withdraw his fatwa on illegitimacy of membership in Ba‘th Party and requested the freedom of political prisoners as well as the stop in deporting Iranians and putting pressure on seminary. However, considering the conditions of Iranian revolution, the whole number of Shiites and the institution of religious authority were regarded as potential security threats, which finally led to martyrdom of Sadr and his sister. After his martyrdom, three declarations recorded in the time of his house arrest were published, which demanded public mobilization against the government. Nevertheless, no important event occurred in the Shiite-dwelling regions, and – in practice – with Sadr’s martyrdom, the Shiite Islamist movement went into coma for two decades and the religious authority – despite avoiding interference in political affairs – was subject to various types of pressure and suppression.

Sadr’s martyrdom and his elimination from the field of political action in Iraq must be considered as the product of the action of the structure and the measures and relations of that agent. In that time, the most important factor was Islamic revolution of Iran and its leadership who were in direct relation with Sadr and his pupils. Sadr was the representative of the revolutionary trend in Najaf seminary, who

pursued the project of establishing Islamic government and armed jihad for victory and seizure of power. This policy was not so much accepted in Najaf seminary, and mostly young seminary student were surrounding him. This policy could not survive under Ba'thi government after his martyrdom. By forcing the agent to accept its norms, the structure caused most Shiite Islamists to migrate abroad and, afterwards, most of the activities of that trend occurred out of the sphere of action of the political structure, because – in practice – surviving under the norms of Ba'thi government was not possible for any political trend. As we observed, Ayatollah Sayyid Hakim – who died in the early years of Ba'th Party's seizure of power – had a conservative approach in facing with Ba'th Party, did not step in the path of direct confrontation with that Party, and pursued a type of active cultural action. However, after Ayatollah Hakim and in the time of Ayatollah Khoui's religious authority, Ayatollah Khoui used an avoidance policy to protect Najaf seminary, and with a policy of no struggle with power institution, he rejected the approach of confrontation with the power. This was while the model of Sadr's confrontation was quite political and overthrowing based on armed jihad, making use of the capacity of institution of religious authority as well as the capacity of religion and his followers for public mobilization against Ba'th's government, which led to his martyrdom.

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